Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of English Language and Literature

THE USE OF EPIC AND ROMANCE ELEMENTS IN J.R.R. TOLKIEN'S *THE LORD OF THE RINGS*

Yiğit ERTUĞ

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2023

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The jury finds that Yiğit ERTUĞ has on the date of 13.11.2023 successfully passed the defense examination and approves his Master's Thesis titled "The Use of Epic and Romance Elements in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*".

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ETİK BEYAN

Bu çalışmadaki bütün bilgi ve belgeleri akademik kurallar çerçevesinde elde ettiğimi, görsel, işitsel ve yazılı tüm bilgi ve sonuçları bilimsel ahlak kurallarına uygun olarak sunduğumu, kullandığım verilerde herhangi bir tahrifat yapmadığımı, yararlandığım kaynaklara bilimsel normlara uygun olarak atıfta bulunduğumu, tezimin kaynak gösterilen durumlar dışında özgün olduğunu, **Prof. Dr. Huriye REİS** danışmanlığında tarafımdan üretildiğini ve Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Yazım Yönergesine göre yazıldığını beyan ederim.

Yiğit Ertuğ

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Dr. Huriye Reis, without whose guidance and unending support in the most difficult times, this thesis would not have been possible.

I am also very grateful to the distinguished members of the jury, Prof. Dr. Hande Seber, Prof. Dr. Özlem Uzundemir, Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Pınar Taşdelen and Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Merve Sari Tüzün for their kindness and final remarks, as well as their suggestions to make this thesis better.

In addition, I would like to thank my principal and friend, İnci Gültekin, for her aid in both our professional and personal lives. Similarly, I would like to thank Selin Cengiz, my co-worker and friend, who has not only helped me at work so that I could work on my thesis more freely, but also listened to my complaints and supported me.

Most importantly, my deepest and strongest gratitude is reserved for my mother and father, who were with me all the time listening to my unending worries, encouraging me and consoling me in my darkest moments. Without their unconditional love and help, I could have never finished this thesis.

Above all, I would like to thank my friend Onur Çiffiliz, who not only supported me emotionally, but also physically and logistically. Without his unending help and advice, I could never have finished and delivered my thesis. Thank you, Onur. May the hair on your toes never fall out my friend. In addition, I would like to thank my friends Muhammed Can and Elif Erdoğan Yalçin, whose house had become a base of operations during the last days of editing for my thesis.

Thus, I dedicate this thesis to my friends, family and mentors. May they always find happiness and success, and I hope Eru Illúvatar guides their paths.

ABSTRACT

ERTUĞ, Yiğit. *The Use of Epic and Romance Elements in J.R.R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings*, M.A. Thesis, Ankara, 2023.

Since its publication in 1954, *The Lord of the Rings* has played a prominent role in the development of the genre that will be known as fantasy literature. As an established medievalist himself, J.R.R. Tolkien drew inspiration from romances, having translated *Sir Orfeo* and *Sir Gawain & The Green Knight*. Tolkien was also no stranger to epic, both owing to his interest, as a linguist, in Old English, as well as his fascination with Nordic myths. His aim as an author was to create a mythology for England by using his knowledge of romance and epic.

This thesis is concerned with how Tolkien employs elements of romance and epic in his trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*. It argues that at the core of Tolkien's narrative are many traditional values and elements that have shaped epic and romance. Accordingly, the grand story of *The Lord of the Rings* borrows heavily from the quest narrative of chivalric romance and combines it with important elements of epic. The introduction part of this thesis discusses epic, romance, and fantasy genres, attempting to establish a connection between them. Chapter I is concerned with the epic elements in *LOTR*, such as the hero, the epic catalogue, epic similes and throwbacks. Chapter II deals with the romance elements, particularly those of the knightly romances. It hence examines the knight hero, courtly love, knightly companionship and errantry as they are used in *The Lord of the Rings*. The conclusion establishes *The Lord of the Rings* as a work that continues both romance and epic traditions through its use of significant elements of both.

Keywords

J.R.R. Tolkien, Epic, Romance, Fantasy Literature, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy

ÖZET

ERTUĞ, Yiğit. *J.R.R. Tolkien'in Yüzüklerin Efendisi Eserinde Destan ve Romans Unsurlarının Kullanımı*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2023.

1954'te yayınlandığından beri *Yüzüklerin Efendisi* fantastik edebiyat olarak bilinecek olan edebi türün gelişiminde önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Bilinen bir Orta Çağ akademisyeni olan J.R.R. Tolkien romanslardan ilham almıştır. *Sir Orfeo* ile *Sir Gawain & Yeşil Şövalye* eserinin çevrisini yapan Tolkien ayrıca Eski İngilizceye olan ilgisi ve İskandinav mitlerine olan merakından ötürü destan türüne de yabancı değildi. Tolkien'in bir yazar olarak esas amacı romans ve destan ile ilgili bilgisini kullanarak vatanı İngiltere için bir mitoloji yazmaktı.

Bu tez yazmış olduğu üçlemede Tolkien'in romans ve destan unsurlarını nasıl kullandığını incelemektedir. Tez, Tolkien'in eserinin merkezinde destan ve romans türlerini şekillendirmiş olan geleneksel değerlerin bulunduğunu öne sürmektedir. Buna göre, ana hikaye şövalye romanslarda görülen misyon anlatımından etkilenir ve bunu önemli destan ögeleri ile birleştirilmiştir. Tezin giriş kısmı destan, romans ve fantastik edebiyat türlerinden bahsederek aralarında bir bağlantı kurmaya çalışır. I. Bölüm *Yüzüklerin Efendisi*'ndeki kahraman, katalog, teşbih ve hatırlatıcı gibi destan unsurlarını inceler. II. Bölüm ise romans, özellikle de şövalye merkezli romans ögelerini inceler. Böylece bu bağlamda *Yüzüklerin Efendisi*'nde kullanılan şövalye kahraman, saray aşkı, şövalye yoldaşlığı ve maceraperestliği gibi unsurlar bu bölümün konulardır. Sonuç kısmı ise *Yüzüklerin Efendisi*'nin romans ve destan türlerinin her ikisinden de önemli unsurları taşıyan ve bu türlerin devamını sağlayan bir eser olarak adlandırır.

Anahtar Sözcükler

J.R.R. Tolkien , Destan, Romans, Fantastik Edebiyat, *Yüzüklerin Efendisi* üçlemesi

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

LOTR	*The Lord of the Rings*
FOTR	*The Fellowship of the Ring*
TTT	*The Two Towers*
ROTK	*The Return of the King*

INTRODUCTION

The majority of the critics acknowledge that the trilogy of the *LOTR* is closest to epic and romance in terms of its subject and structure, and the primary point of this thesis is based upon this argument. With relevant comments from the critics who have studied *LOTR*, this thesis will thusly focus on providing the elements of epic and romance in all three books of the trilogy. It is also intended to show in which parts Tolkien alters epic and romance elements to complement the overall frame of fantasy. Tolkien's introduction (and in times, alteration) of the elements of epic and romance helped define *LOTR*'s success, and allowed for successive works of fantasy literature to be produced based on this model. The dominant genre of *LOTR* is still a topic open to debate. Of course, there was consensus for a long period that it is an example of fantasy literature with its elves, wizards, orcs and hobbits; however, the immensely detailed nature of Tolkien's work led many critics to ask the question: "What is the true genre of *The Lord of the Rings*?", and each tried to answer this question in a variety of ways. The most prevalent method of answering such a question seems to be connecting the trilogy to the older traditions, in which fantastical elements were commonplace.

The following study aims to depict and discuss the use of epic and romance elements found in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (1954) in order to establish their place in the development of fantasy literature. In order to achieve this, epic and romance as genres will be explained with relevant critics' definitions. Fantasy as established by Tolkien will also be explained with particular attention to Tolkien's essay "On Fairy Stories" (1947). Shippey comments on this issue as such: "*The Lord of the Rings* reintroduced to the literary world a genre which had been thought to be dead beyond revival: namely, romance; and at the same time created a new literary mode of expression: namely, the fantasy trilogy" (*Roots* 40).

A number of critics have shared opinions on the trilogy. For example, Jane Chance and Alfred K. Siewers define the whole of the trilogy as a "modern-epic romance fantasy" (1). This study aligns itself closely with such a definition. Martin Simonson also accepts that "the epic and romance traditions dominate a great part of *The Lord of the Rings*" (71). Even for critics who do not agree with the double or hybrid genre definition, either epic

or romance is still the answer to the question of genre. For Bernhard Hirsch, the definition of *LOTR* is a "quest-romance" (77), while George H. Thomson identifies the trilogy as a "tapestry romance" (45). On the other hand, Langford marks it down as an "epic fantasy subgenre" as well as stating that the trilogy is "a work outside its own generic confines" (134). Edward James likens it to *Beowulf* and concludes that it is a "Catholic Epic" owing to its "subtle" and "underrated" religious as well as heroic nature (69). A different view is Gloriana St. Clair's, who; despite admitting that epic and romance influences are clearly visible within the work, is of the opinion that the trilogy is much closer to saga than all other genres (13). Saga, which has a very diverse subject matter and written in prose might at first glance seem compatible with *LOTR*'s structure, however, their common ground ends with prose and the embedded poems within the text.

Tapestry romance on the other hand depicts "a series of interwoven stories each of which is picked up or dropped as occasion and suspense require" (Thompson 48). This definition shares a similarity with the episodic nature of both epic and chivalric romance in general, yet one particular aspect of tapestry romance is in opposition to *LOTR*'s structure. *LOTR* does not "drop" or "pick up" stories, as its episodic structure is very closely intertwined; without the inclusion of a certain chapter, the whole story would be lacking. LOTR has a chapter based semi-episodic structure, as each chapter deals with a different part of the quest to destroy the Ring. Thus, this study does not include views that do not align with epic and chivalry traditions. In any case, *LOTR* has a familiar plot structure for the readers of fantasy, epic and romance alike due to the common plots and elements such as characterisation, theme, and setting as are observed in all three of them.

In order to comment on specific elements and the plot structure of *LOTR* as well as how fantasy is connected to epic and romance, accurate definitions of fantasy, epic and romance are to be established. Tolkien worked on translating works of English literature such as *Beowulf,* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Tolkien had a great love and interest in the unaltered roots of English language, namely Middle English that he considered remained untouched by the Norman Conquest. Shippey asserts that "Tolkien's first major philological discovery was his demonstration in 1929 that two manuscripts of Middle English *in different handwriting* were nevertheless written in identical English, down to spelling, and even more remarkable, down to tiny points of grammar" (*Roots*

46). Tolkien was aware of an English language and literature that survived outside of the Norman influence in the British Isles. He was proud of what he saw as the "real" English literature, yet he was also aware of the fact that his country lacked what many others possessed: an ancient epic that solidified the English national identity. Grundtvig Grimm also points to, in his article, "Tolkien: Nationalisms and the Invention of Mythologies" (2010) the existence of an "arms race" between Celtic-German language groups regarding epic literature. These countries, who do not organically constitute a nation, sought to produce or acquire an epic literature to call their own in order to cement their place as national unities (Grimm 82). Tolkien had a similar thought, as he mentioned in one of his letters, his intention was "to restore to the English an epic tradition and present them with a mythology of their own" (Carpenter 250).

It is also important to mention that when creating this "mythology", Tolkien embedded his own opinions about the modern society into his work. Tolkien seems to be an anti-modernist at heart, both against the literary movement and advancement of technology, as he has written his works so outside the boundries of the former, and so against the latter (Attebery 37). Even in his letters it is possible to find his opposition to modernisation "Such is modern life. Mordor in our midst. And I regret to note that the billowing cloud recently pictured did not mark the fall of Barad-dur, but was produced by its allies" (*Letters* 183). In *LOTR*, the idea of escapism from the modern era is greatly reflected, especially an escapism from the industralisation of nature. Tolkien further comments that "This, however, is the modern and special (or accidental) escapist aspect of fairy-stories, which they share with romances and other stories out of or about the past" (Fairy 151). His fantasy was not only about telling an extraordinary and educative story, but also reflecting on his views.

While discussing fantasy, determining Tolkien's place within the development of fantasy is crucial. Named "the author of the century" by Thomas Shippey, Tolkien was a medievalist scholar (xvii). Tolkien's involvement with fantasy began with *The Hobbit*, a children's book born out of a bedtime story he told to his children. This story about a hobbit and a magical ring involving dwarves, treasures, a dragon and a wizard later evolved into *The Lord of the Rings*. However, nothing that has been listed was in any way new to the audience, there were enchanters in romance and magical rings in both romance

and epic. Dwarves were certainly a common element in sagas and northern epics; a dragon is nothing special, having been a prominent enemy of the hero in both epic and romance. Yet, the way Tolkien wrote these elements into a story turned them into a major success, enough to be asked for a sequel by his publisher Stanley Unwin, who was very impressed in particular by the hobbits that Tolkien created (Carpenter 192). This sequel, which had the curious name of "The New Hobbit", soon turned into a much more ambitious creation

During the process of writing "The New Hobbit," Tolkien was already exchanging letters with the fans of *The Hobbit*, and one letter in particular draws attention to the intricate workings of the author's mind. Written to Mr. Thompson (who is assumed to be a fan) in a letter draft, Tolkien explains that he set himself a task, "to restore to the English an epic tradition and present them with a mythology of their own: it is a wonderful thing to be told that I have succeeded, at least with those who have still the undarkened heart and mind" (Tolkien *Letters* 250). This ambition and desire to construct a mythology was the driving factor behind his creation of his secondary world fantasy, set in the Middle-Earth, which he would later fill with many stories. In order to construct this myth, Tolkien turned to epics and romances from the past for inspiration (James 67). To this end, Tolkien worked together with his close friend and author C.S Lewis, as they provided criticism for each other, "mediating the fantasies of earlier generations and both, in their own very different ways, helping to give modern fantasy its medievalist cast" (Lewis 62-63).

Tolkien also provided a ground for potential criticism concerning the fantasy genre through his discussion of fairy stories in his essay, "On Fairy Stories" thereby allowing room for a professional discussion of his works (as well as the fantasy genre) whereas so little existed before. Tolkien's essay is about what constitutes a work of fantasy, and how should it be written. In this essay, Tolkien uses the term fairy story interchangeably with fantasy story, Tolkien's definition for fantasy (or fairy story) then is as follows: "The realm of fairy-story is wide and deep and high and filled with many things: all manner of beasts and birds are found there; shoreless seas and stars uncounted; beauty that is an enchantment, and an ever-present peril; both joy and sorrow as sharp as swords" (Tolkien "Fairy" 109). What is meant in this definition is that not only the worlds of fantasy are filled with many strange and wondrous creations of the author's mind, but they also reflect the human condition and emotions as good as any other literary medium. In his attempt

to further explain fairy stories, Tolkien finds *Oxford English Dictionary* to be somewhat lacking; nevertheless, he lists the definitions made by it: (a) a tale about fairies, or generally a fairy legend, with developed senses, (b) an unreal or incredible story, and (c) a falsehood (Tolkien "Fairy" 110). He goes on to discuss each of these definitions; however, his conclusion is more relevant for the development of fantasy and hence for this thesis: stories that include fairies as their main subject are not interesting; and what a fairy story should actually constitute of is the adventures of men in the "Perilous Realm" (Tolkien "Fairy" 113). Tolkien often refers to this realm in question as the faerie, which it is the fantastical landscape of fantasy works. The uses of the faerie are many, ranging from satire to morality, but it is mostly employed for the sake of adventure. The faerie is usually associated with the use of magic; however, there is one crucial rule Tolkien emphasises above any other: "if there is any satire present in the tale, one thing must not be made fun of, the magic itself. That must in that story be taken seriously, neither laughed at nor explained away" (Tolkien "On Fairy Stories" 114). He shows the romance, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* as the best example of this rule, admiring the seriousness of the story concerning magical events.

While making a definition of fantasy, Tolkien excludes certain works that contain fantastical elements (or worlds) from his definition. Fables, certain allegories and traveler's tales as well as dream visions are not considered as works of fantasy. Fables are excluded on the grounds that they do not contain real humans; only animals with certain human characteristics that are capable of speech, which directly violates the main rule of fantasy: "adventures of men in in the Faerie" (Tolkien "Fairy" 113). Allegories and traveler's tales are eliminated because the fantastic elements used in them are merely there to provide a critique of a real life situation, such as Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). Small men with huge self-importance and a ridiculous tendency for violence and war, or giants with no intentions of conquest, like Gulliver suggests them to do, are not proper elements of the faerie, but rather, depictions of real-life figures and situations in an allegorical context in order to mock them. Finally, because dream vision attributes the fantasy elements to dreams, lies and illusions, it does not constitute a true work of fantasy. Even if the world dreamed by the author was a perfect example of the faerie, the author denies this world the moment it is claimed to be a dream. Tolkien

comments that "[i]f a waking writer tells you that his tale is only a thing imagined in his sleep, he cheats deliberately the primal desire at the heart of Faerie: the realisation, independent of the conceiving mind, of imagined wonder" (Tolkien "Fairy" 117). Therefore, Tolkien's difference from the majority of his predecessors was taking fantasy seriously and regrding it as a genre instead of a literary element that supports other genres.

In order to be taken seriously, the introduction of the fantastic elements must be believable. Thus, Tolkien describes the process of creating a "secondary world", which has its own set of rules that are coherent and "true" so long as the mind accepts and believes that they are true for the duration of the reading process. (Tolkien "Fairy" 132). The secondary world of course opposes to the "primary world" where the readers all live in, while the supernatural elements abound in the secondary worlds such as fairies, magic, orcs and hobbits exist. Tolkien suggests that the cretion of a secondary world neccesitates "the willing suspension of disbelief" for without it the secondary world can not be read as a self-contained serious story. As the reader accepts the fact that this new, secondary world he is entering into is a man-made creation, he transforms the author of the story into a "sub-creator" (Tolkien "Fairy" 122). The secondary world imagined and created by this sub-creator is therefore, a new, somewhat unfamiliar and fantastical version of the primary world, and it needs to be credible enough to trigger the aforementioned "suspension of disbelief", Tolkien refers to this credibility as "secondary belief," which arises when what the author relates "accords with the laws of [the story] world" ("On Fairy Stories" 132). Tolkien was the one to push it to prominence for the fantasy genre; or rather, one could say, Tolkien was the author to normalise the creation of secondary worlds to tell new stories in. Before Tolkien, secondary worlds already existed to some capacity as Colin Manlove points out that English literature in particular is "full of the impulse to make little worlds within or without our own" (37). He lists *The Canterbury Tales* (1392), *The House of Fame* (1374-1385), *The Romaunt of the Rose* or *The Parliament of Fowls*, *Beowulf*, the Middle English *Pearl* and *Sir Gawain*, Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590), Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595-96) and *The Tempest* (1610-1611) as some of the examples of secondary worlds.

Before Tolkien, the fantastic was a mode to be utilized in other genres in order to enrich the story, however, his *LOTR* established fantasy as relevant genre. Attebery maintains

that *LOTR* is one of the prototypes of the fantasy genre (14-16). Of course, there have been ideas similar to that of Tolkien in the past, such as Sir Philip Sidney's, in his "An Apology for Poetry" (1595), argues that the poet, a word of Greek origin meaning "maker", can transcend nature and create something greater than nature (19-20). According to David Sandner, "Sidney's claim has an obvious importance to later arguments that the fantastic is the primary literature of the creative imagination and is an important precursor to discussions of the fantastic [literature]'s production of secondary worlds" (19). Similar to Sidney, MacDonald asserts that the natural world, the world that the readers live in, has its own set of laws, and no one must interfere with such laws when writing; however, they can offer new laws and through these laws can create their own worlds. MacDonald marks this as "the nearest, perhaps, [the author] can come to creation" (65). All of these authors are in essence describing the same thing; a secondary world achieved through the medium of fantasy. Sandner argues that this model goes further back, and includes epic and romance, similar to what this thesis suggests (Sandner 6).

The earliest examples of secondary worlds are the settings depicted in epic and romance, the reader can easily identify many familiar elements to the primary world he lives in, but he will also observe many others that he can not familiarise with. For example, the world of *Beowulf* would not look odd to any reader, as the secondary world is inhabited by Nordic warriors, the Geats and the Danes, and the landscape of Scandinavia is familiar enough. However, within the same story the reader is presented with three monsters: Grendel, his mother, and finally, a dragon. Grendel and his mother are both described as members of "Cain's clan" and although no clear physical descriptions are provided, it can be clearly interpreted that they are monsters (Heaney 141).Yet the reader has no problem accepting their presence within the epic despite knowing such creatures do not exist in the primary world. Another example would be Beowulf's battle against Grendel's mother, which takes place underwater. This battle takes almost an entire day, despite Beowulf having no mentions of ever coming out of the lake for air (Heaney 196). Even the original audience of *Beowulf* would know that no human could survive underwater without air for more than a few minutes. However, for the sake of the story, the mind of the reader just accepts that Beowulf is powerful (or blessed) enough to keep fighting without oxygen,

which is an example of how willing suspension of disbelief functions in secondary worlds.

The same "willing suspension of disbelief" also applies to romances. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the story begins in King Arthur's court during Christmas, when a strange knight appears and challenges the knights to cut off his head; also stating that he will return the favour once a year has passed (Armitage 46-47). Sir Gawain rises to the challenge, and he cuts off the Green Knight's head, but the latter simply picks up and re-attaches his head (49). Later, as Gawain adventures to fulfil his oath to the Green Knight for his own head to be cut off, he finds out that the magical knight was put under a spell by Morgan Le Fay; hence; the introduction of magic into the setting (184-185). The setting in this context becomes a secondary world in the wake of Camelot and its denizens. The realms and events in *Beowulf* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* both show clear signs of the Faerie, yet, they were not thought to be "different worlds" by their respective audiences. Manlove explains this as follows: "Visits to heaven or hell in pre-1700 literature are actually to what is seen as the primary world, in comparison to which it is ours which is secondary. These are not meant to be seen as invented worlds, but as figures of final truth" (38). Therefore, it can be inferred that secondary worlds existed in literature for a long time, especially in the form of romance and epic, yet they were not recognised as other worlds, or faerie. The nineteenth-century works saw a return to secondary worlds with authors transporting their protagonists to new magical realms, such Lewis Carrol's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and early twentieth century saw fantasy and faerie worlds becoming more grounded and serious, particularly reflected in Lord Dunsany's *Gods of Pegâna* (1905). With Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and the sequel, *The Lord of the Rings* however, these secondary worlds gained immense traction, to the point of becoming the most dominant type of fantasy, namely, epic fantasy [1]as established by Tokien. Lloyd Alexander presents epic fantasy as a genre "that draws heavily upon the mythology and establishes itself within the tradition and the conventions of the heroic romance" (qtd in Večko). Epic fantasy is defined by the epic nature of its setting and by the epic stature of its plot, themes, and characters. Stableford argues that

[1] Epic fantasy is often used interchangeably with "high fantasy", "sword and sorcery", "quest fantasy" (Stableford 197-198).

in epic fantasy " the primary focus is the replication or calculated variation of the recipe for hero myths detailed by Jospeh Campbelll" as well as stating that epic fantasy distinguishes itself from other subgenres of fantasy due because it "consists entirely of fiction set in secondary worlds" (197-198).

In the creation of secondary worlds and therefore, works of fantasy, Tolkien followed a certain pattern. This pattern has also become the go-to definition of fantasy, which neccesitates four elements for the genre. The first of these is fantasy, that is, the creation of secondary worlds, a process which he names "sub-creation", and in which he seeks to distance his work from the "fact" or reality to some extent ("On Fairy Stories" 138-139). The second is recovery, which is arresting strangeness or arousing defamiliriastation in the reader which adds elements to the story that are not rooted in reality, but are presented in such a way that they become a part of Tolkien's secondary world reality ("Fairy" 140-144). Tolkien also argues that it is very hard to incorporate these fantastical elements into a serious story ("Fairy" 140). The third element is escape or rather, "escape of the prisoner", in which Tolkien argues that a person upon reading fantasy is running away from life, however, his argument is a crituqe of the modern era ("Fairy" 148-150). He argues that through escapism in fantasy, humans can overcome adversity and navigate their desires that usually appear out of their reach ("Fairy" 151-152). He also argues that this escapism is deeply rooted in humanity's wish to escape from death ("Fairy" 153), hence his employment of eucatasrophe, a happy ending and resolution to the story. In his own words, eucatastrophe is "The consolation of fairy-stories, the joy of the happyending: or more correctly of the good catastrophe, the sudden joyous turn" ("Fairy" 153). He argues that eucatastrophe is unique to fairy tale (or fantasy) and it offers a miracle that is never counted on to recur, neither does it erase the dycatasrophe, the sadness and sorrowin the story (Tolkien "Fairy" 153). Eucatasrophe merely ensures that the story will havea happy ending, in which the readers are granted hope, which is hard to find in their daily lives (Tolkien "Fairy" 154). These four elements are the essence of Tolkien's fantasy, and are often found in other works of fantasy as well.

But these core elements are not Tolkien's only inspirations when writing epic fantasy. The motif of the cursed ring, a prominent element of Germanic epics is also central to

LOTR. Tolkien seems to be inspired by the *Nibelungenlied,* as well as Wagner's *Der Ring Des Nibelungen* which he denies (*Letters* 324). John Clute on the other hand suggests that the One Ring is "like the Ring of the Nibelungs can enslave others" (825). In both *LOTR* and Wagner's work, the stories revolve around rings with great powers that can bestow dominion over the world to their wielders (Dry 30-31). Once again, both rings have some sort of a curse on them, Nibelungs' ring will bring down the gods[2], whereas the One Ring has a will of its own and will ultimately corrupt or betray its bearer (*FOTR* 54). Thus, even though Tolkien denies any inspiration or similarity, it is apparent that the motif of the cursed ring plays a large part in his story.

Aside from epic elements, medieval romance elements are also among Tolkien's inspirations. As Senior states that "modern heroic fantasy borrows much of its costuming and many of its conventions from medieval literature, such magical characters and elements" (33). Some of these elements are quests taken by knights and heroes, prophecies, knights, wizards, dragons, elves, dwarves, unnatural monsters, enchanted castles and forests, as well as magical artefacts. Most of these elements are derived from earlier folklore, as well as romance and epic. Fantasy adopts the medieval model, "[t]he exploits and battles with evil antagonists and forces of knights afield provide an elemental conflict between good and evil in which good confronts evil to affirm its own activity and power" (Senior 33-34). In short, fantasy can be defined as "action acknowledged by reader and writer to contain 'impossible' elements that are accepted as possible in the story and treated in an internally consistent manner" (Ekman 17). It is "[a] fiction evoking wonder and containing a substantial and irreducible element of the supernatural with which the mortal characters in the story or the readers become on at least partly familiar terms" (Manlove 157). Finally, "*[f]antasy is any departure from consensus reality* [emphasis original], an impulse native to literature and manifested in innumerable variations, from monster to metaphor. It includes transgressions of what one generally takes to be physical facts" (Hume 21). This collective definition of fantasy is henceforth

[2] "The Ring shall bring not power but destruction, not joy but misery and the gnomes will devote their ceaseless energies to the destruction of the power of the gods" (Dry 39).

accepted by this thesis, as it aligns the most with Tolkien's own view of fantasy, and the way he uses it in *LOTR*.

Gary K. Wolfe asserts that "[f]antastic in the broadest sense had been a dominant characteristic of most world literature for centuries prior to the rise of the novel" (11). Epic, is a primary example and it is one of the earliest forms of narrative, one of the first means for humankind to express themselves with a story. This ancient genre is hard to re-produce within the conditions of today's world; Scholes and Kellogg even refer to the epic as such; "Epic poem is as dead as the dinosaur. We can put together a synthetic epic with a superficial resemblance to the originals, just as we can fabricate a museum dinosaur; but the conditions which produced the originals have passed" (11). The epics in question were filled with collective myths, histories and struggles of nations, collected in oral form and passed on throughout the generations. Today, the struggles of nations are not described in such a fantastic manner anymore.

Almost every civilization throughout history can claim ownership of an epic, from the Sumerian *Gilgamesh*, to Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and eventually to the Roman *Aeneid*; and each of these epics, despite having been produced under vastly different circumstances and cultures, share some common elements that help critics categorise them as "epic". Richard P. Martin makes three very important points about determining what an epic is. According to him, one can distinguish an epic by its relation to other genres, epic has "symbiotic ties" with folklore and myth, and finally, the specifics of textual or performance style do not necessarily mean that a performance can be labelled an epic (Martin 16). Thus, Martin's comments cement epic's place as a truly complex genre. He makes it out as a genre whose boundaries cannot be easily defined, or rather, has a lot of exceptions. For example, Martin's point about the text is accurate, as an epic is not necessarily bound to a certain textual structure to be an epic (16). This is especially important when considering *LOTR* itself is written in prose, except for some poems and songs recited by the characters. However, it would be more useful to first establish a definition for what an epic is in the traditional sense.

M.H. Abrams in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (2009) defines epic as "a long verse narrative on a serious subject, told in a formal and elevated style, and centered on a heroic

or quasi-divine figure on whose actions depends the fate of a tribe, a nation, or the human race" (97). Similar to this definition, Scholes and Kellogg comment on the genre as follows:

> It often takes that form of heroic, poetic narrative which we call epic. Behind the epic lie a variety of narrative forms, such as sacred myth, quasi-historical legend, and fictional folktale, which have coalesced into a traditional narrative which is an amalgam of myth, history, and fiction. (12)

Their definition opens up a variety of possibilities to define the genre, which is why they simplify the definition later in their book as "the chronicle of the deeds of the hero" (209). Minna Skafte Jensen uses a simpler yet similar definition: "[E]pic is a long narrative poem describing historical events. By 'long' I mean: longer than other forms in a community's spectrum of genres. 'Narrative' means: mainly concerned with action, but allowing for both description and reflection" (46). Kurt A. Raaflaub examines the historicity of epics, and his conclusion is that "epics were usually believed to represent history", and "heroic myth thus became an instrument of ethical, social, and political reflection and offered a timeless and continually valid repertoire which enabled the poets to weave contemporary concerns into the epic action, to illuminate and educate their audiences" (69).

In *LOTR*, Tolkien follows a similar structure, as he explains in the appendices of *ROTK*, he takes on the persona of a translator (or academic) who happened to come across *The Red Book of Westmarch*[3] and merely translated the story told in *LOTR* (*ROTK* 304-308). The way the *Red Book* functions is similar to how Homer recollects the history of the Trojan War in writing (in *The Iliad*) this time, an author in present time collects an epic story from Middle-Earth, and relays it unto the readers in the present. Epics are concerned with history, but they should not be taken as fact. Epic's more accurate function is to reflect the society that produced them and the events that shaped the society. In fact, because of the mythical elements in them, epics move closer to the realm of fiction; thatis, fiction inspired by historical events that is relayed to the audience in a fantastical manner. The intent of the poet in doing so is educating the audience through the actions

[3] This book is seen multiple times through the trilogy, first under Bilbo's ownership, who passes it onto Frodo; and Frodo passes it onto Samwise. It recounts the tale of The One Ring, found by Bilbo, carried by Frodo and finally destroyed.

of the epic hero. The audience accordingly is supposed to reflect the hero's better deeds in their own actions.

Epics are based on the heroic persona who often excels his peers and represents the best qualities of his society. This hero is usually male. Frye defines this type of hero as such: "If superior in degree to other men but not to his natural environment the hero is a leader. He has authority, passions, and powers of expression far greater than ours, but what he does is subject both to social criticism and to the order of nature" (33-34), in that he far suppresses his fellow men in power and standing. Most of the time, epics depict the hero facing great challenges to his society, yet it should not be thought that the hero does this merely out of the goodness of his heart; his real aim is to increase his fame and standing among his peers. This often leads the hero to pursue even greater challenges that might far exceed his own powers and mortality, which could (and usually does) result in his death. Yet such is the hero's lot. In order to be remembered, one has to embrace the possibility of death, which is known as the heroic paradox. This pattern can be observed in many epics regardless of the culture that produced them. In *Beowulf*, the hero marches to his last battle knowing he will perish against the dragon (153). Similarly it is revealed in *The Odyssey* that Achilles of *The Iliad* dies after the events of the epic, despite having been warned by his mother Thetis[4]. The Sumerian hero Gilgamesh even attempts to overcome his mortality after the death of his friend Enkidu, only to realise later that true immortality does not stem from living eternally, but by leaving behind a lasting name. Most of the time, the hero has some knowledge regarding his death, and despite this knowledge of impending doom, he will still carry on with his duties; so the truest epic hero is a man that can overcome the fear of his mortality and summon forth his courage to accomplish the task at hand.

In most epics, the hero is superior to his fellow men, as the hero has in him authority, passions and powers of expression superior to common man, subsequently his actions are open to social critique (Frye 33-34). W.H. Auden states that, "The epic hero is one who,

[4] In *Pseudo-Apollodorus, Bibliotheca E3. 29* (1921), goddess Thetis warns Achilles not to be the first to disembark from the ships at Troy, because the first to land ashore was going to be the first to die.

thanks to his exceptional gifts, is able to perform great deeds of which the average man is incapable. He is of noble (often divine) descent, stronger, braver, better looking, more skillful than everybody else. A stranger meeting him on the street would immediately recognize him as an epic hero" (211). Similarly, Nagy holds that epic heroes are superior to their fellow men due to their lineage because they are descended from the gods. As Nagy further states, "The heroic potential is 'programmed' by divine genes" (109). Jackson comments that "[a]ncestry and descent are of great importance, and the actions of individuals are very often set in a frame of reference which compares them with similar actions by their ancestors or by men of an earlier time" (119). In other words, even though the heroes may not manage to accomplish the same tasks, they operate in the hope that their efforts will make them famous or immortal (Jackson 199). Thus, there is a strong sense of similarity in all epic heroes, even though they have different tasks and motives. For Miller, the ideal epic hero is "indubitably human, though almost always invested with oversized and probably superhuman characteristics and powers"; and the actions of this hero are "described in the song within some identifiably historical context: a frame of actual (read: possible, understandable) events depicted as occurring in a segment of human history" (32). Roger B. Rollin is of the opinion that:

> All of these heroes are larger than life; some are merely larger than others. But what the hero is and does in terms of objective reality are less important than what he represents to our inner reality. The local man who saves a child from drowning is of less enduring interest to us than our fictive or historical heroes: the former wants symbolism, and unless local mythopoeia provides him with it, we tend to displace him in our consciousness with the more value-charged heroes we seem to need. The heroes of the great English epics represent attempts by poets of genius to fulfil that need for their own times (435).

Achilles' unmatched fighting skills, Odysseus's genius mind (Garner 391) or Beowulf's superhuman strength (8-9) are all primary examples of such qualities. They cement their fame by killing a powerful rival or beheading a terrifying monster such as Gilgamesh and Enkidu killing Humbaba and the Bull of Heaven (George 175), which shows another heroic principle: battling against supernatural foes. All heroes face enemies that are superior to them in terms of sheer physical and magical power. Sometimes the enemy is a god, sometimes it is a beast. Achilles battles a river into submission and Beowulf faces a variety of monsters. In their pursuit for fame and glory, heroes often journey away from

their homes. Beowulf travels to Hrothgar's realm, Odysseus first travels to Troy, then gets stranded in a variety of places before finally reaching home, Ithaca. Aeneas travels the world until he finally reaches somewhere he can settle. Thus, it can be discerned that vast travels are synonymous with epic adventure. Moreover, all heroes are cultural legends. They are usually recognised for their greatness in their homelands, which inspires them to seek more fame elsewhere; or their fame travels further than they do and their future opponents recognise them. As Rollin states, "The vague origins and the sudden departures of such heroes also serve to enhance their legends. These legends in time take on almost religious status, becoming myths which provide the communities not only with models for conduct but with the kind of heightened shared experiences which inspire and unify their members" (427). In essence, a legendary status does not necessarily have to be a part of the hero; it can be attained later, at the end of or during the hero's journey or quest.

It is also important to note that the hero is a member of the "heroic society", and the confines of which is crucial for the epic. Kerr comments on the concept as such: "The form of the society in an heroic age is aristocratic and magnificent… The great man is the man who is best at the things with which everyone is familiar" (8). Every member closely follows certain codes of conduct and partakes in certain rituals (or actions), whether it is the mountains or fjords of the Germanic peoples, or the temperate heartlands of Greece surrounded by wine-dark seas, the heroic society persists in some form. The members of these heroic socities were "stronger and more enduring and in which humans freely communicated with the gods" (Raaflaub 61). These heroic socities were also martial communities where one's measure was greatly tied to one's strength and courage, as evidenced by the epic heroic definitions provided by critics and scholars of epic genre.

The plot of an epic, as stated before, is driven by the epic hero. Most of the time the plots of epic are similar to one another. That is mostly due to the fact that the heroic society of the pre-medieval times had certain rules and arrangements, which inspired such plots to be developed. Some of these plots are listed by Gregory Nagy, among which two are reflected in *LOTR*. "The returning king reclaims his kingdom by becoming reintegrated with his society," which reflects Aragorn's own journey to becoming the king of Gondor and "[t]he son goes off on a quest to find his father in order to find his own heroic

identity", which reflects Frodo's quest, since he goes on a similar quest as his adoptive father, Bilbo, and discovers his own heroism in the end (Nagy 79-80). Similar plots are found in Greek and Roman epics, such as *The Odyssey*, which exhibits both plots through Odysseus and his son Telemachus. Another common plot point is "the defence of a narrow place against odds" which is thought be one of the core elements of the epic (Kerr 5). This is especially common in Germanic heroic poetry, and is also seen in *LOTR*, such as when Gandalf holds the Bridge of Khazad-dûm against the Balrog in order to give the Fellowship time to escape (Tolkien *FOTR* 245), or when Boromir defends the hobbits Pippin and Merry against overwhelming odds (Tolkien *TTT* 10).

An epic usually starts with the hero already having proved himself worthy such as Achilles, Odysseus, Aeneas and Beowulf. These heroes have some accomplishments that make them qualified for further achievements and to be recognised by the gods. However, there are some cases, as in *Gilgamesh*, where the hero is powerful, but has not yet proven himself beneficial to his nation or society. In such cases, the plot might change greatly from the more common patterns. One constant is that it is always the hero that is central to the plot structure, and he is the one to resolve or conclude it. To set an example one should look at *The Iliad*, the plot starts with a fight over the distribution of the loot between King Agamemnon and Achilles, which results in the hero to protest the king's decision and refuse to fight against the Trojans anymore. Similarly, the poem reaches its conclusion once Achilles parleys with King Priam of Troy and gives up Hector's body. The same can be observed in *The Aeneid* as the plot starts when Aenas leaving the Trojan lands and arriving in Queen Dido's realm, where he lives in peace and luxury for a while alongside the beautiful queen. However, soon he is commanded by the divines to fulfil his destiny in Italy, while the epic concludes with Aenas' final defeat of Turnus in battle. In *LOTR*, Frodo, although not himself a traditional epic hero, is an exception to this rule, as he has no glory or fame to himself, he is yet unproven in the line of duty despite coming from a prestigious family. However, almost all of the other members of the Fellowship are remarkable men, chief among them Aragorn.

Until this point, no distinction has been made between epics of different cultures and their respective heroes, as the aim was to show that the structure, hero, plot and the purpose of

the epic genre does not show massive changes between different cultures. However, although different epics have many common characteristics, there are still important distinctions to be considered, such as between a Germanic and a Roman epic. One of the primary differences between northern and southern epics is the variety of adversaries. In Greek and Roman epics, it is much more common to see the whims of the gods interfering with mortals' lives and forcing the heroes to resolve the problems between the divines. The case of Paris is an example of this. The young Trojan prince, who is unaware of his identity, is asked by three goddesses to decide upon who among them is the most beautiful. Paris' choice, Aphrodite, offers the love of Helen to him. This choice will later result in the Trojan War and hence, the epic: *The Iliad*[5]. The outcome of this conflict between the divines is reflected into *The Iliad* through the Olympians splitting into two camps and fighting on different sides against each other in the Trojan War.

In light of all this information, it is possible to propose an epic definition this thesis will base its arguments on: epic is a long narrative of a hero's deeds, especially martial. For an epic text to be considered truly epic, the presence of an epic hero is necessary. The epic hero is the one who can overcome and accomplish odds and tasks no one else in his society can, and he is partially divine or has the favour of a divine being. His deeds are usually written in verse, mostly concerned with the hero overcoming great odds and adversaries, which are often supernatural in their nature, concerning the fate or existence of a nation or a large body of people. Within this narrative, it is possible to catch glimpses and reflections of the nation in question such as their morals, culture and beliefs. Thus, epics are, by their nature, concerned greatly with history and allow the readers to see deeper into historical events of importance. The setting can be vast, containing many countries, even other worlds where no other mortal could travel. Epics are usually written in verse, in a grandiose style, or as Aristotle states, "in high mimetic mode" (33-34). Not all epics follow the same convention of verse or elevated style, but they are the exception rather than the rule.

[5] This story takes place in *Pseudo-Apollodorus* (*Bibliotheca*, E.3.2) but it is not included in *The Iliad*.

In addition to epic elements, *LOTR* also employs certain romance elements and therefore, a definition of romance will be established in order to discuss these elements. At first glance, romance and epic seem very similar to one another. That is due to romance slowly emerging by using the same elements the epic incorporates, namely folktale, myth as well as history. Kerr even states, "[t]he name Romance is given to a number of kinds of medieval narrative by which the Epic is succeeded and displaced" (3). This occurred, "most notably in France, but also in other countries which were led, mainly by the example and influence of France, to give up their own 'epic' forms and subjects in favour of new manners" (3). Richard William Southern notes the transition from localism to universality, the rise of logic and the emergence of systematic thought as reasons for the replacement of epic with romance (220-221). Southern suggests that "[i]t is a reflection of a more general change of attitude which found expression in many different ways. Briefly, we find less talk of life as an exercise in endurance, and of death in a hopeless cause; and we hear more of life as a seeking and a journeying" (221). Thus, the transition from epic to romance seems to be the reflection of the social, intellectual and spiritual change, which had an effect on both the secular and the religious life of twelth century Europe.

Despite its popularity, romance is perhaps one of the most difficult genres to define properly. The critics do not present a singular opinion when it comes to defining what actually constitutes a romance. As Lillian Herlands Hornstein argues, "[a]lthough the romances have never been considered difficult to understand, no one has been able to tell us exactly what they are" (64). Similarly, Paul Strohm asserts that "[r]omance is the most capacious and protean of medieval genres … even as it is the most recognizable in its motifs, themes, structures, and memes" (353). Similar to Strohm's argument, Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner argues that romance is "the shape-shifter par excellence among medieval genres" (13). Melissa Furrow remarks that "romance does not seem to be easily pinned down by a definition that really would be accepted by consensus" (46).

However, for the sake of this study itself, a definition needs to be made. Although the exact definition of the genre is hard to establish, the origin of romance is possible to trace through time. The old French word, *romanz*, normally identifies works written in French; however, it changed into *romance* to represent any secular text of love and adventure in

French or English (Bradbury 291). Romance does not have an English origin, and many of the works are either adaptations or translations from the original French versions. Nevertheless, romances "often overlap in style as well as content, and in some general as well as particular respects" (Mills 2). Romance is also seen as a result of French *chanson de geste*, as it adopts the heroic subject from it (Field 154). A.C. Gibbs, who remarks on the familiarity between both genres, refers to *chanson de geste* as the "epic of the feudal age" (3). Therefore, it can be discerned that romance is akin to the latest member of a literary family that starts with epic and continues in *chanson de geste*, finally resulting in romance. Similar to these two genres, romance represents "ideas or ideals, defines heroes who embody those ideals, and celebrates the success of the heroes" (Foster 401). Griffin asserts, "By a romance we commonly mean a tale of an improbable or, better, of an incredible character," similar to that of epic (55). The heroes of romance however, are not members of the heroic society as they were in the epic, but rather, a chivalric, feudal society. Maurice Keen explains that authors of romance "were enthusiastic in explaining that the stories of their heroes presented a model of true chivalry" (2). Similarly, Auerbach asserts that "[o]nly members of the chivalric-courtly society are worthy of adventure, hence they alone can undergo serious and significant experiences," and further adds that, "[t]hose outside this class cannot appear except as accessories, and even then generally in merely comic, grotesque, or despicable roles. This state of affairs is less apparent in antiquity and in the older heroic epic than here" (139). Therefore, it can be discerned that romances chiefly deal with the chivalric noble class and their undertakings.

In her study[6] Pınar Taşdelen pays attention to the fact that, "[a] chivalric context is another well accepted unifying factor for grouping romances, and the romances sharing chivalric motives are regarded as 'chivalric romances'" (34). Also for Gibbs, texts keeping their subject matters from Anglo-Norman material and French *chansons de geste* can be classified as chivalric romances (18-19). These romances are heroic narratives adapted to English feudalism and Christianity, and the solitary adventure is replaced by the military expedition in chivalric romance in an exotic or otherworldly setting (Taşdelen 34). Moreover, similar to epic, romance is greatly dominated by war as it is of perennial interest to humanity, and romance writers usually retain the war undertaken on behalf of

[6] "Romancing The Ordeal: Representations of Pain and Suffering in Middle English Metrical Romances," conducted at the University of Hull in June 2012.

country theme and battle narratives of epic to some degree, even enlarging upon it at times (Griffin 62). This is also a major theme in *LOTR*, as the primary conflict, The War of the Ring, is one of the central subjects of the books, and battle narratives dominate greater part of the second and third books. Therefore, this thesis takes chivalric romance characteristics as its primary definition for the discussion of the romance elements in *LOTR*.

However, further elaboration is still required for an accurate definition. Helaine Newstead explains that romance "is a narrative about knightly prowess and adventure, in verse or in prose, intended primarily for the entertainment of a listening audience" (11), while Derek Brewer states that romances "deal in a fantasy world of adventure and love by knights and ladies" (61). Stephen Knight makes a distinction between three different types of romance, the first of them being "a lonely hero wins honour, wife and property" (102). This description aligns with Tolkien's own knight-errant in *LOTR*, Aragorn. Aragorn's journey and challenges result in him acquiring his beloved Arwen, as well as the throne of Gondor, thus his journey consists of several incidents that are commonly used in chivalric romance. Finlayson remarks that "love is either simply one of the rewards of prowess (generally accompanied by a kingdom) or is used to motivate an episode and then casually abandoned" (59). This is also the case in *LOTR*. Despite the fact that Arwen is a major reason for Aragorn to take on the quest alongside the Fellowship, she does not have a significant presence in the books[7].

One final point to be made is how the protagonist of romance operates in relation to the epic hero. The knight often finds himself in unfamiliar surroundings and faces adversity or peril, which he resolves through his martial skill, and then rides out for more adventure (Finlayson 55). This is somewhat altered in *LOTR*, as Aragorn is always accompanied by other members of the Fellowship, however, it is also not uncommon for knight-errants to have companions, such as the case of Roland, or Knights of the Round Table. The knight-errant of romance usually employs all the typical virtues seen in epic, such as bravery, loyalty and generosity, and through them, he is able achieve a position in the court of the king. Jackson states other virtues specifically observed in romance heroes as follows,

[7] In part V of the Appendices of *The Return of the King*, Tolkien relays a part of "The Tale of Aragorn and Arwen," presenting their love story to the reader.

"Mercy to a defeated enemy, moderation and balance of virtues, and good manners" (19). Aragorn displays mercy, as well as good manners to his subjects and allies, such as when he marches to the Black Gates to confront Sauron, and orders deserters to reclaim their honor by retaking the keep of Cair Andros, which fills them with newfound courage and hope (*ROTK* 112). He also heals his subjects in the House of Healing in Gondor after the battle of Minas Tirith which earns him the respect and admiration of the people he will come to lead (*ROTK* 167). However, he does not always show mercy to defeated enemies. Arguably, most of Aragorn's enemies are creatures beyond rehabilitation and showing mercy to such foes would not end well. Romances are also greatly concerned with the private identity of the knight-errant, and emphasise this aspect rather than the hero's service to his society, as opposed to epics (Crane 11). In *LOTR*, this is chiefly observed in the first book, where Aragorn starts out as the Strider, a rugged ranger, but slowly transforms into Elessar ("Elfstone"), embracing his destiny and duty as the King of Gondor, and escapes the shackles of his alter ego. In the third book, he fully commits to his identity as a King, and acts as such.

Another important distinction between epic and romance is the Christian elements, which are not seen in epics save for *Beowulf*. Examples of such elements include the depiction of Christian holidays as seen in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and the virtues depicted in Gawain's resistance to temptation (to a certain extent) in the same romance, or the angels coming down from the heavens to take Roland's soul in *Chanson de Roland* (Sayers 142). Christian influences are also observed in *LOTR*, alongside Christian teachings and reflections of the Bible. Members of the Fellowship act on those virtues. Additionally, Tolkien writes that he envisioned Frodo's quest as representing the Lord's Prayer, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Letter 181 Carpenter 251). He also states that:

> *The Lord of the Rings* is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision. That is why I have not put in, or have cut out, practically all references to anything like 'religion', to cults or practices, in the imaginary world. For the religious element is absorbed into the story and the symbolism (Carpenter *Letters* 191).

Of course, Christianity or God do not have a visible representation in Middle-Earth at the time of *LOTR*, however, the overall creation of this secondary world is not limited to the trilogy. Through the *Silmarillion*, the Christian influences of Middle-Earth become much more clear.[8]

Aside from the Fellowship and Frodo, Gandalf the Grey, the wizard, is one of the major characters that reflects Christian elements. In him, the presence of God (Eru Illúvatar) is observed the most as Gandalf is a Maiar, a being of light, who is close to what the Bible would describe as an archangel (Tolkien *Silmarillion* 11-12). Alongside the quest to destroy the Ring, Gandalf has his own quest in Middle-Earth; that is to advise the free peoples against the evil of Sauron, and inspire them to fight for the good and freedom of all. However, Gandalf is limited in his quest. He is not allowed to use his immense powers or to fight the battle against Sauron for the free peoples, he can only advise and inspire them to decide to fight on their own (Tolkien *Silmarillion* 195). Thus, Gandalf only wields his angelical miracles, when he (or the Fellowship) is faced with supernatural beings such as the Nazgûl and the Balrog. Gandalf even reflects Christ's resurrection, sacrificing himself in the fight against the Balrog to save the Fellowship, and later, returns to Middle-Earth as Gandalf the White to finish his task.[9] Gandalf also resembles Christ in his forgiveness. It can even be argued that he is the only character that has mercy toward his foes, such as when he offers Gríma Wormtongue a chance to redeem himself by riding alongside the king he betrayed (Tolkien *TTT* 84) or the merciful attitude he has towards Gollum, not knowing what role he might come to play in the upcoming war (*FOTR* 57). Thus, Tolkien reflects many elements of Christ's life by portraying it through his characters. For instance, Frodo portrays the part of the suffering servant (through his quest), Aragorn of the returning king (through his own endeavors to become king), Gandalf the Grey, the wise teacher; and Gandalf the White, the perfected teacher, signifying the Resurrection.

[8] In order not to digress, Tolkien's creation myth will not be included in this thesis. However, in *The Silmarillion* Tolkien explains the creation of Middle-Earth, as well as God and angels that preside over it. It can be noted that despite some differences, the creation is almost biblical.

[9] Tolkien only hints at who or what is responsible for Gandalf's resurrection. However, it is widely accepted by critics and readers that it was Eru Illúvatar who brought Gandalf back to life in order to finish his quest to safeguard Middle-Earth.

Romances also contain various landscapes, not entirely different from epic in that regard. These lands are sometimes realistic, sometimes fantastic, which are home to a variety of magical beings or strange events. One reason for this is the fact that "[t]he foreign lands are portrayed as 'places of ordeal' as a result of ideas derived from exotic explorations in the Middle Ages" (Taşdelen 206). Robert Rouse explains romances, despite not always being very accurate, allowed medieval readers to travel through different landscapes through stories (135-139). *LOTR* also engages in a similar attempt at cartography and geography, in fact, the maps in LOTR are one of the most detailed examples found in fantasy. Waymack and Greenle consequetly acknowledge Tolkien as the pioneer of maps in fantasy (185). Similar to romance, maps in fantasy allow the readers to follow along with the protagonists' journeys, as well as understanding the distances travelled and the importance of specific locations (Waymack and Greenle 190). Tolkien, by employing his maps, can depict the Shire as a secluded, green land; or Mordor as a volcanic, ash covered wasteland. As a result, he helps the readers understand the vast distances travelled by his heroes through such maps.

With all these elements combined, a working definition this thesis takes as its primary definition concerning romance is as follows: Romance, in the broadest sense of the genre, encompasses a quest or an adventure, undertaken by a male hero of virtue, who is a "knight." (Lee 3) The success of the quest hinges not only on the hero's individual strength, but also on his virtues as a Christian, ergo, his purity of character and soul (Jackson 19). Such a hero also follows to some extent a set of chivalric rules. The setting of his quest encompasses a landscape that is somewhat relatable and realistic, yet it also includes some magical and fantastical elements to enrich the story. His quest takes place within the social structure of a feudal realm; however, this realm is usually interjected by more fantastic and magical lands where the knight adventures to accomplish his quest (Waymack and Greenle 190). These magical realms may contain the aforementioned fantastic elements in the form of dragons, fairies, magicians, demons and similar beings. The hero is often involved with a lady of high standing, whom he intends to court or marry; and his quest is mostly intended to prove his worth to her (Fisher 152). However, the lady, despite being essential, might not be central to the story itself; remaining as a mere accessory or motivation for the hero (Finlayson 57).

Having established definitions of the epic and romance, a summary of the trilogy will be provided. As stated before, the quest for the Ring encompasses a large plot with the hobbit Frodo at its center. He needs to deliver the Ring first to Rivendell, where it is assumed that the Ring will be safe under the elves' guardianship (*FOTR* 61). However, the Lord of Rivendell, Elrond Half-elven, declares that the Ring cannot be contained and thus must be taken all the way into Sauron's realm of Mordor for its destruction in Mount Doom, where the Ring was originally forged (*FOTR* 201-202). Therefore, Frodo and his eight companions depart from the peaceful land of the elves and make their way to the Fires of Mount Doom; however, neither the Dark Lord Sauron nor his newfound ally, fallen wizard, Saruman intend to make their journey easy. The paths they take are often sabotaged or blocked by servants of evil, forcing the Fellowship to journey in ever more dangerous places (*FOTR* 221). One such place is Moria, where their leader the wizard Gandalf dies, which leaves the group dangerously divided in intentions, and causes Frodo and the Fellowship to doubt the quest's chance to succeed (*FOTR* 245-246). Their sullen mood is lifted from their hearts; however, when Aragorn, now the new leader of the group, leads them to Lothlórien, the realm of the wood elves under the rule of Lady Galadriel (*FOTR* 248). There, the weary heroes are allowed to respite as Galadriel showers them with gifts and kind words, and even allows Frodo and Sam to gaze into her magical mirror, which strengthens their resolve to save the Shire and finish the quest (*FOTR* 267-268). Upon their departure from the magical forests, they are once again attacked by enemies, this time by Saruman's forces, which causes the already doubtful Fellowship to split up, and results in Boromir's death, who dies while protecting Merry and Pippin from Saruman's orcs (*FOTR* 290-98). Now split up into three groups, Frodo and Sam resolve to carry the Ring to Mordor by themselves, Merry and Pippin are captured (*FOTR* 298), and Aragon, Gimli and Legolas pursue the orcs that took Merry and Pippin (*TTT* 14). From this point onwards, the narrative takes on a more episodic structure, as the narration splits between Frodo and Sam, and the other heroes. Frodo's quest becomes increasingly dangerous as it spans more and more isolated locations as he and Sam move ever onwards towards Mordor, with dubious alliances and darkness lurking at every step. Whereas Aragorn and the rest of the Fellowship test their steel in open war against Sauron and Saruman's armies in the last holdouts of Middle-Earth's defenders.

The second book, *The Two Towers,* clearly divides the narrative between Frodo and Sam and the rest of the Fellowship. Frodo and Sam are now joined by Gollum, one of the previous owner of the Ring and a suspicious creature (*TTT* 151-52). They continue their long trek towards Mount Doom while evading Sauron's servants with Gollum's help, and observe the war unfolding around them. Frodo not only overcomes the myriad dangers surrounding him, such as the Nazgûl and the ghostly Dead Marshes (*TTT* 161-62), but also constantly battles against the Ring's corrupting influence (*TTT* 162-63, 218-19). Gollum fights a similar battle of wills against the Ring in his mind (*TTT* 169), which he eventually loses, and betrays Frodo and Sam to the giant spider Shelob in order to obtain the Ring from their corpses (*TTT* 229). This results in Frodo being paralyzed, and an unknowing Sam taking on his master's gear and quest with the assumption that Frodo is dead (*TTT* 238-39).

In the meantime, Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli discover a resurrected Gandalf, now known as Gandalf the White as opposed to Gandalf the Grey (*TTT* 65-67). This "new" Gandalf states that he has been sent back to replace the traitor Saruman and finish the quest alongside his companions (*TTT* 72). Together these four heroes journey to Rohan and first save the King of Rohan, Théoden, from Saruman's mind-addling spell (*TTT* 81-82), and then take up arms alongside the King and his warriors, the Rohirrim, to fight against Saruman (*TTT* 87). However, due to the great difference in the number of soldiers, King Théoden decides to retreat into an old keep, Helm's Deep, which is built into a mountain and has protected the people of Rohan in the past (*TTT* 91-92). In this old keep, with the contributions of Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli, as well as the reinforcements brought by Gandalf, the Rohirrim triumphs over Saruman's superior numbers, and the now victorious King of Rohan travels to Isengard alongside the heroes to force Saruman to a truce (*TTT* 102).

However, upon reaching Isengard they are pleasantly surprised. The ents, a race of tree-men, inspired by Merry and Pippin, who were saved by Gandalf's intervention behind the scenes (*TTT* 45-46, 50), have risen up against Saruman and laid ruin to his realm (*TTT* 109-110). Saruman, now left with next to nothing to bargain with, is rendered almost

entirely powerless, and he is banished by both Gandalf and Théoden (*TTT* 130). Now as a united group the remainig members of the Fellowship also discover a magical stone that allows sight and communication over large distances, a Palantír, which Saruman used to contact Sauron. As Pippin unwittingly uses it, he discovers Sauron's battle plans (*TTT*134, 137). This prompts Gandalf to take Pippin with him to Gondor, where the next battle for the fate of Middle-Earth will take place, while Aragorn and Théoden prepare their own forces to go to Gondor's aid (*TTT* 140).

The last book of the trilogy, *The Return of the King*, opens with Gandalf and Pippin reaching Gondor; the last powerful and free human kingdom of Middle-Earth, whose throne Aragorn stands to inherit (*ROTK* 13). Here Gandalf presents his services to the Steward of Gondor, Denethor, and Pippin swears himself to the Steward as well, in order to pay his life-debt to Boromir, who died protecting the hobbits in Amon Hen (*ROTK* 15-16-17). Through Pippin's eyes, the readers discover that Gondor is in turmoil, and Denethor is a dubious character. Similar to Boromir's wish to use the Ring against Sauron, Denethor too, uses the enemy's tools against him with constant risk to his kingdom and himself (*ROTK* 23-24). In the meantime, levies, lords and princes sworn to Gondor start gathering in Minas Tirith, the capital city of the kingdom (*ROTK* 27-28), while Aragorn gathers his own sworn soldiers to aid his people (*ROTK* 30-31). King Théoden similarly musters the Rohirrim to honour Rohan's vow to Gondor from the past, and he is joined by Merry, who similarly swears himself to the old king as a squire (*ROTK* 33). The overall mood of the heroes and warriors is sullen, however, as the approaching battle is a hopeless and desperate endeavour (*TTT* 47). This is also observed by Aragorn, who travels to the Paths of the Dead (*ROTK* 34-36). Aragorn hopes to even the odds by calling forth the cursed undead oath breakers to serve him, despite the fact that his journey is perceived as a suicidal folly by many (*ROTK* 34). However, he succeeds in his foray into the underworld, and now calling his new army of rangers, elves and the undead Grey Company, marches to Gondor (*ROTK* 42). As Théoden and Aragorn separately make their way towards Gondor, Sauron's armies besiege Minas Tirith (*ROTK* 65). Gandalf takes charge of the defences, and manages to hold the city until Rohan's arrival (*ROTK* 66-67-68-69-70). The Rohirrim with great casualties manage to turn the tide against Sauron's armies for a time (*ROTK* 77-80), but it is with Aragorn and the Grey Company's

arrival that the battle is won (*ROTK* 85). However, total victory is yet to come, for without the Ring's and by extension, Sauron's destruction, there is no chance to prevail, as Gandalf suggests (*ROTK* 106). Thus, Aragorn and his companions decide on a desperate gambit. By gathering all forces available to the them, they march to Sauron's lands for a distraction, in the hopes that Sauron will put forth all of his armies before them and clear the way for Frodo and Sam to traverse Mordor unchallenged and destroy the Ring (*ROTK* 107-111).

On the other side of the Black Gates of Mordor, Sam is on a desperate quest of his own to save Frodo from the orcs, who took his paralyzed body (*ROTK* 118). Luckily for Sam, the orcs guarding Frodo start fighting over Frodo's mithril shirt, allowing Sam to reach his master almost unhindered (*ROTK* 124-128). Once Frodo comes back to his senses both him and Sam disguise themselves as orcs (*ROTK* 129) and make their way towards Mount Doom through now empty land (*ROTK* 140). Yet, the nearer they get Frodo is challenged increasingly by the Ring's mental assaults, which prompts Sam to carry Frodo on his back (*ROTK* 148), until they are once again attacked by Gollum (*ROTK* 149). In the fiery chasms of Mount Doom, Frodo and Gollum fight over the ownership of the Ring, as Gollum falls to his death alongside his "precious". The One Ring and Sauron are thereby destroyed (*ROTK* 152-154). Thus, the final victory over Dark Lord is won, the two separate narratives converge again and Aragorn is crowned the King of Gondor (*ROTK* 168), but one final challenge awaits Frodo and the hobbits. Their homeland which they fought so hard to save, is taken over by ruffians (*ROTK* 190) and they are led by none other than an almost powerless but still dangerous Saruman (*ROTK* 205). Under the four heroic hobbits' leadership, Shire is cleared and Saruman is killed by his own servant, ending his threat once and for all (*ROTK* 206). While Sam, Merry and Pippin come to leading positions in the Shire and establish families and new lives, Frodo departs from the world he fought so hard to save with an elven ship (213). The trilogy ends with Sam coming home to his family, his journey finally completed (*ROTK* 214).

With the summary of the books as well as the definitions for all three genres and their connections to *LOTR* are established, this thesis will expand on them in the following chapters. The first chapter will focus on elements of epic as well as the epic hero found

in the framework of *LOTR*, and how they are incorporated into fantasy by Tolkien. A particular emphasis will be on the second book, *The Two Towers*, as it contains the Anglo-Saxon inspired land of Rohan, where a heroic society led by and old and an inept king must unite the country and fight for their freedom. Battles of epic scale, such as that of Helm's Deep, Pelennor Fields and Battle of the Black Gate will be discussed in this chapter. Moreover, Frodo's status as an epic hero alongside his companion Samwise Gamgee and the Fellowship as a collective epic hero in relation to Frodo will also be analysed. The numerous guide figures in the first book, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, such as Lord Elrond, Tom Bombadil and Lady Galadriel will be discussed in relation to similar figures in epics such as Athena, Zeus and similar entities. The epic catalogue will be presented, such as the heroes' arms and armaments as well as Sauron's servants, the Nazgûl and their mounts, trolls, the demonic Balrog and wights. Finally, the overall quest for the destruction of the Ring will be discussed in terms of its relation to the epic.

The second chapter will focus on elements of chivalric romance as well as romance elements in general and their different employment by Tolkien. Particular emphasis will be on the third book, *The Return of the King*. This book focuses greatly on the Kingdom of Gondor and its neighboring states, where the heroic society of Rohan is replaced by a feudal society. Aragorn's journey towards kingship and his qualities as a knight-errant will be discussed, at time by making comparisons between him and Boromir, as well as Faramir. The Christian elements in all books will be analysed, such as Gandalf's resurrection, alongside the virtues displayed by the members of the Fellowship, which are akin to the knight companions of the Round Table. Finally, the culmination of the quest for the destruction of the Ring will be discussed in relation to romance structure. Lastly, in the conclusion part, this thesis aims to conclude the arguments presented in the chapters, having shown the elements of epic and romance in Tolkien's fantasy trilogy.

CHAPTER I

ELEMENTS OF EPIC IN *THE LORD OF THE RINGS*

As a twentieth century fantasy work *The Lord of the Rings* includes elements of epic and romance. This chapter discusses the epic elements such as the epic hero (or heroes), the epic quest, elevated and decorated epic style, epic throwbacks and similes, the catalogue of arms for the hero and the epic comitatus narrative in accordance with the definition of epics as long narratives of heroes' often martial deeds (Foley 115). For an epic text to be considered truly epic, the presence of an epic hero is necessary (Nagy 71). The epic hero is the one who can overcome the odds and accomplish tasks no one else in his societycan, and he is partially divine (Nagy 84) or has the favour of a divinity (Louden 90). His deeds, usually written in verse, are mostly concerned with the hero overcoming great odds and adversaries which are often supernatural in nature (Nagy 79-80); concerning the fate or existence of a nation or a large body of people (Sherratt 120-121) In epics, it is possible to observe the morals, culture and beliefs of their respective nations. Thus, epics are, by their nature, concerned greatly with a nation's myths and culture and allow the readers to see deeper into events of importance for the nation in question (Sherratt 120-121). The setting can be vast, containing many countries, even other worlds where no other mortal could travel. Epics are usually written in verse, in a grandiose style, and the plot of an epic should be unified with a beginning (often starting in medias res), middle and end suitably connected (Aristotle 38-39). Because of epic's length, every part should be given appropriate detail and magnitude; and this narrative structure should make it possible to treat many narratives (or stories) being carried on simultaneously, as long as they are related with the same overarching plot (Aristotle 38-39). Thus, these parts create an epic structure, in which separate interconnected incidents come together to contribute to the whole story. Not all epics follow the same convention of verse and elevated style, but they are the exception rather than the rule.

The epic elements present in *LOTR* are elements that have been long established in the classical epic tradition. and Tolkien employs these elements by rewriting them and integrating them into his fantasy novels. In this context, it is important to discuss the language employed in *LOTR*. Unlike the majority of epics, *LOTR* is written in prose, but

songs and poems are in verse and they enhance the prosaic narrative. In fact, songs and poems are employed to provide exposition and depth, such as when Aragorn tells the tale of Beren and Luthien to the hobbits in a song (*FOTR* 149). Shippey argues that

> One quality which that work [*The Lord of the Rings*] has in abundance is the Beowulfian 'impression of depth', created just as in the old epic by songs and digressions like Aragorn's song of Beren and Lúthien, Sam Gamgee's allusions to the Silmaril and the Iron Crown, Elrond's account of Celebrimbor, and dozens more. (*Road* 195)

In this context, as Hannah Parry states, the characters in *LOTR* "echo the classical heroic attitude toward the glorification of history through epic" as the heroes "possess an awareness of and respect for this oral history and actively seek a place within it". Moreover, as she further notes, "the social practice of 'singing of men's fame' often occurs within epic narrative, taking the form of epic digressions" (8).

Additionally, the language of *LOTR*, especially when the Shire is concerned, is rustic and simple. However, when the elder races, such as the elves (*FOTR* 71) and the Ents (*TTT* 45), are concerned, or if a formal meeting takes place, such as the Council of Elrond, the characters speak with decorum (*FOTR* 188) appropriate from epics. For example, when Ents such as Treebeard or Bregalad introduce themselves to Merry and Pippin, they explain their names in length and employ the elevated language of the epic, "Well, I am an Ent, or that's what they call me. Yes, Ent is the word. *The* Ent, I am, you might say, in your manner of speaking. *Fangorn* is my name according to some, *Treebeard* others make it. *Treebeard* will do" (*TTT* 45). Another Ent also introduces himself in a more formal way, although his introduction befits his younger age, "I am Bregalad, that is Quickbeam in your language. But it is only a nickname, of course. They have called me that ever since I said *yes* to an elder Ent before he had finished his question. Also I drink quickly, and go out while some are still wetting their beards." (*TTT* 58). Similarly, elves such as Gildor speak in the elevated tone of epic:

> "Gildor Inglorion of the House of Finrod. We are Exiles, and most of our kindred have long ago departed and we too are now only tarrying here a while, ere we return over the Great Sea. But some of our kinsfolk dwell still in peace in Rivendell. Come now, Frodo, tell us what you are doing? For we see that there is some shadow of fear upon you." (*FOTR* 71)

Moreover, often meetings and greetings are delivered with proper decorum, as exemplified before. Similarly, expositions and throwbacks also follow the high style. Aside from these throwbacks and expositions, characters usually sing to encourage each other, similar to the Celtic and Germanic bardic-epic traditions. Due to the lack of clearly stated divine characters or deities, prophecies are also delivered by song and poetry, such as Bilbo's poem for Aragorn's future coronation: "Renewed shall be blade that was broken/ The crownless again shall be king" (*FOTR* 135).

Clearly, despite the fact that there is the dominance of prose the story has much in common with the classical epics in terms of its style. It also uses the conventional epic throwbacks, digressions, similes in order to develop a grand, elevated mode of speech. For instance, in the opening chapters of the first book, when Gandalf tells Frodo the story of the Ring and its Maker, the Dark Lord Sauron, there is an epic throwback which provides background information to prior events that the audience are not privy to (*FOTR* 50-51-52). Similarly, during the Council of Elrond, Elrond and Boromir repeat the story with additional details, and throughout the same Council, many interconnected stories are delivered by various other characters, such as Gloin's story about Moria, Boromir's visions and dreams, and Aragorn's personal history (*FOTR* 186-87-88). The epic throwbacks accord with the classical epic mode of speech, too. Boromir, for example, explains the details of his journey in an elevated style:

> Denethor, Lord of Minas Tirith, wise in the lore of Gondor. This only would he say, that Imladris was of old the name among the Elves of a far northern dale, where Elrond the Halfelven dwelt, greatest of lore-masters. Therefore my brother, seeing how desperate was our need, was eager to heed the dream and seek for Imladris; but since the way was full of doubt and danger, I took the journey upon myself. Loth was my father to give me leave, and long have I wandered by roads forgotten, seeking the house of Elrond, of which many had heard, but few knew where it lay. (*FOTR* 188)

It is clear that *LOTR* employs th epic simile, too. The elven lords and ladies in the text are described through similes: Elrond's eyes are "grey as clear evening" (*FOTR* 173), while Lady Galadriel's own eyes are "keen as lances in the starlight (*FOTR* 262). These similes define important characters with clearly established characteristics. Especially the immortal elves are attributed divine characteristics: They have almost divine eyes and

sight as the examples above illustrate. Tolkien also uses similes in defining the epic world of the story. For instance "the night was like a black wall" (*FOTR* 218) or the moon is "burning like a watchful eye" (*FOTR* 206). Bilbo Baggins, before he departs from the Shire and entrusts the Ring to Gandalf and by extension to Frodo, also uses a simile to hint at the insidious power of the Ring: "Why, I feel all thin, sort of *stretched*, if you know what I mean: like butter that has been scraped over too much bread" (*FOTR* 38). It can be therefore seen that *LOTR*, to a certain extent, contains the epic figures of speech that elevate its style accordingly.

In epic, it is common to see the omniscient narrator occasionally leave the chief hero of the story in order to focus on an event far away from him. These events often affect the hero in some way in the future phases of the epic. *LOTR* follows these conventions, too, as the trilogy follows the unified plot of the Quest of the Ring, which follows certain individuals trying to achieve the destruction of a magical artefact that can enslave the world and all its peoples. The overall narrative of *LOTR* is divided into two main parts starting at the end of the first book, vaguely between Frodo and Aragorn, with the occasional intrusion of Merry and Pippin's episodes, and their respective companions. This division allows the story to focus on important events, characters and battles as they happen; all of which form an interconnected plot that culminates with the destruction of the One Ring in the fires of Mount Doom. In this sense, *LOTR* is not different from *The Iliad* with its many heroes and armies, nor is it dissimilar to *The Odyssey* with the long, magical and perilous journey of a singular character, namely Frodo. Therefore, it can be said that *LOTR* has several heroes who struggle to accomplish a quest, and focuses on its chief heroes such as Aragorn and Frodo as the epic heroes.

Furthermore, it is important that the story begins at the onset of a birthday party (*FOTR* 31). The birthday of the hobbit Bilbo Baggins is connected to the quest of destroying the Ring. Bilbo has the honour of being the cause of the larger quest undertaken by the heroes, as he was the chief hero of *The Hobbit*, the prelude to *LOTR*. In *the Hobbit*, Bilbo was the one to find and win the Ring from Gollum (*The Hobbit* 240). *LOTR* is the continuation of the story that started with Bilbo's adventures in *The Hobbit*, where he left his ancestral home to aid thirteen dwarves in retaking their home and ended up finding the One Ring

(57-58). Thus, the birthday party is also the start of the quest structure at the heart of *LOTR*. Because Bilbo uses the Ring to become invisible in front of all the inhabitants of the Shire, Gandalf is able to discern that the One Ring has been found, and takes the necessary steps to destroy it, thus starting the plot of *LOTR*. The quest initially spans centuries of history and events, going as far back as to Aragorn's ancestors Elendil and Isildur, who battled against Sauron and emerged victorious (*FOTR* 186). During the fight, Elendil dies, and Isildur, his son and heir, claims the One Ring as weregild, therefore setting into motion the quest that takes place in *LOTR* (*FOTR* 186). The fate of the Ring and therefore the quest to destroy it determines the fate of the entire Middle-earth, surpassing the needs of a single person or nation. What starts out with a single hobbit then turns into an all-out war that involves all the major locations of Middle-Earth. With such a large variety of races and cultures' involvement, the scope of the mission takes on an epic scale, as the success or failure of the Quest for the Ring will greatly affect the world and all of its inhabitants.

Accordingly, the plot, with its heroes, grand battle scenes, epic struggles and with an epic quest at its centre, is as close to traditional epic as any fantasy novel can be. There are a few elements missing from the narrative, such as the epic invocation to a muse or goddess. However, as stated above, epic throwback, epic digressions, and epic quest are all observed in *LOTR*. Similarly, its plot has elements such as epic companions or comitatus. A comitatus is described as "the select group of the hero's retainers, those warriors bound voluntarily and personally to his service by virtues which modern men still respect and aspire to" (Markland 341). As Anderson states, "[w]hatever the outcome of the fight, however, victory and life or defeat and death, undoubtedly the relation of the warleader to his *comitatus* is one of the most important themes in Old English literature and life"(95). In essence, a comitatus is a sworn group of warriors following a heroic leader, andthey often are more than willing to give their lives for the leader's cause. In *LOTR*, The Fellowship founded in Rivendell is the first official comitatus formed around Frodo Baggins, and their primary aim is to defend him as he carries the Ring into Mordor. This first comitatus is perhaps the most inclusive and crucial. As Elrond states:

> The Company of the Ring shall be Nine; and the Nine Walkers shall be set against the Nine Riders that are evil. With you and your faithful servant, Gandalf will go; for this shall be his great task, and

> maybe the end of his labours. 'For the rest, they shall represent the other Free Peoples of the World: Elves, Dwarves, and Men. Legolas shall be for the Elves; and Gimli son of Glóin for the Dwarves. They are willing to go at least to the passes of the Mountains, and maybe beyond. For men you shall have Aragorn son of Arathorn, for the Ring of Isildur concerns him closely. (*FOTR* 207)

The initial comitatus in the story is a multi-cultural, multi-species alliance that intends to end Sauron's designs on Middle-Earth by destroying the Dark Lord's chief weapon. However, this comitatus swears no oath, as Elrond wisely predicts the potential difficulties in carrying a corrupting object over a large distance, even though some companions, such as Gimli, insist on taking vows (*FOTR* 211). When Gandalf, the de facto leader of the Fellowship falls in Moria, the conflicts within the group widen, as a result of which they break apart in Amon Hen (*FOTR* 290). However, they still remain loyal to the cause in smaller groups and work towards the ultimate goal of stopping Sauron in smaller numbers with differing methods and results. Thus, Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas become the Three Hunters to save Merry and Pippin who themselves try to organise an uprising of Ents (*TTT* 14), while Sam and Frodo continue the quest towards Mordor (*FOTR* 298). Later, as Gandalf comes back from death to lead the Fellowship again, a more unified comitatus is observed once again. Thus, the members of the Fellowship, who are the central figures of the narrative, still maintain the epic comitatus.

Alongside the comitatus, *LOTR* also presents an epic catalogue of arms. As in epics these armaments and objects are important and given significant place in the narrative. Frodo is armed with Sting; a magical elvish dagger and he wears the priceless mithril mail shirt of his Uncle Bilbo (*FOTR* 210). Later in the story, he is also gifted a phial by Galadriel, which illuminates the darkest of places with a magical light (*FOTR* 277). This phial is later used by Sam to fight against Shelob, to save Frodo (*ROTK* 237-238-39). Similarly, Aragorn carries Anduril, the Flame of the West, which belonged in the past to his ancestors, hence signifying his heritage and its power (*FOTR* 210). Aragorn receives a banner woven by his beloved Lady Arwen, which becomes his sigil and war banner, when he leads the Grey Company into battle in Pelennor Fields (*ROTK* 31). The wizard Gandalf is armed with his magical staff alongside his elven blade Glamdring. He also rides

Shadowfax, the lord of horses (*TTT* 73). The rest of the Fellowship are described in detail as well, although they do not possess arms or horses with names:

> Boromir had a long sword, in fashion like Andúril but of less lineage, and he bore also a shield and his war-horn.
> Gimli the dwarf alone wore openly a short shirt of steel-rings, for dwarves make light of burdens; and in his belt was a broad-bladed axe. Legolas had a bow and a quiver, and at his belt a long white knife. The younger hobbits wore the swords that they had taken from the barrow. (*FOTR* 210)

Each member of the Fellowship use their weapons to accomplish their epic victory, and to prove the worth of their arms and armour. Frodo's dagger often warns him of imminent danger (*FOTR* 240, 255, 290), while the mithril coat saves his life (*FOTR* 241). As for Aragorn's sword Anduril, it not only serves as a potent weapon, but also allows him to prove the legitimacy of his claim as the King of Gondor (*FOTR* 188, *TTT* 24, 189). Gandalf's horse Shadowfax allows the wizard to travel fast enough to outrun Saruman and Sauron's servants, and gather allies faster than expected (*TTT* 100, 137), while Merry's dagger proves essential in defeating the Witch-King, who is Sauron's chief commander (*ROTK* 80). As stated, heroic deeds are performed with heroic weapons as in the case of the kingdom of Rohan and its leaders, Théoden and Éomer, who are armed with Herugrim and Gúthwinë, respectively.

In contrast to the heroes and the epic catalogue describing their weapons, Sauron and his servants, lack weapons with names, save for the One Ring that Sauron has created (*FOTR* 185). It cannot be said that Sauron has a catalogue, but certain descriptions of his armies reflect the epic catalogue often reserved for the heroes. Tolkien also briefly explains how he envisioned Sauron's servants to work in a letter as follows: "A man who wants to exercise 'power' must have subjects, who are not himself. But he then depends on them" (*Letters* 211). Tolkien clearly differentiates his heroes and villains. Whereas the heroes' epic catalogue is not necessary for their heroism, Sauron is dependent on his own servants to properly function and assert himself upon Middle-Earth. Anduril is indeed very helpful to Aragorn when his claim is challenged, but he does not only rely on the sword to prove his kingship and legitimacy. Likewise, Frodo benefits greatly from Sting's magical glow that warns him against orcs, but he could still accomplish his quest without it. In Sauron's case, however, he is dependent on his epic catalogue of orcs, wolves and other servants.

Foremost among Sauron's catalogue of arms are his servants, the Nazgûl, who were once nine human kings, but they were seduced away by Sauron's magical rings: "Nine he gave to Mortal Men, proud and great, and so ensnared them. Long ago they fell under the dominion of the One, and they became Ringwraiths, shadows under his great Shadow, his most terrible servants" (*FOTR* 51). Sauron's servants are not limited to ghastly creatures, either, as Elven Lord Glorfindel tells Frodo that "Not all his servants and chattels are wraiths! There are orcs and trolls, there are wargs and werewolves; and there have been and still are many Men, warriors and kings that walk alive under the Sun, and yet are under his sway. And their number is growing daily" (*FOTR* 170). In *TTT*, Frodo and Sam also see the Men of the East, the Haradrim and the Easterlings arriving in droves to serve in Sauron's battles (186-87). They also see more Men going to Mordor, which Gollum describes like a catalogue of arms:

> Dark faces. We have not seen Men like these before, no, Sméagol has not. They are fierce. They have black eyes, and long black hair, and gold rings in their ears; yes, lots of beautiful gold. And some have red paint on their cheeks, and red cloaks; and their flags are red, and the tips of their spears; and they have round shields, yellow and black with big spikes. Not nice; very cruel wicked Men they look. Almost as bad as Orcs, and much bigger. Sméagol thinks they have come out of the South beyond the Great River's end: they came up that road. They have passed on to the Black Gate; but more may follow. Always more people coming to Mordor. One day all the peoples will be inside (*TTT* 176).

Sauron's armies are often depicted to show the reader the extent of Sauron's forces, as well as how powerful he is. His armies are without match, and the heroes cannot prevail against him in an even battle. They can only win costly and fleeting victories and delay the inevitable. Whereas Tolkien employs the epic catalogue for his heroes in the usual manner, that is, merely highlighting the precious arms and armour of his heroic cast, with Sauron he has the ulterior motive of showing the reader the importance of Frodo's quest; for if the Ring, and with it Sauron, is not destroyed, neither Gandalf nor Aragorn can turn the tide against such a force.

As an epic element in the *LOTR*, it is clear that the heroic society often observed in epics also exists in *LOTR* to a certain extent. In *TTT*, the kingdom of Rohan, its customs and characters form the heroic society. Although the kingdom is mentioned a few times in

FOTR (187,198-99, 275), it is not until Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas travel there in pursuit of Merry and Pippin that the reader is introduced to Rohan in *TTT*: "[b]ut even as they looked, the shadows of night melted, the colours of the waking earth returned: green flowed over the wide meads of Rohan; the white mists shimmered in the water-vales; and far off to the left, thirty leagues or more, blue and purple stood the White Mountains …" (16). Rohan is quite literally a land of Anglo-Saxon horsemen. Therefore the land and the men of Rohan are a good example of Tolkien's depiction of heroic society. Honegger states about the riders of Rohan that:

> They provide, structurally speaking, the heroic counterpart to the bucolic hobbits of the opening sections of the book, and the two peoples are complementary (and largely idealized) depictions of 'typically English' elements. Rohan is to the Shire as the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Offa of Mercia is to the rural 'Merry Old England' of the late Victorian period. The sources for the Riders of Rohan are quite obvious to anyone familiar with Anglo-Saxon literature and culture. (1)

Honegger's observation that Rohan is similar to famous Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, and it establishes a connection between the heroic society of history and fantasy. Aragorn, who spent time among the riders, speaks these words about the Rohirrim as an outsider: "They are proud and wilful, but they are true-hearted, generous in thought and deed; bold but not cruel; wise but unlearned, writing no books but singing many songs, after the manner of the children of Men before the Dark Years" (*TTT* 22). As Aragorn's commentary on the people of Rohan shows, the epic heroic society is clearly represented in Rohan: men of Rohan are oral, uneducated and martially endowed. Indeed, different characters in *LOTR* speak of the people of Rohan in heroic terms. Faramir states, when he talks about Rohan to Frodo, that:

> […] for the most part they hold by the ways of their own fathers and to their own memories, and they speak among themselves their own North tongue. And we love them: tall men and fair women, valiant both alike, golden-haired, bright-eyed, and strong; they remind us of the youth of Men, as they were in the Elder Days" (*TTT* 198).

Consequently, not only the descriptions of the Rohirrim but also their language is noted to be of epic nature. Legolas comments about their language by saying that: "[t]hat, I guess, is the language of the Rohirrim … for it is like to this land itself; rich and rolling

in part, and else hard and stern as the mountains" (*TTT* 76). Within the narrative, Rohan and its people are described as a culturally rich and courageous society, even admired by their more "modern" allies from Gondor, as evidenced in Faramir's words to Frodo.

Their societal structure is also based on the heroic society. The old but warlike King Théoden, for example, holds his court in his mead-hall (*TTT* 70), rewards loyalty and brave deeds, as is the custom of heroic societies, hence he performs royal generosity. Théoden awards Gandalf, Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas from his personal armoury and menagerie for their efforts (*TTT* 86). A similar royal generosity is later shown by Lady Galadriel of Lothlórien when she hosts the Fellowship in her realm and showers them with parting gifts (*FOTR* 276). In *LOTR*, royal generosity is exclusively shown to the companions of the Fellowship by their benefactors or those they help, and influential members of the Fellowship, such as Aragorn when he becomes king, and Frodo, who often display their own generosity to servants and allies in return. Aragorn, for example, rewards Beregond with the Captaincy of Faramir's White Guard due to his unwavering loyalty to Faramir (*ROTK* 169), while Frodo makes Sam his heir, and bestows upon him the entirety of the Baggins family's wealth and property (*ROTK* 213).

Aside from royal generosity, Rohan as a country and culture has other epic elements of heroic societies. Richard Gallant notes that "J.R.R. Tolkien used Germanic heroic elements in his fiction to great effect" (109). Furthermore, as Gallant further notes, Tolkien wanted to employ only the "noble and defiant" aspects of Germanic epics and it is possible to observe in Rohan (109). Tolkien avoids the gruesome aspects of heroic societies in *LOTR*, such as kin-slaying, and focuses on more "noble" aspects such as the familial bonds between the ruling family of Rohan (*TTT* 83), or the loyalty of the commanders to their King (*TTT* 100). Accordingly, in *LOTR*, familial disputes are quickly resolved with offending parties quickly reconciling (*TTT* 80-85). Similarly, the "defiant" aspects are emphasized, such as King Théoden's decision to make a last stand in Helm's Deep rather than succumbing to Saruman's rule (*TTT* 90). Another example is his nephew Éomer's continued service to king and realm even in exile (*TTT* 24), or his niece Éowyn's disguised service among Rohirrim's ranks (*ROTK* 71), which emphasizes the "defiant" aspects of Germanic epics.

Tolkien also employs elements of the Anglo-Saxon language in the names of Rohan's nobles and locations. The king of Rohan, Théoden, means "lord" or "protector," whereas the capital of Rohan is called Edoras, meaning "sheltering building" or "enclosure" in Anglo-Saxon language (Kightley 120). The King's own hall, whose description is reminiscent of a mead-hall, is called Meduseld, directly taken from the epic *Beowulf* (Kightley 120).

Moreover, it is possible to observe the use of certain elements of Germanic epics, such as hopeless defences and grim but heroic fighting scenes when Rohan is involved. Riding out to fight enemies both for the sake of the kingdom and allies such as riding out against Saruman in an epic manner is described as follows: "The trumpets sounded. The horses reared and neighed. Spear clashed on shield. Then the king raised his hand, and with a rush like the sudden onset of a great wind the last host of Rohan rode thundering into the West" (*TTT* 88). Similarly, riding to save Gondor for the allegiance they owed to the bigger kingdom (*ROTK* 70) is an example of loyalty and oath-keeping so cherished in heroic society (Boere 1). The Rohirrim become ever more Anglo-Saxon in their tactics as their situation gets more desperate, such as when they seek shelter in Helm's Deep. Kerr observes that Germanic societies in epics usually have a scene where the armies have a last stand in a narrow place (5). This is also reflected in *LOTR* with Rohan's desperate defence in Helm's Deep (*TTT* 91-92). Similarly, as Honegger notes, at the Black Gates, "[i]n dire need they no longer rely on their horsemanship or on orchestrated cavalry attacks, but alight from their horses and put up a shield-wall, the classic Anglo-Saxon formation for battle – which, at the same time, is the obvious choice for a defensive stance" (11). As befits their heroic society, the men of Rohan do not run from battles but prepare themselves for an epic last stand against their adversaries.

Evidently, the military structure of Rohan is based on the epic society with men of some nobility, thanes[10] in all but name, commanding troops of their own soldiers and serving their king, who rewards their loyalty through his generosity. Moreover, there is a strong model of personal leadership in Rohan, which is often observed through Théoden and Éomer as they lead their soldiers to battles, and perform speeches to rouse their armies,

[10] The only official title stated is a Marshal of the Mark, which Wormtongue uses to refer to Éomer (*TTT* 83)

as well as personally getting involved in combat. Théoden, as the king, is a perfect example of the idealised warrior-king, despite his age. He exhibits the "noble and defiant heroism" at every turn, from his first appearance to his last (Gallant 109). The king's response in the face of certain death under siege, for example, is to ride out with his men one last time:

> 'The end will not be long,' said the king. 'But I will not end here, taken like an old badger in a trap. Snowmane and Hasufel and the horses of my guard are in the inner court. When dawn comes, I will bid men sound Helm's horn, and I will ride forth. Will you ride with me then, son of Arathorn? Maybe we shall cleave a road, or make such an end as will be worth a song – if any be left to sing of us hereafter.' (*TTT* 98)

Similarly, in Gondor, he fights with the conviction of an ideal king of epic, and meets his death with sword in hand, standing against Sauron's armies (*ROTK* 81). His funeral is that of an epic warrior, too, showing the fallen king's importance: "For after three days the Men of the Mark prepared the funeral of Théoden; and he was laid in a house of stone with his arms and many other fair things that he had possessed, and over him was raised a great mound, covered with green turves of grass and of white evermind" (*ROTK* 173). Thus, Théoden clearly represents the great Germanic heroism in *LOTR.*

It needs to be noted that certain scenes and dialogues from *Beowulf* are also observed in the epic kingdom of Rohan. Kightley argues that Chapter Six of *TTT*, "The King of the Golden Hall," is almost a direct rewriting of Beowulf's arrival in Heorot, with characters of both works functioning almost in the same way in both scenes (119). The arrival of Gandalf and his companions and their questioning by the wardens are nearly identical to that of Beowulf and his party, almost to a word[11]. The conversations between Wulfgar and Beowulf are also reflected in the questioning of Gandalf by Théoden's door guard, Hama. While Wulfgar judges the hero to be "well born and worthy of respect[…]he is formidable indeed" (150), Hama judges Gandalf and his company to be "friends and folk worthy of honour, who have no evil purpose" and lets them enter the king's hall (*TTT*

[11] Kightley notes that while the guard in *Beowulf* aptly judges Beowulf's character from his appereance, the guard in *LOTR* fails in this manner, thinking that Gandalf is a spy or the servant of the enemy (*TTT* 121-122).

79). Both the guards and wards in *Beowulf* and *LOTR* show agency and judge their respective heroes correctly.

Within the respective halls of the kings, the characters have similar functions as well. Gandalf's spell to break Saruman's hold on Théoden's mind and relieve the periled old man (*TTT* 81) is similar to Hrothgar's feeling of relief upon Beowulf's arrival to slay Grendel (Heaney 151). Théoden, like Hrothgar, is old and wise. His times of glory are now shadowed by the arrival of new heroes. Both Meduseld and Heorot have two cunning and sharp-tongued, insulting advisors: Gríma and Unferth. Whereas Unferth is spurred on by jealousy and speaks ill of Beowulf (*TTT* 155-156), Gríma tries to discredit Gandalf with his insults in order to maintain Saruman's control over Rohan by saying "Why indeed should we welcome you, Master Stormcrow? *Láthspell* I name you, Ill-news; and ill news is an ill guest they say" (*TTT* 80). The resolution in both stories is the heroes' intervention in order to save a failing ruler's realm. King Théoden's transformation from an old man into a powerful king by Gandalf's magic allows the king to once again lead his people into battle. Gandalf's however, is a subtler heroism. Especially his refusal to yield his staff to the door guards of the mead-hall is important in this regard:

> The guard still hesitated. 'Your staff,' he said to Gandalf. 'Forgive me, but that too must be left at the doors.' 'Foolishness!' said Gandalf. 'Prudence is one thing, but discourtesy is another. I am old. If I may not lean on my stick as I go, then I will sit out here, until it pleases Théoden to hobble out himself to speak with me.' Aragorn laughed. 'Every man has something too dear to trust to another. But would you part an old man from his support? Come, will you not let us enter?' 'The staff in the hand of a wizard may be more than a prop for age,' said Háma. He looked hard at the ash-staff on which Gandalf leaned. 'Yet in doubt a man of worth will trust to his own wisdom. I believe you are friends and folk worthy of honour, who have no evil purpose. You may go in.' (*TTT* 79)

Thus, by this pretence of weakness Gandalf is able to use his magic through his staff and break the curse of enfeeblement placed upon the king Théoden. Upon his entry then Gandalf greets the king with these words, "[n]ow all friends should gather together, lest each singly be destroyed" (*TTT* 80). These words reinforce not only Gandalf's heroism, but also the importance of communal good rather than a personal one. Kightley comments

that "'Lof' and 'dom' are not worth pursuing, in Gandalf's opinion…", for the wise wizard, serving the good of the community is far more precious to personal glory (131).

In essence, Tolkien's use of epic elements in his own story serves two purposes. One is to enhance the narrative of the fantasy novel and add gravitas to it with epic elements, and the second is to transform certain epic elements into ones he believed to be much more appropriate, such as heroism becoming less about personal glory and more about serving the community; which is what all epic heroes strive to do regardless of "lof" and "dom." Finally, upon Théoden's restoration, his nephew Éomer shouts "Westu Théoden hál!" which Alaric Hall suggests is a scholarly joke, being a dialectal form of *Beowulf's Wæs þú, Hróðgár, hál* ("Be thou well, Hrothgar!"), as Éomer shouts "Long Live King Théoden!" in Mercian accent (par. 3-4). Thus, Tolkien finishes his rewriting of the Anglo-Saxon epic in the most Anglo-Saxon way possible.

As other epics, *LOTR* is mostly gender specific in its heroism. Women in *LOTR* are few in number and as in many epics, the role of a woman is mostly to support or hinder the hero in *LOTR,* too. Only a small cast of important women enrich the narrative, and provide assistance or harm to the male heroes of the story. Elven Lady Galadriel assumes the role of a guiding goddess for the weary hero, while Shelob, the female spider-monster, emerges as an obstacle for the hero to overcome. Mac Fenwick, for example, states that both Lady Galadriel and the female spider-monster Shelob are, in essence, found in *The Odyssey*, in the form of an ideal woman in Galadriel's case [12]as she greatly reflects Circe and Calypso; whereas Shelob resembles Scylla and Charbydis (17). Lady Galadriel is a beautiful, wise and powerful ruler as well as a magician overseeing an enchanted forest and the elven premises within (*FOTR* 260-263). She provides gifts, hospitality and rest for tired Frodo and his companions, and later, by using her magical mirror, motivates Frodo (*FOTR* 273-277).

Aside from Galadriel is the shield maiden of Rohan, Éowyn, who has elements from old Nordic epics as well as being a unique and interesting heroine in the narrative. As stated above, Rohan is the epitome of Anglo-Saxon, epic heroic society, and as such, the

[12] It should also be noted that Galadriel is essentially an enchantress within the confines of the story told in the trilogy, despite her much larger lore and role in the expanded works set within the Middle-Earth

characters that exist within that realm are all epic types. Donovan comments that the primary female characters in *LOTR* "are narrative agents charged with the authority of distinct heroic women figures from Old Norse mythology and literature called the Valkyries" (225). Through the employment of the traditional shield maiden and Valkyrie in the form of Éowyn, *LOTR*, introduces the epic heroine in a martial form. Despite her gender, she is allowed to seek glory in combat, and she indeed achieves it in the battlefield when she fights alongside her uncle and brother in Pelennor Fields (*ROTK* 79-80). Since Éowyn is a fighter above all, she is a heroic figure of epic. From the readers' first encounter with her through Aragorn's eyes, it is observed that, "strong she seemed and stern as steel, a daughter of kings" (*TTT* 81).

Éowyn's greatest fear is to "stay behind bars, until use and old age accept them, and all chance of doing great deeds is gone beyond recall or desire" (*ROTK* 47). Thus, contrasting Galadriel's mythical and somewhat passive status as an epic character, Éowyn emerges as a proper epic heroine. According to Dawn Catanach, Éowyn is also a part of a comitatus due to her riding out with Théoden and Éomer (2). Therefore, Éowyn can be understood as a female heroic figure that not only stands out, but is also functional in the narrative, as her slaying of the Witch-King, the leader of the Nazgûl, hastens the victory in Minas Tirith (*ROTK* 80). Éowyn's unbent desire to accomplish something before her old age, and her ambition to gain fame and martial prowess enable her to kill the Witch-King of Angmar (*ROTK* 80). Thus, she not only removes a potent commander of Sauron's armies but also unwittingly avenges Frodo's everlasting wound from the Morgul blade, consequently building herself a name. Although Galadriel and Shelob can be regarded as supernatural figures commonly found in traditional epics, it is clear that in Éowyn Tolkien creates an epic heroine.

As argued above, *LOTR* follows the textual and structural epic qualities. However, the epic hero is handled slightly differently in *LOTR*. Two key components of Tolkien's heroes are that they do not seek compensation for their heroic deeds, and they are not all martially endowed, skilful warriors, despite showing martial skill at times. This section discusses Frodo Baggins as the apparent epic hero of *LOTR*, as well as his closest companion Samwise Gamgee. However, it is crucial to remember that *LOTR* is closer to fairy tale, where it is common for the underdog to triumph over the greater forces of evil.

When considering the epic heroes in *LOTR*, it is important to note that Tolkien had a different view of heroism as opposed to the classical definition of epic hero[13], and he did not have a central, clear-cut protagonist that directed all the action. According to Sale, the kind of heroism Tolkien depicts is "a distinctively modern cast – a heroism based upon the refusal to yield to despair rather than on any clear sense of goal or achievement, a heroism that accepts the facts of history and yet refuses to give in to the tempting despair these facts offer" (251). Although Tolkien's view of heroism does not necessitate his heroes' use of martial talents, he nevertheless endows most of them with a certain degree of battle-prowess. He simply does not put an emphasis on skill at arms, but rather, on personal courage. George Clark believes that "Tolkien sought a true hero motivated by a heroic ideal consistent with his own religious and moral ideals, but he could not rid himself of his desire for the glorious heroes of old" (39). Thus, it is important to note that in *LOTR*, the emphasis is on the hero's bravery rather than his capabilitiy as a warrior.

Moreover, as opposed to the classical epics, the quest to save the world in *LOTR* is undertaken and achieved through a variety of actions performed by a large cast of characters. At least ten individuals directly contribute to the victory against Sauron in addition to countless side characters and nameless soldiers and civilians. According to Amendt-Raduege, "[t]his surfeit of heroes is not an oversight on Tolkien's part, however, nor is it the product of blind chance. Instead, it reflects Tolkien's view of the world … Tolkien saw a world full of heroes: ordinary men and women standing up for what they thought was right" (2). Likewise, Verlyn Flieger states that "the lack of any one heroic protagonist is one of the hallmarks of Tolkien's fiction" ("Frodo" 132). However, the presence of many central heroic characters or the lack of a clear-cut protagonist does not negate the potential existence of epic hero (or heroes) in *LOTR*. Tolkien centres the story of *LOTR* around the fantasy race of hobbits, and two members of this species, Frodo Baggins and Samwise Gamgee, can both be considered as epic heroes. Critics that write about their potential heroism are equally divided between the two characters. Although Frodo and Aragorn are the characters closest to traditional epic heroes by virtue of being central to their epic narratives, Tolkien acknowledged Sam as the "chief hero" and the "most heroic character" in his letters (178, 261).[14] Sam displays courage, perhaps even

[13] As established in the Introduction.
[14] *The Letters of Tolkien*, First Edition, 1981

greater than Frodo, and martial skill when necessary. He is also rewarded at the end of the story, becoming perhaps more akin to traditional heroic figures, especially according to Campbell's definition and quest structure (212-221).[15]

As stated above, the epic hero is not a regular man waiting in the comfort of his home; he is one who actively seeks challenge, always looking for adversaries and errands in the form of strong warriors, deadly beasts or hard tasks. Frodo, in *LOTR*, is an epic hero who appears weak compared to the unassailable, super human figures of Gilgamesh, Achilles, Odysseus, Beowulf and Aeneas. Initially, he does not even appear to be a hero of any kind. He is a simple landowner and a stranger to the larger world that surrounds him (*FOTR* 32-33-34). Daniel Hughes states that Tolkien restores the old forms of epic and romance to the modern reader "by putting the hobbit in the midst of them with a mood where the creature is not overblown to carry an impossible burden nor Man lowered to meet him" (83). As Gunnar Urang suggests, "[w]e are meant to see things their way – as the ordinary coming to know the heroic, the everyday encountering the supernatural and the uninvolved becoming the involved …" (112). William C. James, in his study of "Christian Epic Heroism," arrives at the conclusion that in *LOTR*, "Tolkien takes the demand that modern heroes be inferior a requirement normally thought to apply the inner capacities of the will, to psychological traits, or to the ability to make decision and renders it external and visible by giving his hobbits a diminutive state" (148). James also asserts that "[t]he hobbits differ from epic heroes in the sense that they are not warlike" (149). C.S. Lewis, likewise, states that "[a]lmost the central theme of the book is the contrast between the Hobbits (or 'the Shire') and the appalling destiny to which some of them are called" (101). Frodo's hobbit heroism therefore is not that of a martial kind in its essence, although, as Roger Sale states, "it will take heroism of some kind ... to hold onto the Ring, to take it to Mordor, to give it up there" (204). As stated, Frodo's challenge as an epic hero is not to fight off great beasts although he eventually has to in order to complete his epic journey, or take part in wars. His task is to resist the temptation of the One Ring over a long journey, and to finally give it up for good and let it be destroyed alongside its maker Sauron. His mission to destroy the Ring is crucial as the One Ring is the key to world domination if wielded by the Dark Lord Sauron. To defy the will of the Ring

[15] *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Second Edition, 2004

seeking to corrupt him at every turn, and marching into the realm of the Dark Lord, Mordor, which is the only place where the artefact can be destroyed, requires great bravery and mental fortitude from Frodo.

Accordingly, Frodo as an epic hero has three defining characteristics which are his courage, his leadership and his generosity. In terms of courage, Frodo clearly lacks the martial prowess of the traditional epic hero and does not exhibit a supernatural aura that Auden argues an epic hero should exhibit (211). Still, Frodo overcomes the many difficulties put ahead of him and completes the quest he undertakes for his community. Sale states that "Frodo is, unlike a great deal else in the trilogy, modern" (199). Goldberg, in response, claims that, "[w]hile being a modern hero, Frodo is also very clearly a re-shaped' version of Beowulf, the very embodiment of the Anglo-Saxon heroic ideal" (29). As Goldberg argues, Frodo is observed to perform the Anglo-Saxon epic heroism throughout his epic journey in *LOTR*.

Robert Goldberg states that "Throughout *LOTR*, and most notably in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Frodo displays both courage and fear, characteristics that would be familiar to humans" (31). It is clear that Frodo is afraid, for example, when he first hears about the Ring and he does not consider himself fit for its protection: "I really wish to destroy it!' cried Frodo. 'Or, well, to have it destroyed. I am not made for perilous quests" (*FOTR* 58). Yet, Frodo steels himself up and bears the burden of the Ring to Rivendell and then to Mordor. As stated, courage is the "victory of will", and Frodo may not have the innate courage present in epic heroes who welcome danger, yet Frodo is able to supress his fear and act with courage when it matters the most (Lubin 10). This is, of course, mostly reflected in his constant battle against the Ring's mental burden on him (*FOTR* 129, *TTT* 162, *ROTK* 145-46).

Yet, Frodo's bravery is not purely spiritual, either; he is a courageous warrior and a leader when it is required. To protect his companions, Frodo often takes up a sword or offers himself to the enemy's weapons. In the Barow-dens, for instance, he tries to fight off the ghostly wights (*FOTR* 112-116). Moreover, he is the only one to stand against the Nazgûl among the hobbits in Weathertop despite being as afraid as his friends are (*FOTR* 153) and when his wounds are severe, he still refuses to flee without his friends (*FOTR* 164). Clearly, he acts like an epic hero and does not shy away from combat when it is required.

In the Mines of Moria, Frodo is the second to leap into action when the battle starts (*FOTR* 241). Even when a friend turns into an enemy, Frodo does not shirk from his duty to safekeep the Ring. In the ruins of Amon Hen at the end of *FOTR*, Boromir, emboldened by Gandalf's death and seeing the quest as a lost cause, attempts to seize the Ring from Frodo with the hopes of using it to save his own kingdom (291-293). Faced with potential treachery and understanding the threat of the Ring's corrupting influence on his companions, Frodo leaves the rest of the Fellowship behind to preserve them from the Ring's temptations (*FOTR* 297).

Frodo's leadership is also of note as an epic characteristic. From the start of his journey to the very end, Frodo is often required to act as a leader to his friends and companions. When Gandalf conscripts Samwise to the quest, Frodo finds himself responsible for his safety (*FOTR* 59). With the inclusion of Merry and Pippin, Frodo's responsibility drastically increases, he has to act as their leader in many dangerous situations such as the Old Forest, Barrow-dens and Bree. In the Old Forest, he brings Tom Bombadil to save his friends from the clutches of Old Man Willow, a sentient, killer tree (*FOTR* 98-99). In the Barrow-dens he manages to keep his wits against the ghastly wights and resist long enough for Bombadil to once again rescue him and his friends (*FOTR* 114). Finally in Bree, he decides to trust Strider, takes his advice and stops Pippin from potentially revealing their secret mission (*FOTR* 124-125). He succeeds in leading his hobbit friends, so much so that they all voluntarily join the newly formed Fellowship in Rivendell, despite knowing that it will be very dangerous for them (*FOTR* 205). When the Fellowship loses Gandalf in Moria, now lacking the wizard's leadership, Frodo is forced to make more and more decisions for the quest. One such decision is made after Boromir's assault on him, when Frodo decides to leave his companions and continue the journey alone (*FOTR* 297), but his loyal friend Sam does not abandon him, and thus, the two of them continue the journey to take the Ring to Mordor. This decision to leave powerful companions behind to ensure their safety reflects Frodo's leadership qualities alongside his bravery. On the other hand, Frodo's leadership is subtle, he does not command armies or an array of brave companions. Only Sam and later, Gollum, are under his charge. Yet, he cares deeply for them, and on multiple occasions, he is ready to sacrifice himself as their leader (*FOTR* 112-116).

Frodo's leadership truly manifests during the Scouring of the Shire, when the hobbits, having successfully completed the quest and fought their battles, return to their home (*ROTK* 189-190). Here, they find that their lands are taken over by the evil wizard Saruman and his thugs, and Frodo becomes the de facto leader of the resistance forces that fight against them (*ROTK* 192-193). Upon their victory, Frodo also becomes the mayor of the Shire for a time to oversee its reconstruction (*ROTK* 207-209). However, the most crucial instance of Frodo's leadership, and courage, is displayed when he is captured by Faramir and his rangers. Frodo is prepared to lay down his life for Gollum even though the creature tried to kill him not too long ago. He decides to go down to the Forbidden Pool where the creature is fishing, unaware of the bowmen aiming at him. Frodo says, "Let me go down quietly to him,' and 'You may keep your bows bent, and shoot me at least, if I fail. I shall not run away" (*TTT* 204). In essence, Frodo is prepared to lay down his own life for his comrades, and in return, he receives a similar dedication and loyalty from them.

As an epic hero, Frodo's most apparent and most commonly observed epic characteristic is his magnanimity. He is not only generous but also merciful. Generosity, especially royal generosity displayed by kings, is a crucial part of most epics, and is often displayed by heroes. This is best displayed in *The Iliad*, where a dispute about the distribution of loot between King Agamemnon and Achilles causes Achilles to abandon his duty to the Greek army, which almost causes the Greeks to lose the Trojan War (89-90). In the classical epic tradition, a hero's motivation to fight is directly tied to the booty and fame he will earn from risking his life; however, in *LOTR*, Tolkien's heroic figures seldom care about material wealth, even Boromir, who tries to seize the Ring from Frodo does not want it for material wealth but to save his homeland (*FOTR* 292). In *LOTR*, neither Frodo nor any other character has any concern for material wealth or fame. However, the generosity as seen in heroic societies somewhat makes its way into *LOTR*. Frodo is a primary exhibitor of this trait. He is generous to his companions whenever he can as his declaration of Sam as his heir, and the gifting of his ancestral home of Bag End and the Red Book to Sam illustrate (*ROTK* 209-11).

Frodo's most crucial generosity, however, is his mercy to defeated enemies. Most importantly, his sparing of Gollum, who assaults him and Sam, leads directly to the

success of the quest. (*TTT* 151). By sparing his life, Frodo is able to convince the creature to become their guide on the way to Mordor, thus earning himself a valuable companion through his generosity. Throughout the journey to Mordor, Frodo and Gollum cooperate, even saving each others' lives on occasion. For instance, Frodo saves Gollum from Faramir's rangers and Gollum saves Frodo from certain death at the Black Gate (*TTT* 168). Later, Gollum, overcome by his desire and addiction to the Ring, betrays Frodo; but in the end, at the very last moment, Gollum causes his own undoing as he falls into the fires of Mt. Doom after taking the Ring from Frodo (*ROTK* 152). Frodo's final victory and accomplishment of his quest are in truth, due to his previously shown mercy.

Aside from the three main characteristics, namely courage, leadership and generosity, Frodo also shares other distinctive traits with epic heroes, which are his lineage, motivation for the quest, his epic boasting, the intervention of supernatural beings and finally, his epic resolution. As stated, Frodo Baggins is initially a simple hobbit of the Shire. In the prologue of *FOTR*, titled "Concerning Hobbits," the hobbits as a race do not appear to be heroic at all. They are not athletic but fat, they love food and have six course of meals a day. They also love peace and quiet. Being natural born farmers, they love dressing in bright colours, partying and exchanging gifts (*FOTR* 19-20). However, hobbits "are quick of hearing and sharp-eyed, and though they are inclined to be fat and do not hurry unnecessarily, they are nonetheless nimble and deft in their movements" and they possess "[t]he art of disappearing swiftly and silently" (*FOTR* 19).

The first hobbit who differs from the general consensus about the hobbits is Bilbo, Frodo's uncle, who is the first hobbit to leave the safety and comfort of the Shire sometime ago, and go on an adventure with the wizard Gandalf and his dwarf companions. This adventure undertaken by Bilbo results in him finding the One Ring, and sets the stage for Frodo's own journey.[16] Frodo is adopted and raised by his Uncle Bilbo the Ring-finder, known to be the greatest adventurer of all hobbits, and also is his designated heir. The two are related through their shared Took blood, which descends from Old Took Bandobras "Bulroarer" Took, a heroic figure in hobbit history (*FOTR* 32). The text is clear about Frodo growing up with Bilbo's stories about his adventures, and

[16] The details of this adventure undertaken by Bilbo are recorded in Tolkien's *The Hobbit* (1937).

learning Elvish language from him (*FOTR* 69). Similar to the wanderlust that overtakes Bilbo in *The Hobbit*, Frodo, too, is grasped by a thirst for adventure (45-46). Thus, even though Bilbo and Frodo are not father and son, it is clear that Frodo's upbringing in Bilbo's care affects and shapes his heroic character. Similar to epic heroes willing to surpass their fathers or ancestors, Frodo, too, desires adventures on a par with Bilbo.

Another significant aspect of Frodo's epic character is his motivation for taking up the quest. When the wizard Gandalf appears to inform him of the true nature of the alluring golden ring he inherited from Bilbo, Frodo accepts the task of keeping the Ring and guarding it, thus showing great control and courage appropriate for an epic hero (*FOTR* 48). The Ring is the property of Dark Lord Sauron, who has forged it in order to dominate others to his will, and as Gandalf explains, it is impossible to destroy the Ring by any mortal means (*FOTR* 51, 57-58). As Harold Lubin states, courage is "the victory of will - of self-control ... when confronting dangers and, the ultimate danger, death" (10). Despite everything Gandalf tells him about Sauron and his servants, Frodo is still resolved to carry the burden of the Ring and destroy it. In this sense too, Frodo's resolve to complete a task that greatly concerns the fate of all Middle-Earth makes him into an epic hero. One of his motivations to accept this task is to protect his homeland and nation. He resolves to leave home so that his people can remain safe from Sauron: "I am a danger, a danger to all that live near me. I cannot keep the Ring and stay here. I ought to leave Bag End, leave the Shire, leave everything and go away" (*FOTR* 58). It is clear that his aim is to save his people and land even if it means the loss of his home for him:

> I should like to save the Shire, if I could – though there have been times when I thought the inhabitants too stupid and dull for words, and have felt that an earthquake or an invasion of dragons might be good for them. But I don't feel like that now. I feel that as long as the Shire lies behind, safe and comfortable, I shall find wandering more bearable: I shall know that somewhere there is a firm foothold, even if my feet cannot stand there again. (*FOTR* 58)

Initially, Frodo is only ordained to take the Ring away from the Shire to the elven holding of Rivendell. However, upon reaching there, Frodo learns that safekeeping the Ring is not possible, and it needs to be destroyed (*FOTR* 201-202). He once again accepts the task of carrying the Ring, this time all the way to Mordor (*FOTR* 204). Thus, Frodo's quest gains more importance. Once undertaken to ensure the safety of his homeland, his quest is now tied to the fate of the entire free world. His success or failure to bring the

Ring to Mt. Doom will be the salvation or enslavement of Middle-Erath. His primary aim to safeguard his homeland and people is also realised after the quest to destroy the Ring is accomplished, as saving the Shire becomes his real task.

As an epic hero, Frodo, throughout his quest, performs the epic boasting as well and praises his talents, past glories, lineage or potential future victories. Goldberg defines heroic boasting as "a 'sub-trait' of the characteristic of courage" (30). Boasting is observed in many epics, such as when Beowulf boasts before his fight with Grendel, "But he will find me different. I will show him how Geats shape to kill in the heat of battle" (159). In *LOTR*, it is also possible to see boasting although its scope is greatly diminished. Frodo makes a formal vow to deliver the Ring in the Council of Elrond; however, his vow is simple as he only says "I will take the ring, though I do not know the way" (*FOTR* 204). Goldberg states that "[y]et, in the ears of those at the council, particularly Elrond, this boast had as much power and force behind it as did Beowulf's boast" (31). Another instance of Frodo's boasting is a recurring one between him and Gollum, over the ownership and fate of the Ring. Whenever Gollum reveals his desire to claim the Ring, Frodo boasts that he would put on the Ring and claims that "If I, wearing it, were to command you, you would obey, even if it were to leap from a precipice or to cast yourself into the fire. And such would be my command. So have a care, Sméagol!" (*TTT* 170). In these instances, the reader observes the exchange from Sam's point of view as opposed to Frodo's. Sam states "[f]or a moment it appeared to Sam that his master had grown and Gollum had shrunk: a tall stern shadow, a mighty lord who hid his brightness in grey cloud, and at his feet a little whining dog" (*TTT* 153-54). A similar change appears before the final moments of the Ring's destruction and the quest's completion: as Frodo and Sam head up to Mount Doom, Gollum attacks them and is stopped by Sam. There, Frodo boasts of his power to destroy Gollum: "Begone, and trouble me no more! If you touch me ever again, you shall be cast yourself into the Fire of Doom" (*ROTK* 150). This boast is not for naught, as Gollum indeed falls into the fire after assaulting Frodo and claiming the Ring, thus fulfilling Frodo's boast. Therefore, the epic boast in *LOTR* works in two different ways: One is the traditional sense in which the hero, Frodo, announces his aims and intentions to enemies and allies, and lets them know of his potential as a hero; whereas the other is a boast that is actualized through the Ring's power and Frodo's will. Not only

Frodo's epic boasts show his intent of accomplishing his quest, but they also allow him to actually accomplish it.

Another epic element, which can be observed in Frodo's epic journey, too, is the intervention of supernatural forces to help the hero. When Frodo stays on his course and strives to accomplish his tasks, greater powers than him offer assistance. Accordingly, Frodo receives aid both from his mortal friends Sam, Merry and Pippin, as well as powerful beings or individuals such as Gandalf, Tom Bombadil, and Galadriel, while Sauron's servants seek to stop him. The intervention of good and evil supernatural beings in Frodo's journey strengthens the epic struggle of good and evil within the narrative. His trek gradually turns into a battle of good versus evil revolving around his fate and the Ring as Frodo must ride, walk and paddle across many different landscapes. In this long journey, he is sometimes assisted, and sometimes hindered by the supernatural forces. Although his quest begins in the pastoral realm of the Shire, Frodo continuously moves away from safe and familiar spaces toward dangerous and enchanted lands. Most of these landscapes are also inhabited or invaded by dangerous, often supernatural creatures that seek to impede Frodo's quest (*FOTR* 98-112-230-243, *TTT* 160-229). However, supernatural beings are not always enemies, Frodo also receives aid from some. The Old Forest just at the border of the Shire, for example, is one such place, where Frodo and his companions are trapped and require aid. There, they are aided by Tom Bombadil, a powerful man-shaped being that watches over Nature (*FOTR* 92-93, 98). Similarly, as Frodo travels away from the Shire and towards the elven settlement of Rivendell, he is stalked by the Nazgûl, the ghostly servants of Sauron, who, on multiple occasions, attack him and his friends (*FOTR* 67-68, 80). After taking up the task to destroy the Ring in Rivendell, the lands he passes through become increasingly more dangerous and their denizens far more magical. The dwarf Mines of Moria, for example, are inhabited by an ancient demon, the Balrog, who claims the life of Gandalf, who is, arguably, the strongest member and the leader of the Fellowship (*FOTR* 245).

An example of friendly enchanted place is the magical woods of Lothlórien, where Lady Galadriel hosts Frodo (*FOTR* 264). Galadriel functions similar to a goddess that inspires and helps heroes in epics. She allows the Fellowship to rest in the safety of her realm, and shows Frodo her magical mirror, where he sees disturbing events happening in the Shire,

as well as getting a glimpse of Sauron, which hardens his resolve to carry out his quest (*FOTR* 270). Lady Galadriel also offers guidance and gifts to the Fellowship to help them on their quest (*FOTR* 273-277). This sequence of one hostile landscape followed by a more amicable one is a pattern. Throughout his journey, Frodo's travels always follow this pattern of evil and dangerous to friendly and peaceful. Similar to the landscape pattern, Frodo's encounters with persons of interest or creatures also unfold in this manner. As in *TTT*, in which Frodo is at first lost and clueless as to his whereabouts, and is attacked by Gollum (*TTT* 144-152). Gollum is an interesting example of the good and evil creatures surrounding Frodo, as he is initially an enemy, and then turns into an ally that leads Frodo to his objective (*TTT* 169). However, Gollum then once again becomes an enemy, only to die and somewhat redeem himself in his death due to having unwittingly destroyed the Ring (*ROTK* 152). There is also the figure of Shelob, who is essentially a supernatural threat. She not only hinders Frodo and Sam in Cirith Ungol by blocking their passage into Mordor, but also paralyses Frodo, which results in his capture by Sauron's orcs (*TTT* 237-38-39). In turn, she is defeated by Sam's heroic efforts (*TTT* 237).

Epic heroes always have a resolution (Feeney 154) at the end of their journey, which is usually accompanied by the heroic paradox (Putnam 473): a choice between fame and death, and life and being forgotten. Similarly, Frodo has a resolution and a heroic paradox upon returning home to the Shire. Frodo, throughout his epic journey, has two aims: to safeguard his homeland, the Shire, and to destroy the One Ring when the time comes. He completes both of these objectives, arguably with assistance, and finally returns home to his inheritance. However, Frodo completes his epic journey as a changed hobbit.

He has been physically and mentally challenged by the Ring and wounded several times. These have taken a toll on him. Especially the wound by the Morgul blade of the Nazgûl on Weathertop, and the burden of carrying the Ring for a long time into Mordor have long standing effects. Lynn Whitaker observes that "[t]hroughout the quest, Frodo is increasingly infantilized, dependent on Sam to be fed, watered, clothed and sheltered" (27). Similarly, in his fight to retake the Shire, Frodo does not take up his sword and shed blood; but leaves martial deeds to Merry and Pippin. In a sense, he is once again dependent on his comrades' valour to accomplish his aim of saving the Shire. Even when

he settles down to his old home, Bag End, he asks to be joined by Sam and Rose who is Sam's wife. Sam, when living together with Frodo, notices that Frodo is noticeably sick and in pain at times, as well as displaying some PTSD: "One evening Sam came into the study and found his master looking very strange. He was very pale and his eyes seemed to see things far away. 'What's the matter, Mr. Frodo?' said Sam. 'I am wounded,' he answered, 'wounded; it will never really heal" and "Mr. Frodo wore always a white jewel on a chain that he often would finger" (*ROTK* 210).

It is clear that Frodo is unable to reintegrate back into the society, and he is not able to find rest from his past experiences of the quest. The ordinary life he sought to return to is no longer a possiblty for him. Lady Arwen, perhaps foreseeing this, offers Frodo her place on the ship to the Undying Lands, "[b]ut in my stead you shall go, Ring-bearer, when the time comes, and if you then desire it. If your hurts grieve you still and the memory of your burden is heavy, then you may pass into the West, until all your wounds and weariness are healed" (*ROTK* 172). Karyn Milos argues that, alongside the trauma Frodo suffered throughout his epic journey, he also laments the loss of the Ring which he carried for so long (18-19). Indeed, Farmer Cotton overhears Frodo when he is sick, saying "It is gone for ever,' … 'and now all is dark and empty" (*ROTK* 209). His constant fingering of the white jewel bestowed by Arwen also supports Frodo's inability to face the fact that the Ring is gone. Combined with his recurring illnesses, where he relieves the pain and memories of the quest, Frodo naturally seeks travel to the Undying Lands (Milos 17-18). This journey to Undying Lands is significant in an epic sense, as only truly worthy heroes are allowed respite in it.

The Undying Lands are a place akin to paradise to mortals, and only the select few are allowed to dwell there, for the divinities[17] of Middle-Earth have created it, and often wander there alongside mortals (*Silmarillion* 174). It is a resting place, perhaps akin to a peaceful Purgatory where only elves, who themselves are immortal, are allowed to go to. However, great heroes or persons are, too, allowed to reach the Undying Lands, among whom are Bilbo, the dwarf Gimli, and of course, Sam and Frodo (*ROTK* 252). In a way,

[17] The gods and divines of Tolkien's Secondary World have almost no presence in *LOTR*, save for Gandalf and Sauron, and they both hardly ever show personal power. All the divines and the Undying Lands are described in *The Silmarillion*, edited and compiled by the author's son Christopher after his father's death.

the Undying Lands are akin to the Nordic Valhalla, a hall where deserving heroes gather in the afterlife. It is fitting, then, that Frodo, whose deeds go unrecognized by a majority in life, is honoured in the afterlife by a heroic resting place. As Whitaker states, "Sam, Merry and Pippin will all go on to enjoy home and family, to enjoy adulthood, but Frodo cannot. Middle-earth is saved by Frodo, but not for him" (28). Frodo is not meant to stay in the mortal plane but to go away to heal, and take comfort in the fact that his friends will enjoy the fruits of his labour. Sam notices that Frodo does not take any credit for his own heroic deeds: "Frodo dropped quietly out of all the doings of the Shire, and Sam was pained to notice how little honour he had in his own country. Few people knew or wanted to know about his deeds and adventures; their admiration and respect were given mostly to Mr. Meriadoc and Mr. Peregrin and (if Sam had known it) to himself" (*ROTK* 210).

This selfless heroism exhibited by Frodo is the type of heroism Tolkien loves and promotes, which is also in line with the epic heroic ideal. Clark states that "Tolkien knew and loved the literature that preserved the heroic ethos of the old Germanic world, but he could not accept the heroic vision of man's fate or the traditional heroes represented in those literatures. His fantasy fiction rewrites heroic literature and the hero" (40). Hence, Frodo's understanding of heroism is that "the heroic act is not done in service or contract, obedience or pledge but rather, out of love and of free will" (James 154). Instead of dying in pursuit off ame, Frodo accomplishes his quest incognito instead, refusesing to take credit for it, and with his physical and mental state deteriorating, he chooses to exile himself from his beloved homeland and companions. Therefore, Frodo is depicted by Tolkien in a heroic light that is distinctively of twenty- first century, but also reflects certain traditional epic qualities as explained above.

In terms of having characteristics of an epic hero, Sam can also be considered as having qualities of one. Indeed, many critics,[18] including Tolkien, believe that Sam, in fact, has the characteristics of an epic hero. Jan Wojcik comments that "Frodo and Sam can both be called hero: Sam with subtle, Frodo with obvious references" (16). Indeed, Sam is a much subtler hero as he does not fit into many heroic characteristics at first glance. First

[18] Chrsitine L. Chichester in her thesis titled *Samwise Gamgee: Beauty, Truth, and Heroism in J.R.R. Tolkien's* The Lord of the Rings argues that Sam is the epic hero in *LOTR*, while Jan Wojick and Jerome Rosenberg each argue in their respective articles that Sam should be considered a hero alongside Frodo.

of all, he does not come from a significant bloodline (*FOTR* 31). Additionally, he is not particularly powerful or exceptional, being a mere gardener for the Baggins family (*FOTR* 33). Even his motivation to go on the quest alongside Frodo seems insignificant. Sam says:

> I heard a deal that I didn't rightly understand, about an enemy, and rings, and Mr. Bilbo, sir, and dragons, and a fiery mountain, and – and Elves, sir. I listened because I couldn't help myself, if you know what I mean. Lor bless me, sir, but I do love tales of that sort. And I believe them too, whatever Ted may say. Elves, sir! I would dearly love to see *them.* Couldn't you take me to see Elves, sir, when you go? (*FOTR* 59)

Of all the lengthy discussion about the evil of the Ring and the strength of Sauron, Sam only gathers that Frodo will be going to see the elves, and he wants to be a part of it. Chichester, in her study of the character, observes that:

> When his master, Frodo (a more classical hero, and one whose heroism is not necessarily diminished when compared to Sam's) receives a call to adventure, Sam considers this call to extend to himself and promptly joins Frodo on what becomes a journey of heroic proportions. Sam not only experiences versions of many stages of the hero's journey alongside his master, but many times, he steps up to lead when Frodo is weakened, bringing a different yet equally valid type of heroism to a largely Frodo-centered plot. (10)

On the other hand, although Sam appears to be conscripted into the quest by Gandalf, he has his own agency in the decision which comes to define him, that is, his loyalty to his friend and master, Frodo. As stated above, Sam's loyalty is essential to epic journey motif, and the completion of the quest would never be possible without him.

Sam is more akin to a traditional epic hero when compared to Frodo. Unlike Frodo, whose strength lies in mental fortitude, Sam's strength manifests itself more in line with classic epic heroes. That is, in times of trouble, when facing strong and often supernaturalenemies, Sam rises up to the challenge and responds with strength, both martial and spiritual. In Moria, Sam is the first to react to Frodo's wounding by attacking the orc (*FOTR* 242). Moreover, when Frodo leaves the Fellowship, Sam alone is able to find and persuade his master to take him along (*FOTR* 297). Similarly, when Frodo and Sam are lost and ambushed by Gollum, Sam is the one to wrestle with and hold the creature (*TTT*

151). Similarly, when Gollum betrays them in Shelob's lair, Sam is the one to stand tall, fight and put fear into the heart of the giant arachnid (*ROTK* 237-38-39). Chichester remarks that, during his battle against the spider, Sam is, "infused with a transcendental strength, a conduit for the heroic. Sword in hand …" (61). Sam even rushes to save Frodo by himself, perhaps emboldened by his final battle, who was taken by the enemy into Minas Morgul, a fortress within Mordor (*ROTK* 118-119).

Evidently, Sam Gamgee is a traditional epic hero that shows loyalty to his companions, be they leaders or masters, unto death and exhibits martial prowess in the face of danger. In fact, all of his heroic traits are foreshadowed much earlier in the story, such as when the hobbits were hosted by Gildor and his elves (*FOTR* 72). The elves, renowned for their prophecies, talk in private with Sam, telling him "not to leave Frodo," which, Sam, later reflects on when Frodo asks him if he is still resolved to commit to the dangerous journey: "If you don't come back, sir, then I shan't, that's certain,' said Sam. '*Don't you leave him!* they said to me. *Leave him!* I said. *I never mean to. I am going with him, if he climbs to the Moon; and if any of those Black Riders try to stop him, they'll have Sam Gamgee to reckon with*, I said. They laughed" (*FOTR* 75-76). Later on, Frodo reflects on the slight changes Sam exhibits as their journey together continues: "I am learning a lot about Sam Gamgee on this journey. First he was a conspirator, now he's a jester. He'll end up by becoming a wizard – or a warrior!' 'I hope not,' said Sam. 'I don't want to be neither!" (*FOTR* 162). But luckily for both of them, Sam indeed turns into a warrior. The orcs who happen upon Frodo's paralysed body in Shelob's lair remark that "a great Elven warrior" must be around, since Shelob is wounded and nowhere to be seen (*TTT* 243). Sam, thus, ultimately turns into an epic warrior in the eyes of his enemies and allies.

It must be noted that Sam's heroic adventures are reflective of Frodo's own. The two are almost always side-by-side. Whatever dangers Frodo faced in his journey, Sam also faced those perils right alongside him. Although Anne C. Petty argues that, despite Sam's heroic battles, Sam is "the universal helper", however, one should not forget that Tolkien's ideal epic hero is the one who helps because he can, which makes Sam much more heroic than he is given credit for (37). Richard Roos states about Sam that "[h]e seems at first to be thrown in for comic relief, but as the work progresses he grows in importance until in the

last book, he is indispensable … Sam's attractiveness comes from the simplicity of his total motivation: loving dedication to his Master" (1176). It is through that dedication that Sam's epic heroism shines the most, and Sam displays epic qualities of generosity, boasting and even leadership alongside his already established martial prowess and courage. When Frodo feels down and lost, Sam boasts about his quest and eventual legacy, for instance: "Let's hear about Frodo and the Ring!' And they'll say: ''Yes, that's one of my favourite stories. Frodo was very brave, wasn't he, dad?' 'Yes, my boy, the famousest of the hobbits, and that's saying a lot" (*TTT* 223), which lifts Frodo's spirits up. When facing Shelob, he boasts of his victory: "Now come, you filth! ... You've hurt my master, you brute, and you'll pay for it. We're going on; but we'll settle with you first. Come on, and taste it again!" (*TTT* 236). Even the scene gives the reader the feeling of an epic battle,

> "And then his tongue was loosed and his voice cried in a language which he did not know:
> *A Elbereth Gilthoniel*
> *o menel palan-diriel,*
> *le nallon sí di'nguruthos!*
> *A tiro nin, Fanuilos!*
> And with that he staggered to his feet and was Samwise the hobbit, Hamfast's son, again" (*TTT* 236).

It is important to note that this sudden boastful heroism that comes upon Sam is only triggered when he sees Frodo's fall to the spider. After that a true change comes over Sam; unaware that his master is not dead but paralysed, he takes up the Ring, the magical sword Sting and the Phial of Galadriel, and gives Frodo a "burial":

> 'If I'm to go on,' he said, 'then I must take your sword, by your leave, Mr. Frodo, but I'll put this one to lie by you, as it lay by the old king in the barrow; and you've got your beautiful mithril coat from old Mr. Bilbo. And your star-glass, Mr. Frodo, you did lend it to me and I'll need it, for I'll be always in the dark now. It's too good for me, and the Lady gave it to you, but maybe she'd understand. Do *you* understand, Mr. Frodo? I've got to go on.' (*TTT* 237-38)

This scene not only serves as an epic burial for a fallen hero, but also inspires a new hero, namely, Sam to take up the martyr's quest. Although Sam resolves to continue and finish the quest to destroy the Ring on his own, upon discovering his master is still alive, he risks it all and saves him; nevertheless, he shows growth into a heroism of his own. Auden

comments in the "Quest Hero" that his "subjective experience of living is one of having continually to make a choice between given the alternatives, and it is this experience of doubt and temptation that seems more important and memorable to me than the actions I take when I have made my choice" (90). Sam is also presented alternatives: he could give up and return home or he could weep for Frodo and be caught by the orcs, but he resolves to take up his master's quest instead. Chichester suggests that mental and spiritual stimuli spur Sam into heroism, and Sam is lifted from the role of a sidekick, "the universal helper" into an indisputable epic hero because of circumstances (63).

Sam also experiences the glorious homecoming of an epic hero. Thus, Sam's notable turn into an epic hero also follows him to his homeland. After the destruction of the Ring, Sam returns to the Shire alongside Merry, Pippin and Frodo, and once again starts exhibiting his heroism. Under Frodo's leadership, Sam assists in the defeating of Saruman and his ruffians, and saves the Shire (*ROTK* 203); however, his most crucial deed is not martial. Saruman has destroyed the agrarian land, instead turning it into an industrial land of machines but Sam, having been gifted seeds from Lady Galadriel's garden, spreads them all over the Shire and restores to his homeland its former beauty and earns the love and respect of all that inhabit it (*ROTK* 207-08-09). He also marries the love of his life, Rosie Cotton, and moves in with Frodo (*ROTK* 209). In the end, while Frodo cannot cope with his wounds and trauma and consequently fails to reintegrate into society, Sam is able to do so. Thus, upon his departure to the Undying Lands, Frodo declares Sam as his heir, leaves him his estate, his treasury and most important of all, *The Red Book of Westmarch*, where the story of the *Lord of the Rings* is contained (*ROTK* 210-11). Thus, Sam is also the character to conclude the story, as he rides back home after watching Frodo leave Middle-Earth forever. Accordingly, Sam returns home to his loving family, "… the evening meal was ready, and he was expected. And Rose drew him in, and set him in his chair, and put little Elanor upon his lap. He drew a deep breath. 'Well, I'm back,' he said" (*ROTK* 214).

Moreover, Unlike Frodo's, Sam's fame and heroic status are recognised in the Shire (although unbeknownst to him), and he is able to live out his days in peace as a family man and a proper hobbit. His ending is the greatest divergence from the often tragic endings of classic epic heroes, who usually die at the end due to the heroic paradox, a fate

even Frodo himself cannot escape. Rosenberg comments that "Sam's character, then, is a perhaps not-so strange combination of village gossip, humble servant, able warrior, knowledgeable scout, faithful friend, merciful enemy, and hard-nosed skeptic who can be incorrect in judgment…" (11). Furthermore, he states that Sam lacks the nobility of Aragorn, the grandeur of the elves, the harsh wisdom of Gandalf, the missionary zeal of Frodo as well as "the other Utopian virtues of the more idealized members of the novel's community" and stays behind in the "real world" of Middle Earth (11). It is this ordinary or "rustic" love and life of Sam that endears the character so much to Tolkien, and it is why he considers Sam as the "chief hero" of *LOTR* (*Letters* 177). It seems that Sam, alongside Frodo, is a potential epic hero, as without Sam, there is no epic journey, no epic quest, and there is no victory against evil. Without Sam, the *Red Book* would not be passed down to future generations and become the epic of *The Lord of The Rings*, either and all the heroic grandeur of the Third Age of Middle Earth would be lost.

To summarize, as this study has shown, there are several epic elements, such as the use of elevated language, the epic catalogue of arms and epic comitatus, epic similes and throwbacks, an epic quest and the battles that accompany such a quest, the presence of good and evil supernatural creatures and deities and most important of all, an epic hero, employed in *LOTR*. These epic elements present in other epics such as *Beowulf*, are used to contribute to the epic nature of the LOTR. From minor characters like Théoden and Éomer, whose deeds as rulers and warriors showcase epic comitatus and Germanic fighting spirit, to Éowyn's disguising herself to fight alongside her people for their survival as a nation, all of these elements add an epic layer to the story. The hobbits, arguably the most central characters of the story, and their loyalty, courage and companionship, and their epic journey to accomplish an impossible task to save the world all come together to form an epic tale of heroism. But, at the same time, the hobbits are undeniably ordinary and humane; finding themselves in the midst of a world of danger and war, and do their utmost to rise up to the challenge, earning their epic heroism. As Koravos states, "[t]he ordinary and the marvellous co-exist in *The Lord of the Rings*, which is both a mythological and a realistic story" (35). Indeed, *LOTR* is a trilogy where the readers can easily identify with the hobbits and the Shire, but, as the story progresses, there emerges more myth, more magic and more heroism shown by the unlikeliest of

people. Tolkien considers Beowulf as "[s]omething more significant than a standard hero, a man faced with a foe more evil than any human enemy of house or real," which easily applies to Frodo and Sam (*Monsters* 17). In the end, *LOTR* is a fantasy novel, but with the carefully placed and rewritten epic elements, Tolkien turns it into a story of epic proportion. Thus, a fantasy novel becomes an epically endowed story, which turns it into an epic fantasy.

CHAPTER II

ELEMENTS OF ROMANCE IN *THE LORD OF THE RINGS*

This chapter focuses on the elements of romance, and especially the elements of chivalric romance in *LOTR*. It argues that in all the books, but especially in *The Return of the King*, where the culmination of Aragorn's journey is achieved, there is both imitation of and innovation upon chivalric romance. The books contain romance elements such as courtly love, fantastical landscapes, the use of magical figures, items and happenings in the journey and adventures of Aragorn, and his companions Gimli and Legolas. As Tuğçe Çankaya asserts, in *LOTR*: the generic features of chivalric romance and modern fantasy such as the quest theme, secondary/imaginary worlds, circular plot pattern, the struggle between the light and the darkness and so on lead us to the issue of another level of intertextuality between these two genres. (19) Therefore, as stated, it is possible to make the claim that *LOTR* as an epic fantasy, borrows elements from chivalric romance and even innovates on them.

In terms of plot structure, as Finlayson remarks, two components are crucial for chivalric romance. One is the concept of hero, which, according to this study, Aragorn represents, and the other is episodic action (57). In terms of structure, Frye explains that in the structure of romances, "discontinuous episodes" follow each other (47). The episodic structure of the chivalric romance is employed in *LOTR*. When considering the episodic structure of *LOTR*, Honegger states that without the inclusion of the hobbits and their point-of-view, the story would become "*Chanson d'Elessar*", essentially making Aragorn[19] into the main character of the entire narrative (*Splintered* 2).

Aragorn's narrative, indeed, reflects the traditional chivalric romance template. Aragorn is the knight-errant of *LOTR*, as stated in the introduction of this thesis, chivalric romance encompasses a quest or an adventure, undertaken by a male hero of virtue, who is identified as a knight. The success of the quest hinges not only on the hero's individual strength, but also on his virtues as a Christian, ergo, his purity of character and soul, and such a hero also follows a set of chivalric rules (Whetter 66). The setting of his quest

[19] Elessar, meaning "Elf-Stone", is Aragorn's kingly name in Elvish

encompasses a landscape that is somewhat relatable and realistic, yet it also includes some magical and fantastical elements to enrich the story, as well as to serve a didactic function. His quest takes place within the social structure of a feudal realm; however, this realm is usually interjected by more fantastic and magical lands (Whetter 96) where the knight adventures to accomplish his quest. The knight also seeks recognition for his deeds and heroics, which he hopes will improve his standing in the world (Davenport 131) These magical realms may contain the fantastical elements in the form of dragons, fairies, magicians, demons and similar beings. The hero is often involved with a lady of high standing, whom he intends to court or marry; and his quest is mostly intended to prove his worth to her (Brewer 24). However, the lady, despite being essential, might not be central to the story itself; at times remaining as a mere accessory or motivation for the hero to prove himself worthy (Finlayson 57). In his interactions with the lady, the knight-errant is often humble and he is inferior to her in the relationship.

Another important element of chivalric romance is that Christianity is deeply engrained into its structure and elements. Examples of such elements include Christian holidays as seen in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and the virtues that characterise Gawain's resistance to temptation (to a certain extent) in the same romance (121), or the angels coming down from the heavens to take Roland's soul in *Chanson de Roland* (Sayers 142). Tolkien refers to *LOTR* as "a fundamentally religious and Catholic work" in a letter, and further states that "That is why I have not put in, or have cut out, practically all references to anything like 'religion', to cults or practices, in the imaginary world. For the religious element is absorbed into the story (*Letters* 191). In fact, Christianity or God does not have an overly visible representation in Middle-Earth in *LOTR*, however, in *The Silmarillion*, the Christian elements in the Middle-Earth become much clearer.[20] Stratford Caldecott argues that:

> The cosmological setting of Tolkien's imagined world, along with the creatures and events with which he filled it and the moral laws governing this imagined cosmos, were all intended to be compatible with his beliefs about reality, and in fact provide "pointers" to a Christian world-view. Love, courage, justice, mercy, kindness, integrity and other such virtues are incarnated in the story through characters such as Aragorn and Frodo. It is a

[20] In order not to digress, Tolkien's creation myth will not be described in this thesis. However, in *The Silmarillion* Tolkien explains the creation of Middle-Earth as well as the God and angels that preside over it.

> testimony to the power and realism of the Christian tradition that exposure to these patterns of the moral life can have a purifying effect on the receptive reader, yet without making us feel confined or oppressed within an ideological system. (5)

Christian virtues are often expected of a knight, and have been a staple of romance in general (Cooper 25). As such, in *LOTR*, Christian virtues are often presented to the reader by the members of Fellowship, such as Frodo's mercy to Gollum on many occasions (*TTT* 151-152-205), Aragorn's justice upon assuming his throne (*ROTK* 168-169-170), Legolas and Gimli's loyalty and integrity during the war and its aftermath (*TTT* 14-67, *ROTK* 252). In fact, not only the virtues of the characters, but also their constant test and resistance against temptations make up a large part in the subtle religiosity of *LOTR*. Gandalf envisions Frodo's quest as representing the Lord's Prayer that reads "[l]ead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Carpenter *Letters* 251). Pınar Taşdelen remarks that temptation in medieval drama and mystery plays is presented as "something to be abstained from through biblical accounts, beginning with Satan's temptation, followed with an individual's falling into temptation oneself" (149). The same is also true in chivalric romances, as temptation is a test for the aspiring knight-errants to face and overcome. Cooper mentions the evil temptations[21] as an obstacle to any knight, and indeed a knight's spiritual challenge is to resist such temptations (84). Therefore, giving into temptation is not knightly behaviour, and a knight is supposed to resist any vile tempter in his quest or adventure.

In this context, in *LOTR*, the One Ring represents the urge to sin and betray virtue; it is a vile tempter. The central characters, including the knightly hero Aragorn, are, at certain points in the story, placed against the Ring, and as each of them come directly in contact with the Ring, they struggle with thoughts and temptations to claiming it for themselves. Gandalf, for example, is outright offered the Ring by Frodo, for he is "wise and powerful," to which he replies, "[w]ith that power I should have power too great and terrible," and adds: "Do not tempt me! For I do not wish to become like the Dark Lord himself. Yet the way of the Ring to my heart is by pity, pity for weakness and the desire of strength to do good" (*FOTR* 58). Similarly, Frodo offers the Ring to Galadriel for she is "wise and

[21] Sexual approaches from women, temptations to live in luxury or the Devil's offers to a knight are all considered as evil temptations by Cooper (78-79, 84).

fearless and fair" (269), and just like Gandalf, Galadriel realises the power of the Ring and how it might change her:

> You will give me the Ring freely! In place of the Dark Lord you will set up a Queen. And I shall not be dark, but beautiful and terrible as the Morning and the Night! Fair as the Sea and the Sun and the Snow upon the Mountain! Dreadful as the Storm and the Lightning! Stronger than the foundations of the earth. All shall love me and despair! (*FOTR* 270)

Then she refuses the Ring, and states that she will "remain Galadriel" (270). Arguably, both Gandalf and Galadriel are vastly powerful, semi-divine entities, and they can see the temptations of sin offered in the form of the Ring, and resist the urge. Aragorn, by no means divine or as powerful as Gandalf and Galadriel, "never lusts for the One Ring, whereas even Galadriel and Gandalf *are* tempted" (Chasseu 32). Likewise Faramir refuses to take the Ring from Frodo because: "I am wise enough to know that there are some perils from which a man must flee" (*TTT* 200). Only two characters, Sam and Boromir, try to take the Ring from Frodo. Boromir is the only character to completely be tempted and seduced by the Ring as he attempts to take it by force; and thus, he becomes the sole character to give in to his sinful urges (*FOTR* 292-93). Sam only takes the Ring involuntarily upon Frodo's assumed death, and resists the corruption, as the Ring fills his mind with visions of immense gardens tended by him and his servants, to which he responds by thinking through his "unconquered plain hobbit-sense," and realises that all he needs in life is a small garden that only he can freely take care of, having more than that is just too much (*ROTK* 120-21).

The One Ring is also a moral burden, which is evident in its weight. Often times Frodo and Sam complain about the weight of the Ring (*TTT* 218) and Sam, upon wearing it for the first time is almost crushed by the weight: "[a]nd at once his head was bowed to the ground with the weight of the Ring, as if a great stone had been strung on him" (*TTT* 238). Sullivan notes that "the Ring is a burden only to characters with a conscience" (78). Therefore, the Ring functions as the ultimate temptation, of the urge to sin, that the romance characters are to resist and through which display the virtues of the proper knighthood. The weight the sinful Ring places upon their conscience allows them to see the Ring for what it is, and resist it.

Indeed, in *LOTR* the knight is an important element that makes the plot a romancenarrative, for it adopts the knight and his adventures. As Cooper puts it, "[r]omance isinseparable from ideas of chivalry, and from the primary exponent of chivalry, the knight" (41). According to Ben Reinhard, when the nineteenth century romantics revivedromance, "they naturally gravitated towards knighthood; Scott is, in this matter, theromantic *par excellence*" (178). Scott's most important contribution to the revival of thegenre, aside from his novels, is his essay on chivalry in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Scottdefines chivalry as the blending of "military valour with the strongest passions, whichactuate the human mind, the feelings of devotion and those of love" (10). Scott's viewson knights and chivalry are also reflected in the writings of C.S. Lewis. Like Scott, Lewis maintains that chivalry is "the special contribution of the Middle Ages to our culture" (13). Moreover, Lewis' is of the opinion that "[t]he knight is a man of blood and iron, a man familiar with the sight of smashed faces and the ragged stumps of lopped-off limbs; he is also a demure, almost a maiden-like, guest in hall, a gentle, modest, unobtrusive man" (13). What he describes is a hero of contradictions, a warrior that sheds blood readily, but he is still a beautiful, almost effeminate and kind man. For C.S. Lewis, "this combination of old heroic courage with civilizing Christianity was almost the definition of chivalry" (qtd in Reinhard 182). Tolkien agreed with his friend and fellow medievalist, hence using similar characteristics in his own knights (*Monsters* 16-20). According to Shirley L. Marchalonis, "The knight's duty as it was idealized is to perfect himself as a knight and to use his qualities for the benefit of society as a whole" (16). She also remarks that chivalry is, "an ideal, never really attainable, but providing a goal and a definition of the proper actions and attitudes of a certain class" (18).

In this context, in *LOTR*, the knight-hero is Aragorn, who is from a royal and semi-divine bloodline (*ROTK* 301). Essentially, as stated, a knight is a hero in pursuit of an ideal for self-betterment, both spiritually and in terms of his social status. Steele draws attention to the fact that Aragorn is a "classical hero" (31), thus, he is martial and capable. Aragorn is indeed a seasoned warrior and adventurer, he is described by Gandalf to be "the greatest traveler and huntsman of this age of the world" (*FOTR* 56). Frye defines the hero of romance as, "superior in degree to other men and to his environment, the hero is the typical hero of romance, whose actions are marvellous but who is himself identified as a human being" (33). Moreover, the "prodigies of courage and endurance, unnatural to us,

are natural to him, and enchanted weapons, talking animals, terrifying ogres and witches, and talismans of miraculous power violate no rule of probability…" (Frye 33).

As stated earlier, the narrative is divided into two parts in *LOTR*; whereas Frodo serves as the epic hero, Aragorn's episodes reflect a knightly adventure that eventually crowns him as the king of Gondor (*ROTK* 95). Aragorn not only travels with two companions, who themselves reflect knight-errant or squires in their actions and loyalty to Aragorn and their mission, but also travels through a large distance, in which he and his knightly companions solve problems they come across. They follow their hobbit companions and ultimately contribute to their survival, they save the king and then the kingdom of Rohan and they finally race towards Gondor and eliminate reinforcements of Sauron's armies.

However, the chivalric aspects of Aragorn are a point of discussion. It has been stated that Tolkien has a style of rewriting certain aspects of the genres he incorporated into *LOTR*, which causes divergence from the genre he seeks to reflect in his novel. His treatment of the knight-errant, similar to his treatment of epic heroes Frodo and Sam, is, hence, different. Flieger argues that "Tolkien puts a modern spin on many of his characters, reconfiguring the contexts and situations in which they play a part while at the same time keeping faith with the medieval types from which they derive" (*Splintered* 95). This "modern spin" manifests itself in two different ways in the portrayal of Aragorn as a romance hero. The first is the use of the word "knight," which is often used interchangeably by Tolkien, usually referring to people that are not actual knights. The riders of Rohan for example, are often referred to as knights, yet they clearly are not.[22] On the other hand, there are characters clearly identified as knights such as the knights of the Dol Amroth. They live in a castle near the sea; their gear clearly reflects their knighthood as they are clad in "shining mail" and "bright-burnished vambrace" (*ROTK*13, 66, 82). These cavaliers are also said to "held themselves like lords" and that "there is Elvish blood in the veins of that folk," (*ROTK* 66-67). Alongside these named knights, there are also the unnamed knights. Hence, it is possible that Boromir and Faramir, two captains and brothers from Gondor, are knighly characters like Aragorn. Boromir and

[22] The Rohirrim are occasionally referred to as "knights" within the text, however, they are not "knights" but rather, horse-riding soldiers. They are as stated by many critics "horse-riding Anglo-Saxon warriors" as opposed to the truly knightly representations of the riders from Dol Amroth.

Faramir also serve as foils to Aragorn, who is portrayed to be the best among them (Reinhard 181).

For example, Boromir, Captain of Gondor, is a knight in spirit and behaviour, if not in name, and he is a member of the Fellowship alongside Aragorn. Boromir is the character "who most clearly embodies the chivalric ideal" and he is a knight as depicted in most chivalric romances (Reinhard 184). However, Boromir is ultimately set up as a negative character, and his ultimate function is to be a foil to Aragorn. Ben Reinhard states, "[t]he knightly ethos of chivalry is routinely downplayed, criticized, and deconstructed" in *LOTR* and "Tolkien's treatment of chivalry is one of his most daring breaks from tradition" (177). Boromir's arrival in Rivendell in search for meaning to his troubling dreams is akin to an errantry, at the face of defeat against Sauron's armies. He comes looking for the sword that was broken, Narsil, the ancestral sword and symbol of office for the kings of Gondor, with which he hopes to defeat the armies of Sauron and save his kingdom (*FOTR* 187-188). Instead, Boromir finds the long-lost heir to the throne of Gondor, Aragorn, who was hiding as a ranger, but has finally decided to claim his rightful throne, and in Aragorn, Boromir sees a rival to his own heroism.

Boromir is also equipped very similarly to a knight, and he behaves as if trying to become like the chivalric heroes, in which he fails. When the Fellowship leaves Rivendell, "Boromir had a long sword, in fashion like Andúril but of less lineage, and he bore also a shield and his war-horn" (*FOTR* 210). He also blows his war-horn before departure, upon which Elrond warns him:

> "Loud and clear it sounds in the valleys of the hills,' he said, 'and then let all the foes of Gondor flee!' Putting it to his lips he blew a blast, and the echoes leapt from rock to rock, and all that heard that voice in Rivendell sprang to their feet. 'Slow should you be to wind that horn again, Boromir,' said Elrond, 'until you stand once more on the borders of your land, and dire need is on you.' 'Maybe,' said Boromir. 'But always I have let my horn cry at setting forth, and though thereafter we may walk in the shadows, I will not go forth as a thief in the night". (*FOTR* 210)

Boromir's pledge and blowing of the horn is risky and foolhardy (*FOTR* 201). Not only does he announce to his enemies that he is departing to defeat them with his horn, but also announces his unwillingness to be anything less than a knight, even though the quest

he is embarking on requires stealth, which shows his hubris. Boromir's model of chivalry is repeatedly contrasted with that of Aragorn and the rangers (Reinhard 184). In his younger brother Faramir's words, "Boromir: a man of prowess and for that he was accounted the best man in Gondor. And very valiant indeed he was: no heir of Minas Tirith has for long years been so hardy in toil, so onward into battle, or blown a mightier note on the Great Horn" (*TTT* 199). Faramir also remarks that Gondorians "esteem a warrior, nonetheless, above men of other crafts. Such is the need of our days. So even was my brother" (*TTT* 199).

Accordingly, in *LOTR*, the narrative presents Boromir as a knight in the battles and challenges that ensue during the Fellowship's journey. Boromir proves himself indeed a powerful and capable man, as his brother remarks. Still, Boromir fails to be a knight-errant or a hero. This is due to his "obsession with the strength of his people" and it is "closely connected to his temptation and eventual fall" (Reinhard 185). Nancy Enright suggests that Boromir wields "stereotypical and purely masculine kind of power" and that he is "shown to be weaker morally and spiritually" (93). However, Boromir is also outspoken at times, such as when he challenges Gandalf's decision, and debates with him about the path they should take, not respecting the wizard's leadership (*FOTR* 221-222). The main problem Boromir presents is a knight companion's inability to follow orders for the greater good. Boromir does not think he is capable of doing something wrong, and his argument against the wizard also reflects this; whereas Gandalf suggests passing through the Mines of Moria, Boromir insists that they should pass through the Kingdom of Rohan, solely based on his own knowledge about the men of Rohan, despite Gandalf having revealed that Rohan might have defected to Sauron's side (*FOTR* 222). Again, when the Fellowship is stuck waiting outside the gate of Moria, Boromir throws a rock in the pool right outside the gates; much to Frodo's protest (*FOTR* 229), claiming that he hates the pool; yet it is also apparent that he still questions Gandalf's leadership. Once the gates of Moria are open, a monster comes out from the pool and attacks the Fellowship; and although it is never clearly stated, it is possible that Boromir's rock has disturbed the creature, causing it to attack the companions (*FOTR* 230). Once they escape the creature's clutches and take shelter inside the mines, Boromir once more protests, because he is not satisfied with Gandalf's decision to come to Moria against his wish: "Boromir muttered

under his breath, but the echoing stone magnified the sound to a hoarse whisper that all could hear: 'In the deep places of the world! And thither we are going against my wish. Who will lead us now in this deadly dark?" (*FOTR* 231).

Often in the narrative Boromir's inability to escape the confines of what he deems as "right" is observed. Boromir is supposed to act as a companion, or as a knight-errant for the quest to destroy the Ring, but he can not give up his authority in pursuit of something greater than himself and his knightly glory. This poses a problem for the character, as well as his companions in the Fellowship. Boromir's refusal to yield his knightly understanding of the world results in his inability to move with stealth, he has a hard time following the leadership of one that is not a knight (the wizard Gandalf), neither is he truly capable of following a fellow knight (Aragorn), and he cannot adapt to the choices or opinions other than his own. After Gandalf's sacrifice in Moria, Aragorn assumes the leadership of the Fellowship, and leads the group into Lothlórien, where they debate what is to be done with the Ring. Boromir is yet again the voice of opposition:

> I shall go to Minas Tirith, alone if need be, for it is my duty,' said Boromir; and after that he was silent for a while, sitting with his eyes fixed on Frodo, as if he was trying to read the Halfling's thoughts. At length he spoke again, softly, as if he was debating with himself. 'If you wish only to destroy the Ring,' he said, 'then there is little use in war and weapons; and the Men of Minas Tirith cannot help. But if you wish to destroy the armed might of the Dark Lord, then it is folly to go without force into his domain; and folly to throw away.' He paused suddenly, as if he had become aware that he was speaking his thoughts aloud. 'It would be folly to throw lives away, I mean,' he ended. 'It is a choice between defending a strong place and walking openly into the arms of death. At least, that is how I see it.' (*FOTR* 272)

Evidently, Boromir is bound by his duty to his country rather than his duty to his companions, whose quest is to save the entire world. On the other hand, his thought process is limited; he can only imagine using a powerful weapon, the One Ring, to save his homeland and become a worthy knight-errant for his people. Steven Brett Carter argues that "[s]ince Boromir represents the ancient heroic tradition of warriors that pursued glory and honour to their death; he would selfishly be drawn to the Ring" (98). Even if he wanted the Ring with no ill will, he could not have used it without losing himself to that power in the process: "True-hearted Men," as Boromir calls himself and

Gondorians, “will not be corrupted ... We do not desire the power of wizard-lords, only strength to defend ourselves, strength in a just cause” (*FOTR* 292). Yet even without touching the artefact, he loses himself, and succumbs to evil. He gives in to the temptation of the Ring and fails as a knight. This thought process ultimately leads him to be consumed by the Ring’s power, as a result of which he assaults Frodo (*FOTR* 291-293), which leads him to sacrifice his life in redemption to protect the hobbits Merry and Pippin (*TTT* 10). Thus, in Boromir, the reader sees a weak, problematic knight. Boromir’s unflinching devotion to a set of ideals –ideals that are never stated, but can be observed in Boromir’s words and actions- results in a tragic figure whose death is ensured. For all of his chivalrous bravado, Boromir only receives a somewhat dignified and heroic funeral by his three companions,

> Now they laid Boromir in the middle of the boat that was to bear him away. The grey hood and elvencloak they folded and placed beneath his head. They combed his long dark hair and arrayed it upon his shoulders. The golden belt of Lórien gleamed about his waist. His helm they set beside him, and across his lap they laid the cloven horn and the hilt and shards of his sword; beneath his feet they put the swords of his enemies. (*TTT* 12)

His broken sword and the now broken oliphant horn seem to be the symbols of the knighthood he was unable to perform properly. Boromir’s downfall is ultimately the result of his moral and spiritual weakness, as he is unable to accept the dangers the tempting Ring puts on any mortal’s mind, and consumed by visions of becoming a chivalric saviour of his country, he ends up failing both himself and his companions (Enright 93). In this regard, also considering Boromir’s hubris and his actions, it is possible to claim that Boromir is more an epic hero, whose time has passed, and his inability to adapt to the chivalric times is his ultimate downfall.

While Boromir fails as a knight, his brother Faramir appears to be the ideal knightly figure, for Tolkien. If Boromir is a conventional knight, Faramir is, through the new characteristics granted by Tolkien, “the new knight” of fantasy. Despite following the traditions and virtues of knighthood as observed in romance, Faramir breaks or changes some conventions of mainstream knighthood, chief among them are his tactics in battle and the subsequent attire he chooses for combat. Faramir appears in rugged and

unfashionable clothing, dressed for combat and stealth, rather than in shining armour, unlike Boromir (*FOTR* 124, *TTT* 184). When Frodo and Sam meet Faramir and his soldiers first, Tolkien offers the reader a detailed description,

> Four tall Men stood there. Two had spears in their hands with broadbright heads. Two had great bows, almost of their own height, and great quivers of long green-feathered arrows. All had swords at their sides, and were clad in green and brown of varied hues, as if the better to walk unseen in the glades of Ithilien. Green gauntlets covered their hands, and their faces were hooded and masked with green, except their eyes, which were very keen and bright. (*TTT* 184)

Their very weapons are in total opposition to knightly arms often seen in chivalric romances, namely a horse, heavy armour, lance and sword (Lee 55, Cooper 42). An archer, such as one of Faramir's rangers, could "without any of the long apprenticeship to arms necessary to make a knight, and equally without the moral effort required of a pike wielding footman, kill either of them from a distance without putting himself in danger" (Keegan 333). The traditional warrior class, which were the knights, protested such tactics and the men who used them "on the ground that their weapon was a cowardly one and their behaviour treacherous" (333). Brennan Croft writes that "Faramir has a more modern and thoughtful attitude toward war, and is perhaps a more realistic model to emulate for the twenty-first-century reader" (101). Faramir's knighthood is not observed in his arms and costumes but rather, the quality of his character, which, as Sam would say, is "the very highest" (*TTT* 201). Although Aragorn is the greater hero and knight, Faramir is, as Reinhard states, "more central to Tolkien's thought" and "[t]he vocabulary and imagery of chivalry hang thick about the young hero. He is courteous, pious, grave, wise, gentle, and merciful" (182). Thus, Faramir can be said to exhibit knightliness in all its aspects.

The courstesy of Famair as a knight can be observed in the reader's first encounter with Faramir in *TTT*, where Frodo and Sam, caught in an ambush set for Gondor's enemies, are captured by Faramir's rangers (*TTT* 184). Courteously, upon the questioning of Frodo and Sam as potential enemy spies, Faramir reveals his name and rank to the captured hobbits: "The tall green man laughed grimly. 'I am Faramir, Captain of Gondor,' he said. 'But there are no travellers in this land: only the servants of the Dark Tower, or of the

White" (*TTT* 184). He affords a brief chat with them, and assigns Frodo and Sam guards for their safety –as well as his own- before departing for battle (*TTT* 185). In this brief exchange between the hobbits and the captain, Faramir is chivalrous and kind in speech, treating even potential enemies with respect. Indeed, Faramir later comments that he "would not snare even an orc in falsehood" (*TTT* 189) during his thorough interrogation of Frodo. When Sam sees Faramir unmasked, he notes that his face "was stern and commanding, and a keen wit lay behind his searching glance" (*TTT* 188).

Once the matter of Frodo and Sam's identities and motives as friends of Gondor and enemies of Sauron are established, Faramir's behaviour towards them grows gentler and merciful, as befits a noble knight hosting his guests in a castle. He talks at length about his elder brother Boromir, informing Frodo of his death, as well as comforting the hobbits with the fact that since someone arrayed a funeral boat for him, surely some in the Fellowship must have survived (*TTT* 191-192). He leads them to a secret and holy enclave of his people, and along the way, they discuss the potential kingship of Aragorn as well as Isildur's Bane, the name under which Faramir knows the "secret weapon of the enemy" (*TTT* 192-194). After admitting that he understands why Boromir, consumed by his desire for glory and the salvation of his homelands, would lay claim to the artefact, Faramir puts Frodo's mind at ease: "But fear no more! I would not take this thing, if it lay by the highway. Not were Minas Tirith falling in ruin and I alone could save her, so, using the weapon of the Dark Lord for her good and my glory. No, I do not wish for such triumphs, Frodo son of Drogo" (*TTT* 194). He instils so much good-heartedness and honesty in Frodo that "[a]lmost he yielded to the desire for help and counsel, to tell this grave young man, whose words seemed so wise and fair, all that was in his mind" (*TTT* 194).

Faramir's chivalric kindness is enhanced by his show of hospitality as a nobleman and a knight. Upon reaching Henneth Annûn, the refuge and enclave of Faramir and his soldiers, Faramir shows his prisoner-turned-guests the hospitality that befits his rank, granting them not only beds, but also baths and a meal (196-97). He sits the hobbits beside him, and he instructs them on the Gondorian custom of looking towards west, their ancestral homeland, before the meal (*TTT* 197). For the rest of their meal, Faramir entertains his guests with stories of Gondor and Rohan, revealing in the process that he is

one of the very few people who can read the ancient scrolls contained in Gondorian treasure vaults (*TTT* 193). Furthermore, he states that Boromir would never accept Aragorn's eventual coronation due to his pride as a knight and steward of Gondor, whereas Faramir would accept it if Aragorn could prove his claim, as he has studied and knows the lore of the kings, and could recognise a legitimate king (*TTT* 192-93). At the end of their meal, Sam unwittingly reveals that Frodo is indeed carrying the One Ring, not some arcane weapon, yet Faramir once again rejects it, defeating his brother in spirit and wisdom, proving himself the better knight of the two. His education and respect for guests and customs, his treatment of prisoners and guests, combined with his iron will, present him as the "gentle and modest" knight of Lewis (qtd in Reinhard 13). Thus, it is possible to claim that Faramir is an ideal knight in behaviour and virtue, but challenges the tropes of chivalric combat.

Another important characteristic of Faramir as a knight is his loyalty to his leader and country. Whetter comments that the chivalric code requires honouring a great king's, more than a knight's own, individual codes of honour, which enables the romance heroes to support feudal monarchies in which they live or find themselves (62). Similarly, in the third book, *ROTK*, Faramir returns to his city of Minas Tirith in order to defend his kingdom against Sauron's armies, now too numerous to fight on multiple fronts. This time he is presented to the reader through the eyes of the hobbit Pippin, as well as Beregond, one of the high-ranking guards of the steward and the Citadel of Minas Tirith. In fact, upon their first meeting, Beregond and Pippin talk about the brothers Boromir and Faramir, and Beregond shows clear favouritism towards the latter: "He is bold, more bold than many deem; for in these days men are slow to believe that a captain can be wise and learned in the scrolls of lore and song, as he is, and yet a man of hardihood and swift judgement in the field. But such is Faramir. Less reckless and eager than Boromir, but not less resolute" (*ROTK* 25).

Clearly, Beregond recognises Faramir as an equal knight (if not better) to Boromir, a view not shared by Faramir's father, Lord Denethor, the steward of Gondor. As the siege around Minas Tirith grows tighter, Faramir is sent onto the front on an almost suicidal mission, one that his brother Boromir, clearly favoured by their father, would have

enjoyed and appreciated (*ROTK* 61). In the face of the hopeless situation, Faramir rises up to fulfil his father's command: "I do not oppose your will, sire. Since you are robbed of Boromir, I will go and do what I can in his stead – if you command it', 'I do so,' said Denethor, 'Then farewell!' said Faramir. 'But if I should return, think better of me!' 'That depends on the manner of your return,' said Denethor (*ROTK* 61). This instance shows the war ferocity and noble gentleness of Faramir as well as his stern loyalty, as he solemnly accepts the duty bestowed on him, and readies himself for war. Although Denethor is not the king, he is the man in charge of the kingdom as wel as Faramir's kin, thus two times his sire, and Faramir's willingness to obey him despite his own ideas about warfare presents him as an ideal knight.

Indeed, Faramir's view of warfare is crucial in understanding the significance of his sense of loyalty in the face of war as a knight. During Frodo's imprisonment, Faramir speaks to the hobbit about his personal view of war, and states that war can be fought to defend their lives: "War must be, while we defend our lives against a destroyer who would devour all; but I do not love the bright sword for its sharpness, nor the arrow for its swiftness, nor the warrior for his glory. I love only that which they defend…" (*TTT* 194). He also laments that Gondor has largely moved away from this high ideal: "We now love war and valor as things good in themselves" (*TTT* 199). As Reinhard argues, Faramir rejects the seductive temptation of battle glory whereas Boromir is a typical victim to such sense of glory. (181).

In the presentation of war as an element of romance, it is seen that Tolkien, perhaps because of his personal experience in the First World War, is a realist about war, whether imaginary or real (*Letters* 64). Tolkien states, "[Faramir] is holding up the 'catastrophe' by a lot of stuff about the history of Gondor and Rohan (with some very sound reflections no doubt on martial glory and true glory)" (*Letters* 90). Thus, Faramir represents the ideal knighthood.

Moreover, as a knight, Faramir plays an important role in *LOTR* by leaving the city of Minas Tirith, hence the kingdom of Gondor, to Aragorn. His acceptance of Aragorn's legitimacy and coronation is significant because he gives up his only station in life, the

stewardship of the largest human kingdom, solely because it is the right thing to do. With both his older brother and father dead, Faramir assumes the mantle of steward for the kingdom of Gondor. As a realm that has lacked a legitimate king for a long time, Gondor has been ruled by stewards for a long time, "[e]ach new Steward indeed took office with the oath 'to hold rod and rule in the name of the king, until he shall return.' But these soon became words of ritual little heeded, for the Stewards exercised all the power of the kings" (*ROTK* 229). However, Faramir surrenders both the city and the kingdom to Aragorn upon his return to the realm, going as far as giving up the office of stewardship itself to the rightful king, which would leave Faramir with no title or claim of his own to any patch of land in the entirety of Gondor (*ROTK* 167). In return for his loyalty, Aragorn not only grants him the title of steward again but also the Principality of Ithilien, a land Faramir loved dearly (*ROTK* 169). Hence, as befits the romance norms, for his loyalty and humble nature, Faramir is not only awarded with titles and lands beyond the scope of his imagination, he also becomes the father of a new dynasty, one that has blood ties to the kingdom of Rohan through Éoywn. Faramir's fate and service as an unconventional, idealized knight proves to be much more fruitful. Not only does he survive his ordeals as a captain due to the loyalty of his men, he also gets to enjoy a noble and prosperous life after the conclusion of the War of the Ring.

Moreover, as a romance element, concealing one's identity and using disguise is observed in *LOTR*. As stated, in terms of romance hero, Aragorn, who combines the better aspects represented by Boromir and Faramir, is the knight-hero of the story. He appears to be the knight in disguise of the traditional romances. Aragorn's identity was hidden since his childhood for his safety by his foster-father Lord Elrond (*ROTK* 259); and Aragorn himself chose to remain hidden until the time was right to reveal himself as the legitimate king. Ipomadon hides himself as a fool (de Rotalende 18), even Lancelot has disguised himself twice in *The Knight of the Cart* (Gathof 6). The disguise of the knight is used for a variety of reasons in romances. As Morgan Dickson suggests, "[d]isguise often functions in helping to define a character: he steps outside society in order to examine or communicate his own interior identity" (42). The hero's disguise is not a 'narcissistic fantasy' as opposed to what Lee argues, that is that a knight remains anonymous to be pursued by others (55). Disguise is rather a means to provide the hero with "visual

anonymity" (Bliss 38) as well as a way for the hero to "speak their mind" (Weiss 50). Taşdelen states that "[d]isguise, indeed, highlights the hero's inward virtues and redresses him with humility by stripping him off his sins" (189). Similarly, Sarah E. Gordon argues that going "incognito" or in disguise challenges "the Romance conventions of naming and reputation" and the hiding of real identity paradoxically constructs an identity for the character (69). In essence, in chivalric romances, disguise helps the hero protect himself until his noble identity is revealed, and this is also the case in *LOTR*.

Accordingly, Aragorn as the knight in disguise performs a variety of worthy deeds under nicknames. As Estel, he goes out on errantry with his foster-father Elronds's sons to prove his worth (*ROTK* 233). Under the name of Strider he leads the northern rangers in safeguarding the Shire and offers protection to Frodo and his friends (*FOTR* 189). He even serves Rohan and Gondor in disguise, riding with their knights to safeguard the respective kingdoms with the name Thorongil (*ROTK* 259). Aragorn thus is an example of a knight "proving his worth" in disguise, outside of his attached lineage and name (Mahoney 648-49). As stated, by not revealing his true identity, Aragorn is able to function outside of the confines of knighthood and prove himself as a worthy warrior and leader to the people he will come to lead. Moreover, he is also able to risk his life more easily for the quest to destroy the Ring, since he has not officially assumed his rank and responsibilities that come with it. Although he intends to claim his mantle as a king, his guise is precisely why he can go alongside Frodo to destroy the Ring (*FOTR* 188) and later, upon the breaking of the Fellowship, he is free to pursue Pippin and Merry instead of going to Gondor (*TTT* 14). Similarly, he is able to fight and turn the tide of war in Rohan, thus ensuring that the equestrian kingdom will come to the aid of his own kingdom in the future (*ROTK* 83).

However, Aragorn's fluidity, due to his many disguises, makes it somewhat difficult to define him entirely as a knight-errant. Kocher states that "Aragorn is unquestionably the leading man in *The Lord of the Rings* ... yet he is probably the least written about, least valued, and most misunderstood of all its major characters" (130). One problematic aspect of Aragorn is his various names and occupations; he is simultaneously Strider, a rugged vagabond, Dúnadan the mysterious ranger, Aragorn son of Arathorn, Elessar the Elfstone,

and many more. When first presented to the reader and the hobbits, he is Strider, a wild looking man that evokes suspicion (*FOTR* 124-25). Very little information accompanies this suspicious character. He claims to be a friend of Gandalf, and knows about the Ring and Frodo himself. A letter by Gandalf has warnings about him and his identity:

> PPS. Make sure that it is the real Strider. There are many strange men on the roads. His true name is Aragorn.
> All that is gold does not glitter,
> Not all those who wander are lost;
> The old that is strong does not wither,
> Deep roots are not reached by the frost.
> From the ashes a fire shall be woken,
> A light from the shadows shall spring;
> Renewed shall be blade that was broken,
> The crownless again shall be king. (*FOTR* 135)

As part of his disguise, Aragorn has many names, too. Although it does not become clear to the reader nor the hobbits for some time, Gandalf's letter is meant to show Aragorn's true identity as a king in hiding; and that he shall one day return to his land. This brief letter with a prophetic poem and the revelation of his true name is all Frodo and the readers get about Aragorn at first galnce. On the other hand, if Gandalf trusts Aragorn, it is enough for Frodo to also trust and travel with him (*FOTR* 135). Yet, repeatedly, Aragorn exceeds their expectations. He momentarily becomes someone else, or performs some deed that the hobbits did not expect to see from a wild ranger. For instance, "[h]e stood up, and seemed suddenly to grow taller. In his eyes gleamed a light, keen and commanding" (*FOTR* 135). When questioned about his appearance, he remarks rather evasively "I see,' laughed Strider. 'I look foul and feel fair. Is that it? *All that is gold does not glitter, not all those who wander are lost*" (*FOTR* 136). Moreover, "He knew many histories and legends of long ago, of Elves and Men and the good and evil deeds of the Elder Days. They wondered how old he was, and where he had learned all this lore" (*FOTR* 149). That is, despite his unlikely appearance, Aragorn/Strider seems to be an educated and wise man. He is also a great tracker, and knows enough about the arts of healing to ease the pain of Frodo's poisonous wound, for instance (*FOTR* 155). He even displays his knowledge of poetry and music when Bilbo asks him to help finish a song (*FOTR* 177). Clearly, Aragorn is the mysterious knight in disguise, but for the hobbits mystery of the ragged but wise Strider persists until they finally reach Rivendell, where the Council of Elrond finally reveals Aragorn as who he truly is: the heir of Isildur, of the

thrones of Gondor and Arnor. It becomes clear that the Ring belongs to him, as it was his ancestor who took the Ring as weregild from Sauron (*FOTR* 188).

In chivalric romances, if the hero is a king, the hero's quest is about usually the restoration of a righteous rule to his kingdom (Lee 3). Aragorn also serves in that kingly capacity within the narrative, and he borrows certain traits from the idealised King Arthur (Finn 25). Similar to the legendary King Arthur, Aragorn's legitimacy and identity are established and confirmed through an ancestral, magical sword, Narsil, the sword of Númenoren kings. Like the magical Excalibur, the sword is rendered useless until the rightful heir claims it. In Excalibur's case, it was stuck inside a rock (or anvil stone) for the rightful heir to draw it and prove his identity[23] (Steele 45) whereas in Narsil's case, the sword is broken into many shards until the heir of Isildur appears to claim it (*FOTR* 208). The shards of the sword are only granted to Aragorn by Elrond, who has been safekeeping the artefact, after Aragorn has proven himself a worthy knight and hero in the company of his two sons. Elrond says, "[w]ith these you may yet do great deeds; for I foretell that the span of your life shall be greater than the measure of Men, unless evil befalls you or you fail at the test. But the test will be hard and long" (*ROTK* 233). Yet the sword remains in pieces for long years until Aragorn finally resolves to take up his name and claim by joining the Fellowship to destroy the Ring:

> The Sword of Elendil was forged anew by Elvish smiths, and on its blade was traced a device of seven stars set between the crescent Moon and the rayed Sun, and about them was written many runes; for Aragorn son of Arathorn was going to war upon the marches of Mordor. Very bright was that sword when it was made whole again; the light of the sun shone redly in it, and the light of the moon shone cold, and its edge was hard and keen. And Aragorn gave it a new name and called it Andúril, Flame of the West. (*FOTR* 208)

The heirloom enchanted sword, alongside Gandalf's earlier prophecy, significantly increases the legitimacy of Aragorns' kingship. The ancient sword is the sword used by Isildur to strike Sauron and cause him to lose the One Ring (*FOTR* 186). It is this sword,

[23] It should be mentioned that Excalibur is a part of the Arthurian romance corpus, and thus it is not necessary for knights to have hereditary magical swords as an indication of kingship

unlike any other blade in Middle-earth, that Sauron fears the most because it caused his downfall once, and because of what it heralds for the future; namely, a king on the throne of Gondor and Arnor that will oppose his rule (208). Like Excalibur, Anduril is a symbol of the king and his return. Richard Finn comments that Aragorn is "[t]he king that will rise from the ashes of the Northern Kingdom, Arnor. Likewise, Arthur rises from the ashes of the royal line of Uther Pendragon to reassert its dominance. Arthur's claim, like Aragorn's, is increased by the owning of such a sword" (24). Moreover, Aragorn shares many characteristics with the chivalric knight-errant: Particularly, his willingness to fight for those who cannot and defend the weak can be considered in this sense (Lee 3-4). Håken Arvidsson states that: "The development from Ranger to King maybe subtle, but it is none the less profound. The smooth transition is due to the pains Tolkien's took in portraying Aragorn as a well-balanced man, who thinks before he acts, and who slowly grows into the role of the rightful ruler of Gondor and Arnor" (58).

Although Aragorn starts his knightly journey as a follower, he is put into many difficult positions, especially after Gandalf's death, until he becomes the leader. When Gandalf falls, he leads the Fellowship on a hasty retreat to Lothlórien, which is a place mistrusted by the majority of his companions (*FOTR* 245). When placed in difficult situations, Aragorn chooses the knightly path of hardship and battle instead of putting his kingdom first. When Frodo deserts the company with Sam, Aragorn once again faces a difficult choice, although going towards his kingdom to warn and guard it against the approaching war is tempting, Aragorn instead decides to take the knightly path and goes after his companions Merry and Pippin (*TTT* 14). This decision proves to be the best option available to him, as not only he finds the resurrected Gandalf, but also saves the kingdom of Rohan, allowing them to survive Saruman's assault, and ensuring their aid to Gondor in the future. It seems that until very end Aragorn is a knight errant and pursues adventure.

As stated above, as a knight, Aragorn takes more risks, which in turn brings powerful companions and objects of power to his side. One such object is the *palantír* of Orthanc, a seeing stone that allows the user to communicate over great distances and see many miles away. Aragorn uses it to announce himself to Sauron, sowing fear in the mind of the Dark Lord, "He [Sauron] is not so mighty yet that he is above fear; nay, doubt ever gnaws him", and also gazes into his evil plans (*ROTK* 35). Although it is a great risk to

use a *palantír*, a fact which causes his closest companions to berate Aragorn, it allows him to decide on a course of action against the enemy (*ROTK* 35). Unlike his previous challenges, this time Aragorn takes charge as a king, leading the Dúnedain rangers into battle as their king and commander (*ROTK* 42). In a hopeless attempt to reach his city before it falls, he even allows the dead, who once betrayed his forefathers, to join him and redeem their spirits by aiding Gondor in its most desperate hour (*ROTK* 42). After the battle for Gondor is won, Aragorn again takes the lead alongside Gandalf to push onwards to Mordor in order to create a distraction for Frodo, and he is joined by all the commanders, princes and kings he has aided in the past before coming to Gondor (*ROTK* 107-108-109). Ultimately, Aragorn achieves victory over Sauron and his endless armies, and cements his position as the King of the unified kingdoms of Arnor and Gondor (*ROTK* 167). Aragorn's coronation and subsequent marriage to Arwen are the culmination of his knightly journey.

As the incognito ranger, the disguised knight and the leader of Men, Aragorn displays the knightly virtues expected from a man of his position. He is a courageous character, never shying away from combat, and taking arms to protect friends and allies. First, he protects Frodo and the hobbits after meeting them in Bree under Gandalf's orders, then his sword serves to safeguard all members of the Fellowship until their breaking point in Amon Hen. Even when the Fellowship is broken apart, he takes up arms to protect the realms of Men, namely Rohan and Gondor. His march to the Black Gates to ensure the success of Frodo's quest is the last time he performs a courageous martial deed, and it is owing to this suicidal attack that Aragorn, Frodo and Gandalf are able to defeat Sauron and his forces. Therefore, it is clear that Aragorn embodies both characters of a chivalric romance; at times he is a knight errant trying to prove himself and taking on challenges, and at times he is a king trying to save and restore order to his realm.

Moreover, as a romance hero, Aragorn is also a just character (Cooper 42). Upon assuming his crown, he passes out justice to friend and foe alike, as with the War's end, there must come a time for peace and governance. Captain of the Guard for the Steward, Beregond, who abandoned his post and duty in order to save Faramir from being burnt alive by his father Denethor, is judged accordingly: "Beregond, by your sword blood was

spilled in the Hallows, where that is forbidden. Also you left your post without leave of Lord or of Captain. For these things, of old, death was the penalty. Now therefore I must pronounce your doom" (*ROTK* 169). However, Aragorn also acknowledges Beregond's valor in combat, and loyalty to Faramir, and exiles him from Minas Tirith; only to appoint him to Faramir's newly formed White Company and bid him to accompany his beloved lord to his new post in Ithilien (*ROTK* 169). Beregond's fault is not overlooked orforgiven, he is punished for his mistake, but also rewarded for his deed, displaying Aragorn's justice as a just king.

Mercy is another knightly aspect that is expected of a hero (Steele 133). Aragorn as a knight may seem lacking in terms of mercy, similar to his knightly companions Legolas and Gimli. As a knight, he is supposed to be merciful, especially towards enemies that surrender to him. Arguably, their enemies are for the most part, not human, but orcs or wraiths like the Nazgûl, and Aragorn does not show mercy to such enemies. Such creatures are not redeemable, if they were shown mercy, they could not reintegrate into society or establish their own kingdoms and domains. However, his human enemies, namely the Haradrim and the Easterlings, races of men that served Sauron in the War of the Ring, are shown mercy: "And the King [Aragorn] pardoned the Easterlings that had given themselves up, and sent them away free, and he made peace with the peoples of Harad; and the slaves of Mordor he released and gave to them all the lands about Lake Núrnen to be their own (*ROTK* 169).

Evidently, Aragorn's nobility, both in deed and blood, is one of his most prominent virtues as a knight. Aragorn is from a royal and ancient bloodline; so ancient in fact that he is a member of the Númenoren bloodline, who were the original race of men before their blood diluted and shortened their lifespan and capabilities (*ROTK* 216). However, his nobility is also bolstered by his deeds, such as his staunch refusal to enter Minas Tirith and claim his birthright at a time of war and chaos, and his willingness to let Gandalf lead the war effort until the time is right to assume his kingship. He states: "But for the present I am but the Captain of the Dúnedain of Arnor; and the Lord of Dol Amroth shall rule the City until Faramir awakes. But it is my counsel that Gandalf should rule us all in the days that follow and in our dealings with the Enemy" (*ROTK* 95). Accordingly, he enters the

city not to claim it but to heal his friends who have suffered greatly in the war, and then he leaves as quietly as he arrived (*ROTK* 95-101).

Aragorn is also an exemplary figure of chastity. Chastity of a knight is often an important part of his knightly perfection, and it is a trait also sought in ladies (Lee 106-175). Thus, in romances, the author often creates a situation where the knight has to go through a test of chastity. Markman states that this kind of chastity test can take many shapes and forms, magical or otherwise; but the knight is expected to demonstrate "the very best action which a man can perform" when faced with such a situation (576) In Aragorn's case, his chastity is tested by the shield-maiden of Rohan Éowyn. In *TTT*, in the victory celebrations of the aftermath of Helm's Deep, Aragorn is offered drinks by Éowyn, who obviously has feelings for Aragorn, and wishes to express them:

> As she stood before Aragorn she paused suddenly and looked upon him, and her eyes were shining. And he looked down upon her fair face and smiled; but as he took the cup, his hand met hers, and he knew that she trembled at the touch. 'Hail Aragorn son of Arathorn!' she said. 'Hail Lady of Rohan!' he answered, but his face now was troubled and he did not smile (86).

Aragorn becomes aware of the temptation and love of the lady for him, and steels himself against her. He does this without speaking or performing any gestures, but by simply hardening himself in a visible but subtle manner. Honegger is of the opinion that this scene is much more innocent than similar incidents of temptation, but it is a scene of temptation nevertheless (6). Similarly, Torey J. Stevens considers Éowyn as a temptress, and states that "[s]he attempts several times to entice Aragorn to join her in a romantic relationship that could cause him to abandon his duties as a warrior, thus sacrificing his final reward as King of Gondor and as the future husband of Arwen" (26-27). Accordingly, before Aragorn is to depart for Gondor through the Path of the Dead, Éowyn comes to him again, this time she is more assertive as she approaches Aragorn as a warrior queen rather than a shy maiden, which Aragorn again resists (*ROTK* 38). Moreover, Éowyn's more assertive and persuasive attempts solicit a more active response from Aragorn this time,

> But she said: 'Aragorn, wilt thou go?'
>
> 'I will,' he said.

> ‘Then wilt thou not let me ride with this company, as I have asked?’
> ‘I will not, lady,’ he said. ‘For that I could not grant without leave of the king and of your brother; and they will not return until tomorrow. But I count now every hour, indeed every minute. Farewell!’
> Then she fell on her knees, saying: ‘I beg thee!’
> ‘Nay, lady,’ he said, and taking her by the hand he raised her. Then he kissed her hand, and sprang into the saddle, and rode away, and did not look back; and only those who knew him well and were near to him saw the pain that he bore. (*ROTK* 39)

Evidently, Aragorn manages to remain chaste and stay loyal to his betrothed Arwen. His moral strength helps him to never give into Éowyn’s temptations, but it is also clear to see that rejecting a desperate lady of high standing pains Aragorn because he has to be courteous. It is also important to note that despite temptress figures being a large part of the overall romance corpus (Cooper 241-242), chivalric romances mostly do not contain such ladies, instead focusing more on adventures of the knights.

Another virtue that Aragorn displays that is in line with the knights of chivalric romances is his faith in God (Llull 12-13). Often a knight will be put in hopeless positions where his faith is tested, and a knight only prevails if he remains faithful to God and his mission. Aragorn’s faith is not only placed in divine providence, as represented by Gandalf and his mission, but also in his companions, allies, friends and most importantly, himself. In this sense, *LOTR* changes the faith in God as an element of the chivalric romance, and replaces God with faith in one’s self as well as in one’s quest, making the knight into a faithful warrior. As James Prothero states, Aragorn’s rush to Gondor’s aid in *ROTK* illustrates his faith in always doing his duty no matter what the cost or the outcome might be:

> Though all his world of Arnor has crumbled and his kingship lies in the dust, though all the undefeatable hosts of Mordor lie before him and even the dead in the White Mountains whom he must call to fulfill their oaths; though Minas Tirith must fall before he reaches it; though victory on Pelennor Fields is but a respite and the sortie to Sauron's gates little more than a suicidal decoy action, Aragorn stays true to what he must do, because it is right, because it is the good, and because he loves the good, heart and soul, and is incapable of contemplating another course. (8)

Aragorn is put in a hopeless situation where his very life and kingdom are in peril; but he not only keeps his faith in his allies and divinities, but also in the justness of his mission. For despite all odds, Aragorn is ensured that what he is doing is right and there is no other way to go about it. Prothero notes Aragorn's "incapability to contemplate another course" (8). Clearly, Aragorn is faithful to his cause, himself and his allies in the war. For him to succeed, Frodo needs to take the Ring to the fires of Mount Doom, and his allies need to join him in his nigh-impossible mission to fight in the Black Gates. Aragorn needs to suffer destruction of his kingdom and people, but remain faithful to his quest in order to achieve success. Taşdelen remarks, "[a]lthough the romance hero achieves self-realization by means of suffering, he mostly suffers in order to become either a perfect knight or to gain revenge on his victimizers (50). Similarly, Aragorn's kingdom is almost destroyed and it is only then that he takes charge of his kingdom and forces his people, the Gondorians, into another battle (*ROTK* 110). In his suffering, he has to keep faith in God, which materializes in the form of Gandalf the White, who is in many ways an allegory of Christ and thus, the person which represents[24] Eru on Middle-Earth (Hartley 276), to whom Aragorn transfers all authority to lead the final war effort against Sauron (*ROTK* 95).

Upon victory over Sauron, Aragorn does not take all the credit onto himself; and during his coronation, he assigns each of his companions a task in the ceremony. The custom in Gondor is that "that the king should receive the crown from his father ere he died; or if that might not be, that he should go alone and take it from the hands of his father in the tomb where he was laid" (*ROTK* 168). However, Aragorn changes the ceremony greatly to acknowledge his faithful friends: "By the labour and valour of many I have come into my inheritance. In token of this I would have the Ring-bearer bring the crown to me, and let Mithrandir set it upon my head, if he will; for he has been the mover of all that has been accomplished, and this is his victory" (168). Polk states that "[t]his is what the patient person looks like; this is the essence of holiness" (30), and thus even in his final victory, Aragorn's faith and humility as a knight is displayed to his subjects. Through

[24] Hartley explains that Aragorn, Frodo, Gandalf, and others represent Eru's different aspect and will on Middle-Earth, but his article makes it clear that Gandalf reflects Eru the most.

suffering for the benefit of all as expected of a knight (Llull 15), Aragorn triumphs and achieves victory, which, Cooper states, is a "typical pattern" (5).

It is important to note that although it is not uncommon for a knight to have knightly companions to aid him in his journey, it is not always the case in chivalric romance as it is more focused on a singular hero. As Cooper states, this is because quests are meant for the knight alone, and that chivalric romances are concerned with depicting the model knighthood shown by a singular hero (50). According to Lee, having companions is not a seldom affair in chivalric romance (60-61-62). However in *LOTR*, Aragorn almost always have companions and the companions that travel alongside the hero are Gimli and Legolas, who are mostly presented through their rivalry and martial prowess. In fact, Gimli and Legolas are great warriors and they prove themselves within the narrative as such. However, they are also of noble upbringing, Legolas is the Prince of Mirkwood (*FOTR* 183), and Gimli is of the royal and divine line of Dúrin (*FOTR* 184). Gimli being a dwarf and Legolas being an elf, they have racial tensions between them, owing to their respective races' past problems with each other (*FOTR* 226). However, they are able to stand united against Sauron's forces under Aragorn's unifying leadership, and over time, forge a bond of friendship. Both Gimli and Legolas are often depicted in battling against Sauron and Saruman's various minions from orcs to men, and they make a competition out of it: "Two!' said Gimli, patting his axe. He had returned to his place on the wall. 'Two?' said Legolas. 'I have done better, though now I must grope for spent arrows; all mine are gone. Yet I make my tale twenty at the least. But that is only a few leaves in a forest" (*TTT* 95). Mostly observed during the siege of Helm's Deep, Gimli and Legolas constantly fight and banter, counting the enemies they dispatch. In their joyous slaughtering of their enemies, they are two noble companions assisting their king on his errantry to reclaim his throne and rid the land of all the evil creatures that plague it.

Errant knights seem to cover a lot of mileage in romances, as romances contain various landscapes. These lands, sometimes real, sometimes fantastical, are home to a variety of people, magical beings or strange events. D. M. Hill states that "[t]he real irony as far as medieval romance is concerned is that the word "romance" with its connotations of the unreal, the farfetched, and so on, is a label for a form of writing which at its best is

intensely realistic and matter-of-fact" (95). In other words, romances use the fantastic places to provide challenges to the knights. As Taşdelen argues, "[t]he foreign lands are portrayed as 'places of ordeal' as a result of ideas derived from exotic explorations in the Middle Ages" (206). Lee states that wandering knights are quite common and "the area covered by the wanderings, if not the whole known world, is at least the whole of the world that mattered" (184). Robert Rouse explains that romances, despite not being very accurate, allowed medieval readers to travel through different landscapes through stories and thus, romances can also be seen as a geographical medium (135-139).

Similarly, *LOTR* presents the reader with similar maps of many locations where the knight is tested. Waymack and Greenlee assert that "[p]refatory cartography in modern fantasy literature is a medievalism, and it came to the field, like so much else, through the foundational work of the medievalist J. R. R. Tolkien" (184). Similar to a romance poet, Tolkien provides many landscapes for his stories, from the green and pastoral realm of the Shire to the ash-covered wastes of Mordor. Similar to most romances, maps in Tolkien also allow the readers to follow along with the protagonists' journeys, as well as understanding the distances travelled and the importance of specific locations (Waymack and Greenle 190). Clute points to the interconnectedness of character, plot, and setting and defines "fantasy geography" as a manifestation of the story and a "metaphysical pathos of the emotions and events" (111-12). As seen in the case of Gimli and Legolas, who travel a great part of Middle-Earth alongside Aragorn and visit a variety of critical landscapes, there are challenges, emotional bonding, and historical information about the secondary world of *LOTR*. Emotional struggles between two companion knights are also played out through the use of different (and at times, opposing) landscapes. The Gates of Moria, for example, showcase the tensions between Legolas and Gimli:

> Those were happier days, when there was still close friendship at times between folk of different race, even between Dwarves and Elves.'
> 'It was not the fault of the Dwarves that the friendship waned,' said Gimli.
> 'I have not heard that it was the fault of the Elves,' said Legolas.
> 'I have heard both,' said Gandalf; 'and I will not give judgement now. But I beg you two, Legolas and Gimli, at least to be friends, and to help me. I need you both ... (*FOTR* 226)

There is a parallel between the entrance into the dwarven realm of Moria and the elven realm of Lothlórien. In both places, Gimli and Legolas have an argument, and are made to reconcile by the current leader of the Fellowship (*FOTR* 254-55). As they continue their long journey, they are increasingly exposed to landscapes of men, as well as unfamiliar ones such as Fangorn, and the landscape increasingly fascinates them. Gimli, for instance, is enamoured by the cavern system of Helm's Deep: "My good Legolas, do you know that the caverns of Helm's Deep are vast and beautiful? There would be an endless pilgrimage of Dwarves, merely to gaze at them, if such things were known to be" (*TTT* 104). Similarly, Legolas is fascinated by the enchanted forest of Fangorn, and they make a promise to each other to come and visit both places together if they survive their ordeal (*TTT* 105).

Evidently, while the fantastic landscapes in *LOTR* often serve as places of bonding and challenges where Gimli and Legolas are concerned, they become historical and eventful, where Aragorn and Gandalf are concerned. Gandalf's ride to Minas Tirith, for example, introduces the lands of Gondor, its vassals, economy and history to the reader, allowing them to see what Aragorn is fighting to save, as well as the setting of the third book (*ROTK* 13-14-15). Moreover, Aragorn's venture into many fantastic landscapes is more in line with fantasy geography; the descriptions and events surrounding Aragorn's vicinity are explicitly a part of the protagonist knight's journey and errantry. His foray into Helm's Deep, a semi-fantastic castle with magical tunnels becomes his test as a warrior (94), whereas his passage from the Paths of the Dead highlights his leadership, and shows the difficulty of the siege Gondor faces: "We must ride our own road, and no longer in secret. For me the time of stealth has passed. I will ride east by the swiftest way, and I will take the Paths of the Dead" (*ROTK* 34). Aragorn is unable to wait for the Rohirrim to finish mustering since he is pressed for time, and thus he decides to take risky but swift action. Through the Paths of the Dead, Aragorn can reach his besieged kingdom faster, but he has to parlay or defeat the dead souls, the Oathbreakers, in order to pass (*ROTK* 39). Not only Aragorn manages to pass through these places by his sheer courage, but he also manages to convince the dead soldiers to join him in his war (*ROTK* 42). As Lee argues, "the romance heroes and heroines begin to travel as soon as events at home have brought them into danger and cease their travels only with the final solution of their

problems" (184). Having finally acquired a shortcut and a powerful force to save his kingdom, Aragorn finally returns "home" to Gondor.

Another important romance element in *LOTR* is the courtly love convention. Courtly love usually involves a relationship between a knight and a lady of high standing. In courtly love, the lady is idealised and no longer seen as a reflection of divine beauty (that is God or Jesus in most cases), but as a divinity herself (Honegger 13). Courtly love is often adulterous, as the lady who receives the affection of the knight is often married or betrothed to another man (Fisher 152). Courtly love places the lady above the knight in status. The lady is the lover's 'souverain' and the knight in question owes her loyalty as if she was his feudal lord (Munrow 197). Alexander Denomy asserts that courtly love should not be carnal or sexual, even though it is the case in some romances; instead he holds that:

> When the object of love is the pleasure of sense, then love is sensual and carnal; directed towards the spiritual, it is mystic, towards a person of the opposite sex, sexual, towards God, divine. Courtly Love is a type of sensual love and what distinguishes it from other forms of sexual love, from mere passion, from so-called platonic love, from married love is its purpose or motive, its formal object, namely, the lover's progress and growth in natural goodness, merit, and worth. (44)

The love between the aspiring knight and his lady serves both as a motivation to the knight to better himself and as a reward at the end of the knight's journey. In *LOTR*, there are three couples whose relationship can be considered in terms of courtly love: Aragorn and Arwen, Faramir and Éowyn, and Gimli and Galadriel seem to be courtly love couples. Of these three couples, Gimli and Galadriel are the only ones to remain unmarried through the course of the story. Honegger comments that "[i]nterestingly, the only pair that fits the courtly love pattern is that of Gimli and Galadriel, with the dwarf venerating the Elven Queen as his courtly lady" (7). Gimli and Galadriel are more in line with the unattainable love of the knight and the lady, strengthened by Tolkien's depiction of Galadriel to resemble, to a certain extent, Virgin Mary (Tolkien *Letters* 303). Galadriel is not only married, but also far above Gimli in status and a divine being. In that she is, similar to Virgin Mary, "the unreal, unattainable noble ... lady who could not be a wife", at least not for Gimli, and "a beloved but a divinity to be adored" (Evren v).

In the particular case of Gimli and Galadriel, the affection that forms inside the Dwarf is entirely platonic, and devoid of sensual love. He, indeed, appreciates the beauty of Galadriel's physical form, but harbours no will to have sexual relations with her. Their chance meeting in the forest realm of Lothlórien is crucial for the development of such feelings on Gimli's part. He is quite hostile and suspicious of all elves, as the relations between dwarves and elves have been sour for a long time (*FOTR* 226), and he suffers the humiliation of being singled out of the eight companions, and being blindfolded on his way to Galadriel's realm (*FOTR* 254). However, soon enough, Lady Galadriel sends word for the removal of his blindfold (*FOTR* 258-59) and upon reaching Lórien, Gimli is shown great kindness by her. When Galadriel's husband, Lord Celeborn implies that the dwarves are at fault for unleashing the Balrog that killed Gandalf, she cuts him off, and speaks of the beauty of the dwarf realms in Gimli's own language, enchanting the dwarf even further:

> [T]he Dwarf, hearing the names given in his own ancient tongue, looked up and met her eyes; and it seemed to him that he looked suddenly into the heart of an enemy and saw there love and understanding. Wonder came into his face, and then he smiled in answer. He rose clumsily and bowed in dwarf-fashion, saying: 'Yet more fair is the living land of Lórien, and the Lady Galadriel is above all the jewels that lie beneath the earth!' (*FOTR* 263)

From this point onwards, Gimli's affection for the fair lady of Lórien only grows further, his love for the treasures of the earth is replaced by one that is above the ground. When the Fellowship is to depart from Lórien, Galadriel offers a gift to each member of the company, but hesitates when she comes across Gimli, unsure what to give him. Gimli refuses any gifts, stating that it is enough for him to "have seen the Lady of the Galadhrim, and to have heard her gentle words" (*FOTR* 277). It is important to point out that Galadriel is not only married to one of the strongest elven leaders of Middle-Earth, Lord Celeborn, but she is also quite powerful herself, having been courted by ancient elven heroes in the past who asked for a single strand of her hair (*Unfinished* 296). Despite her many prospects in the past, Galadriel is impressed with Gimli, and bids him once again to ask for a gift, which prompts the dwarf to, hesitantly, ask for a strand of her hair "which surpasses the gold of the earth as the stars surpass the gems of the mine" (*FOTR* 277). The courtly language and the expression of love is as clumsy as the dwarf himself, further

cementing Galadriel's position as a lady that is far above the reach of the dwarf knight-errant. Amused, Galadriel smiles:

> "It is said that the skill of the Dwarves is in their hands rather than in their tongues,' she said; 'yet that is not true of Gimli. For none have ever made to me a request so bold and yet so courteous. And how shall I refuse, since I commanded him to speak? But tell me, what would you do with such a gift?' 'Treasure it, Lady,' he answered, 'in memory of your words to me at our first meeting. And if ever I return to the smithies of my home, it shall be set in imperishable crystal to be an heirloom of my house, and a pledge of good will between the Mountain and the Wood until the end of days.' Then the Lady unbraided one of her long tresses, and cut off three golden hairs, and laid them in Gimli's hand. (277)

Evidently, in Aragorn and Gimli as courtly lovers, Tolkien depicts two extents of the courtly love tradition. Gimli acts as the knight-errant who constantly seeks his lady's favour, and upon leaving the Lady's presence with the strands of hair, takes it unto himself to defend and cherish her beauty to his final breath. When he meets with Éomer in Rohan, who arguably knows little about Galadriel beyond rumors and makes a rude remark about her, Gimli instantly steps up to correct him by saying: "Then Éomer son of Éomund, Third Marshal of Riddermark, let Gimli the Dwarf Glóin's son warn you against foolish words. You speak evil of that which is fair beyond the reach of your thought, and only little wit can excuse you" (*TTT* 23). Similarly, when Wormtongue insults Galadriel in the Golden Hall, Gimli steps forward to defend her name, only to be stopped by Gandalf to deescalate the situation (*TTT* 80). During Aragorn's coronation and marriage in Gondor, Éomer and Gimli see Lady Galadriel together, and the newly crowned King of Rohan finally witnesses her beauty (*ROTK* 173). The Marshal and the dwarf had made a bet about Galadriel: "I will forget my wrath for a while, Éomer son of Éomund,' said Gimli; 'but if ever you chance to see the Lady Galadriel with your eyes, then you shall acknowledge her the fairest of ladies, or our friendship will end" (*TTT* 87). Remembering their past argument about her, Éomer asks Gimli to fetch his axe, for he does not think Galadriel is the most beautiful lady he has seen. That honour belongs to Arwen, and he is ready to defend her honour with his sword (*ROTK* 173). In response, Gimli leaves hisaxe, "Then Gimli bowed low. 'Nay, you are excused for my part, lord,' he said. 'You have chosen the Evening; but my love is given to the Morning. And my heart forebodes that soon it will pass away forever" (*ROTK* 173). In life, Gimli cherishes his lady's beauty

and defends her honor, in death, he is accepted into the Undying Lands, the first dwarf ever to do so; "it is said that Gimli went also out of desire to see again the beauty of Galadriel; and it may be that she, being mighty among the Eldar, obtained this grace for him" (*ROTK* 252), his beloved lady vouching for his safe passage to the afterlife. Therefore, Gimli and Galadriel's story depict a courtly love that survives death.

Although Aragorn and Arwen are the central courtly love couple in the story, their love story, contained in the Appendices of *ROTK* (233-238), is not centralised. It is possible to see their brief interactions in Rivendell as observed by Frodo (*FOTR* 181), and their marriage upon Aragorn's coronation (*ROTK* 171). Indeed, it is mostly for the sake of Arwen's love that Aragorn seeks to claim his birth right as the king of Gondor and Arnor, as only then can he marry his beloved (*ROTK* 236), thus, everything Aragorn does and endures is ultimately for the sake of his beloved lady. Lewis remarks that:

> [t]he love between Aragorn and Arwen does not overwhelm the narrative in *The Lord of the Rings*. It features instead in elusive moments of transcendence and intimation when either Aragorn or another character alludes to the relationship between the two of them. The reader never explicitly sees them embracing, and yet is aware that Aragorn and Arwen must be taking part in the rituals of courtly love, restructuring, in their own way, the reverence and veneration observed in numerous Romances between the Knight and Lady. (68)

Aragorn and Arwen's courtly love affair, indeed, does not dominate the narrative; however, it is significant within the text. Tolkien regards the love story as "the most important of the Appendices" (*Letters* 255). According to Steele, "Tolkien at his most sentimental, principally as the scene seems to depict a form of the serendipitous love-at-first-sight moment that is so specific to Romance literature" (68). Tolkien describes the first meeting of Aragorn and Arwen as such:

> The next day at the hour of sunset Aragorn walked alone in the woods, and his heart was high within him; and he sang, for he was full of hope and the world was fair. And suddenly even as he sang he saw a maiden walking on a greensward among the white stems of the birches; and he halted amazed, thinking that he had strayed into a dream, or else that he had received the gift of the Elf-minstrels, who can make the things of which they sing appear before the eyes of those that listen. 'For Aragorn had been singing

> a part of the Lay of Lúthien which tells of the meeting of Lúthien and Beren in the forest of Neldoreth. And behold! there Lúthien walked before his eyes in Rivendell, clad in a mantle of silver and blue, fair as the twilight in Elven-home; her dark hair strayed in a sudden wind, and her brows were bound with gems like stars. (*ROTK* 233)

Not only does Aragorn see his beloved as far superior to him, likening her to Lúthien, the most beautiful elven lady that existed (Steele 70), he is also in a somewhat dreamy haze as he gazes at Arwen and calls out to her (*ROTK* 233). When Arwen introduces herself as the daughter of Elrond, Aragorn's foster father, he remarks that "in dangerous days men hide their chief treasure" (234), a clumsy remark uttered to a lady of high station and endless beauty. From that point onwards, Aragorn is struck with a love-sickness, which his mother notices, and warns him against it: "My son,' said Gilraen, 'your aim is high, even for the descendant of many kings. For this lady is the noblest and fairest that now walks the earth. And it is not fit that mortal should wed with the Elf-kin" (234). Despite his significant lineage as a kingly heir, Aragorn is not considered a worthy match for Lady Arwen. Yet, his foster father and Arwen's father Elrond is not merciless, as he notices Aragorn's longing, and calls him to his side: "A great doom awaits you, either to rise above the height of all your fathers since the days of Elendil, or to fall into darkness with all that is left of your kin. Many years of trial lie before you. You shall neither have wife, nor bind any woman to you in troth, until your time comes and you are found worthy of it" (234-235). Elrond, although remorseful, promises Arwen to Aragorn should he manage to overcome his many knightly and kingly trials and "rises above the height of his fathers" (235). Only then, and if Arwen desires, can Aragorn marry his beloved. It is with this motivation that Aragorn goes out for thirty years to fight against Sauron and prove himself, long before the quest for the Ring even begins (235), and as *LOTR* unfolds, Aragorn continues to pursue his beloved through errantry. Although this love affair begins one-sided, with Aragorn awestruck, in time, Arwen comes to return his feelings. Dressed by Galadriel and now a grown men, Aragorn meets Arwen once again in Lothlórien:

> Aragorn was grown to full stature of body and mind, and Galadriel bade him cast aside his wayworn raiment, and she clothed him in silver and white, with a cloak of elven-grey and a bright gem on his brow. Then more than any king of Men he appeared, and seemed rather an Elf-lord from the Isles of the West. And thus it was that Arwen first beheld him again after their long parting; and

> as he came walking towards her under the trees of Caras Galadhon laden with flowers of gold, her choice was made and her doom appointed. (*ROTK* 235-36)

This "doom" of Arwen is particularly important in the love story of Arwen and Aragorn for elves are immortal creatures, but should an elf choose to love a human, they abandon this immortality and become mortal (*ROTK* 235). Arwen, in this case, displays her own mastery over her fate, and she willingly chooses the Doom of Men for the sake of her beloved Aragorn (*ROTK* 172). Actively, Arwen contributes little to the overall quest for the Ring; however, she not only provides ample motivation for Aragorn to fight and venture, but also sends him her favour in the form of a war banner, as well as her brothers to accompany Aragorn in his march to Gondor (*ROTK* 84). Ultimately with Aragorn's victory at the Black Gates, Arwen surrenders her eternal life not to save Aragorn's life but to be with him. She thus, helps establish the Telcontar dynasty and restore the vacant royalty of Gondor when she becomes the war-torn kingdom's first queen after many centuries (*ROTK* 171).

The third couple having a courtly relationship similar to the ones in romances is Faramir and Éowyn. However, Éowyn is not the traditional lady of a romance; in fact, she could be named the most complex female character in the context of *LOTR*. She is a transitory character, as in chivalric tradition where women mostly healers (Lee 102) or objects to be won over by knights. Unlike Arwen and Galadriel, she is not confined to a passive role in her country or a certain tract of land. Despite performing her duties as a shield maiden and princess of Rohan, she is also not afraid to step out of her boundaries to pursue what she loves and holds dear, as she disguises herself as Dernhelm and rides to battle with the men of Rohan (*ROTK* 71). Her love for Aragorn, for example, compels her to swear her life to him but not merely as a lover, but also as a companion at arms: "But I am of the House of Eorl and not a serving-woman. I can ride and wield blade, and I do not fear either pain or death" she says, and insists that Aragorn take her with him (*ROTK* 39). However, Aragorn rejects her both out of fear for her safety and his own feelings for Arwen. Thus he prompts Éowyn to ride with the Rohirrim in disguise to seek her death in battle. In the end, she is wounded and carried off into the Houses of Healing (*ROTK* 93). It is there that she meets the similarly wounded Faramir, with whom she grows close, while Aragorn, Gandalf and his allied armies march onwards to the Black Gate (*ROTK*

162). Reluctant at first, their conversations soon take on a courtly aspect, Faramir says to Éowyn:

> Then, Éowyn of Rohan, I say to you that you are beautiful. In the valleys of our hills there are flowers fair and bright, and maidens fairer still; but neither flower nor lady have I seen till now in Gondor so lovely, and so sorrowful. It may be that only a few days are left ere darkness falls upon our world, and when it comes I hope to face it steadily; but it would ease my heart, if while the Sun yet shines, I could see you still. (*ROTK* 163)

Éowyn is out of reach for Faramir, but not because she is of higher social standing and almost divine, like Galadriel is for Gimli or because Faramir has to meet some conditions to ask for her hand like the case of Aragorn and Arwen. The barrier between them is Éowyn's harsh, death and glory seeking shield maiden persona, and her feelings for another, namely, Aragorn, which Faramir easily deduces, and, in time, overcomes. Both Faramir's patience and kind words loaded with wisdom, and the anxious time spent together in the end break the icy barrier in Éowyn's heart: "I will be a shieldmaiden no longer, nor vie with the great Riders, nor take joy only in the songs of slaying. I will be a healer, and love all things that grow and are not barren" (*ROTK* 166). Consequently, she gives up her dream of becoming Aragorn's warrior queen spouse and instead chooses to be with Faramir, whose wisdom and kindness she grows fond of (*ROTK* 166). She transitions from an epic heroine into a chivalric lady. The unconventional knight and his unconventional lady thus conclude their brief courtly love in marriage: "I will wed with the White Lady of Rohan, if it be her will. And if she will, then let us cross the River and in happier days let us dwell in fair Ithilien and there make a garden. All things will grow with joy there, if the White Lady comes" (*ROTK* 166). Although a marriage is not always expected in courtly love convention, as Lee asserts it is agreed that "[b]irth is virtue, marriage is essential and woman is power" (40). Thus, with their marriage, both Éowyn and Faramir obtain power and meaning in their lives. Furthermore, Éowyn becomes a healer and embraces the idea of marriage and a domestic life, which therefore turns her into a usual lady encountered in chivalric romances (Lee 9).

Therefore, courtly love is certainly a part of *LOTR* as an element of romance. For Gimli it is an almost divine affair to serve and cherish her lady's beauty and wisdom, even though she is married, and Gimli is rewarded for his efforts in the end. For Aragorn it is

a motivation to adventure, improve himself and become worthy of his lady. In Faramir's case, as he suffers and toils, in the end he wins the love of the lady and her hand in marriage.

Another element of chivalric romance is the inclusion of a wizard (or witch) who could help or hinder the hero (Çankaya 78). Gandalf's role as a romance character is similar to Merlin as the helper of knights, guide and "master" to the heroes of the story in the Arthurian romances (Steele 36). As an influential figure in *LOTR*, Gandalf functions as the ultimate wise guide of the heroes, warriors and kings of *LOTR* and prefers to serve in the background subtly for a long time, as opposed to Aragorn, whose role is more active in order to reclaim his kingdom.

With Bilbo's disappearance and Frodo's inheritance of the One Ring, Gandalf grows in importance as a wizard. He is extremely knowledgeable in history, lore and magical objects (*FOTR* 48-60), and he starts guiding Frodo as a mentor towards the quest for destroying the Ring. Hence, Gandalf is instrumental in aiding Aragorn in his quest to claim the kingship of Gondor. In his introduction to the story, Tolkien states of Gandalf that: "the old man was Gandalf the Wizard, whose fame in the Shire was due mainly to his skill with fires, smokes, and lights. His real business was far more difficult and dangerous, but the Shire-folk knew nothing about it" (*FOTR* 33). Aragorn also speaks about Gandalf's real power upon meeting the hobbits in Bree, "But do not give up hope! Gandalf is greater than you Shire-folk know – as a rule you can only see his jokes and toys. But this business of ours will be his greatest task" (*FOTR* 136). Gandalf's fame in the Shire is due to his fireworks, to the hobbits, that is the extent of his "wizardry".

However, without Gandalf's guidance, Frodo's quest would be significantly harder. Finn states that "Gandalf is a larger part of the story, giving us a glimpse of his powers and the struggles he himself fears, pushing the story forward with action rather than simply cryptic guidance" (23). When he faces the demonic Balrog in Moria, Gandalf literally fights fire with fire and declares that, "I am a servant of the Secret Fire, wielder of the flame of Anor. You cannot pass. The dark fire will not avail you, flame of Udûn. Go back to the Shadow!" (*FOTR* 245). His magic causes the Balrog's flames to lessen in their intensity, and it is through this fight that the existence of hellfire, as used by the Balrog,

and holy fire as used by Gandalf, is revealed. This scene is also where Gandalf the Grey falls to his death, paving the way for his transformation. Therefore, Gandalf shares the qualities, such as guidance, mentorship and magical assistance of Merlin, and is thus a figure of existing Celtic and Norse mythology as well as the well-known Arthurianlegends.

As stated, similar to Merlin, Gandalf the Grey is chiefly a pagan magician thrust into a Christian adventure. Therefore, upon his death and rebirth, Gandalf takes on a more Christian, almost Messiah-like appearance and qualities. In fact, Gandalf not only has "Christian heroism," but is also "a kind of Christ-figure (Caldecott 29). After his fall into the darkness of Moria and death, Gandalf reports that "[d]arkness took me, and I strayed out of thought and time, and I wandered far on roads that I will not tell. Naked I was sent back – for a brief time, until my task is done" (*TTT* 72). Gandalf there experiences a resurrection similar to Christ's Resurrection, when he sacrifices himself in the fight against the Balrog to save the Fellowship, and later, returns to Middle-Earth as Gandalf the White to finish his task. Tolkien explains Gandalf's resurrection in a letter as follows:

> That I should say is what the Authority wished, as a set-off to Saruman. The 'wizards', as such, had failed; or if you like: the crisis had become too grave and needed an enhancement of power. So Gandalf sacrificed himself, was accepted, and enhanced, and returned. 'Yes, that was the name. I was Gandalf.' Of course he remains similar in personality and idiosyncrasy, but both his wisdom and power are much greater. When he speaks he commands attention; the old Gandalf could not have dealt so with Théoden, nor with Saruman. He is still under the obligation of concealing his power and of teaching rather than forcing or dominating wills, but where the physical powers of the Enemy are too great for the good will of the opposers to be effective he can act in emergency as an 'angel' – no more violently than the release of St Peter from prison. (217)

Gandalf thus manifests his powers more openly and frequently, and truly becomes a leader in the War of the Ring as Gandalf the White. In him, the presence of God (Eru Illúvatar)[25] is observed the most as Gandalf is a Maiar, a being of light, who is close to

[25] Tolkien only hints at who or what is responsible for Gandalf's resurrection, however, it is widely accepted by critics and readers alike that it was Eru Illúvatar, the chief God of the world, that brought Gandalf back to life in order to finish his quest to safeguard Middle-Earth against Sauron's evil (*Letters* 217).

what the Bible would describe as an archangel (Tolkien *Silmarillion* 11-12). His resurrection only enhances this angelic and biblical force. First, he saves Rohan by breaking the hold of Saruman on Théoden (*TTT* 81-82), and then by saving its people (*TTT* 100), he banishes the traitor Saruman (*TTT* 129).

Gandalf also resembles Christ in his forgiveness. It can be argued that he is one of the rare characters that is merciful and forgiving towards his foes, such as when he offers Gríma Wormtongue a chance to redeem himself by riding alongside the king he betrayed (Tolkien *TTT* 84). Gandalf the White returns from the dead, advises kings, leads people and punishes the faithless, whereas when he was still the Grey, he could not stand against Saruman and was imprisoned (*FOTR* 197). When the White first encounters Aragorn, he says: "Yes, I am white now,' said Gandalf. 'Indeed I *am* Saruman, one might almost say, Saruman as he should have been" (*TTT* 67). Evidently, Saruman was meant to be God's champion on Middle-Earth. He was to guide the free peoples against Sauron, but he himself was corrupted in his lust for power and greatness: "For I am Saruman the Wise, Saruman Ring-maker, Saruman of Many Colours!" (*FOTR* 196). Saruman rejects the purity of white, "It [white] serves as a beginning. White cloth may be dyed. The white page can be overwritten, and the white light can be broken," to which Gandalf retorts, "In which case it is no longer white," said I. "And he that breaks a thing to find out what it is has left the path of wisdom" (*FOTR* 196). When they face each other again, at the onset of Saruman's defeat, Gandalf displays his true power and authority: "Come back, Saruman!' said Gandalf in a commanding voice. To the amazement of the others, Saruman turned again, and as if dragged against his will, he came slowly back to the iron rail, leaning on it, breathing hard. His face was lined and shrunken" (*TTT* 129). Not only Gandalf displays his newly acquired power, he also uses it to punish Saruman who broke faith in God and faith in the mission he was given.

In a way, Gandalf takes over the whole mission of safeguarding Middle-Earth by defeating Saruman, and in *ROTK*, it is possible to observe an even more active and assertive Gandalf. Gandalf no longer discusses or asks permission, when he was the Grey, he mentioned his difficulty in obtaining access to the library of Minas Tirith (*FOTR* 192), but as the White, he simply bids people to let him pass: "Let me pass! I must come to

your Lord Denethor, while his stewardship lasts. Whatever betide, you have come to the end of the Gondor that you have known. Let me pass!" (*ROTK* 14). His power and authority are also more visible, as Pippin observes: "Yet by a sense other than sight Pippin perceived that Gandalf had the greater power and the deeper wisdom, and a majesty that was veiled. And he was older, far older" (18). He takes charge of the defense of Minas Tirith, holding the city long enough for Théoden's Rohirrim to arrive, followed by Aragorn and his Grey Comppany (*ROTK* 66-67). Finally, after the victory of men, he is put in charge of the Allied forces of Rohan and Gondor in the brief but crucial time preceding the destruction of the Ring (*ROTK* 108). He, thus, saves Frodo and Sam from certain death in Mount Doom with the Eagles (*ROTK* 155). With the destruction of the Ring and Sauron, Gandalf finishes his long mission at last.

To summerize, Gandalf serves as an ultimate guide to the heroes Frodo and Aragorn as Gandalf the Grey and exercises his great powers with caution, only when absolutely necessary. When he becomes Gandalf the White, he never seeks out greater titles or powers even though he is far more powerful in this state of being, unlike Saruman. He merely becomes more active in his fight against Sauron and continues his guiding of Aragorn. Once Gandalf's task of achieving the final destruction of Sauron is completed, he leaves Middle-earth to be ruled by Men, namely, Aragorn's newly established Telcontar dynasty. About this turn of events, Gandalf says, "[b]ut in any case the time of my labours now draws to an end. The King has taken on the burden" (*ROTK* 178). He even goes West to join his fellow "angels" and God, never to be seen again on Middle-Earth, concluding his role as a guide, teacher and leader. Steele remarks that "Gandalf succeeds in inspiring the hearts of the Heroes in *The Lord of the Rings* and as such replaces Saruman as the head of the White Council and also as the most superior Istari or Wizard in Middle-Earth […] It is also due to Gandalf's machinations and hard work that Sauron is finally destroyed and he is duly rewarded" (141). Gandalf's reward might seem small compared to Aragorn's crowning, but Gandalf gets to return home, to the paradise of the Undying Lands in triumph. In Gandalf, Tolkien reinforces the idea of a mentor and guide figure, especially considering his "hermit" status when he was still the Grey wizard (Cooper 86).

To finalize, *LOTR* employs chivalric romance elements, which are the knight errant and his virtues, knightly adventure and the quest, followed by Christian elements, more subtle than chivalric romances in the context of *LOTR*, courtly love, a knightly setting and depictions of medieval relations such as lords, king and vassals and finally a guiding mentor figure in the form of a wizard, Gandalf. Accordingly, Aragorn serves as a knightly romance protagonist, with Boromir set up as a foil to enhance Aragorn's position as a proper knight, within the narrative. Aragorn as the knight of *LOTR*, undertakes a series of adventures and errantry on his quest that concerns the development of the knight into a better knight. Indeed, the romance elements that *LOTR* employs can be observed in the position and adventure of Aragorn as well as his companions and adversaries. Basically, the Quest of the Ring is Aragorn's quest and it takes place in the context of chivalric romance. Aragorn goes on a quest to destroy his main enemies' artefact, the One Ring, which provides the necessary errantry and quest structure expected from a knight. He is also supported by other knightly companions, namely Gimli and Legolas, who fight alongside him. Aragorn as a knight figure, is powerful and virtuous. He is gentle, chaste, loyal, and faithful. He is, in fact, so powerful and just that he might be considered as a saint (Chausse 32).

LOTR also uses the magical and the supernatural in the way chivalric romance employs them. Aragorn is guided by a semi-Christian and pagan figure, Gandalf, whose miracles and leadership at times of peril save the knight from an untimely death. Courtly love as an element of romance is present in Aragorn's romantic involvement with a lady of high standing, namely Arwen. If Aragorn wants to marry her, he must first obtain the throne of his ancestors, therefore providing the knight-errant with both a love interest and a motivation to go on a quest. Similarly other characters, namely Faramir, Éowyn, Gimli and Galadriel also depict different iterations of courtly love. Christianity also plays a subtle but great role in *LOTR*, similar to medieval romances. Although *LOTR* lacks a clear and centralized religion, the text and characters provide an important religious context. In subtle ways, all major characters contain and display virtues of Christianity, and in the case of Gandalf and Frodo's resurrections and tribulations, they are similar to those of Christ.

LOTR lastly, employs the medieval romance setting Gondor, the vassal and lord relations between the states of Gondor and Arnor are similar to their romance counterparts. The geography is not limited to these kingdoms, either, as there are dark underground mining holds infested with demons, enchanted forests and castles carved into mountains, each of which the knight hero visits in his adventures, and walks away from, having survived and stronger. Thus, *LOTR* borrows and, at times, transforms or changes the elements of the large corpus of medieval romance.

CONCLUSION

This thesis is based on the idea that elements of epic and chivalric romance are present in Tolkien's work *The Lord of the Rings.* This study finds that while the presence of epic and chivalric romance elements are observable in *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien's work employs some of these elements in an innovative way while retaining their traditional implications.

Chapter I of this thesis analyses the elements of epic in *The Lord of the Rings* and demonstrates that there is an epic society represented by the heroic society of the Kingdom of Rohan in *The Two Towers*. Additionally, the conventional epic quest is manifest in the Fellowship and the One Ring, which the heroes seek to destroy. Epic heroic figures such as Frodo and Sam are present in the story, and are vital for its resolution. These elements are the hallmarks of epic tradition, and are employed throughout the trilogy. Moreover, in addition to the serious atmosphere, the large cast of characters, the urgency of the Ring's destruction and the presence of the Dark Lord and his overwhelming forces contribute to the development of an epic narrative. In its "good versus evil" story as the central epic plot, Tolkien presents an epic narrative which with textual additions to the narrative such as poems and songs also grant an almost "Homeric" tone to *The Lord of the Rings.*

Chapter I also shows that Tolkien's use of the epic elements in *The Lord of the Rings* is innovative rather than traditional. Tolkien's hobbits, the central characters in the story, achieve certain epic feats; yet the "hobbit hero", despite showing great similarities to the traditional epic hero, is not completely compatible with the established epic heroes. It is significant that, Tolkien's "hobbit hero" does not possess any martial power to set him apart from his peers, although Sam opposes this by actively fighting and defeating powerful enemies. The hobbit hero also does not have any clear connection to godly or divine figures from which he inherits a "genetic power" (Nagy 109). Nonetheless, the "hobbit hero", Frodo, possesses the epic heroic elements such as courage, generosity, leadership and determination. In this context, Sam's epic depiction, and Tolkien's own account about Sam, suggest that it is Sam, not Frodo, that is the "chief hero" (178, 261). Thus, this study finds that Tolkien's views on heroism changes the concept of epic hero,

as he presents not one, but two heroes in *The Lord of the Rings* and both of these characters, despite sharing attributes with the established epic hero, are not truly epic heroes but present a uunique interpretation of heroism and courage. This, on the other hand, opens up the case of reading *The Lord of the Rings* as an edifying piece of literature, similar to epic.

Since Tolkien has diverted from the epic hero with Frodo as well as the inclusion of a large cast of heroes who contribute to the overall success of the quest to destroy the Ring, he promotes an idea of heroism that serves an edifying purpose, which is, simply put "the heroism of the little people" or that "anyone can be a hero". Honegger comments that "it is the low mimetic heroism of Frodo and Sam that carries the day and, ultimately, endows all other acts of bravery and high mimetic heroism with meaning" ("Splintered" 4). Similarly, Carpenter reports that Tolkien once said that what impressed him was that "we are here, surviving, because of the indomitable courage of quite small people against impossible odds" (qtd in Amendt-Raduege). Thus, *The Lord of the Rings*' epic edifying purpose seems to be found in its large cast of heroes, their larger number and their smaller statures versus the world and its problems, especially when hobbits are concerned. *The Lord of the Rings* appears to convey the message of "simple, everyday heroism" to its readers, and how even the most seemingly insignificant person can make a difference against evil.

Chapter II of this thesis, on the other hand, analyses the elements of chivalric romance and other corpuses of medieval romance Tolkien employs in *The Lord of the Rings*. It is evident that Tolkien mostly adapts chivalric romance elements such as the knight-errant as represented by Aragorn, knightly companions such as Gimli and Legolas, and courtly love in the relationship between Aragorn and Arwen, Gimli and Galadriel and Faramir and Éowyn, as in the trdaitional chivalric romance. Tolkien's romance heroes travel and, in a sense, adventure, in their quest to defeat the Dark Lord's armies. However, it should be noted that these adventures usually end in large-scale battles that the knights lead against their inhuman enemies, such as Aragorn's defence of Helm's Deep. Common elements such as encounters with enchanters in magical forests, or obtaining boons from a powerful lady also happen, which help bring the chivalric romance into the forefront especially in chapters concerning Aragorn.

Similar to his use of epic elements, Tolkien's greatest break from the romance tradition is in his knightly heroic figure, namely, Aragorn, whose knightliness is re-adapted or re-shaped throughout the story (Reinhard 117). Although not as distinct as the "hobbit epic hero", Tolkien's knight-errant is also different from the chivalric romance knight-errants. Tolkien uses the brothers Boromir and Faramir, who are both "knights" within the social structure of Middle-Earth, but in the opposition to each other as they both display very different characteristics of knightood, to showcase what Aragorn should and should not do as a knightly character. It is clear that Aragorn is a knight-errant, but his knightly behaviours are defined by Tolkien in an innovative way. Aragorn, for example, appears as a vagabond with no arms or armour for a long time throughout the story, and his leadership and tactics are in opposition to the conventional chivalric knight-errants. That is, unlike the traditional romance hero, he does not start as an established or at least acknowled knight but rather, as a vagabond figure. However, as the story progresses, Aragorn grows into a more knightly hero as he performs ever greater deeds. He vanquishes the Nazgûl that threaten the hobbits, leads the Fellowship for a time and saves the kingdoms of Rohan and Gondor from invaders both mundane and supernatural. Eventually, as the Knight of the story, he obtains an heirloom sword, becomes a leader of men, and finally finishes his quest to destroy his mortal enemy Sauron. At the ending of the story it is observed that he reclaims his rightful place as king, albeit with the help of his companions.

This thesis, thus, shows the close relation between fantasy and epic as well as romance through a study of epic and romance elements in *The Lord of the Rings*. It is also important to the reasons for Tolkien to go back to epic and romance for his trilogy. As mentioned in the Introduction, Tolkien was not only anti-modern, he was also very opposed to the technological advancements of his time. His escapist views for fantasy, coupled with his wish to produce a serious mythology for England appear to have made him look back in time, where he, owing to his own academic experiences, have discovered the serious and influential genres of epic and romance. Those two genres, which have dominated a large part of the past have been utilized by Tolkien to enhance his own epic fantasy, helped him shape his trilogy into a more serious and remarkable story. Additionally, since epic and romance depict ages where swords, virtues and heroics won the day, where good and evil were usually more clear as opposed to the modern era, it is evident that Tolkien, as

an advocate for the natural, the rustic and the simple (*Letters* 303), would prefer to "escape" into more serious yet "simple" times in his secondary world fantasy. As this study demonstrates, epic and romance are adapted into Tolkien's trilogy, and they have always contained the fantastic. Today, despite the fact that the conditions to produce such works no longer exist, both epic and romance still find a place in the fantasy works across the world.

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APPENDIX 1. ETHICS COMMISSION FORM

	HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ	Doküman Kodu *Form No.*	FRM-YL-09
		Yayım Tarihi *Date of Pub.*	22.11.2023
	FRM-YL-09 **Yüksek Lisans Tezi Etik Kurul Muafiyeti Formu** *Ethics Board Form for Master's Thesis*	Revizyon No *Rev. No.*	00
		Revizyon Tarihi *Rev.Date*	

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Date: 05/12/2023

ThesisTitle (In English):The Use of Epic and Romance Elements in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*
Thesis Title (In German/French):.....

My thesis work related to the title above:
My thesis work related to the title above:

1. Does not perform experimentation on people or animals.
2. Does not necessitate the use of biological material (blood, urine, biological fluids and samples, etc.).
3. Does not involve any interference of the body's integrity.
4. Is not a research conducted with qualitative or quantitative approaches that require data collection from the participants by using techniques such as survey, scale (test), interview, focus group work, observation, experiment, interview.
5. Requires the use of data (books, documents, etc.) obtained from other people and institutions. However, this use will be carried out in accordance with the Personal Information Protection Law to the extent permitted by other persons and institutions.

I hereby declare that I reviewed the Directives of Ethics Boards of Hacettepe University and in regard to these directives it is not necessary to obtain permission from any Ethics Board in order to carry out my thesis study; I accept all legal responsibilities that may arise in any infringement of the directives and that the information I have given above is correct.

I respectfully submit this for approval.

Yiğit Ertuğ
05.12.2023

Student Information			
	Name-Surname	Yiğit Ertuğ	
	Student Number	N19133968	
	Department	English Language and Literature	
	Programme	English Language and Literature	
	E-mail/Phone Number		

SUPERVISOR'S APPROVAL

APPROVED

Prof. Dr. Huriye REİS

	HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ	Doküman Kodu *Form No.*	FRM-YL-09
		Yayım Tarihi *Date of Pub.*	22.11.2023
	FRM-YL-09 **Yüksek Lisans Tezi Etik Kurul Muafiyeti Formu** *Ethics Board Form for Master's Thesis*	Revizyon No *Rev. No.*	00
		Revizyon Tarihi *Rev.Date*	

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞINA

Tarih:05/12/2023

Tez Başlığı*: J.R.R. Tolkien'in Yüzüklerin Efendisi Eserinde Destan ve Romans Unsurlarının Kullanımı

Yukarıda başlığı gösterilen tez çalışmam:

1. İnsan ve hayvan üzerinde deney niteliği taşımamaktadır.
2. Biyolojik materyal (kan, idrar vb. biyolojik sıvılar ve numuneler) kullanılmasını gerektirmemektedir.
3. Beden bütünlüğüne veya ruh sağlığına müdahale içermemektedir.
4. Anket, ölçek (test), mülakat, odak grup çalışması, gözlem, deney, görüşme gibi teknikler kullanılarak katılımcılardan veri toplanmasını gerektiren nitel ya da nicel yaklaşımlarla yürütülen araştırma niteliğinde değildir.
5. Diğer kişi ve kurumlardan temin edilen veri kullanımını (kitap, belge vs.) gerektirmektedir. Ancak bu kullanım, diğer kişi ve kurumların izin verdiği ölçüde Kişisel Bilgilerin Korunması Kanuna riayet edilerek gerçekleştirilecektir.

Hacettepe Üniversitesi Etik Kurullarının Yönergelerini inceledim ve bunlara göre çalışmamın yürütülebilmesi için herhangi bir Etik Kuruldan izin alınmasına gerek olmadığını; aksi durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.

Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

Yiğit Ertuğ

05.12.2023

Öğrenci Bilgileri			
	Ad-Soyad	Yiğit Ertuğ	
	Öğrenci No	N19133968	
	Enstitü Anabilim Dalı	İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı	
	Programı	İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı	
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DANIŞMAN ONAYI

UYGUNDUR.

Prof. Dr. Huriye REİS

* Tez **Almanca** veya **Fransızca** yazılıyor ise bu kısımda tez başlığı **Tez Yazım Dilinde** yazılmalıdır.

APPENDIX 2. ORIGINALITY REPORT

	HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ	Doküman Kodu *Form No.*	FRM-YL-15
		Yayım Tarihi *Date of Pub.*	22.11.2023
	FRM-YL-15 Yüksek Lisans Tezi Orijinallik Raporu *Master's Thesis Dissertation Originality Report*	Revizyon No *Rev. No.*	00
		Revizyon Tarihi *Rev.Date*	

TO HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Date: 29/11/2023

Thesis Title (In English):The Use of Epic and Romance Elements in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*
Thesis Title (In German/French):.....

According to the originality report obtained by myself/my thesis advisor by using the Turnitin plagiarism detection software and by applying the filtering options checked below on 29/11/2023 for the total of 123 pages including the a) Title Page, b) Introduction, c) Main Chapters, and d) Conclusion sections of my thesis entitled above, the similarity index of my thesis is 5 %.

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I hereby declare that I have carefully read Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences Guidelines for Obtaining and Using Thesis Originality Reports that according to the maximum similarity index values specified in the Guidelines, my thesis does not include any form of plagiarism; that in any future detection of possible infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility; and that all the information I have provided is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Kindly submitted for the necessary actions.

Yiğit Ertuğ
29.11.2023

Student Information			
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	Department	English Language and Literature	
	Programme	English Language and Literature	
	E-mail/Phone Number		

SUPERVISOR'S APPROVAL

APPROVED

Prof. Dr. Hurİye REİS

	HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ	Doküman Kodu *Form No.*	FRM-YL-15
		Yayın Tarihi *Date of Pub.*	22.11.2023
	FRM-YL-15 **Yüksek Lisans Tezi Orijinallik Raporu** *Master's Thesis Dissertation Originality Report*	Revizyon No *Rev. No.*	00
		Revizyon Tarihi *Rev.Date*	

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞINA

Tarih: 29/11/2023

Tez Başlığı*:J.R.R. Tolkien'in Yüzüklerin Efendisi Eserinde Destan ve Romans Unsurlarının Kullanımı

Yukarıda başlığı verilen tezimin a) Kapak sayfası, b) Giriş, c) Ana bölümler ve d) Sonuç kısımlarından oluşan toplam 123 sayfalık kısmına ilişkin, 29/11/2023 tarihinde şahsım/tez danışmanım tarafından Turnitin adlı intihal tespit programından aşağıda işaretlenmiş filtrelemeler uygulanarak alınmış olan orijinallik raporuna göre, tezimin benzerlik oranı % 5 'dır.

Uygulanan filtrelemeler*:

1. ☐ Kabul/Onay ve Bildirim sayfaları hariç
2. ☒ Kaynakça hariç
3. ☒ Alıntılar hariç
4. ☐ Alıntılar dâhil
5. ☒ 5 kelimeden daha az örtüşme içeren metin kısımları hariç

Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Çalışması Orijinallik Raporu Alınması ve Kullanılması Uygulama Esasları'nı inceledim ve bu Uygulama Esasları'nda belirtilen azami benzerlik oranlarına göre tezimin herhangi bir intihal içermediğini; aksinin tespit edileceği muhtemel durumlarda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.

Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

Yiğit Ertuğ
29.11.2023

Öğrenci Bilgileri			
	Ad-Soyad	Yiğit Ertuğ	
	Öğrenci No	N19133968	
	Enstitü Anabilim Dalı	İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı	
	Programı	İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı	
	E-posta/Telefon		

DANIŞMAN ONAYI

UYGUNDUR.

Prof. Dr. Huriye REİS