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Political analysis on fantasy and its language: The Folk of the Air Series, Holly Black

Language, culture and institutions of English-speaking countries II

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*“All grown-ups were once children...
But only few of them remember it.”*
(Antoine de Saint-Exupery)

Sommario	5
Introduction	12
The origin of Fantasy	17
1. The origin of Gothic Sublime.....	23
1.1 Gothic Novel	23
1.2 Edmund Burke.....	24
1.4 Literary meaning and brief analysis	26
1.5 Mary Shelley	27
1.6 Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus (1818).....	27
2. Modern father of Fantasy: J.R.R Tolkien and C.S. Lewis	30
2.1 Fantasy in modern times	30
2.2 J.R.R Tolkien: the father of Fantasy	30
2.3 His juvenile friendships and C.S Lewis	32
2.4 The Lord of the Rings (1954-1955)	34
2.5 Myths and Tolkien’s political fantasy.....	36
2.6 C.S. Lewis, his life	37
2.7 The Chronicles of Narnia: The lion, the witch and the wardrobe (1950)	38
2.8 Dystopias and fantasy.....	39
2.9 George Orwell (1903-1950).....	40
2.10 Nineteen Eighty Four (1949) – George Orwell.....	41
2.11 Aldous Huxley.....	42
2.12 Brave New World, 1932.....	43
2.13 Lois Lowry, The Giver (1993)	44
2.14 Themes of The Giver.....	45
3. Holly Black, The Folk of the Air series	47
3.1 A general description on the author and her works.....	47
4. Main features of the language of politics	54
4.1 The art of persuasion	57
4.1.2 Evaluation.....	58
4.1.3 Grammatical evaluation	59
4.1.4 Textual evaluation	59
4.1.5 Lexical evaluation	59
4.1.6 Evaluation and modality.....	59
4.1.7 Language choice and evaluation	60
4.1.8 Ways of persuading.....	60
4.1.9 Modality: necessity and moral obligation	64
4.2 A political analysis on the Folk of the Air series, Holly Black.....	73
4.3 Representation of power.....	79
4.4 Analogy: metaphors, similes and metonymies.....	89

4.3.1 Metaphors and Metonimies	91
4.3.2 Rhythm: Bicolons, tricolons and policolons	93
5. Conclusions	106
6. Bibliography	109
7. Sitography	110
Acknowledgments.....	112

Sommario

Il genere fantasy non nasce oggi, è stato semplicemente accettato ed è entrato nel novero dei generi più conosciuti negli ultimi anni con un'infinità di sotto generi.

La storia del fantasy, inteso come immaginazione, non può essere legato solamente ai libri, ma si fa risalire ai racconti tradizionali tramandati di generazione in generazione. I racconti che sopravvivono alle persone, ma che hanno al centro sempre degli elementi fantastici, creature immaginifiche, mondi incredibili con eroi capaci di riportare l'ordine nel caos. I poemi epici sono perciò il primo segno di una immaginazione che connette quella che è la dimensione religiosa e l'umanità: il tutto mostrando come anche le divinità presentino pregi e difetti di ogni uomo e donna su questa terra.

La mitologia Greca, in questo senso, con l'Iliade e l'Odissea ha tracciato almeno nella società e cultura occidentale un sentiero definito.

I miti a differenza delle leggende o del folklore, pongono un grande accento sul ruolo del divino nei confronti degli esseri umani, i quali non possono che affidarsi al fato.

Omero, anche lui, è una figura usata dai veri narratori sia dell'Iliade sia dell'Odissea: come detto precedentemente i poemi epici sono una composizione che ha a che fare con la narrazione e ricordo di gloriosi atti del passato di un paese. L'Odisseo di Omero è subito diventato l'archetipo di eroismo e personalità ingegnosa. Odisseo è ancora oggi uno dei personaggi più simbolici e un personaggio chiave della letteratura fantasy con i suoi lunghi e sofferti viaggi ebbero un'estrema influenza sulle opere fantasy. Il protagonista deve superare alcuni ostacoli per tornare a casa: è un momento caratteristico quello in cui i protagonisti devono risolvere queste difficoltà.

Un altro esempio citato è Beowulf, dritto intorno al settimo secolo, rappresentato in un modo in cui il lettore condivide con lui dolori e gioie. Beowulf è un eroe agli occhi dei suoi compagni di viaggio grazie alla sua incredibile forza fisica, che gli permette di sconfiggere numerose creature a mani nude. Questo poema probabilmente è nato come un elogio funebre a un re che morì nel settimo secolo e fu sottoposto a una lunga serie di modifiche. Beowulf è ambientato in una società di tipo germanico: tutte le avventure sono ambientate in Danimarca e Scandinavia. La presenza religiosa all'interno del poema, ovviamente è uno degli elementi centrali, ma il Cristianesimo è solamente citato limitando il suo ruolo in uno spazio ambiguo; le uniche volte in cui è nominato è quando viene citata la Bibbia e il vecchio testamento e Cristo non è mai menzionato all'interno.

Il genere gotico nasce nell'ottocento, Mary Shelley scrisse Dr. Frankenstein durante una notte piovosa, suo marito Percy Bisshe Shelley insieme ad alcuni suoi compagni di poesia. Fu pubblicato sotto pseudonimo e poi solo successivamente con il nome della scrittrice.

Aveva solo diciannove anni quando scrisse questa opera; Frankenstein nasce da una serie di incubi tra sogno e dormiveglia, in quel periodo si stava studiando l'uso dell'elettricità e di come potesse riportare in vita i morti.

C'erano una serie di spettacoli pseudo-scientifici in cui veniva mostrato che una scarica elettrica su un corpo privo di vita lo facesse muovere "*animandolo*".

Frankenstein, d'altro canto, rappresenta il sogno che l'uomo ha da sempre di riportare in vita i morti, ma anche di assumere il ruolo di un Dio terreno capace di giocare con le redini del destino. La sua creatura è rappresentata come un incubo, eppure la differenza tra il suo creatore e quest'ultima sta proprio in questo piccolo corridoio di significati: il mostro di cui bisogna aver paura non è la creatura cucita insieme e portata in vita artificialmente, ma lo stesso Dr. Frankenstein che inorridito scappa davanti ciò che ha fatto. Scappa davanti alla parte di se che ora lo fissa animata da una vita aliena che generata dai suoi desideri più bassi, si rispecchia nei suoi peccati e difetti.

Mary Shelley è in questo caso una delle prime autrici a dare una voce alla figura del mostro che esprime i suoi sentimenti e le sue paure come tutti noi; è come noi, ma è diverso. La Shelley decide di mostrare il lato meno umano di ognuno di noi attraverso questo mostro che altro non è se non tutti coloro che sono discriminati, che ci fanno paura e che non vogliamo vicini per via del loro aspetto. L'autrice costruisce una relazione a specchio tra i due personaggi: il creatore e la sua creazione mostruosa.

Nel secondo dopo guerra, J.R.R Tolkien e C.S. Lewis sono gli autori de 'Il Signore degli anelli' e 'Narnia'. Erano entrambi professori all'università di Oxford ed ebbero la possibilità di condividere quelle che erano le loro passioni sui miti e folclore dando vita a dei mondi ricchi di elementi fantastici in un periodo storico in cui l'umanità stava perendo contatto con quelle che sono la sua storia e la fede religiosa.

Tolkien trae ispirazione dai miti nordici, con le loro tradizioni e anche nella scelta dei nomi, ma soprattutto anche nell'ambientazione che rimanda molto alla Scandinavia e Danimarca con paesaggi verdi e smisurati descritti nella Terra di Mezzo. Tolkien era un filologo, uno studioso di lingue che non solo amava studiarle, ma nei suoi libri le ha inventate ben tre. Le radici linguistiche di queste lingue ovviamente sono quella latina, greca e quella nordica con l'utilizzo delle rune (la lingua degli elfi).

I due autori ebbero una lunga amicizia che spinse entrambi verso una commistione di idee e temi che si influenzarono a vicenda. Lewis non era un uomo di fede, incontrò Tolkien a Oxford e proprio grazie a questa amicizia tra i due professori crebbe in lui la concezione di una fede cristiana: fu così che ebbe inizio quella che poi sarebbe diventata l'allegoria alla base di Narnia.

Lewis parti infatti dalla domanda come sarebbe in un altro mondo se Dio fosse un leone. Lewis in realtà non usa un' allegoria, per lui Asgar è Dio ma di un mondo diverso dal nostro: non è l'allegoria di un Dio, a ma è Dio scesa in terra ma in una terra fantastica e diversa dalla nostra.

Narnia affronta la storia di una famiglia negli anni 50, dopo la fine della seconda guerra mondiale composta da quattro fratelli che cercano di tornare alla vita di sempre, ma manca qualcosa. La loro immaginazione non c'è più, perché è stata spazzata via dalla crudeltà e ferocia della guerra. È solo attraverso la più piccola tra loro che riescono a ritrovare quella gioia nell'immaginazione, nel trovare avventure nuove in una lotta tra il bene e il male che però sappiamo porterà alla vittoria del primo sul secondo.

Per quanto riguarda il genere distopico, un romanzo che ebbe un grande impatto fu sicuramente la Fattoria degli animali di George Orwell. Si tratta di una versione allegorica di quella che era la situazione della Rivoluzione russa dalle origini con Stalin. George Orwell non scrisse solamente questa opera, ma forse il suo lavoro più famoso è '1984'. Orwell esprime al massimo quello che è il potere di una dittatura capace di controllare tutto, dalle relazioni al lavoro, per arrivare al dettaglio più atroce ossia mutare gli eventi della storia. La storia è la più grande forma di insegnamento che l'umanità impartisce a se stessa; è silenziosa e proprio per questo facile da ammutolire e cambiarne i connotati fondamentali per soddisfare i propri interessi.

Il protagonista cerca di sovvertire l'ordine delle cose, si innamora e crea un piano per creare un gruppo di dissidenti e ribelli. Eppure nella natura stessa del Grande Fratello, è questo occhio sempre vigile che controlla ogni movimento. Il finale non è dei migliori; i due amanti vengono torturati fin quando la loro devozione per il grande fratello è superiore a qualsiasi altro sentimento e razionale motivazione che li aveva spinti ad allontanarsi dal loro amore per il Grande Fratello.

Aldous Huxley, nel 1932, scrive anche qui di una società prova di libertà di movimento in cui perfino la riproduzione e la nascita di bambini è affidata alle macchine: una riproduzione che potremmo definire assistita.

Lois Lowry, *The Giver*, nasce dalla malattia del padre dell'autrice che soffre di perdita di memoria. L'autrice ha ammesso che l'alzheimer stava portando via i ricordi più belli che il padre stava custodendo e in questo modo stava distruggendo l'identità stessa.

Da questo concetto si sviluppa quella che è la trama intera di questo romanzo che persino in alcuni stati è stato bandito a causa delle tematiche che affronta tra cui l'eutanasia.

La società rappresentata all'interno del romanzo è priva di emozioni negative, nessuno prova dolore, non si ha ricordo del passato e anche qui come in Aldous Huxley la nascita dei bambini è affidata a una serie di donne che hanno come unico scopo quello di procreare in età fertile.

È una società basata sull'utile e il non utile all'organizzazione di una città che abbia al proprio interno persone capaci di convivere senza meschinità.

La serie di Holly Black, 'Folk of the Air' ha come centro focale le dinamiche politiche intorno al trono vacante. L'autrice, inoltre, ha pubblicato altri libri negli anni e molti traggono ispirazione dal folclore il cui filo rosso sono sicure le fate e le creature dotate di poteri magici, ma è con Jude Duarte nel regno di Elfhame che entra nell'Olimpo del genere urban fantasy e Young Adult con 'The Cruel Prince' nel 2018, il quale resta per quattro settimane nella lista di Bestseller del Times.

Ha lavorato insieme a diversi autori tra cui: Cassandra Clare e Tony di Terlizzi, rispettivamente sulla serie di 'Magisterium' e 'Spiderwick'.

La serie di mio interesse inizia con la morte dei genitori della protagonista, Jude Duarte; il suo arrivo in questo mondo magico abitato da fate immortali e con poteri magici non è dei migliori. Elfhame è sia un posto incantevole sia un inferno a causa delle diversissime tradizioni e abitudini verso le quali Jude e Taryn (la sorella gemella) devono fare i conti: devono proteggersi da bevande inebrianti e incantesimi mortali e pericolosi per la loro incolumità.

Non è il ritratto di un posto sicuro, eppure entrambe rimangono comunque affascinate e incantate dalla vita che trascorrono. La loro esistenza è scandita dal ricordo di come i loro genitori siano stati brutalmente uccisi da Madoc, che ora svolge le veci di padre autorevole, ma non amorevole.

Erano delle bambine quando sono state catapultate in quel mondo nuovo, il loro percorso è diametralmente opposto nonostante il trauma ad unirle nello stesso dolore: Jude cerca di ottenere una posizione di potere all'interno della corte, mentre Taryn desidera sposarsi per avere un ruolo rilevante ma senza correre troppi rischi.

Incarnano entrambe due riposte plausibili a quello che è stato il trauma infantile subito, e sono emblema di due modi di forza: Jude è violenta e cerca sempre uno scontro aperto sia verbale che fisico, mentre la gemella non rincorre questi atteggiamenti istintivi, ma nasconde se stessa rispecchiando il comportamento di chi ha di fronte.

Madoc le alleva insieme ai suoi figli biologici: Vivianne e Oak. Il loro rapporto fin da subito è tossico in cui rappresenta quella che è per le gemelle una figura paterna, ma anche il tiranno che per sete di potere tenta di uccidere Jude quando ne ha l'occasione e mette in serio pericolo la vita di Oak essendo in realtà figlio di Principe Dain e quindi erede al trono.

Jude, la nostra eroina, è come Madoc. Ha avuto lui come insegnante di tutto ciò che sa su Elfhame e su come combattere, lo sa grazie a lui e le sue lezioni spesso impartite in maniera non del tutto pedagogica.

Taryn invece è stata cresciuta sotto l'ala di Oriana, la moglie di Madoc, per questo motivo ha sviluppato, rispetto alla nostra protagonista, un altro set di capacità.

Il potere di Jude è forza fisica e mentale, Taryn invece sparisce al punto da essere quasi invisibile per diventare ciò che gli altri vogliono lei sia.

Il potere non ha un'unica definizione, o meglio non esiste solo la definizione del dizionario, ma anche quella politica.

Ciononostante quello che ci interessa è la connotazione politica del termine; secondo Mario Stoppino esso si differenzia con quello che è l'autorità, altro elemento essenziale.

L'autorità si concentra sul risultato finale, non propone argomentazioni, al contrario invece il potere si serve della persuasione che a sua volta utilizza dispositivi linguistici per presentare le proprie opinioni e infine modificare quelle che sono le credenze e idee del pubblico.

Per l'analisi politica di *The Folk of the Air* si sono elencati quelli che sono gli strumenti per indagare il ritmo e l'intensità con cui i personaggi cercavano di persuadere l'ascoltatore: bicoloni, tricoloni e policoloni.

Bicoloni sono espressioni che contengono due frasi parallele, anche i tricoloni utilizzano il parallelismo: consiste in tre elementi paralleli.

Il più semplice tipo di tricoloni è la ripetizione di tre parole o frasi. La maggior parte dei tricoloni presenta un'impostazione di tre frasi, ognuna delle quali ha strutture lessicali e sintattiche, ma applicando un certo grado di variazione. I policoloni mantengono lo stesso principio, ma hanno più di tre parole/espressioni ripetute.

Un altro tipo di tricoloni vengono chiamati 'oltre al tre' che consiste in un parallelismo più lungo ed elegante.

L'antitesi è un'altra figura retorica che contiene due parti parallele per quanto riguarda la loro struttura, ma allo stesso tempo opposte nel significato (tanto che è considerata una sotto categoria del bicolon).

L'esempio calzante è la frase ormai famosa di Neil Armstrong, il primo uomo a mettere piede sulla luna: 'un piccolo passo per l'uomo, un grande passo per l'umanità.'

Gli ossimori presentano una struttura dove due elementi apparentemente contraddittori sono combinati in una singola parola, frase o epigramma: 'dolceamaro', 'essere crudeli per gentilezza'. Da

notare è come spesso l'opposizione tra questi elementi sia valutativa (ossia attraverso di loro il parlante esprime la sua opinione e idee).

Spesso la parola stessa ossimoro viene utilizzata per suggerire l'incompatibilità delle due componenti.

Un'altra figura retorica di un certo interesse è la metafora: in cui una qualità che appartiene a un'entità precisa viene trasferita a un'altra entità che solitamente è del tutto diversa da quella originale. Le metafore esprimono sempre una valutazione sul soggetto sia essa buona o cattiva; ed è per questo che sono essenziali in un'argomentazione di tipo persuasivo.

Le similitudini, al contrario, sono più facili da rintracciare perché contengono al proprio interno un segnale lessicale di paragone, sono inoltre spesso seguite da una spiegazione del perché il target e la fonte sono accostati come 'simili'. Le similitudini sono spesso il mezzo per persuadere, stessa cosa per le metafore. Mantengono, però, l'analogia che sta alla base di questa figura retorica tra due oggetti diversi nel ruolo di target e fonte.

Le metonimie sono altri elementi di riferimento nell'analisi politica. Sia le similitudini che le metafore mettono in relazione due elementi generalmente sconnessi l'uno dall'altro, una metonimia invece presenta alcune entità utilizzate per menzionare qualcos'altro connesso o associato con esso.

A volte, quest'altra entità a cui in qualche modo è legata si tratta di una parte dell'elemento originale: ad esempio, 'la corona' indica la famiglia reale e i suoi membri oppure 'la bottiglia' indica un drink alcolico ecc.

In questa tesi vengono presentati anche cinque modelli di persuasione:

1. Autorità
2. Paragone e contrasto
3. Problema-soluzione
4. Ipotesi-prove-spiegazione
5. Associazione

Attraverso l'autorità, il parlante ossia la persona responsabile del messaggio persuasivo cerca di sfruttare un'autorità superiore per rinforzare il suo messaggio. Ad esempio, la religione per constatare la veridicità delle sue parole cita le Sacre Scritture per confutare certe affermazioni.

Problema-soluzione e il modello ipotesi-prove-spiegazione sono i due che sono stati maggiormente utilizzati e applicati da Holly Black.

Il primo pone l'accento su un problema seguito immediatamente dopo da una soluzione proposta dal parlante. Il secondo modello in esame si differenzia dal primo perché inizia da un'ipotesi che porta delle prove e conseguente spiegazione.

Paragone e contrasto, come modello, invita a fare un confronto su due posizioni opposte. Solitamente si presenta con un linguaggio valutativo per esprimere la propria opinione e di come sia migliore rispetto alle affermazioni e argomentazioni degli avversari.

Associazione, l'ultimo tra questi modelli persuasivi. La persuasione è in questo caso condotta attraverso altre fonti, elementi che si allontanano dal linguaggio: immagini, musica, vestiario e colori. Significa che questi aspetti vengono associati a un partito, una persona o un politico.

L'analisi politica e del potere nella trilogia avviene nel quarto capitolo, in cui prima si approfondisce quello che è il potere nella sua connotazione non solo linguistica, ma anche politica: il lato psicologico e le motivazioni che spingono ogni personaggio alla ricerca oppure alla fuga davanti al potere e le sue trame.

Jude Duarte, la protagonista ha come unico obiettivo la propria salita al potere. Prima come semplice cavaliere della corte del Re, poi come siniscalco alla destra di Cardan diventato Re grazie alla stessa Jude.

Taryn è invece descritta come un camaleonte. Ha una personalità mutevole: ha imparato negli anni a sparire, ad agire sotto il raggio d'azione, non facendosi mai notare volontariamente finendo così per rispecchiare gli atteggiamenti di chi aveva di fronte.

Il potere non è qualcosa che la attira, ma si trova in mezzo tra sua sorella Jude e il padre Madoc, che sono posizionati a due poli estremi.

Madoc è un personaggio ricco di sfumature: un calcolatore che cerca di tenere in scacco la figlia: i due giocano una partita, la scacchiera è Elfhame. Per Madoc, i membri della sua famiglia non sono altro che pedine; ogni contromossa di Jude è in ritardo su Madoc che è sempre due passi in avanti rispetto a lei.

Cardan, l'ultimo figlio di Re Eldred, lascia che siano i suoi fratelli maggiori a distruggersi a vicenda per salire al trono.

Cardan è inserito tra schemi e intrighi, come Taryn, ha diversi strati che nascondono in realtà quanto sia importante per lui l'onestà e quanto vorrebbe liberarsi dalla corona che indossa sulla testa.

Concludendo, il potere e le dinamiche, che scaturiscono da un trono improvvisamente vuoto, hanno risvolti inaspettati; partecipare alla vita politica del regno per Jude come per gli altri personaggi intorno a lei, finirà per cambiarli e non sempre in meglio.

Introduction

The Folk of the Air series is a trilogy by Holly Black which concentrates on power related dynamics. Power is the aim focus for Holly Black's characters: the plot is all played around a vacant throne. These books give a new perspective on how young adult novels can and should be a way for young generations to fight for their right minus the killing, but of course a fierce commitment to social causes.

The protagonist, Jude Duarte, is powerless. She has no idea what she is going to do for her "country", and yet she participates even when she is discriminated due to her "race". Jude is a human living among immortal and magical faeries whose only purpose in life seems to destroy hers.

Powerful characters are represented under different nuances and shades; discrete, loud, chaotic, but also dark.

The aim of the thesis is to show how fantasy is not less than any other genres: it is valuable and it has still today something to say. The question the thesis tries to give a response to is whether there is a political sphere within the Folk of the Air series. It is through the analysis of the features the political language presents and its models of persuasion that I could be able to find if these YA books contain figures of speech, political elements within the characters' speeches and so on. Since this category of novels is always seen as a less worthy genre because it deals with a younger reader and also due to the critics who frame it with trivial themes and a simple narration.

For this reason, given the possibility to analyse Holly Black's trilogy, it was a fundamental light motif the necessity to prove this category's ability to reach great themes and use a complex language rich in political features.

It comes however with a certain stigma to even read fantasy novels because it is common thought this genre to be mainly for children.

Moreover, fantasy is strictly connected to childhood and a magical perception of the world with fantastic creatures and heroes and their incredible talents.

Even though Fantasy is all this, it is also so much more. Fantasy deals with mature content and political assets around the world through an imaginative eye: nationalism, immigration and discrimination are only a few examples of the topics that are shown under fantasy lenses to whom the reader is not used to.

Holly Black throughout her trilogy uses a large number of figures of speech, since they are essential to better demonstrate a political point of view and opinion, but also to take a look on what a political system really is made of.

Moreover, it allows to give each character an emotional breakthrough and some breath to shine their colours.

The second point of this thesis, is the analysis of these figures of speech and their function within a speech: metaphors, similes, metonymies, but also other devices such as bicolons, binomials, tricolons and policolons.

Looking into this trilogy, I couldn't help but noticing the numerous amounts of bicolons and tricolons: they are extremely useful to create a pattern and engage the audience as we'll later see.

Persuasive techniques and models are also used, allowing to shape the orator's speech and organise it to have a better result and agreement from the audience.

Models of persuasion are: authority, comparison and contrast, problem and solution, hypothesis-evidence-explanation and at last association.

Political language is the neuralgic centre of this thesis. As said before, Holly Black's trilogy lays its principal themes in power and authority which both are gained through persuasion.

Persuasion has its key elements: authority is one of them.

It should be noted that in this particular trilogy there is no democracy, it is a magical kingdom with a ruler whose crown goes to their descendants since it had been created by Grimsen, the wordsmith, and Queen Mab.

In Elfhome, this incredible place, authority is the only means to show off position, social status and heritage.

Power and authority are two very different concepts only linked by their formal origins and relationship with one another: one cannot live without the other and vice versa.

On one hand, authority does not focus on evidence or counterpart's proofs since its main goal is to get things done and persuade. On the other hand, power is founded on persuasion and persuasion needs arguments to build its case on.

Throughout the trilogy I did find a model of persuasion highly used by the author which is the hypothesis-evidence-explanation model: it starts off from an hypothesis which leads to evidence to end up with a possible solution.

Politics and fantasy have always found a way to go hand in hand even if it seems they don't, they do take inspiration from reality with its political forms (tyranny, kingdoms etc) and give their own representation of it.

However, fantasy is not a new genre. It has a long history behind its back.

In the first chapter, there is a detailed study of the fantasy's historical development. From the beginning of time, anthropologically speaking, humanity narrated stories; storytelling was connected to form values and their past experiences as lessons to pass onto the next generations. There was a concrete link to childhood and stories, through imagination stories got closer to what is the children's vocabulary and mindset.

Imagination has always been thought to be something only for children and adults had to get rid of it together with other childish habits.

Homer was one of the first in the western society to write an epic poem which still influences today's market of fantasy.

The Greek mythology is rich in poems and myths that have had a great impact on our society culturally and literary. The Iliad and Odyssey are the perfect representation of the heroic quest, great adventures and missions.

There is another Group of critics of things that fantasy hits roads in the eighteenth Century with gothic novels.

The second chapter is on the Gothic novel especially with Bram Stoker and Dr. Frankenstein by Marley Shelley.

This genre was born around the 18th century: appealed a period where there was a taste for mistery, but also a genuine impulse for freedom and escape from the ugly world.

This phenomenon reached its peak, in the production of Gothic novels from 1760-1820 in Britain due to a discontented feeling towards the Enlightenment and rationality.

Dracula collects its character's personality and personal background from the Romanian folklore, even though the idea of the first literary vampire was by John Polidori.

Dr. Frankenstein by Mary Shelley takes the monster trope to another level giving it a voice, feelings and fears humans have.

Dracula is a seducer to his victims, while Dr. Frankenstein's creature is made of human insecurities and flaws, its flesh is patched up together and bleeds like we do.

Fantasy had another big turning point in 1950s with J.R.R Tolkien and C.S. Lewis.

1950s fantasy was the product of the end of two World Wars, the lack of imagination, the battlefield's cruelty, not to mention how children were exposed to death and devastation of cities.

In that period, neo-realism appeared, but most importantly magic-realism has been attached to a certain group of writers.

The big step, however, was with Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* as a form of anti-realism involving fantasy creatures such as elves.

Tolkien had strong friendship with C.S. Lewis. They both influenced each other, it is however thanks to the great success *The Lord of the Rings* and of *The Hobbit* it is possible to talk about the resurrection of the genre.

Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the wardrobe (1950) by C.S. Lewis; he works on an allegory to analyse how the presence of God might have been if He was embodied by a lion. It narrates a story of 4 siblings after WWII; they do not have a lot, but apart from that, they lack imagination and space to fantasise about other worlds and adventures. They did lose their childhood and their most beautiful years because of the war. They had to grow before time, and act like adults to forget what they had lost along the way.

The Lion, the Witch and the wardrobe does feel like waking up from a dream, even entering the closet seems a metaphorical passage from real life to the dream world which might turn into a nightmare, but alas still a dream.

Another subgenre is dystopias. They show how dark the future of mankind can get due to the seeds planted in present time.

First, George Orwell with *1984* describes how a totalitarian society to help readers to recognise tyranny in all its forms.

Second, Aldous Huxley investigates in '*Brave New World*' is an anti-utopia: the author does not believe in the whole utopia as a functioning social system. The definition of utopia is a system that works and won't fail to deliver goods. For him, it should be rejected this whole idea.

Last, *The Giver* (1993), by Lois Lowry, found some kind of censure due to its themes: sexual content, infanticide and euthanasia. *The Giver* depicts the importance of human connections, but also

memories which build up identity and create a connection among the inhabitants of a community. We are our memories and the experiences we had throughout our lifetime.

In the third chapter, we focus on a general description on the author and her works, especially the Folk of the Air series. Holly Black writes about Jude Duarte, a teenager living in Elfhome, which is not a place for humans. Even though it is not safe, she endures any kind of mistreatment by faeries among them: Cardan, the youngest son of the High King. Jude and her twin go from being powerless to both gain a social status in Elfhome through pains and plotting schemes.

Chapter four is about the main features of the language of politics.

Communication is the currency of politics: persuasion is achieved by a skilful communication and a great use of techniques. One of the first to talk about it was Aristotle who found three different models of appeal based on three elements: speaker, audience and speech. Art of persuasion affirms that in order to persuade to the audience's emotions, intelligence, ambition and instincts by using compassion, logic, promises and in the end appealing to beliefs.

A political analysis of the trilogy follows with a major focus on how each character deals with it: some flies from it, other sacrifice themselves and put it above anyone else, others kill for it.

Another section is dedicated to the representation of power with a brief reference to how political power works and its different meanings. Moreover, powerful dynamics are a constant around the throne and its revolving-around characters who commit a great deal of mistakes and bloodsheds for their personal interests.

The analysis is a turning point for this thesis, because it allows to get a better view on each character's desires and wishes, but also psychological turmoil.

The origin of Fantasy

Fantasy is the ability to reproduce sensible objects in the mind: the process of imagination. What we generally mean whenever we speak about fantasy is derived from an exclusive rather than an inclusive definition of the term. It is usually more of a way to put into shelves and categorise this genre and consider it a less valuable than the other genres inside the literary field. Fantasy is considered to be a genre suitable only for children or young audiences. Yet, its origins lay in what we define our '*cradle of civilisation*'.

Fantasy is the background of images and playground for our imagination to explore its nuances and colors. In our minds it is perfectly clear where our imagination stands and reality: these two never mix and if they do, it is due to some medical condition.

However, the difference between mental images and the objects themselves is emphasised by the fact that mental images can be formulated even when no real equivalent exist. It is common for fantasy to present elements of pure imagination, they give the narration its flow and adventurous rhythm for which these kind of books are known for.

Geoffrey Chaucer is the first to ever known who used the word '*fantasye*' to refer to strange and bizarre elements that have no link to reality and everyday experience. This is the sense even today it is used when one speaks of "fantasy literature".¹

This chaucerian attitude is peculiar, if not a paradoxical one. Since there is no thought without fantasy and fantasising might be the consciousness' evolutionary reason of existence, the truth is that the notion of fantasy is tainted with implications of unworthiness since the beginning of times.

It is partly for this reason that the notion of fantasy as a literary genre is so recent. Before 1969, the description of fantasy was usually applied to children's works; the implication is clear, only the folly of fantasising was something adults had to put away together with other childish behaviours.

Even though it is the last genre to have received its own label, it is also the most ancient genre that is readily identifiable.

This genre is related to storytelling which is much older than literature, although in definition it has no history than its literary written pieces of work. Many tellers must have routinely modified the stories they told. They were transmitters, the stories had to survive them by surrendering their authority to the tale itself, which in the end took on with their existence in order to live for generations to come.

¹ Stableford B., *The A to Z of Fantasy Literature*, Toronto, The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2009

Anthropological observations suggest that all human cultures are alike in this aspect. The stories that cultures possess before acquiring the faculty of writing, and the stories that provide the foundations of literary culture when they do acquire it, are almost all fantastic.

It was always the anthropologists who thought fantastic aspects of preliterate culture implied that preliterate cultures were in some sense childish and primitive.

This was just a line of thoughts, others contemporary anthropologists believed otherwise: they were sure 'Enlightenment' would surely banish "superstition" from the world and that there would be no such a thing in the future as false belief or fantasy literature. Now it is luckily one different story.

This situation is also due to the fact that almost all preliterate cultural stories would be heard for the first-time during childhood. This is one of the reasons why this category of stories is maintained by oral transmission are commonly felt and seen as children's stories.

These tales have been narrated for countless generations, this inner characteristic makes them seem repetitive, unoriginal and unrealistic. Those deep-roots give fantasy literature its unique qualities both culturally and psychologically.

Therefore, it is clear that there is a strong connection between legends, myths and fantasy. Myth is a term which derives from the Greek word for "story," but it is now often recognized as fiction. In specialized definitions employed by anthropologists and folklorists, by contrast, As far as storytelling, there is another anthropological aspect of human nature that we need to investigate which is myths and how they shaped the genre. Myths are sacred narratives concerning the interaction of the human and divine worlds. They connect gods, religion with legends and morale to get humans to behave and impart a lesson on them. There are different kind of myths of course, but this connection to the divine is mostly for the human benefit: the birth of a God, how they grow up to commit some mistakes mirroring humans in this one and how they go for becoming a God or humans who engage in heroic quests to prove their strength and values.

For instance, Hercules's twelve labours are one of the most famous quest in mythological history: Hera (Zeus's wife) cast a spell on him that drove him temporarily insane and caused him to murder his beloved wife and their two sons since the Goddess was angry at Zeus for having an affair with a woman who bore him a child (Hercules).

Hercules, our hero, went to Apollo to be punished for what he had done: the God saw that the crime had not been his fault, however he insisted the young man to make amends. Once he completed every one of these labours Hercules was forgiven and became a God achieving immortality.

However, a clear boundary separates myths from legends and folk tales, because the term tends to be reserved for stories that deal with the creation and divine administration of the world rather than matters of imaginary history featuring heroic or charismatic individuals (legends) or fancies that were never afforded any kind of reverent awe (folktales).

The myths of different cultures (particularly the classical and Nordic mythologies) provide the bedrock of a large fraction of modern fantasy. Hindu mythology and various Oriental mythologies have also given rise to substantial subgenres of fantasy literatures.

Another relevant fantasy is the nordic one, their mythical network involves a population of gods known as Aesir: Odin, Thor, Loki and Baldur. The ultimate climax of the war to invade Vanir is the battle of Ragnarok. It was described in the 10th-century which completes the “Twilight of the Gods”. Other Northern European myths and legends that have survived include the hero myth of Beowulf and a Finnish cycle incorporated into the Kalevala. The Icelandic cycle was a vital source for William Morris and provided raw materials extensively transfigured by J. R. R. Tolkien.

People have always looked for a sort of escapism, some faraway place where they do not have to think about their daily life. Humanity always had the profound need to make some incredible stories up: myths, legends, legendary creatures with incredible characteristics. Heroes with extreme strength or bravery to protect their kingdoms. It is why fairytales were born, to tell a story full of wonders, dangers but in the end peace is restored and the protagonists defeat the evil forces.

It is a human necessity to know even subconsciously that everything will turn out for the best and when it ends bad, it is not the end (it is probably just a cliffhanger).

Fantasy novels have numerous subgenres: different perspectives on the world and how their stories need to end. These novels’ plot development depends on choices, political system, subplots and mostly the author’s background and beliefs they want to portray.

It is interesting as the distinction between our historical past and mythical does not seem to be so clear since what we define ‘history’ is merely a concatenation of legends that we have chosen to believe.

It is inevitable to admit there are different schools of thought on this subject. Some definers of the fantasy genre insist that fantasy literature is something relatively new despite the large number of elements it shares with the literature of earlier eras.

The reasons are numerous, but it is an attempt to avoid the stigma. Its main goal is to distinguish between 'children's fantasy', 'folktales' and a 'fantasy genre'.

It is said we should never be talking about fantasy books before the Age of Enlightenment, because it is an opposition to the notion of realistic/naturalistic literature. The 'fantastic' from this perspective could not be identified as a genre because it lacked a significant distinction from other materials of story making.² The fantasy could not qualify as an acceptable genre because it was significantly different from the other genres and their setting in format.

It is convenient to separate fantasy and fantastic in a contemporary context in order to save from the bad connotations around fantasy within literary field.

It is, however, to be noted that another current takes an opposite stand on this disputation. A lot of critics put the beginning of the fantasy genre all the way back to Homer.

It should all start from the origins of writing and storytelling as well. A strong case in favour of this assertion is Homer himself, the first significant author of fantasy literature.

Homer might be a figure of fantasy himself, a legendary writer created by the preservers of the Iliad and Odyssey. What it really matters about these two works is that whoever invented these epic tales thought it was necessary to create an individual author for both of them.

In a way, Homer was an originator, since he was transfigured first and that transfiguration enjoyed special status to him and these two works.

There is no doubt that Homer was a fantasist, his inventors introduced into his canonical accounts and historical facts (the fall of Troy might not have happened as it is narrated but it is likely such a thing happened) the creatures met throughout these two works.

Even though in his works there are mystical and mythological creatures, epic battles and Gods intervening in the human's lives, what is clear is that to the readers and listeners there was no doubt it existed a difference between reality as they knew it and the supernatural aspects represented by Homer.

Not only in Greece, but in every cultural society there had been a mythology rich in epic tales. The word 'epic' comes from the Greek noun *epos*, which means 'the poets', 'oral exposition'. The two

² Flute J., Grant J., *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, UK, 1997

major epic poems in the Western tradition are the Iliad and the Odyssey attributed to the Greek poet Homer. However, later examples of epic poems are Virgil's Aeneid and the Anglo-Saxon Beowulf.

The epic poem is a long narrative poetical composition dealing with the recollection of a glorious past in the national history of a country, the praise of the brave deeds of heroes, and the lament at the death of a hero. History is the frame and the background of an epic poem, since the canvas is occupied by supernatural folk-tales and mythological events.

The society described is aristocratic and military. there is no attempt to deal with the story of a single human.

Homer's Odysseus is soon become the archetype of heroism and ingenious personality. Moreover, Odysseus is still today one of the most symbolic and a key character of fantasy literature.

His long-suffering travels had an extreme influence on fantasy latest works, from transfiguration experiences to stories of wanderers who must have overcome some kind of obstacles to get back home: this is a peculiar element in fantasy where protagonist most of the time have to deal with. Other creatures that appear frequently in ther Odisy are also the ones which are included inside the fantasy genre: the margin of the sub-genre accommodates all the stories of wanderers and heroes fighting against monstrous cyclops, and other fantasy creatures.

Another example is Beowulf. He embodies the epic poem characteristics, he is represented in a way that the reader can share glory and pain with: it is also the basis to be engaged in that universe, understand its mechanisms, social divisions and traditions. There are elements connected to the present, in order to send a message to the reader through the pages as an Easter egg giving them something to reflect.

It was written in old English, Beowulf is the oldest surviving epic poem in the English language, for this reason I reckon it does deserve a space in this thesis. It is an epic poem because the setting of this story covers great lands and the action consists of brave deeds.

Beowulf is a hero in the eyes of his fellow men thanks to his incredible physical strength. Till the end his most heroic trait is not only the physical traits but also abuse he is not afraid of death.

It was originally untitled, but in the 19th century it was called with the name of his great hero: Beowulf whose adventures are the primary focus. Beowulf was probably composed as an elegy for a king who

died in the 7th century and it went under a series of retelling before it had a chance to be written down.

3

It is set in a Germanic warrior society: those great adventures took place in Denmark and Scandinavia. An ambiguous role is played by Christianity within the poem.

It is almost certain the poem to be transcribed in a Christianised England. Yet the only biblical quotes inside are the ones referred to the Old Testament and Christ is never mentioned.

The society in Beowulf worships pagan idols and Beowulf himself addresses while praying to the “*Mighty faher*” or the “*Wielder of all*”.

In the end, fantasy has always been the main source for humanity to learn and grow. Fantasy has a long story behind itself, morale and values worth a story rich of angst, tension and fighting for what is good in the world. Because good forces always end up saving the world.

³ Spiazzi Marina, *Only Connect...New Directions*, Italia, Zanichelli, 2013

1. The origin of Gothic Sublime

1.1 Gothic Novel

As stated before, fantasy has a long story behind, and yet a great spin it is to be found during the 18th century.

In the second half of the 18th century a new sensibility revealed itself in fiction, marked by a taste for the strange and the mysterious by a genuine impulse for freedom and escape from the ugly world, and by the fear of the triumph of evil over good and chaos over order.

Developments such as these caused a reaction against the serenity, rationalism and realism of Defoe's, Richardson's and Fielding's novels. This phenomenon reached its out peak in the production of Gothic novels which flourished in Britain from about 1760 to 1820 and reflected a specific historical moment characterized by an increasing disillusionment with the enlightenment and rationality. The interest in such novels was common to all strata of society. The gothic influence did not cease after this period: today's ghost and horror novels, which are so keenly read all over the world, come from the 18th century Gothic novel.

Gothic literature can be considered the product of a world which was conscious of social inequity, since it had its origin in a period when the bourgeoisie began to understand its real conditions: the migration towards industrialized towns and industrial exploitation had destroyed the importance of the single human being and man had become a slave to forces he could not control.

Therefore, this kind of literature can be regarded as a reaction against industrialization, and Gothic symbols and characters as denunciation of social problems. It could also be seen as a description of a fallen world that can be experienced through all the aspects of the novel: plot, setting, characterization, and theme.

The concept of the sublime also influenced the Gothic Novel through the work of Edmund Burke where the sublime was linked to anything such as darkness, obscurity, loudness, pain, power, terror and infinity.

According to Burke, the individual had virtually limitless potential and terror was one way of realizing some of that potential.

The setting is greatly influential in Gothic novels and evokes an atmosphere of horror and fear. It includes ancient settings, isolated castles, mysterious abbeys and convents with hidden passages, dungeons and secret rooms. The gothic hero becomes a sort of archetype since there is a pattern to his characterization; there is always the protagonist, usually isolated either by choice or not, and a heroine both stricken with unreal terrors and persecuted by a villain. The villain is the embodiment of evil, either by his own fall from grace, or by some implicit malevolence.

The wanderer or outcast of many gothic tales is the symbol of isolation as he wanders the earth in perpetual exile usually as some sort of divine punishment.

The plot itself mirrors the ruined world since it deals with the protagonist's fall from grace after his succumbing to temptation from a villain.

The first novel of this kind is the Castle of Otranto (1764) by Horace Walpole, the Mysteries of Udolpho (1794) by Anne Radcliffe.

- Setting in a castle
- An atmosphere of mystery and suspense
- An ancient prophecy
- Omens, portents, visions
- Supernatural or otherwise inexplicable events
- High even overwrought emotions
- Women in distress
- Women threatened by a powerful, impulsive tyrannical male
- The metonymy of gloom and horror

The term Gothic Novel broadly refers to stories that combine elements from horror and romanticism. The Gothic Novel often deals with supernatural events, or events occurring in nature that cannot be easily explained or over which man has no control, and it typically follows a plot of suspense and mystery. Here is a list of some common elements found in Gothic novels:

glooming,

- Supernatural beings or monsters (ghosts, vampires, zombies, giants)
- Curses or prophecies
- Damsel in distress
- Heroes
- Romance
- Intense emotions
- Decaying setting (haunted houses or castles with secret passages, trapdoors, and other mysterious architecture).

1.2 Edmund Burke

Gothic novels and texts represent evil with monstrous antagonists and deformed features, yet they may be human but they are still monsters.

Gothic as term, it first appeared in contraposition to Roman Empire.

The sublime is a critical term used in rhetoric to describe a style of speech which is ethically uplifting. For writers during the 1800s, sublimity continued to define the excellence of achievement which combined high thoughts, lofty feelings, elevated language and perfection of form.

In 1757, it was Edmund Burke who wrote a philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful in which he distinguished the terms ‘*sublime*’ and ‘*beautiful*’.

Burke associated beauty with smallness, brightness and smoothness while sublime associated was associated with the infinite, with solitude, darkness and spiritual awe particularly in relation to vast, immense and grandiose nature. The cult of the sublime which dominated the latter part of the 1800s was to influence the development of the Gothic novel, poetry and art. Subsequently, British poets such as Shelley, Wordsworth and Coleridge were deeply affected by the notion of the sublime in relation to nature.

The desire to experience sublime feelings also rendered the Grand Tour a must for those who could afford it. British travelers toured Europe in search of grandiose, awe-inspiring natural scenery, such as that offered in the Alps.

1.3 Dracula, Bram Stoker

Stoker supplemented his income by writing a large number of sensational novels, but by far his most famous was the vampire tale *Dracula* featuring as its primary character the vampire, Count Dracula, which he published on May 18, 1897. Stoker's inspiration for the story was a visit to Slains Castle near Aberdeen.⁴

Structurally *Dracula* is an epistolary novel, written as collection letters from the characters, as well as fictional articles from the Whitby and London newspapers.

Before writing his most famous masterpiece, he collected folklore tales, myths and documents. He spent seven years doing so. It was the period of invasion literature, there was this strong fear of what was different and might enter inside the western borders. However, the novel had more impact on later readers than the Victorian audience who appreciated it for its setting and adventurous plot.

The idea of the vampire was firstly imagined by John Polidori in his novel “The Vampyre” while spending his summer with Mary Shelley, the creator of Frankenstein, in 1816.

An interesting detail is that Stoker took inspiration for his *Dracula* from his tyrannical actor manager Henry Irving. He also wished Irving might play his character on stage, but he refused.

⁴ Website: https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Bram_Stoker

During his seven years long research, he found out a peculiar word in Romanian which was “Dracul” meaning “Devil”. It is still argument of discussion whether or not Stoker knew about the existence of Vlad the Impaler who has similar elements with Dracula.

1.4 Literary meaning and brief analysis

Dracula is a novel which goes around dichotomies: traditions and modernity, gender roles and stereotypes. Mina Harker is a modern woman, she uses modern technology of the time, such as the typewriter, yet she still embodies the stereotypical role for a woman as a schoolmistress.

It is possible to say that Stoker deals with the conflict between the world of the past with its folklore and religious traditions against the world of technology.

The characters of *Dracula* use (then) modern technology and rationalism to defeat the count. For example, during their pursuit of the vampire, they use railroads and steamships, not to mention the telegraph, to keep a step ahead of him (in contrast, the count escapes in a sail boat). Van Helsing uses the aforementioned method of hypnotism to pinpoint Dracula's location. Mina even employs the then-primitive field of criminology to anticipate the Count's actions and cites

Jonathan Harker struggles with his rationality in a world of creatures like Dracula. He attempts to give reasonable explanations to some strange phenomena he witnesses. One of the examples is when he notices Count Dracula crawling down the castle face down. In order to live with himself, he suggests it was just a trick of the moonlight.

Moreover, it is through technology and rationality that they are all able to defeat the Count: they use railroads and steamships whereas the Count uses a sail boat.

Mina employs the new criminology's field to anticipate the Count's actions quoting Cesare Lombroso and Max Nordau's⁵ theories on criminals. They were considered experts in the field.

As noted, this novel is about the fear of what is foreign and unknown and might end up being a threat. Dracula embodies this frightening element in the novel, he is invasive and he seduces his way through the characters. He has a way to get into people's mind and deep desires. He also represents what it was the Victorian feeling of loss of values and a declaimed morality; syphilis was a common disease at the time and it was kind of an epidemic as Dracula transmits his vampirism in a highly erotic way.

⁵ Cesare Lombroso and Max Nordau believed that some anatomical aspects were to be typical of some criminals and it was possible to identify them through a series of aspects: skull, the brain etc.

1.5 Mary Shelley

Mary Shelley was born in 1797, her parents had been heavily influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution. Ten days after Mary's birth, her mother died. This had a huge impact on her childhood, full of nightmare due to the loss of her maternal figure. Only two years later, her father remarried. Her stepmother and her daughters were to be the cause of Mary Shelley's sufferings and troubles for many years of her life. Godwin's house was visited by some of the most famous writers of the day like Samuel Coleridge and Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Shelley was immediately attracted by the young and intellectual Mary Godwin. In 1814, Mary only 17 and Shelley, a married man of 22 fled to France. Shelley's wife committed suicide because of it. Later he decided to rent a country house on the banks of Lake Geneva, near Villa Diodati rented by Byron himself. It was there that Mary started writing Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus. The initial inspiration burst into Mary's consciousness as a waking dream or nightmare, but also as the result of the intellectual stimuli of Shelley and George Gordon Byron together with her own deep anxieties and uncertainties. In 1818, Frankenstein was published anonymously.

Four years later, they moved to Lerici, where Percy set sail in a storm and was found drowned ten days later.

Mary returned in 1823, a widow aged 26, unrecognized by Shelley's family. She continued to publish and write spending her last years with the family of her son. She died in 1851.

1.6 Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus (1818)

This novel set a new chapter on scientific and fantasy fiction, a complete turning point from now on. Before her, there had never been something like this, a human-like creature with feels and fears just like us whose voice echo ours. Mary Shelley deliberately chose to divide the audience's reception of the "monster". Is he good or evil?

Dr. Frankenstein, a Swiss scientist, manages to create a human being by joining parts from corpses. Despite his constancy and hard work, the result of the experiment is revolting "*I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart.*"⁶

⁶ Frankenstein by Mary Shelley, chapter 5. The creation of the monster, Dr. Frankenstein here is taken by the horror of the creature he just created. He gave life to something human, but utterly monstrous.

The story is not chronologically told and it is introduced to us by a series of letters written by Walton to his sister Margaret Walton Saville (whose initials are the same of the author, Mary Shelley).

Mary Shelley dedicated Frankenstein to his father and used many ideas held by her agents including social justice and education. She clearly sympathies with the monster but is afraid of the consequences of his actions. Here it is summed up the tension between fear of revolution and interest in revolutionary ideas, two attitudes which were characteristic of English individuals in those years.

In the introduction of the novel the author gives her own account of Frankenstein's origin. It seems that the reading of ghost stories, her personal anxieties and the memories of her sense of loss and death of her own mother came out together at that point of her life building up the waking dream or nightmare that so terrified her when she was a child.

The first thing that strikes one about this report of their first encounter is that Victor Frankenstein names the creature: '*monster*'.

After spending the night wandering and having nightmares, he enters again in the chamber where his creature lies awake. "*I beheld the wretch — the miserable monster whom I had created. [...] his eyes, if eyes may be called, were fixed on me.*" (Chapter 5)

Frankenstein stands as a God hating his own progenies, he cannot stand the sight of him. He rushes downstairs and hides in the courtyard walking up and down fearing any noise.

The reader witnesses, not simply the creature, but also the process by which Frankenstein reaches for this seductive and powerful label. This is the first time the term is used in the book (monster), even though the creature has been glimpsed, textually earlier, but narratively later, by Captain Walton.

The more we look at this passage, the more we see it as a projection of the speaker: there is a gap, as it were, between the semantic label and the phenomenon to which it is being applied.

It is a commonplace that Frankenstein is deceived by the appearance of the creature, and, in particular, interestingly, it is the *eyes* of the creature which seem to be the focus of his revulsion.

"*As I looked on him, his countenance expressed the utmost of malice and treachery*⁷" (chapter 20), Frankenstein is shocked by the sudden appearance of the monster and sees him evil only due to his appearance, he suggests that being ugly is a proof of his malevolence. Dr. Frankenstein is trying to shift blame on his creature away from himself, but in doing so he gives the reader an excuse for him to treat "it" badly.

⁷ Dr. Frankenstein is already accustomed to the presence of his creature, and yet he is still troubled by the sight of 'it'. Eyes are the primary sense Mary Shelley uses to symbolise how much it leads us to banal prejudices.

It is not only the fall of the creature but also of its creator; his hysterical reaction denotes an originating unconsciousness. It is unnecessary when looked back at it. He demonizes the creature but in doing so he reduces himself on the same level.

The decision to give the monster a voice is Mary Shelley's most important subversion of the category of monstrosity. It is also to be noted that evil behavior is not limited to those who appear deformed. In Mary Shelley's 1818 novel, both the physical and spiritual form are embodied by Victor and his creature. Victor commits a sin by looking for a way to build a life out of nowhere, he seeks the mechanisms of life. He uses vocabulary of damnation (catholic view and perception of good and evil). Shelley points her language to highlight the division Victor is experiencing: he was brought up with some beliefs, but now his pursuit of something greater is leading him to be repulsed by his intellectual means.

He's not any different from his unnamed creature. He is driven to a state of rage through his rejection by the De Lacey family: *"I could with pleasure have destroyed the cottage and its inhabitants, and have glutted myself with their shrieks and misery."*

His creature is no exception; he demands to be heard, he speaks of his wretchedness to defend himself; *"You accuse me of murder; and yet you would with a satisfied conscience destroy your own creature.[...] Yet I ask you not to spare me: listen to me; and then if you can, and if you will, destroy the work of your hands."*

2. Modern father of Fantasy: J.R.R Tolkien and C.S. Lewis

2.1 Fantasy in modern times

The 1950s were characterized by the appearance of neo-realism, a trend which worked against Modernism. Neo-realism led to social protests, and in the late 1950s and early 1960s it was associated with a group of young graduate writers, mostly of middle- or lower- class origin, who were deeply dissatisfied with their present. Because of their violent outburst against the values of the new social class they had entered they were nicknamed ‘Angry Young Men’.

They Portrayed a conflict-ridden everyday reality through the figure of a young character, who was usually provincial and lower-middle-class in origin, and who tried to go up the social ladder at the expense of some established values and figures.

A form of anti-realism was revived by the world of fantasy of John R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of The Rings* (1954-1955), which involves elves, dragons and comments on reality using allegories and mythology.

Fantasy has recently developed into what is called magic realism, a trend which mingles the realistic with the unexpected and the inexplicable, and in which elements of dream, fairy story or mythology are combined with everyday reality.

The label ‘*magic realism*’ has been attached to Latin American writers like Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986), Gabriel Garcia Marquez (1928-2020), the Italian Italo Calvino, as well as the Commonwealth writer Salman Rushdie (1947-).

Other novelists were interested in religious and metaphysical problems; the best example was William Golding who, in *Lord of Flies* (1954) created a moral fable of the human condition. ⁸

2.2 J.R.R Tolkien: the father of Fantasy

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (1892-1973) endured really early on his life the death of his parents. His father died when Tolkien was three years old, whereas his mother died when he was just twelve. He was born in South Africa because of his father’s job in a bank.

Ten months after having returned to England, Arthur Tolkien died of complications due to rheumatic fever. Tolkien mentions his father in several letters expressing his own life long interest for his native country wishing one day to go back.

The list of losses doesn’t stop here; in 1904 his mother was diagnosed with diabetes and died in November of the same year. Tolkien refers to her a lot in his letters as “a gifted lady”.

At twelve he was orphan, he had his brother Hilary by his side, but he felt very much alone anyway.

⁸ Crisafulli L.M., Elam K., *Manuale di Letteratura e Cultura Inglese*, Bologna, Bonomia University Press, 2009

In a letter to his son Michael in 1972, he compares the death of his mother, Mabel, to the sense of loss at the death of his wife, Edith.

Despite the objection of her relatives her mother, Mabel, converted to Catholicism and took her children to mass, and they were also accepted into the Roman Catholic Church. They both attended the same school where they got to know Father Morgan, who had a major influence on Tolkien. Unnoticed by her sons, Mabel's condition began to deteriorate again. At the beginning of November she collapsed in a way that seemed to her children terrifying. She sank into a diabetic coma and six days later, on 14 November, she died.⁹

His presence helped ease the pain for the sudden loss of their mother, but Mabel's death was a severe loss.

For Tolkien, her mother's faith and her death seem to have intensified the importance Catholicism had in his life. He considered her to be a "martyr", as he saw the extreme poverty and the "persecution" by Protestant relatives all these factors in his opinion contributed to her death at the age of thirty-four.

Tolkien thought the study of language (his discipline) to be superior to the study of literature. Tolkien joked that literature *'is written for the amusement of men between thirty and forty'*.¹⁰

Tolkien is largely known all over the world for his books, he was a professor at the Oxford University, he also wrote a number of stories, including most famously *The Hobbit* (1937) and *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955), which are set in a pre-historic era in an invented version of our world which he called Middle Earth.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Tolkien did not rush into battlefield, but returned to Oxford where he worked hard and achieved his first-class degree in 1915.

He then enlisted as a second lieutenant in the Lancashire, for many months he was kept in boring suspense in England. Finally it appeared that he must embark for France, before departing he and Edith married in Warwick on 22 March 1916.

He got a form of typhus-like infection common in the sanitary conditions, throughout 1917-1918 his illness kept recurring, although his rapid remission enabled him to do home service to be promoted lieutenant. It was when he was stationed in the Hull area that's he and Edith went walking in the

⁹ Carpenter H., *J.R.R Tolkien a Biography*, UK, HarperCollins, 2016

¹⁰ It was during one of those Monday meetings that C.S. Lewis and Tolkien usually had to talk about literature. In one of these occasions, Lewis recorded this quote by his friend.

woods, and there in a grove thick with hemlock Edith danced for him. This was the inspiration for the tale of Beren and Luthien: he came to think of her as “*Luthien*” and himself as “*Beren*”.

His academic publication record is very scarce, they were extremely influential: the most notably is “*Beowulf, the Monsters and the Critics*”.

Tolkien got into the habit of writing the children annual illustrated Christmas letters as if they were from Santa Claus , and a selection of these were published in 1976 as *The Father Christmas Letters*.

However, Tolkien’s life was far from unremarkable.

He became one of the founder members of the group called “The Inklings”. The origins of the name had to do with writing. Another prominent member was C.S.Lewis who then would have become one of Tolkien’s closest friends.

The flow of publications was only temporarily slowed down by Tolkien’s death. The long-awaited Silmarillion, edited by his son Christopher Tolkien, appeared in 1977. In 1980 he also publishes his father’s incomplete writings from his later years under the title *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth*.

On 29 November 1971 Edith died, and Ronald soon returned to Oxford, to the rooms provided by Merton College. Ronald died on 2 September 1973. He and Edith are buried together in a single grave in the Catholic section of Wolvercote cemetery in the northern suburbs of Oxford.

On the headstone it reads: Edith Mary Tolkien, Luthien, 1889-1971 and John Ronal Reuel Tolkien, Beren, 1892-1973.

2.3 His juvenile friendships and C.S Lewis

He established a long lasting friendship with a group of fellow students at King Edward’s school. Among them we find: Robert Quilter Gipson, Geoffrey Bache Smith, and Christopher Wiseman. All of them were members of the Tea Club and Barrovian Society.

There were other members, of course, but these three were the closest to Tolkien. Even though they did choose different paths and careers, they kept in touch with numerous letters.

An important moment in their relationship is a reunion in 1914, that they referred to as “the Council of London”.

It resulted in Tolkien’s possibility to express himself and he realizes that “inspiration” always followed whenever they spent quality time together.

This friendship had a particular significance on Tolkien's part, because it made grow inside of him the concept of male fellowship. A major value to their relationship was added when they all fought as soldiers in World War I .

Geoffrey Smith and Robert Gilsonite died during war. From the letters exchanged between them, it is clear that this group of friends believed to have a superior purpose given by God. In their deaths, they were still part of the group and somehow inspired a sense of mutual aim in life.

C.S. Lewis and Tolkien met at Oxford on May 11, 1926.

As a married man with small children, he developed strong friendships there. These relationships he built along the way became an influence as much as the ones he had with his adolescent friends. An after dinner conversation he had with Tolkien made it possible for him to being called a Christian, even though it took him more than two years.

He later described this life changing discussion he had to his friend Arthur Greeves "Now the story of Christ is simply a true myth: a myth working on us in the same way as the others, but with this tremendous difference that it really happened...Christianity is God expressing Himself through what we call "real things".¹¹

After their initial antipathy, the colleagues soon discovered they shared a like-minded interest in languages, poetry, myth and storytelling. They bonded, however over their terrible experiences during the World War I. They shared the loss of their parents which they both endured in their childhood. They craved each other's companionship, they lost themselves in anachronistic tales created to engage what we know to be 'escapism'. Of course, the realms of Lewis' Narnia and Tolkien's Middle-earth are full of wars, troubles and imperfections as much as our 'real' world.

While many other author had written and published works of fantasy, it is thanks to the immense success of *The Lord of the Rings* and of *The Hobbit* that we can talk about a resurrection of this genre. He is widely considered the father of modern fantasy literature or high fantasy.

His primary mechanism of definition is language: its use, its blending and its absence. There is little evidence of Tolkien's criticism, because it was largely oral and not documented. We should not call it criticism, but rather the clearest example of Tolkien's impact on Lewis is language: philology.

However it is difficult to measure how much the feedback on Lewis' part had any impact on his writing. Tolkien usually in his letters refers to Lewis as he was 'encouraged' from his friend and he

¹¹ Wittingham E.A., *The evolution of Tolkiens Mythology, A study of the History of Middle-earth*, UK, 2007

was grateful for it. It was a time, proven by some letters, for Tolkien when he was open to criticism or advises from people he trusted and respected.

He wrote in an era of disenchantment, the world was on the edge of self-destruction by ideological investments and state alliances. Writers reflected on the situation in their own works. The old values and absolute truths were to be met with cynicism became the urgent reaction to the great ideologies linked to the Great War's ideals they had been fought for.

The key elements in his writings are the notions of corruption and redemption, these are concepts incorporated in Tolkien's moral absolutes of right and wrong.

Lewis said in his autobiography *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life*, C.S. Lewis said his friendship with J.R.R. Tolkien "marked the breakdown of two old prejudices. At my first coming into the world I had been (implicitly) warned never to trust a Papist, and at my first coming into the English Faculty (explicitly) never to trust a philologist. Tolkien was both."

Tolkien's faith and beliefs are a central element of his life, and the spirituality found in his fiction is far from Christianity, though. He focuses his attention on the term spirituality and not religion. There are no churches or temples, he wants to imagine a world without Christianity.

2.4 The Lord of the Rings (1954-1955)

Tolkien spent more than years on his most famous work building he primary narration for the Lord of the Rings, from which he had the constant support of the Inklings: a group of friends among whom there was C.S.Lewis. He did an impressive work, not only he created all the characters and a whole new world, but also a few languages. It is interesting that while other languages in Middle-Earth, like the Elvish languages were inspired by Latin and the ancient Indian, the dwarf runes are taken from the Nordic runes of the Vikings.

The Lord of the Rings takes up the story about 60 years after the end of *The Hobbit*. The story begins in the first volume, when Frodo Baggins, Bilbo's adoptive heir, came into possession of Bilbo's magic ring. Bilbo's old friend Gandalf the Grey discovered that it was the One Ring, the instrument of Sauron's power which corrupted others with desire for it and the power it held.

Sauron sent the sinister riders in black, to the Shire, Frodo's native land, in search of the Ring. Frodo escaped, with the help of his loyal gardener Sam and three close friends. Aragorn led the hobbits to Rivendell on Gandalf's request. However, Frodo was gravely wounded by the leader of the Ringwraiths, though he managed to recover under the care of the Half-elven lord Elrond.

In Rivendell, the hobbits also learned that Sauron's forces could only be resisted if Aragorn fulfilled an ancient prophecy by wielding the sword Andúril, the sword that cut the Ring from Sauron's finger in the Second Age. A high council decides that the only course of action that can save Middle-earth is to destroy the Ring by taking it to Mordor and casting it into Mount Doom, where it was forged.

Frodo volunteered for the task, and a "Fellowship of the Ring" was formed to aid him consisting of Frodo, his three Hobbit companions, Gandalf, Aragorn, Boromir of Gondor, Gimli the Dwarf, and Legolas the Elf. They started to be followed by Gollum who belonged to a people "of hobbit-kind" before he was corrupted by the ring.

The Fellowship goes to a realm, where Galadriel showed Frodo and Sam visions of the past, present, and future. Frodo also saw the Eye of Sauron, and Galadriel was tempted by the Ring. By the end Frodo decided to continue the trek to Mordor on his own, however, the faithful Sam insisted on going with him.

The second book of the volume tells of Frodo and Sam's exploits on the way to Mount Doom. They managed to capture and "tame" Gollum, who then showed them a way to enter Mordor secretly. At the end of the volume, Gollum betrayed Frodo to the great spider, Shelob, and though he survived, he was captured by Orcs.

In the third volume, *The Return of the King*, the Fellowship assisted in the final battles against the armies of Sauron, desperately against Sauron's armies in order to distract him from the Ring, hoping to gain time for Frodo to destroy it.

The temptation of the Ring proved to be too great for Frodo and he claimed it for himself. However, Gollum struggled with him and managed to bite the Ring off. Gollum slipped into the fires of the mountain, and the Ring was destroyed.

Finally with Sauron's defeat, Aragorn gets to be crowned king. At the end, Frodo remained wounded in body and spirit and went west accompanied by Bilbo over the Sea to Valinor, where he could find peace.

2.5 Myths and Tolkien's political fantasy

His myths are extremely conservative. *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings* describe the rightful return of the king on his throne. It is a victory that rebuilds the feudal social structure destroyed by evil forces.

Tolkien was a meticulous writer, he included details about the geography of Middle-Earth and rewrote entire poems inside it. Beside it, there's no mention of political institutions; this typology of disputes is usually resolved through general consensus and sometimes with reference to a moral authority shared within. There are no institutional rules to follow and too lead through process, laws or procedures. Tolkien was a philologist and created within this universe two languages, Quenya and Sindarin, he developed their phonetic and alphabetic systems.

Tolkien's approach to Norse mythology was a deep study of what he thought to be different form of arts and not religious pantheons or traditions.¹²

Tolkien thought of his *Legendarium* as a Northern Europe setting with myths and legends. In these countries, leaders got their power through acclamation, but diplomacy. People on command would build connections and would rule on their territory attributing patronage to the elite classes.

Gandalf, for instance, is definitely influenced by the Norse God Odin. Odin is often described in old texts as the wanderer, an old man with one eye, a long white beard, a broad hat, wearing a cloak and wielding a spear. Tolkien also wrote a letter in 1946 that he thought of Gandalf as an Odinic wanderer. A clear example of direct influence is Gandalf's name which appears on a list of dwarfs in *Völuspá* and *Prose-Edda*¹³ and then there is King Gandalf whose life is still today a mystery.

The modern perspective on democracy and dictatorship fails to see the fundamental aspects of Middle-Earth politics. Tolkien was inspired by Icelandic books from both known and unknown authors who wrote on Norse Mythology. It is believed it did originate in Sweden: in more than one way this set of myths is very similar to Greek mythology and all mythologies around the world.

In Norse mythology, rings and swords appear to be very important and were often used in poems as metaphors of power. To own rings was to have power, but to share a ring, it meant sharing a property with someone.

¹² J.Chance. *Tolkien and the Invention of Myth*, Lexington, The University Press of Kentucky, 2004

¹³ Cleasby R., and Vigfusson G., *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, Oxford, OUP Oxford, 1963

It should be noted that the elves in Middle-Earth are tall, intelligent, slim and very beautiful. The Elves in Iceland are often called Hidden People rather than elves. It does sound quite similar to the description of Iceland's elves: taller, slimmer and more beautiful than humans.

Humans, Dwarves and Elves do not live under democratic governments and rulers, they are though called "free peoples" (The Lord of the Rings, second volume, third chapter, page 275). The most democratic element were the Polity and Freedom Houses which would classify Mordor and the Elven realms as authoritarian. In Middle-Earth there is no egalitarian society, people couldn't in most cases move from a class to another.

2.6 C.S. Lewis, his life

C. S. Lewis was himself a prodigy, he started reading at the age of three and writing short stories about fantasy lands by five.

When he was a teen, he rejected his Catholic background to live as an atheist through his 20's. He turned to theism in 1930 and to Christianity in 1931, with the help also of his close friend J.R.R Tolkien.

Lewis wrote about these life changing events in autobiography "Surprised by Joy" in 1955.

In 1950 he published what has become his most widely known book, the children's fantasy *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. He went on to write six additional stories, and together the series came to be known as *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The series, which describes the conflicts between good and evil that occur in the kingdom of Narnia, is unified by Aslan, a noble lion, which is the form in which the Son of God usually appears in Narnia.

In 1950 he published his most widely known book "the Lion, The witch and the Wardrobe". It sets in a fantasy world called Narnia where the Kingdom is unified thanks the Aslan, the Lion. He is the Son of God.

Lewis's journey toward God, though, was not simple. Escape soon became his journey. In the years following his friendship with Tolkien he converted even if he had not desired to meet God for so many years.

Late in life he married Joy Davidman Gresham. In 1956 they were got married in a secret civil ceremony, but only six months later she was diagnosed with cancer.

In 1957 they repeated their vows and the priest prayed for her to be healed. She died eventually in 1960¹⁴.

2.7 The Chronicles of Narnia: The lion, the witch and the wardrobe (1950)

The novel is about four siblings who are evacuated from London to the countryside. Lucy one day discovers that one of the wardrobes contains a portal to another world.

Lewis, in this novel, draws on the Christian story of salvation through a godlike figure (Aslan sacrifice on the stone table and resurrection are clearly meant to remind the Crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ) in order to promote the Christian morale.

He wrote Narnia and distances his novel from allegories. He started by posing himself this question: "Suppose there were a world like Narnia and it needed rescuing and the son of God went to redeem it, as he came to redeem ours, what might it, in that world, all have been like?"

Essentially 'supposing' is simply the basis of a story that asks "*what if?*" Lewis is against the allegory, because Aslan in that case should just 'represent' Jesus, but in his series of books he is Jesus. He is Jesus, if Narnia existed and a deity decided to walk among people of that world. He is Jesus' equivalent in Narnia. If Narnia existed and God chose to walk among them and appear under a lion like figure.

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe is a novel in which Lewis depicts the Christian story of salvation: Aslan's sacrifice and subsequent resurrection clearly recall what happened to Jesus Christ.

*"The Witch knew the Deep Magic, there is a magic deeper still which she did not know ... that when a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead, the Stone Table would crack and Death itself would start working backward."*¹⁵

Aslan not only willingly sacrifices himself, but he has no sins. For this reason, he comes back to life and saves Narnia with the help of the four siblings.

On the contrary, as it is obvious to assume, the white Witch is the incarnation of evil, she is narcissistic and enchants with her sweet words into making anyone what she wants them to do.

"It is a lovely place my house, said the Queen. "I am sure you would like it. There are whole rooms full of Turkish Delight, and what's more I have no children of my own. I want a nice boy whom I could bring up as a Prince and who would be King of Narnia when I am gone. While he was Prince

¹⁴ Website: britannica.com

¹⁵ C.S. Lewis, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, London, HarperCollins, 2001

*he would wear a gold crown and eat Turkish Delight all day long; and you are much the cleverest and handsomest young man I've ever met. I think I would like to make you the Prince — some day, when you bring the others to visit me.”*¹⁶

The witch tries to persuade Edmund by telling him how intelligent and handsome he is, and she is in desperate need of a Prince. She is fulfilling every single desire he might have deep in his heart trying to satisfy him even if just by words. Edmund among the siblings is the one who suffers the most being older than Lucy but younger than Peter and Susan: he is an outsider. He doesn't belong to Lucy's fantasies and magic, but neither he shares any sense of responsibility towards the others as Susan and Peter do.

The novel's value lie its power not only as an allegory, but also for its form of escapism already cited provided to the reader. The whole idea of a portal to another world symbolises the children's literal escape from a frightening world during war into one of snow, magic and adventure. Although this novel was written five years after the end of the Second World War, children were still living a time of austerity and poverty where Turkish Delight was something they couldn't have.

The novel's ending makes us think the force of dreams where we feel we have lived an intense experience only to walk up and discover it's only next morning after all.

2.8 Dystopias and fantasy

Fantasy plays a role also in warning the masses from future dangers, because the seeds are already in the present time. Dystopias show the evils sides of contemporary societies and those seeds may transform into something completely alienating reality where the reader feels to be a far away future and yet an experience they already lived somehow in their own life.

The young adult market is teeming with dystopian fantasies (“the Giver” by Lois Lowry, *Among the Hidden* by Margaret Haddix to name a few) with the recent trilogy of “The Hunger Games” did find a new voice and is now more popular than ever.

These dystopian novels depict either an individual fighting against oppression or a group of people coping collectively as a society with the dehumanized conditions.

Some of these stories are set in non-specified worlds, thorough generally they are set in a future that is dark and oppressive.

¹⁶ Lewis. C. S., *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, London, HarperCollins, 2016 P.254

The reasons behind the fall of that particular universe are multiple: from the rise to power of one political or religious group of people to an apocalyptic disaster whose details are forgotten. Other motives are to be searched in the advancement of technology and its consequences.

In Lois Lowry's novel, she praises the uniqueness and memories which give us the possibility to give major light on what are the most important things in life: values and a sense of community.

Aldous Huxley with "Brave new world" embraces themes that were already there, like seeds that in the future could have been a problem: the highly presence of media, how the utopia we all idealise hides dark sides within itself.

George Orwell's 1984 is about control by a totalitarian government whose face is the Big Brother. Orwell builds up a totalitarian society where there are different ministries whose job is to modify history to justify every move the Big Brother does.

A modern example I would like to quote is Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins published in 2010. It is one of the latest dystopian trilogy, the core message is how subtle really is the equilibrium built in a dictatorship. In Hunger Games there is the rise of the heroine from a poor background and through tremendous adventurous and deadly traps, she will become a symbol for the oppressed. A mockingjay who rises from the ashes to let the whole world burn down with her.

Finally, these were just a few titles to get an idea as a whole of the genre's development throughout the years and how it still has something to say even to young audiences.

2.9 George Orwell (1903-1950)

He was born Eric Blair, in India 1903. He could not stand the lack of privacy, the pressure to conform to the values of the English public school, such as development character. At Eaton he began to develop an independent-minded personality, indifference to accept those values and professed atheism and socialism.

In 1927, he went on leave and decided not to return to the Indian Imperial police "he wished to escape from reality from every form of man's dominion over men".

Back in London he started a social experiment: he wore second hand clothes, he spent short periods living in common lodging houses. He directly experienced poverty and learned first hand how institutions for the poor worked. After a period where he worked as a dishwasher in a hotel, he decided to begin publishing under the pseudonym of George Orwell. He chose George because it had an Englishness about it suggesting plain speaking and common sense, and 'Orwell' because it was the name of a river he was fond of.

In 1936, he married Eileen O'Shaughnessy, an Oxford graduate who shared his interests in literature and socialism.

They were both politically active, in the same year he was commissioned by a left-wing publisher to investigate conditions among the miners and unemployed in the industrial North, where he stayed for two months. In December, they went to Catalonia to report on the Spanish Civil War. In Spain he joined the militia and fought in the trenches of the Aragon front. That was the time of his conversion to socialism and the ideals of brotherhood and equality. Back in England they adopted a young boy, they called him Richard.

When the Second World War broke out, Orwell moved to London and he joined the BBC, in 1943 he also began writing *Animal Farm*, which was published in 1945. Orwell's last book, *Nineteen Eighty Four*, was his most original novel; it was published in 1949 and soon became a best-seller. Orwell died of tuberculosis the following year.

2.10 Nineteen Eighty Four (1949) – George Orwell

Orwell insisted on tolerance, justice and decency in human relationships, and warned against the increasing artificiality of urban civilization. He presents a critique of totalitarianism, warning and helping his readers to recognize tyranny in all its forms.

It is a dystopia, a future where the world is divided into three blocks: Oceania, Eurasia, Estasia. The regimented world of Oceania is ruled by the Party, which is led by a figure called Big Brother. To control people, he invented the 'Newspeak' which is a new language with a limited number of words. Free thought, sex, and any expression of individuality are forbidden, but the protagonist, Winston Smith, illegally buys a diary in which he begins to write his thoughts and memories addressing them to the future generations.

He works at the Ministry of Truth, where they rewrite history and its records to suit the momentary needs in order to make people believe whatever they want to.

He starts an illegal affair with Julia. They are both to be summoned by O'Brien who tells them that he too is a member of the powerful Inner Party and works against it as a member of the Brotherhood led by Emmanuel Goldstein.

He also gives them a manifesto of the Brotherhood.

Once home, they start reading it and some soldiers break in and arrest them. Winston is taken to the Ministry of Love, where he finds out O'Brien to be a party spy.

For months, O'Brien tortures and brainwashes him who struggles to resist him.

In the end he is sent to the room 101, the final destination. Here Winston is forced to confront his worst fear: rats on his head ready to eat his face.

On a political side, Orwell built an anti-utopian novel set in a squalid and grotesque London. Anti-utopias show the world a possible future based on the negative aspects already present. He portrays a frightening picture where the human kind is under constant control of Big Brother. There is no privacy because there are monitors (*telescreens*) watching every step people take. This is obviously a dictatorship where the Party has absolute control of the mass-media, communication and propaganda. Language, history and even thought are controlled in the interest of the state of things through the introduction of Newspeak.

Winston is the last man who believes in human values in a totalitarian age: his name has a symbolic value. Smith is one of the most famous surnames in England, widely popular, while Winston evokes Churchill's patriotic appeal and commitment during Second World War for 'blood, sweat and tears'.

2.11 Aldous Huxley

Aldous Leonard Huxley was born on 26th July 1894. His father was a schoolmaster at the time, but shortly after he joined a publishing company. His grandfather was Thomas Henry Huxley, the illustrious biologist who had been an important advocate of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. His mother, Judith, founded a girl's school, also had distinguished ancestry, as she was a grand-niece of the prominent Victorian critic and poet Matthew Arnold.

He was able to live up to the expectations raised by belonging to such a family. While studying at Eton, he had to face some sad and difficult occurrences in this early period: the death of his blindness caused by the onset of an eye disease, an irritation of the cornea from which he would have suffered all his life. In August 1914, his brother Trevenan committed suicide at the age of 24, hanging himself as a result of a personal crisis.

Brave New World, the most popular of Huxley's books, was published when its author was 37 years old and it represents the culmination of the first phase of Huxley's career as a writer. It is the most disturbing of his novels. His next novels all give the impression of being the work of a man who knows exactly where he stands on issues such as pacifism, the value of individual life, the need to expand our awareness and who wants to pass all these convictions to his readers.

He felt able to confront the serious question of human life, and not only analyze alternative positions but to assert the validity of his own chosen positions. What is most constant in Huxley's opinions and habits set in this context: he is convinced that inborn characteristics determine intelligence, character and lifestyle. He writes in an essay 'The Outlook for American Culture, some reflections in a Machine

Age' that what it is really deplorable in the American Way of Life is how it encourages large number of people 'not want to be cultured' nor 'to be interested in the higher life'.

'For these people existence on the lower, animal levels is perfectly satisfactory. Given food, drink, the company of their fellows, sexual enjoyment, and plenty of noisy distractions from without, they are happy'¹⁷.

His attack focuses on standardization, both mechanical and, as a result, cultural: like many other intellectuals of the period, he reacted with genuine horror and disgust at the products of the nascent mass culture industry.

2.12 Brave New World, 1932

Brave New World is clearly an anti-utopia, it is rather radical. He imagines a system that works and will not fail to deliver goods, but he is willing to concede this possibility because he wants to demonstrate that the whole principle of utopia as goal needs to be rejected.

Brave New World is the fictional extension of Huxley's earlier views on the nature of American culture, it adopts a a more drastic solution to the problem of the ranks of industrial workers who were fighting against bourgeoisie as consumers of cultural products.

Huxley brought to the attention of large numbers of people on genetic engineering.

The inhabitants of an efficient Utopia would indeed be happy, but (and this is Huxley's objection), for the very same reason they would no longer be human. The trouble is that it does not allow you to be unhappy, because only human beings who experience sadness and misery can understand the whole notion of utopia and have a powerful appeal.

In Brave new World, people achieve happiness by reducing the range of experience at their own disposal, '*people are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can't get*'.¹⁸

In the early part of the century it was widely assumed among thinking people that some sort of elite would have to take charge of directing society, Huxley's response is to reject the framework as a whole: he is not interested in showing that one kind of utopian aspiration is better than another or that any given utopia cannot work. He wanted to raise doubts about the desirability of all such supposedly final solutions.

¹⁷ Huxley A., *The Outlook for American Culture, Some Reflections in a Machine Age*, USA, 1927

¹⁸ Benison J., *Introduction on Brave New World*, Italia, Black Cat Edition, 2014

Brave New World had been banned from various countries because it deals with drug addiction, suicide and acceptance of promiscuous sex. The novel was first banned in Ireland in 1932 for anti-religion, anti-family and blasphemous content. Australia quickly followed by censoring the book in the same year.

2.13 Lois Lowry, *The Giver* (1993)

Another novel that in recent times found some kind of censure is ‘*The Giver*’ published in 1993 by Lois Lowry. This novel was seen as controversial by some for its violent themes, sexual content and depiction of infanticide and euthanasia.

Lois Lowry was born March 20, 1937, in Honolulu, Hawaii. She stated that her books vary in content, though reading them it seems the author focuses on the same topic which is, in Lowry’s words, “*the importance of human connection.*” Like her other books, *The Giver* shows changes in characters’ lives, describing the different phases of growing up.

Jonas is a teenager who lives in a perfect world. In his community there are no wars, social inequities or pain. Everything that can cause pain or disturb has been abolished, including sexual impulses, seasons and colors. Rules they have to respect are strict, but all the members of the Community conform to the government’s control system where there’s no space for individual choices.

Each familiar unit is formed by a man and a woman to which they assign two kids: a boy and a girl. The day of the ceremony arrives and Jonas is assembled with his classmates in order of birth. All of the Community is present, and the Chief Elder presides. Jonas is stunned when his turn is passed by. The Chief Elder then explains that Jonas has been selected as the next Receiver of Memory. He is going to be trained by the current one, who sits among the Elders.

Given the high status the Receiver has, he can almost do anything because he stands outside the rule created. Jonas grows apart even from his friends, because he needs to keep the training secret (telling lies is not allowed inside their society).

Once he begins it, Jonas's training makes clear his uniqueness, for the Receiver of Memory is just that—a person who bears the burden of the memories from all of history. Jonas soon reveals to be unique because he’s able to keep inside him the memories the Receiver gives him. From this moment, Jonas will be asked to call him ‘the Giver’ since this is what they are doing. These memories are extremely important since the ordinary person in the community knows nothing about the past and its perils. The Receiver is the only one who has free access to the books and also memories of the past and can advise the Council of Elders on how to proceed.

Jonas' father is concerned about an infant and brings him home at night. The baby's name will be Gabriel, if he grows strong enough to be assigned to a family. Jonas becomes attached to him, maybe because he has pale eyes just like him, but especially when he finds out that Gabriel can receive memories. If Gabriel doesn't increase in strength, he will be released from the Community — in common speech, taken Elsewhere.

This happened to various people, among them there are elderly people, chronic rule breakers. The Giver educates him by showing his father doing his job: as two identical individuals cannot be allowed in the community, Jonas's father releases the smaller of identical twin newborns by injecting the baby with poison before putting its dead body in a trash can.

There is no elsewhere, those who have been said to have been *released* have been killed.

Both the Giver and Jonas agree that time has come to change how things are going: the only way to do so is that Jonas has to leave the Community at which time the memories he has been given will flood back into the people.

The Giver advises a plot in which Jonas will escape beyond the boundaries of the Communities. The Giver will make it appear as if Jonas drowned in the river so that the search for him will be limited. Their plan falls into pieces when Jonas learns that Gabriel will be released the following morning and he understands he has no choice but to escape with Gab.

Their escape is fraught with danger, and the two are near death from cold and starvation when they reach the border of what Jonas believes must be Elsewhere, the two are near death from cold and starvation. Using his ability to "see beyond", he finds a sled waiting for him at the top of a snowy hill. He and Gabriel ride the sled down towards a house filled with coloured lights and warmth and love and a Christmas tree, and for the first time he hears something he believes must be music. The ending is ambiguous, with Jonas depicted as experiencing symptoms of hypothermia.

2.14 Themes of The Giver

One of the most important themes in *The Giver* is how significant it is memory for human life. Lowry was inspired to write *The Giver* after a visit to her aging father, who had lost most of his long-term memory.¹⁹

The main themes inside the novel are:

1. **Individuality:** Jonas lives in a Community founded on the whole ideology of sameness, there's no difference, there's no uniqueness. To achieve it, individualism is encouraged. No

¹⁹ Sprow, Victoria. "The Giver Themes: The Individual vs. Society." LitCharts. LitCharts LLC, 22 Jul 2013. Ven. 21 Febbraio 2022.

one breaks the rules, everything and everyone are disciplined till the littlest detail. It is a society that denies also any sexual impulse, it eliminates any kind of human connection driven by feelings. Rationality is the only way to live fully.

2. **Freedom:** no one is allowed to make choices. Any additional change to the society needs to pass through a series of procedural processes. There's no right or wrong, because each individual gave up their own free will t never experience the consequences coming from committing a mistake. In doing so, they will never be able to feel the joy that comes from making the right choice. Having a choice means be happy even if it costs sacrifice something along the way or suffer to achieve it.
3. **Emotions:** as noted before rationalism is the basis on which the society has been constructed. Jonas leads the reader to his wonder of how much he missed out: colors, playful moments with his friends, the pain by falling from his bike...etc. In this society birth mothers are not allowed to nourish their children and watch them grow or even spend some time with them: children are then divided into different familiar units. Sex is forbidden and sexual urges are tamed by medical tools that they take every day and suppresses impulses. Every step of the way needs to have a rational and practical purpose.

3. Holly Black, The Folk of the Air series

3.1 A general description on the author and her works

Holly Black grew up in Jersey. Nowadays, she lives in New England with her husband, son and cats. From an early age she loved reading and writing. Her first book, *Tithe: a modern faerie tale*, was published in 2002.

She, then, published a companion book, *Valiant* (2005) which was the recipient of a Nebula Award and a sequel “*Ironside*” (2007), which spent 5 weeks on the New York Times Bestseller list.

Holly Black collaborated with her long-time friend, Tony di Terlizzi, to create the bestselling *Spiderwick Chronicles*. The first two books, *The Field Guide* and *The Seeing Stone* were released together in 2003, *The Ironwood Tree* (2004), and *The Wrath of Mulgarath* (2004) following in rapid succession.

All these books have been translated into 32 languages. There are three additional chapter books in the *Beyond the Spiderwick Chronicles Series*, *The Nixie’s Song* (2007), *A Giant Problem* (2008), and *The Wyoming King* (2009).

In 2013-2014, she also collaborated on a five-book middle grade fantasy series: *Magisterium* with her friend and fellow author Cassandra Clare. The series includes *The Iron Trial* (2014), *The Copper Gauntlet* (2015), *The Bronze Key* (2016), *The Silver Mask* (2017) and *The Golden Tower* (2018).

In 2018, *The Cruel Prince* debuted on the New York Times Best Seller list and remained on the list for 4 weeks. The second book *The Wicked King* (2019) debuted at #1 on the New York Best Seller list. The third book, *The Queen of Nothing* (2019) finished out the series.

*“The thing that intrigues me about Jude is that I love when people have one foot in two worlds. I think that’s a really interesting problem ... How do you choose when you’re part and parcel of two things? When you’re neither fish nor fowl nor good red herring.”*²⁰

The author proceeds into describing once more how the tragic of those past events have an echo on all their lives (Taryn, Jude and Vivianne)

“She’s so powerless, she’s been raised by a man who is deeply concerned with power, and who is willing to make some pretty brutal calculations, and when she has an opportunity for power she goes

²⁰ Holly Black stated in an interview with Books For Keeps.

for it ...” Her analysis gives a psychological perspective to the father and daughter relationship Jude and Madoc developed throughout the years.

Holly Black is an activist for Black Lives Matter and for gender equality together with her husband and their child Sebastian.

The Folk of the Air series is a YA fantasy trilogy that concentrates on the life of Jude Duarte and her trials of existing as a human in the High Court of Faerie. Jade with her twin Taryn assist to their parents’ murder by Madoc, they are then forced to live in the Kingdom of Elfhome with him: the fey murderer of their mother and father.

I would like to concentrate my attention on the three books to give a better insight of what really happened. The author created a net of plots and subplots only a summary on each of these books might get the idea of the series of events which lead to Jude being the High Queen of Elfhome.

The Cruel Prince²¹ starts off with Jude’s parents brutal murder by Madoc, when Taryn and she were just seven years old. They are taken to Elfhome to live with him since they are his responsibility given the fact that they are his wife’s children. In Elfhome, they are raised among the gentry by him and his wife Oriana alongside Oriana's son Oak. Jude aspires to be a knight in order to become a permanent member of the Court, but Madoc forbids her. Cardan Greenbriar, the youngest son of King Eldred, despises Jude and often bullies her at school along with his friends Nicasia, Locke, and Valerian. Jude really wants to take part to that tournament, therefore, she goes against his father will and take part as a participant against all those High Fae. Among them there are her bullies as well.

Prince Dain is the High King’s successor, since Eldred is going to abdicate in his favor he knows to have the throne in his hands.

Vivi wants Jude and Taryn to live in the human world with her girlfriend Heather, but Jude has grown too used to Faerie.

Cardan’s older brother, Dain, offers Jude the chance to be his spy in exchange for immunity to any glamour except his. Jude accepts. On her first mission to Prince Balekin’s home Hollow Hall, she discovers a letter from Orlagh, the Queen of the Undersea and Nicasia’s mother, implying that Balekin will poison Dain with blusher mushroom. She also sees Balekin beat Cardan in a swordfight and lash him with his belt for not killing a human servant.

²¹ Holly Black, *The Cruel Prince*, London, Hot Key Books edition, 2020

Cardan is the Cruel Prince the first book owes the title from. Cardan is the youngest son of Eldred, The High King of Elfhome.

He endures some ill treatments from his brothers because of a prophecy that he was the one to destroy the crown, to be the ultimate reason to the fall of their High Court as they all know it. For this reason, he does not care about politics, his family's and court's gossip or conspiracies.

Prince Dain and Prince Balekin went to debilitate Cardan's childhood which was by large part a lonely one: no one not even his mother cared about his well-being.

For this reason, he has no interest in politics and in his family's conspiracies as well.

Jude meets the other members of the Court of Shadows: the Bomb, the Roach, and the Ghost. She begins practicing mithridatism, which is to take a small dose of poison every day in order to get used to it and never fear to be poisoned and killed in that way.

Valerian eventually discovers Jude is resistant to glamours and tries to kill her, but she stabs him. Locke invites her to a party at his house and gives her a dress that belonged to his mother Liriope. The next day, she discovers a golden acorn in the pocket of a dress Locke gave her that tells her about Liriope's death by blusher mushroom. This clue causes her to reconsider Queen Orlagh's letter, which she decides was merely indicating the location of particular mushrooms.

Dain (the same prince who put a geas on her) found out that she stabbed Valerian and is angry at her for acting recklessly. He forces her to stab her hand. That night, Valerian tries to kill her in her bedroom, but she ends up killing him. Soon afterwards, she and the Ghost kill a messenger, who turns out to be one of Madoc's spies in disguise.

Before the coronation, Madoc gives Jude a sword forged by her biological father: Justin Duarte who spent some years in Elfhome to practice and learn how to forge swords.

At the coronation, Balekin and Madoc stage a coup which kills the entire royal family except for Cardan. Jude and Cardan escape to the Court of Shadows headquarters, where she holds him captive. Cardan tells her, the Roach, and the Ghost that Dain killed a child he had with Eldred's consort. He did so because of a prophecy saying if the child lives he would never be king.

Back home, Jude finds out that Locke has been dating her and Taryn at the same time and challenges Taryn to a duel. Vivi glamours them to stop, but the glamour does not work on Jude due to the geas.

Madoc lectures Jude and tells her she can have anything she wants in exchange for Cardan. He also mentions a banquet held by Balekin.

Jude comes to the realization that Oak is Dain and Liriope's child and that Madoc wants to rule through him. She later interrogates Cardan and makes a plan to crown Oak while Cardan swears himself to her for a year and a day.

On the day of the banquet, Jude and Madoc duel over the crown. Jude manages to win by poisoning Madoc's wine. However, it turns out that Jude has Oak crowning Cardan so he can be her puppet king. The vow of obedience was a strategic move to get him under her control using the trust he had in her.

The Folk of the Air series presents a lot of common YA tropes. This trilogy deals with abusive relationships and the whole idea behind how ends justify the means.

Jude's character goes under a big development and deep growth; from a stubborn human and common little girl to a skilled and masterful swordsman, spymaster and for almost a year she will find herself to be the only and true ruler.

While Jude decides to fight in order to fit in, Taryn on the other hand chooses another path which is to marry and to fall in love to someone in order to be no different from faeries.

Taryn to gain Locke's love looks her twin sister flirting with him as a sick and toxic proof of how much Taryn loves him and is sure of her own feelings for him.

Jude Duarte is no killer, even though she kills Valerian and a Madoc's spy in the first book. So, a doc was absolutely wrong about her. Nobody saw in her that anger for revenge, and when they noticed it was too late.

That pain connects both Cardan and Jude; this mistreatment turns out to be a malicious cycle for these two.

Cardan and Jude experienced a mirror like abuse: their relationship is built on animosity. Cardan's anger is due to Madoc's affection to Jude, whereas Jude envies him because of his freedom.

Their broken nature allows them to connect to one another other so much and therefore understand deeply each other.

They commit mistakes, this is what makes the audience relate to their past and consequently to their morally grey actions. It is the adults who usually put under pressure the main protagonists that constant controlling to maintain certain expectations.

In this series it is young people who put on themselves all these expectations, Jude and Cardan do it throughout the whole series.

The second book of the trilogy, **The Wicked King**²², takes place five months after the Cruel Prince ended. Jude is worried her time to control Cardan is going to end sooner than she thought. For this reason, she tries to find a way to prolongate that period, also because she is afraid he might hurt her even if she commanded him not to through the vow of obedience she made him agree to. He trusted her, but now their animosity rises again since he never wanted to be King and she tricked him into the throne only to protect her little brother Oak.

Balekin sends a letter to Cardan, but Jude goes in Cardan's place but he won't tell her anything, so Jude takes Vulciber (a prison guard) since he is loyal to Balekin and she interrogates him only to find out that Queen Orlagh of the Undersea is collaborating with Balekin to form an alliance against the High King Cardan.

A mysterious event happens, someone tries to assassinate Cardan in his chambers: Jude (the High King' seneschal) is informed, woken up in the night. She later discovers it was Nicasia who found another woman together with Cardan in his bed and out of jealousy she was allegedly trying to kill the other woman.

*“You don't understand. She wants us to be married. She wants me to be queen.”*²³

If Cardan refuses then Orlagh will flood the kingdom since Elfhame is surrounded by water.

During the Council's meeting, Jude is summoned and they tell her they want to advise Cardan as they're his council and he is refusing to participate. However, they do not listen to Jude's warnings about Orlagh and her plans to take over Elfhame if her wishes are not met.

Jude and Madoc have a meeting before the second meeting of the council. Her father tries to make Jude betray Cardan because Queen Orlagh is way more powerful. Madoc's intention is not to allow such alliance between the Undersea and Elfhame to happen, at least not through this poor marriage.

²² Black Holly, *The Wicked King*, London, Hot Key Books edition, 2019.

²³ *Ibid.*, p.54

Once she is attacked on the way home, she goes to Cardan and commands him not to be alone ever that night to protect him from menaces.

Madoc listens to this exchange and understands how Jude got her position next to the High King, and her true power over Cardan.

After this, the Ghost and Vulciber betray her and while Taryn's wedding with Locke, she is hit on the head only to find herself in the Undersea. Nicasia reveals that Grimsen (the blacksmith) is working with them and they are planning to create a second crown that won't require one of Eldred's heirs to be crowned.

Jude pretends for a month to be glamourous, Balekin wants her to be a weapon from the inside given her closeness to Cardan, the High King. Towards the end of this novel, all is set in motions and violence gets in the pot creating a mix of emotions building up the cliffhanger.

Cardan gets poisoned, Balekin is the only one to have the antidote which he'll provide in exchange of the crown. Jude meets with Balekin and takes the poison without testing the antidote, but she tricks him: the poison was just water and then she spits out the antidote in a bottle for the Bomb to take it to Cardan.

The two fight in a duel, and Jude kills Balekin. Heading back to Cardan's chambers and talking to him she understands that Taryn impersonated her in order to let Madoc get on with his plan to create an army to move against them.

Jude is the exiled, mortal Queen of Faerie: married to Cardan in exchange for releasing him from his vow to her but betrayed not long after, sent to live with her siblings in the human world outside of the court. She's left reeling and embarrassed by her own foolishness, unsure of how to regain her throne, when opportunity arrives in the form of her desperate twin sister Taryn. As it turns out, Taryn finally had enough of her awful faerie husband Locke and murdered him, but she can't lie under glamour like Jude can so she begs her to intercede in secret.

Eager for the chance to slip back into faerie against the terms of her banishment, Jude agrees to help Taryn. However, when she returns to Elfhome it's clear that war is brewing between her father Madoc and Cardan, resting on uncertain alliances with Undersea and the other Courts. It doesn't take long for her to become caught up once again in the fight for succession, except this time, she's not just defending Cardan's throne. She's defending her own.

The ongoing conflict between Jude, Madoc, and Cardan, among a massive host of other allies and enemies, comes to a heady, dramatic conclusion in **The Queen of Nothing**.²⁴ This book also invokes the power of the throne in magical and metaphorical terms. Madoc has allied himself with the northern Courts while the coalition between Undersea and Cardan's kingdom remains tenuous. Moreover, as Jude notes after being kidnap-rescued by Madoc in place of Taryn: she's upset because it's her throne that her adoptive father is after, too, not just Cardan's.

Madoc's aim is to go to war against Elfhame, he is sure he'll win. He does not doubt for a second he might not have all the right cards this time, so when Jude Duarte, his High Queen, kills Cardan who had been turned into a giant snake (it turns out to be the only way to save him), Madoc's plans for victory go to waste.

In the end the whole trilogy leads to a sudden turning point: Madoc is out of the game and exiled to never set a foot into Elfhame ever again, while Jude and Cardan rule over their kingdom together as a couple.

Politics in the Folk of the air series are strictly connected to blood, heritage and also thirst for power which undeniably is the spark from whom all this story is carried into a great representation through political language. All these characters differ on their perspectives on power and how politics should or should not be. However, they do have their personal intentions and keep their stance in face of the political consequences of their choices.

Political language is a powerful means and it has a lot of elements who help obtaining the intended result.

²⁴ Holly Black, *The Queen of Nothing*, Hot Key Books edition, 2020

4. Main features of the language of politics

Authority, persuasion, power and the language is the essential part of it. It is through language that the orators lead the audience into believing and agreeing on what is their opinion on the topic. It is a relevant means language for political speeches. Whenever there is a politician talking to a crowd, it would come spontaneous to think they are talking without having prepared their speech before hand. However, there is a staff of professionalists whose main goal is to use the correct figures of speech and models of persuasion in order to obtain consensus and the audience's agreement.

In the field of the politics of language, some fields such as critical discourse studies concern themselves with language and power, specialising in examining how power differs amongs social through manifestations in language.

Language is the mean to achieve and exercise power. As Schaffer said language is vital to the process of transforming political will into social action, "in fact, any political action is prepared, accompanied, controlled and influenced by language."²⁵

In politics the use of language is for persuade during a debate in both the political sphere, that is among politicians, but also the public sphere, in the media, both mainstream and social media.

The definition of the art of persuasion is generally through the mass media, persuasion is achieved by a skilful communication and great use of techniques.

Communication is the currency of politics. How they express themselves determines who they are and whether they will succeed in their profession.

Aristotle is the famous Greek philosopher who wrote a lot about rethoric. He considered it to be a great part of human nature and communication. He defined it in great detail, he did not see it as something related to politics: Plato however saw rethoric to be about the manipulation of an audience by someone who was insincere in their motives.

This last concept is connected in a way with perceiving the nature of humans: either good or bad nature.

Aristotle analysed clearly how human nature is bad and good especially when it comes to politicians, or in his case to orators in general.

²⁵ Fabris Adriano, *Etica della comunicazione*, Carocci Editore, Roma, 2014

To better understand the whole situation, the example of politicians is necessary. Due to a spread belief, they are not to be trusted: their main goal is to find consensus and be able to always flatter their possible electorate. A politician has to be ready to act ruthlessly; lie, persuade and promise everything.

In order to do so, they have to make their possible electors believe they'll be able to satisfy their needs and demands. Politics are known as a department where people are called to be liars, it is a spontaneous and natural element in their behaviour.

This concept is a grotesque way to portray politics and their dynamics, because it starts from a more general assertion: the presupposition here is that, lies are always something inherent to the human species.

The essence (nature of someone) it is charged of values and it is judged to be either 'good' or 'evil' if it does or does not conform with those social values.

At the core of this idea we can detect a general presupposition: lying is something inherent to mankind. It is no surprise if all this finds a concrete realisation within the communicative ability of a politician.

Men lie due to their essence, because they are evil. However, this concept goes openly against another theory showing that mankind is inherently good and men are led to achieve good not only for their owns' sake but also for humanity as a whole. As a matter of fact, it is correct to say that mankind loves the truth and looks for it.

These two theories stand on two opposite rails, therefore it clashes into a no-solution generalisation: there is no possibility for collective and individual good to be in harmony.

The way we communicate, it all depends to how we think men and women nature is: are they good? Whenever they perpetrate strategies, are these for the common good? It all depends on how we consider human nature: on a *positive* or *negative* light. It does influence those strategies and communicative acts we'll see later in this thesis.

Some historical deepening: this concept went through a series of transformations due to the clash of Hebrew's and Catholic's mindset. When Christianity met with the Greek morale, a new necessity to establish a bridge between these two completely different views was born. They intended men's acts in relations to their nature in a distinct and almost opposite way.

For this reason, some tensions grew out of this "cultural melting pot", though it is to be said that there already were inside turmoils in the Greek world. Gorgia looked to the proper good and individual benefit. Socrate does not reject Aristotle's rhetoric: he wants to highlight those conditions which are

fundamental for a “good” rhetoric. A rhetoric standing side by side with the “*bad*” one: it is not an end in itself, but each communication act has to strive for the *good*.

To communicate is to pursue the *universal good*.

That is why, Socrates sustains his paradoxical thesis in Gorgia where “*It is better to suffer than commit injustice.*”²⁶ In his case, this paradox will be tragically true, because he was sentenced to death after a unfair judgement.

Even though Socrate’s position, Aristotle states that a speech is made up of three elements: the speaker, the audience and the speech itself.

The speaker uses the speech to manipulate the thoughts and feelings of the audience. Every speech, at its core, is an exercise of persuasion. *One of the most common features of this formal debating is that it is the skills of speaking persuasively that are far more important than a personally held belief in the topic under debate.*

For instance, the speaker might be seeking to persuade the audience to do something, they might want to persuade the audience that something is true.

Aristotle thought that speakers persuade audiences using three different models of appeal, based on the three elements: speaker, audience, speech.

1. *Ethos* persuades by the appeal of the speaker’s personality or character.
2. *Logos* is the appeal to reason through the quality of the argument in the speech.
3. *Pathos* appeals the audience’s emotions.

The first kind depends on the personal character of the speaker; the second on putting the audience into a certain frames of mind; the third on the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself.

Persuasion is achieved by the speaker’ personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think them credible. This kind of persuasion, like the others, should be achieved by what the speaker says, not by what people think of their character and persona they created around themselves.

²⁶ Gorgias is a Socratic dialogue written by Plato around 380 BC. The dialogue depicts a conversation between Socrates and a small group of sophists at a dinner gathering. Socrates debates with the sophist seeking the true definition of rhetoric.

It is not true that their personal goodness is worth nothing to their own power of persuasion, on the contrary, it is one of the most effective means of persuasion the speaker possesses.

Secondly, persuasion may come through the hearers (audience) if the speech stirs their emotions. Our judgement differs whether we are pleased from when we are pained and hostile.

Thirdly, persuasion is effected through the speech itself when we have proved a truth or an apparent one by persuasive arguments suitable to the case.

Persuasion depends on being credible not on being true to oneself; the only truth is the one the audience needs. In this model, to communicate means to conform to the interlocutor's necessities, a good and stable communication is the one who ends to lead to a great understanding and to engage who is interested. It means that sharing from both sides that particular content even if from different perspectives, mostly to preserve the listeners' rights not only the speaker's.

4.1 The art of persuasion

It seemed useful for the purpose of this thesis to dig into persuasion since most of the interactions are political oriented. This YA series is rich in character who need to deal with power and its consequences on their lives. Some of them want it, others flee from it. Through speeches they try to keep order or to achieve some kind of agreement. It comes therefore as no surprise this brief introduction on persuasion and its models since it allows us to get a better analysis on the series and its dynamic.

The purpose of public speeches ranges from the simple transmission of information to persuading people to act. Subtlety of language is very important when you are trying to persuade someone to adopt your way of thinking. Orators try to effect the attitudes and beliefs of their audience by imaginative and emotional suggestions. The topics of speeches vary according situations but the most famous speeches relate to times of crisis. Here are the techniques of persuasion commonly employed in speeches:

1. list of three
2. repetition
3. alliteration
4. examples based on personal experience
5. use of quotations and statistics
6. use of rhetorical questions
7. strong statements

8. strong ending

In order to persuade, the speaker has to appeal to the audience's:

1. emotions (by using compassion, fear and sympathy)
2. sense/intelligence (by using logic, facts, statistics)
3. greed/ambition (by using promises)
4. instincts (by appealing to nationality, humanity, prejudices)

4.1.2 Evaluation

In order to persuade the targeted audience, the speaker resorts evaluative language. It is the one which expresses point of view, the orator's opinions and attitudes. Evaluation is the indicator of something to be thought by the speaker to be either good or bad.

As stated before, the persuader uses evaluative elements to convince the audience his or her opinions are good, whereas the alternatives are always bad. Evaluative language is the basis of persuasion in politics. It does happen that to prove their ideas to be the right ones, they do not show the counterparts' evidences which is a way to get the most of the consensus prioritising their position.

It is interesting to note that Darwin thought humans to be inherently evaluating animals, probably truth to be told all animals are. An useful ability which makes them able to survive is to recognise and differentiate between something to be good or bad. It is an instinct that makes a difference between life and death not only in the animal world, but also within human communication. The inner ability to distinguish these two factors in some contexts does make a huge difference in someone's life (for example during a trial). In a less hyperbolic example, to understand when someone is telling the truth allows to create a better relationship among the two parts and trust.

Evaluation can be expressed overtly or covertly. The second of these, covert or implicit evaluation, is so called because the speaker or the writer provides no linguistic clues, but exploits the audience's ability to recognise a good or a bad thing when they see it. Implicit evaluation depends upon expecting one's audience to share with you similar moral and socio-political values such as: gender equality, the importance of democracy and patriotic pride.

Overt or explicit evaluation can be expressed through grammatical, textual or lexical means as I'll analyse throughout the next paragraphs.

4.1.3 Grammatical evaluation

Comparatives are an obvious indication of evaluation. The system of transitivity is the grammatical structuring which tells us ‘who does what to whom (and how)’: it tells us who is the doer of an action and who the ‘done to’ of an action or event. This use of language it allows the speaker to put some degree of responsibility by placing the participants and the events in a particular order.

It might be useful to consider these examples to better understand these nuances:

1. Caroline argued with Kate
2. Kate argued with Caroline
3. Kate and Caroline argued

In the first Caroline seems to be responsible, in the second Kate is the doer of the action and in the third they are co-doers and co-responsible.

4.1.4 Textual evaluation

Evaluation can be expressed by the particular positioning and ordering of blocks of language within a text.

Speakers often open their speech with a strong and clear evaluative statement to attract the audience’s attention and often try to end their speech with a rhetorical finale, consisting of a particular emphatic and sometimes quite poetic summation of their evaluative argument.

This means that the opening and the closing of a speech are the most interesting parts for an evaluative analysis.

4.1.5 Lexical evaluation

The most obvious signs of evaluation are contained in the lexis, that is, the words and phrases the speaker uses. If we divide all the words in the language into two types:

- Grammar words: determiners (e.g the, a, one, some), linkers (e.g and, because, since) and prepositions (e.g in, at, from, by, across)
- Content words: nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs

4.1.6 Evaluation and modality

Modality refers to the grammatical systems which speakers can use to express their degree of commitment to their belief that something did or did not happen (degree of past certainty); will or will not happen (degree of future probability); should or should not do something (degree of necessity),

Or to their belief that: someone did or did not do something (certainty); is able or unable to do something (ability); is willing or unwilling to do something (willingness or ‘volition’); should or should not do something (necessity or moral responsibility).

4.1.7 Language choice and evaluation

There are many ways to say the same thing, speakers as well as writers must practice and choose one among these many potential manners. The choice they make it does tell us a great deal about what they think about a topic and how they evaluate it. Finally it is easy to understand what their opinions and motifs are.

Some words share the same meaning (their denotational meaning), but they differ in what we call their connotational meaning. For instance a seller is likely to label their products as ‘vintage’ and ‘antique’, but very unlikely to use ‘second-hand’ or ‘used’.

The denotation of a word is the definition we might find in a dictionary, the connotations, however, are the associations that item has for us, especially the evaluative ones. Orators, writers and speakers often make a choice of which word or expressions to describe a person, an event, an entity.

4.1.8 Ways of persuading

A fundamental concept in sociolinguistics and communication theory is that of *face* and *face work*.

Face is the defined image we all project on the outside, and ‘facework’ is the behaviour we employ to project that image.

For example, Jude Duarte once she rises to her role as seneschal and then Queen of Elfhame, there is no other choice but to put aside her personal life and difficulties and wear a mask in order to project a stronger appearance.

“I’m going to have to look really good,” I say.

At that she gives me an actual smile. “I don’t understand how you do it,” she says. “I don’t understand how you can be so calm.”²⁷

The concepts of ‘face’ and ‘facework’ has much in common with Aristotle’s notion of *ethos*²⁸.

Politicians, orators in general, have two separate kinds of face:

1. *Competence face* is one’s image as well informed, an expert, in control and authoritative.

²⁷ Black H., *The Queen of Nothing*, Hot Key Books, London, 2020, p. 225. After Cardan’s transformation into a snake, Jude is now suddenly alone to rule and afraid of her next move. Even tough, she does not know what to do, she needs to put on a brave face and act like she owns it.

²⁸ Ethos according to Aristotle is to persuade through the orator’s character and personality, cit. p. 46

2. *Affective face*, which is one's image as likeable, good humoured and normal, face that seems saying 'one of us'.

Another distinction similar to that between persuasion by appeal to reason and persuasion by appeal to emotions is between **ideational** persuasion in which a speaker projects primarily their competence face; **interpersonal** persuasion in which the speaker projects primarily their affective face.

In the first the author attempts to persuade an audience of the veracity, logic and effectiveness of their actions.

In the second case, an author tries to convince the audience to be worthy of their attention and respect. He persuades them that they are lacking some quality or service the speaker can provide.

Another strategy to interpersonal persuasion is to flatter one's audience. Affective persuasion is much more concerned with encouraging one's own party to keep up the good fight and to support their leader.

There are five models of persuasion:

- Authority
- Comparison and contrast
- Problem and solution
- Hypothesis, evidence, explanation
- Association

- **Authority**

These models are relevant and it is necessary to talk about it because in the series there are moments where the characters use this model. It is authority and power the main characters in these three books. Each character is connected in some way to these two key elements.

The Folk of the air series is revolved around a throne, an High King about to abdicate in favour of one of his sons. A son who winds up killing almost his whole family to sit on the throne as he thinks he is the one supposed to rule.

Conspiracies and plots but also betrayals happen on a daily basis in Elfhame where being authoritative means to have power over others. People need to swear their fidelity vows to the Blood Crown which cannot be broken by anyone, but the High King.

High King Eldred is old and wants to retire, however his choice is the starting point for other evil forces to arise. Being authoritative was useful only when Eldred had a crown upon his head. Prince Dain shows Jude that being authoritative allows him to hurt her whenever he wanted given the geas he put on her.

Being powerful and having some kind of authority is the only means these character know to show off their positions, social status, social connections, financial stability and also heritage.

Authority has a long story behind its back, but I would like to pose a brief focus on its difference and similarities (if there are any) to power with their dynamics.

Authority has been defined and represented as an established power; it is of interest to know a little bit more about his inner significance.

In the traditional western society, the notion of authority from the Romans till today, is one of the most crucial terms in political theory. It is strictly connected when applied to the notion of power. While it is stayed almost the same its connection to power, the term authority has been reinterpreted in various ways and applied with different meanings. At times it was denied, explicitly or not, that there is still a problem to identify a proper definition of authority and its relationship with the word power. It was denied by all those supporters who agreed these two terms, power and authority, to be synonyms. The general tendency is to distinguish between the two as the authority is to be considered a subspecies of power, or less often to be one of the origins of power.

One of the first way authority manifested itself within bureaucracy and organisations structures. This significance was also used to analyse the political system. The definition was: an institutionalised and stable relationship of power where the underlings obey without condition.²⁹

Authority in this definition goes openly against to the definition of power founded on persuasion. On one hand, through persuasion there are assertions and arguments presented to favor a certain behavior, on the other hand (authority), the message is transmitted containing the indications to a certain attitude without asserting arguments on its behalf.

One obvious example of this kind is religion; religious services tend to use appeals to religious writing, known as sacred scriptures (Note that they use scriptures to underline the importance of the concept of language) as a **high authority**.

Within the persuasive relationship, the receiver accepts the orator's idea and opinions because there is evidence on the matter; on the contrary, authority leads to a blinded acceptance of what the speaker thinks and suggests to be good. Academic and scientific writing is largely based on appeals to **authority**. It is common to come across references to what previous authors have said. It is typical for academic writing to constantly back up arguments with claims of the sort "I'm not the only person to think this".

²⁹ Bobbio N., Matteucci N., Pasquino G., *Dizionario di Politica*, Torino, UTET, 1983

To summarise authority is a steady power, continuous in time, to whom individuals comply to some extent, comply unconditionally. It is one of the most popular social phenomena a social scientist can come across. The most persistent and relevant power relationships are all on some level connected to the authority: parents with their children, a teacher with their students in a class, the power of an entrepreneur over his employees, a government with its civilians.

In the end, the basic structure of any kind of organisation is built on authority: from concentration camps to a cultural association, as well as the structure of a state government, they are all formed on authoritative relations. No wonder if the whole concept was used throughout time to define the State or the political society within.³⁰

As we have seen before, the persuader is the person responsible for the persuasive message, appeals to some sort of higher authority to convey and strengthen their message. Authority and power go hand in hand, but as we stated, they are two completely different concepts in their meaning but also social applications.

▪ **Comparison and contrast: us against them**

In this model of persuasion, the persuader invites us to compare and contrast an argument, policy and product. It is relevant because in the Folk of the air series, we do have oppositions of this kind: wherever connections of power lay, there we find two or more forces which fight to take it. In the Folk of the air series, Madoc is in sharp opposition both to Cardan's and Jude's way they keep their power: mostly because he was the one who wanted to gain that power not them.

Evaluation plays a role when this model is used since there is usually the assumption or implication that one is better than the others.

Highlighting the contrast between two entities, notions, states, and so on is one of the most useful and frequent ways of furthering a political or sociological argument.

Such contrast can come in various forms:

- a. Geographical
- b. Historical
- c. Conceptual
- d. Political

³⁰ Stoppino, M., *Potere e teoria politica*. Italia, Giuffrè editore, 2001

We should note that these sorts of contrast are often evaluative: a choice is proposed between something positive and something negative (less positive). As a ruler whenever they want something they evaluate their speeches to make the audience agree and in most of the cases even changing their own opinions and behaviours.

- **Problem- solution: the simple problem-solution model**

In this form of persuasion, the orator first outlines a supposed problem and suggests that he or she has the solution to that said problem.

In its most synthetic form, as in the slogans, the problem is more or less implicit in the solution offered by the slogans themselves.

In more extended cases , the problem is usually given first and then the author goes on to offer us his or her solution. This solution is usually accompanied by a positive evaluation.

In as tell more sophisticated version of the problem-solution persuasion, the author outlines the problem then offers a preliminary solution, which then she or he goes on to reject evaluating it as wrong or inadequate.

- **Hypothesis—evidence— explanation model**

In this model speaker or writer introduces his or her principle argument in term of hypothesis. Then the following sections are evidences to support that said hypothesis. This last section in often followed by one or more explanations, which propose to clarify why the original argument or hypothesis should be the case. This model does seem to be rational, and yet listeners need to be cautious because the orators attempting to corroborate their own hypothesis are not always likely to include any counter-examples or inconvenient evidence in their speech.

- **Association**

Persuasion by association is largely conducted through resources other than language. Music, images, colours, clothes, logos are all used in the hope of creating a favourable association in our mind about a person, a party or policy. There has been a huge increase in the use of associative techniques in political propaganda. In this films, it is called ‘image politics’.

4.1.9 Modality: necessity and moral obligation

That something needs to be done and someone should be doing it; there might be future predictions.

A high proportion of opinion pieces look to the future, first outlining negative situations in the present predicting possible future events and suggesting a particular course of action.

One useful way of studying transitivity and agency is to look at the use of pronouns, they change according to whether a participant is a doer or not.

- **DOER**
- **DONE TO**
- **POSSESSOR**

Rhetorical devices and figures of speech that help make a political speech memorial and exciting to an audience:

- a. **Binomials, bicolons, tricolons**
- b. **Contrasting-pairs**
- c. **Oxymorons**
- d. **Metaphors**
- e. **Similes**
- f. **Metonymy**
- g. **Chiasmus**

a. **Binomials, bicolons and tricolons**

Binomials are semi fixed phrases, very common in language in general.

For example: *man and wife, salt and pepper, one and all*. They are also quite a common feature of political language: government and parliament, political and monetary.

Bicolons are expressions containing two parallel phrases thus tend to be more extended than binomials. For instance: *“they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”*

These semi fixed phrases are very common in the Bible.

Like bicolons, **tricolons** employ parallelism, it consists of three parallel items, the simplest kind of three part list or tricolon, it is the repetition of three words or phrases.

For example: *Maggie, Maggie, Maggie/out/out/out*³¹

Most tricolons consist of a set of three phrases, each one has a similar lexical or syntactic structure but accomodating, with a certain degree or variation.

³¹ Partington A., Taylor C., *The Language of Persuasion in Politics, an introduction*, UK, Routledge, 2018

TRUMP: (2016)

- Americans cars will travel the roads
- Americans planes will soar in the skies
- Americans ships will patrol the seas

Each phrase begins with the adjective American, followed by a mode of transport, followed by will and a verb of movement along or through or physical medium in the plural.

A good number of tricolons have a metrical pattern of crescendo, each part increasing on the last.

For instance, in literature it is presented in Mark Antony's famous appeal: "Friends, Roman, countrymen..."³²

Sometimes one finds longer parallel structures, a kind of elegant variation on the tricolon, which is called beyond the tree, since it is longer and less easy to find.

"first they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win." — Gandhi

b. The contrasting pair (antithesis)

Another common feature of political speeches is what Atkinson calls the contrastive pair, and what classical Greek and Roman writers on rhetoric called antithesis. Whereas the three-part list contains three parts which essentially complement each other, the contrastive pair contains two parts which are in some ways in opposition, but in other ways use repetition to make the overall effect. A good example of this is Neil Armstrong's words when he became the first person to set foot on the moon in 1969.

It is a structure containing two parts which are parallel in structure, but at the same time opposed in meaning.

Example: "one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind." They do have a similar structure but 'small' contrasts in meaning with 'giant', 'step' contrasts with 'leap', and 'for a man' with 'for mankind'.

³² Shakespeare W., *Giulio Cesare*, trad. Lombardo A. E testo originale a fronte, Milano, Edizione Universale Economica, 2013. It was written in 1599. It is the start of Mark Antony's monologue which uses subtle expressions to prove that Caesar is no longer the leader they need and deserve. The Julius Ceasar of William Shakespeare is largely a political work and it is extremely interesting in how friendships and relationships get poisoned by the thirst for power.

c. Oxymorons

Two apparently contradictory elements are combined in a single word/phrase or epigram: being cruel to be kind, deafening silence, noble savage.

The term 'oxymoron' is often used to make an argument by negatively evaluating some entry, by suggesting that the 2 component are incompatible.

An oxymoron is a paradoxical combination of words or expressions with opposite, that is more or less straightforwardly antonymic senses, like bitter-sweet, the sound of silence, and Eyes Wide Shut, the title of a Stanley Kubrick film. Typically, this semantic clash forces a metaphor-like adjustment of the interpretation of such constructions. Some oxymorons are word formations, usually compounds, while others are recurring or novel collocations, or even whole syntactic phrases or clauses.

- She is the only man around here.
- We chastise those whom we love.
- They seemed to be stuck in a love-hate relationship.

Although oxymorons contain contradictory elements, they are meaningful in a paradoxical way. The qualities that are interlaced in this kind of trope are ordinarily felt to **conflict**, and as a result oxymorons allow us to acknowledge the intricate character of the things they describe. Like metaphor oxymoron makes it possible for language constructions to accommodate experiences that are not denoted by the basic contents of words and the sense oppositions that they involve. All the same, the elements in an oxymoron share some more superordinate meaning aspects, and it is this more common quality that makes it possible to bring together opposing senses in order to create a complex figurative reading of some kind.

In addition, this kind of paradoxical connection of lexical senses may seem to exaggerate conflicting tendencies in the situations that they are used to represent appearing to be hyperbolic.

d. Metaphor

Metaphor is a figure of speech in which a name or quality is attributed to something to which it is not literally applicable. Metaphor is a basic part of the way we both see the world and explain it to others. For example we often talk of making an argument in terms of going on a journey: we take one step at a time, if we lose our way , *we go around in circles* etc.

Or we often talk of ideas or theories as buildings: *his arguments collapsed*.³³

It is important to underline the connection between the literal source meaning and the broadening of the understanding of a word that we find in a live metaphor. The most common explanation is the language users can see some similarity between the two elements, or between two things.

Two common sources of metaphor in politics are sport and war, both involve some physical aspect of some sort. Politicians and reporters as well use these kind of metaphors. For instance, an election usually between male is usually portrayed as a fight: games have a strong hold on these political metaphors.

To better explain the nature of metaphor, as a common ground we do agree that our intuitive ability is what language uses. This perceived similarity between the source meaning and the metaphorical interpretation makes it possible to use the same word or string of words while the difference between them makes it easy to distinguish the literal and the metaphorical meanings. Moreover, meanings are conveyed through languages which are connected with cultural and environmental circumstances: they do deal with their experiences both psychologically or cognitively.

A language is not static and closed, but quite the opposite. It changes through time, it changes because it is a living creature, it is dynamic. It is a prerequisite for languages to be flexible and to be open to additions as long as they do not interfere with its communicative capacity. Language needs to work well within those psychological processes and experiences of various kinds. The construction of novel figures of speech shows the human necessity to express thoughts and impressions that have no conventional verbal representations can make us invest words with new meanings. If a figure of speech is repeatedly used by members of a community, they do become a conventional part of it.

Metaphor is deeply embedded in the way we construct the world around us and the way that world is constructed for us by others. The key metaphors of politics involve concepts of enemies and opponents, winners and losers; they do not suggest that government could be achieved through discussion, co-operation, working together.³⁴

A certain quality supposed to belong to an entity (the source) is re-applied or transferred to another entity (the target) which is usually of a very different type from the source.

³³ Beard Adrian, *The Language of politics*, London, Routledge, 1999

³⁴ Alm-Arvius C., *Figures of Speech*, Studentlitteratur, 2003

Finally metaphors always express an evaluation of the target in terms of good or bad, which is why they are useful in persuasive argument. Part of what makes metaphors so powerful in persuading people is that this process of comparison is not fully conscious.

The power of metaphor and its danger is that the grounds are implicit, not stated openly. This has two consequences. First, different people can interpret the same metaphor in different ways. Second, it makes the supposed resemblance more difficult to challenge or deny.

e. Similes

They exploit the analogy of two deliberately very different things in the roles of agent and source while containing an explicit lexical sign of comparison (like/as). It might come as a surprise, but they are often used by orators or writers to persuade their targeted audience. There is usually an explanation right after of why the source and target are supposedly similar.

For example:

1. Austin is like a shark
2. The chancellor is like a mugger who grabs someone's money and then wants that person to thank him for provide the bus fare to get him home.

However, 'China is like India' would not be considered a simile since that they two are similar entities, in this case nations are being compared.

Often similes are used to allow the author to extend the analogy and develop the basis of the resemblance explaining why x is like y:

"Love has entered me like a disease, so stealthily I have not seen its approach nor heard its footsteps."

The distance between source (disease) and target (love) is intentionally dissonant and the author takes some time to connect the two.

Simile is a trope which, like metaphor, describes one thing by comparing it with another, suggesting similarities between them, although they are also clearly different. However, we distinguish similes from metaphors, because the former contain an *explicit* indication of the comparison, while it is merely *implicit* in a metaphor.

- ... Gary dancing like a polar bear with its paw in a splint. (The Times, 17 Feb 1995)

They all contain items that characterise a situation or an individual as similar to something else. However, there is no factual identity between the thing described by a simile. If we take this broad

view of what simile is, some examples do not seem clearly figurative. In addition, these examples show that the category of similes contains both cases which can easily be turned into metaphors by leaving out the similarity indicator and other constructions that have to be rephrased more extensively in order to become metaphorical.

But, bear-like, I must fight the course. ... (Shakespeare, Macbeth, Act five, Scene VII)

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?... (Shakespeare, Sonnet 18)

All comparisons between the denotata of verbal senses cannot be considered similes, however. In fact, comparison or the recognition of similarities as well as differences is a basic aspect of categorisation in general. Literal comparisons have a propositional or factual status, and it should be possible to say whether they are true or not.

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that the semantic affinity between metaphors and similes makes them shade into each other in some cases.

This means that they are both active at the same time in this construction.

f. Metonymy

Metonymy involves replacing the name of something with something that is connected to it, without being the whole thing. For example, the President of the United States, his government and advisors, are sometimes replaced by the much simpler term 'The White House', which is the presidential residence and administrative centre. Similarly, when an announcement is made by a member of the British royal family, it is often described as follows: 'Buckingham Palace today denied claims that the royal family is out of touch with the people.' The above announcement without use of metonymy would read '*The royal family today denied claims that they are out of touch with the people*' or '*The Queen today denied . . .*'

We can observe that such uses can be explained as descriptive shortcuts. In other words, a metonymic shift means that a word or complex expression that basically stands for one thing is also used about something else that the primary denotata³⁵ are regularly connected with in our experience. For

³⁵ The denotata of a specific use of a linguistic sign are the things out in the world that it stands for. This notion is clearly related to those of extension and reference. By an act of reference a language user can employ a referring expression

instance, the name of the playwright Shakespeare can also be used about his plays and sonnets, and the name of the citadel Kremlin in Moscow is regularly used to represent the government of the former Soviet Union or present-day Russia which had or has its offices inside it.

Similarly, an angry discussion is ‘a discussion in which the participants were angry’, and happy days means ‘days in which (certain) people were happy’.

- Being a great actor does not mean that you can direct Shakespeare.
- The Kremlin had no choice but to reconsider its policies.

Metonymy, then, involves replacing the name of something with something that is connected to it, without being the whole thing itself; and in doing so it affects the audience’s perception of and attitude to the original thing.

Here I would analyse in brief some other linguistic instruments useful to the purpose of political speeches. **Adjectives** are often used to characterise something in particular way (it does not matter if in a positive or negative perspective). They allow to enter a certain evaluation to the speech, and also the effect it has on the reader or listener.

Another one is **repetition** which emphasises particular ideas and opinions. Repetition is a means to persuade the audience to agree with them and also give a certain rhythm to the speech itself engaging the receiver to pay attention to it. The tone is also a key element for any orators to apply correctly and send the message intentionally to the audience and obtain their wanted result. For this reason, **sarcasm** is the use of mocking tone to convey contempt or even subvert the position of the opponent being subtle about without saying it openly.

g. Chiasmus

“Mankind must put an end to war or war will put an end to mankind.” A special form of contrasting pairs where the elements of the first part are switched around in the second. Chiasmus, as in the quotation from Macbeth below, can be considered a specific sort of parallelism. It means that words or expressions are repeated in the reverse order.

- “A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist see the opportunity in every difficulty.”

containing a specific sense to pick out one or several members within its extension. The term denotata is a near synonym of extension, but can be more loosely applied to cover things in the world and more incidental connections.

- “Fair is foul, and foul is fair ...”³⁶

The following paradoxical coordination of the antonyms lose and win is also from the opening scene of *Macbeth*, where we first meet the three witches and their abstruse assertions and predictions.

It can be analysed as an example of oxymoron or antithesis, although it also connects to the figure of speech termed parallelism.

- “... when the battle’s lost and won”.³⁷

Blood, sweat, and tears is now an English set expression, and it can be compared to the memorable formulation from Churchill’s radio speech to the British people after the German invasion of France in May 1940.

- “I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, sweat and tears.”

It is noticeable that the idiom does not contain the word toil. Could this be because it is, as it were, the “odd man out” in relation to the other three nouns, which all denote bodily fluids? In addition, a rhythmic repetition of three words may be felt to be more agreeable than Churchill’s somewhat heavier string of nouns sketching the expected suffering and struggle of the British nation.

³⁶ Shakespeare W., *Macbeth*, London, HarperCollins publishers, 2010

³⁷ *Macbeth*., Scene I, cit p.71

4.2 A political analysis on the Folk of the Air series, Holly Black

Holly Black It seems that Holly Black doesn't show directly her political view, she is a general voice which demonstrate how power might eat any good person if not centred and with values. All these characters move within a grey area, where good and bad mix and create different colours. Machiavelli declared "the ends justify the means."³⁸ Jude Duarte achieves her goals through murders, betrayals and there is no going back too the life they knew.

For the Folks, language is so much more than a means to communicate a message. To swear is not a vane promise like sea re used to believe and think. As humans, we have this habit to promise we won't ever do something and end up doing it anyway. Faeries cannot do it even if they would want to: they can never lie, they can answer in a more intricated manner thorough a series of half truths or narrate stories of pure fantasy.

The Folk of the Air series has its focus on how to take power, how forces around it move in order to get it. Once it is secured, they have to compromise their values as Jude does.

"Maybe you thought I was too busy to take my revenge?"³⁹

The Folk of the Air series is not only about a monarchy and the way power is taken, protected and secured, but also about discrimination towards humans in particular towards Jude and Taryn Duarte. They stayed living in Faerieland and they started realising that their life was messed up to the point that they could not fit nor in the human world nor in Elfhome. *Maybe growing up the way we have, bad things feel good to us⁴⁰.*

The author focuses her attention on strategies, schemes and the way characters create a web of under plots that end up together with Jude becoming the Queen of Faerie building up a cliffhanger in the finale of the second book.

Holly Black demonstrates how destructive power and politics are if no rules are applied, whenever a kingdom gets under big changes there are menaces ready to take it and undermine its political security. Elfhome is a kingdom but there is no constitution, politics relies on blood and positions which are granted by the High King or the royal family. Being part of the court is an honour not so

³⁸ Chapter XVIII of "The Prince" (1513-1514), for men judge generally more by what they see and appears to be. For this reason, letting a Prince take the credit and holding the state, it will end up being praised by people who believe in what they see and by what comes out of it.

³⁹ The Wicked King, p. 149

⁴⁰ The Cruel Prince, p.61

many people in Elfhome have. Humans stand at the far ends of the social chain: the lowest wretched creature on a faeries's perspective.

Vivi, the eldest sister, is nowhere near all these plots and murders; she strives for a normal life and future with her human girlfriend. Being Madoc's daughter means that she never fully accepted being his blood, the blood of an assassin. Vivi is the only one among the siblings to have inherited some magical powers. They share the same mother but Jude and Taryn's father was Justin Duarte.

The three of them when they were younger, escaped to find a motel room and stayed there for two weeks before Taryn and Jude begged Vivi to take them home. *Vivi thinks we are stupid for not being able to resist the intensity of Faerie, for desiring to stay in a place of such danger.*⁴¹

*"Have I not taken you into my service and given a great boon? Did I not promise you a place in my Court? [...]" "You are my creature, Jude Duarte. You will strike only when I tell you to strike. Otherwise, stay your hand."*⁴²

Prince Dain is the oldest of Eldred's sons. He seems to be the kindest and also the most reasonable among them. Jude believes he is the only way she has to protect herself from faeries and their enchantment. For this reason, when he asks what is her deepest desire she

Prince Dain uses the repetition her to emphasise how much control over Jude he has. He put a geas on her from enchantment, however she vowed to be at his service and he later on commands her to stab her hand as a form of punishment. This even is useful because it does portray how it is undeniable dangerous to live in Elfhome as a human. Even though he seemed the best solution to her problems, he now seems to show his true face as manipulative and sadic. Jude starts realising that maybe he is not what he leaves others to see, he is just good at hiding his nature.

Taryn is a mirroring and double-faced character; she betrays her twin-sister multiple times for her own benefit and Madoc's.

*Unlike me, Taryn is adaptable. She knows the right things to say. She'd be okay if she were thrust back into this world. She's okay now. She will fall in love, just as she said. She will metamorphose into a wife or consort and raise faerie children who will adore and outlive her.*⁴³

⁴¹ The Cruel Prince, p. 62

⁴² Ibid., p. 196

⁴³ Ibid., p.56

She falls in love with Locke, but then she lets him court Jude as a proof that her love is strong and solid. Jude falls into this trick and is hurt more by the fact that her twin allowed all this mockery to happen without telling her.

Moreover, Taryn helps Madoc out of the vows he had to profess towards High King. In order to let Madoc form an army against the crown she fakes to be Jude and finally deceive Cardan, the High King.

*“I just did what dad said! I didn’t think it mattered. You had all that power and you wouldn’t use it. But I never wanted to hurt you.”*⁴⁴

Turning back to Vivi: she is also the only one who falls in love with a human girl, as Madoc did. Her whole life she tried to escape to be anything like him and yet she followed in some kind of twisted way his example.

Vivi is the reader’s voice because she is the rational and downhearted whenever she tells Jude that she doesn’t have to risk her life every time or that they can go back to the human world. *“You keep rushing into danger,” Vivi informs me. “You’ve got to stop acting as though Court politics is some kind of extreme sport and stop chasing the adrenaline high.”*⁴⁵

Oak is just a piece in this larger game of schemes and hidden plots. He is the son of Prince Dain and Liriope, for this reason he has a vital role. Liriope tries in any way possible to protect her child from Dain: blinded by power he wanted the baby to be dead in order to fulfill a prophecy that tied his son destiny to his chance to get on the throne. Liriope gets poisoned, but Oriana intervenes and takes Oak out of her mother’s belly. Given his father being Eldred’s son, Oak can rightly rise to power as the High King, but to protect his childhood, Jude makes Cardan former regent of Elfhome.

When Jude poses the crown on Cardan’s head, Madoc, the Royal General, suddenly realises he was cut off of power and grandeur. He plotted against Eldred and Prince Dain to get Balekin on the throne but only to be the one manoeuvring the whole kingdom as he wished. His plan is ruined by Jude, but Balekin does not give in. He build an alliance with Queen Orlagh of the Undersea to take his throne back. *“If the Undersea is planning to steal Oak, then perhaps they promised Balekin the crown,” says Mikkel. “Safer for there to be only two in the bloodline, when one is needed to crown the other. Three is superfluous. Three is dangerous.”*⁴⁶

⁴⁴ The Queen of Nothing, p. 40

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 155

⁴⁶ The Wicked King, p. 121

Cardan, Balekin and Oak are three possible head on which to lay the Blood Crown. ‘Three is superfluous. Three is dangerous’ is a repetition to reveal the real message behind which is one of these three should die, preferably Balekin.

“You said, ‘I will have the crown.’ You,” I remind him, my hand going to the hilt of my sword. “You’ve barely spoken Oak’s name. He is just a means to an end, and that end is power. Power for you.”

“I’ll make a bargain. Swear to me that you’ll never raise a hand against Oak, and I’ll help. Promise me that when he comes of age, you will immediately step down as regent. You’ll give him whatever power you’ll have amassed, and you’ll do it willingly.”⁴⁷

Holly Black, however, introduces her liberal and ‘democratic’ perspective through her character and how they try to maintain their values and their thirst for power at ease. The author tries to pose her perspective on their character’s choices: they need to decide whether to stand on their morale or to pick power above anything else. Jude describes power like faerie wine, because once you have it, it is not easy job to let it go. Power is intoxicating.

“I am going to make a proposal, I don’t want to put the crown on Balekin’s head just to lose mine. Ask whatever you want for yourself, for the Court of Shadow, but ask something for me. Get him to give me lands far from here. Tell him I will be gloriously irresponsible, far from his side. He never need to think of me again. He can sire some brat to be his heir and pass the High Crown to it. Or perhaps it will slit his throat, a new family tradition. I care not.”⁴⁸

Jude Duarte and Prince Cardan find themselves to be in control of a kingdom and they do know they are not prepared for such a long commitment. Prince Cardan is against all these plots and schemes which were the ones who had him suffering throughout his childhood. He had it rough, no maternal or paternal love, neither his siblings cared about him. He was *an abandoned prince, weaned on cat milk and cruelty, left to roam the palace like a little ghost.*

He suffered because of power and its strings. He was something replaceable, he did not matter in the big picture. Balekin Showed him a toxic love, while he wanted him to be stronger he made him

⁴⁷ The Cruel Prince, p. 351

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.310

weaker. *“I don’t order this because I am angry with you, brother,” Balekin tells Cardan, causing me to shudder. “I do it because I love you. I do it because I love our family.”*⁴⁹

His abusive behaviour scares Jude that imagines what Cardan could become if he would stay sometime more under Balekin’s influence. A tyrant? A murderer? *Truly, he has come by his cruelty honestly in Balekin’s care.*⁵⁰

Prince once faced with real danger for his Kingdom, he revolts his old habits in something useful for his people. *“A king is not his crown.”*⁵¹

On the contrary, Jude is a spymaster, a seneschal, a traitor and finally the Queen of Elfhome. She never had the possibility to fully choose where to stand. She completely lost her memories of what it meant being her parents’ daughter; she remembers that she cannot rest not even a second.

*“Sometimes when I look at you, I’m not sure if you’d even know how to be human anymore.”*⁵² Vivianne realises Jude is more fit than her to stay in Elfhome even if she is the one to be a faerie. Vivi is also the only one who keeps saying to go back to the human world, where they do not have to suffer every day and kill to survive. They can be happy with regular things such as go to movies, visit cities or learn to drive a car.

In Jude’s life there is no ‘regular’ or ‘common’. What she experiences is this constant sense of alert, it is not possible for humans to be naïve in Faerieland. She had to learn their way of living, she is excellent with her sword, she learned how to fight also through chess, and to punch harder than her enemy. These lessons are engraved in her bones. It is not wrong saying that she is no longer human, she now is an hybrid: half-human and half-faerie. *“Diverting. It speaks as though it thinks she’s one of us.”*⁵³

Jude is not even considered a living creature, a human being is no way near those immortal faeries with their everlasting beauty and magic powers.

“Low Court rulers have begun arriving. They claim to have come to bear witness to your father’s challenge and to provide the High King with aid, but that is not the whole measure of why they are here.” He sounds bitter. “They come to scent weakness.”

⁴⁹ The Cruel Prince, p.118

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.119

⁵¹ The Queen of Nothing, p. 214

⁵² The Cruel Prince, p. 286

⁵³ The Queen of Nothing, p.83

I frown. “They are sworn to the Crown. Their loyalty is tied to Cardan whether they want it to be or not.”

“Nonetheless”, Randalin goes on, “with the Undersea unable to send their forces, we are more dependent on them than ever. We would not wish the low Courts to bestow their loyalty only grudgingly. And when Madoc arrives—in mere days—he will seek to exploit any doubts. You create these doubts.”

[...] He goes on. “There has never been a mortal Queen of Elfhome. And there should not be one now.”

“Do you expect me to give up such an enormous power on your say-so?” I ask.

“You were a good seneschal,” Randalin says surprising me. “You care about Elfhome. That’s why I implore you to relinquish your title.”⁵⁴

Randalin is a member of the council. He is using the hypothesis-evidence-explanation model through which he tries to persuade Jude to leave her throne for a ‘just’ cause and let return peace in Elfhome. He starts off by saying that the Low Courts need to be on their side and Madoc will come to Elfhome with the only purpose to take advantage of any doubt. (Hypothesis)

And then goes on informing her that there has never been a mortal Queen (evidence) and shall never be one in Elfhome. He concludes giving the solution: Jude should relinquish her title since she cares so much about the kingdom. (Explanation)

My body has acclimated, and now it craves what it should revile.⁵⁵

This figure of speech (chiasmus) explains on many levels Jude’s story and relationship with Madoc, with Cardan, but also her longing for Elfhome as it is clear it destroyed her possibility to have a normal life among humans. She started poisoning herself to make her body ready if anyone tried to kill her through a poison. Her fate is connected with that kingdom even if she is not welcomed by the inhabitants and badly mistreated.

⁵⁴ The Queen of Nothing, p.189

⁵⁵ The Wicked King, p. 43

4.3 Representation of power

I should start by considering not only the linguistic definition of the word ‘power’, but also the political connotation of it.

Power is a borrowing noun from French, but it lays its origins from Latin “potere”. It refers to the ability to act or effect something strongly; physical or mental strength; might; vigour, energy; effectiveness. Another connotation it has is the control or the authority over others; dominion, rule; government, command, sway. Power is also a political ascendancy or influence in the government of a country or state.⁵⁶

Politics need power in all its forms and mechanisms, through language and gestures, even a slightly change of tone empowers the speaker and put them on a higher level than the audience.

Power is a relation to social consequentiality. According to Mario Stoppino, power has to be considered only on its actual power or exercise of power (he does not refer to the connections between actual power and potential power which might be found).

Oppenheim, together with Roal Dahl, is another author who puts on the same level power and social consequentiality. He affirms to sustain his assertion: “the study of the social action and political one works on objective consequences on social and political behaviour, independently to the subjective motivations of the actor (the one who act on it).”⁵⁷

Based on Stoppino’s affirmations, nobody denies the necessity to study objective effects of those behaviours on people; therefore all the interactions of social consequentiality are of interest. However, all this does not make less demanding the urge to line the significant distinctions between causal social relations due to their impact on relative behaviours. To say it in other words, to analyse their differences based on the mental status of the individuals involved in the interaction.

Its definition we still use today is power as intention. Power do not correspond to social consequentiality in this regard, but social and intentional causation.

⁵⁶ Oxford English Dictionary online, The definitive record of the English language, oed.com

⁵⁷ I. Carter, M. Ricciardi, *Freedom, Power and Political Morality Essays for Felix Oppenheim*, Palgrave MacMillan, UK, 2001

This position on the matter at hand was pretty clear already in Weber's power (Macht) as "*Power is the chance to impose your will within a social context, even when opposed and regardless of the integrity of that chance.*"⁵⁸

Russel defined power as "*production of intended effects*"⁵⁹: this concept is a common ground for different authors, among them even Roal Dahl who later in life met this orientation of thought.

For this reason, what we mean with intention is a modality of action done by who uses power: a state of mind related to action X of subject A, which links that action to be behaviour X of subject B. This said actions' correlation is called "**finalisation of action**". For instance, a command can be executed more or less readily, in a less accurate way, etc. This is something to keep in mind, for when we refer to power we mean both a social and intentional causation.

Politics is definitely concerned with power and how to get praised by the audience: the power to make decisions, to control resources, to control other people's behaviours and their values, but also in some cases thoughts on social matters. Knowledge is power, to know is the ability to lead the world as you see.

The Folk of the Air series mainly focuses on power, how it is possible to hold onto it, to lose it in just a heartbeat, but mostly on its corruptive nature. There are no villains, Holly Black seems to present characters whose thirst for power gets over them and become puppet of their own desires.

The readers perceive the effect power and her position have on Jude's life and the relationships as well. Jude needs power, Madoc desires it, Prince Cardan flies from it and Prince Balekin sacrifices his morale and values by killing almost all members of his family to get on the throne.

The word **power** appears almost 210 times throughout the series. On a side note, it is relevant how there is no party or politician; the main protagonist is a human girl who cannot sit tight and accept her fate to be manoeuvred without her consent. Jude Duarte goes through her personal growth hand in hand with the reader who sees her committing mistakes, killing and betraying the people around her.

She actively decides that her life is in Elfhame and not in the human world, this means for her a series of unlucky events that lead her to become the way she is. She is fearless, troublesome and does not stand back.

⁵⁸ M. Weber, *Economia e società*, trad. it., Milano, Comunità, 1961,

⁵⁹ B. Russell, *Power: A new social Analysis*, London, Unwin Books, 1967

As a matter of fact, being Madoc's daughter would be a messed up way of growing for anyone. He is a general and wears a cap that he dips into his victims' blood. For him, the only possible path is war and the battlefield, he experienced only blood and cries in his lifetime.

"Power," he said. "Power is the ability to get what you want. Power is the ability to be the one making decisions."

[...] *"We get power by taking it."*⁶⁰

Madoc is trying to impart a lesson to the twins; he represents both a fatherly and alienating figure. Their strange and bloody beginning of that relationship lead to a massive trauma which had obviously a different and quite opposite results for Taryn and Jude. *"You can take a thing when no one's looking. But defending it, even with all the advantage on your side is no easy task, Madoc told her with a laugh. [...] "Power is much easier to acquire than it is to hold on to."*⁶¹

Madoc cannot be more proud of Jude for taking chances and aiming high than he ever expected her to do. He loved both the twins in a different way: Taryn as a precious treasure to keep untouched, while Jude was like him. *"I dismissed you capacity for strategy, for strength and—for cruelty. That was my mistake, and one I will not make again."*⁶²

Madoc is a father, a warrior, a traitor, a husband and a friend. It does seem to be the most complex among the other characters, mostly because he lives his moral duality without guilt: he is a father and yet he tries to sabotage his daughter's rise to power with every means he knows. Due to his thirst for power, he turned a twin against the other admitting at the same time that he loved them both.

I reckon, his killing skills and murderous traits are underestimated because he speaks a lot about war and killing his victims, but during the whole tree books there is no war where the reader can actually see his brutality if not for the assassination of Prince Dain during Eldred's abdication in his son favour or Jude's and Taryn's parents.

They got along pretty well, they understood each other: Holly Black expresses through their complex relationship how dark and scary emotions can be as Jude and Taryn get attached to a killer and the murderer of their parents. This ambivalent position in their hearts makes the whole strategies to reach for power much more intriguing, because Jude is playing a harsh game and the opponent plays dirty

⁶⁰ The Wicked King, prologue

⁶¹ The Wicked King, ch. 1

⁶² The Wicked King, p. 40

psychological and tangled games. He gave them everything he knew, any tips to survive in Elfhome, he embodies the idea of a moral grey character. He is evil, but he has his good side. *“Get used to the weight, Madoc had told her. You must be strong enough to strike and strike ad strike again without tiring.*

Jude’s rival is her father, or the closest thing she had to a paternal figure. *“At last, I finally understand. Orlagh and the Undersea we will vanquish together. But when they are gone, it will be us staring across a chessboard at each other. And when I best you, I will make sure I do it as thoroughly as I would any opponent who has shown themselves to be my equal.”*⁶³

Even though he cares for Jude, he almost kills her. During a duel between them, he hurt her and she could have died if she weren’t already Queen of Elfhome and so the earth healed her by being connected to her blood. Yet, he did not know this information. He left her to rot and die. *“You were always good,” he says, looking down at me. “Just never good enough”.*⁶⁴

Madoc is the patriarch and everything happens under his knowledge and approval. He brutally kills Prince Dain mostly because the only language he knows is blood and swords to prove his worth. For this reason, Jude asks Madoc to let her become a knight and participate in the spring games to duel against the noble parties and young fairies, but her desire is denied and postponed till the following year.

She doesn’t want to be a knight for the position in particular, but for the power that comes within. Nevertheless she takes part at the games without Madoc’s permission, she secures a position as one of the spies for Prince Dain, the successor at the throne, he grants her a wish. He makes her able to resist enchantment, he puts a geas on her, a geas of protection from enchantment: faeries can no longer make her do whatever they want and humiliate her.

*“What good is a general with no war?” [...] “The new king’s coronation will be at the autumn solstice. Worry not. I have a plan too ensure our futures. Only concern yourselves with making ready for a great deal of dancing.”*⁶⁵

‘A general with no power?’ Madoc finds it difficult to believe his character can be anything else but a general and war. He is only that and he doesn’t seem to like changing his personality. He shows his

⁶³ The Wicked King, p.207

⁶⁴ The Queen of Nothing, p.129

⁶⁵ The Cruel Prince, p. 37

masculinity through violence and lack of communication. He uses words to order to all his family what to do or not to do. Madoc is selfish, he knows what he wants and puts anyone at risk for his murderous plans.

*“Your ridicoulos family might be surprised to find that not everything is solved by murder.”*⁶⁶

Betrayal, murderers and sacrifices: these are the only paths Jude and her family know. Everyone wants power, but it’s not something everyone is ready to sacrifice their lives for.

Locke, the promised groom to Taryn, says these words to Jude even though he has a knife on his neck. Jude Duarte is threatening him because he humiliated her and the High King and also because she wants to be sure his wedding with Taryn (her twin) will be a happy one. Locke loves to create stories, he is not fascinated by Taryn, he chose her because it would have made a great story and he wanted to see how it would have turned out.

Jude Duarte collects informations on every single details displayed before her eyes: Cardan hit by his older brother, faeries mocking humans, scandals and murderers under a sheep’s cloths.

To know sometimes might mean to spy, but also have control over people and threatening them on some perspective, because Jude spies and deceives to collect a large amount of information to gain power and respect among faeries.

The author portrays through her characters both the malicious and benevolent consequences power has on good as well as bad people.

It destroys lives and also delivers great responsibilities on the one who dare to take it on their shoulders.

The rise to power for Jude is at the beginning a phase of growing up in a world where she doesn’t belong as a human and to change the narrative. What she truly desires is to be in some way or another inside the Court.

To be a knight of the High King it could have meant that she could rise to power and gain respect. Being bullied since the age of seven has this psychological escalation on the protagonist who needs to show that she has control over everything except she does not. There are schemes behind her back, unknown plots and secret strategies to move power away and alterate the course of the story. Prince Dain and Prince Balekin are fighting over the throne, they use every means possible to achieve their goal.

⁶⁶ The Wicked King, p. 151

*“The Folk can glamour things to look different than they do. They can mess with your mind—charm you, persuade you to do things you wouldn’t consider normally. And then there’s everapple, the fruit of Faerie. If you taste it, all you’ll think of is getting more.” [...] “The Folk are ageless, immortal and magical. And they’re not all fond of humans. So don’t let your guard down, don’t make any bargains, and keep some specific things on your person at all times— rowan berries and salt.”*⁶⁷

She has been feeling powerless her whole life, she couldn’t protect her parents from Madoc, she cannot deceive her weaknesses and being mortal is one of them. *No matter how careful I am, eventually I’ll make another misstep. I am weak. I am fragile. I am mortal.*⁶⁸

“Nothing you haven’t already offered me. You wanted to give me your oath and your sword. I accept. I need someone who can lie, someone with ambition. Spy for me. Join my court of shadows. I can make you powerful beyond what you may ever hope. It’s not easy for humans to be here with us. But I could make it easier for you.”

*[...] It is perhaps not the future you imagined for yourself,” Price Dain says. “No shining armor or riding into battle, but I promise you that once I am the High King, if you serve well, you will be able to do as you like, for who can gainsay the High King? And I will put a geas on you, a geas of protection from enchantment.”*⁶⁹

Prince Dain, at first, seemed kind to Jude offering a place inside the court. He then is revealed to be violet and manipulative, prioritising power over all else. At some point in his life, he had an affair with his father’s consort, Liriope who got pregnant. The unborn child’s prophecy was that if the child is born, Dain will never become king. To secure his position as the future regent, Prince Dain sent one of his spies to poison Liriope and ultimately kill their child. Although Dain was the third-born child, he always wanted the crown and was willing to overcome all obstacles. It is believed that he created the Court of Shadows (a group of spies at his service, among them there is also Jude) with the only purpose to exploit Prince Balekin’s ambitions to ever get on the throne.

Jude Duarte has her own epiphany since at the beginning of the story her desire is to be accepted in a world she doesn’t belong to. However she comes to realise that she is going to be something else entirely.

⁶⁷ The Wicked King, p. 170

⁶⁸ The Cruel Prince, p.46

⁶⁹ Ibid., P.86

*I thought I was supposed to be good and follow the rules, but I am done with being weak. I am done with being good. I think I am going to be something else.*⁷⁰

Jude is a teen in her rush to fit in, to be like the rest, to avoid being different because it makes her an easy target.

There is power in being fragile, there is power in scars and flaws. The reader is lead through Jude's traumatic experiences to understand that being strong has nothing to do with muscles, but with mindset and being smart and sneaky. *He is wrong about me. I am going to make my mayfly life count for something.*⁷¹

Jude has a strong sense of protection towards her family no matter how broken it is, she loves her family. In order to protect her younger brother from becoming a pawn in Madoc's plan for glory, she mischievously puts Prince Cardan on the throne. Consequently, she obtains the rule of his personal seneschal and the only one with true control over Elfame and its High King.

*For five months I have used every bit of restraint I learned over a lifetime of keeping my head down. I have tried to behave as though I had only ribs and drabs of power, an important servant's power, and still keep in my head that I was in charge.*⁷²

Locke tried to mock Cardan and made her Queen of Mirth. It is a traditional habit among faeries: steal away a mortal girl, make her drunk on faerie wine, then convince her she is being honored with a crown, but all the time heaping insults on her oblivious head.

She ensures for herself a year and a half of power, but she needs to find a way to keep it that way which it is no easy. She can command Cardan to do anything she wants, yet she feels guilty to have taken him on the throne betraying his trust. However she wants more, she knows she has to reach a higher position, but she does not know which one and most importantly how.

*Once, a position as grand as seneschal would have been beyond my wildest dreams. Now it seems a humiliation. Power is infectious. Power is greedy.*⁷³

It is Cardan who proposes her to marry him and be his Queen, since it is more of an agreement than something romantic, she accepts and takes the vow of obedience off of him. *"Kings and queens don't*

⁷⁰ The Cruel Prince, p.43

⁷¹ Ibid., p.210

⁷² The Wicked King, 149

⁷³ Ibid. p.92

often marry for something other than a political alliance, true, but consider this a version of that, and were you Queen, you wouldn't need my obedience. You could issue all your own orders. And I would be free."⁷⁴

After having become the only Queen of Elfhome she is exiled by Cardan to never enter their kingdom again. She lives together with her siblings in the human world. Talking with her younger brother, Oak, she ends trying to convince him that one day he will be the one on the throne. Since he is just a little boy, he runs away angrily because he does not want to be King. *"All power is cursed," I say. "The most terrible among us will do anything to get it, and those who'd wield power best don't want it thrust upon them. But that doesn't mean they can avoid their responsibilities forever."*⁷⁵

Jude went from aspiring to get more power to understand its poisoning and double faced effect due to the fact that she experienced it on her skin. She knows that among the worst people who will do anything to get, there is also her name engraved next to Madoc's.

Once she gets back to Elfhome after Taryn asked for her help, Jude secures her throne beside Cardan from the menace of Madoc and his army.

*I try not to smile, but I've missed the rush of power that comes with playing a game like this, of strategy and cunning. I hate to admit it, but I've missed risking my neck. There's no room for regrets when you're busy trying to win. Or at least not to die.*⁷⁶

It is just a matter of time, however, for Jude as legitimate Queen of Elfhome, to fall into her old habits again.

Vivianne, the oldest sister, is angry with Madoc. He took her from the human world because he is her biological father and she despises him for that. The effect is that *Vivi would like to punish Madoc, but her only power is to be a thorn on his side*⁷⁷

Vivi is the oldest and it is interesting that she is the one that paradoxically does not aspire to live in Elfhome even if she has every right to stay in the kingdom. She never fully accostumed to whatever were the traditions of Elfhome: she wanted to flee and live in the human world. Her desire is never to

⁷⁴ The Wicked King, p. 304

⁷⁵ The Queen of Nothing, Holly Black, 2019

⁷⁶ The Queen of Nothing, Holly Black, 2019

⁷⁷ The Cruel Prince, p. 40

participate in those grand schemes Jude and Madoc elaborate, but to watch tv and get a proper education, study and conduct a normal life far away from murderers, plots and bloodsheds.

Vivi is the only biological daughter of Madoc and they do not get along very well, they do not have much in common. Vivi is a pacifist, she wants to be quite the opposite of her father.

Cardan is scared, he is cruel, he is a bully, he is a Prince. He deals with past traumas, he cannot deceive how broken he is. He has no interest for politics because it reminds him of his royal family's mistreats. Cardan hates Jude. Jude hates Cardan. Their whole relationships has its basis on how unpleasant they find each other. *"You want me to put myself in your power? Voluntarily?"*⁷⁸

Balekin and Cardan fates are intertwined due to the plans behind their backs. Due to the prophecy on Cardan's destiny, Eldred never fully got to know his last son. Nobody ever showed him affection and when they did, soon they found out how hard to love he was and decided to leave him on his own. As for Balekin, it is a whole different story. He had a love-hate relationship with his father, they never got along, mostly because Eldred understood Balekin's true nature. Prince Dain admits to Jude it is due to the ambition Balekin has and it doesn't allow him to have healthy relationship with him, they scheme against each other and don't trust one another at all. Resulting in Dain killed by Madoc in the Balekin's attempt for the throne. Eldred, the High King, despised Balekin and never accepted his becoming Elfhame's regent. Even as he died at his son's hands, he laughed and vowed that Balekin would never reign over Faerie.

*"Cardan," Balekin says. "I know you. I know that you'd prefer I did the difficult work of ruling while you enjoyed the power. I know that you despise mortals and ruffians, and fools. Come I have not always danced to your piping, but you haven't the stomach to truly cross me. Bring me the crown."*⁷⁹

Cardan is no fool, he leaves his older brother in the Tower of forgetting, he loved his brother but grown under his shadow he had been taught how useless he was and pointless even trying to be good. Cardan is very similar to Balekin, their appearance is almost the same, and yet this particular detail makes me wonder whether hitting Cardan was done in a sort of self-punishment behaviour toward himself whether he admitted or not.

⁷⁸ The Cruel Prince, p. 318

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.362

However, Balekin gives voice to the motives which led him to beat Cardan profusely. *“Although I have sometimes been harsh with you, it was because I sought to make you better. Do you think that you can be indolent and self-indulgent and yet succeed here, as a ruler?”*⁸⁰

Taryn, the sweet and lovely twin, shows her true, and I dare say, hidden colours at the beginning of *The Queen of Nothing*, when she asks for help having killed his husband, Locke. She did it when it was crystal clear that Locke was with her but there was nothing left between them, but hatred and resentment.

*Taryn doesn't like conflict. Her manner of dealing with all the terror and confusion in our lives has been to become immensely adaptable, like one of those lizards that change color to match their surroundings. She's the person who knows what to wear and how to behave, because she studies people carefully and mimics them.*⁸¹

Taryn was schooled by Oriana in all those lessons she learned how to be anyone and no one, to not manifest who she was or at least being able to be anything the interlocutor wanted her to be.

She completely disappeared and with that even part of her humanity and compassion for her own sister flipped away. To do what she was asked, she went deliberately against Jude not once, but twice. Her only aspiration was to marry a Fae, to breed his outsprings and be content with that. There is nothing wrong with wanting a family and to fit in, but at what expense?

What cost is she ready to pay in order to be someone she is not?

Jude forgives her twin sister only to be shot in the back once again for Madoc's sake.

“You're unwinding yourself like a spool. What happens when there's no more thread?”

*“Then I spin more,” I say carrying the metaphor.*⁸²

Taryn wants Jude to be presentable and wear the finest clothes since she is the High King's seneschal. For this reason she appears out of nowhere in Jude's bedroom to give our protagonist together with her clothes also her old stuffed animals. She judges her way of living because her standards now should be higher since her rise to power, it is essential a change of appearance that would better suit her role.

⁸⁰ *The Wicked King*, p. 186

⁸¹ *The Cruel Prince*, p.85

⁸² *The Wicked King*, p.40

“Once, they were a reminder that there was a time before Faerieland, when things were normal. Once, they were a comfort to me. I take a long last look, and then, one by one, I feed them to the fire. I’m no longer a child, and I don’t need comfort”⁸³.

4.4. Analogy: metaphors, similes and metonymies

SIMILES

The Folk of the Air series presents a lot of figures of speech that convey what the author feels and thinks; she speaks through her characters. It is inevitable that I had to choose the most significant above all of them. I picked the ones whose nature and true essence is connected to power and political schemes, but also plots to destroy the so called status quo. In Elfhome as it is already known, there is a monarchy and a lot of people want that throne and the power coming with it.

- Watching his fear ripen fills me with almost voluptuous satisfaction. I, who have had little power in my life, must be on guard against that feeling. Power goes to my head too quickly, like fairie wine.

Jude was nothing else but a girl with no power, no possibility to stand against her Faerie bullies who tried to kill her multiple times. She is inebriated by how she can control now and alternates course of actions around her.

- Sometimes when lying on the cold stone floor, I wonder if there’s a limit to what I will let them do, if there is something that would make me fight back, even if it dooms me. If there is, that makes me a fool. But maybe if there isn’t, that makes me a monster.⁸⁴

She identifies herself as a monster maybe because she is afraid that she would break sooner or later. She cannot endure her kidnapping for much longer, Jude knows that her only possibility to make it out alive is to never fight back, but to play her part properly since they all think she is glamoured; under their complete control is more difficult than she thought.

Time is passing by, Balekin and Queen Orlagh are keeping her under water (in their castle) dehydrated and underfed. Holly Black uses a metaphor which depicts Jude as monster to reflect upon Jude’s inherent strength which might be her both personal sentence and salvation at the same time making her a monster.

⁸³ The Wicked King, p.41

⁸⁴ The Wicked King, p. 237

- They make me feel like a child playing a grown-up game.⁸⁵
- I think of Madoc and how around him, I am perpetually a child. It's no small thing to pass judgment on the person who raised you, no matter what else they have done.⁸⁶

I put those two passages together, because they perfectly fit Jude's guilt towards Madoc, his father. In the first one, She is talking to Madoc and members of the council who did not listen to her trying to explain their enemies' plans to take over the Kingdom. It is clear that given her young age, they did not want to engage her ridiculous arguments, and yet she was telling the truth.

In the second one, Jude had a brief talk with Madoc while feeling that she was a child compared to him and that they could never be on the same level. These two metaphors are important because they depict how mixed up her feelings are, she knows she is doing the right thing, but she is mostly alone. However, the game she is playing is not one she wants to lose.

- Lying on his bed feels like wiping my dirty peasant feet on the throne.⁸⁷

Jude and the Bomb are controlling the High King chamber to be safe after the Nicasia entered in his rooms and throw an arrow at him. It is clear that she has so many responsibilities and yet she does not feel like she can do them all. She is experiencing the so called "impostor syndrome" which is a psychological occurrence in which an individual doubts their skills, talents, or accomplishments and has a persistent internalised fear of being exposed as a fraud.⁸⁸

- Her manner of dealing with all the terror and confusion in our lives has been to become immensely adaptable, like one of those lizards that change color to match their surroundings.⁸⁹

Holly Black describes Taryn through a simile. Taryn never shows her intentions, she is quite, but let's not be fooled by this attitude. She is maybe even stronger than her twin, a different kind of strength that allowed her to kill her husband.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.39

⁸⁶ The Wicked king, p. 183

⁸⁷ Ibid., p.75

⁸⁸ Langford J., Clance P. R., *The Impostor phenomenon: recent research findings regarding dynamics, personality and family patterns and their implications for treatment*, 1987.

⁸⁹ The Wicked King, p. 84

Taryn is like a lizard changing her colour to match the people around herself; she does not want anything for herself, she wants what others expect from her. Her identity is broken in pieces with other people's name on it. Not all people react to trauma with anger, she has a total different psychological response: she simply disappears.

➤ “You like it, don't you? Playing games with us? Pulling our strings and seeing how we dance?”

“The Folk, you mean?”

“I imagine you'd like it as well with mortals, but we're what you're practiced in.” He doesn't sound disapproving, but it still feels like being skewered on a pin.⁹⁰

The Roach (one of the spies with whom Jude works with) describes her as a puppeteer, because she pulls the strings behind the scenes without no one noticing it. He also tells her she is playing games with all of them, referring to all the strategic moves she had to plan to overcome different obstacles on her path. These two are two powerful metaphors that engage Jude Duarte's true nature as liar, deceiver and spymaster.

Moreover, she is the seneschal, but she has also control on the High King and on the Court of Shadows (their group of spies).

4.3.1 Metaphors and Metonymies

Throughout the tree books there is a large selection of metaphors and metonymies, but I did choose only the most relevant to a politics or power related cause. The following are just the ones I thought could give a better insight within the character's psychology and motifs.

“I don't think I will be a good king. I never wanted to be one, certainly not a good one. You made me your puppet. Very well, Jude, daughter of Madoc, I will be your puppet. You rule. You contend with Balekin, with Roiben, with Orlagh of the Undersea. You be my seneschal, do the work, and I will drink wine and make my subjects laugh. I may be the useless shield you put in front of your brother, but don't expect me to start being useful.”⁹¹

⁹⁰ The Wicked King, p.131

⁹¹ The Cruel Prince, p. 372

Cardan builds his speech on contrasting pairs. After being betrayed by Jude who put him on the throne, he uses anaphora to describe how distant they are, but also that he doesn't trust her anymore. There is a constant opposition between 'You made me your puppet' and 'I will be your puppet': there is no unity, Cardan is objectively telling her that they are not on the same page. 'You be my seneschal' while 'I will drink wine'. Not only he doesn't want to help her out, he won't do anything for the Kingdom, the only thing left for him to do is to get drunk and forget all that happened because of Jude. He uses colons to repeat how far they are from one another since she decided to control him confirming his fears that he won't be worthy of that title.

"If you're the sickness, I suppose you can't also be the cure."⁹²

Cardan is drunk, he describes Jude for the power she has over him. She is the one who tricked him onto the throne of Elfame. Since she cannot be the one helping him out, she is the sickness. In the end, what he means is that she is either good or bad, there is no in between.

There are few descriptions of Jude by other characters I found interesting, but I think this gives light to the ambivalent nature of her character.

"You requested an audience with the crown," Cardan says.

"No, brother it was you I wanted to speak with, not the ornament on your head."⁹³

Cardan leaves the impression that through the crown he has some power but without it he feels he is nothing but the youngest brother with no political skills and communicative instruments. Yet, he is on the throne, but he seems to feel weird about it.

[...]I will have to live with this acid in the pit of my stomach. The future of Faerie depends on my playing a long game and playing it perfectly.⁹⁴

Having poisoned Madoc, it came to her the weight of what she just did. She knows she did it for a better cause, to put on the throne Cardan and leave Oak a calmer childhood away from the intrigues around the throne. She described as acid in the pit of her stomach, which points out her sense of guilt towards her family for lying and betraying them. Even though, the game is kind of a long shot she wanted to put her weight on her shoulders; even lying was just a means to protect her little brother and Elfame as well.

⁹² The Wicked King, p. 56

⁹³ Ibid., p. 187

⁹⁴ The Cruel Prince, p. 356

4.3.2 Rhythm: Bicolons, tricolons and policolons

To give rhythm to a speech, it is essential to enhance fluidity and underline topics, opinions and matter at hand. Jude Duarte, Madoc and the High King use a lot of these linguistic devices in order to address their intentions clearly. Madoc's aspirations for power are represented throughout the whole series where he is ready to sacrifice every valuable person close to him.

Cardan's crown is a weight he never wished to have, anyhow he stands tall to protect his people, his kingdom and to maintain peace within it.

Jude Duarte is the grey area between these two opposite characters; via the linguistic means she is able to fit inside Elfhome as a faerie. She can control Cardan, her sisters moves and plotting against Madoc even though he is much more experienced in subverting power's strings.

- "I can see why humans succumb to the beautiful nightmare of the court, why they willingly drown in it."⁹⁵

Bicolons here underlines how important it is for the people to decide where to put their power, but as it is in Elfhome, humans succumb to that 'beautiful nightmare' which is an oxymoron to express at its best how scary and incredibly beautiful it is. I reckon, it also is a critic to the social behaviour of the electorate who sometimes do not vote and leave their decisional power in somebody else's hands.

- "I want to win. I do not yearn to be their equal. In my heart, I yearn to best them."⁹⁶

The desire fills the main character. Till now she wanted to be like everyone else, but she realises that she can beat them out by being human, fragile and imperfect. This bicolon is powerful due to its nature and the repetition of 'yearn' which is brave: Jude is a human girl with no particular talent, but the sword and yet she wants to best them, the same fairies who have bullied for years. It is a profound sense of vengeance and to be better than them,, somehow this small victory would make her feel in control and for Jude that is enough.

- "Here's why I don't like these stories: they highlight that I'm vulnerable. No matter how careful I am, eventually I'll make another misstep. I am weak. I am fragile. I am mortal. I hate that most of all."⁹⁷

⁹⁵ The Cruel Prince, p. 17

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.31

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.46

Jude cannot be weak in order to succeed, at least that's what she thought. Being vulnerable is seen as weakness but in reality it's her whip hand, it makes her stronger and different from Fairies. Through the use of tricolons, Holly Black strongly describes Jude's insecurities about her own persona, she knows she has flaws. She is scared almost everyday, but she keeps fighting it. She hates that side of her, because in her heart and soul stands a glorious and courageous warrior. She still doesn't know it, but her path leads that way.

- “We've talked about it before, of course, how Vivi thinks we're stupid for not being able to resist the intensity of Faerie, for desiring to stay in a place of such danger. Maybe growing up the way we have, bad things feel good to us.”⁹⁸

Bad things feel good to us, it sums up how the twins lived in Elfhome where every day they are on a survival mode. That place is not for some scared little girls as they once were, however they never leave the Kingdom to come back to the human world. Once they cross that magical border, they are unfit to live a normal life. For this reason, 'bad things feel good to us' is a powerful imagery that shows how traumas do not end, they reshape individuals and they become their own nemesis sometimes.

- “If I cannot be better than them, I will become so much worse.”⁹⁹

Bicolons here is used to highlight how dark and dangerous path Jude choose to cross. Holly Black uses evaluative language to pass on the idea that Jude's perception on what she at last decided she wanted for herself. She doesn't want to be better them, she doesn't want to be the best, she aspires to be worse than those fairies. By being worse the author conveys the message that there are no more rules, taboos are for humans and even killing is not so scary after this epiphany. She'll end up killing Valerian, she falls into this vicious cycle as it seems impossible to establish a moral balance.

- “Would you prefer no High King at all? If the crown is destroyed, there will be war, and if there's war, I will win it. One way or another, I will have that crown, Jude. And you stand to benefit when I do. There's no reason to oppose me. You can have your knighthood. You can have all the things you've ever dreamed of.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ The Cruel Prince, p.60

⁹⁹ Ibid., p.210

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p.351

Madoc uses the hypothesis-evidence-explanation model of persuasion. To obtain power, he is willing to use Oak (his foster son) as puppet regent and then put him aside once he will be of age. He poses a rhetorical question ‘Would you prefer no King at all?’ almost as if it were an impossible hypothesis. The evidence here is how sure he is to win a possible war and how easy it would be for him to get the crown in the end. He then proceeds to explain her how much benefit she would have for staying on his side and supporting his plans.

The use of a binomial it is called in use as it underlines Jude’s possibility to gain everything she ever wanted: ‘you can have’. Madoc doesn’t know that Jude is planning to control Cardan and put him on the throne, so she can have everything but she doesn’t want everything. She wants more.

- “Do you know why Eldred had no interest in his youngest son? Baphen saw ill fortune in his stars from the moment of his birth. Yet so long as Cardan wears the Blood Crown, I am sworn to him as surely as I was to his father, as surely as I would have been to Dain or even Balekin. The opportunity that presented itself at the coronation—the opportunity to change the course of destiny—is lost to me.”

- “You let me be humiliated in Faerie from the time I was a child. You’ve let Folk hurt me and laugh at me and mutilate me.” I hold up the hand with the missing fingertip, where one of his guards bit it clean off. Another scar is at its center, from where Prince Dain forced me to stick a dagger through my hand. “I’ve been glamoured and carried into a revel, weeping and alone. As far as I can tell, the only difference between tonight and all the other nights when I endured indignities without complaint is that those benefited you, and when endure this, it benefits me.”¹⁰¹

It is to be noted that Jude Duarte never fully reciprocated that mixed feelings Madoc had for her: she was the favourite. This passage represents their conclusion, their finale as father and daughter if they ever were that close. She inevitably hurt him as much as he did to her.

All that pain is now used not for his plans of glory, but for her to rise to power and gain whatever she desires. They are not that different as they started: they now are two faces of the same coin.

She endures what she knows will get her more access to authority. She won’t ever be just the daughter of Madoc, she became the owner of her own life. The ‘doer’ and the ‘done to’ are Madoc and Jude: she was humiliated and mutilated when he should have had protected her, whereas all that she is

¹⁰¹ The Wicked King, p.116

going through now it is a benefit for her. She is risking her life but to gain something greater than acceptance by Faeries: she is fighting to control and have power over them. Through the last chiasmus 'the only difference between tonight and all the other nights when I endured indignities without complaint is that those benefited you, and when endure this, it benefits me' Jude ends the discussion, because she is the one who puts her own life at risk and gain power, she is not only ready to move on from their toxic relationship, but she takes away Madoc's control over her head. She is done with his lies and manipulative behaviours.

- "I'm an excellent juggler," [...] "Juggling, you see, is just tossing two things in the air at the same time." [...] "No matter how many things you add, you've got only two hands, so you can only toss two things. You've just got to throw faster and faster, higher and higher." [...] "My advice," says Val Moren, "is that you learn to juggle better than I did, seneschal."

These words do seem like a prophecy of what Jude's seneschal work really is. She is not only a mere seneschal, she does control the Boood Crown and Cardan with it, she obtains prince Balekin to be in prison and away from overthrowing Cardan's secured position as High King of Elfhome. She is more than a pawn in this game. She is the master player behind heavy curtains, invisible and yet in plain sight for everyone to see how a mortal human girl stands next to the High King of Elfhome. She kills in his name, she betrays her family to protect the power she collected in just few months: power is never enough and she wants more. Jude becomes her own nemesis in a way: she does not care anymore about her own well being and as a proof she ends by being kidnapped because she trusts the wrong people. It is a long metaphor as her job to survive and mediate between the High King, the council and all those other political forces is compared to juggling; 'you just have to throw faster and faster, higher and higher'

- "We may not die from your age, but we grow weary with it," Madoc says with a heavy sigh. "I have made war in Eldred's name. I have broken Courts that denied him fealty I have even led skirmishes against the Queen of the Undersea. But Eldred has lost his taste for bloodshed. He allows those under his banners to rebel in small and large ways even as other Courts refuse to submit to us. It's time to ride to battle. It's time for a new monarch, a hungry one."¹⁰²

¹⁰² The Cruel Prince, p. 37

Madoc is using bicolons to express clearly how he wants the High King to be out of the scene since he is not young anymore and Madoc wants bloodsheds, but also wars. 'It's time' is repeated twice to emphasise how desperate he is for that change.

- “Very clever, daughter. No wonder you weren't tempted by anything I offered you. I said I wouldn't underestimate you, and yet I did. I underestimated you, and I underestimated both your ambition and your arrogance.”¹⁰³

Madoc repeats twice that his biggest mistake is that he underestimated her, both her ambition and arrogance. It is an error he wouldn't do just this time. The tricolons here it is Madoc making amends to his daughter because he realised how blind he was. Jude Duarte is not a child anymore, but as many parents do, he did not see her like an adult till it was too late and she became his nemesis.

- “Get used to the weight, Madoc had told her. You must be strong enough to strike and strike ad strike again without tiring.”¹⁰⁴

There is this lesson that would turn out to be both salvation and damnation for Jude: she won't find herself give her a break from the scheming and the lies. She doesn't stop even when she is almost dead because of Madoc. She just unravels into this beast with no rest, she could not do anything but to keep fighting because that is the only worthy lesson Madoc gave her that she applied in her everyday life. Pain did not make her stronger, but more fragile and broken.

- As the High King's seneschal and the de facto ruler, I have much to study. Military commitments, messages from vassals, demand from every corner of Elfame written in as many languages. Only a few months ago, I was still attending lessons, still doing homework for scholars to correct. The idea that I can untangle everything seems as impossible as spinning straw into gold, but each night I stay awake until the sun is high in the sky, trying my hardest to do just that. That's the problem with a puppet government: it's not going to run itself. Adrenaline may turn out not to be a replacement for experience. [...] ¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ The Cruel Prince, p.207

¹⁰⁴ The Wicked King, p. 1

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 34

It is a simile at the center of this speech: ‘The idea that I can untangle everything seems as impossible as spinning straw into gold’ uses evaluative language to make understand the reader Jude’s doubts on her abilities to reign the kingdom of Elfhame.

Jude is now a seneschal of the High King. She has a lot of responsibilities and this big change in her life feels too much for her. The idea of her being like the puppeteer behind the curtains is frightening, but exciting at the same time. That is also why she is afraid she might end up loving too much the sensation power gives her. The last sentence works like a warning to remind herself that she needs to work hard, because adrenaline is not sufficient.

- “You’ve told us a tale, and it is a good one. We’ll let you go tonight. But I can reward you better than murderous prince who does not and will never have the High King’s favor. There are better positions than guarding the Tower of Forgetting – yours for the taking. There’s gold. There’re all the rewards that Balekin can promise but is unlikely to deliver.”

Jude defines the tale the prisoner told them to be ‘good’ using spot on an evaluative lexical adjective. Then she proceeds to high the evaluative expectations by using ‘I can reward you better than a murderous prince’: she describes Balekin for his main characteristic, being an assassin and having killed most members of his own family. He ‘does not and will never have the High King’s favor’, this is a powerful use of modality: Jude is certain Balekin will rot in prison and won’t ever get near the throne (it turns out to be true).

At last, she shows Vulciber (the prisoner they are interrogating) they can give him a position, gold and ‘all the rewards tat Balekin can promise but is unlikely to deliver.’ Tricolons are used to emphasise the list of gifts for Vulciber in exchange of information.

- “I am done with being polite. We’re not going to play word games or make up riddles. Humiliating the High King is a bad idea. Humiliating me is a terrible idea. Running around on my sister is just dumb.”
“First, stop trying to make me uncomfortable. Stop trying to turn me into a character in one of your dramas. Pick another target to weave stories around. “Second, whatever your issue is with Cardan, whatever pushed you to make such a meal of toying with him, whatever made you think it was fun to steal his lover and then throw her over for a mortal girl—as though you wanted him to know the thing dearest to him was worth nothing to you—let it go. Whatever made you decide to make me Queen of Mirth to torment him with the feelings you suspected he had, leave off. He’s the High King, and it’s too dangerous.” [...] Humiliate the

king before the Court, and the courtiers will spread rumors and his subjects will forget to be afraid. Soon, the lesser Courts will think they can go against him."¹⁰⁶

This speech starts off with a large use of f bicolons, tricolons and in the end Jude to make Locke realise the consequences of what he did, she relies on a particular model of persuasion, which is the hypothesis-problem-solution. Tricolons are used to indicate how many mistakes he committed and the reasons behind them, but Jude ends everything by showing that if the king is humiliated before the Court (hypothesis), the courtiers will preda rumors and no one will be afraid of the High King. (Evidence) In the end, the Courts will feel validated to ga against him because they would perceive him as weak. (Explanation)

- “Cardan,” Balekin says. “I know you. I know that you’d prefer I did the difficult work of ruling while you enjoyed the power. I know that you despise mortals and ruffians, and fools. (TRICOLONS, Come I have not always danced to your piping, but you haven’t the stomach to truly cross me. Bring me the crown.”
- [...] “Without me, you would be nothing. Without me, you will be nothing.”
- [...] “You threaten me, you praise yourself. You give away your desires. Even were I considering your offer, after that little speech, I would be sure you were no diplomat.”¹⁰⁷

I put together these three passages since they are all from the same encounter between Balekin and Cardan, the High King.

Balekin is trying to manipulate his younger brother into believing that he knows him and he knows he won’t be a menace for him since Cardan never ‘had the stomach to cross him’.

This last binomial is used to emphasise Cardan as a weak and fragile High King, that is something Balekin wants.

To diminish

Dance to someone piping—To get along with someone else’s wishes and desires. It might seem that I would get ahead of myself, but ‘mortals and ruffians, and fools’ reminded me of Shakespearean Anthony famous speech ‘Friends, Roman, countrymen...’¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ The Wicked King, p. 150

¹⁰⁷ The Wicked King, p. 186-187

¹⁰⁸ Shakespeare W., Julius Caesar, cit. p. 66

Cardan repeats for three times what his brother's flaws are. Balekin is in no position to neither praise himself or threaten the High King: through this tricolon the author underlines Cardan's power over his imprisoned older brother. 'He is no diplomat' sounds here more like an insult than an objective description.

- "Tell me, why did my brother steal my crown? Orlagh thinks she understands, because she understands the craving for power, but she doesn't understand Cardan. He never much cared for hard work. He liked charming people. He liked making trouble, but he despaired of real effort. And whether or not Nicasia would admit it, she doesn't understand either. The Cardan she knows might have manipulated you, but not into this."¹⁰⁹

A month goes by and the High King bargains her release. She still has to act as if under a spell, to be under Balekin's will. She can't do it anymore, she did all she had to do, but her body is falling apart. Balekin, however, gets his brother poisoned and tries to blackmail Jude into giving him the Crown in exchange of the antidote. They end up in a duel with no witnesses and Jude kills him.

In the Cruel Prince Jude had Cardan convinced to be under her total control, like a *puppet*. This turns out to be a double-edged sword. For Madoc uses Taryn to order the High King to free him from his royal vows and Cardan accepts due to the fact that he doesn't feel good after being poisoned.

- "I saw the maps in Madoc's room, [...] I know the formation in which he means to sail against Elfhome, and I know the number of his ships. I know the soldiers in this encampment and which Courts are on his side. I know what Grimsen is making in his forge. If Cardan will promise me safe passage to Elfhome and to lift my exile once we're there, I will give all that to you. Plus, you will have the prisoner delivered into your hands before he can be used against you."¹¹⁰

Policolons is the repetition of 'I know' by Jude. She tries to make a point and suggest a plan to get the Ghost free in exchange of her knowledge about Madoc's ships, soldiers and courts on his side. She also uses at the end of her speech the problem solution model of persuasion: the solution is her telling them all she knows and they will also get the prisoner before it could be used against them.

- Madoc's smile is all sharp teeth and satisfaction, as though I am being taught a lesson.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 237

¹¹⁰ The Queen of Nothing, p.121

“You’re still loyal to that puppet. Why, Jude? Wouldn’t it be better if he took an arrow through the heart in his own hall? You cannot believe he makes a better High King than I would.”

[...] “Maybe I believe that it’s time for Elfhame to be ruled by a queen.”

He laughs at that, a bark of surprise. “You think Cardan will just hand over his power? To you? Mortal child, surely you know better. He exiled you. He reviled you. He will never see you as anything but beneath him.”

[...] “That boy is your weakness. But worry not,” Madoc continues. “His reign will be short.”¹¹¹

Madoc tries to get under Jude’s skin, to manipulate her and get her on his side. Cardan is described as a puppet through a metaphor, and to add some features in his portrayal of the High King, he tells her that Cardan would never hand her his power.

In a crescendo, he attempts to hurt Jude’s pride by remembering that ‘He exiled you. He reviled you’ to get a reaction from his daughter.

- A terrible silence follows. I wait for him (Cardan) to pronounce judgement on me. Whatever he commands will be done. His power is absolute. I don’t even have the strength to fight back. [...] “She is my wife,” Cardan says, his voice carrying over the crowd. “The rightful High Queen of Elfhame. And most definitely not in exile.”¹¹²

The monarchy in Elfhame is an absolute monarchy. The regent holds the power to administrate the Kingdom howsoever they desire: they need to attend the Council’s meetings where their decisions can be effected by a vote, but most of the times it is up to the regent having the last word on any matter.

- “We should just attack the moment his ships appear on the horizon,” says Yorn. “Not give him a chance to call for parlay. It will be harder without the aid of the Undersea, but not impossible. We still have the greater force.”¹¹³

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 128

¹¹² Ibid., p.147

¹¹³ The Queen of Nothing, p.177

The new grand general was appointed during Jude's exile, he is an ogre named Yorn. It is a Folk's tradition to call a parlay. If Madoc requests it, he and a small group of his fellow companions are to be welcomed into Elfhome in order to discuss an alternative to the war.

- [...] "Yes, you have a treaty now," I say not wanting to be reminded of my exile again. "But Orlagh could pass the Crown to Nicasia. If she did, a Queen Nicasia would be free to make a new alliance with Madoc, just as once the Court of Teeth put a changeling on their throne, they were free to march against Elfhome. And Nicasia might ally with Madoc if he would make her mother well."¹¹⁴

Jude suggests that their treaty might be over if Queen Orlagh had to abdicate in favour of her daughter Nicasia. By doing so, the new Queen would be free to form an alliance with Madoc, and they would have zero chance to win a possible war. Through the model of persuasion (problem-solution) she thinks there could be a possibility something could come up badly for them, there is no actual solution to a problem like this.

The only manoeuvre they can go for is to be attentive and never let their guard down.

- "Is there anything you can tell us? Whatever Madoc is planning, we need to know."
He shakes his head. "The last time I saw him, he was furious. With you. With himself. With me, once he knew you'd discovered I was there. He gave me orders and sent me off, but I don't think he intended to send me so soon."

Tricolon, hypothesis model. Madoc is angry at himself, at Jude and also at his prisoner. To sum up, Madoc is furious with everyone around him. This might seem a slight detail, but once a strategist such as him loses temper it means that he is not thinking straight. Therefore, he might end up committing some mistakes and he would not be able to see the bigger picture. Tricolons are used to emphasise his anger towards the entire world,

[...] "If the council finds out we have Orlagh's attacker in custody, things will not go well."
Cardan says with sudden decision. "They will urge me to hand you over to the Undersea to carry favor for Elfhome. It will only be a matter of time before Nicasia knows you are in our

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p.178

hands. Let's take you back to the palace and put you in the Bomb's custody. She can decide what to do with you."¹¹⁵

Cardan is using the problem solution model of persuasion; the problem being that the Queen of the Undersea might want the person who tried to kill her, but to protect the Ghost they decide that his fate is up to the Bomb who will take him in custody in the Court of Shadows.

- Cardan shakes his head. "No, let Madoc come and call for his parlay. Our knights will be in place. And inside the brush, so will our archers. We will hear him out, and we will answer him. But we will entertain no games. If Madoc wishes to move against Elfhome, he must do so, and we must strike back with all the force we possess."¹¹⁶

The High King makes his intentions pretty clear, he does not want his subjects to misunderstand him. Moreover, what makes the whole speech more intriguing and engaging for the other characters is that they feel called in by the pronoun 'we'. Finally he changes the modal verb from 'will' to 'must' in a crescendo, while for Madoc there is only a reference to his persona and not his army whereas Cardan refer to his forces with 'us' in order to underline how strong they are together as a united front.

- "Lord Madoc," Cardan says. "Traitor to the throne, murderer of my brother, what brings you here? Have you come to throw yourself on the mercy of the crown? Perhaps you hope the Queen of Elfhome will show leniency."¹¹⁷

Cardan calls Madoc names: they do seem a kind of epithets to insult him and take out all the evil things he did in the past. Their main goal, in my opinion, is to make Madoc stand back if not physically, at least morally given the fact that he killed the High King's brother and allied himself with the Undersea.

- "This is your last chance to surrender," I say. "Bend the knee, Father."
He laughs again, shaking his head. "I have never surrendered in my life. In all the years I have battled, never have I given that to anyone. And I will not give it to you."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ The Queen of Nothing, p.185

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p.205

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p.211

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 211

Evaluative language through his repetition of ‘never’ not once, but twice: it is also a bicolon in the way he affirms he will not give in to anyone. Madoc does not surrender; he is a warrior and last thing he would do is to call himself out of a battle. He repeats himself to his daughter in a powerful way to impress both regents and make them squirm on their thrones. Nothing they have is forever and he is ready to take everything they have acquired.

- Madoc smiles. “Yes, but do your sworn subjects love you? My army is loyal, High King Cardan, because I’ve earned their loyalty. Have you earned one single thing that you have? I have fought with those who follow me and bled with them. I have given my life to Elfame. Were I the High King, I would give all those who followed me dominion over the world. Had I the Blood Crown on my head instead of this cap, I would bring victories undreamed. Let them choose between us, and whomsoever they choose, let him have the rule of Elfame. Let him have the Crown. If Elfame loves you, I will yield. But how can anyone choose to be your subject if you never give them the opportunity to make another choice? Let that be the manner of the contest between us. The hearts and minds of the Court. If you are too much the coward to duel me with blades, let that be our duel.”¹¹⁹

Comment on what model he uses, repetition and

- [...] “Behold half that has come pass.” He laughs. “I never considered it was meant to be interpreted literally. And I never considered I would desire its fulfillment.”
I do not like where this is going. “Queen Mab created this crown to keep her descendants in power,” Cardan says. “But vows should never be to the crown. They should be to a ruler. And they should be of your own free will. I am your king, and beside me stands my queen. But it is your choice whether or not to follow us. Your will shall be your own.”¹²⁰

Cardan builds his speech on continuous opposition of two terms: the **crown** stands opposite to the **ruler** of the following phrase. Then, there is the contrast between the **king** and the **queen**. These antithesis are a way to perpetrate on his utopian kingdom where no subjects should vow to a crown, but to the regent. He believes is a democratic form of monarchy Elfame never had experienced

¹¹⁹ The Queen of Nothing, p.213

¹²⁰ The Queen of Nothing, p. 216

before. However, he comes to this idea only thanks to Madoc's pressing attempts to get the Crown of Blood.

- "You chose a wardrobe for me when I was a seneschal, to make me seem the part. I saw Locke's estate and how changed it was. Can you put together a throne room for me? And maybe find clothing from somewhere for the next few days. I don't care where it comes from so long as it makes me appear to be the Queen of Faerie."¹²¹

Jude needs a wardrobe to better impersonate her position a true ruler of Elfhome. Her position, her role as Queen needs a face of work which is the behaviour Jude employs to project that image of herself. Would it be a scena on a theatre, the audience would see Jude wearing a storic face and royal clothes to resonate and improve her aura as High Queen of Elfhome.

- I had imagined myself different from Madoc, but already given the chance, I am becoming a tyrant, threatening in place of convincing. Unstable instead of steadying.¹²²

Once again, Jude is all alone. This time she cannot fail. Cardan was transformed into a giant snake, she is devastated and there are few people she can trust and less the people she can listen to their advices. She thought herself to be different from Madoc, but once on the throne as High Queen without Cardan, she was lost and instead of being 'steady' she was 'unstable'. This chiasmus reveals Jude's fears, her incapacity to do always the right choice and to be vulnerable. Maybe it shouldn't be this way, but she is human: she has feelings and she is not always right. Jude fights for the people she loves and if that means to go against her better judgment she does.

¹²¹ The Queen of Nothing, p.224

¹²² Ibid., p.231

5. Conclusions

This thesis tried to analyse how relevant political devices within the Folk of the Air series. This YA series shows how power is the engine topic of these three books. We saw how fantasy novels from the myths, epic poems and then the most recent dystopias, but also Tolkien's and Lewis' novels, demonstrate in their own way that there is a strong connection with any form of social causes or critical analysis of political systems. Fantasy as a genre presents much more political matters with a critical eye on social themes. Each example within the literary field I wrote about presents socio-political aspects that these authors wanted the reader to reflect upon.

The 18th century novels were an open critic to Enlightenment and rationality to a world that did not allow mankind to have feelings and negative sensations.

Gothic novels were born to reply to this visceral and human need: Bram Stoker took his main character's profile from Romanian folklore, his story nourishes on Dracula's seduction, but also it represents the urge to take away the fog of rational logics.

Mary Shelly wrote Dr. Frankenstein which is about a creature discriminated for his look and appearance. It does strike the reader for the modern perspective it has on discrimination as it is still happening.

Tolkien was the founder of modern fantasy as we happen to know it, Lewis had a relevant role as his friend and colleague at Oxford University.

Tolkien's main influence were all the legends and myths of the Nordic tradition. Lewis, on the other hand, became Catholic thanks to that friendship and he wrote 'The Lion, the Witch and the wardrobe' in 1950. Lewis' pacifism and religious faith led him to write about the young generations dealing with the consequences of WWII. Their imagination was a powerful means to escape the harsh reality around them.

The dystopias, at last, show the dark side of our societies as a warning of what might happen in the future.

George Orwell wrote about a tyranny and the devastating results of a society that needs to live with a constant eye on itself.

Aldous Huxley chose to give his personal opinion on the utopias and their ideology which he finds to be incorrect and vane since it is no possible for a society to fulfill with goods every single person and be happy about that utopian political system.

Lois Lowry with *The Giver* clears her story from any form of political criticism, but she underlines the importance of history and how much memories build the identity as a society. Memory loss is usually associated to medical reasons, but in her novel nobody remembers history or pain; all the primary emotions are wiped out to guarantee coexistence and avoid wars.

In particular on a first reading, it was surely difficult to pick up on the different figures of speech in the books or any political devices because of its language targeted for younger readers.

However, I analysed how each character deals with power and I realised they all are linked to it. Through the analysis as we have seen, each character deals with powerful dynamics. It has a lot to do with their psychological sphere and past experiences.

Cardan is crowned High King when he didn't want anything to do with royal intrigues and mandatory commitments: he just wanted to live his life far away from his responsibilities. We witness his character arc from a voluptuous and immature Cardan to the High King who puts his people's choices above his own, he is extremely good and shows his moral values as a strength.

This trilogy concentrates on power dynamics through figures of speech such as metaphors, similes and metonymies. It was easy afterwards to understand how much this topic meant within the novels. Political linguistic devices were fundamental to operate a deeper and thorough study on the characters' speeches (bicolons, tricolons, policolons) whose aim is to create a major impact on the rhythm and a pattern for the audience to follow better.

Within the trilogy it was possible to witness what kind of relationship characters have with power.

It means that figures of speech were to be found and political speeches allowed me to comprehend their intentions and plans each character has acted on in order to obtain a prestigious role in the kingdom, in *Elfhame*.

It is important to note how even the characters who do not want to participate in those dynamics around the throne end up being involved anyway. Even though they do not wish upon themselves such a weight on their shoulders, they find themselves trapped into bloody plots from whom it was almost impossible to stay out of.

Holly Black, in an acute and subtle way, embraces a wide spectrum of topics: murder, betrayals and romantic relationships as well.

Jude is the character arc in this trilogy, she goes from being without power since she was human to become the first human Queen of Elfhome. Jude Duarte is a survivor, she killed and betrayed to gain a position and respect.

It seems she has no morale, but living in that kingdom means also to compromise one's conscience for gold, social status since she never had any of that.

Her relationships are obviously affected by her deep change, her twin doesn't understand Jude's hunger for more; for more power, more danger and for some time they grow apart. Nobody seems to see her, but Madoc who underestimated her more than once. Yet he is the only true rival she has in Elfhome. He starts to form his army to go against Cardan, but she is the one who wins without fighting a war but thanks to her witty personality and intelligence, she tricks him into thinking there would have been an agreement between them to submit under her control Cardan (who had been transformed into a snake).

All of these scenes and plots have been developed for young readers to enjoy, therefore she needed to use a language which had to be closer to what their vocabulary was.

It is also interesting as the author's language managed to transmit all these complex themes, as homicide, which are given a connotation to. Her real motivations for those grey actions are explained through psychological processes Jude endured during childhood.

The reader does not perceive in a traumatic manner these brutal events, but they are painted in a context where they are considered almost acceptable. Elfhome has its own rules and habits, they grew up in that environment and learnt to behave consequentially. Taryn learnt to be transparent, Jude to be aggressive and Vivianne to escape from her responsibilities.

Cardan is the only one who in way gets a better arc, since he is the first High King to marry a human, he distances himself from that internalised racism to take Elfhome towards a new era.

Evaluative language and political features are essential to analyse what this trilogy is about, the rise to power and a kingdom with a human queen and family's betrayals.

In the end, since the traumatic experience it was the murder of their parents, violence for Jude is the only response when her securities are undermined and finds herself dealing with on the edge of survival situations. She survives an assassination attempts and ends up killing him, he wanted to end her life because she was human.

Mankind has always had the strong necessity to tell every kind of stories through fantasy elements and imagination. For this reason, I could not write down all the fantasy aspects within this thesis since its history lies so far back in time.

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