

A Fellowship of Philosophy: Übermensch and the Will to Power in Tolkien

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Abstract : This article associates Tolkien's concept of power with Nietzsche's Übermensch. Despite his catholic beliefs, Tolkien refuses to create religiously motivated characters, opening room for existentialist decisions. Who is an Übermensch? What Tolkienian character resembles this concept the most? To tend to these questions, the article studies the case of Adolf Hitler and Elisabeth Nietzsche, manipulating Nietzschean philosophy. An investigation of the Nazis' misuse of philosophy, art, and myth for political advantage introduces a Nazi version of Übermensch, best reflected in Sauron and Saruman. Unlike the Nazi version, Nietzschean Übermensch is proven to emphasize internal power and seek harmony within one's desires. Tolkien's best candidates for Übermensch, Aragorn and Bilbo are examined through Nietzsche's three metamorphoses of becoming a higher spirit. What is more, I will study Nietzsche's admiration for cheer and eating, the main characteristics of the hobbits, to strengthen his bond with Tolkien.

Keywords : Tolkien, Nietzsche, literature, fantasy, history, philosophy

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