Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of English Language and Literature

FROM MIDDLE-EARTH TO THE REAL WORLD: J. R. R. TOLKIEN'S *THE HOBBIT*, *THE LORD OF THE RINGS*, AND *THE SILMARILLION*

Azize Ahu Ersözlü

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2013

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KABUL VE ONAY

Azize Ahu Ersözlü tarafından hazırlanan "From Middle-earth to the Real World: J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Silmarillion*" başlıklı bu çalışma, 15.11.2013 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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ÖZET

ERSÖZLÜ, Azize Ahu. *Orta Dünya'dan Gerçek Dünyaya: J. R. R. Tolkien'in* Hobbit, Yüzüklerin Efendisi, *ve* Silmarillion*'ı*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2013.

Gerçeği betimlemekten uzak bir edebi tür olduğu varsayımıyla hak ettiği değeri uzun süre görmemiş olsa da fantezi, gerçeğe yaklaşmanın farklı bir yoludur. Bu çalışmada öne sürülen tez, J. R. R. Tolkien'in fanteziyi dünyanın gerçeklerini irdeleyecek ve değiştirecek bir yol olarak kullandığıdır. Bu savı desteklemek üzere Tolkien'in *Hobbit* (1939)*, Yüzüklerin Efendisi* (1954-55) ve *Silmarillion* (1977) adlı eserleri incelenmiş ve Tolkien'in Orta Dünya'da tecrübe edilen canlandırıcı ve yoğun duygular yoluyla bir dönüşüm geçirme ve bu dönüşüm sayesinde dünyayı değiştirecek farkındalığı, isteği ve cesareti kazanma fırsatlarını nasıl yarattığı irdelenmiştir.

Bu çalışma altı bölümden oluşmaktadır. Giriş bölümünde kısaca fantastik edebiyata karşı önyargılara ve bunun muhtemel kaynaklarına değinildikten sonra Tolkien'in eserlerine farklı yaklaşımlar incelenmiştir. I. Bölümde Tolkien'in "Peri Masalları Üzerine" başlıklı makalesinde kurduğu fantezi kuramı ve eserlerini anlamaya yardımcı olacak kavramlar açıklanmıştır. II. Bölümde ilk olarak Tolkien'in "yeniden kazanma" kavramının diğer yabancılaştırma kuramlarıyla benzerlikleri ve farklılıkları özetlenmiş, ardından bunun bir yöntem olarak eseri okuyan kişilerin ne gibi görüş, duygu ve yaklaşımlarını değiştirmeyi amaçladığı irdelenmiştir. III. Bölümde Tolkien'in kaçış ve mutlu sonla ilgili fikirlerine değinilmiş, eserlerindeki felaketlerin ve mutlu sonların ne gibi değişimlere yol açtığına yer verilmiştir. IV. Bölümde Tolkien'in nasıl bir mit oluşturduğu, yaşadığımız dünya ve Orta Dünya'ya ait mitleri ne amaçla kullandığı araştırılmıştır. Sonuç bölümünde ise Tolkien'in fantastik eserlerinin yaşadığımız dünyadan bir kaçış olduğunu savunan görüşlerin çürütülmesi amaçlanmış ve yazarın bu edebi türü ciddi konuları ifade edebileceği bir çerçeve olarak nasıl kullandığı tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler

Tolkien, *Hobbit*, *Yüzüklerin Efendisi*, *Silmarillion*, Orta Dünya, yeniden kazanma, mutlu son, fantezi, mitleştirme.

ABSTRACT

ERSÖZLÜ, Azize Ahu. *From Middle-earth to the Real World: J. R. R. Tolkien's* The Hobbit, The Lord of the Rings, *and* The Silmarillion, Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2013.

Fantasy has long been regarded as an antagonistic genre to realism, and held in contempt because it fails to represent reality. However, despite its departure from consensus reality, fantasy is an equally effective way of approaching reality. This study defends the thesis that J. R. R. Tolkien uses fantasy as a means to reflect upon and change the reality of the primary world. Therefore, this thesis examines *The Hobbit* (1939), *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-55), and *The Silmarillion* (1977), and discusses and illustrates the ways through which Tolkien approaches reality, and how he creates opportunities for a transformation through the refreshing and intense feelings one might experience in Middle-earth, thereby gaining the awareness, willingness, and courage to transform the primary world.

This work consists of six chapters. The introduction shortly investigates the probable causes of the prejudices against fantastic literature, and examines various approaches towards Tolkien's works. Chapter I explores Tolkien's theory of fantasy as he builds it in his famous essay "On Fairy-stories," and defines basic concepts which are key to understanding his fiction. Chapter II starts with a brief comparison and contrast of Tolkien's concept of "recovery" with other theories of defamiliarisation, and proceeds with how the characters' recovered notions, feelings, and attitudes find their application in the primary world. Chapter III studies Tolkien's understanding of escape and happy ending, and how the catastrophes and eucatastrophes of the three works enable a process of transformation. Chapter IV examines Tolkien's myth-making, and to what end Tolkien utilises the primary and the secondary world myths. The conclusion refutes the charges of escapism directed towards Tolkien's fantasy, which, actually, is used as a framework to provide context for serious concerns.

Key Words

Tolkien, *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Silmarillion*, Middle-earth, recovery, eucatastrophe, fantasy, myth-making.

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INTRODUCTION

> I rarely remember a book about which I have had such violent arguments. Nobody *seems* to have a moderate opinion: either, like myself, people find it a masterpiece of its genre or they cannot abide it, and among the hostile there are some, I must confess, for whose literary judgment I have great respect. (Auden, "At the End")

This was what W. H. Auden, one of the very first Tolkien critics, wrote of *The Lord of the Rings* shortly after it was published in 1954-55. Since then, critics' views regarding Tolkien's works have been no less controversial. Although sales reports and surveys have proved the fondness of the reading public of Tolkien's books,[1] critics have not always seemed to share their enthusiasm. This curious fact could be related to a general distrust of fantasy, because, as C. S. Lewis observes, while professing to criticise the book, many reviewers reveal their dislike of the genre (*On Stories* 56). In fact, no other genre has ever been approached by such divergent attitudes as fantasy. In recent years, with the growing popularity of fantasy fiction, academics and critics have directed their attention to this once disregarded genre, but the belief that works which attract such large audiences must be second-rate literature still exists. In order to illustrate this, John Sutherland opens his *Bestsellers* with a quotation from Irwin Shaw, who once said, "[f]or some literary critics writing a book that is popular and commercially successful rates very high on the list of white collar crime" (vi). Fantasy novels are still displayed on separate shelves in libraries and bookstores today, as if they were not for people who read serious literature. Fantasy is ignored in many college English departments (Le Guin, Introduction 11), and much fantasy writing is "excluded by traditional definitions of canonicity" (Upstone 50).

Conflicting attitudes towards fantasy may have their sources in its very nature; therefore, it is important to attend first to the question of what fantasy is. As Lewis once

[1] *The Lord of the Rings* has sold more than one and a half billion copies worldwide, followed by *The Hobbit*; one hundred million. *The Lord of the Rings* was chosen "the book of the century" by Waterstone's poll conducted among twenty-six thousand readers in 1997, and Folio Society's one thousand members voted it their favourite book in the same year (Curry, "Tolkien" 1-2). It was voted "Nation's Best-loved Book" in BBC's Big Read survey in 2003 ("Rings Triumphs").

wrote, "[t]he first qualification for judging any piece of workmanship from a corkscrew to a cathedral is to know *what* it is – what it was intended to do and how it is meant to be used" (*A Preface* 1). The etymology of the word "fantasy" might shed some light on its nature: fantasy is intrinsically paradoxical; it is closely connected to imagination and illusion, yet it makes real things clear and visible. "Fantasy" has its origins in Middle English *fantasie*, which dates back to the early fourteenth century, when it meant "illusory appearance." The earlier sense of "whimsical notion, illusion" was later followed by that of "imagination" in the 1530s. The word has its roots in French, Latin, and Greek: fourteenth-century French word *fantaisie* was defined as "vision, imagination" while Latin and Greek *phantasia* meant "visualisation, a making visible." *Phantasia*, in turn, is derived from *phanos* and *phaino*, which mean "light, bright," and "bring to light, come to light," respectively. Other Greek words from the same root are very close in meaning: *phantazesthai* ("picture to oneself"), *phantos* ("visible"), and *phainesthai* ("appear"). The word "fantasy" is also closely related to "phantasm," which comes from the Middle English word *fantasme,* and the Old French word *fantesme,* having their roots in the Latin *phantasma* and in the Greek *phantazein*: "to present to the mind, make visible, display" (Harper; Le Guin, Introduction 9; Scholes, "Boiling Roses" 7).

Like the etymological roots of the word "fantasy," its definitions are quite numerous. In fact, fantasy has been defined by almost as many critics as there are writers of fantasy.[2] However, neither fantasy writers, nor critics of the fantastic literature seem to have agreed on its nature or its function. On the one hand, it has been generalised to be anything that deals with what is unreal; on the other, it has been restricted to deal with nothing *but* the unreal. As writers and critics have varied – if not contradictory – views when they define fantasy, there seems to be a disagreement about what works are to be included in this genre, or even about whether fantasy is a genre, a form, or a mode, or a natural human activity. What Purtill writes of science-fiction might as well be said of fantasy: [t]he trouble is that any simple definition will have too many exceptions, and any definition without exceptions will be as complex as a legal contract" (40). Still,

[2] See Appendix 1 for the definitions and the typical elements of fantasy as have been identified by various critics.

from the many definitions that have been made, one can get glimpses of certain inherent, albeit rather paradoxical characteristics of fantasy: it deals with the impossible, but it is supported by logic; it is not factual, but it is true; it deals with non-rational phenomena, but it can fulfil one's desire to change reality. The only consensus on the nature of fantasy seems to be the fact that fantasy in some way or another violates the conventional norms of possibility. Yet, one thing is certain: fantasy refuses to be a single thing. Like Humpty Dumpty says of words in *Through the Looking Glass*, fantasy is what its author chooses it to mean:

> "When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more or less."
> "The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things."
> "The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master – that's all." (Carroll 95)

The controversy over fantasy involves more than its definition, and it goes back quite a long time in the history of literary criticism during which its presence as a reputable genre was ignored. Fantasy was regarded as a silly pastime without any use to those who indulge in it, and dismissed as a frivolity and thus regarded unworthy of serious notice. Myth, fable, and fantasy had negative connotations when applied to serious literature. The attitude of classical philosophers, through centuries and changes in culture, turned into a general distrust of fantasy.[3]

The marginalisation of fantastic literature has its roots in Plato's discussions on the nature of artistic imitation and the relationship between this imitation and reality. For centuries, many thinkers reiterated Plato's claim that they did not have leisure at all for such pointless pastimes. Plato's *Phaedrus* and *The Republic* have been deeply influential in the arguments against fantastic literature for centuries after they were composed around 370 BCE. In *Phaedrus*, Plato, through Socrates, says that he never has time to reduce traditional myths to rational explanation. What he is interested in is following the Delphic inscription to know oneself, not the falsification of these myths (6). In *The Republic*, Plato, though not as directly as in *Phaedrus*, implies that the

[3] See Appendix 2 for a brief survey of various approaches towards fantasy.

fantastic has no positive purpose in society when he banishes even the imitative poet from his hypothetical city of Callipolis (313). As Hume points out, Plato's dismissal of mythic tales as not my business saying he does not have time for them prepared the way for the argument that the thinkers' business is to try to know themselves, so that fantasy is to be disdained because it tells the listener/reader about things that did not/do not happen, therefore will be of no use in the pursuit of self knowledge (xvi). It has been more than two millennia since *Phaedrus* and *The Republic* were composed; nevertheless, the four arguments Plato put forward in these dialogues have constituted a basis for later claims that fantasy fails to represent reality, and that it should be taken as a mere pastime: it is an imitation far removed from the real; it invokes wrong feelings in the audience, and is therefore dangerous; it is created by inspiration, not through reason; it is ignorant about what it describes. However, ironically enough, *The Republic*, one of the forerunners of utopian fiction, is considered by today's literary critics to belong to the genre of fantasy (e.g., Mumford 271; Wootton 29).

Centuries later, in the late nineteenth-century, many authors turned to writing fantasy, probably "seeking alternatives to the hegemony of the novel of social realism" (Irwin 4). The rebellion of Romanticism against rationalism had created a fertile ground for fantasy to flourish, and reputable writers soon started to publish bodies of fantastic tales, which developed into a new literary form. The great body of fantastic works produced by the mid-twentieth century generated considerable critical work on fantasy. Beginning around 1970, scholars and critics devoted themselves to the study of the fantastic in an attempt to discover "how best to illuminate works of fantastic art"[4] (Morse 3).

The history of modern fantasy began with William Morris, George MacDonald, and Lord Dunsany (Mathews 16, 22), and fantasy became a "full fledged modern genre" when the construction of other worlds – like these three authors did – became its "central principle" (Scholes, "Boiling Roses" 6). MacDonald, in his essay entitled "The

[4] Some of the most prominent works on fantasy were published during this decade: Lin Carter's *Imaginary Worlds: The Art of Fantasy* (1973), Colin Manlove's *Modern Fantasy* (1975), Eric S. Rabkin's *The Fantastic in Literature* (1976), Diana Waggoner's *The Hills of Faraway: A Guide to Fantasy* (1978), Roger C. Schlobin's *The Literature of Fantasy* (1979), Marshall B. Tymn, K. J. Zahorski, and R. H. Boyer's *Fantasy Literature* (1979), and Stephen Prickett's *Victorian Fantasy* (1979), to name a few (Stableford xlvi).

Fantastic Imagination," provided "the key to modern fantasy" too: an invented world with its own laws, which Tolkien calls "Secondary World" (Scholes, "Boiling Roses" 11; Tolkien, *Fairy* 132). Although he was not the first to theorise about or create works of modern fantasy, many critics agree that Tolkien played a prominent role in its history. Scholes gives the credit to Tolkien when it comes to naming this genre: "[i]t is Tolkien, in his superb essay "On Fairy-stories," who claims the name *Fantasy* for the genre in which he himself aspired to work," and adds, "*The Lord of the Rings* is the paradigm of fantasy in our time" (17). Shippey asserts, it was Tolkien who "established the conventions of a new and flourishing genre" (*Author* xxvi). Senior writes that fantasy was made a prominent genre by Tolkien (*Stephen* 17). Yolen attributes the entrance of fantasy into the mainstream to Tolkien's books (Introduction vii). Stableford similarly states, it is thanks to Tolkien "that the modern commercial genre of fantasy came into being when it did and in the format that became typical of it. Tolkien was its Homer, *The Lord of the Rings* its *Iliad* and *Odyssey*" (xlv). Today, fantasy novels not only find their way into bestseller lists, they are also adapted into films, TV series, and albums.[5] Shippey believes the fantastic to be the dominant mode of the twentieth century, and says that one of the main reasons for this fact is Tolkien (*Author* vii; "Lecture"). Elgin thinks, it is Tolkien who is most responsible for the critical attention given to the fantasy tradition by providing "the prime examples of fantasy" (265).

However, like many works of fantasy have been dismissed as a triviality, the works of Tolkien have not always been received with enthusiasm, either. As a reputed Oxford philologist and scholar, Tolkien must have surprised many people by his involvement in the genre. His student and friend, Auden, has noticed after the publication of the third part of *The Lord of the Rings*,

> I can only suppose that some people object to Heroic Quests and Imaginary Worlds on principle; such, they feel, cannot be anything but light "escapist" reading. That a man like Mr. Tolkien, the English philologist who teaches at Oxford, should lavish such incredible pains upon a genre which is, for them, trifling by definition, is, therefore, very shocking. ("At the End")

[5] Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, HBO series *Game of Thrones* adapted from George R. R. Martin's novels, and *Complete Songs & Poems* by The Tolkien Ensemble, who set the songs and poems in Tolkien's works to music are only a few examples.

Grotta mentions the favourable criticism *The Lord of the Rings* received when it was first published, but he adds that the longest and most important review given to the book was decidedly negative. He quotes the noted American writer and critic Edmund Wilson, who in his review titled "Oo, Those Awful Orcs" wrote that it was a children's book that has got out of hand and became a fantasy for its own sake, which, for Wilson, is an indulgence (120-22). Fred Inglis voiced the centuries-old criticism that has been directed to fantasy literature: "[i]t *is* moving, there is no doubt, but it moves a reader away from and never towards real life" (192). The book was considered irrelevant to the human situation (Roberts 458). At least one critic found it "a magnificent performance," but added that it is not literature (Raffel 218).[6] Whether Tolkien was amused by or angry at these remarks can only be guessed. His official biographer Carpenter quotes a small poem written by Tolkien which seems to be a humorous response:

> *The Lord of the Rings*
> Is one of those things:
> If you like it you do:
> If you don't, then you boo!" (*Tolkien* 226).

When the second edition of *The Lord of the Rings* was published ten years later, Tolkien took the foreword as an opportunity to respond to his critics: "[s]ome who have read the book, or at any rate reviewed it, have found it boring, absurd, or contemptible; and I have no cause to complain, since I have similar opinions of their works, or of the kinds of writing that they evidently prefer" (*LOTR*[7] xxiii).

There were soon attempts to shift the emphasis of literary criticism from "extraliterary aspects" of Tolkien's work and its audience to "a consideration of the work itself," one

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[6] Some of what was written on Tolkien's work was downright hostility rather than literary criticism. Parker regards these as "savage" attacks, and offers Wilson's review as a case in point, who dismissed *The Lord of the Rings* as "balderdash" and "juvenile trash" (608). Shippey lists some critics who responded in anger, shock, or indignation when *The Lord of the Rings* was crowned as "the book of the century" in 1997 in a poll by Waterstone's bookstore, or who dismissed the book as a temporary craze (*Author* xx-xxii, 305-9). Pearce draws attention to the level of hostility towards Tolkien when he quotes Susan Jeffreys, who described the book as "a horrible artifact" in the Sunday Times, and added that she "won't keep the thing in the house" (*Giants* 296; *Man* 130).

[7] *The Lord of the Rings* will be abbreviated as *LOTR* in the parenthetical references henceforth.

of which was Isaacs and Zimbardo's collection of essays *Tolkien and the Critics* (1968) (Isaacs, "Possibilities" 3). In his introductory essay, Isaacs suggested, "[p]rose fiction has taken new turns or even jumps with Tolkien, and the critics must try to keep up" (11). Although some later critics were not as hostile towards Tolkien's works, they were still dismissive.[8] Contemporary literary professionals; on the other hand, find Tolkien's works worthy of serious critical attention. More critics and scholars now approach Tolkien's works with approval and admiration. The body of criticism on the works of Tolkien is considerable, and critical essays and reviews of these are regularly published as collections and in journals, some of which, like Tolkien Studies, are dedicated to Tolkien and his works. "There's certainly enough scholarship out there," writes Mooney, to sustain that "*The Lord of the Rings* may be on the verge of some form of canonicity." Isaacs observes that scholarly meetings on twentieth-century literature almost always have at least one paper on Tolkien, and "separate MLA seminars have been devoted entirely to him at the national convention" ("Need" 113-14). The future of Tolkien criticism is likely to be brighter. As Shippey predicts, when "future literary historians, detached from the squabbles of our present" look back, they will regard books like *The Lord of the Rings* as the "most representative and distinctive works" of the century (*Author* vii).

[8] The most interesting example for this group of critics is Harold Bloom, who has edited a number of books of Tolkien criticism. Bloom writes in his introductions that he suspects *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are fated to become "Period Pieces," and that Tolkien "will not be read a generation or two hence," because Tolkien, having met a need in late 1960s, is not likely to be "an author for the duration of the twenty-first century" (Introduction to *Tolkien* 1st ed. 2; Introduction to *Tolkien's* The Hobbit 7; Introduction to *Tolkien's* The Lord of the Rings 2). Curry has realised that Tolkien is either not at all included or given very few lines in certain anthologies, which he thinks is "an unconscionable dereliction of duty" on the part of the editors ("Tolkien" 2). Todorov and Brooke-Rose see Tolkien as a creator of the marvellous, not of the fantastic, due to his creation of a secondary world and do not include his works in their studies of the fantastic. Whereas Todorov does not mention Tolkien's name or works, Brooke-Rose writes "the dominance in LR is clearly that of the pure marvellous" (235). Jackson finds the desire evoked by Tolkien's fantasy conservative rather than subversive, and concludes that it is a failed fantasy (2). Manlove attributes Tolkien's success in the U.S.A. to the "paperback revolution" and the "disillusionment among the American young at the Vietnam war" (*Modern* 155, 157). Curry finds the source of the "extraordinary critical hostility" towards Tolkien in modernism and modernist critics, and elaborates, "*The Lord of the Rings* really is a text whose predominant available meanings powerfully contradict their own values" ("Tolkien" 1, 3, 21). Attebery similarly argues that modernist critics were unable to include *The Lord of the Rings* in their studies because it was "too different from the dominant texts of the period," and adds that a modernist reading is unlikely to lead to an understanding or appreciation of fantasy (*Strategies* 37).

In 1955, Tolkien remarked to Auden,

> [w]hat appreciative readers have got out of the work or seen in it has seemed fair enough, even when I do not agree with it. Always excepting, of course, any "interpretations" in the mode of simple allegory: that is, the particular and topical. In a larger sense, it is I suppose impossible to write any "story" that is not allegorical in proportion as it "comes to life"; since each of us is an allegory, embodying in a particular tale and clothed in the garments of time and place, universal truth and everlasting life. (*Letters* 212)

So, although Tolkien's work is not a simple allegory, it indeed "comes to life." As Dickerson and Evans observe, "[c]lothed in the garments of Middle-earth is a 'universal truth' that is both written into the text Tolkien created and woven into the fabric of reality – the story we are in" (220). Tolkien witnessed mass starvation, epidemic disease, and concentration camps, and lived through two world wars, experiencing the earlier one first-hand during his active duty on the Western Front, and sending two of his three sons to the later. Tolkien believed in the possibility of a better world, and used his writing as a means of regaining the good that was lost. He used fantasy, which has for ages been considered a way of escape from reality, as a means to an end: he enabled his readers to *confront* the evils of the world rather than *escape* from them. As Greenwood claims, Tolkien's fantasy has been "a flight to, rather than from, reality" (185).

Tolkien once remarked that one of his objectives in writing *The Lord of the Rings* was "the encouragement of good morals in this real world, by the ancient device of exemplifying them in unfamiliar embodiments, that may tend to 'bring them home'" (*Letters* 194). Through recovery, Tolkien aims at a reconsideration of possible preconceptions and at a refreshed view to see the world as it should be seen. One reason for Tolkien to be labelled "escapist" could be the fact that his works have happy endings, which might have been taken by critics as contrary to how things end in real life. However, according to Tolkien, a happy ending is an indispensable aspect of a successful fantasy ("Fairy" 153). An equally essential element of a true fantasy, for Tolkien, is creating secondary belief in the reader ("Fairy" 132). In order to foster belief in the secondary world, Tolkien benefited from pre-existing material and created his own mythology. Not only did he attempt to command secondary belief, but he also used

myth to express in intelligible form certain transcendent truths, since myth is the most convenient way in which humans can perceive the world coherently (Pearce, *Man* xiii), because it explains "why the world is as it is and things happen as they do" (Abrams, *Glossary* 170). Tolkien emphasised such truths as the essential goodness of the world, the destructive power of pride, and the tendency toward corruption, evil, and misery.

A glimpse into a fantasy world like J. R. R. Tolkien's Middle-earth provides opportunities for seeing the primary world through a refreshed perspective. In his *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Silmarillion*, Tolkien uses fantasy as a means to offer a picture of the real world and to evoke a willingness and courage to transform it. This thesis is an attempt to prove that Tolkien makes use of the fantasy genre not to escape from the real world, but to suggest the possibility and the need to transform it into a better place for all beings to live in through recovery, eucatastrophe, and myth-making. To illustrate how Tolkien chooses to achieve his aim, this study will focus first on his theory of fantasy as he wrote in his famous essay "On Fairy-stories," next on Tolkien's application of his theory in his works of fiction. The latter will consist of three parts: the first two will illustrate the employment of the techniques of recovery and eucatastrophe in *The Hobbit, The Lord of the Rings,* and *The Silmarillion,* and the third will be dedicated to Tolkien's myth-making.

CHAPTER I
"ON FAIRY-STORIES:" TOLKIEN'S THEORY OF FANTASY

Tolkien's famous essay "On Fairy-stories" is regarded as one of the most influential contributions to the study of fantasy literature, where Tolkien offers a critical analysis of a form which has "captured him" (Helms 11). The essay, as Timmerman points out, "constitutes one of the few genuine aesthetic treatises on making a fantasy world" (51). It is considered to be a manifesto where Tolkien declares what fantasy is and how it should operate (Flieger and Anderson 9). It is also in this essay that Tolkien shapes his ideas about recovery, sub-creation, and eucatastrophe, which, as Hart and Khovacs put it, furnished the theoretical support for his later work (viii). Tolkien's theories were evolving while he was writing *The Lord of the Rings*, if not already "fully evolved" as Ryan argues (107). As he wrote in a letter, the essay "was entirely beneficial to *The Lord of the Rings*, which was a practical demonstration of the views that I expressed" (*Letters* 310). The essay includes essential guidelines to understanding how Tolkien applies his theories of fantasy in his fictional works; therefore, it is important that this scholarly text be examined before Tolkien's fiction is fully discussed.

1.1. THE BACKGROUND

The essay has its roots in an Andrew Lang[9] lecture Tolkien was invited to deliver at the Scottish University of St. Andrews in 1939. These lectures were, as the Secretary to the University wrote in his letter to Tolkien in 1938, required to focus on Andrew Lang and his work, or "one or other of the many subjects on which he wrote" (qtd. in R. Hart 2). The topic of Tolkien's lecture was fairy stories, which was what earned him and Lang fame and success. Tolkien had published his fairy-story *The Hobbit* to remarkable success, had written what would later be published as *The Silmarillion*, and was working on *The Lord of the Rings* [10] – his own "experiment in the arts of […] inducing

[9] Andrew Lang (1844-1912) was a well-known collector and writer of fairy tales, and a scholar famous for his translations of Homer.

[10] In his introductory note to *Tree and Leaf*, Tolkien says the lecture was written "in the same period when *The Lord of the Rings* was beginning to unfold itself" (5).

'Secondary Belief'" (*Letters* 412). Very soon after the publication of Tolkien's first book, Allen & Unwin decided to meet the demand for a new story about Hobbits. Tolkien sent them, along with the manuscripts of various short tales and poems, the disordered bundle of manuscripts of what was later to become *The Silmarillion*, but he suspected any of these manuscripts "filled the bill" – they did not (Carpenter, *Tolkien* 244; Tolkien, *Letters* 25-26). Although Tolkien agreed to write a sequel to *The Hobbit* at his publisher's bidding, and started *The Lord of the Rings* as such, he was not able to go much further than a few chapters, and a short while later the new story took "an unpremeditated turn," transforming into a fairy-story for adults (Tolkien, *Letters* 34).[11]

Tolkien thought that his new story was quite unsuitable for children, but neither did he think fairy-stories are necessarily written for them. He realised that fairy-stories have been told and enjoyed by adults through much of history, because they told people "important things about reality – about who they were and what the world was like," and it was only recently that they have become "marginalized" as children's stories (Duriez 21). At the same time as his mind was occupied by this thought, he was preparing his St. Andrew's lecture, which would later mark a key moment in Tolkien's development (Hart and Khovacs viii). Tolkien had been thinking about fairy-stories for quite some time, and put some of the results into the St. Andrews lecture, which he eventually enlarged and published (*Letters* 216). As Carpenter argues, Tolkien took the lecture as an opportunity to prove his belief that fairy-stories (including his) are not necessarily intended for children, and to justify the purpose of the fairy-story he was writing (*Tolkien* 253, 255). Windling similarly maintains, Tolkien was not only defending fairy-stories in his lecture; he was also "arguing the case for his own future masterwork, restoring magical fiction to its place in adult literary tradition" (216). Rachel Hart believes "On Fairy-stories" to have enabled Tolkien "to reflect on and

[11] "Not ever intending any sequel, I fear I squandered all my favourite 'motifs' and characters on the original 'Hobbit,'" Tolkien wrote in one letter to his publishers, and in another he added "it is difficult to find anything new in that world" (*Letters* 29). A year after Tolkien started his new children's story about Hobbits, he noticed it was progressing "towards quite unforeseen goals" and quite unexpectedly "forgetting 'children'" (40, 41). The reason, for Tolkien, was that "my mind on the 'story' side is really preoccupied with the 'pure' fairy stories or mythologies of the *Silmarillion*, into which even Mr Baggins got dragged against my original will, and I do not think I shall be able to move much outside it" (38).

justify his own world of faërie, then developing from *The Hobbit* into *The Lord of the Rings*" (2-3). Flieger and Anderson likewise claim that not only did the talk mark the transition between these two books, it was also "the hinge and pivot" between them (9). Tolkien confesses in his letters that when he wrote *The Hobbit*, he was influenced by the traditional belief that "there was a real and special connexion between children and fairy-stories," which he later calls a "contemporary delusion," and says that he regrets the tone and style in the book and the fact that it was not "more carefully written" (*Letters* 298, 310, 218, 191). In contrast, *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien says, is "quite unfit for children" (*Letters* 136).

The lecture was first revised, enlarged with details and clarifications, and published as an essay titled "On Fairy-stories" in 1947, four years after he delivered the St. Andrews lecture (Tolkien, *Tree* 5). Tolkien believed "On Fairy-stories" to be an important work, and complained that Oxford University Press had let it go out of print (*Letters* 220). C. S. Lewis, another close friend of Tolkien's, often made references to the essay in his own writing, because he thought it was "perhaps the most important contribution to the subject that anyone has yet made" (*On Stories* 35). More than fifteen years after the first publication, Tolkien revised the essay for the second time (though less extensively than the first time), and published it in 1964 in his *Tree and Leaf*, coupled with his short story "Leaf by Niggle."[12] Tolkien never really stopped thinking about or writing fairy-stories. *Smith of Wootton Major*, the last short story he published, was companioned by another essay on Faërie and fairies.

As Grotta maintains, Tolkien not only established the need and the desire for fantasy literature, but he also gave specific information about the technique for creating successful mythology, knowledge that he directly applied to his own works (100). It is uncertain whether Tolkien "followed his own prescription" when writing his fairy-stories, or "formulated the prescription" to justify what he was writing (Kocher, *Master*

[12] Tolkien wrote in a letter that he would have preferred the publication of "On Fairy-stories" with his two other essays; namely, "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics," and "The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth," which "really do flow together," because the first deals "primarily with fairy-story," the second with "the contact of the 'heroic' with fairy-story," and the last with "'heroism and chivalry'" (*Letters* 350).

7). Nevertheless, it can be safely assumed that composing this lecture was an opportunity for Tolkien "to focus his own thoughts about his new work" (White 175). Consequently, "On Fairy-stories" became both a major contribution to the theory of fantasy and a framework for understanding Tolkien's own writing (Sammons, *War* 21). In his essay, Tolkien offers his theories of fantasy, recovery, sub-creation, and eucatastrophe, which find their application in all his fictional works, thereby making "On Fairy-stories" the key to Tolkienian fantasy.

1.2. TOLKIENIAN FANTASY AS FAIRY-STORY

Tolkien begins his essay by examining the contemporary usage of the word "fairy-story," and some false assumptions regarding the genre, particularly concerning its definition, its origins, and its function. He uses "fairy-story" in the same sense as "fantasy literature" is used today. Tolkien says,

> fairy-stories are not in normal English usage stories *about* fairies or elves, but stories about Fairy, that is *Faërie*, the realm or state in which fairies have their being. *Faërie* contains many things besides elves and fays, and besides dwarfs, witches, trolls, giants, or dragons: it holds the seas, the sun, the moon, the sky; and the earth, and all things that are in it: tree and bird, water and stone, wine and bread, and ourselves, mortal men, when we are enchanted. ("Fairy" 113)

For Tolkien, a definition cannot be arrived at through dictionaries or historical accounts of elf or fairy. Rather, the definition of a fairy-story depends upon "the nature of *Faërie:* the Perilous Realm itself, and the air that blows in that country," which cannot be defined or described, but only perceived. It has many ingredients, but the secret of the whole will not necessarily be discovered through analysis. Faërie may most nearly be translated by Magic – but it is not the vulgar device of the magician; it is "magic of a peculiar mood and power" ("Fairy" 114). Tolkien's claim is that

> [t]he magic of Faërie is not an end in itself, its virtue is in its operations: among these are the satisfaction of certain primordial human desires. One of these desires is to survey the depths of space and time. Another is […] to hold communion with other living things. A story may thus deal with the satisfaction of these desires, […] and in proportion as it succeeds it will approach the quality and have the flavour of fairy-story. ("Fairy" 116)

Tolkien goes on to disqualify certain types of tales from the genre in order to further explain what fairy-stories are. Travellers' tales, for example, are not fairy-stories because they only report marvels to be seen in this mortal world ("Fairy" 116). Fairy-stories, in contrast, "are about the *aventures* [13] of men in the Perilous Realm or upon its shadowy marches" ("Fairy" 113). Neither can such dream visions as Carroll's *Alice* books be included in the genre, because these stories employ "the machinery of Dream," which explains the marvels in the stories. Writers of such books cheat deliberately "the primal desire at the heart of Faërie: the realisation, independent of the conceiving mind, of imagined wonder." For Tolkien, it is essential that a genuine fairy-story be "presented as 'true.'" The fairy story deals with marvels; therefore, "it cannot tolerate any frame or machinery suggesting that the whole story in which they occur is a figment or illusion" ("Fairy" 116-17). Its text must never hint "that the fantasy world is unreal or that the hero's experience is untrue" (Kuznets 20). The beast-fable is not a fairy-story, either. Although, like the fairy-story, it contains a small part of marvel deriving from the second desire (desire to hold communion with other living things), the beasts' speech "has little reference to that desire" ("Fairy" 117).

Discussing their origins, Tolkien sets about defending fairy-stories against the theories of folklorists, philologists, and anthropologists such as George W. Dasent and Max Müller (Sammons, *War* 22; Flieger, "There Would" 28). Tolkien is determined to refute the theories of "people using the stories not as they were meant to be used, but as a quarry from which to dig evidence, or information, about matters in which they are interested" ("Fairy" 119). He states that the origins of fairy-stories date back to the same time as the origins of language and the mind, and argues that it is more interesting, though more difficult, to consider what fairy-stories are, "what they have become for us" ("Fairy" 119-20). Tolkien quotes from George W. Dasent, who said "[w]e must be satisfied with the soup that is set before us, and not desire to see the bones of the ox out of which it has been boiled" ("Fairy" 120). Tolkien agrees; however, he uses Dasent's metaphor for reasons that are completely different from his. Dasent's emphasis was on

[13] Flieger and Anderson draw attention to the usage of the French *aventures* instead of *adventures*. They believe Tolkien's choice to be deliberate, since *aventures*, besides the usual meaning, conveys "the darker implications of hazard, uncertainty and outright danger that his following phrase 'the Perilous Realm' underscores" (93).

race, and his approach, "praising the Aryans and denigrating non-Aryans in the crassest racist terms," was purely racist (Dorson 2: 572). Tolkien counters Dasent's argument, and spurns his "soup" as "a mishmash of bogus pre-history founded on the early surmises of Comparative Philology," and his "bones" as "the working and the proofs that led to these theories." What Tolkien means by "the soup" is the story, and by "the bones" its sources ("Fairy" 120). Fairy-stories, "very ancient indeed," he adds, are from that "Pot of Soup, the Cauldron of Story" ("Fairy" 121, 125), just like all good stories are the result of a process of borrowing and independent invention. When they tell magical tales, storytellers dip into this pot of soup, which has been filled with myths, romances, folk tales, and all other sorts of literary creations and has been simmering for centuries (Windling 216). Tolkien reminds that it will be a vain attempt to uncover the sources of the threads of the story in order to understand it, since "the picture is greater than, and not explained by, the sum of the component threads" ("Fairy" 121).

After dealing with Dasent, Tolkien goes on to refute Max Müller's theory of myth. Müller's claim was that mythological gods were originally natural phenomena, and it is through "a disease of language" that these natural phenomena turned into beings and myths (24). Müller believed that after the emigrations of the Indo-Aryan peoples, the mythical Sanskrit words have survived, but their referents (the phenomena) have been forgotten. Myths that we have today arose from a verbal "misunderstanding" of early names for celestial phenomena (Flieger, "There Would" 29). In 1861, Müller wrote,

> [m]ythology, which was the bane of the ancient world, is in truth a disease of language. A myth means a word, but a word which, from being a name or an attribute, has been allowed to assume a more substantial existence. Most of the Greek, the Roman, the Indian, and other heathen gods are nothing but poetical names, which were gradually allowed to assume a divine personality never contemplated by their original inventors. *Eos* was a name of the dawn before she became a goddess […] *Zeus* originally meant the bright heaven, in Sanskrit *Dyaus;* and many of the stories told of him as the supreme god, had a meaning only as told originally of the bright heaven, whose rays, like golden rain, descend on the lap of the earth […]. This mythological disease, though less virulent in modern languages, is by no means extinct. (24)

Max Müller's view of mythology, according to Tolkien, "can be abandoned without regret." Tolkien says, "[m]ythology is not a disease at all, though it may like all human things become diseased. You might as well say that thinking is a disease of the mind. It

would be more near the truth to say that languages, especially modern European languages, are a disease of mythology" ("Fairy" 121-22). Therefore, Müller's view – that gods were personifications of natural forces, that the stories told about them were originally myths, and that they finally dwindled down to fairy-stories – is "the truth almost upside down," because "[t]he gods may derive their colour and beauty from the high splendours of nature, but it was Man who obtained these for them, abstracted them from sun and moon and cloud; their personality they get direct from him" ("Fairy" 123). Tolkien defeats Müller with his own weapon by giving the Norse god Thórr as "a clear case of Olympian nature myth." He explains, Thórr is the Norse form of Thunder, and Thórr's hammer Miöllnir can therefore be interpreted as lightning. Yet, Tolkien says, even though some details of his character can be related to these natural phenomena ("for instance, his red beard, his loud voice and violent temper, his blundering and smashing strength"), Thórr has "a very marked character, or personality, which cannot be found in thunder or in lightning" ("Fairy" 123-24). The inquiry of which came first, natural phenomenon or character, is meaningless; so is tracing Thórr back in time. "If we could go backwards in time, the fairy-story might be found to change in details, or to give way to other tales. But there would always be a 'fairy-tale' as long as there was any Thórr. When the fairy-tale ceased, there would be just thunder, which no human ear had yet heard" ("Fairy" 124).

In the first draft of the essay, after abandoning Müller's views, Tolkien added, "[b]ut language cannot be forgotten. Mythology is language and language is mythology. The mind, and the tongue, and the tale, are coeval" (Fairy-stories MS. A 181).[14] In the final version of the essay, the second sentence remains more or less the same, but the first idea is conveyed in a different sentence: "[t]o ask what is the origin of stories […] is to ask what is the origin of language and of the mind" ("Fairy" 119). Tolkien's argument here is similar to the principles of the structuralists regarding myth, who identify it as language. Claude Levi-Strauss, for example, writes, "myth *is* language: to be known, myth has to be told; it is a part of human speech" (209). However, myth rises "*above* the ordinary linguistic level" "where meaning succeeds practically at "taking off" from the

[14] For Manuscripts A and B of the essay, see Flieger and Anderson's *Tolkien on Fairy-stories* "Part Three: The Manuscripts," which includes all the deletions made by Tolkien.

linguistic ground on which it keeps rolling" (210). Therefore, myth belongs to "a higher and more complex order" than language (211). Taking this theory further, Roland Barthes argues that myth is "a system of communication," "a message," "a mode of signification, a form" (107). He defines myth as "a type of speech defined by its intention […] much more than by its literal sense" (122). In this part of the essay, Tolkien is actually pursuing the same line of thought as his fellow Inkling[15] and philosopher of language Owen Barfield, philosopher Ernst Cassirer, and linguists, anthropologists, and philosophers Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf (Flieger, *Green* 243). Critics agree that Barfield's book *Poetic Diction* (1973) markedly influenced Tolkien's views on sub-creation (e.g., Duriez 20; Johnson 27; Sammons *War* 38). Tolkien himself once confided to Lewis that Barfield's "conception of the ancient semantic unity had modified his whole outlook" (Carpenter, *Inklings* 42).

Barfield's claim is also that myth is not a "disease of language" as Müller perceives it (89). Rather, it is "closely associated with the very origin of all speech and literature" (Carpenter, *Inklings* 41). Barfield asserts, there was originally no distinction between "literal" and "metaphorical" (92). In "On Fairy-stories," Tolkien reiterates these views, and argues that not only is language as old as the human mind and myth, but it also has the power to alter perception:[16]

> The human mind, endowed with the powers of generalization and abstraction, sees not only *green-grass*, discriminating it from other things (and finding it fair to look upon), but sees that it is *green* as well as being *grass*. But how powerful, how stimulating to the very faculty that produced it, was the invention of the adjective: no spell or incantation in Faërie is more potent. And that is not surprising: such incantations might indeed be said to be only another view of adjectives, a part of speech in a mythical grammar. The mind that thought of *light*, *heavy*, *grey*, *yellow*, *still*, *swift*, also conceived of magic that would make heavy things light and able to fly, turn grey lead into yellow gold, and the still rock into a swift water. If it could do the one, it could do the other; it inevitably did both. ("Fairy" 121-22)

[15] The Inklings was a literary society of which Tolkien, Lewis, and Barfield were members (Carpenter, *Tolkien* 199).

[16] Tolkien says that sub-creative art involves "combining nouns and redistributing adjectives" ("Fairy" 143). Some critics suggest that Tolkien's discussion in the essay is closer to post-modern critical theories of interpretation than it is to structuralist theories (e.g., Curry, "Tolkien" 26-27; Flieger and Anderson 102).

This argument brings Tolkien to another important point: the power of poetic imagination. The primary reason for the extreme difficulty of going back to the origins of stories is the fact that a story is a product of three interwoven elements; independent invention, inheritance ("borrowing in time"), and diffusion ("borrowing in space"), and therefore it requires elven skill to unravel this intricate web ("Fairy" 121). However, the most important of these three elements, for Tolkien, is invention:

> When we can take green from grass, blue from heaven, and red from blood, we have already an enchanter's power – upon one plane; and the desire to wield that power in the world external to our minds awakes. It does not follow that we shall use that power well upon any plane. We may put a deadly green upon a man's face and produce a horror; we may make the rare and terrible blue moon to shine; or we may cause woods to spring with silver leaves and rams to wear fleeces of gold, and put hot fire into the belly of the cold worm. But in such "fantasy," as it is called, new form is made; Faërie begins; Man becomes a sub-creator. ("Fairy" 122)

One does not have to be limited with "the mere identification of things" in the primary world; rather, recognising the possibility of the disconnection of the adjective "green" from the noun "grass," one can imagine that things could be different (Zimmer 49-50).

As a result, what is important is "the effect produced *now*" by these old tales on people who read them. Such stories "open a door on Other Time, and if we pass through, though only for a moment, we stand outside our own time, outside Time itself, maybe" ("Fairy" 128-29). This ability of the writer – to create a secondary world – is one of the key themes of the essay, and runs throughout. So does the word "sub-creator," which Tolkien uses to refer to the creator of other worlds that remain rooted in the reality of the primary world. "Secondary world" and "sub-creation" are two keys to Tolkien's theory of fantasy, and he elaborates on these later on in the essay.

In the next section of "On Fairy-stories," Tolkien defends fantasy and fairy-story against those who only find them suitable for children; therefore, unworthy of critical attention. Before Tolkien goes on to discuss the use of fairy-stories, he contemplates on the misconception that there is a natural connection between children and fairy-stories:

> Actually, the association of children and fairy-stories is an accident of our domestic history. Fairy-stories have in the modern lettered world been relegated to the 'nursery', as shabby or old-fashioned furniture is relegated to the play-room,

> primarily because the adults do not want it, and do not mind if it is misused. […] Fairy-stories banished in this way, cut off from a full adult art, would in the end be ruined; indeed in so far as they have been so banished, they have been ruined. ("Fairy" 130)

Fairy stories are for children as much as they are for any human being; some children may enjoy them, because, after all, "children are human and fairy-stories are a natural human taste" ("Fairy" 135-36). In Tolkien's opinion, the use of fairy-stories cannot be evaluated by considering children in particular. It is true that children are capable of "*literary belief*" when the story itself is capable of producing it. "That state of the mind," Tolkien says alluding to S. T. Coleridge, "has been called 'willing suspension of disbelief.'" Although Tolkien shares Coleridge's perception of the artist as the creator of a better world, he disagrees that "willing suspension of disbelief" is a good description of what happens ("Fairy" 132). For Tolkien, successful fantasy does not make the reader conscious of it (Sammons, *War* 120). Other critics agree: Purtill argues, "[w]illing suspension of disbelief suggests something self-consciously insincere, some deliberate element of 'let's pretend'" (19). Reilly claims that it "indicates a kind of tolerance or tacit agreement" (142). Tolkien calls the commitment of the reader to sustaining the illusion "Secondary Belief." For him, the readers must believe that what they are reading is true without having to force themselves to suspend their disbelief:

> What really happens is that the story-maker proves a successful 'sub-creator'. He makes a Secondary World which your mind can enter. Inside it, what he relates is 'true': it accords with the law of that world. You therefore believe it, while you are, as it were, inside. The moment disbelief arises, the spell is broken; the magic, or rather art, has failed. You are then out in the Primary World again, looking at the little abortive Secondary World from outside. ("Fairy" 132)

This idea of sub-creation of a secondary world with inner consistency of reality is central to Tolkien's argument. Tolkien adds that the enjoyment of a story does not depend on the belief that the narrated events could or did happen in real life. He adds, "[f]airy-stories were plainly not primarily concerned with possibility, but with desirability. If they awakened desire, satisfying it while often whetting it unbearably, they succeeded" ("Fairy" 134). Tolkien concludes that if a fairy-story is worth reading

at all, "it is worthy to be written for and read by adults" ("Fairy" 137).[17] Fairy-stories, like other literary forms, are written with art; however, they also offer "Fantasy, Recovery, Escape, Consolation," which children do not need ("Fairy" 138).

1.3. FANTASY

Tolkien, instead of trying to define fantasy, lays out its principles. For Tolkien, fantasy is "the making or glimpsing of Other-worlds" ("Fairy" 135). He uses the word "fantasy" to refer to both "the Sub-creative Art in itself" and "a quality of strangeness and wonder in the Expression, derived from the Image." As an essential quality of the fairy-story, fantasy is the combination of imagination and "freedom from the domination of observed 'fact'" ("Fairy" 139). Tolkien connects fantasy with "unlikeness to the Primary World," the world of "observed fact," and considers the creation of a secondary world with its own rules and laws "a virtue, not a vice." He says,

> I am thus not only aware but glad of the etymological and semantic connexions of *fantasy* with *fantastic*: with images of things that are not only 'not actually present', but which are indeed not to be found in our primary world at all, or are generally believed not to be found there. But while admitting that, I do not assent to the depreciative tone. That the images are of things not in the primary world (if that indeed is possible) is a virtue, not a vice. Fantasy (in this sense) is, I think, not a lower but a higher form of Art, indeed the most nearly pure form, and so (when achieved) the most potent. ("Fairy" 139)

Tolkien later calls this notion of unreality "arresting strangeness," which is both a benefit and a drawback, because many people dislike "being 'arrested'" or any meddling with the Primary World" ("Fairy" 139). It is also difficult to achieve. In theory, it is more sub-creative, but in practice, "the inner consistency of reality" will be found more difficult to produce. Anyone can say "*the green sun*," but not everyone can command secondary belief:

> To make a Secondary World inside which the green sun will be credible, commanding Secondary Belief, will probably require labour and thought, and will

[17] Tolkien strongly holds the opinion that the fairy-story is "really an adult genre, and one for which a starving audience exists" (*Letters* 209). He recapitulates this notion in many of his personal letters (*Letters* 216, 220, 232-33, 297).

> certainly demand a special skill, a kind of elvish craft. Few attempt such difficult tasks. But when they are attempted and in any degree accomplished then we have a rare achievement of Art: indeed narrative art, story-making in its primary and most potent mode. ("Fairy" 140)

If the sub-creator fails, Tolkien sarcastically adds, disbelief has "not so much to be suspended as hung, drawn, and quartered" ("Fairy" 141). The secondary world must be logical and credible, and the fantastic elements should not undermine reason, which requires a special skill. Due to the lack of a word for this "elvish craft," Tolkien proposes "Enchantment," and distinguishes it from "Magic:"

> Enchantment produces a Secondary World into which both designer and spectator can enter, to the satisfaction of their senses while they are inside; but in its purity it is artistic in desire and purpose. Magic produces, or pretends to produce, an alteration in the Primary World. It does not matter by whom it is said to be practised, fay or mortal, it remains distinct from the other two; it is not an art but a technique; its desire is *power* in this world, domination of things and wills.
> To the elvish craft, Enchantment, Fantasy aspires, and when it is successful of all forms of human art most nearly approaches. ("Fairy" 143)

Later, he offers a second aspect of fantasy: "[t]he hard recognition that things are so in the world as it appears under the sun; […] recognition of fact, but not a slavery to it" ("Fairy" 144). The story is tied to the primary world by this recognition, and its success depends on the art of the sub-creator, who must create a secondary world which commands secondary belief. Tolkien claims, all sub-creators hope that they are drawing on reality; that the peculiar qualities of their secondary worlds "are derived from Reality, or are flowing into it." The work has to partake of the reality of the primary world if "inner consistency of reality" in the secondary world is to be achieved ("Fairy" 155). Scholes says, "[n]o man has succeeded in imagining a world free of connection to our experiential world, with characters and situations that cannot be seen as mere inversions or distortions of that all too recognizable cosmos" (*Structural* 7). For a successful fantasy to be created, then, both reason and imagination are to be employed. It must have "the mythic character" of the secondary world as well as the "historical consistency" of the primary world (R. Wood 7). Fantasy is made out of the primary world, but, Tolkien argues, "a good craftsman loves his material, and has a knowledge and feeling for clay, stone and wood which only the art of making can give" ("Fairy" 147). So, sub-creators must draw on the materials from their own lives to construct a

coherent and believable Other-world (Ringel 161). If the reader loses the hard recognition that things are so in the primary world, secondary belief fails.

Whittingham claims, the origins of Tolkien's ideas on sub-creation lie in his discussion with C. S. Lewis, who, as Johnson reports, was "an avid *reader* of myths," but had believed that myths were essentially beautiful lies until this discussion (Whittingham 23-24; Johnson 26). According to Tolkien's official biographer Humphrey Carpenter, Lewis once referred to "myth and fairy-story" as "lies," and "fairy-story making" as "Breathing a lie through silver," and Tolkien later composed "a long poem recording what he had said to Lewis," fourteen lines of which he quotes in "On Fairy-stories" (*Tolkien* 198; *Inklings* 43).[18] The sub-creation of a fantasy realm, for Tolkien, is a human right, although there is the possibility of its being misused. Tolkien ends his defence of fantasy against those who find it illegitimate, suspect, or untrue, stating that

> [f]antasy is a natural human activity. It certainly does not destroy or even insult Reason; and it does not either blunt the appetite for, nor obscure the perception of, scientific verity. On the contrary. The keener and the clearer is the reason, the better fantasy will it make. ("Fairy" 144)[19]

He elaborates on the fact that fantasy can be misused: "Fantasy can, of course, be carried to excess. It can be ill done. It can be put to evil uses. It may even delude the minds out of which it came." But the same thing can be said of anything on earth; therefore it is wrong to condemn fantasy because it has the potential to be abused. "*Abusus non tollit usum.*[20] Fantasy remains a human right" ("Fairy" 144).

[18] The poem is titled "Mythopoeia," the making of myths, and alternatively "Misomythos" and "Philomyth to Misomyth (Myth-lover to Myth-hater)" (Carpenter, *Tolkien* 197). "Mythopoeia" was included in the later publications of *Tree and Leaf*, which had combined "On Fairy-stories" with Tolkien's short story "Leaf by Niggle." The result is a collection of three pieces of writing in *Tree and Leaf*, which "touch in different ways" on sub-creation (Johnson 26).

[19] Prominent scientist Albert Einstein also appreciated the value of fantasy in reasoning. When asked what books children should be exposed to so that they would become scientists, Einstein's immediate reply was, "fairy tales" (qtd. in Zipes, *Breaking* 1).

[20] Abuse does not preclude use (Flieger and Anderson 113).

1.4. RECOVERY

The next characteristic of a fairy-story, as Tolkien explains in the essay, is recovery. Tolkien says, since contemporary artists are heirs of many generations of ancestors in the arts, there may be a danger of boredom or of anxiety to be original, and the true road to escape from these is to be found in recovery, which fairy-stories help us to make ("Fairy"145). Recovery is "a regaining of a clear view," "seeing things as we are (or were) meant to see them – as things apart from ourselves," and what fantasy helps recover is a new way of perceiving reality. Familiar things are most difficult to see with fresh attention; one cannot recover something when s/he possesses it familiarly, but fantasy has the power to restore a clear view. "We need, in any case, to clean our windows; so that the things seen clearly may be freed from the drab blur of triteness or familiarity – from possessiveness" ("Fairy" 146). The fairy-story offers recovery by removing "the veil of familiarity" and placing familiar things in an unfamiliar secondary world (Lewis, *On Stories* 90). By taking us into a secondary world where the sun might be green, "fairy-story helps us to regain a brighter, fresher vision of our everyday sun" (Roberts 453). Recovery offers, "a clarity of perspective" (Timmerman 55), and "a new dimension of depth" (Lewis, *On Stories* 38). Tolkien goes on to say,

> [c]reative fantasy, because it is mainly trying to do something else (make something new), may open your hoard and let all the locked things fly away like cage-birds. The gems all turn into flowers or flames, and you will be warned that all you had (or knew) was dangerous and potent, not really effectively chained, free and wild; no more yours than they were you. ("Fairy" 147)

Simple, ordinary things that are "untouched by Fantasy," are placed into unfamiliar settings, and made "all the more luminous." Fantasy makes the familiar objects of the primary world seen anew and full of wonder: "[b]y the forging of Gram[21] cold iron was revealed; by the making of Pegasus horses were ennobled; in the Trees of the Sun and Moon root and stock, flower and fruit are manifested in glory." Tolkien adds it was in fairy-stories that he first discovered the wonder of everyday things ("Fairy" 147).

[21] Gram was the sword of the Norse hero Sigurd, which he used to slay the dragon Fafnir (Tolkien, *Legend of Sigurd* 99).

Jeffrey argues that the term "recovery" presupposes that something has been lost (66). However, this could be the very association Tolkien wished to forge. Northrup claims, Tolkien the linguist has deliberately chosen the word "recovery," because "cover" has its roots in Old French, and means "to acquire," and "recovery" means "to acquire again," which is precisely what a fairy-story is supposed to do (823).

1.5. ESCAPE

One other main function of fairy-stories for Tolkien is escape. For decades, many critics have looked down upon fantasy due to its escapist nature, and many others have argued against this contempt; however, Tolkien accepts the charges of escapism, and argues for its necessity. He says,

> I have claimed that Escape is one of the main functions of fairy-stories, and since I do not disapprove of them, it is plain that I do not accept the tone of scorn or pity with which "Escape" is now so often used: a tone for which the uses of the word outside literary criticism give no warrant at all. ("Fairy" 147-48)

In order to refute these charges of escapism, Tolkien claims that when critics use such words as "Real Life" and "Escape," "we are faced with a misuse of words, and also by a confusion of thought" ("Fairy" 148). First, it is not very clear what is meant by "real life," since it is mostly associated with advancements in technology. Tolkien has a few words to say against this widely accepted claim that materialism of the primary world is more real than the imagined reality of the secondary world (Greenwood 184). He writes, "[t]he notion that motor-cars are more 'alive' than, say, centaurs or dragons is curious; that they are more 'real' than, say, horses is pathetically absurd" ("Fairy" 149). Second, critics are confusing the two totally distinct aspects of escape: "the Escape of the Prisoner" and "the Flight of the Deserter" ("Fairy" 148). Tolkien defends the "*fugitive* spirit" of fantasy distinguishing between these two much-confused concepts: whereas the deserter escapes from obligation and responsibility, the prisoner escapes from his jailor to his freedom – and why should he not? Tolkien argues,

> [w]hy should a man be scorned if, finding himself in prison, he tries to get out and go home? Or if, when he cannot do so, he thinks and talks about other topics than jailers and prison-walls? The world outside has not become less real because the

> prisoner cannot see it. (“Fairy” 148)

Not mentioning mass-produced patterns such as electric street-lamps in one’s work is considered escape, for instance. But why should fantastic stories mention these ugly things when they have “more permanent and fundamental things to talk about,” like lightning, for example? By excluding these street-lamps from the story, the writer might enable the reader to realise the fact that they are indeed ugly. What is more, he might not stop there: “he might rouse men to pull down the street-lamps. Escapism has another and even wickeder face: Reaction.” It could make readers not only see the so-called “progressive” and “inexorable” products like ugly architectural structures and bombs in all their hideousness, but also react against them (“Fairy” 149). As Greenwood argues, escape involves “a refusal to accept things the way they are” (184). Escape is not only from aesthetically displeasing things, either:

> But there are also other and more profound ‘escapisms’ that have always appeared in fairy-tale and legend. There are other things more grim and terrible to fly from than the noise, stench, ruthlessness, and extravagance of the internal-combustion engine. There are hunger, thirst, poverty, pain, sorrow, injustice, death. (“Fairy” 151)

Escape provides the opportunity to be removed from the misery of the primary world. However, this is not to be disapproved, because the aim of this kind of escape is to find in the secondary world the strength to fight the grim and terrible things in the primary world. Also, even there is no need to escape from “hard things such as these, there are ancient limitations from which fairy-stories offer a sort of escape, and old ambitions and desires (touching the very roots of fantasy) to which they offer a kind of satisfaction and consolation.” Some of these are “pardonable weaknesses or curiosities,” such as the desire to swim like a fish or to fly like a bird. Some other wishes are more profound: “such as the desire to converse with other living things.” Fairy-stories satisfy this profound desire to reconnect the tie, broken long ago, between humans and other living things (“Fairy” 151-52). “And lastly there is the oldest and deepest desire, the Great Escape: the Escape from Death,” examples of which can be found in fairy-stories. However, fairy-stories talk about “the burden” of immortality rather than create a longing for it (“Fairy” 153).

1.6. CONSOLATION THROUGH EUCATASTROPHE

Closely connected to escape, indeed brought about by escape, is consolation, the last characteristic of a fairy-story. Fairy-stories bring about consolations of many kinds, as mentioned above. "But the 'consolation' of fairy-tales has another aspect than the imaginative satisfaction of ancient desires. Far more important is the Consolation of the Happy Ending" ("Fairy" 153). For a true fairy-story to be complete, Tolkien asserts, it must have a happy ending. He starts by building an analogy to drama: "Tragedy is the true form of Drama, its highest function; but the opposite is true of Fairy-story," and goes on to reason that if the unhappy ending is the true form of drama, the happy ending must be the true form of the fairy-story. Since a word that expresses this happy ending does not seem to exist, he coins the term "eucatastrophe."[22] He adds, "the *eucatastrophic* tale is the true form of fairy-tale, and its highest function" ("Fairy" 153). His definition of eucatastrophe is as follows:

> The consolation of fairy-stories, the joy of the happy ending: or more correctly of the good catastrophe, the sudden joyous 'turn' (for there is no true end to any fairy tale): this joy, which is one of the things which fairy-stories can produce supremely well, is not essentially 'escapist', nor 'fugitive'. In its fairy-tale – or otherworld – setting, it is a sudden and miraculous grace: never to be counted on to recur. It does not deny the existence of *dyscatastrophe*, of sorrow and failure: the possibility of these is necessary to the joy of deliverance; it denies […] universal final defeat […] giving a fleeting glimpse of Joy, [...] poignant as grief. ("Fairy" 153)

Eucatastrophe is the sudden joyous turn, an element all good fantasies possess. Joy does not imply only happiness; nor does the happy ending deny the existence of "sorrow and failure." Quite the contrary, it only denies "universal final defeat." "The joy of deliverance" is only possible through "dyscatastrophe" (sorrow and failure), and with the recognition of immense loss. Tolkien then tells that when the sudden turn comes, good stories give the readers – or hearers – "a catch of the breath, a beat and lifting of the heart, near to (or indeed accompanied by) tears" ("Fairy" 154). This effect is very difficult to produce, because it depends on the whole story; however, when achieved, "it reflects a glory backwards." Despite all the flaws the story might possess, it ends up as a

[22] By adding the Greek prefix "eu-," which means "good," Tolkien has reversed the meaning of "catastrophe," and come up with "a happy or fortunate ending" (Northrup 831).

successful one. The effect of the eucatastrophe is felt more intensely in a serious tale of Faërie. “In such stories when the sudden ‘turn’ comes we get a piercing glimpse of joy, and heart’s desire, that for a moment passes outside the frame, rends indeed the very web of story, and lets a gleam come through.” This “gleam,” as explained in the epilogue, is “a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth” (“Fairy” 154).

In November 1944, Tolkien writes in a letter to his son Christopher of his coinage of the word “eucatastrophe” for the essay. After listening to a very well delivered Sunday sermon, which seems to have included “the story of the little boy […] with its apparent sad ending and then its sudden unhoped-for happy ending,” Tolkien was “deeply moved and had that peculiar emotion we all have – though not often:”

> And all of a sudden I realized what it was: the very thing that I have been trying to write about and explain – in that fairy-story essay […]. For it I coined the word ‘eucatastrophe’: the sudden happy turn in a story which pierces you with joy that brings tears (which I argued it is the highest function of fairy-stories to produce). And I was there led to the view that it produces its peculiar effect because it is a sudden glimpse of Truth, your whole nature chained in material cause and effect, the chain of death, feels a sudden relief as if a major limb out of joint had suddenly snapped back. It perceives – if the story has literary ‘truth’ on the second plane […] – that this is indeed how things do work in the Great World for which our nature is made. (*Letters* 100)

In the “Epilogue,” Tolkien once again highlights the importance of the skill of the sub-creator in creating belief. He answers the question “is the fairy-story true?” saying that it is, provided that a successful secondary world has been created. Moreover, Tolkien adds, through eucatastrophe, “we see in a brief vision that the answer may be greater – it may be a far-off gleam or echo of *evangelium* in the real world” (“Fairy” 155). The greatest eucatastrophe, for Tolkien, is “The Resurrection” (“Fairy” 156). As sub-creative art is an echo of God’s creation, it should also echo “the ultimate Creator’s one fairy-story that culminates […] with the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ” (Northrup 832).

“On Fairy-stories” has been a highly influential piece of critical work on later discussions on the nature of fantasy. The origins of “the fundamental document of modern fantasy theory” are claimed to go back to this essay (Stableford xlv). Tolkien’s definitions of fantasy, Faërie, sub-creation, enchantment, escape, recovery, and

eucatastrophe have served as keys to understanding and evaluating not only his own fiction, but also other secondary-world fantasies created by later writers. Timmerman argues, "On Fairy-stories" is significant in its circular movement from the primary world, through the secondary world of the sub-creation, and back to the primary world. As he puts forward, "[f]antasy construed as Tolkien does is therefore a means of engaging our world of daily fact with renewed perspective and clarity of insight" (58).

Tolkien was aware that the world was full of horrible atrocities, but although he thought "[w]e were born in a dark age out of due time," he also believed that "there is this comfort: otherwise we should not *know*, or so much love, what we do love" (*Letters* 63-64). Fantasy, as Tolkien understands it, enables the reader to cope with the reality at hand by substituting everyday experience with new insights into our world, and liberating the mind from the limitations of the empirical fact. Sub-creating secondary worlds might be regarded as a way of turning away from the real world; however, these worlds, with their unfamiliar settings, supernatural characters, and extraordinary plots – all of which reflect and depend upon the primary world – are as close to reality as any work of art could get. Fantasy "reinforces our awareness of what is by showing us what might be, and uses the imaginary laws of the created world to postulate hidden principles on which our own might be organized" (Irwin 36). This is precisely what Tolkien uses fantasy for: to create a better reality, but not as a substitute for the primary world, rather as a model for it. Like Yolen writes of the fantasy book, Tolkien's fantasy "tells us of the world *as it should be*. It holds certain values to be important. It makes issues clear," thereby becoming "a rehearsal for the reader for life as it should be lived" (*Touch Magic* 64). Our explorations into Tolkien's secondary world, as Stableford puts it, "can only increase the possibility that we might find better ways to exist as individuals in the actual world, and perhaps the possibility that we might find better ways collectively to change the actual world in ways that will improve it" (lxiv-lxv).

CHAPTER II
RECOVERY: INTO THE SECONDARY WORLD AND BACK AGAIN

2.1. DEFAMILIARISATION, ALIENATION, AND RECOVERY

Tolkien is not the first literary professional to suggest that recovery is an indispensable aspect of literature, nor is he the first author to employ this device in his works. Indeed, recovery has been a concern for more people than literary scholars and critics, such as for philosopher Martin Heidegger, who wrote in 1949 that

> [a]ll distances in time and space are decreasing. […] Humans cross the longest stretches in the shortest time. They put great distances behind themselves, and thus put everything at a short distance from themselves.
> However, the hasty elimination of all distances does not bring about nearness; for nearness does not consist in a small measure of distance. Something that stands closest to us in terms of distance […] can remain remote from us. Something that is ungraspably far away from us can be close. Short distance is not already nearness. Great distance is not yet remoteness. (253-54)

Carlo Ginzburg finds the origins of defamiliarisation in a "famous work from antiquity," written in the second century by the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius (10).[23] He quotes a passage from Marcus Aurelius, which he thinks is an early example of defamiliarisation:

> Surely it is an excellent plan, when you are seated before delicacies and choice foods, to impress upon your imagination […] that this is the dead body of a fish, that the dead body of a bird or a pig; and again, that the Falernian wine is grape juice and that robe of purple a lamb's fleece dipped in a shellfish's blood […]. Surely these are excellent imaginations […], going to the heart of actual facts and penetrating them so as to see the kind of things they really are. (11)

More than a century before Tolkien gave his lecture on fairy-stories, Romantic poets put forward similar views regarding the power of literature to make the familiar seem

[23] According to Ginzburg, Tolstoy, whose novels Shklovsky derived most of his examples from, was a great admirer of Marcus Aurelius (11).

new.[24] Later in 1917, in his essay "Art as Technique," Russian formalist Viktor Shklovsky developed the concept of defamiliarisation (also translated as "estrangement"). The Russian word he used (*ostraneniye*), when literally translated, means "making strange" (Lemon and Reis 4). Similar to the concept of defamiliarisation is the Brechtian *Verfremdung*, translated as "alienation." As summarised by Mitchell, "[i]n both theories the (proper) role of art is seen as one of de-routinisation, de-automatisation: art is the enemy of habit; it renews, refreshes our perceptions; by 'making strange', it defamiliarises" (74).[25]

Formalists seek defamiliarisation by "baring the device," thereby exposing the literary techniques employed (Jay 268). This contradicts Tolkien's claim that "[w]e must be satisfied with the soup that is set before us, and not desire to see the bones of the ox out of which it has been boiled" ("Fairy" 120). Harmon and Holman describe "baring the device" as the opposite of verisimilitude: "[i]nstead of making beholders forget or ignore the fact that they are encountering an artifact, much art *bares its device* and admits that it is not transparent but opaque, not life or even like life but a willed simulacrum never able to achieve commensurateness with life itself" (54). They later add, for the Russian Formalists, "[a]rt does not strive in the least for verisimilitude but keeps baring the device to remind us that it *is* art" (146). Northrup argues, this is precisely what distinguishes recovery from defamiliarisation (823). Tolkien is not as concerned with "literariness," or "baring the device" as he is in verisimilitude, which is explicit in his fairy-story essay: in order to create secondary belief in the reader, the sub-creator must possess "a special skill, a kind of elvish craft" ("Fairy" 140). S/he must create a credible secondary world with an inner consistency of reality drawing on the reality of the primary world. For Tolkien, art *does* strive for verisimilitude.

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[24] Romantic critics emphasised the artist's ability to evoke a freshness of sensation. Samuel Taylor Coleridge claimed that the prime merit of a literary genius is combining "the child's sense of wonder and novelty" with the representation of "familiar objects" in order to evoke "that freshness of sensation" (*Biographia* 1: 85) Likewise, Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote, "[p]oetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar" (487). According to Shelley, poetry also "makes us the inhabitants of a world to which the familiar world is a chaos. […] It creates anew the universe after it has been annihilated in our minds by the recurrence of impressions blunted by reiteration" (505-6).

[25] For a brief account of these two theories, see Appendix 3.

Brecht, like Tolkien, strives for making the familiar look strange; however, Brecht's process of alienation aims to deprive the audience of an identification and thus an emotional involvement with the characters (190, 92). On the other hand, Tolkien once said that he "wanted people simply to get inside this story and take it (in a sense) as actual history" (Carpenter, *Tolkien* 260). For Tolkien, the successful sub-creator makes a secondary world where the readers enter, and when disbelief arises, the art has failed ("Fairy" 132). The secondary world should "draw in" the readers (Rateliff, "Elvish Craft" 4), making them participants in its creation by drawing on personal experiences (Tolkien, "Fairy" 159).

As Attebery maintains, "Tolkien's brand of recovery requires the combination of the familiar and the impossible within the context of an affirming, reordering narrative" (*Strategies* 16). Only once does Tolkien describe an event through an animal's point of view, which, according to Shklovsky, is a common way of defamiliarisation.[26] In *The Lord of the Rings*, soon after the Hobbits leave their familiar surroundings, the Shire, they are noticed by a fox:

> A fox passing through the wood on business of his own stopped several minutes and sniffed.
> 'Hobbits!' he thought. 'Well, what next? I have heard of strange doings in this land, but I have seldom heard of a hobbit sleeping out of doors under a tree. Three of them! There's something mighty queer behind this.' He was quite right, but he never found out any more about it. (*LOTR* 72)

This passage seems to "highlight the sudden strangeness that comes from encountering the overly familiar with fresh eyes," and remind the reader of the unusualness of the Hobbits' adventure, and their accidental heroism (Vincent 105). Similarly, Tolkien very seldom chooses not to refer to the real name of the object he is writing about. One example can be found in a footnote in one of the appendices to *The Lord of the Rings*, where he reports rumours that the Lossoth, an unfamiliar, unfriendly people, "can run on the ice with bones on their feet, and have carts without wheels" (*LOTR* 1041). Being where it is, this description does not seem intended to help the readers or the characters

[26] For Shklovsky, there are several ways of making the familiar seem strange: not naming the familiar object, describing an object/event as if seen/happening for the first time, and describing it from an unusual point of view (e.g. from that of an animal) (13-14).

recover anything important about ice-skates or sledges in the primary or the secondary world. Another example is in the "Prologue" to *The Lord of the Rings*, where Tolkien refuses to use the word "tobacco." He writes that Hobbits "imbibed or inhaled, through pipes of clay or wood, the smoke of the burning leaves of a herb, which they called *pipe-weed* or *leaf*," and adds that the plant is "a variety probably of *Nicotiana*" (*LOTR* 8). The reason Tolkien deliberately avoids using the word "tobacco," is, as Shippey argues, that it would sound wrong: "[tobacco] is an import from some unknown Caribbean language via Spanish, reaching English only after the discovery of America," and Tolkien knew that the foreign feel of "tobacco" would betray the inner consistency of reality of his secondary world (*Road* 78-79).[27]

2.2. WHAT CAN BE RECOVERED BY MEANS OF TOLKIEN'S TALES

2.2.1. Delight in Simple Pleasures

Tolkien's recovery functions on different levels. To begin with, the simple and the ordinary are juxtaposed with the extraordinary, and made more luminous in enchanted settings, as Tolkien states in "On Fairy-stories" (147). As Kocher observes, "no audience can long feel sympathy or interest for persons or things in which they cannot recognize a good deal of themselves and the world of their everyday experience" (*Master* 7). Tolkien maintains his audience's interest and sympathy by the help of his Hobbits,[28] and utilises this achievement in the recovery of simple, everyday things that

[27] In the first edition of *The Hobbit*, Bilbo uses "tobacco," which Tolkien changed in the second edition (Shippey, *Road* 79).

[28] For an author who paid meticulous attention to consistency, Tolkien is curiously inconsistent with his capitalisation of the names of his races. For example, he never capitalises "goblins" in *The Hobbit*, but writes "Goblins" in his poem "Mythopoeia," and "Orcs" or "orcs" (another name for Goblins) in *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien mentions in a letter to his publisher about his capitalisation preferences stating that "*Men* with a capital is, I think, used in text when 'human kind' are specifically intended; and *man, men* with a minuscule are occasionally and loosely used as 'adult male' and 'people'" (*Letters* 28). However, the rule does not always apply: Elf or Dwarf with capital initial letters, for instance, can refer both to Elfkind or Dwarfkind, and to individual Elves or Dwarves. For the sake of consistency, in this thesis, the names of Tolkien's races will all be capitalised unless they appear in a direct quote where they are written in lower case.

have long been taken for granted. Both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are "framed by scenes of 'ordinary life'" (Purtill 106). The former begins and ends in Bilbo's comfortable Hobbit home, and the latter begins with Bilbo's birthday party and ends with Sam's return to his home. In the end, like the Hobbits who come to see the little comforts of their everyday lives through a refreshed view, the readers are prompted into "a deeper and truer appreciation of these things" (Curry, *Defending* 141).

Of all Tolkien's characters, Hobbits are the best representatives of simple, ordinary people with simple tastes, "fond of the simple comforts of modest living" (Dickerson and Evans 14). In *The Hobbit*, it is one Hobbit named Bilbo Baggins who, with his "common-sense approach, the frequent what-am-I-doing-here," makes the secondary world acceptable to the readers (Parker 602). Bilbo lives in a comfortable home in a pastoral community as a somewhat respected member, following his own daily routine, and he never does anything unexpected. Perfectly content with his simple life, he has no interest in "mad adventures" like "climbing trees," "visiting elves," or "sailing in ships" "to other shores" (*TH* [29] 8). Unlike his uninvited, adventurous Dwarf visitors, he does not know how to "hoot twice like a barn-owl and once like a screech-owl" (*TH* 41). Nor can he skin a rabbit or cut up meat, "being used to having it delivered by the butcher all ready to cook" (*TH* 129). However, he agrees, to his own amazement, to embark upon a long and perilous journey with a company of Dwarves, from which none may return. Their aim is to journey to the mountain where Smaug the Dragon lies on the treasure it stole from the Dwarves' forefathers, and to reclaim the Dwarves' inheritance (*TH* 21-25). Shortly after Bilbo sets out on his adventure, though, he starts missing those simple, fundamental things that he has always taken for granted: he says, "I wish I was at home in my nice hole by the fire, with the kettle just beginning to sing!" The narrator adds, "[i]t was not the last time that he wished that!" (*TH* 38). Indeed, Bilbo's longing for his home, fire, and kettle is repeated throughout the book many times, and when he finally returns to his familiar surroundings from his perilous journey, he notices that "the sound of the kettle on his hearth was ever after more musical than it had been" (*TH* 348). During his adventure away from home, Bilbo learns not only the value of a warm fire and dry clothes, but also what it is to be "really hungry, not merely politely

[29] *The Hobbit* will be abbreviated as *TH* in the parenthetical references henceforth.

interested in the dainties of a well-filled larder" (*TH* 216). Before he left his home, Bilbo took the simple comforts of his daily life for granted, never truly appreciating the their real value. At the end, Bilbo has renewed his attachment and regained an awareness of what he had before (Burns 92). His longing for his Hobbit-hole is "no longer simply escapism;" he now recognises his home for what it really is – "a paradise of warmth, light, rest, peace, and satisfaction" (Olsen, *Exploring* 178-79).

Another Hobbit, Samwise Gamgee, longs for "a good homely meal, 'something hot out of the pot'" on his long, unexpected quest far away from home (*LOTR* 649). The narrator says, at the end of a long night-march, "[a] supper, or a breakfast, by the fire in the old kitchen at Bagshot Row was what [Sam] really wanted" (*LOTR* 652). A short while later, when he is offered "pale yellow wine, cool and fragrant, and […] bread and butter, and salted meats, and dried fruits, and good red cheese, with clean hands and clean knives and plates," he does not refuse anything that was offered, "nor a second, nor indeed a third helping" (*LOTR* 676). Similarly, a hot bath after some time on the road inspires the travel-weary Hobbits to sing "one of Bilbo's favourite bath-songs:"

> *Sing hey! for the bath at close of day*
> *that washes the weary mud away!*
> *A loon is he that will not sing:*
> *O! Water Hot is a noble thing!* (*LOTR* 101)

The absence of everyday essentials is most readily observable in Frodo and Sam's journey into Mordor. "Earth, air and water all seem accursed," Frodo notices, and Sam says "all we want is light and water: just clean water and plain daylight" (*LOTR* 711, 918). As they proceed, the air becomes full of fumes, and breathing becomes painful and difficult (*LOTR* 940). Sam's thoughts are haunted by "the memory of water; and every brook or stream or fount that he had ever seen, under green willow-shades or twinkling in the sun" (*LOTR* 939). Deprived of clean air and water, Sam now values these more than "any jewels" (*LOTR* 918).

It is by putting such everyday things as sufficiency of food and drink, cleanness of kitchenware, a relaxing bath at the end of a tiring day, and clean air and water in an enchanted setting that Tolkien enables their recovery, and makes it possible to see them

"with fresh attention" ("Fairy" 146). By extolling the virtues of simple, everyday pleasures, Tolkien expresses "the fundamentally positive value of the material world" (Dickerson and Evans xix-xx), thereby enlarging and underscoring one's appreciation of the primary world (Carter, *Tolkien* 75). Even the most mundane parts of everyday life "are touched by magic and made strange and wonderful" (Olsen, *Exploring* 20).

2.2.2. The Ability to Rise above Triteness

In order to use the Hobbits as what Sale calls "Recoverers," Tolkien resembles them to human beings (*Modern Heroism* 221). They become representatives of ordinary people who are possessive of their world where they live in a dull blur of familiarity, and who later rise above this triteness to see the world around them through a refreshed perspective. Hobbits are not very different from humans; in the prologue to *The Lord of the Rings*, the narrator tells, "in spite of later estrangement Hobbits are relatives of ours" (*LOTR* 2). Carpenter reports, Tolkien once told an interviewer that Hobbits are "just rustic English people" (*Tolkien* 234). A simple, rustic folk, "they love peace and quiet," and are fond of "simple jests at all times, and of six meals a day" (*LOTR* 1-2). The only things that sharply distinguish them from humans are their height ("ranging between two and four feet of our measure"), and their feet (which "had tough leathery soles and were clad in a thick curling hair") (*LOTR* 1-2). Other than these, they represent everyman (De Lint 177). They do not know much – nor are they curious – about what is happening in the world outside their immediate circle, and live in the perfect bliss of this ignorance. They make their first appearance in *The Hobbit* through Bilbo Baggins, whose dreams are confined to a provincial realm and who has limited his own capacity to fulfil his potential (Zipes, *Breaking* 170). When Bilbo first meets Gandalf the Wizard, who is looking for "someone to share in an adventure that [he is] arranging," the Hobbit's immediate response is,

> "[w]e are plain quiet folk and have no use for adventures. Nasty disturbing uncomfortable things! Make you late for dinner! I can't think what anybody sees in them […] We don't want any adventures here, thank you! You might try over the Hill or across The Water." By this he meant that the conversation was at an end. (*TH* 7)

However, Bilbo eventually leaves his small world behind, crosses The Water, and goes far away from his homeland. Bilbo's crossing The Water is important in that it signifies his first step away from a narrow life into a region where enchantment is likely to occur (Burns 56; Gasque 154). Bilbo's world is a small world indeed; when he realises the mountain close by, he is amazed by its size:

> "Is that *The* Mountain?" asked Bilbo in a solemn voice, looking at it with round eyes. He had never seen a thing that looked so big before.
> "Of course not!" said Balin. "That is only the beginning of the Misty Mountains, and we have got to get through, or over, or under those somehow, before we can come into Wilderland beyond. And it is a deal of a way even from the other side of them to the Lonely Mountain in the East where Smaug lies on our treasure."
> "O!" said Bilbo, and just at that moment he felt more tired than he ever remembered feeling before. He was thinking once again of his comfortable chair before the fire in his favourite sitting-room in his hobbit-hole, and of the kettle singing. Not for the last time!" (*TH* 54-55)

Bilbo is unable to see the larger world outside his small Hobbit world. Similarly, when he sees the Long Lake for the first time, the narrator tells, "Bilbo had never imagined that any water that was not the sea could look so big" (*TH* 221). Here, Tolkien, through the eyes of one Hobbit, provides a refreshed view of a great mountain and a large lake. By enabling identification with the Hobbits, Tolkien aims at a clear view through which it is possible to see the world as one is meant to see it: as something apart from oneself. As Timmerman supports, identification with the characters is necessary in and typical of a work of fantasy, because "[w]e are not asked to stand on the outside and survey this tale from detached perspective; we are asked to enter into it so that the story becomes ours. Thus we find characters quite like us" (29). Each race in Middle-earth "symbolizes a particular facet of the *human beings* in the real world;" however, it is the Hobbits with whom the readers most easily identify (Evans 198). Hobbits are like us, Sale maintains, "in their attitude toward the lore and mysteries of life outside their own province. They move provincially, clumsily, relating everything they see to what they know from life at home, as though their way of understanding the world, no matter how inadequate, was the only one way they could possible have." Tolkien, by "trap[ping] the hobbits in their provinciality," holds a mirror to the readers themselves (*Modern Heroism* 205). Like Bilbo, who leaves his home at Bag End, where he "apparently settled down immovably," and his familiar surroundings where the hill is called *The* Hill, and the

small river *The* Water,[30] and where "the shapes of the land and of the trees were as well known to him as his hands and toes," anyone in the primary world could leave their narrow comfort zones, and see that the world has much more to offer (*TH* 5, 346).

Bilbo's experiences in an unfamiliar world enable him to start seeing his world through a renewed perspective. In the beginning of his adventure, when Bilbo looks back from a point on the Misty Mountains, he only sees "the lands they had left, laid out behind them far below," impersonal and unimportant lands which carry no meaning for Bilbo. What he cares about is that far, far away, there lies his little Hobbit-hole (*TH* 65). During the return journey, from the same point Bilbo sees that "[t]here behind lay Mirkwood, blue in the distance, and darkly green at the nearer edge even in the spring. There far away was the Lonely Mountain on the edge of eyesight. On its highest peak snow yet unmelted was gleaming pale" (*TH* 340). Bilbo has gained "an appreciation for the larger world" of which his world is just a small part (Olsen, *Exploring* 286).

Further identification with the Hobbits happens soon when readers learn that Hobbits are also close to ordinary human folk in their general knowledge of – or lack thereof – supernatural beings, mysterious lands, and magical objects. However, as Attebery argues, it is important to have "a limited hero in the unlimited realm of fantasy." Since the hero is the readers' "entry into the enchanted kingdom" and their guide to understanding "the marvels therein," the readers come to know Middle-earth from the Hobbits' perspective (*Fantasy Tradition* 13). The Hobbits treat the unfamiliar as most human beings would: with fear or dismissal. There are rumours that reach the ears of the "most stay-at-home" Hobbits that strange things are lurking in their borders, but Hobbits do not take these seriously (*LOTR* 44). Most Hobbits are provincial characters, "comfortable in what they know, ready to ridicule anyone who does not see the world through their eyes" (Hunnewell 177). By way of illustration, below is a short excerpt from a tavern talk between two Hobbits at *The Green Dragon*:

[30] Tolkien tells in his fairy-story essay that anyone who hears "The Hill, The River, The Valley" will envision their own picture of the depicted scene, and it will be made out of all the hills, the rivers, and the valleys they have ever seen, which will be their "first embodiment of the word" ("Fairy" 159).

> ‘Queer things you do hear these days, to be sure,’ said Sam.
> ‘Ah,’ said Ted, ‘you do, if you listen. But I can hear fireside-tales and children’s stories at home, if I want to.’
> ‘No doubt you can,’ retorted Sam, ‘and I daresay there’s more truth in some of them than you reckon. Who invented the stories anyway? Take dragons now.’
> ‘No, thank ’ee,’ said Ted, ‘I won’t. I heard tell of them when I was a youngster, but there’s no call to believe in them now. There’s only one Dragon in Bywater, and that’s Green,’ he said, getting a general laugh. (*LOTR* 44)

The attitude of the ordinary Hobbit is not very different from that of the ordinary Man. The human inhabitants of Lake Town, which is the closest settlement to the Lonely Mountain, where Smaug the Dragon lives, do not believe in Dragons, either: “some of the younger people in the town openly doubted the existence of any dragon in the mountain, and laughed at the greybeards and gammers who said that they had seen him flying in the sky in their young days” (*TH* 226). When Bilbo is lost in the dangerous Goblin[31] tunnels, the narrator says that he would not like to be in Bilbo’s place, hinting at the readers that they *could have been* (*TH* 83). As David and Carol Stevens point out, Tolkien makes his heroes Hobbits “precisely for purposes of empathy and identification” (20). Once Tolkien has achieved this identification, he uses the opportunity for recovery, this time by placing the familiar Hobbits in enchanted settings. The familiarity of the Hobbits is used by Tolkien “to make the entire remote, lofty, mysterious, cataclysmic action familiar” (Irwin 163).

Hobbits live in the Shire, where they see the world through “the veil of familiarity” (Lewis, *On Stories* 90). Once they leave their familiar Shire, all the Hobbit characters begin to sense that “the world is alive in many and dangerous ways,” and gain – or regain – “a quite different sense of their world” (Sale, *Modern Heroism* 207; “Tolkien and Frodo” 264). Soon they meet Trolls, shape-shifters, and Orcs, and begin to realise the existence of other beings in the world than themselves. Frodo, who lived in the Shire in the comfort of his ignorance of such beings until a short while ago, is now afraid when one of his fellows casts a stone into a dark cave pool, and warns him not to disturb the water. All of a sudden, “a long sinuous tentacle […] pale-green and luminous and wet” crawls out form the water and seizes Frodo by the ankle. After he is saved, Frodo

[31] Tolkien uses “Goblin” in *The Hobbit* as synonymous to “Orc” in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion.*

says, “I felt that something horrible was near from the moment that my foot first touched the water” (*LOTR* 307-9). As Merry realises in the end, “there are things deeper and higher” in the world, and one should be glad to know about them (*LOTR* 870). Similarly, “Sam’s initially narrow view of the world widens,” when in the end he develops a concern “not only for his own community, but for all that have contributed to the journey” (Upstone 61). He fears that if they are found before they destroy the Ring, “that’s the end of us all, of Lórien and Rivendell, and the Shire and all” (*LOTR* 732). The Hobbits, as Bradley points out, eventually “come to the simple but affective discovery of worlds outside their own small selfish concerns and events greater than the small patterns of their lives” (115).

The chapter titled “The Council of Elrond” in *The Lord of the Rings* is where the readers as well as the Hobbits learn parts of the vast history of “events in the world outside,” of which Frodo has only heard as rumours before. It is also here that “the Tale of the Ring” is told “from the beginning even to this present” by multiple narrators, each knowing a part of it (*LOTR* 240-42). The Hobbits at the council are as ignorant of the history of Middle-earth as the readers, and they are once again used by Tolkien to offer the readers a fuller understanding of his secondary world (Flieger, *Green* 88). Readers and Hobbits alike slowly learn about the history of Middle-earth, and what roles some prominent characters play or have played in the shaping of it, thereby recovering a new way of perceiving reality. They also see these characters as they were “meant to see them” (Tolkien, “Fairy” 146). The Hobbits have learned before from a note Gandalf the wise wrote to them that Aragorn, who introduced himself to the Hobbits as “Strider,” is more than one of the Rangers wandering around. The note included the following poem about 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.* (*LOTR* 170)

Frodo later hears from Gandalf that Aragorn is “one of the people of the old Kings,” and at the Council of Elrond, Aragorn is revealed as the rightful heir to the throne (*LOTR* 221, 246). However, not until he sees him in a new light in Lothlórien does Frodo

comprehend who Aragorn actually is: “a young lord tall and fair” (*LOTR* 352). Here, like Frodo, the readers see for themselves “the ancientness of life that had hitherto been only the lore of others” (Sale, “Tolkien and Frodo” 257).

Seeing the narrow Hobbit perspective on the wide world, the readers start questioning the wideness of their own views, because Tolkien has utilised his fictive secondary world not only to lift his readers “out of the small minded obsessions of the moment” (R. C. Wood 76), but also to “reveal possibilities outside the range of our limited, workaday lives” (Bassham, “Lewis and Tolkien” 246).

2.2.3. A New Perspective on Nature

Tolkien uses recovery to challenge possible preconceptions, and his representation of nature is a case in point. Nature is often presumed to be good; however, as exemplified by such representations of nature as Tom Bombadil, Old Man Willow, Beorn, and the Eagles, nature is neither good, nor evil. “These representations,” Vincent comments, “are necessarily caught up in recovery, in that the narrative forces us to regard the everyday scenery” in a way that is, as Tolkien puts it, “freed from the drab blur of triteness or familiarity” (Vincent 112; Tolkien, “Fairy” 146).

The first representation of nature “caught up in recovery” is Old Man Willow, a huge willow-tree, who attempts on the Hobbits’ lives. Frodo describes him as “old and hoary. Enormous it looked, its sprawling branches going up like reaching arms with many long-fingered hands, its knotted and twisted trunk gaping in wide fissures that creaked faintly as the boughs moved” (*LOTR* 116). Old Man Willow tries to drown Frodo in the stream, and traps Frodo’s two other Hobbit companions, Merry and Pippin, in a crack in his trunk, threatening to squeeze them in two until Tom Bombadil rescues them. Later in his home, Bombadil tells them “many remarkable stories,” some of which concern Old Man Willow (also called the Great Willow):

> He told them tales of bees and flowers, the ways of trees, and the strange creatures of the Forest, about the evil things and the good things, things friendly and things unfriendly, cruel things and kind things, and secrets hidden under brambles. […] Tom’s words laid bare the hearts of tees and their thoughts, which were often dark and strange, and filled with a hatred of things that go free upon the earth. […] But

> none were more dangerous than the Great Willow: his heart was rotten, […] and he was cunning. (*LOTR* 129-30)

Merry and Pippin later learn that some trees have "*bad* hearts," and one can infer that Old Man Willow is one of these (*LOTR* 468). He is a figure "who exhibits a hostility or malice in the world of nature" (Stanton 29). The narrator says, Tom's stories enabled the Hobbits to "understand the lives of the Forest," and see the Old Forest as something "*apart from themselves*" (emphasis added, *LOTR* 129). Like he does with the Hobbits, Tolkien "lift[s] the reader away from their preconceptions to a vantage point" where they can view the world through a refreshed perspective, and grow an awareness of nature as a separate entity (Vincent 113).

Secondly, there is Tom Bombadil, who, although not evil like Old Man Willow, is not necessarily good, either. The exact nature and identity of Tom Bombadil is quite a mystery. Tom has been identified by critics as a "nature spirit," "a kind of archetypal 'vegetation god,'" and a "*genius loci*," or spirit of the place (e.g., Fuller 23; Light 156; Reilly 131; Shippey, *Road* 123). In Tolkien's own words, he is the spirit of the vanishing countryside, and represents a "natural pacifist view" (*Letters* 26, 179). Tom desires knowledge of other things simply because they are "other," but he is "entirely unconcerned with 'doing' anything with the knowledge" (*Letters* 192). He is responsible for "all things living and growing in [his] land," and his biggest concern regarding the Hobbits is to see them safe over the borders of his land (*LOTR* 124, 145). Not only does he avoid taking sides between good and evil, he is also "disinterested and uninterested" in the struggle between these two outside his own realm (Stanton 30), where he is "Master," although the very safety of his realm and himself depends upon the defeat of the evil league (Tolkien, *LOTR* 266). At the Council of Elrond, an Elf says, "I think that in the end, if all else is conquered, Bombadil will fall, Last as he was First; and then Night will come" (*LOTR* 266). Light resembles this to a hypothetical future of the primary world where a nuclear holocaust makes the planet uninhabitable for any life from, and adds, just as the earth itself would not at all be concerned with this, Tom as the embodiment of the natural world is equally indifferent, because

> [t]ime for him is green; it is bound with the long rhythms of nature as they come and go, and not with the relatively brief experiences of the self-conscious beings (and especially mortals) of the planet. […] From Tom's perspective, attuned to

> natural cycles, the welfare of individuals does not matter as much as the sustainability of the continuing and evolving processes of nature (157-58).

Tom is like nature itself – neutral, and "interested only in life and in growing things" (Reilly 139), and indifferent to human concerns (Selling 61). He seems to be portrayed to remind the reader of "the value of knowing and loving the world for what it is" (Dickerson and Evans 24).

The fact that nature is not good does not mean it is evil. It is true that wild nature in Tolkien's works more often than not creates inconvenience, disrupts the progress of the journey, or threatens lives; for instance, wind, rain, snow, or hail make a journey or a camp miserable at best; impossible at worst (*TH* 38-39, 67; *LOTR* 288), paths are obscured by moss, or by other organic matter (*TH* 55; *LOTR* 111), trees in the forest have tangled boughs, matted twigs, falling branches, and exposed roots (*TH* 163; *LOTR* 112), and loose rocks fall or create landslides (*TH* 113; *LOTR* 289). However, the fact that these things happen does not mean that nature is in league with evil forces. It is simply something other, something "outside of the recognizably human cares," as it is meant to be seen (Vincent 113).

The "moral complexity of the wild" is most apparent in such characters as Beorn and the Eagles (Olsen, "Rescued"). Beorn is first mentioned by Gandalf as "a very great person," but a very dangerous one: "heaven knows what will happen" if the Hobbits annoy him (*TH* 134). Gandalf says he is a "skin-changer," but he is not certain if Beorn is a Man who from time to time turns into a bear, or vice versa (*TH* 135).[32] Gandalf finds a clever way of introducing the Dwarves to Beorn to avoid upsetting him. Beorn says he is not "over fond of dwarves," and yet he accommodates the company in his "queer lodgings," as he knows Thorin comes from a family who are enemies of Goblins (*TH* 141). He turns out to be a great host to the company, but as long as they stay indoors during the night: Gandalf warns the Dwarves not to "stray outside until the sun is up, on your peril" (*TH* 149). On the next morning, they discover why: in the night,

[32] Beorn's name also enforces this ambiguity. As Tolkien wrote in the preface to the translation of *Beowulf*, in Anglo-Saxon, *beorn* meant "warrior," or in heroic poetry, "man." Poets used it for "warrior," "while *beorn* was still a form of the word 'bear'" ("Beowulf" 54).

Beorn in his bear form caught a Warg[33] and a Goblin, from whom he learned the news that the Dwarves are still being hunted. One can infer from the use of the verb "caught" that Beorn possibly got information from them by torturing them. The Goblin's head stuck outside the gate and the Warg-skin nailed to a tree proves the truth of the narrator's comments: "Beorn was a fierce enemy" (*TH* 154). As Olsen comments, Beorn is "a true native of the wild" ("Rescued").

Not unlike Beorn are the Eagles, who save Bilbo, Gandalf, and the Dwarves from a difficult situation, but who are not exactly "champions of goodness" (Olsen, *Exploring* 123). The Eagles are uninterested in a greater good, and they are unwilling to put themselves in harm's way for others. Their rescue of the company is mainly motivated by the fact that they want to "cheat the goblins of their sport" rather than by their interest in the welfare of the Dwarves (*TH* 129). The Lord of the Eagles explicitly says to Gandalf, "we will not risk ourselves for the dwarves" by taking them anywhere near the settlements of Men, because he fears Men will shoot arrows at the Eagles thinking that they are after their sheep (*TH* 128-29). This race of Eagles are the "greatest of all birds" in their pride and nobility, but after all, they are predators (*TH* 121). The Eagle Lord confesses that Men are right to attack them, because the Eagles do steal their sheep. The relationship between the Eagles and the Men are like any other where humans settle on the borders of the wilderness, "cutting down trees, and building themselves places to live in" (*TH* 118). Their relationship with Goblins is also determined by predatory instincts: most of the time, the Eagles take no notice of Goblins, because they do not eat Goblins (*TH* 121). They are neither good, nor evil – they are simply *wild*.

As Vincent puts forward, "*recovery* is characterized by a strong visual emphasis and an almost overabundance of descriptive detail and sensory language" (104). Tolkien's descriptions of nature appeal to all five senses – both of the characters and of the readers. The "drip, drip" of raindrops falling off the leaves on the weary travellers while they are trying to rest is "most annoying" (*TH* 39). One almost hears and sees the

[33] Wargs are an evil breed of wolves that have the ability to talk, and that are larger and more intelligent than their ordinary counterparts. Goblins ride these like horses.

thunderstorm on the Caradhras mountain pass: "[t]he lightning splinters on the peaks, and rocks shiver, and great crashes split the air and go rolling and tumbling into every cave and hollow; and the darkness is filled with overwhelming noise and sudden light" (*TH* 67). The night they spend in the Old Forest is enough to give the company goose pimples:

> The nights were the worst. It then became pitch-dark – not what you call pitch-dark, but really pitch: so black that you really could see nothing. […] [Bilbo] would see gleams in the darkness around them, and sometimes pairs of yellow or red or green eyes would stare at him from a little distance, and then slowly fade and disappear and slowly shine out again in another place. And sometimes they would gleam down from the branches just above him; and that was most terrifying. (*TH* 164)

Before the company enters the Old Forest, Gandalf warns them that they are "over the Edge of the Wild now," which is a reminder that they are on the edge of an enchanted setting (*TH* 161). Wind shaking rain off the leaves, thunder and lightning, and darkness in a wild forest are all familiar things for many in the primary world, but, as Shklovsky has underlined, perception often becomes habitual and automatic, and when an object is thus perceived, "ultimately even the essence of what it was is forgotten" (11). Similarly, the essence of the nature of the primary world might be forgotten. Tolkien's appeal to the five senses through descriptive details might help those who have forgotten nature's essence as a result of automatic perception to revitalise their perceptions of nature. By putting natural phenomena in a fairy-story setting, Tolkien encourages many to recover what they have lost, see nature with a fresh view, and remember that it is "dangerous and potent," "free and wild," and "no more yours than [it was] you" (Tolkien, "Fairy" 147).

Most of Tolkien's natural descriptions depict environments that could be stumbled upon in the primary world. The following is one:

> Coming to the opening they found that they had made their way down through a cleft in a high sleep bank, almost a cliff. At its feet was a wide space of grass and reeds; and in the distance could be glimpsed another bank almost as steep. A golden afternoon of late sunshine lay warm and drowsy upon the hidden land between. In the midst of it there wound lazily a dark river of brown water, bordered with ancient willows, arched over with willows, blocked with fallen willows, and flecked with thousands of faded willow-leaves. The air was thick with them,

> fluttering yellow from the branches; for there was a warm and gentle breeze blowing softly in the valley, and the reeds were rustling, and the willow-boughs were creaking. (*LOTR* 115)

Shippey speculates, this is what Tolkien actually saw during his walks in Oxford (*Author* 62-63). Tolkien never ceased to see the essence and beauty of nature regardless of its familiarity. However, their immediate surroundings are so familiar to many people in the primary world that their perception has become automatic. Fortunately, people can "discover or recover a fresh perspective in this world" by taking the opportunity "to become lost for a time in another world" like Tolkien's Middle-earth (Timmerman 2). When they find themselves once again in the primary world, they might start to notice the value of natural beauty no matter how often they see it. Tolkien utilises fantasy to do more than "simply restructure a reality which we already know;" his natural descriptions give us "renewed awareness of what we already know" (Timmerman 1). In Middle-earth readers can experience a world where certain places are alive – "as they commonly used to be, until we started to see them otherwise" (Curry, *Defending* 158). Many readers have expressed an appreciation of the primary world by virtue of Tolkien's secondary world, like author Diane Duane, who asserts that due to Tolkien, who makes the real world seem more magical, and reality itself more real, "the universe will forever genuinely contain magic" (128).

Tolkien's descriptions of nature reach another level when Elves enter the picture. A short while before he encounters Elves for the first time, Bilbo thinks that "it smells like elves." Then, he looks up at the stars and sees that they are "burning bright and blue" (*TH* 57). In the Elves' secret valley of Rivendell, Bilbo perceives the world around him and the sky above him differently. As Olsen remarks, he becomes "sensitive to beauty that he might have taken for granted otherwise" (*Exploring* 62). Similarly, Lothlórien, the forest realm of the Elves, takes Frodo's breath away when his blindfold is removed:

> Frodo stood awhile still lost in wonder. It seemed to him that he had stepped through a high window that looked on a vanished world. A light was upon it for which his language had no name. All that he saw was shapely, but the shapes seemed at once clear cut, as if they had been first conceived and drawn at the uncovering of his eyes, and ancient as if they had endured for ever. He saw no colour but those he knew, gold and white and blue and green, but they were fresh and poignant, as if he had at that moment first perceived them and made for them names new and wonderful. (*LOTR* 350)

This passage is perhaps the best representative of what Tolkien intends to do with the use of recovery: a cover has been removed from Frodo's eyes, literally as well as metaphorically. What he sees is familiar, and yet enchanted, thus enchanting. Frodo is looking into an unfamiliar world, but seeing things that he has seen before, and they are "fresh," as if seen for the first time. Like Tolkien suggests in "On Fairy-stories," Frodo is able to "look at green again, and be startled anew […] by blue and yellow and red" ("Fairy" 51). Frodo soon turns to Sam, and sees that "Sam was now standing beside him, looking round with a puzzled expression, and rubbing his eyes as if he was not sure that he was awake." "It's sunlight and bright day, right enough," both familiar to Sam, but he feels as if he was "*inside* a song." Soon, Frodo lays his hand upon a tree, and through his recovered sense of nature, he experiences something totally new: "never before had he been so suddenly and so keenly aware of the feel and texture of a tree's skin and of the life within it" (*LOTR* 351).

People tend to marvel at something either when it is strange or new, or when the familiar is rendered unfamiliar, changing the beholders' perceptions of it (Selling 61). The value of Tolkien's Middle-earth lies in the fact that it reintroduces the "wonders and beauties of the natural world around us, which we tend to accept rather than to wonder at as legitimate Things of Marvel" (Carter, *Tolkien* 75). As Gimli observes, humans do not always appreciate nature, and they often see it as something to be utilised rather than as a source of wonder:

> Strange are the ways of Men, Legolas! Here they have one of the marvels of the Northern World, and what do they say of it? Caves, they say! Caves! Holes to fly to in time of war, to store fodder in! 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. Aye indeed, they would pay pure gold for a brief glance! […] No dwarf could be unmoved by such loveliness. None of Durin's race would mine those caves for stones or ore, not if diamonds and gold could be got there. Do you cut down groves of blossoming trees in the spring-time for firewood? (*LOTR* 547-48)

Elves in the secondary world might not cut down blossoming trees for firewood, but humans in the primary world do. One of the things Tolkien wants people to recover is their perception of nature in general, and of trees in particular. Tolkien believes in the need to see trees – which have become too familiar to "see with fresh attention" – in a

new light ("Fairy" 146). What he says of familiar things in his fairy-story essay might as well be said of trees: "[w]e say we know them. They have become like the things which once attracted us by their glitter, or their colour, or their shape, and we laid hands on them, and then locked them in our hoard, acquired them, and acquiring ceased to look at them" ("Fairy" 146). To force us to look at trees again, Tolkien both makes ordinary trees, as Cynthia Cohen puts it, "significant in the narrative," and he creates fictional species such as Lothlórien's *mallorn*-tree (95). These fictional species are made of the same "primary material" as ordinary trees: the colours, textures, and shapes of their trunks, leaves, branches, and roots are similar to those of the primary world trees (C. M. Cohen 96). By "juxtaposing the enchanted with the familiar," Tolkien once again provides an opportunity to pierce the "drab blur of triteness and familiarity" (Bassham, "Lewis and Tolkien" 247; Tolkien, "Fairy" 146). The first description of the *mallorn* is provided by Legolas the Elf:

> In the autumn their leaves fall not, but turn to gold. Not till the spring comes and the new green opens do they fall, and then the boughs are laden with yellow flowers; and the floor of the wood is golden, and golden is the roof, and its pillars are of silver, for the bark of the trees is smooth and grey. (*LOTR* 335)

The Elves of Lothlórien live on wooden platforms built on these trees.[34] When Frodo and Sam climb one, they notice that "[t]he branches of the mallorn-tree grew out nearly straight from the trunk, and then swept upward; but near the top the main stem divided into a crown of many boughs" (*LOTR* 342). These golden trees do not only amaze the characters in the story. Having met mighty *mellyrn* (plural of *mallorn*), one cannot see ordinary oaks, maples, and chestnuts of the primary world in the same way ever again. After all, a successful sub-creation changes the way the readers see the primary world when they return to it when the escape has ended (Card 165). Tolkien achieves what he has proposed to do in "On Fairy-stories:" "[w]e should meet the centaur and the dragon, and then perhaps suddenly behold, like the ancient shepherds, sheep, and dogs, and horses" ("Fairy" 51).

Tolkien was "much in love with plants and above all trees" all his life (*Letters* 220). He

[34] Hence the name, *Galadhrim*, or "tree people."

often visited the Botanical Gardens in Oxford, where his favourite trees were (Grotta 154). Tolkien very often expressed in his writing his love of trees and his hatred of the destruction of the natural environment, especially "the destruction, torture and murder of trees" (*Letters* 420). In his introductory note to *Tree and Leaf*, he says his short story "Leaf by Niggle" was inspired by a "great-limbed poplar tree that I could see even lying in bed," which was first "mutilated" then cut down by its owner for no other crime than "being large and alive" (*Tree* 5). Tolkien's biographer Carpenter reports that one particular incident regarding trees remained in Tolkien's memory: "[t]here was a willow hanging over the mill-pool and I learned to climb it. It belonged to a butcher on the Stratford Road, I think. One day they cut it down. They didn't do anything with it: the log just lay there. I never forgot that" (*Tolkien* 39). In another letter Tolkien writes, "[i]n all my works I take the part of trees as against all their enemies" (*Letters* 419). He voices his love of trees and his concern for them in *The Silmarillion* through one of the demiurges, Yavanna, the Giver of Fruits. She is "the lover of all things that grow in the earth," but she holds trees dearest (*TS* [35] 30, 52). This is what Yavanna – and, probably, Tolkien – thinks about trees: "Long in the growing, swift shall they be in the felling, and unless they pay toll with fruit upon bough little mourned in their passing. So I see in my thought. Would that the trees might speak on behalf of all things that have roots, and punish those that wrong them!" (*TS* 52). Tolkien has created fictional characters to fight his battle in the secondary world and "punish those that wrong them:" Ents and Huorns. Daniel Grotta, another Tolkien biographer, quotes Tolkien's son Michael in order to explain the invention of Ents:

> From my father I inherited an almost obsessive love of trees: as a small boy I witnessed mass tree-felling for the convenience of the internal-combustion engine. I regarded this as the wanton murder of living beings for very shoddy ends. My father listened seriously to my angry comments and when I asked him to make up a tale in which the trees took a terrible revenge on machine-lovers, he said, 'I will write you one.' (106)

Ents are introduced through two Hobbits, Merry and Pippin. The first thing the Hobbits notice is the Ent's eyes: [t]hese deep eyes were now surveying them, slow and solemn, but very penetrating. They were brown, shot with a green light." Pippin's first

[35] *The Silmarillion* will be abbreviated as *TS* in the parenthetical references henceforth.

impression of these eyes, as he later tries to describe it, is this:

> One felt as if there was an enormous well behind them, filled up with ages of memory and long, slow, steady thinking; but their surface were sparkling with the present; like sun shimmering on the outer leaves of a vast tree, or on the ripples of a very deep lake. I don't know, but it felt as if something grew in the ground – asleep, you might say, or just feeling itself as something between root-tip and leaf-tip, between deep earth and sky had suddenly waked up, and was considering you with the same slow care that it had given to its own inside affairs for endless years. (*LOTR* 463)

This is a moment of recovery for the Hobbits, when they suddenly come to the awareness that nature is alive, and has been so much longer than they can imagine. It is actually them who "had suddenly waked up" to this fact. As the Hobbits slowly realise, although he belongs to the present time, the Ent is ancient indeed, with ages of memory, and is looking back at them. Soon, the Ent says he is called Fangorn, or Treebeard in Common Speech, and tells the Hobbits about the Ents: they are tree-herds, and like shepherds herd sheep, they herd trees, which they have begun to look more and more alike. They are like trees, but they are also similar to Elves – both are "less interested in themselves than Men are, and better at getting inside other things – and to Men, who are "more changeable than Elves are, and quicker at taking the colour of the outside" (*LOTR* 468). Ents are "sentient, rational creatures, equal in the complexity of their psychology and the uniqueness of their perspective to the other Free Peoples" (Olsen, "Ent" 40-41). There are also some Ents who are becoming "treeish," and some trees are getting "Entish" (*LOTR* 468). The former seem to be Huorns, who are quite as mysterious to the Hobbits as to the readers. Treebeard will not say much about them, but the Hobbits presume they are Ents who have become treeish, at least in appearance. Treebeard does say that they can move, quickly and stealthily, and they can speak with the Ents. They are wild and dangerous unless herded by the Ents (*LOTR* 565). Soon Merry and Pippin see other Ents, and are very much surprised to see that each is unique. The Hobbits' being struck by the variety they see – "the many shapes, and colours, the differences in girth, and height, and length of leg and arm; and in the number of toes and fingers" – reflects back on the primary world, where the reader can now notice that trees are not only different from each other in kind, but as individual trees with unique growth and history (*LOTR* 480).

Tolkien, through the evil deeds of Saruman, reveals his hatred of the destruction of the natural environment in *The Lord of the Rings* (Selling 54). "The only wizard that really cares about trees," says Treebeard, is Gandalf (*LOTR* 466). Another great Wizard, Saruman, used to walk about in Treebeard's woods, who told him many things "that he would never have found out by himself," but now that Saruman has turned to "evil ways," he is "plotting to become a Power. He has a mind of metal and wheels; and he does not care for growing things, except as far as they serve him for the moment" (*LOTR* 473). Like the butcher who cut his tree and left the log to just lay there, Saruman and his "foul folk are felling trees – good trees. Some of the trees they just cut down and leave to rot" (*LOTR* 474). Once green and full of trees, Saruman's hold Isengard is now "filled with pits and forges," where iron wheels revolve endlessly, and hammers thud (*LOTR* 260, 554). Ents, like Tom Bombadil, do not ordinarily take sides; however, "the wanton hewing […] without even the bad excuse of feeding the fires" has so angered the Ents that they decide to go to war to take a terrible revenge on this machine-lover, this "tree-killer" (*LOTR* 472, 485, 568). Eventually, the Ents overthrow Isengard, and Huorns take their revenge on their old enemies, the Orcs (*LOTR* 541-72 passim).

Ents' and Huorns' skill in defending themselves and the trees they are responsible for is a reminder of the incapability of the trees in the primary world of doing so. Tolkien utilises these characters for what Le Guin calls "a heightening of reality" (*Language* 79). Ents are tough; it takes "a very heavy axe-stroke to wound them seriously," but the wielder of the axe does not get to strike a second blow. "A punch from an Ent-fist crumples up iron like thin tin," which trees cannot do (*LOTR* 567). As Cynthia Cohen maintains, "Tolkien compels his readers to become responsible for preserving and protecting the trees in their own lives," which are otherwise defenceless against many modern threats they face (119). Bassham points out that some have even been inspired to commit "acts of nonconformity that some might consider as heroic" ("Lewis and Tolkien" 258). As Tolkien argues in his fairy-story essay, reaction could be a by-product of reading fantasy ("Fairy" 149).[36]

[36] Grotta reports that Tolkien was delighted to hear of some American students who were outraged when the university council pulled down "a very pleasant little grove of trees" to build a culture centre of concrete, on which the students wrote "ANOTHER BIT OF MORDOR"

In Middle-earth, one could catch glimpses of what could happen if nature is left to a tyrant to heedlessly destroy it. In *The Hobbit*, the tyrant that destroyed the landscape is Smaug the Dragon: "[t]he land about them grew bleak and barren, though once, as Thorin told them, it had been green and fair. There was little grass, and before long there was neither bush nor tree, and only broken and blackened stumps to speak of ones long vanished. They were come to the Desolation of the Dragon" (*TH* 235). Tolkien believes the tyrants' "smashing, hurting, and defiling" is a result of their losing sight of objects, and so he offers recovery as a way to gain a refreshed insight into things, thereby avoiding the possibility of becoming insensitive or destructive (*Letters* 200). Another tyrant, Sauron "can torture and destroy the very hills," and Frodo and Sam see this with their own eyes when they first look upon his lands (*LOTR* 266). The barren landscape lying before them enables the Hobbits to see the Dead Marshes, which gave them shudders when they passed through them a short while ago, in a new light: dreadful as the Marshes are, spring and summer will come here again (*LOTR* 631). On the other hand, in Sauron's realm Mordor,[37] Tolkien offers an example of irredeemable destruction of nature, which, according to Elder, recalls of the primary world (xii):

> Here nothing lived, not even the leprous growths that feed on rottenness. The gasping pools were choked with ash and crawling muds, sickly white and grey, as if the mountains had vomited the filth of their entrails upon the lands about. High mounds of crushed and powdered rock, great cones of earth fire-blasted and poison-stained, stood like an obscene graveyard in endless rows, slowly revealed in the reluctant light.
> They had come to the desolation that lay before Mordor: the lasting monument to the dark labour of its slaves that should endure when all their purposes were made void; a land defiled, diseased beyond all healing – unless the Great Sea should enter in and wash it with oblivion. 'I feel sick,' said Sam. Frodo did not speak.
> For a while they stood there, like men on the edge of a sleep where nightmare lurks, holding it off, though they know that they can only come to morning through the shadows. The light broadened and hardened. The gasping pits and poisonous mounds grew hideously clear. The sun was up, walking among clouds and long

(142). Curry illustrates how reading Tolkien's works has inspired a defence of the countryside by reporting a resistance in Newbury, Berkshire against a destructive and futile bypass (*Defending* 43). He goes on to quote from David Taggart's journal, whose 1972 voyage into a French nuclear testing area led directly to the foundation of Greenpeace: "I had been reading *The Lord of the Rings.* I could not avoid thinking of parallels between our own little fellowship and the long journey of the Hobbits into the volcano-haunted land of Mordor" (44).

[37] Mordor is actually a compound word composed of *mor* (dark) and *dôr* (land) (*TS* 435, 430). It is therefore also known as "the Black Land," and "the Land of Shadow" (*TS* 410).

> flags of smoke, but even the sunlight was defiled. The hobbits had no welcome for that light; unfriendly it seemed, revealing them in their helplessness – little squeaking ghosts that wandered among the ash-heaps of the Dark Lord. (*LOTR* 631-32)

Mordor's description is Tolkien's reminder that once people lose sight of what is valuable, they might not be able to recover it for many generations. Tolkien more than once emphasises that nature belongs to nobody, let alone to the current generation. "The trees and the grasses and all things growing or living in the land belong each to themselves," Goldberry says (*LOTR* 124). Gildor tells Frodo that the land they live on does not belong to them. Others dwelt on the same soil before them; and still others will dwell there again when the present residents are no more (*LOTR* 83). Once the readers start to see their natural environment as they are meant to see it, as a beautiful and magical entity, they will not be able to remain unconcerned by its destruction. As Rosebury points out, Tolkien's "romantic protest against the despoliation of nature" demands that present generation take thought for the future ones (175).

2.2.4. The Heroism of the Humble Individual

As Upstone states, the rise of the small man permeates Tolkien's works (56). Through recovery, Tolkien redefines the meaning of courage and heroism, and depicts a heroism "of a distinctly modern cast" – a heroism that accepts historical facts, "and yet refuses to give in to the tempting despair" offered by those facts (Sale, "Tolkien and Frodo" 251). Tolkien's works offer a parade of traditionally heroic characters and warriors such as the Rohirrim (Riders of Rohan) and the Dúnedain (Men of the West), but it is the Hobbits, unlikeliest of them all, who commit the most heroic deeds. They start out as simple, common individuals, and slowly transform into epic heroes. Hobbits are convenient characters for Tolkien to use as a means to an end. Like most people in the primary world, Hobbits are not heroic by nature, but when "pressed by circumstances and by knowledge that their participation in fearsome events is necessary, they become heroic" (Irwin 162).

When the Dwarves first come into his house, Bilbo (plain Mr. Baggins of Bag-End, Under-Hill) sits in the corner, "while the four dwarves sat around the table, and talked

about mines and gold and troubles with the goblins, and depredations of dragons, and lots of other things which he did not understand, and did not want to, for they sounded much too adventurous" (*TH* 12). The Dwarves have been led by Gandalf to believe that Bilbo is a burglar, or an expert treasure-hunter, but they soon realise that he is not. However, in a crisis Bilbo "regularly rises to the occasion," and proves himself (Raffel 233). He does what the adventure-hardened Dwarves fail to do on many occasions: after he escapes from the Goblin tunnels, having lost "hood, cloak, food, pony, his buttons, and his friends," he decides it is his duty to go back into the "horrible, horrible tunnels and look for his friends." However, the Dwarves are reluctant to do the same for Bilbo. "He has been more trouble than use so far," says one Dwarf. "If we have got to go back now into those abominable tunnels to look for him, then drat him, I say" (*TH* 106-7). Plain Mr. Baggins has become superior to his Dwarf companions with his "internalized, solitary, dutiful" kind of courage (Shippey, *Author* 28). Bilbo saves himself from the cords of a giant spider, and kills it by his sword "all alone by himself in the dark without the help of the wizard or the dwarves or of anyone else." Bilbo now feels a different person, "and much fiercer and bolder in spite of an empty stomach" (*TH* 181). He challenges the other spiders that have trapped the Dwarves, and "slashing at spider-threads, hacking at their legs, and stabbing their fat bodies" forces them to retreat, thereby rescuing the Dwarves (*TH* 183-91). Afterwards, when Bilbo tells them how he saved them putting on the invisibility ring that he had found in the Goblin tunnels,

> they had changed their opinion of Mr. Baggins very much, and had begun to have a great respect for him. […] They knew only too well that they would soon all have been dead, if it had not been for the hobbit; and they thanked him many times. Some of them even got up and bowed right to the ground before him. […] Knowing the truth about vanishing did not lessen their opinion of Bilbo at all; for they saw that he had some wits, as well as luck and a magic ring – and all three are very useful possessions. In fact they praised him so much that Bilbo began to feel there really was something of a bold adventurer about himself after all. (*TH* 192)

Bilbo's next trial of heroism is when the company arrive at Smaug's mountain. Bilbo, now "the remarkable Mr. Invisible Baggins," is sent into the secret tunnel into the Dragon's lair while the Dwarves, including "the great Thorin Oakenshield himself," will courageously "wait in the tunnel for his report" (*TH* 204, 246-47, 14, 274). Bilbo walks along the tunnel until he perceives the Dragon's presence with all five of his senses, and then stops. "Going on from there was the bravest thing he ever did," says

the narrator (*TH* 249). Bilbo goes into the Dragon's lair again, and talks to the Dragon. Flattering Smaug and capturing him in a moment of vanity, Bilbo discovers a weak spot in Smaug's armour, which the Dragon unwittingly reveals (*TH* 256-63). This discovery contributes to the Dragon's slaughter although Bilbo does not know it when he goes back in for the third time. While Bilbo is inside challenging the non-existent Dragon, the Dwarves keep their distance in the tunnel. "As Thorin carefully explained, Mr. Baggins was still officially their expert burglar and investigator" (*TH* 274). Bilbo, who at the beginning was "shaking like a jelly that was melting" upon hearing the risk of death, now proves more courageous than the Dwarves at the face of it (*TH* 21).

Purtill maintains, Bilbo represents "the kind of courage exhibited by the ordinary person who rises to heroism in the face of challenge" (60). Until he was recruited in Gandalf's adventure, heroic acts had not been required of Bilbo. He was so far from heroism that the Dwarves' first impression of him was that he looked "more like a grocer than a burglar" (*TH* 22). Neither are the readers aware of his heroic capabilities in the beginning (Petty 94). However, Bilbo lives up to the expectations of Gandalf, who, before the adventure began, said of him to the Dwarves that "[t]here is a lot more in him than you guess, and a deal more than he has any idea of himself" (*TH* 24). From the beginning, the Hobbits have been represented as the common individual, and by turning Bilbo the Hobbit into a hero, Tolkien uses Bilbo's very ordinariness as a reminder of the potential of the ordinary individual to act heroically (Purtill 63).

In *The Lord of the Rings*, it is again the Hobbits who are the most heroic. At the Council of Elrond, where a Wizard, a Man, Elves, and Dwarves are trying to determine what to do with the Ruling Ring, it becomes obvious that the Ring must be taken to the only place it can be destroyed: the cracks of Mount Doom, where it was forged – but taken by whom? First, Bilbo valiantly offers to do it, but is gently rejected by Gandalf because he has already played his part, and does not have the required strength left to deal with the Ring. Then, although in the beginning he said to Gandalf, "I am not made for perilous quests. I wish I had never seen the Ring," Frodo volunteers to embark on this perilous quest: "I will take the Ring […] though I do not know the way" (*LOTR* 61, 270). Elrond offers Frodo an opportunity to change his mind: "it is a heavy burden. So heavy that none could lay it on another. I do not lay it on you. But if you take it freely, I

will say that your choice is right." However, Frodo is determined to at least try to accomplish the task he shouldered, "to find a way where the great ones could not go, or dared not go," and against all odds, the Ring is eventually destroyed (*LOTR* 644).

Bilbo and Frodo are not the only Hobbit heroes who achieve great deeds. Sam fights Shelob, an ancient evil in the shape of a great spider, with only a small blade in his hand. Thinking that Frodo is killed by Shelob, Sam takes the Ring from Frodo, and alone, sets off to the Mount Doom to "see it through." He must do so, because of a sense of duty, or, in Bowman's words, sense of "social responsibility," not only towards his Shire, but also towards the Middle-earth itself ("Refining" 102). Otherwise, he tells himself, "that's the end of all of us, of Lórien, and Rivendell, and the Shire and all" (*LOTR* 732). Sam shows tremendous courage by deciding to continue all by himself, but soon hears from the Orcs that Frodo is paralysed, not dead. The Orcs also talk about no one ever being able to stab Shelob before; whoever wounded Shelob must be a large Elf warrior (*LOTR* 739-40). Sam decides that he must rescue Frodo "or perish in the attempt" (*LOTR* 897). Conquering the temptation of the Ring and the "wild fantasies" that arise in his mind, which is as heroic as one can be, Sam plods on, rescues Frodo, and gives him back the Ring (*LOTR* 901-11). Frodo and Sam are once again on their way to Mount Doom, from which they have no hope of returning.

Two other Hobbits play their parts by rousing the Ents to overthrow Isengard. They are small, but as Gandalf says, their arrival at Fangorn is like "falling of small stones that starts an avalanche" (*LOTR* 496). If not for Merry and Pippin, the Ents would still be minding their own business, oblivious to what is happening in the outside world, and Rohan and Gondor, two kingdoms of Men, would have fallen. What is more, Merry stabs Lord Nazgûl, the chief Ringwraith, whose greatest weapon has been freezing everybody's heart with terror, rendering them unable to fight (*LOTR* 842). Having met great men like Théoden, King of Rohan, and Aragorn, Merry and Pippin become like them when they arouse the Shire and lead the battle against Saruman's thugs (*LOTR* 1006-16). In the end, like Bilbo gains the respect of the Dwarves, the eldest of mortal races, Merry and Pippin "rake their place among the greatest in folklore" (Upstone 56). Treebeard puts the Hobbits into the "Long List" so that Ents will remember them:

> *Ents the earthborn, old as mountains,*
> *the wide-walkers, water drinking;*
> *and hungry as hunters, the Hobbit children,*
> *the laughing-folk, the little people.* (*LOTR* 586)

Sam realises that the tales "that stay in the mind" are not actually about people who, bored of their lives, go out and look for adventures, but rather about ordinary folk who "seem to have been just landed in them," like himself and Frodo, whose small hands move the wheels of the world (*LOTR* 711). Like Bilbo got in his make-up "something that only waited for a chance to come out," the most ordinary person has the potential to do great deeds (*TH* 5). By portraying a different type of hero, and by enabling the readers to identify with the hero through the process of recovery, Tolkien prompts his readers into the realisation, as he once said, "that we are here, surviving, because of the indomitable courage of quite small people against impossible odds" (qtd. in Carpenter, *Tolkien* 235). He also challenges his readers, in Attebery's terms, "to go out and create something equally grand and magical" (*Fantasy Tradition* 154).

Tolkien also forces the Hobbits to question their preconceptions about the villain by the use of the process of recovery. Among all the characters Tolkien has created, Gollum most challenges the distinction between the hero and the villain. He is described in *The Hobbit* as an old "small slimy creature," who lives deep down by the dark water in the Goblin caves. The narrator is ignorant of his origins – of "where he came from, [or] who or what he was" – but hints that Gollum has not always been a creature of the dark, and gives clues about his past (*TH* 84). Gollum challenges Bilbo into a game of riddles, "the only game he had ever played with other funny creatures sitting in their holes in the long, long ago, before he lost all his friends and was driven away, alone, and crept down, down, into the dark under the mountains" (*TH* 87). The riddles remind Gollum of the times "when he lived with his grandmother in a hole in a bank by a river" ages and ages ago (*TH* 88-89). Could Gollum have once been a Hobbit? After the riddle contest, Bilbo escapes using the magic invisibility ring Gollum has lost. Bilbo is being chased by Gollum, and thinks for a moment of killing the unarmed creature, but pitying him, decides against this. He suddenly sees Gollum through a different perspective: "he was miserable, alone, lost. A sudden understanding, a pity mixed with horror, welled up in Bilbo's heart: a glimpse of endless unmarked days without light or hope of betterment,

hard stone, cold fish, sneaking and whispering" (*TH* 102). Later, Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings* tells Frodo Gollum's story: Gollum was Sméagol, of Hobbit-kind, and came to the possession of the Ring by murdering his friend Déagol. Made even worse by the Ring, he was expelled from his family, and leaving the sun-lit and moon-lit world behind him, "he wormed his way like a maggot into the heart of the hills, and vanished out of knowledge," taking the Ring with him (*LOTR* 52-54). Frodo is repulsed by the idea of Gollum's kinship with Hobbits, but Gandalf says what happened to Sméagol might have happened to others – a slow destruction through the Ring's possession:

> All the "great secrets" under the mountains had turned out to be just empty night: there was nothing more to find out, nothing worth doing, only nasty furtive eating and resentful remembering. He was altogether wretched. He hated the dark, and he hated light more: he hated everything, and the Ring most of all. […] He hated it and loved it, as he hated and loved himself. He could not get rid of it. He had no will left in the matter. (*LOTR* 55)

The only reason Bilbo was spared Sméagol's fate and "took little hurt from the evil" is that he began his ownership of the Ring with pity. Frodo angers Gandalf by regretting Bilbo's pity, but Gandalf says although he does not think Gollum can be cured, there is a chance of it. Gandalf also feels Gollum has some part to play yet (*LOTR* 59).

As Greenwood argues, Tolkien's world is not simply divided into black and white, and such terms as good and evil, or hero and enemy are not "always sharply distinguished" (176). The boundaries of these terms "become permeable," which results in "an interchange of meanings" among them (Greenwood 191). Tolkien creates this ambiguity to encourage the readers to recover their notions of these concepts. Each individual has in his/her makeup a bit of both good and evil: "one may resist temptation more successfully than another, but even the best may fall, and even the worst may repent," which is best illustrated by Frodo and Gollum (Auden, "Good and Evil" 138). Gollum is the black shadow of Bilbo and Frodo, like Lord Nazgûl is of Aragorn, or Orcs of Elves (Le Guin, *Language* 64). He is there to remind the Hobbits what Bilbo could have become, and what Frodo could still become if he is unable to recover himself from the possessiveness of the Ring. For Gollum, Frodo is what he once was. They are not much different from each other; the villain once had – perhaps still has – the potential to become good whereas the hero could turn into the villain. Indeed, Bilbo

is at times like Gollum both in personality (when Gandalf angers him by suggesting he part with the Ring, he says "[i]t is mine, I tell you. My own. My precious. Yes, my precious"), and in appearance (when Frodo shows the Ring to him, Bilbo looks like "a little wrinkled creature with a hungry face and bony groping hands") (*LOTR* 33, 232). Frodo, too, albeit briefly, allows his shadow side to peek through when Sam offers to bear his burden for a while:

> 'No, no!' cried Frodo, snatching the Ring and chain from Sam's hands. 'No you won't, you thief!' He panted, staring at Sam with eyes wide with fear and enmity. Then suddenly, clasping the Ring in one clenched fist, he stood aghast. A mist seemed to clear from his eyes, and he passed a hand over his aching brow. The hideous vision had seemed so real to him, half bemused as he was still with wound and fear. Sam had changed before his very eyes into an orc again, leering and pawing at his treasure, a foul little creature with greedy eyes and slobbering mouth. But now the vision had passed. There was Sam kneeling before him, his face wrung with pain, as if he had been stabbed in the heart; tears welled from his eyes. (*LOTR* 911-12)

Frodo's possessiveness of the Ring has clouded his vision, and prevented him from seeing the very familiar Sam as he is meant to see him. In this respect, Frodo has become Gollum, but unlike him, Frodo is able to recover his vision, which is what makes him a hero and Gollum a villain. However, Gollum will almost become a Hobbit in one of the saddest scenes in the story, which will be described below.

Soon after Sam and Frodo part with their guide and protector Aragorn, they are lost on the mountains of Emyn Muil. One day they capture Gollum, who has been following them, but like Bilbo before, Frodo pities him, and remembering what Gandalf told him, does not have the heart to kill him. Frodo decides to take Gollum as their guide, but first makes him swear by the Ring not to harm them. He wants Gollum to swear by the dearest thing to him, which Gollum calls "the Precious," because he understands what the Ring has done and is still doing to him. Sam, too, realises this when he sees Frodo and Gollum in a new light: "the two were in some way akin and not alien: they could reach one another's minds" (*LOTR* 618). From another perspective, Frodo and Gollum can be regarded as the same person, the former being the bright side, the latter being the shadow side (Le Guin, *Language* 64; Bradley 119). Identified as "a shadowy figure" by Tolkien himself (*LOTR* 345), Gollum has also been called by other critics as Frodo and Bilbo's "dark side," "corrupted counterpart," or "dark counterpart," and described as the

dark side of the Hobbit nature, like Hyde is of Jekyll (e.g., Flieger, *Green* 156; Parker 605; Zimbardo 105; Green 36). At one point in the narrative, Tolkien shows Gollum through a different perspective when he comes on to the sleeping Hobbits:

> A strange expression passed over his lean hungry face. The gleam faded from his eyes, and they went dim and grey, old and tired. A spasm of pain seemed to twist him, and he turned away, peering back up towards the pass, shaking his head, as if engaged in some interior debate. Then he came back, and slowly putting out a trembling hand, very cautiously he touched Frodo's knee – but almost the touch was a caress. For a fleeting moment, could one of the sleepers have seen him, they would have thought that they beheld an old weary hobbit, shrunken by the years that had carried him far beyond his time, beyond friends and kin, and the fields and streams of youth, an old starved pitiable thing. (*LOTR* 714)

Unfortunately, the Hobbits do not see what the readers see. Sam wakes up suddenly, and suspecting that Gollum is about to harm Frodo, rebukes him and accuses him of being a sneak. Sadly, "Gollum withdrew himself, and a green glint flickered under his heavy lids. Almost spider-like he looked now, crouched back on his bent limbs, with his protruding eyes. The fleeting moment had passed, beyond recall" (*LOTR* 715). Tolkien writes in a letter that this is one of the scenes that move him very powerfully, and adds that he is "most grieved by Gollum's failure (just) to repent when interrupted by Sam" (*Letters* 221). Gollum is a wretched creature, but his wretchedness can partly be attributed to the fact that he has not become purely evil; if he had, he would only be plotting to steal the Ring instead of "feeling genuine gratitude to, and affection for, Frodo" at the same time (Auden, "Good and Evil" 140). Vincent argues,

> [t]his passage provides the reader with the sudden strangeness that Tolkien believed to be the natural result of re-encountering the world, and then uses that strangeness to guide the reader to a moral conclusion: Gollum *is* like the hobbit, he *could be* like them, save that he freely chooses not to be. (108)

Gollum soon betrays the Hobbits, and takes them to Shelob's lair in the hope of recovering the Ring once Shelob has killed them. The Hobbits manage to survive, and Gollum once again catches up with them while they are climbing Mount Doom, and attempts to take the Ring from Frodo. Sam draws his blade, but cannot strike Gollum with it. Having experienced the burden of the Ring himself, Sam finally understands why Gollum is such a wretched creature (Chance, *Tolkien's Art* 180). It is now his turn to empathise with Gollum and pity him:

> Sam's hand wavered. His mind was hot with wrath and the memory of evil. It would be just to slay this treacherous, murderous creature, just and many times deserved; and also it seemed the only safe thing to do. But deep in his heart there was something that restrained him: he could not strike this thing lying in the dust, forlorn, ruinous, utterly wretched. He himself, though only for a little while, had borne the Ring, and now dimly he guessed the agony of Gollum's shrivelled mind and body, enslaved to that Ring, unable to find peace or relief ever in life again. But Sam had no words to express what he felt. (*LOTR* 944)

Sam tells Gollum to be off, or he will hurt him, and goes after Frodo into the door in the mountain's side. He finds Frodo inside, at "the heart of the realm of Sauron and the forges of his ancient might." Unexpectedly at the last minute, Frodo claims the Ring for himself. At this time, Gollum jumps on Frodo, bites off his ring finger with the Ring on it, and falls off the chasm into the Crack of Doom. Ironically, Gollum the shadow side succeeds where Frodo the bright side fails (*LOTR* 945-46).

Frodo undergoes a process through which the conscious and the unconscious within him "learn to know, respect, and accommodate one another" (Freeman xi). By facing his shadow, Frodo eventually recovers his notion of his self: just like Gollum, he is unable to detach himself from possessiveness after all. Therefore, Gollum has to be forgiven. "But for him, Sam, I could not have destroyed the Ring. The Quest would have been in vain," says Frodo in the end (*LOTR* 947). Through self-knowledge, and "by coming to understand the character of good and evil," Frodo matures (Chance, *Tolkien's Art* 147). Whereas before the quest Frodo regretted Bilbo's not slaying Gollum while he could, in the end he forbids the other Hobbits from killing Saruman even after the Wizard attempts to stab Frodo (*LOTR* 1019). Bilbo, too, through Gollum, attains an "ego personification" which is "ever aware of the dark shadow vestige" (O'Neill 63). Tolkien has succeeded in utilising fantasy to provide the necessary "internal exploration […] to produce a whole, integrated human being" (S. Wood 12).

Bettelheim writes that fairy-stories are mainly concerned with "the inner processes taking place in an individual" (25). By picturing Gollum and the three Hobbit heroes (Bilbo, Frodo, and Sam) side by side, Tolkien shows his readers the processes operating in the Hobbits' minds; in Lüthi's terms, "processes of development and maturation" (139). One has to accept the shadow in order to achieve "wholeness, the dynamic

harmony of mind" (Green 36).[38] The recovery of Gollum and Frodo's selves leads the readers to the realisation that an individual's becoming good or evil depends upon how much s/he acknowledges her/his inner shadow side. Ursula Le Guin has aptly summarised the importance one should attach to knowing one's shadow in preparation for the struggle against evil:

> We need knowledge; we need self-knowledge. We need to see ourselves and the shadows we cast. For we can face our own shadow; we can learn to control it and to be guided by it; so that […] we will be less inclined, perhaps, either to give up in despair or to deny what we see, when we must face the evil that is done in the world, and the injustices and grief and suffering that we all must bear, and the final shadow at the end of all. (*Language* 66)

This self-knowledge can be attained by reading good fairy-stories like Tolkien's, which, according to C. S. Lewis, means that "we are obeying the old precept 'Know thyself'" (*On Stories* 36).

2.2.5. Views of Death and Immortality

Morse states, some authors use fantasy as a way of presenting familiar problems and themes such as attitudes towards death in a new light (2). Tolkien uses recovery towards this end, and challenges ideas or notions regarding death and immortality, which, in his own words, is the real theme of his stories (*Letters* 246, 262, 267, 284). In "On Fairy-stories," Tolkien notes that humans' stories about Elves provide many examples of "the Escape from Death." He humorously adds, Elves' stories about humans must be full of "the Escape from Deathlessness" ("Fairy" 153). As Shippey notes, Tolkien's stories contain both themes (*Author* 248). Beren, the only mortal Man ever to "come back from the mansions of the dead," escapes death while his beloved Elf Lúthien escapes from deathlessness (*TS* 124). After Beren dies, he is taken to the halls of Mandos, where Lúthien follows him. She kneels before Mandos, keeper of the halls of the dead, and sings to him, moving him to pity. Lúthien is given a choice, and she chooses to relinquish her immortality, and return to Middle-earth to live with Beren (*TS* 224-25).

[38] Jung calls this achievement "individuation" (90).

Elves satisfy the oldest and deepest desire, escape from death, which Tolkien wants to overturn by presenting death as a gift. Elves are immortal but not indestructible. When "killed" by injury or grief, they remain in the world, confined as they are to the circles of the world. "This becomes a great burden as the ages lengthen, especially in a world in which there is malice and destruction" (Tolkien, *Letters* 236). Tolkien wants to show the readers that "immortality, or rather endless serial living" is a burden ("Fairy" 153).[39] Elves are doomed to linger on the earth while all other beings must perish, no matter how long their life span is. Mortality, in Tolkien's legendarium, is considered a gift – the gift of Ilúvatar, the creator. "Of the Beginning of Days" in *The Silmarillion* tells of the gift of death given to Men, which shall be a source of envy among the immortal:

> It is one with this gift of freedom that the children of Men dwell only a short space in the world alive, and are not bound to it, and depart soon whither the Elves know not. Whereas the Elves remain until the end of days, and their love of the Earth and all the world is more single and more poignant therefore, and as the years lengthen ever more sorrowful. For the Elves die not till tile world dies, unless they are slain or waste in grief (and to both these seeming deaths they are subject); neither does age subdue their strength, unless one grow weary of ten thousand centuries; and dying they are gathered to the halls of Mandos in Valinor, whence they may in time return. But the sons of Men die indeed, and leave the world; wherefore they are called the Guests, or the Strangers. Death is their fate, the gift of Ilúvatar, which as Time wears even the Powers shall envy. (*TS* 48)

However, Men cannot fully comprehend how precious a gift Ilúvatar has given them, and start considering death a punishment. Envying the Elves, they are discontent with what they call their doom. Elves report these to the Valar, the demiurges, and the Valar send messengers to the Men to explain "the fate and fashion of the world." The messengers say that unlike Elves, Men "escape, and leave the world, and are not bound to it, in hope or in weariness," and add that it is the others that should envy Men (*TS* 318). *The Silmarillion* is written through an Elvish point of view, and reflects the Elves' "griefs and burdens of deathlessness in time and change," and their envy of Men's freedom from the circles of the world (Tolkien, *Letters* 146). In *The Lord of the Rings*, in which the main characters are the Hobbits, these feelings are expressed by individual Elves, although less intensely. Legolas says, for instance,

[39] This notion has become popular among horror fiction writers like Ann Rice and Joss Whedon, whose vampires find eternal life a burden (Jones 171).

> [f]or the Elves the world moves, and it moves both very swift and very slow. Swift, because they themselves change little, and all else fleets by: it is a grief to them. Slow, because they do not count the running years, not for themselves. The passing seasons are but ripples ever repeated in the long long stream. Yet beneath the Sun all things must wear to an end at last. (*LOTR* 388)

Conceptions on longevity and deathlessness are further challenged by Gollum and Bilbo, on the one hand, and by the Ringwraiths on the other. Gollum and Bilbo are given lives beyond their natural life span by the possession of the Ring. Almost five hundred years old, Gollum is physically spent: his once plump and hairy Hobbit body is now skinny and slimy, and even Bilbo cannot recognise "that nasty wet cold thing" as a Hobbit (*TH* 92). Bilbo is one hundred and eleven years old, and though he looks only middle-aged, he feels old age in his "heart of hearts." He says to Gandalf, "I feel all thin, sort of *stretched*, if you know what I mean: like butter that has been scraped over too much bread. That can't be right" (*LOTR* 32). As Gandalf later tells Frodo, a mortal "who keeps one of the Great Rings, does not die, but he does not grow or obtain more life, he merely continues, until at last every minute is a weariness" (*LOTR* 47). Natural life span cannot be "increased qualitatively or quantitatively; so that prolongation in time is like stretching a wire out ever tauter, or 'spreading butter ever thinner' – it becomes an intolerable torment" (*Letters* 155).

The rejection of death, on the other hand, means "the attempted denial of nature, the body, and ultimately life itself" (Curry, *Defending* 92). The Ringwraiths, or the Nazgûl, illustrate the cost of the rejection of the gift of death. The Nazgûl are nine formerly human kings who were given Rings of Power and are thus controlled by Sauron. They are unable to die as long as they are subordinate to the One Ring. They are not exactly living, but they are undead. Nor can they be killed because "the power of their master is in them, and they stand or fall by him" (*LOTR* 273). Their history is told in "Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age" in *The Silmarillion*:

> Those who used the Nine Rings became mighty in their day, kings, sorcerers, and warriors of old. They obtained glory and great wealth, yet it turned to their undoing. They had, as it seemed, unending life, yet life became unendurable to them. They could walk, if they would, unseen by all eyes in this world beneath the sun, and they could see things in worlds invisible to mortal men; but too often they beheld only the phantoms and delusions of Sauron. And one by one, sooner or later, according to their native strength and to the good or evil of their wills in the

> beginning, they fell under the thraldom of the ring that they bore and under the domination of the One, which was Sauron's. And they became for ever invisible save to him that wore the Ruling Ring, and they entered into the realm of shadows. The Nazgûl were they, the Ringwraiths, the Enemy's most terrible servants; darkness went with them, and they cried with the voices of death. (*TS* 348)

As opposed to Aragorn, to whom has been given the grace to go at his will,[40] they are abominations indeed. Aragorn recognises that his natural life has reached its end, and saying his farewells, goes to the House of the Kings in the Silent Street to lie down to die, where he falls into a peaceful sleep: "[t]hen a great beauty was revealed in him, so that all who after came there looked on him in wonder; for they saw that the grace of his youth, and the valour of his manhood, and the wisdom and majesty of his age were blended together." The image of the dead King is described by the narrator as "an image of the splendour of the Kings of Men in glory undimmed" – a striking contrast to the Nazgûl (*LOTR* 1062-63).

Tolkien "interweaves the two themes of death and immortality, constantly causing the meaning of each to overflow across the boundaries of the other" (Greenwood 185). By portraying different characters with long life and immortality, Tolkien offers an opportunity for a recovered perspective on life and death, and reminds a very important fact: "the omnipresence of death renders life immensely precious" (R. Wood 20).

2.2.6. An Open Mind towards Strangers

Recovery in Tolkien's works also involves a resonsideration of the concept of "other." As pointed out by Chance, "the Shire rustics' fear of outsiders," the Dwarves' "suspicion and fear" of the Elves; Elves' of Dwarves; Men of other Men "and strange creatures of all sorts" is utilised by Tolkien as a "disapproval of xenophobia" ("Subversive" 161).

At the same time as the readers are familiarised with the two Hobbit heroes of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, they are introduced to these Hobbits' so-called

[40] "A good Númenórean died of free will when he felt it to be time to do so" (Tolkien, *Letters* 205).

peculiarities. Bilbo and Frodo are regarded by some Hobbits as eccentrics: Bilbo is the daughter of "the famous Belladonna Took," from whom he probably inherited "something a bit queer in his make-up." The only reason Tooks are considered "queer" is the fact that "once in a while members of the Took-clan would go and have adventures," which is so humiliating that the family hushes it up. This fact has even led to the rumour that one of the ancestors of the Tooks must have taken an Elf wife (*TH* 5). Bilbo's adventure makes the rumours even worse; now, other Hobbits are gossiping about him during tavern talks: "[h]e's often away from home. And look at the outlandish folk that visit him: dwarves coming at night, and that old wandering conjuror, Gandalf, and all" (*LOTR* 24). Frodo, Bilbo's distant cousin and adopted heir, "often wandered by himself, and to the amazement of sensible folk he was sometimes seen far from home walking in the hills and woods under the starlight" (*LOTR* 42). Frodo has possibly inherited his "eccentricity" from his Took side. Hobbits enable Tolkien to offer "an image of the domesticated side of the seemingly harmless devotion to self, clan, or race that is part of the universal human tendency toward […] ethnic self-aggrandizement" (Evans 214).

Identification with the Hobbits does not disallow reservations about the perspective of the ordinary Hobbit. It is obvious that Hobbits can be "as provincial in the Shire as people are on earth" (Gasque 154). Not only do Hobbits live in what Basney describes as "xenophobic isolation," some of them are even intolerant of other Hobbits who happen to live in a different part of the Shire (187). In Buckland, Frodo is criticised for mixing himself up with Hobbiton folk, because "[f]olk are queer up there" (*LOTR* 94). Similarly in Hobbiton, it is Bucklanders who are regarded as "queer" not only because they live on the *wrong* side of the river, but also because they "fool about with boats on that big river – and that isn't natural" (*LOTR* 22, 23, 69). Dickerson and Evans emphasise that Tolkien's prejudiced characters serve as a warning to the readers against what Wirzba calls "romanticiz[ing] local community life" (8). Wirzba has written,

> [i]t is dangerous to romanticize local community life, especially when we remember that local communities have often been susceptible to various forms of provincialism. Farming communities, for instance, have not always been respectful of the contributions of women, nor have they been very welcoming of foreigners or people with new ideas. The result has often been a form of communal claustrophobia. (8-9)

It is true that most Hobbits are "rather smug, not interested in anything beyond the Shire and suspicious of anything unusual or 'unhobbitlike,'" but among these Hobbits, there are a few provincial characters that are impossible to identify with (Purtill 90). One is Sam's father, the Gaffer, an agricultural worker who does not approve of his son's love of the tales of the old days that Bilbo tells. His advice to Sam is "Elves and Dragons! […] Cabbages and potatoes are better for me and you. Don't go getting mixed up in the business of your betters, or you'll land in trouble too big for you" (*LOTR* 24). Ted Sandyman the miller is downright irritating in his shutting himself off stubbornly from the world outside his narrow life. He does not believe in Dragons, he accuses another Hobbit of lying about having seen an Ent, he does not care about (or believe) the Elves' moving West, he calls Bilbo and Frodo "cracked," and mocks Sam because he is getting his news about Elves from Bilbo (*LOTR* 44-45). This failure to identify with these narrow-minded individuals makes it possible for Tolkien to offer a chance of recovery of the concept of otherness. Most people are familiar with similar characters from the primary world even if they have not made first-hand acquaintance with them. The attributes of these Hobbits are not only recognisable but also typical aspects of humanity (Flieger, *Green* 10-11). These individuals are not like Sam, who is educated by Bilbo and fascinated by Elves. They suffer from what Tolkien describes as "a mental myopia which is proud of itself, a smugness (in varying degrees) and cocksureness, and a readiness to measure and sum up all things from a limited experience, largely enshrined in sententious traditional 'wisdom'" (*Letters* 329). In his portrayal of these Hobbits, "Tolkien is obviously commenting on the unhealthy conservatism of close-minded people" (Bloom, *Tolkien's* The Hobbit 42).

These individuals could be taken as a reminder that confining oneself in restricted surroundings could well end in a loss of touch with the outside world and its inhabitants. As Bloom observes, "once individuals make a decision to leave the safe, traditional, and well-known enclaves behind to embrace and experience life, life changes them." Going through a process of growth "that involves embracing the new," those who take the chance of living life reap its rewards (42-43). The Hobbit heroes Bilbo, Frodo, Sam, Merry, and Pippin eventually come to disregard what these small-minded neighbours think. Bilbo Baggins, who in the beginning prided himself for not

doing anything unexpected and therefore being respectable, now understands that such respect is not at all worthy. Bilbo has lost his reputation, but the narrators tells that,

> for ever after he remained an elf-friend, and had the honour of dwarves, wizards, and all such folk as ever passed that way; but he was no longer quite respectable. He was in fact held by all the hobbits of the neighbourhood to be 'queer' – except by his nephews and nieces on the Took side, but even they were not encouraged in their friendship by their elders. I am sorry to say he did not mind. […] He took to writing poetry and visiting the elves; and though many shook their heads and touched their foreheads and said "Poor old Baggins!" and though few believed any of his tales, he remained very happy to the end of his days. (*TH* 348-49)

To the narrow-minded Hobbit, Bilbo looks as if he has lost his place in the society; however, it is quite the contrary. As Zipes remarks, Bilbo has "regained his place in the society with a more profound understanding of his powers and the knowledge of how to cope with the divisive forces in the world." Having recovered from his initial suspicion of unfamiliar peoples, he has also learned the importance of "brotherhood" in creating and maintaining peace (Zipes, *Breaking* 173).

Gimli and Legolas are two other characters that help Tolkien to portray the development of a new attitude towards strangers. Although Dwarves and Elves were once allies and did business together, they are now estranged. These two peoples are ordinarily distant to each other, but there is a specific enmity between Gimli and Legolas, because Gimli's father Gloin was imprisoned by Legolas's father, the Elvenking of Mirkwood, in *The Hobbit* (*TH* 198). After the Council of Elrond, Gimli and Legolas are appointed to accompany Frodo in his perilous quest, and from then on, they fight side by side against all their enemies. Gimli's meeting Queen Galadriel of Lothlórien changes his perspective: "it seemed to him that he looked suddenly into the heart of an enemy and saw there love and understanding" (*LOTR* 356). This encounter instils in Gimli a deep love and respect for the Elf, so deep that he challenges a Rider of Rohan, Éomer, who speaks unfavourably of her although he knows practically nothing about her – doing exactly what Gimli did before (*LOTR* 432). It is not only Gimli who changes his attitude towards the other. Legolas is not the same Elf after he arrives in Lothlórien: he often takes Gimli with him when he goes "abroad in the land" leaving their other companions behind, who "wondered at this change" (*LOTR* 359). Soon, in Zimbardo's words, "out of hostility grows loving competition" (103).

Elves are not only distrusted by Dwarves, but also by Hobbits and Men. As provincial Hobbits like Ted Sandyman and heroic characters like Boromir, Éomer, and Gimli illustrate, people of Middle-earth are too ready to believe in malicious rumours about the Elves, perhaps because of a fear of the unknown. However, once they get to know the Elves like Gimli does, they greatly admire and respect them. Gimli the stubborn Dwarf leaves their enmity aside, and allows the competitive spirit between himself and Legolas turn into co-operation and understanding. Out of competition grows love, and "at last each is led to the desire to see the beautiful through the eyes of the other" (Zimbardo 103). Gimli promises to accompany Legolas into the Old Forest, and Legolas will visit The Caverns of Helm's Deep with Gimli (*LOTR* 548). In Appendix A of *The Lord of the Rings*, one learns that having developed a great friendship, "greater than any that has been between Elf and Dwarf," Gimli leaves his own people to sail to the Undying Lands with the Elves, which is "strange indeed" even for the narrator (*LOTR* 1081). In order not to part with Legolas (and probably with Galadriel), Gimli forsakes a "long and glorious rest with his ancestors" (R. Wood 130). Tolkien seems to remind the readers that "enlightenment and civilization" are based upon "diversity of opinion, and acceptance of those who are Other" (Chance, "Subversive" 165).

2.3. THE IMPORTANCE OF RECOVERY

Finally, Tolkien illustrates the power of recovery by contrasting such characters as Denethor, Saruman, and Sauron with the Elves, who, Bassham argues, symbolise the "sanative power of recovery" ("Lewis and Tolkien" 247). Elves can take delight in the simplest things and the most ordinary people just because they are "other." Their fascination with other living things manifests itself in their "always wish[ing] to talk to everything." As Treebeard says, it was the old Elves who woke trees up, taught them to speak and learned their tree-talk (*LOTR* 468). Although Elves are virtually immortal and live to be hundreds, even thousands of years old, they are neither world-weary nor do they succumb to "the drab blur of triteness or familiarity" ("Fairy" 146). They look at the world with an "ever-fresh wonder and delight" (Bassham, "Lewis and Tolkien" 247). They dwell mostly in the woods, where they love wandering under starlight (*TH* 194). Natural beauty prompts Elves to sing, and they are often seen harping, dancing,

feasting, and merrymaking in nature. Like Tom Bombadil, Elves have "a devoted love of the physical world, and a desire to observe and understand it for its own sake and as 'other'" (*Letters* 236). "Most astonishing wonderful!" exclaims an Elf upon seeing a Hobbit in their own Rivendell (*TH* 59). When Legolas sees a Huorn for the first time, he gives a sudden cry: "[t]here are eyes! […] Eyes looking out from the shadows of the boughs! I never saw such eyes before." He refrains from going to the Huorn only after Gandalf's reminder of their more urgent business (*LOTR* 549). Elves' habitations also offer recovery in the literal sense to the weary wanderer: in "the fair valley of Rivendell where Elrond lives in the Last Homely House," the Hobbit, the Wizard, the Dwarves, and the ponies grow refreshed and strong in a few days" (*TH* 61). Frodo is cured of his deadly stab wound in Rivendell. Similarly, the fellowship recover from their weariness, and Gandalf from his battle with a Balrog[41] in Lothlórien. Even the streams running through Elven realms are "healing to the weary" (*LOTR* 339).

At the other end of the recovery spectrum are the characters who are unable to see, or imagine others seeing the world differently: Denethor, the Steward of the non-existent High King of Gondor; Saruman, the White Wizard; and Sauron, the Lord of the Rings himself, none of whom have been able to unbind themselves from possessiveness. Denethor, proud and grieving for his son, cannot imagine that the hosts of the evil lord Sauron could be defeated. He calls Gandalf ignorant because he still has hope, and adds, "against the Power that now arises there is no victory." He cannot comprehend what Gandalf is trying to do, and accuses him of intending to usurp his chair and rule in his stead. Afterwards, in his despair, he commits suicide by casting himself on his own funeral pyre (*LOTR* 853-54). Neither can Saruman conceive of doing anything against the "new Power" that is arising. He wants to capture the Ring before Sauron does, and to have control on the new power, thus on Middle-earth (*LOTR* 259-60). This lust for power and dominion eventually transforms him into a malicious, petty old man in the end. He gets satisfaction out of the Hobbits' misery upon seeing the state the Shire is in:

[41] A Balrog is a "primeval spirit of destroying fire" (*Letters* 180). As described in *The Silmarillion*, these demons have whips of flame and hearts of fire, but they are cloaked in darkness (*TS* 54). This particular Balrog is referred to as "Durin's Bane," and is a thing of terror that lay hidden at the earth's foundations until the dwarves of Khazad-dûm dug so deep that they roused it from sleep (*LOTR* 317, 1072).

> You made me laugh, you hobbit-lordlings. […] You thought you had done very well out of it all, and could now just amble back and have a nice quiet time in the country. Saruman's home could be all wrecked, and he could be turned out, but no one could touch yours. […] "Well," thought I, "if they're such fools, I will get ahead of them and teach them a lesson. One ill turn deserves another." It would have been a sharper lesson, if only you had given me a little more time and more Men. Still I have already done much that you will find it hard to mend or undo in your lives. And it will be pleasant to think of that and set it against my injuries. (*LOTR* 1018)

Sauron the Dark Lord is the ultimate embodiment of "the desire to reduce things and people to possessions," which is the major obstacle to seeing the world as one should (Kocher, *Master* 61). Sauron cannot apprehend anyone refusing to take the Ring for himself/herself, let alone having the Ring and seeking to destroy it (*LOTR* 269, 497). Auden points to Sauron's "lack of imagination" as his weak point: "while Good can imagine what it would be like to be Evil, Evil cannot imagine what it would be like to be Good" ("The Quest" 57). The good characters – Aragorn, Gandalf, and Galadriel – can picture what they might become if they had the Ring, so they refuse to take it. Aragorn knows that he could turn into a wraith, like the nine kings who became the Nazgûl. Gandalf and Galadriel are aware that the Ring gives power according to the possessor's measure; while Gandalf would have a power "too great and terrible," Galadriel would be "[s]tronger than the foundations of the earth" if they claimed the Ring for themselves (*LOTR* 61, 366). After Aragorn reveals himself to Sauron in the seeing stone, Sauron assumes that if the heir to the throne is alive, he must have the Ring. This, in turn, forces him into a premature stroke before he has planned all his strategies, which eventually becomes his downfall. Auden argues this to be one of Tolkien's "most impressive achievements;" that is, convincing the readers that "the mistakes which Sauron makes is his own undoing are the kinds of mistake which Evil, however powerful, cannot help making, just because it is evil" ("Good and Evil" 141). Sauron sends all his forces to Gondor, where he presumes the Ring to be, and neglects the watch on his own borders, allowing Frodo and Sam to reach Mount Doom (*LOTR* 780). Like Denethor and Saruman, Sauron, too, eventually pays a great price because of his failure to be a recoverer.

As stated in the beginning of this chapter, Tolkien uses a distinct process of recovery, and through recovery, he puts the strongest emphasis, in Elder's words, on "restraining

our individual appetites, defending beloved landscapes against the ethical and technological challenges symbolized by Mordor, and fostering sustainability in our communities" (x). In Curry's words, what Tolkien illustrates is,

> no matter how dark the future appears we must, like Frodo, Sam, and (just as importantly) Gandalf, refuse despair. Even more importantly, there *is* still hope. The future is not fixed. There are still places on Earth that are beautiful, and loved, and cared for; there are still wonders, people who can wonder, and indeed who work wonders. And that is what *The Lord of the Rings* itself […] conveys: Arda (the Earth) unmarred, and even healed. That includes us." (*Defending* 150)

As Hume discusses, "only after we have freed ourselves from our sense of possessing the familiar" can newness become available to us (16). Tolkien undoubtedly helps people attain this sense of freshness. By placing ordinary things in extraordinary settings and making them more luminous, and by challenging pre-conceived ideas regarding nature and environment, courage and heroism, good and evil, death and immortality, and the strange and the familiar, Tolkien provides a new perspective on the world so that it can be seen anew.

CHAPTER III
EUCATASTROPHE: A WAY TO GLIMPSE AN UNDERLYING TRUTH

3.1. ESCAPE AND HAPPY ENDING

As examined in Chapter I of this study, Tolkien concludes his fairy-story essay by considering escape and consolation, "which are naturally closely connected" ("Fairy" 147). He explains, the many kinds of escapes that fairy-stories provide bring about consolation. One of these is the desire to escape from "our present time and self-made misery." Tolkien believes his present time to be "an age of 'improved means to deteriorated ends,'" when "we are acutely conscious both of the ugliness of our works, and of their evil"[42] ("Fairy" 151). Tolkien's works provide escape from such ugly things as "the noise, stench, ruthlessness, and extravagance of the internal-combustion engine," or "hunger, thirst, poverty, pain, sorrow, injustice, death" into places like the Shire, a naturally beautiful village where Hobbits find happiness in enjoying simple, ordinary things rather than in the consumption of things purchased and devoured ("Fairy" 151). Hobbits love peace and quiet; and live in beautiful one-storey homes dug into the earth in a world where there is "less noise and more green" (*TH* 5). They neither understand nor like "machines more complicated than a forge-bellows, a water-mill, or a hand-loom" (*LOTR* 1). Similarly, the Elf habitations in Middle-earth makes it possible to live for a time in another world, whose beauty comes from mighty trees, scented flowers, running waters, and golden sunlight and silver starlight. Tolkien's son Michael, whom Tolkien thought to be "one of the few people who really know what *The Lord of the Rings* is about," says,

> there is nothing mysterious behind the scale and extent of the appeal of my father's writing; his genius has simply answered the call of people of any age or temperament most wearied by the ugliness, the speed, the shoddy values, the slick philosophies which have been given them as dreary substitutions for the beauty, the sense of mystery, the excitement, adventure, heroism and joy without which the

[42] Tolkien speculates that these ugly works could have been better if the engineers "had been brought up on more fantasy" ("Fairy" 149).

> very soul of man begins to whither and die within him. (qtd. in Grotta 135)

In this respect, Middle-earth is an example of what Rabkin describes as "a world that offers not escape but liberation" (*Worlds* 23), and one needs this liberation in order to regroup, and face the miseries and pains of the primary world again (Northrup 829).

Tolkien's secondary world also offers liberation from "ancient limitations" ("Fairy" 151). It satisfies "pardonable weaknesses and curiosities," like when Bilbo flies on the backs of giant Eagles ("Fairy" 151; *TH* 125; *LOTR* 261). It fulfils "profounder wishes: such as the desire to converse with other living things" when ravens talk to the Dwarves and bring them news, when humans understand bird talk and learn from them the way to kill a Dragon, when the Ents speak and collaborate with Hobbits against their common enemies ("Fairy" 152; *TH* 299-301, 289; *LOTR* 463-487). It provides escape from death, "the oldest and deepest desire," with immortal Elves, and long-living peoples like the Númenóreans and the Dwarves ("Fairy" 153). One is freed from the limitations of time, as well: Tolkien has opened "a door on Other Time," passing through which we are able to "stand outside our own time, outside Time itself, maybe" ("Fairy" 129). The story is filled with "echoes of the dim past," which are heard in songs or tales (Ryan 110). Sometimes the characters of ancient legends spring to life in front of the people's eyes, like when Frodo is astonished at Master Elrond's first-hand experience of the "the glory of Elder Days," and when Théoden is surprised at seeing an Ent, which he thought to belong to children's stories. In Middle-earth, the readers, too, get glimpses of its vast history, reaching back thousands of years. It is possible to experience similar things to what Frodo has experienced in Lothlórien: "it seemed to him that he has stepped over a bridge of time into a corner of the Elder Days, and was now walking in a world that was no more" (*LOTR* 349). To sum up, escape into Tolkien's imaginary world fulfils certain essential needs. As famous psychoanalyst Bruno Bettelheim writes of fantasy, while Tolkien's secondary world is *unreal*, "the good feelings it gives us about ourselves and our future *are real*, and these real good feelings are what need to sustain us" (126).

Nevertheless, for Tolkien, the most important function of escape is to bring about "the Consolation of the Happy Ending" ("Fairy" 153). As stated earlier, Tolkien's claim is that all good fairy-stories end with a sudden joyous turn; in other words, eucatastrophe,

which is how the fairy-story gets as close to truth as possible. Tolkien utilises eucatastrophe to lay bare certain underlying truths, and to encourage an application of these recently acquired or recovered notions to the primary world. Tolkien has created many supremely eucatastrophic moments in his works besides several mini-eucatastrophes, all of which arise when all seem lost. The remainder of this chapter will be committed to the major eucatastrophes in Tolkien's legendarium and the events that lead to them, starting from the ones in *The Silmarillion*, which, as Christopher Tolkien writes in the foreword, relates "the events of a far earlier time" than those of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* (7).

3.2. THE ELVES' LONG EXILE AND THEIR RETURN

Tolkien's happy endings do not deny defeat or loss, which abound especially in *The Silmarillion*. All the loss and suffering experienced throughout the three long ages of Middle-earth serve as the preparation for the ultimate eucatastrophe. As Senior points out, countless people die "violent and often horrible deaths," in *The Silmarillion*, and "virtually no central character survives" ("Loss" 176, 178). R. Wood attributes this "exceedingly bleak" outlook to Tolkien's overwhelming indebtedness to the world of Scandinavian mythology (18). The loss of the Silmarils, and the Elves' wars to regain them take up most of *The Silmarillion*, and as Tolkien writes in a letter, the lust for the Silmarils brings all the Elven kingdoms to ruin (*Letters* 149). However, although *The Silmarillion* is full of "stories of despair and defeat," these stories also include "a reason to hope and the possibility of ultimate victory" (Whittingham 9). Some of the eucatastrophes of *The Silmarillion* occur within the book itself; however, they become clearer when viewed through a wider perspective, and when evaluated within the whole context of Tolkien's legendarium. In order for this to be fully explained, the events leading to the ruin and the redemption of the Elves must be examined.

While most of the Elves still live in the Undying Lands, Fëanor, the chief artisan of the Elves, ponders how the light of the Two Trees of Valinor[43] might be preserved forever,

[43] Tolkien first describes Valinor in "Of the Beginning of Days" as a region where the demiurgic Valar have their houses, gardens, and towers: "the Deathless dwelt there, and there naught faded nor withered, neither was there any stain upon flower or leaf in that land, nor any

and summoning "all his lore, and his power, and his subtle skill" makes three great jewels called the Silmarils (*TS* 78). These look like diamond crystals, but contain an inner fire, which Fëanor has made of the blended light of the Two Trees. When evil Melkor and Ungoliant poison the Two Trees, stripping Valinor of their light, Yavanna demands the Silmarils to renew the Trees. "The Light of the Trees has passed away, and lives now only in the Silmarils of Fëanor. […] Yet had I but a little of that light I could recall life to the Trees, ere their roots decay; and then our hurt should be healed, and the malice of Melkor be confounded," she says (*TS* 91). However, Fëanor now loves the Silmarils "with a greedy love," and has grown too possessive of them (*TS* 80). Therefore, he refuses Yavanna's demand, but at that moment learns that Melkor has also stolen his jewels. Fëanor is described by the narrator as "the mightiest in all parts of body and mind, in valour, in endurance, in beauty, in understanding, in skill, in strength and in subtlety alike, of all the Children of Ilúvatar," but his heart is now "fast bound to these things that he himself had made" (*TS* 115, 79). Therefore, the greed of such a great character ends in equally great dyscatastrophe, or, sorrow and failure, not only for himself and his kin, but also for all the future inhabitants of Middle-earth. However, as Tolkien explains in "On Fairy-stories," the dyscatastrophe that Fëanor has caused is essential for the eucatastrophe to come ("Fairy" 153).

After the destruction of the Two Trees, and the theft of the Silmarils, Melkor flees to Middle-earth, where he builds his fortress. He declares himself the King of the World, and wears an iron crown adorned with the three Silmarils. Fëanor rebels against the Valar, who forbid him from pursuing Melkor, and leaves Valinor with the other Noldor[44] to follow Melkor, whom he now calls Morgoth, the Black Foe of the World, by which name he will be known ever after. The Noldor slay many of the Teleri to seize their ships, committing a heinous act of kinslaying in the Blessed Realm. A "loud voice, solemn and terrible," says that not only are they banned forever from Valinor, since they have stained Valinor with the blood of their kin, a horrible fate now awaits them:

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corruption or sickness in anything that lived; for the very stones and waters were hallowed (*TS* 42). Valinor is also referred to as the "Undying Lands" and the "Blessed Realm."

[44] The Vanyar, the Noldor, and the Teleri are the three kindred of Elves who come from Middle-earth to live in the Undying Lands at the bidding of the Valar. They are also known as the Eldar.

> [Though] no sickness may assail you, yet slain ye may be, and slain ye shall be: by weapon and by torment and by grief; and your houseless spirits shall come then to Mandos. There long shall ye abide and yearn for your bodies, and find little pity though all whom ye have slain should entreat for you. And those that endure in Middle-earth and come not to Mandos shall grow weary of the world as with a great burden, and shall wane, and become as shadows of regret before the younger race that cometh after. The Valar have spoken. (*TS* 103-4)

Upon hearing this, a group of Noldor turn back, but the rest embark upon a long journey towards Middle-earth during which many of them die before they even face the enemy they are after. When he arrives at Middle-earth, Fëanor burns all the ships so that no one can go back to Valinor and seek pardon of the Valar. The Noldor fight five major battles against Morgoth after their arrival, and Morgoth's greatest victory comes after the third of these wars, the Battle of Unnumbered Tears, when he utterly defeats the Noldor, and severs the relationships between Elves and Men:

> Great was the triumph of Morgoth, and his design was accomplished in a manner after his own heart; for Men took the lives of Men, and betrayed the Eldar [the Elves], and fear and hatred were aroused among those that should have been united against him. From that day the hearts of the Elves were estranged from Men, save only those of the Three Houses of the Edain [the first Men]. (*TS* 235)

Tolkien believes, for a story to be successful, "there must be some relevance to the 'human situation'" (*Letters* 233). He utilises fantasy as a way of "making statements, of leading to perceptions that are valuable and valid," and of dealing with "essences" (Parker 601). An essence Tolkien deals with is the destructive effects of possessive desire, an idea he revisits in all his works. He depicts possessiveness as the source of many evil deeds, as is obvious in Fëanor's obsession with his Silmarils. Ulmo the Vala's warning, "[l]ove not too well the work of thy hands and the devices of thy heart" has applicability in the primary world, where possessive desire towards an object will have ruinous effects on the person pursuing it, or the other people around him/her (*TS* 150). All the races of Middle-earth are prone to possessiveness, and it is heroic not to be tempted by it. However, as Carter points out, eventually, "[t]he jealous, the greedy, the proud, the power-hungry, all receive commensurate punishment" (*Tolkien* 77). For instance, Sméagol is ruined by his possession of the Ring and turned into Gollum. Dwarves delved so greedily and deep in search of *mithril* (silver-steel) in Khazad-dûm that they disturbed a Balrog of Morgoth, thus having to abandon their home.

Even the Elves are prone to possessiveness, and Fëanor is not the only example. Apart from priceless gems, the Elves are also possessive of their territory. In *The Hobbit,* upon the Dwarves' supposed trespassing, the Elvenking of Mirkwood says to them, "[i]t is a crime to wander in my realm without leave. Do you forget that you were in my kingdom, using the road that my people made?" (*TH* 201). After the fellowship arrive in Lothlórien in *The Lord of the Rings,* Haldir wants to blindfold Gimli, because the Elves fear and distrust the world outside, and they "allow no strangers to spy out the secrets of the Naith.[45] Few indeed are permitted even to set foot there" (*LOTR* 349, 347). In all these instances, possessiveness leads at best to resentment, and at worst to destruction; however, none can match the results of Fëanor's blindness by his love for his Silmarils, which leads all Middle-earth to loss and ruin. As Evans remarks, "Fëanor's jealousy over these created works and Melkor's lust for them" drive the narrative of *The Silmarillion* through multiple tragedies (209). However, these tragedies are also what bring about eucatastrophe, which is not possible without the recognition of great loss (Tolkien, "Fairy" 153). In the secondary world of Middle-earth, as in the primary world, "the happiest solution involves loss as well as gain" (Auden, "Good and Evil" 142).

Fëanor's refusal to give up his gems ends in the destruction of the "cosmogonic trees of life" (Curry, *Defending* 53). Although his initial purpose in making the Silmarils was to preserve the light of the Two Trees forever, his greedy love causes him to reject a Vala's demand that he give up his Silmarils to revive the Trees. As if this were not wrong enough, he rebels against the whole Valar and chases the Silmaril thief to Middle-earth, killing many of his own kin. Fëanor's possessive desire ends in disaster for himself and his followers, which is Tolkien's means of showing how the first evil choice led to many other crimes like murder and treachery (Purtill 168). Elves are not portrayed as ordinary characters as the Hobbits, with whom it is easy to identify. They are greater, and their erroneous choices end in greater catastrophes. Therefore, their possessive desires are correspondingly more destructive. "Destructive power and desire centres upon an object personifying such conflict," and Silmarils are the first artefacts in Tolkien's legendarium that are pursued by a possessive desire and that cause the death of many of Tolkien's characters (Upstone 56). Tolkien puts other characters after

[45] the north-eastern part of Lothlórien

similar objects in order to employ the basic function of eucatastrophe: he enables the readers to get a glimpse of an underlying truth – that one *must* recover from possessive desires – which will be examined below after the Battle of Five Armies.

Whittingham asserts that although he tells very dark tales in *The Silmarillion*, "Tolkien places the focus on the future and hope for tomorrow" (199). During all this loss and defeat, there have also been glimpses of hope. Some of the battles of the War of the Jewels are won, but the greatest victory is Beren and Lúthien's wresting of a Silmaril from Morgoth's crown. "Among the tales of sorrow and of ruin that come down to us from the darkness of those days there are yet some in which amid weeping there is joy and under the shadow of death light that endures. And of these histories most fair still in the ears of the Elves is the tale of Beren and Lúthien" (*TS* 194). Beren, a mortal of the eldest house of Men, falls in love with Lúthien, an immortal Elf and the only daughter of King Thingol, and seeks her hand in marriage. Thingol, regarding him unworthy of his daughter, sets what he thinks is an impossible task on Beren to achieve if he wants to marry Lúthien: bring him a Silmaril from Morgoth's crown. Beren and Lúthien embark upon a perilous quest, and together, achieve "the greatest deed that has been dared by Elves and Men:" steal a Silmaril from Morgoth (*TS* 216). However, they are unable to keep it: Morgoth's giant werewolf bites off Beren's hand, and runs off in madness with Beren's hand holding the Silmaril in its stomach. Upon their return, King Thingol's heart softens, and Beren marries Lúthien. However, the werewolf is now in Thingol's kingdom, and Beren, understands "that the Quest was not yet fulfilled" (*TS* 222). With a small company, Beren launches a hunt for the werewolf, which mortally wounds Beren, and which is then killed and gutted. Beren's last deed before he dies is handing the Silmaril to Thingol. Grieving Lúthien soon follows her beloved in death, and comes to the Halls of Mandos.[46] She sings a song so sorrowful that Mandos is "moved to pity, who never before was so moved, nor has been since" (*TS* 225). Beren and Lúthien are given a second life in Middle-earth as mortals.

Apart from satisfying the desire to escape from death, the tale of Beren and Lúthien

[46] The House of the Dead, where the spirits of dead Elves go, and the Vala who is the Judge of the Dead are both called "Mandos."

contains the first example of the motive that "the wheels of the world" are often turned by "the seemingly unknown and weak" (Tolkien, *LOTR* 269; *LT* 149). None of the other characters of *The Silmarillion* dare to venture on such a dangerous deed, and manage to steal a jewel from Morgoth's crown. This motive runs throughout Tolkien's legendarium, and is utilised to give readers a glimpse of the ordinary person's achievement of a colossal and seemingly impossible task. Like many other critics, Upstone finds applicability in the idea that one individual is powerful enough to change the course of history. She believes, this idea can be seen as "transcendent of context," and adds, "[t]he resonance of Tolkien's themes allows the filling in of 'blanks' with personal or collective experience" (60).

The major eucatastrophe inside the framework of *The Silmarillion* comes upon the intervention of the Valar in the conquest of Morgoth after Eärendil the Mariner, bearing the Silmaril that Beren and Lúthien recovered, sails to Valinor and pleads for help against Morgoth. The Valar gather a host of Elves, and the might of Valinor overcomes Morgoth, who is captured and chained. The remaining Silmarils are taken from his crown, but although it has been decided that the two jewels be taken back to Valinor, Fëanor's two sons steal them. However, they are destroyed by them, casting themselves with the Silmarils into a fiery chasm and into the sea (*TS* 298-306).

Upstone argues, heroic status is marked by the ability to forgo the objects of desire and power (56). Beren relinquishes the Silmaril for Lúthien, achieving what the mighty Fëanor and his sons cannot. Eärendil the half-Elven willingly returns the Silmaril to the Valar, who destine Eärendil to sail his ship through the firmament wearing the Silmaril on his brow, known from then on as the Evening Star,[47] and called *Gil-Estel*, the Star of (High) Hope by the Elves (*TS* 301, 399). Here, the humble and the ordinary is elevated above the exalted, which will later become a dominant theme among the Hobbits (Greenwood 177). The exaltation of the humble happens not only because they commit heroic deeds that no one else dares to, but also because they are able to let go of an

[47] Also known as the "morning star," or "Venus" in the primary world (Tolkien, *Letters* 385; Chance, *Tolkien's Art* 2, Bramlett 77; Curry, *Defending* 53). Tolkien explains that Eärendil's name originates in Anglo-Saxon *Eärendel*, which meant "ray of light," and sometimes applied to the morning star (*Letters* 150).

object of power. This theme is repeated in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, which will be examined later.

After their victory, the Middle-earth Elves are pardoned and given permission to return to Valinor; however, some have now become possessive of Middle-earth, and decide to remain here.[48] The end of the First Age is marked by the imprisonment of Morgoth by the Valar into "the Timeless Void," but although he is thrust "beyond the Walls of the World," his malice still lingers, because the lies that he "sowed in the hearts of Elves and Men are a seed that does not die and cannot be destroyed; and ever and anon it sprouts anew, and will bear dark fruit even unto the latest days" (*TS* 307).

For Tolkien, the eucatastrophic end denies "universal final defeat" ("Fairy" 153). Therefore, this ending is not a eucatastrophe in every respect of the word, and Tolkien himself admits that his story ends with catastrophe (*Letters* 148). The Silmarils are lost forever to the Elves. Moreover, not all the Elves return to the Blessed Realm although the Valar bid them to, and having once again disobeyed the demiurges, they will never be admitted to Valinor. Finally, although the greatest enemy of Middle-earth is overthrown, ending the First Age, evil is not completely eradicated, which seems like a universal final defeat. The war against Morgoth has proved to be far from being a war to end all wars. Although Morgoth is removed from the world, his lieutenant Sauron rises in his stead (*TS* 35). Soon called "the Dark Lord" by his enemies, Sauron gathers "under his government all the evil things of the days of Morgoth that remained on earth or beneath it, and the Orcs were at his command and multiplied like flies. Thus the Black Years began" (*TS* 348).

In *The Hobbit*, Sauron is not mentioned by name, and in *The Lord of the Rings*, the readers only catch a glimpse of the long tale of Sauron's "past guile, ambition, and triumph," as told by Gandalf, Elrond, and others, but *The Silmarillion* offers an opportunity to the reader to see Sauron in "full stature," which is essential to the understanding of the eucatastrophe of *The Lord of the Rings* (Kocher, *Master* 54).

[48] Those that remain are the Elves who the readers later meet in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

During the Second Age, Sauron, tricking the Elves, learns how to make Rings of Power, and putting a large part of his inherent power in it, makes the One Ring to rule all the others. The Elves still remember and remind the others of the Ring lore:

> *Three Rings for the Elven-kings under the sky,*
> *Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,*
> *Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die,*
> *One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne*
> *In the land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.*
> *One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,*
> *One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them*
> *In the land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.* (*LOTR* 50)

Sauron soon recovers all the lesser rings, except the three rings of the Elves, which possess the greatest powers.[49] He deals out his rings to Men and Dwarves, "hoping thus to bring under his sway all those that desired secret power beyond the measure of their kind," and manages at least to ensnare the Men, who will soon become the Nazgûl (*TS* 346-47). Sauron is almost as evil as Morgoth:

> Now Sauron's lust and pride increased, until he knew no bounds, and he determined to make himself master of all things in Middle-earth, and to destroy the Elves, and to compass, if he might, the downfall of Númenor. He brooked no freedom nor any rivalry, and he named himself Lord of the Earth. A mask he still could wear so that if he wished he might deceive the eyes of Men, seeming to them wise and fair. (*TS* 348)

In the beginning, Sauron is an angelic being, who, like Melkor, later falls victim to his pride and possessiveness. Besides his "customary arrogance and blind contempt," Sauron is "an obsessed being," wishing to "dominate everything and everybody" (Kocher, *Master* 56). As Auden remarks, this "lust for domination […] is not satisfied if another does what it wants; he must be made to do it against his will" ("The Quest" 57). Tolkien portrays Sauron as the ultimate embodiment of possessiveness, and provides glimpses of the degree of destruction such obsessive feelings as his might lead to. The catastrophes Sauron causes all have a role in bringing about the eucatastrophes, thereby exposing an underlying truth. When Sauron realises that he cannot dominate

[49] These three rings are those kept by Gandalf, Galadriel, and Elrond in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Númenor,[50] he causes its downfall. He provokes Númenóreans to break "the Ban of the Valar," and sail into "forbidden seas, going up with war against the Deathless, to wrest from them everlasting life within the Circles of the World" (*TS* 334-35). This causes the island to sink beneath the sea in Atlantis-fashion and Númenóreans to drown, except those who have remained loyal to the Valar and refused to take part in the rebellion.[51] Not of mortal flesh, Sauron survives though he loses his corporeal form. His spirit arises "out of the deep," and passing as "a shadow and a black wind" over the sea, comes back to Middle-earth, where he will spread his malice (*TS* 338). As Shippey observes, "[t]he whole history of Middle-earth seems to show that good is attained only at vast expense while evil recuperates almost at will" (*Author* 148).

Following all these catastrophes, the next joyous turn comes at the end of the Second Age, when Elves and Men decide to unite against Sauron. They form what is called "the Last Alliance," and gather the greatest host that has been mustered since the host of Valar went against Morgoth (*TS* 353). As it is not the first, this will not actually be the last alliance against evil of "people with drastically different cultures, languages, habits, and agenda" (Curry, *Defending* 67). Nor will it be Tolkien's last appeal for "tolerance across an enormous gap of times and attitudes and ethical styles" (Shippey, *Road* 97). People from "drastically different" backgrounds will unite against evil at the end of the Third Age, and finally defeat it. Tolkien uses the united struggle against evil during these long ages as a reminder of what Bruno Bettelheim identifies as the primary message of the fairy-story: "that a struggle against severe difficulties in life is unavoidable, is an intrinsic part of human existence" (8). The peoples of Middle-earth eventually achieve what Bettelheim suggests fairy-tale heroes do: they do not "shy away, but steadfastly meet unexpected and often unjust hardships," and "master all obstacles and at the end emerge victorious" (8). This is an important lesson to be learned and applied to the primary world. The alliance, too, eventually emerge victorious: they besiege the Dark Tower, Sauron's stronghold in Mordor, for a period of seven years, at the end of which Sauron himself comes forth. He kills both commanders

[50] This island, located to the west of Middle-earth and closest to Valinor, was given by the Valar to the Kings of Men as a gift for their help in the overthrow of Morgoth.

[51] These loyal Númenóreans later establish the kingdoms of Arnor and Gondor in Middle-earth.

of the Elves and Men, Gil-galad and Elendil, but Elendil's son Isildur manages to cut the Ruling Ring from Sauron's hand. Sauron is thoroughly defeated, and his spirit flees far away and hides in "waste places," not taking "visible shape again for many long years" (*TS* 354). The Second Age has ended in a eucatastrophe:

> Thus began the Third Age of the World, after the Eldest Days and the Black Years; and there was still hope in that time and the memory of mirth, and for long the White Tree of the Eldar flowered in the courts of the Kings of Men, for the seedling which he had saved Isildur planted in the citadel of Anor in memory of his brother, ere he departed from Gondor. (*TS* 354)

Tolkien wrote the myths and legends in *The Silmarillion* "in the classic style of the Old Norse sagas" (Grotta 164). It is not surprising that he took this as an opportunity to re-introduce to the world the theory of courage, whose essential quality is "indomitability," or, "paradox of defeat inevitable yet unacknowledged" (Tolkien, "Beowulf" 18). Tolkien said in a lecture that the theory of courage is "the great contribution of early Northern literature," and it involves the idea that the right side is right even without the hope of victory; even with the knowledge of the right side's ultimate defeat ("Beowulf" 20). This theory was once an important part of literary works like *Beowulf*. Tolkien claims that readers find Beowulf praiseworthy, because he fights bravely although he will eventually lose ("Beowulf" 38). Like the Norse heroes, who keep fighting on the right side although they know that they will be defeated, Tolkien's heroes continue to fight against monsters. Tolkien describes this doomed fight as "a potent but terrible solution in naked will and courage" ("Beowulf" 26).

Sale remarks that "heroism is not and never has been a constant set of values or actions; what has proven to be heroic in one age is always different from the heroic actions and values of the previous age" (*Modern Heroism* 6). However, Tolkien draws attention to a more important point: regardless of the various forms that heroism takes, there is one essential feature of heroism which transcends the boundaries of time and place: doing the right thing. It is true that modern people cannot act like the High Elves or Númenóreans, and might ask, like Éomer in *The Lord of the Rings*, "[h]ow shall a man judge what to do in such times?" The answer is, in Aragorn's words, "[a]s he ever has judged […] Good and ill have not changed since yesteryear; nor are they one thing among Elves and Dwarves and another among Men" (*LOTR* 438). Right and wrong are

"absolutes that do not vary from year to year or place to place or people to people" (Kocher, *Master* 52). The people in the primary world have to follow suit, and unite against the evils of their time forming similar alliances to those in Tolkien's secondary world. One might lose hope of the total elimination of the evils of the time, or think that others will soon replace these. They would be right, to a certain extent. As Gandalf the wise says, "[a]lways after a defeat and a respite, the Shadow takes another shape and grows again" (*LOTR* 51). The Second Age of Middle-earth ends in a eucatastrophe; however, the Third Age starts with hints of further catastrophe, as did the previous age:

> The servants of Sauron were routed and dispersed, yet they were not wholly destroyed; and though many Men turned now from evil and became subject to the heirs of Elendil, yet many more remembered Sauron in their hearts and hated the kingdoms of the West. The Dark Tower was levelled to the ground, yet its foundations remained, and it was not forgotten. (*TS* 354-55)

Moreover, the greatest evil of all, the Ring, survives, and so does Sauron, because "much of the strength and will of Sauron was passed into that One Ring" while it was being forged (*TS* 346). Although Isildur is counselled to cast the Ring into the fire by which it was forged, thereby causing the power of Sauron to diminish and Sauron to "remain only as a shadow of malice in the wilderness," he refuses to do so, and falling victim to possessive desires, he claims the Ring as his own (*TS* 355). Possessive desire once again leads to destruction when Isildur is soon killed and the Ring is lost. It only takes seven generations for Isildur's people to be divided into "petty realms and lordships," and to finally dwindle to a handful of Rangers (*TS* 356). Arnor, the first half of the Númenórean kingdom, vanishes, and Gondor, the other half, soon wanes, the last king dying without leaving an heir. The line of Kings fails, and Minas Tirith, the last city of Gondor, starts to be ruled by hereditary stewards. Sauron slowly grows and takes shape again in Middle-earth, where he becomes "the Necromancer" and "the Dark Lord" in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, respectively. He soon re-enters his old kingdom in Mordor with the Nazgûl, and re-erects his Dark Tower (*TS* 364).

In spite of all this defeat and loss, the people of Middle-earth do not give in to despair, and keep fighting against evil during the Third Age. This is what people in the primary world should also do. Although they know they will not be able to rid the world of all the wrongs, they should do what they can to correct some of these. In Gandalf's words,

"it is not our part to master all the tides of the world, but to do what is in us" (*LOTR* 879). The primary world is as full of stories of defeat and loss as *The Silmarillion*; however, one should also note that Tolkien has put the emphasis "on hope rather than despair and on victory rather than defeat," which should be reflected back upon the primary world (Whittingham 191).

As stated before, the eucatastrophe of *The Silmarillion* becomes clearer when evaluated alongside of *The Lord of the Rings*, which Tolkien intended to be preceded by *The Silmarillion*, although he was not able to publish it in his lifetime. The eucatastrophic moment, for Tolkien, follows a long period of sorrow, despair, struggle, and failure. "The consolation of fairy-stories," the joy of the eucatastrophe, is only possible with recognition of immense loss ("Fairy" 153). The final victory in *The Lord of the Rings* gains a new meaning when it is attained after thousands of years of struggle and despair; after what Senior describes as "incalculable devastation and annihilation faced by the denizens of Middle-earth From Fëanor to Frodo" ("Loss" 174). When the One Ring is destroyed – ironically, by someone who has been overwhelmed by his own possessive desires towards it – the realm of Sauron finally comes to an end. The readers have learned from Gandalf what would happen to Sauron after the destruction of The Ring:

> If it is destroyed, then he will fall; and his fall will be so low that none can foresee his arising ever again. For he will lose the best part of the strength that was native to him in his beginning, and all that was made or begun with that power will crumble, and he will be maimed for ever, becoming a mere spirit of malice that gnaws itself in the shadows, but cannot again grow or take shape. And so a great evil of this world will be removed. (*LOTR* 879)

However, the story does not end here. Readers also know that the destruction of The Ring means the Elves will "dwindle to a rustic folk of dell and cave, slowly to forget and to be forgotten," because the three rings Sauron has given the Elves will also lose their power (*LOTR* 365). As Gandalf tells Aragorn,

> [t]he Third Age of the world is ended, and the new age is begun […]. For though much has been saved, much must now pass away; and the power of the Three Rings also is ended. And all the lands that you see, and those that lie round about them, shall be dwellings of Men. For the time comes of the Dominion of Men, and the Elder Kindred [the Elves] shall fade or depart. (*LOTR* 971)

The time of the Elves is ending, and soon there will remain no Elves or Elven kingdoms on Middle-earth. However, the prevalent sense of loss at the passing of the Elves in *The Lord of the Rings* is overturned when this parting is evaluated along with the events told in *The Silmarillion*. The Elves who still live in Middle-earth do so against the will of the Valar, and they have lost admittance to Valinor. Galadriel, "the last remaining of the Great among the High Elves," for instance, lives in Middle-earth in exile as "one of the leaders of the Noldorin rebellion against the Valar" (*Letters* 180; *TS* 331). Her longing for the Undying Lands is obvious in the last two lines of her farewell song to the fellowship: "*But if of ships I now should sing, what ship would come to me, / What ship would bear me ever back across so wide a Sea?*" (*LOTR* 373). However, during the fellowship's stay in Lothlórien, Galadriel finds the opportunity for redemption. Her ban is lifted in reward for her rejection of the overwhelming temptation to take the Ring from Frodo (*Letters* 386, 407). When Frodo offers her the One Ring, Galadriel reflects for a while what she would become if she had it, and she decides against this: "I pass the test," she says. "I will diminish, and go into the West, and remain Galadriel" (*LOTR* 366). Now, the passing of the Elves from Middle-earth turns into a eucatastrophe when one knows that they are finally pardoned and are going back to Valinor.

3.3. THE BATTLE OF FIVE ARMIES

The eucatastrophe of *The Hobbit* happens at the end of the Battle of Five Armies when the Eagles and Beorn the werebear arrive, and suddenly turn the tide of the battle. On one side are the Goblins and the Wargs (wolves), and on the other are Elves, Dwarves, and Men, who do not have much hope of winning against the increasing numbers of Goblins. The narrator says at one point that "[v]ictory now vanished from hope," and Bilbo thinks "[i]t will not be long now […] before the goblins win the Gate, and we are all slaughtered or driven down and captured. Really it is enough to make one weep, after all one has gone through" (*TH* 327, 329). The arrival of the Eagles, and later of Beorn, acts as a counterbalance to the Goblins and the Wargs. Now, the events leading to the eucatastrophe will be examined.

Bilbo and the Dwarves are on the Lonely Mountain, looking for the secret entrance

marked on their map. They eventually find it, and the Dwarves send Bilbo inside to investigate the halls under the mountain, who comes back out having stolen a cup from the Dragon's hoard. Although Dragons are "traditionally associated" with hoarding instincts (Flieger, *Green* 155), Smaug is "a most specially greedy" creature (*TH* 29). When he notices the theft, he leaves his lair to look for the thief, and almost kills the company. The narrator describes Smaug's rage as "the sort of rage that is only seen when rich folk that have more than they can enjoy suddenly lose something that they have long had but have never before used or wanted" (*TH* 252). The Dragon's destructive possessive desires, which the narrator will later call "dragon-sickness," have reached such a degree that he takes his revenge on the Lake-men, who he suspects to be in league with the thief, by destroying the whole town and killing one-fourth of the population, but himself dying at the hand of Bard.

The death of the Dragon does not mean a life happily ever after for any of the survivors; on the contrary, the most tragic events happen after he is destroyed. Smaug is dead, but the "essence of the dragon," which Tolkien calls *draconitas*, lives on in the hearts of the others (Tolkien, "Beowulf" 17; Jakobsson 32). The Dwarves hear of this from Roäc the raven, who tells them that the news of Smaug's death "has already gone far and wide," and many are on their way to the mountain to claim a part of the treasure (*TH* 300).

The wise raven advises Thorin to relinquish a part of the treasure for future peace among Dwarves, Elves, and, Men, only to be furiously reminded by Thorin that Dwarves will not yield their gold. The narrator has told the reader about the Dwarves' possessive tendencies before – even the most respectable Dwarf grows fierce when his heart is "wakened by gold and by jewels" (*TH* 276-77). Their after-dinner tales of "gold and silver and jewels and the making of things by smith-craft" almost put Beorn the story-lover to sleep (*TH* 148). However, it is not only Dwarves who are driven by possessive tendencies.

Even Bilbo is not immune to dragon-sickness. Before he went into the Dragon's lair, Bilbo was saying to himself that he has "absolutely no use for dragon-guarded treasures;" however, this was before he actually saw the Dragon's hoard (*TH* 248). His initial reaction upon seeing the treasure contrasts sharply with his later selfless act of

giving up his share. “To say that Bilbo’s breath was taken away is no description at all. There are no words left to express his staggerment,” the narrator says, and adds that although Bilbo has heard stories and songs about dragon-hoards before, he could never imagine “the lust, the glory of such treasure,” which now fills and pierces his heart with enchantment. Experiencing first-hand the desire of Dwarves, he almost forgets the guardian of the treasure, and gazes motionless “at the gold beyond price and count” (*TH* 250). Bilbo cannot recover from possessiveness for a long time. Although the narrator tells “enchanted desire had fallen from Bilbo,” he cannot help but pocket the great white gem which Bilbo knows is a priceless heirloom for Thorin Oakenshield: the Arkenstone, the Heart of the Mountain. Bilbo is captivated by the gem; his feet are “drawn” towards the Arkenstone, and his arm goes towards it “drawn by its enchantment.” He picks it up and hides it in his deepest pocket, admitting to himself the wrongness of his choice: “[n]ow I am a burglar indeed!” (*TH* 274-75).

Middle-earth Elves also tend towards possessiveness. It becomes obvious during the Dwarves’ captivity by the Elves that the Elvenking has a weakness for treasure, “especially for silver and white gems,” and that he is “ever eager for more,” because he still does not have “as great a treasure as other elf-lords of old” (*TH* 195). Later, when he learns about the Dwarves’ quest, he ponders how he can profit from it. “No treasure will come back through Mirkwood without my having something to say in the matter!” he says to himself (*TH* 232). After the Dragon is slain, he sets out with a host of Elves, “eager for a share of the spoil” (*TH* 300). Although Tolkien portrays the Elves as the highest embodiment of superior human characteristics, he also shows that they are not less prone to greed and corruption than the members of other races. The degree of obsession in the characters determines the extent of loss and ruin they cause; likewise, the timing of their recovery from obsessive desires affects their role in bringing about the catastrophe or the eucatastrophe, which also specifies to what degree the characters and the readers who identify with them will be transformed by the eucatastrophe.

Thorin stands at the top of the obsession ladder, and his refusal to recover his perspective almost leads to what Bassham calls “a fratricidal war over dragon gold” (“Adventurous” 9). His eventual recovery from dragon-sickness is an important element in the eucatastrophe of *The Hobbit*; however, in order to fully understand this

eucatastrophe, the near-catastrophes his obsession has caused must be examined.

Thorin is determined to keep the entire hoard of the Dragon to the Dwarves, and sends word to his cousin Dain to immediately gather his army and come to help protect their treasure. Now, the Dwarves fortify the main entrance, and barricade themselves against the coming armies of the Lake-men and the Elves. When the Elves and Men arrive at the mountain, they are surprised to find the Dwarves alive, and demand a parley. Bard explains, it is himself who has killed the Dragon, enabling the Dwarves to reclaim their treasure. Second, he is the heir of Girion of Dale,[52] whose wealth that Smaug stole earlier is now mingled with the Dwarves' treasure. Third, Smaug has destroyed the homes of the Lake-men, who have aided the Dwarves and therefore have claim to a recompense. However, "a combination of pride and greed" prevents Thorin from acknowledging the justice of Bard's claims (Garcia 79). He ignores his first claim; rejects the second, saying that Girion is dead and Dale is no more; admits Lake-men's earlier aid, but he denies the need to recompense, because Smaug's attack is not the Dwarves' doing; and finally says he will not parley with armed Men at his gate, let alone with the Elvenking, who held the Dwarves captive only a short while ago (*TH* 306-19; Shippey, *Road* 95). And this means war. It is time for Bilbo to take courage, and prevent the war at all costs. He sneaks out to see Bard and the Elvenking, and gives them the Arkenstone to aid them in their bargaining. This infuriates Thorin, and costs Bilbo his share of the treasure.

Arkenstone in particular, and Smaug's treasure in general, is the second object associated with destructive desire in Tolkien's legendarium. The purpose of the adventure of Thorin and company was, from the very beginning, to rightfully claim a treasure; however, Thorin pursues the Arkenstone with such a possessive desire that he is not very different from Fëanor, who was obsessed with the Silmarils. He is becoming more and more like Smaug not only in his greedy hoarding, but also in his arrogance and self-absorption (Olsen, *Exploring* 257). As Bilbo tells of him, Thorin is "quite ready to sit on a heap of gold and starve" in a Dragonish fashion (*TH* 313). He refuses to listen to anyone. He ignores Roäc the wise raven who warns him that "[t]he treasure is likely

[52] Dale was an ancient kingdom before it was utterly destroyed by Smaug.

to be your death, though the dragon is no more!" (*TH* 310). He calls Bilbo a traitor, and accuses Gandalf of being in league with the enemy. To quote Gandalf, he is "not making a very splendid figure as King under the Mountain" (*TH* 320). His "consuming lust for the dragon's treasure," and his stubborn refusal to share with other deserving parties who have been hurt in the process almost leads to a terrible battle among the Dwarves, the Elves, and the Lake-men (Minore and Bassham 92-93).

It is again the humble, in this case, Bilbo the Hobbit, who earns heroic status by forgoing an object of desire. Bilbo is not immune to dragon-sickness, but his heroism lies in his unique ability to recover from it. He hands the Arkenstone to Bard, but "not without a shudder, not without a glance of longing" (*TH* 314). Although he took the gem for himself in greed and possessiveness, he "resists being corrupted" by these feelings (Olsen, *Exploring* 262). In the first chapter of *The Lord of the Rings*, Bilbo will similarly give up the Ring of Power, like Sam will do later. This renouncement marks the Hobbits' heroic status, and contrasts them with non-heroic characters like Saruman, who is destroyed by "pride and the lust for power" (Spacks 93). It probably helps other characters to recover from possessiveness, too: the Elvenking, for instance, sees the error of their ways and yields his resolve for war, saying "[l]ong will I tarry, ere I begin this war for gold" (*TH* 323). However, although both Bilbo and the Elvenking are able to recover from dragon-sickness, this fact cannot prevent a major catastrophe, because Dain arrives soon with his army, ready for battle. What does prevent it is the arrival of Goblins at the battlefield, causing all the others to unite against them. Loss, pain, and suffering follow, without which the eucatastrophe cannot come.

So begins the Battle of Five Armies, a battle that none have expected. Dain joins the Elves and Men; at the appearance of the common foe, "all other quarrels were forgotten" (*TH* 325). The Goblins are riding upon wolves, and there are too many of them. Thorin and company also join the fight, and they kill a lot of their enemies, too, but Thorin wants to slay the Goblin leader, and he cannot pierce the ranks of the bodyguards. Many have fallen, and there does not seem to be much hope left for the rest of them. At this point, when all seem lost, there comes a sudden joyous turn: Bilbo gives a great cry upon seeing "a sight that made his heart leap." "The Eagles! The Eagles!" Bilbo cries, "dancing and waving his arms" (*TH* 330). The coming of the great

Eagles has saved Bilbo, Gandalf, and the Dwarves from the attack of Goblins and wolves before, and now they will save the day one more time (*TH* 124-25). However, Bilbo is knocked out, and does not learn what has happened until later.

When Bilbo recovers consciousness, he learns that Thorin is heavily wounded, and that he wants to say his last words to Bilbo, wishing to part in friendship. Thorin's farewell to Bilbo is one of the saddest scenes Tolkien has ever written:

> "Farewell, good thief," he said. "I go now to the halls of waiting to sit beside my fathers, until the world is renewed. Since I leave now all gold and silver, and go where it is of little worth, I wish to part in friendship from you, and I would take back my words and deeds at the Gate."
> Bilbo knelt on one knee filled with sorrow. "Farewell, King under the Mountain!" he said. "This is a bitter adventure, if it must end so; and not a mountain of gold can amend it. Yet I am glad that I have shared in your perils – that has been more than any Baggins deserves."
> "No!" said Thorin. "There is more in you of good than you know, child of the kindly West. Some courage and some wisdom, blended in measure. If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world. But sad or merry, I must leave it now. Farewell!" (*TH* 333)

Though he acknowledges it in the face of death, Thorin eventually understands what is valuable in life. He is going where all the gold and silver in the world is "of little worth," and he admits the primacy of simplistic Hobbit values over possessiveness. Here, Tolkien once again utilises his fantasy world to "illuminate the real world by proxy" (Vincent 103). He uses the eucatastrophe to hold a mirror to the primary world: if more people in the world valued the simple things in life, it would indeed be a "merrier world." Otherwise, people could turn into Smaugs, accumulating material wealth "without being able to appreciate its value" (Zipes, *Breaking* 171).

Thorin dies soon, filling Bilbo with so much sorrow that "he wept until his eyes were red and his voice was hoarse" (*TH* 333). Bilbo later learns that even with the Eagles they were still outnumbered, but in the last hour Beorn appeared, carried away the wounded Thorin, and killed the chief Goblin. After the fall of their leader, the others fled in all directions to be slaughtered or to hide in the deepest holes of the Misty Mountains. Victory is won at the cost of many lives, including those of Thorin, and his nephews Fili and Kili, who have died defending him (*TH* 334-36). Many of the

survivors of the Dragon attack perish under harsh winter conditions because of hunger or sickness (*TH* 293). The Elf-host returns to Mirkwood "sadly lessened" (*TH* 338). The survivors are all injured – even Gandalf is wounded (*TH* 332).

However, Tolkien does not allow his story to end on a sad note. As Attebery explains, a fantasy may involve death, despair, horror, and betrayal, but these must not be the final word (*Strategies* 15). Dain restores the old Dwarf kingdom and as King under the Mountain, he gives away a large part of the treasure. Lake-men re-found Lake-town, which soon becomes more prosperous than ever. Now that the Dragon is dead and the Goblins are overthrown, the hearts of the Elves look forward to a spring of joy. Beorn becomes a great chief in those regions and rids the area of the last Goblins, bringing a new peace "over the edge of the Wild." Bard rebuilds the town in Dale, and most importantly, the desolation of Smaug is restored: the valley is tilled and rich again, and the desolation is "now filled with birds and blossoms in spring and fruit and feasting in autumn." Last but not least, there is now "friendship in those parts between elves and dwarves and men" (*TH* 336-51). All these could only come after great loss and suffering, which makes the happy ending against the odds all the more valuable.

The eucatastrophe of *The Hobbit* changes Bilbo, which has applicability for the readers, too. Sammons claims, if readers identify with good characters, they can learn through their experiences (*War* 145). At the beginning, Bilbo himself was a small-scale hoarder, having filled his "cellars, pantries (lots of these), […] kitchens, dining-rooms" with food and drink, but worried that his uninvited Dwarf visitors would consume a large part of it (*TH* 3). At the end of the story, he welcomes unexpected guests and shares his possessions with them while at the same time laughing, "because he now realizes the joy of community and the love of neighbor" (Chance, *Tolkien's Art* 62). Visitors are now not only "welcome at any time," they do not even have to knock (*TH* 338). More importantly, as Shippey observes, in the beginning, Bilbo is "admittedly a *bourgeois*" (*Road* 81). He sounds like a contemporary human being in his pre-adventure agreement with the Dwarves: "I should like to know about risks, out-of-pocket expenses, time required and enumeration, and so forth" (*TH* 27). After the slaying of Smaug the Dragon and reclaiming of the treasure, Bilbo, putting on this manner once again, tells, "I have an interest in this manner – one fourteenth share, to be precise […] A share in

the *profits*, mind you […] I am aware of that. Personally I am only too ready to consider all your claims carefully, and deduct what is right from the total before putting in my own claim" (*TH* 313). However, as the adventure progresses, he turns into a burglar who "has progressed so far as to rub shoulders with heroes, even to be […] considerable as one himself" (Shippey, *Road* 82). At the beginning, Bilbo was "a somewhat self-important little fellow, set in his ways and suspicious of anything outside his own limited sphere" (Purtill 60). If not for Gandalf, Bilbo would have remained a "comfortably self-satisfied 'bourgeois'" (Purtill 110); "a homebody attached to routine and creature comforts" (Garcia 86). The eucatastrophic events turn him into a hero who relinquishes his share of the treasure for the sake of the people of Lake-town, who have lost everything. In the end, Bilbo is so completely transformed into different person that even Gandalf is surprised at the change. "My dear Bilbo!" he says, "[y]ou are not the hobbit that you were" (*TH* 347).

Tolkien has not chosen to create a secondary world in order to escape from the problems of "real life;" rather, he has done this "only to be enabled to talk more forcefully about reality" (Spacks 96). Minore and Bassham claim that Tolkien draws attention to a point long recognised by philosophers: "that an immoderate love of wealth is a primary cause of war, violence, crime, exploitation, corruption, and environmental damage" (91). Tolkien reminds that possessive urges might at worst lead one into hoarding (like Smaug the Dragon), and at best into forgetting what is really valuable in life (like Thorin). Smaug destroyed a whole town when he realised that *one* cup was missing from his hoard, and Thorin did not care about Lake-town residents' misery after the Dragon's attack. This is a warning that the readers should take from Tolkien, who, in Flieger's words, leads his readers to "a hard recognition of the human condition" (*Green* 13). As Kocher explains,

> [w]e are not to be like dragons hoarding in our dens as treasure whatever we can snatch from the living world around us. People and things are not meant to be our property; they belong to themselves. […] We are possessed, captured, by what we think we possess, says Tolkien. And if we believe we can wholly possess anything we delude ourselves. We […] find our 'precious' slipping out of our fingers. Under our jaded eyes it turns into something different, which we no longer want; our appetite burns for fresh treasures, which we will discard in their turn. (*Master* 62)

Like recovery, eucatastrophe is used here as a means to reach self-knowledge. Bilbo has realised that he could become a monster, which, according to Chance, is a characteristic of the hero; Thorin, although at the very end, acknowledged the same fact (*Tolkien's Art* 147). By meeting the shadow side (represented by Smaug), both Thorin and Bilbo, and the readers become "aware of (and often ashamed of)" such qualities and impulses as egotism, and "inordinate love of money and possessions," which individuals can plainly see in other people although they are blind to them in themselves (von Franz 174). They look at money in a new way now that they have witnessed the potential effects of dragon-sickness (Olsen, *Exploring* 278). Tolkien does not refrain from issuing the warning that the inability to recover from this sickness leads to destruction, as exemplified by the fate of the old Master of Lake-town, who, "being of the kind that easily catches such disease he fell under the dragon-sickness," took the gold given to him for the help of Lake-people and fled with it, "and died of starvation in the Waste, deserted by his companions" (*TH* 351). In contrast, Bilbo even refuses to take what he rightfully deserves. First, when Dain, the new King under the Mountain wants to reward Bilbo saying, "[t]his treasure is as much yours as it is mine; though old agreements cannot stand, since so many have a claim in its winning and defence," Bilbo replies,

> "[v]ery kind of you […] But really it is a relief to me. How on earth should I have got all that treasure home without war and murder all along the way I don't know. And I don't know what I should have done with it when I got home. I am sure it is better in your hands."
> In the end he would only take two small chests. (*TH* 337)

Next, on the way back, when Gandalf and Bilbo dig up the gold of the Trolls which they have hid, Bilbo says, "I have enough to last me my time […] You had better take this, Gandalf. I daresay you can find a use for it" (*TH* 345). Later, in *The Lord of the Rings*, readers learn that Bilbo has indeed become a more generous, less materialistic Hobbit, helping poor families, and inviting everyone to his extravagant one hundred and eleventh birthday party, where everyone is given birthday presents (*LOTR* 21, 23, 24). He hands over to Frodo his priceless *mithril* coat of mail, his ancient Elven sword, and even his Ring (*LOTR* 277, 35). Minore and Bassham see a clear message in all this:

> Be generous. Take delight in food and cheer and song, not in hoarded gold. Count your riches in blessings, not in material possessions. Respect the wisdom of settled

> traditions […]. Simplify, simplify, simplify. It is an old message, one expressed […] by many philosophers and sages. Yet it is a message that has never been more timely. (100)

3.4. THE FALL OF ISENGARD

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien creates many eucatastrophic moments, the most significant ones of which will be discussed in this section. The first major eucatastrophe regards the victory against Saruman, won after battles on two fronts: Helm's Deep and Isengard. Below are the events leading to eucatastrophe, followed by the examination of the eucatastrophe itself.

After his mortal combat with the Balrog and his return from death, Gandalf's first deed is to go with Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli to Edoras, the courts of Théoden, King of the Mark of Rohan. Having lost his only son five days ago, and under the influence of his evil and treacherous counsellor Wormtongue, Théoden has shrunk to a pitiable old man. Despite his son's death and the threat of warfare in his realm, Théoden is not fully aware of the impending danger. It is Gandalf's duty to rouse Théoden and convince him of the necessity of immediate action. The King soon acknowledges the danger posed by Saruman, and upon Gandalf's hopeful remarks about Frodo's quest, abandons despair. Gandalf assures Théoden that there is still hope against Sauron as long as Rohan "can but stand unconquered for a little while," and counsels him to "destroy the threat of Saruman" while they still can (*LOTR* 516, 518).

This theme of raising awareness of a problem and encouraging people to take action runs throughout the chapters where people, Ents, or Hobbits rise up against Saruman. Dickerson and Evans note three "principal motivations," or "prerequisite attitudes" in each incident of successfully rousing a part of Middle-earth: "the recognition that inaction results in further harm," "the abandonment of despair, and the trust that positive actions have positive consequences," and "sufficient care for the created world to do something about the danger" (222).

Théoden is transformed by Gandalf from the weak leader of Rohan into a "very heroic Germanic king" (Chance, *Tolkien's Art* 169). He engages the Rohirrim (the Horse-

lords) in the first heroic act they will commit against the many enemies of Middle-earth. They ride with Gandalf towards Isengard, Saruman's fortress; however, they learn on their way that the previous host of Riders of Rohan have been overwhelmed by Saruman's forces, and that their leader Erkenbrand has drawn off whomever he could gather towards Helm's Deep.[53] Gandalf advises Théoden to change their course, and leaves them on "a swift errand," telling them to wait for him at Helm's Gate. Upon their arrival they learn that nobody has any news of Erkenbrand and his men. After the coming of Théoden's men, the defence of Helm's Deep – a thousand on foot, most of whom "have seen too many winters […] or too few" – is enforced by a thousand riders (*LOTR* 527-30). However, the improbability of victory against Saruman's army is soon made clear. Saruman has genetically engineered a new race of Orcs by breeding them with wild hillmen of Dunland to create the Uruk-hai, whose stamina, unlike Orcs, does not diminish under the sun (*LOTR* 425). They are "stronger and more fell than all others" with "greater stature, […] thick legs and large hands" (*LOTR* 437, 415). They have more weapon power than ordinary Orcs, too: they are armed with "short broad-bladed swords, not with the curved scimitars usual with Orcs" and "bows of yew, in length and shape like the bows of Men" (*LOTR* 415). Saruman's army of Orcs mounted on great wolves, Uruks, and Men is so great that, as Merry reports later, it has taken an hour for them to pass the gates of Isengard (*LOTR* 566).

No matter how superior the enemy force and how desperate victory seem, the heroic characters never yield to despair. Tolkien removes, in Shippey's words, "easy hope" from his heroes, and makes them "conscious of long-term defeat and doom," because he wants to re-introduce to the world the theory of courage (*Road* 177). Not only is the army of Rohan overpowered, the enemies have some "devilry" up their sleeves: gunpowder, which they use for blowing up the culvert and breaching the outer walls. The defence is forced to fall back "further and further into the Deep," into the citadel and the caves (*LOTR* 537). Defeat seems inevitable, and hope leaves the King:

> 'It is said that the Hornburg has never fallen to assault,' said Théoden; 'but now my heart is doubtful. The world changes, and all that once was strong now proves unsure. How shall any tower withstand such numbers and such reckless hate? Had I

[53] Helm's Deep is a huge fortified gorge in the Westfold of Rohan (Day 119).

> known that the strength of Isengard was grown so great, maybe I should not so rashly have ridden forth to meet it, for all the arts of Gandalf. His counsel seems not now so good as it did under the morning sun.' (*LOTR* 539)

Even in the face of ultimate defeat, a probability which accompanies all Tolkien's eucatastrophes, Théoden does not despair. He might not have hope, but he still has courage. He decides to make one last heroic attempt before he dies, and asks Aragorn to join him in his probable death:

> '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.'
> 'I will ride with you,' said Aragorn. (*LOTR* 539)

Théoden's bravery stems from a sense of duty, and even in the face of hopelessness, he is willing to die in battle, because he knows that even if his great deeds go unsung, they are still great deeds (Baltasar 27). At dawn, the great horn of Helm is blown, and the sound is echoed among the hills, lifting the men's hearts. Théoden rides into battle, and drives through the hosts of Isengard "as a wind among grass" (*LOTR* 541).

The eucatastrophic moment arises soon: when the King and his companions come to the Dike, they stop in amazement, because the land has changed. To their surprise, where until the day before a dale has lain, now looms a forest. The proud hosts of Saruman cower in terror, and try to flee in the only direction possible, but lo and behold, there appear Gandalf and Erkenbrand with a thousand warriors. The Wild Men surrender, and the Orcs escape into the forest of, as soon will be obvious, Huorns of Fangorn, whom Gandalf recruited during his "swift errand." No Orc ever comes out of this forest again (*LOTR* 541-42). Théoden's acknowledgement of the threat, his taking action, and his refusal to succumb to despair even in the face of ultimate defeat eventually ends in a eucatastrophe, which Tolkien utilises to imply that what Théoden does is the right thing to do. Tolkien has told in his fairy-story essay that such ideals are best recovered by means of fairy-stories. As Timmerman argues, the purpose of any story is getting the reader to "see things *by means of it*" (7). The readers may not immediately recollect the theory of courage upon reading this passage; however after reflection, the purpose of the

tale will become obvious. After all, there is one real purpose in a story: "to reveal a truth by a tale, a tale that can be read for itself with enjoyment and yet where, upon reflection […] Truth enters in" (Ready 34).

Similar to the rousing of King Théoden by Gandalf is the rousing of the Ents by Treebeard. Ents are non-human heroes, but they are attributed human characteristics. The narrator describes Treebeard, the first Ent the Hobbits see, in very familiar terms: on his tall head, Treebeard has a "most extraordinary face" covered with a beard. He has smooth-skinned arms protruding from his trunk, and large feet with seven toes each (*LOTR* 463). Tolkien's personification of Ents is significant in that their eventual rise to battle reflects back on the necessity of encouraging people in the primary world to embark upon equally heroic acts. Tolkien depicts Ents as similar beings to humans in their habits and personalities – only with an added hint of *tree-ishness*:

> Leaflock has grown *sleepy*, almost *tree-ish*, you might say: *he has taken to standing by himself half-asleep* all through the summer with the deep grass of the meadows round *his knees*. Covered with *leafy hair* he is. He *used to rouse up* in winter; but of late he has been *too drowsy to walk far* even then. Skinbark *lived* on the mountain-slopes west of Isengard. That is where the worst trouble has been. He *was wounded* by the Orcs, and many of *his folk* and *his tree-herds* have been *murdered* and destroyed. (emphasis added, *LOTR* 474-75)

Treebeard's description of these two Ents reminds the reader of two old humans who have withdrawn into themselves after a traumatic experience. The Ents Merry and Pippin see also "*reminded* them of beech-trees or oaks," or "*recalled* the chestnut: brown-skinned Ents with large splayfingered hands, and short thick legs. Some *recalled* the ash: tall straight grey Ents with many-fingered hands and long legs" (emphasis added, *LOTR* 480). Not only are they ambulatory with human-like appendages, but they also have shoulders, eyes, and lips. They resemble humans in their family structure, cultural development, literary heritage, and emotional intelligence[54] (C. M. Cohen 115-16). Nor is their system of government very different from that of humans. Ents gather in Entmoots, and make collective decisions.

[54] These are exemplified by Entwives and Entings; by their linguistic prowess; by their songs and poems; and by their ability to experience love, disagreement, grief, and longing (C. M. Cohen 115).

When he first meets them, Treebeard tells Merry and Pippin that Ents are neither concerned by "the Great Wars," nor do they take sides. They feel responsible for their forests at a basic level: "we do what we can," Treebeard says. "We keep off strangers and the foolhardy; and we train and we teach, we walk and we weed" (*LOTR* 468). Treebeard was once anxious about the shadow on the nearby Mirkwood, but then Sauron, the cause of the shadow, relocated in Mordor, which is a long way away. Now, "there is naught an old Ent do to hold back that storm" (*LOTR* 472-73). However, he is aware of the "pernicious activities of his neighbour Saruman," and he finally acknowledges that Saruman poses a threat (Stanton 117). He confesses, "I have been idle. I have let things slip" (*LOTR* 474). Like Théoden, Treebeard arrives at an awareness of the problem. Treebeard's second step is to assume responsibility and take action, and rouse the Ents. However, Ents are not "hasty folk," and as Treebeard says, "Ents do not like being roused; and we never are roused unless it is clear to us that our trees and our lives are in great danger" (*LOTR* 474, 485). Still, Treebeard manages to persuade the Ents to join the Entmoot, an Ent council, at the end of which they decide to go to war. He tells the Hobbits how the Ents have reached this decision:

> It is the orc-work, the wanton hewing […] without even the bad excuse of feeding the fires, that has so angered us; and the treachery of a neighbour, who should have helped us. Wizards ought to know better: they do know better. There is no curse in Elvish, Entish, or the tongues of Men bad enough for such treachery. Down with Saruman! (*LOTR* 485-86)

For Dickerson and Evans, the second principle that follows acknowledgement of responsibility is believing that "action really can bring about change" (223). Saruman is one of the most powerful figures in Middle-earth, but even so Treebeard believes in the Ents' ability to overthrow him if they set their minds on this. When Merry asks, "[w]ill you really break the doors of Isengard?" Treebeard replies, "[y]ou do not know, perhaps, how strong we are. […] We are stronger than Trolls. […] We can split stone like the roots of trees, only quicker, far quicker, if our minds are roused!" (*LOTR* 486). As Gandalf has predicted, the Ents have woken up and found that they are strong (*LOTR* 500). The marching Ents, as the Hobbits perceive them, are like "the bursting of a flood that had long been held back by a dike" (*LOTR* 485). Ents may have been idle

for a long time, but once they have realised their collective power, there is no stopping them, not even by Saruman.

One other important point regarding the Ents is that in the face of what Tolkien calls "universal final defeat," they deny it ("Fairy" 153). Having lost the trace of the Entwives, they have no hope of producing offspring[55] (*LOTR* 475). "Forests may grow," says Treebeard, "woods may spread. But no Ents. There are no Entings" (*LOTR* 981). Their end – their eventual extinction – is also eucatastrophic. They are aware that the possibility of "sorrow and failure" is necessary to "the joy of deliverance" (Tolkien, "Fairy" 153). When they go to war, there is a "sad but not unhappy" look in Treebeard's eyes; he knows this could well be their end (*LOTR* 486). But he also knows that "they march to deal evil a devastating blow" (Stanton 133). He says to the Hobbits,

> [o]f course, it is likely enough, my friends, […] that we are going to our doom: the last march of the Ents. But if we stayed at home and did nothing, doom would find us anyway, sooner or later. […] Now at least the last march of the Ents may be worth a song. Aye,' he sighed, 'we may help the other peoples before we pass away. (*LOTR* 486)

Ents, too, are motivated by what Dickerson and Evans have identified as three "prerequisite attitudes." They recognise that they have been too idle for too long and let Saruman destroy Isengard. They know, action or inaction, they are doomed, and now that they are helping the other peoples, their passing will have meaning. Finally, they love the forests of Middle-earth too much to leave them to Saruman's ruin.

Treebeard has mentioned Saruman's evil deeds, but not until after the Battle of Helm's Deep is the transformation of Isengard described in detail. What was once "fair and green" is simply "not so now." After the wanton destruction of the forest by Saruman's Orcs, "among the rank grasses could still be seen the burned and axe-hewn stumps of ancient groves." The narrator adds, it is now "a sad country" (*LOTR* 553):

[55] Some critics like Harvey see the loss of the Entwives as "symbolic of the irreplaceability of nature once it has been destroyed by the black, smoky, reeking powers of an industrial society" (111).

> Once it had been green and filled with avenues, and groves of fruitful trees, watered by streams that flowed from the mountains to a lake. But no green thing grew there in the latter days of Saruman. […] instead of trees there marched long lines of pillars, some of marble, some of copper and of iron, joined by heavy chains. […] the Ring of Isengard looked like a graveyard of unquiet dead. (*LOTR* 554)

However, very soon after the overthrow of Saruman, the Ents embark upon the co-operative restoration of Isengard. They destroy the dam built by Saruman on River Isen, thereby taking the first step in the restoration work. Treebeard says, "it will be foul water for a while, until all the filth of Saruman is washed away. Then Isen can run clean again" (*LOTR* 569). In a few months, the Ents' efforts start to yield positive results, and some of the environmental damage heals. "All the stone-circle had been thrown down and removed, and the land within was made into a garden filled with orchards and trees, and a stream ran through it; but in the midst of all there was a lake of clear water." In Treebeard's words, "Ents have played their part" (*LOTR* 978-79). The chapters depicting the restoration of Isengard through the collective labour of the Ents are only one of the many parts in Tolkien's legendarium where he puts emphasis on "the protection of natural scenery against the ravages of an industrial society" (Carpenter, *Tolkien* 306). A similar chain of events happen in the Shire when, following awareness-raising, the Hobbit folk take the responsibility of saving their own environment and take action, but further discussion on this topic will be developed later below.

3.5. THE BATTLE OF THE PELENNOR FIELDS

In this section of *The Lord of the Rings*, readers once again see Tolkien's characters deny "universal final defeat" despite all the sorrow and failure and the strong probability of ultimate defeat, which is indispensable in a eucatastrophe (Tolkien, "Fairy" 154). With the exception of Denethor, no character who takes part in the Battle of the Pelennor Fields succumbs to despair even when victory seems hopelessly lost. After all the "dyscatastrophe" (sorrow and failure), there come the sudden turns, bringing about for the readers "a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth" ("Fairy" 154). The most fundamental truth that gleams through the eucatastrophes of this section is the fact that one must keep fighting evil, and even though hope might seem lost, one must not despair, because there is always hope for a better world.

After the victory against Saruman's forces, Gandalf and Pippin the Hobbit ride like lightning to Gondor while Théoden gathers his Riders to go to war in Gondor. Soon, King Théoden receives a message from Denethor, Lord and Steward of Minas Tirith, the first city of Gondor. The messenger says that Gondor is in great need, and Lord Denethor begs Théoden to come to its aid with all his strength and all his speed. Théoden bids the messenger to tell Denethor that he will, but on his way back, the messenger is killed, and Denethor never hears of the promising news (*LOTR* 798-99, 835). Meanwhile in Gondor, sunlight has been replaced by an evil darkness sent by the Dark Lord from Mount Doom (*LOTR* 808). Five Nazgûl are threatening the warriors outside the city walls using their greatest weapon: "piercing the heart with a poisonous despair," but Gandalf manages to chase them away. They are not seen again that day, but they can still be heard flying high above the city, causing those who hear their cries to "stand stricken with a passing dread" (*LOTR* 816).

The next day, Denethor's son Captain Faramir, whom Gandalf saved the day before, is sent by Denethor to the out walls with a handful of men to defend the fords and bridges of Osgiliath, where the enemy will attempt to cross the river from the east into the land of Gondor – a mission that unavoidably fails. While Faramir and his men are retreating to Minas Tirith, the enemy at their heels, accompanied by a Nazgûl, soon overtake them. Denethor at last releases a sortie, and with Gandalf in the front, the cavalry slaughter the pursuers, and Gandalf scares away the Nazgûl. However, it soon becomes obvious that a third of Faramir's men are dead, and Faramir himself has been heavily wounded. The people of Gondor are now shut behind the city gates, the city besieged from all sides, and desperately watch the enemy do their work outside their shooting range. The last word to come from outside is that a strong army Orcs and Men have arrived, and now that they are holding the northward road, Rohan cannot come if they were to come at all. The people of Gondor can do nothing but watch host after host of enemies pouring into the Pelennor Fields, and wait for their lonely end (*LOTR* 817-21).

However, Sauron has an even more terrible weapon, "dread and despair," which seems to have wounded Denethor most terribly (*LOTR* 823). The Lord of the City, in Pippin's words, has fallen before the city is taken. He has lost all hope, and now that his son lies dying, he no longer gives any heed to the defence of the city. Gandalf takes command,

and tirelessly going from place to place, lifts the men's hearts. Denethor, meanwhile, orders his men to prepare a funeral pyre for himself and the wounded Faramir, preferring death to being captured alive by Sauron, which he believes is inevitable.

This chapter gives Tolkien the best opportunity to show the theory of courage in action through the contrast between the attitudes of the two Kings of Men – Théoden and Denethor. Even in the face of inevitable defeat, Théoden finds strength in courage, which he passes on to his men. Denethor, on the other hand, yields to despair, which leads not only to "fatalism and suicide," but also to Théoden's death (Sale, "Tolkien and Frodo" 269). Although Denethor is one of the very few in whom the blood of Númenóreans still runs, he is not as wise as Théoden. It is true that the "whole venture of the Ring always looks desperate. So does combat after combat against widely superior armies," and yet, if all the characters despaired like Denethor, Sauron would have won the war a long time ago (Kocher, *Master* 53). Tolkien's wise characters are often near the edge of despair, but they do not succumb (Shippey, *Road* 179). Rather, they acknowledge disaster and overcome it. Denethor cannot.

While Denethor is behaving like a madman, Pippin runs to fetch Gandalf to prevent him from burning Faramir alive. He finds Gandalf behind the city gate, but shrinks back in fear and cowers into a shadow when he sees that the enemy is ramming the Gate of Gondor under Lord Nazgûl's command. Soon the gate is broken, and in rides the Lord of the Nazgûl. All flee before his face. All save one: Gandalf, who forbids him from entering the city. At the same moment as Lord Nazgûl lifts his sword to strike Gandalf, a cock crows in one of the gardens in the city, which distracts Lord Nazgûl, and heralds one of the eucatastrophic moments of the story: "as if in answer there came from far away another note. Horns, horns, horns. In dark Mindolluin's sides they dimly echoed. Great horns of the North wildly blowing. Rohan had come at last" (*LOTR* 829). Lord Nazgûl immediately withdraws. Pippin rises from where he was cowering, and listens to the horns, which seem to break his heart with joy. The narrator says, "never in after years could he hear a horn blown in the distance without tears starting in his eyes" (*LOTR* 850).

The readers who have already identified with the Hobbits experience similar feelings,

and with this sudden turn, they are given "a catch of the breath, a beat and lifting of the heart, near to (or indeed accompanied by) tears" (Tolkien, "Fairy" 154). The Men of Rohan have also learned that the enemy is holding the road to Gondor. Fortunately, they have been aided by Wild Men of the Woods, and led by them into another forgotten road, which the enemy are unaware of. The host of Rohan have ridden unseen and unheard into the fields of the Pelennor. "And straightway all the horns in the host were lifted up in music, and the blowing of the horns of Rohan in that hour was like a storm upon the plain and a thunder in the mountains" (*LOTR* 838).

After this eucatastrophic moment, sorrow and pain once more follow: Lord Nazgûl arrives once again, this time riding on a monstrous winged quasi-pterodactyl, "bringing ruin, turning hope to despair, and victory to death." He descends like a falling cloud on Théoden. Théoden's horse is shot, and crashes upon its side burying Théoden beneath its body. The knights of Théoden's house are all killed, or carried away by their terrorised horses – all except Merry the Hobbit and Dernhelm the young. Dernhelm valiantly draws his sword and challenges the Nazgûl Lord, who then reminds him that no Man can hinder him. At that moment Dernhelm reveals his true identity: "no living man am I! You look upon a woman. Éowyn I am, Éomund's daughter," and Théoden's niece. With a skilled stroke, she beheads the Ringwraith's steed. Lord Nazgûl strikes Éowyn's shield and breaks her arm in return. Before he could strike another blow, Merry stabs him from behind, and Éowyn with her last strength drives her sword into his phantom face. Unbelievably, the Ringwraith is defeated; however, at great cost: Théoden dies, Éowyn lies unmoving, and Merry loses feeling of his arm with which he stabbed the Nazgûl (*LOTR* 840-45). However, like Théoden, both Éowyn and Merry were aware of the risks of the heroic action they were taking, and yet, they rode to battle, which represents the struggle of the individual to triumph against power structures for a common good (Upstone 60). What is more, the struggle ends in success.

Armstrong maintains that the myth of the hero is not intended to provide the readers with "icons to admire," but "to tap into the vein of heroism within ourselves," and as such, it leads to "imitation or participation, not passive contemplation" (*Short History* 141). Éowyn and Merry are led to participation by the hope of being put in stories like those that have inspired them. Éowyn wants to go with Aragorn to "win renown;"

similarly, Merry begs Théoden to let him go to battle, and says "I would not have it said of me in song only that I was always left behind!" (*LOTR* 784, 804). Like the myth of the hero inspires Tolkien's most characters, Tolkien utilises the northern theory of courage in the same way to inspire his readers. In the primary world as in the secondary world, "[m]ost intelligent and sensitive people at any time despair of the present and the future, and with good reason, too," but if readers take Tolkien to be their guide, they could easily see that "it is not the only way" (Sale, *Modern Heroism* 240).

Despite Éowyn and Merry's victory, the battle goes on. The combined armies of Gondor and Rohan are already far outnumbered by the enemy, but when the watchmen on the walls see afar a new sight of fear, their last hope leaves them: coming up from the river is a fleet of great ships with the enemy's black sails, which means that the southern fiefdoms have fallen. This is "the last stroke of doom." Éomer, Éowyn's brother and Théoden's heir, sees the enemy ships, and "hope die[s] in his heart" (*LOTR* 846-47). Like Théoden did before him at Helm's Deep, Éomer decides to ride to his last battle, and he knows that no one will survive to make songs of his heroic deeds on the battlefield. However, when all seem lost, there arises another eucatastrophic moment, which the narrator describes as follows:

> And then wonder took him, and a great joy; and he cast his sword up in the sunlight and sang as he caught it. And all eyes followed his gaze, and behold! upon the foremost ship a great standard broke, and the wind displayed it as she turned towards the Harlond. There flowered a White Tree, and that was for Gondor; but Seven Stars were about it, and a high crown above it, the signs of Elendil that no lord had borne for years beyond count. And the stars flamed in the sunlight, for they were wrought of gems by Arwen daughter of Elrond; and the crown was bright in the morning, for it was wrought of mithril and gold.
> Thus came Aragorn son of Arathorn, Elessar, Isildur's heir, out of the Paths of the Dead, borne upon a wind from the Sea to the kingdom of Gondor; and the mirth of the Rohirrim was a torrent of laughter and a flashing of swords, and the joy and wonder of the City was a music of trumpets and a ringing of bells. (*LOTR* 847)

Both eucatastrophes – the arrival of the Riders of Rohan, and of Aragorn with reinforcements from the south – fills the readers with as much joy as it does the characters. However, these sudden joyous turns come with great loss: when Gandalf leaves his post to save Faramir from Denethor's madness, Lord Nazgûl comes back and kills King Théoden. Although Faramir is saved, Denethor, a great Lord of Men, kills

himself on his own pyre (*LOTR* 854). Many brave men die in battle, and many others fall sick of a malady that will not be healed: "they called it the Black Shadow, for it came from the Nazgûl" (*LOTR* 860). Exposed to more of the Black Shadow than others, Éowyn, Merry, and Faramir are now lying mortally ill.

The victory at the Battle of the Pelennor Fields gains a much deeper value having come at such a great cost, which Tolkien uses to underline the importance of heroism at the face of ultimate defeat. Sale argues, "we must remember that at every key moment in the history of heroism in the last five centuries, sane and important people have said heroism was dead, and they were wrong" (*Modern Heroism* 10). Like "[t]here is a seed of courage hidden (often deeply, it is true) in the heart of the fattest and most timid hobbit, waiting for some final and desperate danger to make it grow," there is a potential in the most ordinary individual to act heroically (*LOTR* 140). Timmerman claims that modern fantasy aims to liberate the mind from the intellectual prison of inaction, and adds,

> [t]he quest here is one which seeks a center of value and meaning in life and art which provides genuine satisfaction to human longing, which arises from within the human spirit to replenish that same spirit, and which ultimately directs a vision outward from that spirit to include all humanity in the discovery of value and meaning. In an age which readily claims to be bereft of any normative, traditional guide to value, the task demands a spirit of new heroism, and a uniquely human one. This heroic task is […] to construct some order and meaning out of the remnants of a self-destructive age. The task, then, is twofold: discovery of a locus of value in the heroic character, and revivification of value in others by heroic actions. (47)

Tolkien seems to have achieved this aim.

3.6. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE RING

The main eucatastrophe in *The Lord of the Rings* comes on Mount Doom, when defeat seems inevitable, but, against all odds, the Ring is destroyed. Although not made for perilous quests, the Hobbits persevere without hope – but not without courage – and succeed. As has been pointed out earlier, courage, even without the hope of victory, is important for Tolkien. One should do his/her best, like Frodo does: "we shall have to try," says Frodo. "It's no worse than I expected. I never hoped to get across. I can't see

any hope of it now. But I've still got to do the best I can" (*LOTR* 924). Frodo does not believe that they will be able to make it to the Crack of Doom. Once he says, "I wonder how long it will be before we really are caught and all the toiling and the slinking will be over, and in vain" (*LOTR* 926). One other time, he comments, "I feared it, Sam. […] We've trusted to luck, and it has failed us. We're trapped" (*LOTR* 930). Still, even without hope, he does not give up. Sam is more hopeful than Frodo, and yet at one point he has to face the facts: "the bitter truth came home to him at last: at best their provision would take them to their goal; and when the task was done, there they would come to an end, alone, houseless, foodless in the midst of a terrible desert. There could be no return." However, lack of hope does not mean giving up: "even as hope died in Sam, or seemed to die, it was turned to a new strength. Sam's plain Hobbit-face grew stern, almost grim, as the will hardened in him, and he felt through all his limbs a thrill, as if he was turning into some creature of stone and steel that neither despair nor weariness nor endless barren miles could subdue" (*LOTR* 933-34). The Hobbits do not hope to survive, yet they still have the courage to continue to the bitter end, thereby exhibiting "the indomitability" of northern courage (Bowman, "Refining" 103).

They succeed to complete the quest although at the last minute Frodo changes his mind and claims the Ring for himself: "'I have come' he said. 'But I do not choose now to do what I came to do. I will not do this deed. The Ring is mine!" (*LOTR* 945). The hero fails at his own quest, and Gollum the dark side destroys the Ring of Power, and himself with it, after biting off Frodo's ring finger and falling into the Crack of Doom with his "Precious" (*LOTR* 945-46).

At the end, Sam and Frodo are alone amid pouring lava, "at the end of all things," as Frodo says, where "hopes fail," and "an end comes;" where they are lost "in ruin and downfall, and there is no escape" (*LOTR* 950). They fall, "worn out, or choked with fumes and heat, or stricken down by despair at last, hiding their eyes from death" (*LOTR* 951). The sudden turn happens at that moment: "*The Eagles are coming!* […] There came Gwaihir the Windlord, and Landroval his brother, greatest of all the Eagles of the North" to carry the Hobbits away to safety (*LOTR* 948, 951).

The eucatastrophic moment helps the readers to see not only one but many underlying

truths, some of which have already gleamed through the story so far. Just like the hero can become monstrous, the monster can become heroic – though accidentally (Chance, *Tolkien's Art* 149). Good does not always triumph over evil, but "depends on evil to deliver it" (Madsen 41). The greatest evil in the world is beaten not only through warfare, but also – and more essentially – through "the patient, plodding trek of the hobbits" to the Crack of Doom, "where they can relinquish power over the world" (Elder xii). This could be regarded as Tolkien's anti-militarist proposal, which William James called "a moral equivalent of war" (Elder xii; James 22). The unlikeliest of heroes, two simple Hobbits, who embarked upon a perilous quest with no better weapon than "naked will and courage," succeeded in what many other heroic characters were reluctant to do (Tolkien, "Beowulf" 26).

As previously indicated, Tolkien intended to re-introduce "the theory of courage" to the world, and his basic intention in doing this was, Greenwood remarks, so that the readers could see it anew (184). The Nordic theme of courage runs throughout his epic tale, and is once again introduced here through the slow but steady transformation of the simple Hobbits into epic heroes (Moorman 212). Tolkien emphasises, what is important is having enough courage to do the right thing even when hope fails. People might fall into desperation, and wish, like Frodo did before his quest, that horrible events did not happen in their time, but, like Gandalf says, one cannot choose the times into which s/he is born; what s/he can choose what to do to repair them (*LOTR* 51; *Letters* 402). Instead of grieving about the ills of their times, people must refuse to succumb to victim mentality, and be brave enough to do their best to remedy these ills. It must be understood that the most ordinary citizen of the world has the power to fight against "hunger, thirst, poverty, pain, sorrow, injustice, death" (Tolkien, "Fairy" 151). After all, as Tolkien has made clear, it is common people who can change the world. One common individual, Frodo, knew he was not made for perilous quests, but he could also see that he was no less suited for this quest than anyone else. Before Frodo volunteered to take the Ring to Mount Doom, Elrond offered what R. Wood describes as a "staggering piece of paradoxical wisdom," that an ordinary individual can accomplish what the mighty cannot (87). Master Elrond had said,

> [t]he road must be trod, but it will be very hard. And neither strength nor wisdom

> will carry us far upon it. This quest may be attempted by the weak with as much hope as the strong. Yet such is oft the course of deeds that move the wheels of the world: small hands do them because they must, while the eyes of the great are elsewhere. (*LOTR* 269)

By destroying the Ring, Frodo and Sam accomplish "a world-historical, macrocosmic triumph," thereby becoming heroes of a mythic scale (J. Campbell 38).[56] Master Elrond places Frodo among the greatest heroes: "though all the mighty elf-friends of old, Hador, and Húrin, and Túrin, and Beren himself are assembled together, your seat should be among them" (*LOTR* 270-71). Eventually, Frodo leaves Middle-earth with Bilbo for Valinor, and actually finds a place for himself in the Elvish cosmology (*LOTR* 1096; Madsen 39).

The Hobbits, from the very beginning, have been portrayed by Tolkien as common people, who would rather lead their "bounded" lives than "seek out the opportunity for great deeds" (Zimbardo 102). Theirs is a kind of heroism that is "thrust upon," "undesired," and "unrecognized" (Bradley 117). Yet, they end up committing the most heroic deeds in Middle-earth, which should encourage the readers to do the same in the primary world. None of Tolkien's traditionally heroic characters, whom Auden describes as "expressions of the natural vocation of talent" can even dare what Frodo sets out to accomplish ("Quest Hero" 55). Frodo, who "acts like any modern alienated man […] is Tolkien's affirmation of possibility in a world where all old and other heroic types are by themselves inadequate" (Sale, "Tolkien and Frodo" 248).

3.7. THE SCOURING OF THE SHIRE

In the chapter titled "The Scouring of the Shire," Tolkien offers the readers what Curry calls "an account of local resistance" which should inspire them to take similar action against the destruction of their own environments in the primary world (*Defending* 41).

[56] Joseph Campbell, in his study of the composite hero, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, draws a distinction between "the hero of the fairy tale" and "the hero of a myth:" the former achieves "a domestic, microcosmic triumph," and the latter "a world-historical, macrocosmic triumph. Whereas the former [...] prevails over his personal oppressors, the latter brings back from his adventure the means for the regeneration of this society as a whole" (37-38). Taking the Hobbits' local and global triumphs into consideration, one can say that they eventually become heroes who fit into both of Campbell's categories.

After his fall, Saruman, now known as Sharkey, undertakes the destruction of the Shire by planting in its midst an "ugly and stench-making industry," and transforming the peaceful community into a "heartless bureaucracy" (R. Wood 23). When the Hobbits return home, they have their "first really painful shock." Once beautiful Hobbits homes are deserted, or gone and replaced by a new line of ugly houses. The Hobbits remember that "[a]n avenue of trees had stood there. They were all gone. And looking with dismay up the road towards Bag End they saw a tall chimney of brick in the distance. It was pouring out black smoke into the evening air" (*LOTR* 1004). Saruman's men have replaced the old mill with a bigger one full of "wheels and outlandish contraptions" which are causing air, water, and noise pollution. Saruman has bid his men to "hack, burn, and ruin," and "cut down trees and let 'em lie" (*LOTR* 1013). In the old village not only has every tree been felled, but every hedgerow is broken, and every field of grass is beaten. It is one of the saddest hours in the Hobbits' lives, and it becomes all the sadder for Sam when he sees that the Party Tree has been destroyed. "'They've cut it down!' cried Sam. 'They've cut down the Party Tree!' He pointed to where the tree had stood under which Bilbo made his Farewell Speech. It was lying lopped and dead in the field. As if this was the last straw Sam burst into tears" (*LOTR* 1016-17).

Many critics see the applicability of the Shire's destruction to the primary world. Dickerson and Evans remind that Tolkien's readers have seen the same signs – "the felling of trees, the destruction of lovely old houses to make way for rows of ugly new ones, the construction of factories with smoke-spewing chimneys – and perhaps have merely accepted them as the unavoidable side effects of 'progress'" (206). Elder thinks, "Saruman's projects resonate with many of the destructive outcomes of political and commercial globalization today" (xi). Light maintains that in this chapter of the book, the readers get "a clear critique of the ravages of industrialism pulling apart the traditional connections between people and the land," and that this critique could be used as "a launching pad for a discussion of sustainable development or globalization today" (151). However, the applicability of Saruman and his deeds to the primary world is best described by Tom Shippey, who argues,

> the "applicability" of this is obvious, with Saruman becoming an image of one of the characteristic vices of modernity, though we still have no name for it – a kind

> of restless ingenuity, skill without purpose, bulldozing for the sake of change. […] Similarly, one might say, the Sarumans of the real world rule by deluding their followers with images of a technological Paradise in the future, a modernist Utopia; but what one often gets […] are the blasted landscapes of Eastern Europe, strip-mined, polluted, and even radioactive. One may disagree with Tolkien's diagnosis of the situation, and with his nostalgic or pastoral solution to it, but there can be no doubt that he has at least addressed a serious issue, and tried to give it both a historical and a psychological dimension nearly always missing elsewhere. (*Author* 171)

The Hobbits have witnessed environmental destruction in Isengard and Mordor, where nature has been "pillaged and raped" (R. Wood 23). However, as the narrator says, "[t]his was Frodo and Sam's own country, and they found out now that they cared about it more than any other place in the world" (*LOTR* 1004). In Sam's words, the state the Shire is in is worse than Mordor: "much worse in a way. It comes home to you, as they say; because it is home, and you remember it before it was all ruined" (*LOTR* 1018). The Hobbits' pain of witnessing destruction of such scale in their own home is important in its reflection upon the primary world. The sense of a "tragically endangered natural world, savaged by human greed and stupidity in every corner of the globe," is something familiar to the readers who see it everyday on the media (Curry, *Defending* 17). However, by placing the threat in the Shire rather than leaving it in a remote corner of the world, Tolkien offers his readers a more accessible picture of the threat on their own doorstep. In all the chapters where one part of Middle-earth is roused, Tolkien does not only give his readers a picture of natural ruin, but he also shows them the ways to prevent it. As Lewis observes, such stories as Tolkien's give "sensations we never had before, and enlarge our conception of the range of possible experience" (*On Stories* 66). By using the Ents and the Hobbits to illustrate how people eventually rise to action, Tolkien "broadens our perspective and enlarges our sense of what is possible" (Bassham, "Lewis and Tolkien" 246).

Like the catastrophes in Isengard and the Shire prompt the Ents and the Hobbits to action, their rising to action brings about the eucatastrophes. Through these eucatastrophes, Tolkien puts emphasis on the recognition of the problem and the acknowledgement of responsibility. One should not assume that the danger is far from home. Treebeard was too idle, and let Saruman's deeds slip. The Ents' feeling responsible for their forests at a basic level saying "we do what we can" aggravated the

problem. The Hobbits of the Shire were too fond of comfort, and too slow to recognise the threat. Their "ignorance of a world apart from their perception of reality" rendered them unprepared to deal with Saruman and his ruffians (Baltasar 30). In both cases, remaining neutral meant allowing the ruination to spread. Now, something must be done, and it must be done immediately. Tolkien reminds that everyone has to take sides, because neutrality is not an option. People might think they are safe in their enclosed worlds while horrible events are happening in the world outside, but "there are no havens in a world where evil is a reality" (Grant 176-77). In an Elf's words to Frodo, "[t]he wide world is all about you: you can fence yourselves in, but you cannot for ever fence it out" (*LOTR* 83).

The eucatastrophes point to the fact that an equally important point is taking action and prompting others to do so. It is true that, like the Ents, many people do not like being roused. There are a lot of people in the primary world who, like Merry says of Hobbits, "have been so comfortable for so long they don't know what to do" (*LOTR* 1007). Fortunately, Merry and Pippin do, having experienced the rousing process first-hand. "'Raise the Shire!' said Merry, 'Now! Wake all our people!'" (*LOTR* 1007). However, people do not necessarily wake up when they are told to do so. They need to understand that they are either part of the problem, or the solution. As Dickerson and Evans suggest, Maurice Telleen has expertly put this necessity into words:

> Action or inaction has consequences: both benign and terrible, trivial and important, intended and unintended. We are born into a web of life that both precedes and follows us. Some of it is understood and much of it isn't. But we are each simultaneously part of the picture and one of the painters. Neutrality is not an option. Mindlessness is, but neutrality isn't. (53)

Although they have taken sides, people could feel powerless against the enormous problem. They may ask what Robin Smallburrow asks Sam: "what can I do?" The answer is, one does not have to be a cog in the wheel. If what one does is wrong – "if it has stopped being a respectable job" – then one must give it up, which means taking responsibility for one's own actions. Like Robin says, something might be done "[i]f we all got angry together" (*LOTR* 1002). Dickerson and Evans's claim is that many people are like Robin Smallburrow: "uneasy about having compromised our principles along the way, but with our better selves committed to environmental responsibility." If

persuaded that they can actually do something beneficial for the environment, people will be "eager to participate in activities directed toward positive results" (261).

After raising the people, it is now time to take "faithful and discerning action on behalf of a beloved landscape and community," and do what the Shire-folk do (Elder xi). Like the Hobbits, a naturally peaceful folk who stand up against the men of the cruel tyrant, and who fight the second and last battle ever fought in the Shire, people in the primary world must assume responsibility and fight against environmental destruction. This is the right thing to do – even if defeat seems inevitable. People in the primary world must also understand that they are strong together, and when people stand together like the Rohirrim, the Ents, and the Hobbits do, defeat is not inevitable. Like the Shire-folk, who managed to "arise from their quiet fields to shake the towers and counsels of the Great," Tolkien encourages his readers to hear the Hobbits cry "*Awake! Awake! Fear, Fire, Foes! Awake!*" and to take action against what seems to be an unstoppable despoliation of nature (*LOTR* 270, 1007). This might require taking action on a heroic scale, but if Hobbits can become heroes, so can the readers. As Sale argues, "[t]he heroic voice insists that such communities are possible, that their achievement is a struggle and noble act, that we can do more than wait silently for the end" (*Modern Heroism* 13).

Tolkien's story holds up the mirror to the nature of the primary world (Auden, "The Hero"). Like he shows the readers a picture of an almost irredeemable environmental destruction in Mordor, Tolkien also suggests that natural renewal is possible, as proved in Isengard and the Shire (Curry, *Defending* 71). For this, he utilises eucatastrophe, this time to persuade the readers that there is still hope for damaged environments. In the Shire, the sudden turn happens when Sam remembers Galadriel's gift to him: a box "filled with a grey dust, soft and fine, in the middle of which was a seed, like a small nut with a silver shale." He plants saplings everywhere beloved trees stood before, and puts a grain of the dust at the root of each one. He plants the seed where the Party Tree once was. When spring comes, all his trees sprout, and grow incredibly fast. In the Party Field, now stands a young *mallorn* (*LOTR* 1022-23). Unlike Mordor, the Shire is fortunate to heal quickly and completely:

> Altogether 1420 in the Shire was a marvellous year. Not only was there wonderful sunshine and delicious rain, in due times and perfect measure, but there seemed something more: an air of richness and growth, and a gleam of a beauty beyond that of mortal summers that flicker and pass upon this Middle-earth. […] The fruit was so plentiful that young hobbits very nearly bathed in strawberries and cream; and later they sat on the lawns under the plum-trees and ate, until they had made piles of stones like small pyramids. […] Vines were laden, and the yield of 'leaf' was astonishing; and everywhere there was so much corn that at Harvest every barn was stuffed. (*LOTR* 1023-24)

Dickerson and Evans find this vision of restoration promising, and believe that if properly applied, "the resolutions imagined in the fantasy point toward potential environmental solutions in our world." They add, "Tolkien's environmental views are indeed applicable to our situation" (219). By all means, Tolkien's works have spoken directly to many readers around the world: they have been adopted by environmentalist, anti-war protestors, Civil Rights defenders, to name only a few groups (Curry, "Tolkien" 11-12). His environmental solutions have been embraced by "the bioregional movement" and "social ecologists," as exemplified in the works of Carr (*Bioregionalism and Civil Society*, 2004), McGinnis (*Bioregionalism*, 1999), and Clark (*Renewing the Earth*, 1990) (Morgan 394).[57]

3.8. A TALE WITHOUT A TRUE END

As Greenwood argues, Tolkien leaves his conclusion "without true closure," and ends his myth "in the backyard" of the primary world (193). This is because of the fact that there is no true end to any fairy-tale, as Tolkien has told in "On Fairy-stories" ("Fairy" 153). Tolkien has claimed that the verbal ending "and they lived happily ever after"

[57] It is not only environmental scientists who embrace Tolkien's works. In an article where she remarkably summarises Tolkien's influence on modern science, Kristine Larsen observes the fascination of scientists "from such varied disciplines as palaeontology and astronomy" with Tolkien's works. She writes that many new species and recently discovered fossils are given names according to their similarity to Tolkien's characters in terms of appearances or deeds (225-26). Among the many examples she gives of the former are *E. finarfinella* after blond-haired Finarfin, and *Frodospira*, known only from very small shells, and of the latter, a new order of New Zealand slug which is named *Smeagolida* because it is, like Tolkien's Sméagol/ Gollum, plays a far more significant role "than its drab exterior indicates" (Larsen 226, 223; Climo qtd. in Larsen 224). Geologists have been known to use such names as "Mordor Pound" or "Mount Doom," whereas astronomers have named asteroids "Tolkien" and "Bilbo," and created experiment names with humorous acronyms like SAURON (Spectroscopic Areal Unit for Research on Optical Nebulae) (Larsen 228-29).

does not really end a story, and it is as artificial a device as the beginning "once upon a time" ("Fairy" 160-61). It is for this reason that the closing remarks of Tolkien's tale which are uttered by Samwise Gamgee hint at a continuation rather than a true end:

> At last they rode over the downs and took the East Road, and then Merry and Pippin rode on to Buckland; and already they were singing again as they went. But Sam turned to Bywater, and so came back up the Hill, as day was ending once more. And he went on, and there was yellow light, and fire within; and 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. (*LOTR* 1031)[58]

These words, as Curry maintains, indicate that "it is not a journey away from our lives and our home here on Earth; ultimately, and crucially, it is a *return*" (*Defending* 158).

Tolkien's tale continues in the appendices A and B to *The Lord of the Rings* for more than another century, and in Appendix B, where Tolkien lists "Later Events Concerning the Members of the Fellowship of the Ring," the readers learn that all of them – with the exception of Frodo – live happily ever after indeed; they are happily married with children, they live in a world safer and more peaceful than ever before, and they hold reputable positions in society (*LOTR* 1097). Joseph Campbell argues that happy endings are scorned, because they are misrepresentations, "for the world, as we know it, as we have seen it, yields but one ending: death, disintegration, dismemberment, and the crucifixion of our heart with the passing of the forms that we have loved" (25-26). In this respect, Tolkien's ending is a realistic representation of the world. Although it is a happy ending, it is achieved at great cost, after a lot of loss and suffering. Having fulfilled his task, Gandalf is leaving Middle-earth for Valinor. Soon, all the Elves and their kingdoms on Middle-earth will disappear, the Ents will become extinct, and the Men of Númenor are dwindling into lesser Men. Most importantly, not everyone lives happily ever after. Frodo the hero drops quietly "out of all the doings in the Shire," and Sam grieves to notice how little honour he has in his own country after all his suffering

[58] Similarly, close to the end of *The Hobbit*, after the Battle of Five Armies, Bilbo's farewell remarks to his Dwarf companions end the story in the backyard of the primary world: "[i]f ever you are passing my way," said Bilbo, "don't wait to knock! Tea is at four; but any of you are welcome any time!" (*TH* 338). The last scene in the book depicts Bilbo keeping his promise, and hosting his unexpected visitors Balin and Gandalf.

to save them all (*LOTR* 1025). Frodo's old wounds never completely heal, one having been inflicted by Lord Nazgûl, the other by Shelob. In the end, he decides to use the gift Arwen has given him: her own place on the ship to Valinor. Frodo will never find peace in the Shire in spite of all the things he has done for it. He comments, "I have been too deeply hurt, Sam. I tried to save the Shire, and it has been saved, but not for me. It must often be so, Sam, when things are in danger: some one has to give them up, lose them, so that others may keep them" (*LOTR* 1029). However, there is hope for Frodo, too: although the Undying Lands will not grant him immortality, he will be able to recover from his pain before he dies.

As Attebery maintains, fantasy always ends with a resolution, which is qualified when every "hidden cost in the victory" is found (*Strategies* 15). Tolkien has gone to great lengths to offer the reader glimpses of all the hidden costs in the final victory of *The Lord of the Rings*, which is the ultimate eucatastrophe in his whole legendarium. In spite of all the great losses experienced by the Valar, the Elves, the Dwarves, the Men, and the Hobbits over three long ages (about seven thousand years), Tolkien's story ends with final victory. In this, it persuades its readers "to face life neither with despair nor with false hopes" (Auden, "Good and Evil" 142), and "looks more forward than backward, away from a destructive past and toward a healing future" (Senior, "Loss" 179). As Flieger summarises, what Tolkien does is

> show the world the way he saw it – as a place of hope and despair, cruelty and compassion. He saw it as a place where accidents happen, where plans go awry, where young men die in war and children lose their parents, where the right side can lose, where love is not always enough. But he also saw it as a place where human beings of good will and good intentions grope often blindly towards a more hopeful future that remains out of sight but not out of mind. (*Green* 40)

By providing escape into his secondary world, Tolkien offers his readers the consolation of the happy ending, which recognises the existence of sorrow and failure, but denies the sense of ultimate defeat. The sudden turns enable the readers to unexpectedly glimpse an underlying reality: there is always hope for a better world even when everything seems lost, and it is ordinary individuals who will make the world a better place to live.

CHAPTER IV
MYTH-MAKING: BREATHING A LIE THROUGH SILVER

4.1. A MODERN MYTHOLOGY

In many of his personal writings, Tolkien identifies his intention behind creating his mythology as threefold: as someone interested in learning and creating languages since childhood, Tolkien says his work was fundamentally linguistically inspired (*Letters* 219). He explains that the roots of his imaginary histories are his "predilection for inventing languages," and he claims, because "a language requires a suitable habitation, and a history in which it can develop," he composed his "legends and 'histories'" so that in them his invented languages could be "realized," and "the necessary background of 'history' for Elvish tongues" could be provided (*Letters* 375, 380; *LOTR* xxii). The very act of creating a language, as Gough summarises, "was a fundamental precursor to world creation for Tolkien" (4). Another reason underlying Tolkien's sub-creative work is his love for myth and fairy-story, and the lack of such works to his own taste. Tolkien remarks in "On Fairy-stories" that his taste for fairy stories, awakened by philology, developed "on the threshold of manhood, [which] quickened to full life by war" ("Fairy" 135). He writes in a letter, "an equally basic passion of mine *ab initio* was for myth (not allegory!) and for fairy-story, and above all for heroic legend on the brink of fairy-tale and history, of which there is far too little in the world (accessible to me) for my appetite" (*Letters* 144). Yet, Tolkien identifies the most important reason for his myth-making as the fact that England lacked or lost its own mythology. In his famous essay on *Beowulf*, Tolkien regrets that "we do not know more about pre-Christian English mythology" ("Beowulf" 24).[59] Rateliff mentions the loss of many manuscripts

[59] It is interesting to note that the composition and publication of Tolkien's two important essays, "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics" and "On Fairy-stories," coincide with those of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, respectively. *The Silmarillion*, of course, was Tolkien's life-work, and as such, was being constantly written and re-written at the time of the publication of the essays. Helms draws attention to the influence of the first essay on Tolkien's development of his theories of fairy-story and myth, and Chance considers it "the origin of the artist Tolkien" (Helms 2; Chance, *Tolkien's Art* 183). Chance adds, the *Beowulf* essay is a guide to *The Hobbit*, because many ideas and concepts in the essay are fictionalised in the book (50). Sammons writes, it provides insights into Tolkien's views about the power of myth as an effective technique (*War* 176). Both essays, as Ryan observes, "apply very closely to his own

that would have constituted such a collection, of which Tolkien himself was most probably aware, and emphasises that the list of works known to have once existed comprises the entirety of R. M. Wilson's *The Lost Literature of Medieval England* (1952) ("All the Days" 80-81). All that survived, comments Kocher, were "*Beowulf*, the Christian legends of Cynewulf, some historical war poems, one of two minstrel reflections" and the like ("Mythology" 103). In his frequently quoted letter to Milton Waldman of Collins Publishing, which, according to Hunter, "has attained a kind of mythic status in its own right," and which Chance regards as "a Rosetta stone of aesthetic theory for the study of Tolkien," Tolkien laments the lack of an English mythology (Hunter 138; Chance, Preface xiii). He writes,

> I was from early days grieved by the poverty of my own beloved country: it had no stories of its own (bound up with its tongue and soil), not of the quality that I sought, and found (as an ingredient) in legends of other lands. There was Greek, and Celtic, and Romance, Germanic, Scandinavian, and Finnish (which greatly affected me); but nothing English. (*Letters* 144)

Upon seeing the absence thereof, Tolkien sets about the task of presenting the English with a substitute mythology with the same "tone and quality," "air," and "fair elusive beauty" (*Letters* 231). He explains, "I had a mind to make a body of more or less connected legend, ranging from the large and cosmogonic, to the level of romantic fairy-story […] which I could dedicate simply to: to England; to my country" (*Letters* 144). L. E. Jones justifies Tolkien's way of thinking stating that the supposedly British mythic material is "either too localized," like Robin Hood tales, which are limited to Sherwood Forest, or "too universal," like the Arthurian cycle, which is "rooted in Celtic, not English, myth and flourished throughout Europe" (173). Tolkien's great attempt to create a native English mythology results in *The Silmarillion*, posthumously published by his son and literary executor Christopher Tolkien, and woven into *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* by Tolkien himself.

However, it would be a reductionism to consider the mythology of Middle-earth as a mythology for England only. First, Tolkien's mythology owes much to "genuine original myth" (Purtill 52). Although he created something unique out of it, Tolkien

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writing" (109).

made use of a universal collection of pre-existing material. As a classical scholar and an ardent philologist, Tolkien was familiar with Anglo-Saxon, Northern, Roman, Greek, and Egyptian myths, and as a devout Catholic, he was deeply influenced by Biblical mythology. He mentioned in his own personal and scholarly writing the impact of the Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf*, the Scandinavian *Eddas*, the Finnish *Kalavela*, and the Catholic Bible on his work (*Letters* 31, 383, 87, 144, 214, 345, 172). Second, as Tolkien states implicitly in the "Prologue" to *The Lord of the Rings*, and explicitly in his letters, Middle-earth is not an imaginary "never-never land without relation to the world we live in" (*LOTR* 2; *LT* 220). On the contrary, Middle-earth is the name of "the abiding place of Men, the objectively real world, in use specifically opposed to imaginary worlds […]. The theatre of my tale is this earth, the one in which we now live" (*Letters* 239). As such, it is only natural for the mythology of Middle-earth to be given by many the status of something "akin to real mythology," which demonstrates that "the historicity of Tolkien's texts has indeed become universally accessible" (Upstone 61). The reason behind the universal accessibility of Tolkien's mythology might be better explained by his own words:

> Literature works from mind to mind and is […] at once more universal and more poignantly particular. If it speaks of *bread* or *wine* or *stone* or *tree*, it appeals to the whole of these things, […] yet each hearer will give to them a peculiar personal embodiment in his imagination. Should the story say 'he ate bread,' […] the hearer of the story will think of bread in general and picture it in some form of his own. If a story says "he climbed a hill and saw a river in the valley below," […] every hearer of the words will have his own picture [of such a scene], and it will be made out of all the hills and rivers and dales he has ever seen, but especially out of The Hill, The River, The Valley which were for him the first embodiment of the word. ("Fairy" 159)

Although "poignantly particular," Tolkien's mythology is universal in that it transcends geographical, linguistic, and chronological boundaries: many of the readers who consider Tolkien's "mythology for England" their favourite work of literature neither have visited nor were born in England – some of them were not even born when the books were first published (Rateliff, "All the Days" 89). As Jones calls it, the mythology of Middle-earth is one of the best candidates for "a mythology of the modern age" (175).

The reasons that have prompted Tolkien to create a mythology, and his influences

summarised above have been the topic of many academic studies and scholarly works; nevertheless, these reasons and influences are "the soil of Tolkien's imagination, not the fruit" (Sale, *Modern Heroism* 198). Tolkien is like many other twentieth-century fantasists who were, in Irwin's words, "both myth seekers and myth makers. That is, they have used the inherited mythologies; they have made their own, sometimes anew and sometimes by reworking the traditional materials. Often too they have blended the received and the new-made" (160). Moreover, as Alexander observes, all literary works are made from the same raw materials, "from all the experiences and information we have absorbed, consciously or otherwise, in the course of our lives." These are "susceptible to infinite restructuring and recombination," and what creativity actually involves is "finding unexpected connections and making new syntheses" (164). What is more, if the traditional material is lacking in a fantasy work, "we have something obscure like someone's imperfectly translated dream, or a transparent allegory, or, worst of all, an artificial contraption" (Attebery, *Fantasy Tradition* 15).

Tolkien worked with the same ingredients, which, he argued, have gone into the "Pot of Soup, the Cauldron of Story" for authors of countless generations to dip in their ladles ("Fairy" 125). However, he also criticised people who used stories "not as they were meant to be used, but as a quarry from which to dig evidence, or information, about matters in which they are interested" ("Fairy" 119). Tolkien's advice is to be satisfied with the soup one has been served, and to refrain from trying to see the ingredients with which it has been made ("Fairy" 120). Therefore, not entirely disregarding his sources and influences, this chapter will attend to the question of what Tolkien aims to do by creating his mythology, which is equally – if not more – important. As Tolkien writes of *Beowulf*, myth, a secondary world born of language, is to be experienced, not excavated; it is not an allegory or historical document (Baltasar 19; Tolkien, "Beowulf" 5-7). Discussing the sub-creative aspect of mythology in his fairy-story essay, Tolkien again condemns the understanding of myth as "representation or symbolic interpretation of the beauties and terrors of the world" ("Fairy" 122). Years after the publication of the essays, Tolkien this time finds himself arguing against the allegorical interpretations of his own mythology. In the "Foreword to the Second Edition" of *The Lord of the Rings*, he announces, "I cordially dislike allegory in all its manifestations, [and] prefer history,

true or feigned, with its varied applicability to the thought and experience of readers." However, he admits the applicability of his work, which is different from allegory in that the former "resides in the freedom of the reader" while the latter, "in the purposed domination of the author" (*LOTR* xxiv). Also, Tolkien defends the applicability of myth and fantasy in general (Dickerson and Evans xxiii). For him, the audiences might be able to reach some fundamental truth, which myth contains and transmits, through the experience of myth (Hiley 855-56). Myth is "a device of expression" in which Tolkien expresses "his most important concerns" (Nagy, "Saving" 88).

Humphrey Carpenter, in his biography of Tolkien, proposes that Tolkien believed in "the inherent *truth* of mythology," and re-enacts a conversation between Tolkien and Lewis to support his claim (*Tolkien* 198). This conversation, Carpenter says, also led Tolkien to the composition of the poem "Mythopoeia:"

> *But*, said Lewis, *myths are lies, even though lies breathed through silver*.
> *No*, said Tolkien, *they are not*.
> And, indicating the great trees of Magdalen Grove as their branches bent in the wind, he struck out on a different line of argument.
> You call a tree a tree, he said, and you think nothing more of the word. But it was not a tree until someone gave it that name. You call a star a star and say it is just a ball of matter moving on a mathematical course. But that is merely how you see it. By so naming things and describing them you are only inventing your own terms about them. And just as speech is invention about objects and ideas, so myth is invention about truth. (*Tolkien* 197)

Tolkien expresses his view on this matter in his personal correspondences as well as in his academic works. In his famous letter to Milton Waldman, he writes, "I believe that legends and myths are largely made of 'truth', and indeed present aspects of it that can only be received in this mode," but this truth is "not explicit, not in the known form of the primary 'real' world" (*Letters* 147, 144). In this sense, myth serves as "a bridge between thought and the real world," its purpose being "to express and help us understand what we cannot rationally or intellectually know or express in any other way" (Sammons, *Better* 134). Tolkien writes in his essay on *Beowulf* that "[t]he significance of myth is not easily to be pinned on paper by analytical reasoning. It is at its best when it is presented by a poet who feels rather than makes explicit what his theme portends; who presents it incarnate in the world of history and geography" (15). Like the *Beowulf*-poet he fondly admires, Tolkien implicitly presents his themes

incarnate in the secondary world of Middle-earth. Believing that myth is the only mode in which certain aspects of truth can be conveyed, Tolkien utilises his skill in myth-making in order to express in intelligible form certain transcendent truths, such as the essential goodness and value of the world, the ordinary individual's role in sustaining it, and the necessity of re-enacting the heroic action recovered from myth and applied to the present (Pearce, *Man* xiii; Rosebury 104-5). Like he does via recovery and eucatastrophe, Tolkien, through his myth-making, creates a bridge between the secondary world and the primary world. In this respect, Tolkien is a contemporary author whose literary creations can be considered a response to the challenges of the primary world (Weinreich and Honegger 2: i).

4.2. INNER CONSISTENCY OF REALITY AND SECONDARY BELIEF

Tolkien's myth-making primarily involves giving his secondary world credibility, mostly "rearrang[ing] the primary matter in secondary patterns" (Tolkien, *Letters* 298). Parker argues, fantasy authors need to fulfil a basic requirement if they ever want to claim success: every fantasy must be supported by primary reality; "there must be some sort of bridge, some connection between the real word and the fantasy world," and the more one-to-one correspondences, the more success (599, 600). In this respect, Parker adds, Tolkien's work is highly successful, since it is "tied up with and bridged to a reality as is no other fantasy" (602). No other secondary world contains so many details as Tolkien has invented in order to command secondary belief in the reader, which is one of the very first achievements noticed by Tolkien's earlier critics. In 1962, Auden praises Tolkien's creation of seven species and innumerable names and languages, and adds, "Tolkien's gift for topographical description is equal to his gift for naming and his fertility in inventing incidents" ("Quest Hero" 50-53). Kocher notes in 1972,

> Middle-earth is a place of many marvels. But they are all carefully fitted into a framework of climate and geography, familiar skies by night, familiar shrubs and trees, beasts and birds on earth by day, men and manlike creatures with societies not to different from our won. Consequently the reader walks through any Middle-earth landscape with a security of recognition that woos him on to believe in everything that happens. Familiar but not too familiar, strange but not too strange. This is the master rubric that Tolkien bears always in mind when inventing the world of his epic. (*Master* 7-8)

Contemporary creators of secondary worlds, writes George R. R. Martin,[60] "happily admit their debt to the master [Tolkien]."[61] Martin pays homage to Tolkien stating that "Tolkien was the first to create a fully realized secondary universe, an entire world with its own geography and histories and legends, wholly unconnected to our own, yet somehow just as real" (3). Apart from geography, and histories and legends, Tolkien makes use of a variety of additional material in order to make his Middle-earth world more credible: maps, illustrations, calendars, timelines, genealogies, languages, and writing systems, some of which are appended to *The Lord of the Rings*, which peek through the folds of *The Hobbit*, and which are woven into *The Silmarillion*. Irwin explains that such devices, "a generous provision of what might be called documentation," are necessary for the readers who have found themselves in "a totally new world" (71). All these devices allow "a fuller immersion" in Middle-earth, and lend it "an air of 'truth' or credibility by co-opting the symbolic devices and narrative techniques of factual historical discourse" (Selling 51).

Tolkien applies the rules of Faërie, which he lists in "On Fairy-stories," to his Middle-earth to such an effect that his fairyland is quite close to the primary world. However, this comes with a cost: while working on every detail, his sub-creation grows so large that it takes Tolkien more than ten years to complete *The Lord of the Rings*, he twice revises *The Hobbit*, and he cannot publish *The Silmarillion*. In 1957, three years after the publication of *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien resembles himself to Niggle from his allegorical short story "Leaf by Niggle" (1945) in his constant "niggling over details" (Tolkien, *Letters* 257; Carpenter, *Tolkien* 261). Niggle, an artist struggling with his painting of a great tree, is so obsessed about painting each leaf in perfect detail that he is worried about not being able to complete his work before he dies:

> He used to spend a long time on a single leaf, trying to catch its shape, and its sheen, and the glistening of dewdrops on its edges. Yet he wanted to paint a whole

[60] Most of the stories of Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* novels take place on the fictional continent of Westeros.

[61] This admission of debt is expressed by more than fifteen authors in *Meditations on Middle earth* (2001), which, in its editor's words, is a collection of "literal meditations upon J. R. R. Tolkien" and his influence on the "masters of fantastic literature" who contributed essays to her collection (Haber xiv).

> tree, with all of its leaves in the same style, and all of them different. There was one picture in particular which bothered him. It had begun with a leaf caught in the wind, and it became a tree; and the tree grew, sending out innumerable branches, and thrusting out the most fantastic roots. Strange birds came and settled on the twigs and had to be attended to. Then all round the Tree, and behind it, through the gaps in the leaves and boughs, a country began to open out; and there were glimpses of a forest marching over the land, and of mountains tipped with snow. Niggle lost interest in his other pictures; or else he took them and tacked them on to the edges of his great picture. Soon the canvas became so large that he had to get a ladder; and he ran up and down it, putting in a touch here, and rubbing out a patch there. (*Tree* 73-74)

Looking back, Tolkien writes that the story arose from his own preoccupation with *The Lord of the Rings*, "the knowledge that it would be finished in great detail or not at all, and the fear (near certainty) that it would be 'not at all'" (*Letters* 257). Fortunately for Tolkien, he is able to finish it in great detail although he can never complete *The Silmarillion* saving it from its "confused state" although he "altered, enlarged and worked at" it for many long years (*Letters* 366). He does not altogether lose interest in it, and he "tacks" it "on to the edges of his great picture" – *The Lord of the Rings*.

Christopher Tolkien, who brought *The Silmarillion* into publishable form four years after his father's death, claims that although Tolkien never abandoned working on it until the end of his life, he was unable to unravel the tangled web caused by the many changes and variants of the old legends (Foreword to *The Silmarillion* 7).[62] If one reason was the confused state the stories were in, another was Tolkien's perfectionism. Tolkien admitted that he was "a pedant devoted to accuracy," even in what others may consider trivial details (*Letters* 372). One learns from his letters, for example, that he was doing research on "how much later the moon gets up each night when nearing full," and "how to stew a rabbit" (*Letters* 74). Grotta provides another example writing that Tolkien used "a British Army ordnance survey manual to find out precisely how far soldiers could move on forced marches" (107). It is true that Tolkien niggled over details (Carpenter, *Tolkien* 261); however, it is this meticulous attention to detail that maintains "the inner consistency of reality," which he fervently argues to be the key to sub-creating a secondary world that commands "Secondary Belief" (Tolkien, "Fairy"

[62] Christopher Tolkien later edited and published *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth* (1980), and the twelve volumes of *The History of Middle-earth* (1983-1996), which "gradually unveiled the immense depth" of Tolkien's mythology (Fimi 2).

140). Like many of Tolkien's readers, Grotta, too, thinks, "Middle-earth had a history, a language, a culture so complete – and its continuity so detailed" that it is difficult to believe that it did not actually exist (169).

Of all the details that Tolkien worked on, what most strongly commands secondary belief in his world is "the compelling sense of historical reality" (Tolkien, *Letters* 304). As discussed by Tolkien, it is the poet's skill in creating "[t]he illusion of historical truth and perspective" that makes *Beowulf* such an important work of art ("Beowulf" 7). Taking his cue from the *Beowulf*-poet, Tolkien creates in his own works an "impression of depth," an "effect of antiquity," which he achieves to create by taking every minute detail into consideration while constructing his mythology ("Beowulf" 27).

So as to attain "the compelling sense of historical reality," Tolkien turns to primary world mythology. Like all fantasy worlds, Tolkien's Middle-earth bears, in Scholes's words, "some resemblance to our own ancient past," because "every fictional world must borrow more than can be invented by its author" ("Boiling Roses" 6). Many critics point to the analogy between Tolkien's myths and the primary world mythological corpora (e.g., Nagy, "Great Chain" 247). Not only does Tolkien borrow from the primary world myths, he uses in his myths what Barthes terms "stolen language" (131). *The Silmarillion*, where Tolkien tells the story of the creation, fall, redemption, and apocalypse "with his own modifications," is an elaboration of the Genesis account (Sammons, *Better* 88, 15; Houghton 178). It opens with a creation myth, "Ainulindalë," or "The Music of the Ainur," which makes, in Trevor Hart's terms, "literary verisimilitude" possible, being what it is and where it is placed (41). Like in primary world mythologies, "Ainulindalë" "comes first not just in order to keep the narrative chronology intact, but because in a profound sense it provides the clue for understanding all that follows thereafter" (T. Hart 41). As many critics point out, *The Silmarillion* is Biblical not only in its structure, but also in its tone and its language, especially those of "Ainulindalë," which is evocative of the King James Bible in its paratactic structure and old-fashioned diction (e.g., Upstone 60; Lynch 104; Hiley 847; Sammons, *Better* 88). This similarity has even led to outrage as reported by Christopher Tolkien, who, in the foreword to *The Book of Lost Tales* mentions one reader accusingly telling him, "It's like *the Old Testament*!" (1: ix). The first three parts of the Genesis,

and their echoes in "Ainulindalë" are as follows:

> In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
>
> And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
>
> And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. (*Holy Bible* 9)
>
> There was Eru, the One, who in Arda is called Ilúvatar; and he made first the Ainur, the Holy Ones, that were the offspring of his thought, and they were with him before aught else was made. And he spoke to them, propounding to them themes of music; and they sang before him, and he was glad. […]
>
> Therefore I say: Eä! Let these things Be! And I will send forth into the Void the Flame Imperishable, and it shall be at the heart of the World, and the World shall Be. (*TS* 15, 21)

It is true that in these creation myths, both the primary and the secondary world are created out of void, and after similar commands of "Let there be light," and "Let these things Be!" However, Tolkien sees and uses myth as a means to a unique end. As Hiley notes, this "stolen language" serves an important purpose for Tolkien – giving his "Ainulindalë" a narrative strength and authority similar to that of Genesis, thereby making it more credible: "[t]he register of biblical language has for centuries carried a power and influence greater than that of any other. Tolkien is exploiting the reader's associations with this kind of language to give his own narrative, language, and myth greater resonance" (848). Moreover, it is not only in the Christian myth of creation that the spoken word has great power; as Bierlein says, language is everything to all myths:

> In the Talmudic story of Creation, the letters of the alphabet compete to be the first letter of the first word spoken by God in the Creation. In Persian mythology, it is the utterance of only one word by Ahura Mazda (the Good God) that casts Ahriman (the Bad God) into hell. The name of God is still so sacred to the Jews that to pronounce it is to profane it. (10)

Bierlein also argues that the "patterns, stories, even details contained in myth are found everywhere and among everyone" (5). Therefore, the verisimilitude of Tolkien's myths to primary world myths appeals to readers from diverse cultural backgrounds. Fantasy demands, in Lewis's words, "realism of presentation" rather than "realism of content," and "the apparently realistic" has far more power to be credible (*Experiment* 59, 67).

Like any sub-creator of a secondary world, Tolkien gives much importance to making Middle-earth as credible as possible, because, as Sandor explains, "[t]he success of a fantastic story depends on how the experience it provokes relates to the general experience which the audience has of nature and the world" (345). Tolkien's success partly lies in his ability to encourage the readers to relate their experience of the primary world myths regarding how the world came into being to his secondary world myths as told in *The Silmarillion*. Abram's and Eliade's definitions of myth point precisely to this function of myth: Abrams writes, myths serve to explain "why the world is as it is and things happen as they do" (*Glossary* 122). Similarly, Eliade explains,

> [m]yth narrates a sacred history; it relates an event that took place in a primordial Time, the fabled time of the "beginnings." In other words, myth tells how, through the deeds of Supernatural Beings, a reality came into existence, be it the whole of reality, the Cosmos, or only a fragment of reality. […] Myth, then, is always an account of a "creation;" it relates how something was produced, began to be. Myth tells only of that which really happened, which manifested itself completely. […] In short, myths describe the various and sometimes dramatic breakthroughs of the sacred (or the "supernatural") into the World. (*Myth* 5-6)

By providing such explanations on the nature of Middle-earth and its inhabitants as they exist today, Tolkien gives his text credibility, which is important in creating secondary belief. It is only by maintaining this verisimilitude that the readers can be enabled to apply what they have experienced in the secondary world to the primary world.

4.3. MYTH AS A TOOL FOR THE RECOVERY OF THE MATERIAL WORLD

4.3.1. The Significance of Names

Owen Barfield, whose views on mythology have had a deep impact on Tolkien's, maintains that myth is "intimately bound up with the early history of meaning. It is the same with innumerable words; if one traces them back far enough, one reaches a period at which their meanings had a mythical content" (89). This is also true for the names Tolkien gives the characters, objects, and places of his secondary world, which he says are, for him, "inextricable from the stories" (*Letters* 215). As Tolkien supports by his example of Thórr in "On Fairy-stories," there is a connection between the word and the

phenomenon. “The name creates the thing; without the name, we cannot identify the phenomenon, or our experience of it,” argues Tolkien, furthering Barfield’s theory that “it is through naming things – establishing them with words – that humankind comes to perceive and relate to its world” (Flieger and Anderson 104, 113).

The loss of the mythical content is strongly correlated with the diminishing of the old names in Tolkien’s Third Age of Middle-earth, which, in turn, is often accompanied by the fading of enchantment as exemplified by the name of the Golden Wood, where Galadriel and her people dwell. The forest was originally named *Laurelindórenan lindelorendor malinornélion ornemalin*, meaning “[t]he valley where the trees in a golden light sing musically, a land of music and dreams; there are yellow trees there, it is a tree-yellow land,” but later Elves began to call it *Laurelindórenan*, or “Land of the Valley of Singing Gold,” and now they have made it even shorter: *Lothlórien* or *Lórien* – “Dreamflower” or “Dream” (*LOTR* 467; *LT* 308). As Treebeard remarks, Elves might be right: “maybe it is fading, not growing” (*LOTR* 467). Lothlórien is actually fading, and soon, when no Elves remain in Middle-earth, it will pass into oblivion, and no one will have the opportunity to experience the enchantment that Frodo and Sam experienced there. Tolkien here seems to remind that as long as the mythic quality of things keeps receding, so will enchantment and the possibility of recovery. Languages will end up consisting of “hasty” words, as Treebeard would say, which, in turn, will shape and narrow people’s perceptions. Loss of the thing will lead to loss of experience of the thing, and eventually to loss of words for both of these (Flieger, *Green* 249).

One such loss is exemplified by the recognition of the Rohirrim of the Hobbits, who are unique in their cultural memory of the Halflings (Bowman, “Refining” 94). Tolkien states in Appendix F that “[t]he origin of the word *hobbit* was by most forgotten. It seems, however, […] to be a worn-down form of a word preserved more fully in Rohan: *holbytla* ‘hole-builder’” (*LOTR* 1130). When Théoden sees Merry and Pippin for the first time, he identifies them as “the folk of legend […] the Halflings, that some among us call the Holbytlan,” which astonishes the Hobbits, who have never met “people that knew any story concerning hobbits” (*LOTR* 557). The knowledge of Hobbits is now only available to those who have not lost touch with their cultural and linguistic roots. However, what is likely to be an ordinary occurrence is what happens to Bilbo in *The*

Hobbit: upon the first sight of Smaug the Dragon, Bilbo is lost for words. "To say that Bilbo's breath was taken away is no description at all. There are no words *left* to express his staggerment, since *Men changed the language* that they learned of elves in the days when *all the world was wonderful*" (emphasis added, *TH* 250). When the world is no longer wonderful, so will the people's experiences of the world become, and eventually, there will be no words left in their languages to express wonder, because no one will be able to experience it anymore. As Houghton expresses, Tolkien's main concern was "establishing, or restoring the power of myth (and, indeed, the power of language itself) by bringing us to look at words and concepts in a new light" (180).

Behind Tolkien's names lie "wider significance," or, basic truths about humankind and the primary world that "deserve to be recovered" (Jeffrey 62). The mythic quality of these names equips their bearers with the authority to speak about certain transcendent truths. The first character to illustrate this is Tom Bombadil, who is as enigmatic for the readers as for the Hobbits. When Frodo asks Tom's spouse Goldberry who Tom is, she simply answers, "[h]e is." Noticing the questioning look in Frodo's eyes, she elaborates, "[h]e is, as you have seen him" (*LOTR* 124). However, what the Hobbits and the readers have seen is not much of a help in terms of identifying Tom: "a man, or so it seemed" with "a long brown beard," and in "an old battered hat with a tall crown and a long blue feather stuck in the band," "great yellow boots," and "a blue coat." Tom is a cheerful fellow, constantly laughing, larger in size than a Hobbit, but not as large as a Man; "his eyes were blue and bright, and his face was red as a ripe apple, but creased into a hundred wrinkles of laughter" (*LOTR* 119). When Frodo asks Tom who he is, Tom replies, "[d]on't you know my name yet? That's the only answer," and adds,

> Eldest, that's what I am. Mark my words, my friends: Tom was here before the river and the trees; Tom remembers the first raindrop and the first acorn. He made paths before the Big People, and saw the little People arriving. He was here before the Kings and the graves and the Barrow-wights. When the Elves passed westward, Tom was here already, before the seas were bent. He knew the dark under the stars when it was fearless – before the Dark Lord [Morgoth] came from Outside. (*LOTR* 131)

Later, at The Council of Elrond, the readers learn from Elrond that Tom is called *Forn* by the Dwarves, *Orold* by Northern Men, and *Iarwain Ben-adar* by the Elves. These

seem to further mystify Tom Bombadil at first; however, his names actually expose Tom's true nature: Tolkien explains in his "Guide to the Names in *The Lord of the Rings*" that *Forn* is actually the Scandinavian word for "(belonging to) ancient (days)," and *Orald* means "very ancient" in Old English (171). Elrond explains, *Iarwain Ben-adar* means "oldest and fatherless" in an Elven language, *Sindarin* (*LOTR* 265). He is "fatherless," in the sense that he was not begotten by Elves, Dwarves, Men, Hobbits, or any other race known in Middle-earth, all of whom he pre-dates. As the most ancient entity in the world, Tom is not only pre-existent, but also pre-history and pre-language (Flieger, *Green* 246). As it has already been pointed out in Chapter II, Tom is the spirit of nature, and that as such, he is unconcerned with the affairs of transient beings. He is a "timeless being […] to whom the horrendous events of the Third Age of Middle-earth can have little meaning" (D. Hughes 89). In Tom, the Hobbits are confronted by "something beyond human experience, something beyond the scope of human knowledge" (Olsen, "Wingless"). What is said of Tom can be taken as applying to nature itself. Like Tom, nature simply "is." Like any myth, the myth lying behind Tom is "capable of possessing fragments of truth" (Baltasar 28). Nature, primary or secondary, is pre-existent; it was here before the humans, and will probably be here after them. Tolkien, by attaching a mythic quality to nature, emphasises its ancient quality and perpetuity, and encourages the readers to go back to the primary nature with this fact in mind. The experiences of Tom Bombadil "encourage us to take a longer view of our own history and our relationship to the other living things with which we share the earth" (Light 160).

Another remnant and representative of the way things were in the First Age is Treebeard (Calabrese 33). An echo of the mysterious relation between language and myth, which Tolkien finds delightful, resounds in the voice of Treebeard, the second eldest being in Middle-earth (Johnson 28). When Merry and Pippin ask Treebeard his real name upon first meeting him, Treebeard refuses to tell it because it would take a very long time: "[r]eal names tell you the story of the things they belong to" in Treebeard's language. His name is "growing all the time," and has already become "like a story," because he has lived "a very long, long time" (*LOTR* 465). Everything that has happened to him has contributed to his name and therefore, to his identity (Calabrese 40). Treebeard is lost

for words when he tries to translate the Old Entish word for "the thing we are on, where I stand and look out on fine mornings, and think about the Sun, and the grass beyond the wood, and the horses, and the clouds, and the unfolding of the world." "Hill?" suggests Pippin. Treebeard says, "*Hill*. Yes, that was it. But it is a hasty word for a thing that has stood here ever since this part of the world was shaped" (*LOTR* 465-66). Like Treebeard's name, the name of the thing he stands on for his morning contemplation is shaped by long years of experience, and is worthy of its long existence. The readers cannot help but be reminded that they are as "hasty" as Hobbits in their relationship with the nature; that they seem to forget the pre-existence of such an ancient entity as nature. As Light observes, Tolkien, with his sub-creation of Treebeard, "allows part of nature to speak for itself," and nature seems to say "something about how we can look at the world differently from our own limited perspective" (154, 160). Recognising the ancient quality and propriety of nature would equip people with the ability to take "a longer view of human welfare than we are accustomed to, one where we take responsibility for our actions that create consequences in the future for people and places we will never know" (Light 162). Countless generations of people have done the opposite, which has had considerable effects on the present generation's quality of life:

> In our own world, we all live with the effects of previous generations' environmental pollution. Traces of some of humankind's worst artificial toxins, for example, can still be found in people's bodies long after their use has been banned; the waste products of fossil fuels burned a hundred years ago can be found in the ice layers at both poles. We live with environmental problems unwittingly bequeathed to us by our predecessors. Once-beautiful landscapes are now wastelands, and many grasslands, woodlands, and wetlands are now severely reduced or have vanished forever. (Dickerson and Evans 212)

The state of the natural world has been much better, as readers can learn from Treebeard, of whom Gandalf says, "when you speak with him you will hear the speech of the oldest of all living things" (*LOTR* 558). As the oldest living thing, Treebeard remembers the good old days: "[t]hose were the broad days! Time was when I could walk and sing all day and hear no more than the echo of my own voice in the hollow hills" (*LOTR* 469). Of those old days Elrond has said at the Council "[t]ime was when a squirrel could go from tree to tree from what is now the Shire to Dunland west of Isengard" (*LOTR* 265). In the ancient Old Forest, which is "a survivor of vast forgotten woods," there still lives "ageing no quicker than the hills, the fathers of the fathers of

trees" (*LOTR* 130). But now, Treebeard laments, "nobody cares for the woods as I care for them" (*LOTR* 472). This is an implicit criticism of the present state of the world, of what Flieger calls "'hastiness' of a humanity that can cut down what has taken years to grow and leaves a wasteland in its place." Treebeard, she says, speaks "from and for the natural world," and speaks out against environmental ruination (*Green* 221).

Not only does Tolkien depict Tom Bombadil and Treebeard as the representatives for the natural world, but he also shrouds them in myth to give stronger authority to their representation. Tom's existence dates back to the First Age, to the creation of Middle-earth. He witnessed the creation of the rivers, the trees, and the rain, and saw the arrival of the Elves and their initial passing to Valinor. He was there when Morgoth came to Middle-earth, and when Númenor sank beneath the "bent" sea. Tom has great control over his country, but he does not own it. As Goldberry says, Tom is "the Master of wood, water, and hill," which Frodo mistakes to mean "all this strange land belongs to him." Goldberry corrects Frodo, saying, "[t]he trees and the grasses and all things growing or living in the land belong each to themselves" (*LOTR* 124). Tom's mastery of his land "is through knowledge and experience rather than ownership" (Gay 299). He knows the hearts and thoughts of the things growing and living in his land, and commands them through his songs, an ability he uses twice to save the Hobbits' lives – first from Old Man Willow, and second from the Barrow-wights (demons), which indicates that Tom has power and control over the Undead in his land, too (*LOTR* 129-30, 142-43). The fact that Tom does not own the land or dominate it despite his tremendous power should resonate with a truth for the readers, which they should apply to their attitudes toward nature in the primary world.

Treebeard, too, has a mythic background. His fear that once the Ents are gone, his beloved forests will not at all be cared for goes as far back as the "Beginning of Days," when Yavanna the Vala conceived the Ents as the protectors of the forests. After the making of the Dwarves by her spouse Aulë, Yavanna tells Manwë that she is worried that the children of Aulë will hurt the trees:

> Yavanna was silent and looked into her own thought. And she answered: 'Because my heart is anxious, thinking of the days to come. All my works are dear to me. Is it not enough that Melkor should have marred so many? Shall nothing that I have

> devised be free from the dominion of others?'
> 'If thou hadst thy will what wouldst thou reserve?' said Manwë. 'Of all thy realm what dost thou hold dearest?'
> 'All have their worth,' said Yavanna, 'and each contributes to the worth of the others. But the *kelvar* [animals] can flee or defend themselves, whereas the *olvar* [plants] that grow cannot. And among these I hold trees dear. Long in the growing, swift shall they be in the felling, and unless they pay toll with fruit upon bough little mourned in their passing. [...] Would that the trees might speak on behalf of all things that have roots, and punish those that wrong them!' (*TS* 52).

Manwë, "highest and holiest of the Valar," then heralds the coming of the Ents: "in the forests shall walk the Shepherds of the Trees," which makes Yavanna so happy that she goes back to Aulë to tell him, "let thy children beware! For there shall walk a power in the forests whose wrath they will arouse at their peril" (*TS* 45; 53). The myth regarding the Ents, who "reflect the essence of nature" (Harvey 111), is utilised by Tolkien to "give reality a new twist by writing in the form of myth" (Greenwood 171). As C. S. Lewis has observed in Tolkien's works,

> [t]he value of myth is that it takes all the things we know and restores to them the rich significance which has been hidden by 'the veil of familiarity'. The child enjoys his cold meat (otherwise dull to him) by pretending it is buffalo, just killed with his own bow and arrow. And the child is wise. The real meat comes back to him more savoury for having been dipped in a story; you might say that only then is it the real meat. If you are tired of the real landscape, look at it in a mirror. By putting bread, gold, horse, apple, or the very roads into a myth, we do not retreat from reality: we rediscover it. As long as the story lingers in our mind, the real things are more themselves. […] By dipping them in myth we see them more clearly (*On Stories* 90).

By "dipping" such truths as the ancient value of nature in myth, Tolkien makes his readers see them more clearly. Through Tom Bombadil and Treebeard, Tolkien is able to open up "the longest possible vistas into the past" (Kocher, *Master* 14). When the readers take Middle-earth, as Tolkien has intended, as the primary world, "his invented mythology becoming the story that describes how our world came to be and provides a mythic perception of the distant past – our past," the glimpses into this mythic past both help readers better understand its present state, and serve as a foreboding regarding its future (Whittingham 100). "The process of extermination is already well under way in the Third Age, and in works outside the epic Tolkien bitterly deplores its climax today" (Kocher, *Master* 15). The primeval forests that Treebeard mentions are now gone, and in the Age of Men, the Fourth Age of Middle-earth, when the Shepherds of the Trees

have become extinct, Elves have left, Orcs have hidden in caves, Hobbits have estranged from "the Big Folk," and Dwarves have probably died out, the responsibility for preserving what is left of the primordial nature falls on the shoulders of the humans. Gandalf says to Aragorn, "[t]he burden must lie now upon you and your kindred" (*LOTR* 971). As Light comments, "there is a recognizable call here for us to appreciate the longer perspective of other things in the world and to take responsibility for our actions given our dominant position on our planet" (163).

4.3.2. The Myth of the Two Trees of Valinor

Senior writes of fantasy works that they are successful "only if they address particularized issues and make valid attempts to understand and explain them" (*Stephen* 10). One of the issues that particularly interest Tolkien is natural beauty, and, as he once said, he created his secondary world out of "wonder and delight in the earth as it is, particularly the natural earth" (qtd. in "Obituary"). However much delight Tolkien takes in the natural world, like Yavanna, he holds trees dearest of all its components. In order for the readers to see trees through a refreshed perspective, Tolkien immerses them in myth. Trees, especially the Two Trees of Valinor, carry paramount importance in Tolkien's mythology, and the following is the myth of their creation by Yavanna as told in *The Silmarillion*:

> [Yavanna] sat there long upon the green grass and sang a song of power, in which was set all her thought of things that grow in the earth […] upon the mound there came forth two slender shoots; and silence was over all the world in that hour, nor was there any other sound save the chanting of Yavanna. Under her song the saplings grew and became fair and tall, and came to flower; and thus there awoke in the world the Two Trees of Valinor. Of all things which Yavanna made they have most renown, and about their fate all the tales of the Elder Days are woven. (*TS* 43)

The tales of the Two Trees are intertwined with the lives and fates of many characters Tolkien has created, from Fëanor to Aragorn. When Melkor (later Morgoth) and his evil ally Ungoliant, a spider of monstrous form, poison the Two Trees, a great darkness falls upon Valinor, and "no song or tale could contain all the grief and terror that then befell" (*TS* 88-89).

After the theft of Fëanor's Silmarils, all hope of bringing the Trees back to life seems lost. However, as luck would have it, a few seeds and saplings of the Two Trees have been given as gifts to Elves and Men before. In the courts of the Númenórean Kings, for instance, the White Tree Nimloth grew and blossomed, "and flowered in the evening, and the shadows of night it filled with its fragrance" (*TS* 316). After the destruction of the Trees, the descendants of Telperion develop greater significance, and the White Tree becomes a symbol representing "the deeper history of Men" (C. M. Cohen 99). Sadly, when the Valar deny their demands for immortality, the Númenóreans become estranged from the Valar. The King yields to Morgoth's servant Sauron, and cuts down the White Tree. However, regardless of the mortal peril they are in, the Men of Númenor and Gondor always do their best to save the White Tree at all costs. Isildur risks his life to steal a fruit before the White Tree is felled. This fruit later grows to become the White Tree of the new realm of Gondor in Middle-earth, planted before the house of Isildur. When Sauron attacks Gondor and destroys the White Tree, Isildur once again smuggles a seedling of the Tree when he flees (*TS* 328, 351, 353). Two more White Trees live in the courts of the kings in Gondor until sadly the last one dies. At the end of the Third Age, about two months after the coronation of Aragorn as King Elessar, Gandalf finds a sapling of the line of Nimloth in the snows of Mount Mindolluin (*TS* 366; *LOTR* 971). The following are his words to Aragorn, Isildur's heir:

> Verily this is a sapling of the line of Nimloth the fair; and that was a seedling of Galathilion, and that a fruit of Telperion of many names, Eldest of Trees. […] Remember this. For if ever a fruit ripens, it should be planted, lest the line die out of the world. Here it has lain hidden on the mountain, even as the race of Elendil lay hidden in the wastes of the North. Yet the line of Nimloth is older far than your line, King Elessar. (*LOTR* 971-72)

Aragorn plants the sapling in the court, where it begins to grow, and in just one month, it is "laden with blossom" (*LOTR* 972). The incredible survival of the White Tree is a great reward after the laborious struggle to preserve something that is worth conserving.

Tolkien's myth of the Two Trees sheds light on certain primary world realities. Like Eliade observes, "in mythology and cosmology, or simply symbolically," the tree represents "the *living cosmos*, endlessly renewing itself" (*Patterns* 267). Also, "the Whole exists within each significant fragment […] because every significant fragment

reproduces the whole" (269). The survival of the White Tree, a significant fragment of Telperion, is therefore symbolic of the survival of the whole – the Eldest of Trees. What Gandalf reminds Aragorn above resonates with many different meanings in the primary world, where species extinction is a reality. As Curry encapsulates, at the present rate of "mass-extinction by human beings of other species of life, approaching 100,000 a year," the Earth's remaining species will be wiped out in the next few decades, and in the process, "human beings stand to become their own victims in this ecological holocaust" (*Defending* 73). Botanist and writer Anthony Huxley mentions that many plants in the world will become extinct even before they have been discovered, let alone saved (12). However, the lines of most of these plants are far older than the line of the Homo sapiens sapiens, and they are worth conserving if only for this reason. "Remember this," Gandalf says above, and this is not a warning for Aragorn only. Liam Campbell reads Tolkien's works as an omen, and explains that Tolkien's "ecological augury […] calls for a recovery of environmental values and a reconnection with nature" (21). Gandalf is right when he says that destruction cannot be "made as if it had not been" (*LOTR* 550). On the other hand, there is always hope for a better future even when everything seems lost as long as someone takes responsibility for what is precious and thus worth saving. Tolkien, as Curry points out, also "offers his readers hope that what is precious and threatened in our world might survive too" (*Defending* 132).

4.3.3. The Beauty and Value of the Natural World

With his creation myth, "Ainulindalë," Tolkien equips the whole natural world with a mythic quality, and thus provides a background for the prevalent idea that nature is valuable for its own sake, not because it is something to be utilised. Briefly, here is how the Earth, or Arda as Elves call it, first came into being: Eru, "the One, who in Arda is called Ilúvatar,"[63] first makes the Ainur, "the Holy Ones," as the offspring of his thought. He propounds to them a great theme of music, and invites them to join what Gardner describes as "the cosmic jazz," each contributing their own variations (*TS* 15, Gardner). He then shows the Ainur the product of their sub-creation:

[63] "Father of all" (*TS* 404)

> And they saw with amazement the coming of the Children of Ilúvatar, and the habitation that was prepared for them; and they perceived that they themselves in the labour of their music had been busy with the preparation of this dwelling, and yet knew not that it had any purpose beyond its own beauty. For the Children of Ilúvatar were conceived by him alone; and they came with the third theme, and were not in the theme which Ilúvatar propounded at the beginning, and none of the Ainur had part in their making. Therefore when they beheld them, the more did they love them, being things other than themselves, strange and free. (*TS* 18-19)

Eru finally gives the command "Let these things be!" and makes "Eä, the World that Is." Some of the Ainur descend into the World, and take bodily forms. The higher Ainur become the Valar, or "the Powers of the World," and the lesser ones become the Maiar, the servants and helpers of the Valar. They set about the task of giving shape to the grand design of Ilúvatar, adding their own variations (*TS* 21-22). It is important to note that although the Earth is prepared as the habitation of Elves and humans, it does not have any purpose beyond its own beauty. Also, the Ainur's response to Elves and humans is noteworthy: they love them as beings other than themselves, strange and free. Two pieces of truth are exposed through the folds of myth here; namely, that the world is beautiful for its own sake, and that one should cherish beings other than themselves. The acknowledgement of these truths holds a key role in changing people's attitudes towards global ecological problems, and Tolkien, through the medium of myth, encourages his readers to recover the idea that they live in a world which they should value highly. Curry writes that only through re-enchantment is it possible to realise that "this world, its places and its inhabitants are existentially already wondrous – and as such, worthy of the kind of respect and love that doesn't permit their wanton, callous and stupid destruction. You won't fight for what you don't love." (*Defending* 147).

All Tolkien's tales contain a hint of "a quality of kinship with a primal essence and with nature" (Gasque 158). That is the reason why goodness is associated with "understanding of nature, closeness to the natural world," whereas evil always results in a "desolation of nature" (Spacks 84). It is interesting that this has always been so since the creation of the world, when Melkor thwarted its making:

> And in this work the chief part was taken by Manwë and Aulë and Ulmo;[64] but Melkor too was there from the first, and he meddled in all that was done, turning it if he might to his own desires and purposes; and he kindled great fires. When therefore Earth was yet young and full of flame Melkor coveted it, and he said to the other Valar: 'This shall be my own kingdom; and I name it unto myself!' […] Yet it is told among the Eldar that the Valar endeavoured ever, in despite of Melkor, to rule the Earth and to prepare it for the coming of the Firstborn [the Elves]; and they built lands and Melkor destroyed them; valleys they delved and Melkor raised them up; mountains they carved and Melkor threw them down; seas they hollowed and Melkor spilled them; and naught might have peace or come to lasting growth, for as surely as the Valar began a labour so would Melkor undo it or corrupt it. And yet their labour was not all in vain; and though nowhere and in no work was their will and purpose wholly fulfilled, and all things were in hue and shape other than the Valar had at first intended, slowly nonetheless the Earth was fashioned and made firm. (*TS* 22-24)

From then on, Melkor's sole purpose has been dominion and destruction: he corrupts many of the Maiar (e.g. the Balrogs) to his service, destroys the Two Trees and steals the Silmarils, is named Morgoth (the Dark Enemy of the World), and wages five great wars against the Valar, until after the War of Wrath, when he is "thrust through the Door of Night beyond the Walls of the World, into the Timeless Void" (*TS* 307). Another Maia corrupted by Melkor is Sauron, whose evil deeds have constituted a considerable part of the previous chapters. In Tolkien's mythology, "nothing is evil from the beginning," as Elrond says. "Even Sauron was not so" (*LOTR* 267). "In his beginning he was of the Maiar of Aulë, and he remained mighty in the lore of that people" (*TS* 35). The choice that lies before anyone is thus: either align with the good and live close to the natural world, or ally oneself with evil and destroy nature. Like Melkor, Sauron chooses power and dominion over the natural world and all its inhabitants, and under his dominion, everything has "fallen wholly into decay" (*LOTR* 649). Sauron's realm Mordor's landscape, in Rossi's words, "portrays extremely well the material destruction and moral horror which accompanies the lust for power" (131). Perhaps the best example of starting out with good intentions and becoming an evil tyrant is Saruman, since the readers partly witness his change. Saruman, formerly a wiser and stronger Maia than Gandalf,[65] now wants to rule the world. He attempts to

[64] Manwë is "The Lord of the Air," and is later appointed to be "the first of all Kings: lord of the realm of Arda and ruler of all that dwell therein." Aulë is "The Smith," also known as "The Maker of Mountains," and Ulmo is "The Lord of the Waters" (*TS* 28).

[65] Gandalf is mentioned as the "[w]isest of the Maiar" in *The Silmarillion* (*TS* 34).

entice Gandalf, saying, "our time is at hand: the world of Men, which we must rule. But we must have power, power to order all things as we will, for that good which only the Wise can see." He suggests joining with the "new Power" that is rising, thereby rising with it until eventually they learn to control it (*LOTR* 259). He still wants the same things as he has wanted from the beginning, but now he thinks that the end justifies the means no matter how wicked they are:

> We can bide our time, we can keep our thoughts in our hearts, deploring maybe evils done by the way, but approving the high and ultimate purpose: Knowledge, Rule, Order; all the things that we have so far striven in vain to accomplish, hindered rather than helped by our weak or idle friends. There need not be, there would not be, any real change in our designs, only in our means. (*LOTR* 259)

The means he has started to use is abusing nature, both at his own home, Isengard, and at the Hobbits' Shire. Neither does he see anything wrong with genetically engineering a new breed of super-Orcs. He has invented gunpowder and a kind of napalm bomb, which he uses to breech the walls of Helm's Deep and on the Ents. Many critics take Saruman to represent "a kind of mechanical ingenuity;" "mechanized powers" which threaten ecologically sustained landscapes of Middle-earth; and "technological progress that comes at the expense of life, nature, and the earth" (e.g., Shippey, *Author* 170; L. Campbell 73; Dickerson and Evans 8). It is interesting to note how similar a rhetoric Saruman's is to Robert Oppenheimer's[66] three months after the atomic bombings: "[i]t is not possible to be a scientist unless you believe that the knowledge of the world, and the power which this gives, is a thing which is of intrinsic value to humanity, and that you are using it to help in the spread of knowledge and are willing to take the consequences" (qtd. in Joy 30).[67]

As Stewart argues, "all too often we develop and deploy technologies more rapidly than we develop the conceptual resources to reflect on their implications" (156). Like the

[66]Julius Robert Oppenheimer (1904-1967), American theoretical physicist and science administrator, was the director of the Los Alamos laboratory during the development of the atomic bomb ("J. Robert Oppenheimer").

[67] Oppenheimer reached another conclusion two years later, when he said "[i]n some sort of crude sense which no vulgarity, no humor, no overstatement can quite extinguish, the physicists have known sin; and this is a knowledge they cannot lose" (qtd. in Joy 30).

Rings of Power, some of the technologies that are currently being forged will give their possessors unrivalled power to heal and preserve things as they are; but on the other hand, they will also give them the power to destroy the earth with all its inhabitants (Schick 26). Many scientists today are warning the public against such kind of progress. Schick gives computer scientist Bill Joy as an example, who says, these technologies, especially in the fields of nanotechnology, genetics, and robotics, are so powerful that they have a great potential for accidents and abuses, especially because they are within the reach of individuals or small groups with bad intentions (Schick 26; Joy 21-22). A lot of scientists, Joy argues, are like Oppenheimer,

> [f]ailing to understand the consequences of our inventions while we are in the rapture of discovery and innovation seems to be a common fault of scientists and technologists; we have been driven by the overreaching desire to know that is the nature of science's quest, not stopping to notice that the progress to newer and more powerful technologies can take on a life of its own. (23)

Joy advocates "relinquishment" as the only realistic alternative: the pursuit of certain kinds of knowledge should be limited, and technologies that are too dangerous should not be developed at all (32). Joy's solution will probably not seem to be a realistic alternative to many who argue that relinquishing these new technologies will mean not reaping any of their benefits (Schick 31). At least, the readers could take warning from Tolkien about the potential dangers new technologies can bring, and take action when they see the signs of nature becoming like the defiled Shire, Isengard, or Mordor for the sake of technological development. They could also be aware of the type of rhetoric Saruman uses, which Wirzba describes in the following words:

> The purveyors of the industrial, and now information and global, economies routinely claim the inevitability and necessity of their programs and plans, and then argue that agrarian ways are anachronistic, even dangerous, since they stand in the way of a bright future. History shows, however, that the prophets and salespeople of technological progress rarely reveal the whole story. (2)

Shippey resembles Saruman's rhetoric to that of contemporary politicians: his claims are that Saruman "talks exactly like too many politicians," and that he is "the most contemporary figure in Middle-earth, both politically and linguistically" (*Author* 75, 76). Tolkien's descriptions of Saruman and of the natural destruction with which he inflicts Middle-earth are valuable for readers in the primary world in showing "how

someone like Saruman defends his actions with reasonable-sounding rhetoric, the benign surface of which conceals a more sinister purpose" (Dickerson and Evans 198).

Having the same origins, and having been sent to Middle-earth with the same mission as Gandalf – "to encourage and bring out the native powers of the Enemies of Sauron" – Saruman should have had the same motives as him, and acted as a steward of the earth (Tolkien, *Letters* 180). As Treebeard says, "[w]izards ought to know better: they do know better" (*LOTR* 486). In contrast, as Shippey remarks, Saruman "has been led from ethically neutral researches into the kind of wanton pollution […] by something corrupting in the love of machines or in the very desire for control over the natural world" (*Road* 194). Shippey claims there is "a real-world connection" for this (*Road* 194). In Dickerson and Evans's words,

> Tolkien implies that our stewardship responsibilities have inevitable consequences in terms of an objective environmental ethic in which some practices can be seen as objectively good or evil. Our use of our time and our treatment of the earth are not merely matters of personal preference: there are right and wrong ways to fulfill our duties as stewards of the earth. Tolkien would have us do right. (49)

Those who keep this fact in mind and fulfil their stewardship duties are blessed with the most beautiful habitats in Middle-earth. Rivendell and Lothlórien, for example, are beautiful places that offer joy of life to their inhabitants, and recovery to their visitors. In contrast, the Old Forest, Fangorn Forest, and Mirkwood, which are treated in a utilitarian, neglectful, or hostile manner, become inhospitable not only towards who live there, but also towards passers-by. These, however, have not always been hostile territories; they have become hostile because they were injured by "two-legged creatures," they were "threatened by a machine-loving enemy, " or they have "fallen under the domination of a Power that hated all living things" (Tolkien, *Letters* 419-20).

When the inherent value of nature is ignored or underestimated, natural habitats could turn into inhabitable desolations, which would eventually cease to offer any benefit in the long run even to the most utilitarian. Readers must remember that sustainable development is essential, because they occupy only a small part in the long history of the world, and therefore have to adopt policies taking their possible future impacts into consideration. Today's profit-oriented utilisation of natural resources is leading to what

Curry calls a "global ecological holocaust." In addition to endangering a long list of animals, human beings are posing huge threats on the environment:

> [T]he number of motor vehicles worldwide (now at about 750 million) increases by 12 million a year. We are running out of water – something like an extraordinary 4% of people (more than two billion) have no reliable clean water and sanitation, while demand is soaring, mainly for intensive agriculture. Our environment is awash with toxic chemicals, whose long-term effects are a complete wild-card, and even the sea – for so long beyond the reach of human effects – is succumbing. […] the world is being run as if it was a business in the course of liquidation. (*Defending* 73)

The reversal of this trend requires sustainable development. Purtill claims Tolkien to be "an instinctively 'ecological' thinker" even before the facts Curry lists above began to cause alarm (141). Tolkien wrote long before such contemporary concepts as "ecology" and "sustainability" came into everyday usage; however, as a lover of nature, he recognised that in order to save what is beautiful and rare, he needed to appeal to more than reason and rationality, and wrote in the form of myth. Tolkien, in Sammons's words, "believes the power of myth is its ability to move readers" (*War* 177). His adding a mythic dimension to the natural world enables the readers to appreciate what Light calls "the longer perspective of other things in the world," which, in turn, leads readers to two possible attitude changes: first, empathising with the primary nature and defending it whenever necessary, and second, becoming concerned about long-term environmental sustainability, thereby taking responsibility for their actions that might be causing or mitigating global environmental problems (162).

4.4. THE NEED FOR RE-ENCHANTMENT

Tolkien considers myth to be a way of apprehending the material world. He says that he first divined "the wonder of the things, such as stone, and wood, and iron; tree and grass; house and fire; bread and wine" in fairy-stories and myths, or, "higher and lower mythologies," between which "[t]here is no fundamental distinction" ("Fairy" 147, 123). In order to encourage his readers to recover their ability to look at the world anew, Tolkien uses the medium of fairy-story and myth, and re-enchants the primary world where many have forgotten the wonder of things. Raboteau lists what happens as a result of the failure of such recovery:

> The world becomes flattened, surface, ordinary, spiritless. And in response we succumb to the pseudo-enchantment of addiction to entertainment, to food, to alcohol, to sex, to possessions – out of our deep innate hunger for mystery, for spirit, for glory. […] We settle for glittering treasure, dragon bait, but then the dragon wakens and eats our souls. We become the hollow men and women that T. S. Eliot described. We may not know how to name it, but we are no less deprived, impoverished, hungry. The gnawing feeling that our lives ought to be more possesses us. And we are right. (394)

As Kilby writes in 1969, "[f]or a century at least the world has been increasingly demythologized" (80). Many authors and critics have realised such an occurrence, and attempted to pinpoint its causes. Le Guin, for example condemns "the reductive, scientist mentality of the first half of the twentieth century." According to this view, she writes, the advance of science and the prevailing of rational thinking has drained the content of mythology dry (*Language* 68). The banishment of myth as such has had devastating effects. Sammons argues, demythologisation of the physical world "has taken us further away from the meaning of objects," and as a result, "our present world has become drained of qualities of the supernatural and wonderful" (*Better* 140). However, this "severance of *logos* and *mythos*"[68] (Armstrong, *Short History* 137-8) is a condition that is "alien" to human nature (Kilby 80). Therefore, it is no surprise that the need for myth, which Goldstein considers as indispensable as the need for vitamins and sunlight, eventually became "acute" again in the twentieth century, "when all the certainties of the old values were swept away, when, not coincidentally, Tolkien began his tale" (186, 188).

Human beings are myth-making creatures, and as such, when deprived of *mythos*, they tend to weave some "very destructive modern myths, which have ended in massacre and genocide," and reason alone is not enough to counter these, because "undiluted *logos* cannot deal with such deep-rooted, unexorcised fears, desires and neuroses. That is the role of "an ethically and spiritually informed mythology" (Armstrong, *Short History* 142). T. S. Eliot saw this need early in the twentieth century, before the horrors of the World Wars, and argued for the relevance of myth to modern society (Greenwood 172). In his essay "*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth," Eliot uses the term "mythical method" to

[68] *Logos*, which Armstrong defines as "the rational, pragmatic, and scientific thought," involves "logical, discursive reasoning" and relates "exactly to facts and correspond[s] to external realities," thereby enabling people to function well in the world whereas *mythos* provides the context of meaning, thereby making people's practical activities worthwhile (*Battle* xiv-xv).

describe a method which, in using myth, "manipulat[es] a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity." The mythical method, he argues, "is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history." Eliot suggests mythical method replace narrative method, and adds that the former is, "I seriously believe, a step toward making the modern world possible for art" (167). Tolkien, too, is an author who uses the mythical method to show the relevance of primary and secondary world myths in a society marked by "futility and anarchy."

4.4. ATTITUDES TOWARD MYTH

All the heroic deeds – as well as evil ones – in Middle-earth are renowned in song and legend, and benefit those who value them. Besides those characters who give due importance to myth and legend and profit from them, Tolkien depicts two more groups of individuals with distinct attitudes towards myth and legend in his works: those who have lost but later recover their closeness to them, and those who disdain them. By distinguishing between these individuals, Tolkien helps his readers to recover their possibly negative preconceptions towards myth and fairy-story, and to allow themselves to utilise this endless source of wisdom in their lives in the primary world. Through his great mythology, Tolkien attempts to do what he thought the *Beowulf*-poet achieved through his work, which, in Tolkien's words, is

> an historical poem about the pagan past, or an attempt at one – literal historical fidelity founded on modern research was, of course, not attempted. It is a poem by a learned man writing of old times, who looking back on the heroism and sorrow feels in them something permanent and something symbolical. […] *Beowulf* is not an actual picture of historic Denmark or Geatland or Sweden about A.D. 500. But it is (if with certain minor defects) on a general view a self-consistent picture, a construction bearing clearly the marks of design and thought. ("Beowulf" 26-27)

Similar to *Beowulf*, Tolkien's myths create "the illusion of surveying a past, pagan but noble and fraught with deep significance – a past that itself had depth and reached backward into a dark antiquity of sorrow" (Tolkien, "Beowulf" 27). The pervasive sense of "almost unimaginable depths of time" is a defining quality of Tolkien's secondary world (Huttar 8). Tolkien began building his massive mythology more than twenty

years before *The Hobbit* and forty years before *The Lord of the Rings* were published, and he based both of these on what would later become *The Silmarillion* (Tolkien, *Letters* 130, 31). Even though Tolkien began *The Hobbit* as an independent work without any clear relationship to *The Silmarillion*, elements from his mythology slowly and inevitably crept in (Anderson 144; Stevens and Stevens 18). Tolkien writes in the foreword to the second edition of *The Lord of the Rings* that his story

> was drawn irresistibly towards the older world, and became an account, as it were, of its end and passing away before its beginning and middle had been told. The process had begun in the writing of *The Hobbit*, in which there were already some references to the older matter: Elrond, Gondolin, the High-elves, and the orcs, as well as glimpses that had arisen unbidden of things higher or deeper or darker than its surface: Durin, Moria, Gandalf, the Necromancer, the Ring. The discovery of the significance of these glimpses and of their relation to the ancient histories revealed the Third Age and its culmination in the War of the Ring. (*LOTR* xxii)

Both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are filled with references to the ancient history as told in *The Silmarillion*. Apart from the deeper things Tolkien lists above, the characters and the readers of *The Hobbit* catch glimpses of the history behind Elrond, Thorin, and the Dwarves and Men of Dale (*TH* 61-62, 154, 229, 25). In *The Lord of the Rings*, Aragorn's chanting of the tale of Beren and Lúthien, the verses Bilbo chants about Eärendil, Legolas's and Gimli's songs of Nimrodel and Dúrin, respectively, serve a similar function (*LOTR* 191-93, 233-36, 315-17, 339-41). Moorman suggests, the frequent references of Tolkien's narrators and characters to the past history can be explained by Tolkien's statement that in *Beowulf*, the "impression of depth is an effect and a justification of the use of episodes and allusions to old tales, mostly darker, more pagan, and desperate than the foreground" (Moorman 212; Tolkien 27). Flieger claims Tolkien to have also been writing about himself in writing about the *Beowulf*-poet, and adds, "his clear intent in his own work was not to give 'an actual picture' of the pre-historic mythic past of England, but rather 'a self-consistent picture, an imaginative construction'"[69] ("Unfinished" 127). This self-consistent picture serves the same function as what J. Campbell describes as that of primary world mythologies: myth, he says, is an instrument "to help the individual past his limiting horizons into spheres of

[69] Tolkien's expression "a self-consistent picture, a construction bearing clearly the marks of design and thought" in the published essay was originally "a self-consistent picture, an imaginative construction" in the first two drafts (qtd. in Flieger, "Unfinished" 128).

ever-expanding realization" (190). Tolkien's myth helps us to imagine ourselves in relation to "deeper time and history," and to "acquire the humility to recognize that we are part of a story much longer and grander than ourselves" (Light 161).

Le Guin demands that myth be taken as "an expression of one of the several ways the human being […] perceives, understands and relates to the world," because like science, myth is "a product of a basic mode of apprehension" (*Language* 69). The ability to appreciate myths, therefore, leads Tolkien's characters to a better perception of and relation to their worlds. Like in the primary world, myth is rapidly disappearing from Middle-earth, but those who continue to appreciate myths are able to overcome great obstacles, because, as Kraus observes, they remember something important that others have forgotten (137). "Tolkien seems to tell us knowledge is a crucial part of what it takes to be a hero," whose power comes from "scholarship and respect for tradition" (Kraus 138). In what Flieger calls "a myth-forgetful age," it is those who value tradition that find in myths clues as to the solutions of the problems of the present day (*Green* 294). Elrond, the greatest of lore-masters,[70] discovers and reads the moon-letters on Thorin's map in *The Hobbit*, which is important because the Dwarves have forgotten the moon-letters although it was their ancestors who invented them in the first place. Elrond's lore-mastery helps the company to learn about the secret entrance to the ancient Dwarven home of the Lonely Mountain, where Smaug the Dragon now lives (*TH* 63). It is again Elrond at the Council who understands that the responsibility of the Ring falls on a humble Halfling's shoulders, because, being sixty-five centuries old, he has been an eye-witness of the events told in *The Silmarillion*, where the wheels of the world were turned by small hands while the great were prone to make great mistakes. Elrond says, "I think this task is appointed for you, Frodo; and that if you do not find a way, no one will," and he forms the Fellowship of the Ring, which eventually turns out to be the only way the Ring can actually be destroyed (*LOTR* 270, 275-76).

[70] Sauron says in *The Silmarillion* that Elrond is "wise in all lore" (*TS* 345). Also, the narrator tells that during the Third Age, Master Elrond abode in Imladris (Rivendell), and "he preserved through many lives of Men the memory of all that had been fair; and the house of Elrond was a refuge for the weary and the oppressed, and a treasury of good counsel and wise lore" (*TS* 358-59).

Although not a lore-master, Bilbo, too, benefits from lore. When they reach the secret entrance to the mountain, the Dwarves have already forgotten the information Elrond has recovered from the map, but Bilbo remembers it, and makes use of this ancient piece of wisdom to find the hidden keyhole (*TH* 243-44). Before going down the tunnel for the second time, Bilbo remembers another piece of wisdom passed on to him by his father, which eventually enables Bard to kill the Dragon: "'[e]very worm has his weak spot,' as my father used to say, though I am sure it was not from personal experience" (*TH* 256). Ironically enough, Bilbo's father is a member of the Baggins family, who are respected for their never having any adventures or doing anything unexpected (*TH* 4). Olsen draws attention to the fact that even such a "pillar of dullness and predictability" as Bilbo's father had advice on Dragons, because his mundane life was apparently enriched by wisdom derived from old stories still remembered by the Hobbits (*Exploring* 215-16). However, it takes Bilbo to go on an adventure to recover his love of tales, and thus old wisdom. At one point in his life, Bilbo lost his love of lore, as told in *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth* by Gandalf, who explains why he chose Bilbo as the fourteenth member of Thorin and company:

> Somehow I had been attracted by Bilbo long before, as a child, and a young hobbit: he had not quite come of age when I had last seen him. He had stayed in my mind ever since, with his eagerness and his bright eyes, and his love of tales, and his questions about the wide world outside the Shire. As soon as I entered the Shire I heard news of him. He was getting talked about, it seemed. Both his parents had died early for Shire-folk, at about eighty; and he had never married. He was already growing a bit queer, they said, and went off for days by himself. He could be seen talking to strangers, even Dwarves. (828)

However, twenty years later, Gandalf finds Bilbo changed: "[a]t least, he was getting rather greedy and fat, and his old desires had dwindled down to a sort of private dream" (831). Still, Gandalf insists that the Dwarves employ Bilbo as a burglar, fortunately changing Bilbo's life forever. If not for Gandalf, Bilbo could have "slip[ped] into the comfortable and unadventurous life of his neighbors," without ever being able to recover his love of tales (Taliaferro and Lindahl-Urben 70).

Tolkien illustrates that people's lives are as enriched as they allow the ancient wisdom transmitted by stories to be a part of their daily lives, and provides examples like Ted Sandyman, the miller's son, as to what could happen otherwise. Ted, "the hardline

realist," wins the argument against Sam in *The Green Dragon* about the truth of fireside tales and Dragons, only to end up becoming one of Saruman's thugs that take over the Shire, and passing out of history after the Shire is scoured (Atherton 54; Hunnewell 181). Sam, on the other hand, is elected Mayor of the Shire three times, and has a reputable place in the history of Middle-earth (*LOTR* 1097). Another misomyth, the Master of Lake-town, who, never thinking "much of old songs, giving his mind to trade and tolls, to cargoes and gold," dies of starvation, whereas the people make songs about the new Master, who is "of wiser kind" (*TH* 229, 351).

Another character renowned for his mastery of lore is Gandalf, who, in *The Hobbit* attends "a great council of the white wizards, masters of lore and good magic," with whom he drives the Necromancer (later Sauron) from Mirkwood (*TH* 343). His research into the Ring at the archives of Minas Tirith provides the Council of Elrond with a coherent lore, without which the Ring would be unrecognised and easily recovered by Sauron (Basney 187). Although Denethor's archives contain ancient records, much wisdom has been lost in Gondor, save by a few like the old wife Ioreth, who reminds Gandalf of a saying in old lore: "*The hands of the king are the hands of a healer*." Upon hearing this, Gandalf fetches Aragorn, the rightful heir to the throne, who is able to heal the mortally wounded Faramir, Eowyn, and Merry (*LOTR* 860). Aragorn asks for *athelas*, or kingsfoil, but although women such as Ioreth still repeat rhymes about it without understanding and the herb master knows its names, nobody thinks it has any great virtue or keeps any *athelas* in the Houses of Healing. Genuine knowledge has dwindled down to lore, "which is remembered but no longer felt to have any practical value" (Shippey, *Roots* 163). However, as in this example, what is disregarded as mere folklore proves to be "a legacy of much-needed wisdom" (Huttar 9).

Raboteau, underlining the importance of "recovering wisdom," suggests a return to story in order to "recover or renew our vision," and goes on to say that wisdom is most readily accessible in stories, "particularly in the form of folktales, myths, and legends," which perpetuate and convey the collected wisdom of the human race (396-98). Tolkien, described by Kilby as a remythologiser, stresses the same fact by encouraging both his characters and his readers to recover the wisdom of ancient peoples by means of their stories, legends, and myths (80). Those who are able to recover such wisdom

achieve great deeds, and also become great individuals. Aragorn, for instance, having been raised by Elrond and appreciating Elven lore, not only becomes a great leader, but is also a crucial source of stories, and therefore wisdom, to the Fellowship (Johnson 35). Bilbo becomes a lover, collector, and writer of story at the end of his adventure in *The Hobbit*, during which he learns to appreciate the old songs and stories, and the wisdom contained in these. Growing up with Bilbo's stories distinguishes Frodo and Sam from the other Hobbits, and enables them to look at the world from a different perspective. Lore "illuminates the present by remembering the past" (Sale, *Modern Heroism* 210-11). In Lothlórien, Aragorn's reminiscences of Arwen enable Frodo both to see Aragorn as he really is and to realise that he is looking at things as they once were:

> At the hill's foot Frodo found Aragorn, standing still and silent as a tree; but in his hand was a small golden bloom of *elanor*, and a light was in his eyes. He was wrapped in some fair memory: and as Frodo looked at him he knew that he beheld things as they once had been in this same place. For the grim years were removed from the face of Aragorn, and he seemed clothed in white, a young lord tall and fair. *Arwen vanimelda, namárië!* he said, and then he drew a breath, and returning out of his thought he looked at Frodo and smiled. (*LOTR* 352)

Bilbo's second protégé Sam possesses "the very important characteristic of openness to new ideas and experiences; he longs to met the Elves and dreams of one day seeing an elephant. In this, Sam is considerably different from the usual inhabitant of the Shire" (Purtill 90). Despite his narrow-mindedness, even Sam's father appreciates the power of stories in shaping a person when he boasts of Sam that he learned everything that he could from Bilbo when he was a child. He says, "[c]razy about stories of the old days, he is, and he listens to all Mr. Bilbo's tales. Mr. Bilbo has learned him his letters" (*LOTR* 24). Although he was born into an illiterate family, "Sam turns out to be an extraordinary scholar" (Kraus 144). But for the knowledge they have learned from Bilbo, Gandalf, Aragorn, and Elrond, the two Hobbit heroes Frodo and Sam would be lost when they find themselves alone. Sam knows to use Galadriel's phial, which contains the light of the Two Trees, instead of the Ring against the darkness and the horrors of Mordor at the Tower of Cirith Ungol, and to say the Elvish word "Elbereth" as an invocation of Varda, Lady of the Stars, one of the greatest Valar (*TS* 28).

As Tolkien argues in his fairy-story essay, "the adult relegation of fairy stories to the nursery" has had dangerous results for adults (Birzer 37). Tolkien provides examples of such results in his depiction of the Men of Rohan and Gondor, who have to recover their visions of their mythic traditions. The people of Rohan are "wise but unlearned, writing no books but singing many songs, after the manner of the children of Men before the Dark Years" (*LOTR* 430). They have lost touch with the world surrounding them, and reduced Elves and Ents to superstitions and children's stories (Hunter 142). Théoden, for example, has always known about Ents "from the old tales (narrative traditions) of Rohan, […] never realized he knew something that was a piece of real knowledge, with a real subject and referent" (Nagy, "Saving" 89). Even though the people of Rohan call the forest bordering their land "Entwood," they have forgotten what it refers to. When Théoden asks Gandalf about the Ents, Gandalf replies, "[i]s it so long since you listened to tales by the fireside? There are children in your land who, out of the twisted threads of story, could pick the answer to your question" (*LOTR* 549). Théoden at this point gains a new awareness:

> The king was silent. 'Ents!' he said at length. 'Out of the shadows of legend I begin a little to understand the marvel of the trees, I think. I have lived to see strange days. […] We cared little for what lay beyond the borders of our land. Songs we have that tell of these things, but we are forgetting them, teaching them only to children, as a careless custom. And now the songs have come down among us out of strange places, and walk visible under the Sun.' (*LOTR* 549-50)

As Johnson points out, Tolkien puts one of his strongest passions into the mouth of Théoden, whose understanding of nature is "illuminated and transformed" (36-37). Fairy-stories banished from the adult world to the nursery are eventually ruined, but when their value is rediscovered, they enable their audience to see the world in a new light, and, like Théoden, to begin a little to understand the marvel of what is familiar (Tolkien, "Fairy" 131). Gandalf's appreciation and Théoden's recovery of the value of stories is an opportunity for the readers to clearly see that "the world is far larger than [they have] imagined, and its importance inheres in more than the existence of Men alone" (Dickerson and Evans 232). As a result of this new awareness, the readers come to understand what Théoden has: compared with the primordial nature, "you are but the passing tale; all the years from Eorl the Young to Théoden the Old are of little count to them; and all the deeds of your house but a small matter" (*LOTR* 549).

Similar to Théoden's are the attitudes of two other Riders of Rohan, Éomer and Éothain, who are amazed that some reality they have known from old wives' tales stands before their eyes in actuality, and legend is fulfilled (Zimbardo and Isaacs 183). When Aragorn reveals his true identity, Éomer echoes Théoden's words: "[t]hese are indeed strange days […]. Dreams and legends spring to life out of the grass" (*LOTR* 434). Upon the mention of the Hobbits, Éothain laughs, "Halflings! But they are only a little people in old songs and children's tales out of the North. Do we walk in legends or on the green earth in the daylight?" (*LOTR* 434). Upon these imprudent words, "[a] man may do both," says Aragorn. "For not we but those who come after will make the legends of our time. The green earth, say you? That is a mighty matter of legend, though you tread it under the light of day!" With these words, Aragorn reminds both Éothain and the reader that legend and reality are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, "the present is the material of future legend, which in turn means that legends can be founded on past reality and useful knowledge" (Bolintineau 267). Moreover, the readers are also encouraged to remember that the green earth they casually tread is actually "a mighty matter of legend." The mythic importance of the green earth can be traced back to the beginning of days, when even the "new-made green was yet a marvel in the eyes of the makers; and they were long content" (*TS* 40).

By manipulating certain characters, Tolkien gets them to "challenge their own views about certain tales of the past" (Calabrese 35). For these characters, "the truth of these tales becomes indisputable," thereby changing the viewpoint of the characters who mistook them as old wives' tales (Calabrese 35). This is also what Tolkien encourages his readers to do: challenge their own views regarding the tales of the past. As Dickerson and Evans summarise, "Tolkien shows how myth and fairy tale can help rekindle […] a deeper appreciation for the spiritual significance and sacredness of nature. In turn, this rekindled appreciation can help engender a deeper love for the world and a corresponding desire for its protection and preservation" (232). Grotta writes,

> Tolkien knew the importance of mythology to language and culture. Myths develop a link with the past, a continuity that helps people weather the present and look forward to the future. In an era of unprecedented change, the links to the past are stretched to the breaking point, and a people without roots are likely to because, analogously, a people without branches or flowers. (85)

Those people who have severed their links to the past as a result of myth-forgetfulness are prone to diminish. Described by Calabrese as "the least mythic of all the races," the Hobbits, the narrator reports, "forgot or ignored what little they had ever known of the Guardians, and of the labours of those that made possible the long peace of the Shire. They were, in fact, sheltered, but they had ceased to remember it" (Calabrese 36; Tolkien, *LOTR* 5). In his last conversation with Sam, Frodo reminds him to "read things out of the Red Book, and keep alive the memory of the age that is gone, so that people will remember the Great Danger and so love their beloved land all the more" (*LOTR* 1029). Hunter notes, Frodo here knows that the Hobbits can no longer disregard the need for "historical sense of loss," but this knowledge was still not enough as can be observed in the Prologue of *The Lord of the Rings*, where the narrator tells that although the Hobbits are "very ancient people," they have dwindled in number (*LOTR* 1; Hunter 142). Similarly, Théoden's army is described by the narrator as the "last host of Rohan [that] rode thundering into the West," implying that after Théoden, no such king or riders will ever come to Rohan again (*LOTR* 525).

Gondor is not faring well either, after long centuries of decline. Faramir boasts to Frodo that the members of the house of Denethor "know much ancient lore by long tradition," and moreover, there are many books and tablets preserved in their treasuries; however, as he has to admit, some of these "none can now read; and for the rest, few ever unlock them" (*LOTR* 670). Faramir can read a little in them, because he has been educated, but what distinguishes him from other Gondorians is his realisation of the value of the archived material after he saw as a child that this was what brought Gandalf to Minas Tirith. He has always welcomed Gandalf when he came to the city, and "learned what he could from his wisdom," much to the displeasure of his father. Faramir is "a lover of lore and of music," but his elder brother Boromir is his exact opposite, "caring little for lore, save the tales of old battles" (*LOTR* 1056). Appreciation of lore makes Faramir so markedly different from Boromir that while he is not even tempted to take the Ring from Frodo, Boromir is constantly thinking of using it against the enemy although he was told this is not possible at the Council of Elrond. Boromir first tries to persuade Frodo to change his view of the Ring by saying

> ‘you seem ever to think only of its power in the hands of the Enemy: of its evil uses not of its good. […] Minas Tirith will fall, if the Ring lasts. But why? Certainly, if the Ring were with the Enemy. But why, if it were with us?’
> ‘Were you not at the Council?’ answered Frodo. ‘Because we cannot use it, and what is done with it turns to evil.’[…]
> ‘True-hearted Men, they will not be corrupted. […] And behold! in our need chance brings to light the Ring of Power. It is a gift, I say; a gift to the foes of Mordor. It is mad not to use it, to use the power of the Enemy against him.’ (*LOTR* 398)

When he cannot persuade Frodo to use the Ring, he tries to take it by force, breaking the Fellowship, and dying at the hands of the enemy after a last-minute repentance. He is the perfect validation of Tolkien’s idea that “those who use evil means to destroy evil become like the enemy they are fighting,” which is “central to Tolkien’s thinking and writing” (Purtill 72). Faramir, on the other hand, knows “such things do not bring peace […], not if aught may be learned from ancient tales” (*LOTR* 669). He says he would not take the Ring even if he found it on the road, because he is “wise enough to know that there are some perils from which a man must flee” (*LOTR* 681). He has achieved what Tolkien wants his readers to achieve: although lacking first-hand experience of the Ring, “he has gained the wisdom of experience *within* the story to discern that, regardless of intentions, the Ring *will* corrupt” by recovering “ageless truths and meanings” transmitted through ancient tales (Johnson 36). Boromir is a Man who desires to do good, but caring little for lore and thus lacking the necessary wisdom, he is “corrupted by the power he sees as necessary for doing it” (Evans 214). He remains as narrow-minded as the provincial Hobbits, who, Hunnewell writes, “cannot see beyond the borders of his beloved land,” because he has not recovered much after months among the Elves and the members of the Fellowship (179).

While the Men of Rohan are able to recover their views of lore, Boromir cannot benefit from the wisdom transmitted in it although other characters try to widen his perspective on this matter. Apart from disregarding whatever he has heard at the Council, when he is advised by Celeborn the wise Elf against going into the Forest of Fangorn, he replies that he has indeed heard of Fangorn, and adds, “what I have heard seems to me for the most part old wives’ tales, such as we tell to our children,” so he will go into the forest if need be, regardless of what he has heard. Celeborn’s reply echoes Tolkien’s views on fairy-stories: “do not despise the lore that has come down from distant years; for oft it

may chance that old wives keep in memory word of things that once were needful for the wise to know," a suggestion Boromir does not take (*LOTR* 374). As such, Boromir ends up being one of the very few major characters that Tolkien has the heart to let die. His father Denethor, too, falls victim to his inability to benefit from ancient wisdom: as one of the very few in whom the blood of Númenóreans still runs, he should have had the wisdom to refrain from using the seeing stone, because he should have known that only the true king can master a *palantir*.[71] Instead, he secretly and frequently looks into it, and as he tells Gandalf, "I have seen more than thou knowest, Grey Fool. For thy hope is but ignorance. […] against the Power that now arises there is no victory" (*LOTR* 853). He thinks his ventures provide him with information that others lack; however, he does not know that he is the one fooled by Sauron, who only lets him see in the *palantir* what he wants Denethor to see (*LOTR* 823-24). Denethor lacks wisdom, but he is also "one of those proud, superior mortals vain about his deep learning" (Kocher, *Master* 64). Rather than "embrace the wisdom of the past in a time of crisis," he turns away from tradition and from "valuable course of the stewards who came before him," and destroys the present (Kraus 142-43). Before he dies, he says to Gandalf,

> I would have things as they were in all the days of my life […] and in the days of my longfathers before me: to be the Lord of this City in peace, and leave my chair to a son after me, who would be his own master and no wizard's pupil. But if doom denies this to me, then I will have *naught*: neither life diminished, nor love halved, nor honour abated. (*LOTR* 854)

As Purtill notes, this is "the true voice of pride: either things as *I* want them or nothing" (86). If Denethor was able to embrace the ancient wisdom, he would, like Bilbo, Frodo, Sam, and Théoden, find in them sources of hope and strength. Twenty-first century readers wrestle with a variation of the despair that claims Denethor, and what they should try in order to avoid Denethor's end is "turning to a mythical past and finding themselves in a history that keeps unfolding" (Kraus 145-46).

[71] The *Palantíri*, meaning "Those that watch from afar" in the Common Speech, are the seven Seeing Stones brought by Elendil and his sons from Númenor; made by Fëanor in Aman (*TS* 416). "[T]he Stones each called to each; but those who possessed great strength of will and of mind might learn to direct their gaze whither they would" (*TS* 351).

4.5. THE RELEVANCE OF MYTH TO THE PRESENT

Myth in Tolkien's work enables his characters to connect with the past, which eventually leads his readers to a similar experience. Bilbo, plain Mr. Baggins of Bag-End, Under-hill, who could think only of comfort and a pleasing routine before, "is awakened to the wider world and deeper values" by the Dwarves' song about the Misty Mountains (Tallon 126):

> As they sang the hobbit felt the love of beautiful things made by hands and by cunning and by magic moving through him, a fierce and jealous love, the desire of the hearts of Dwarves. Then something Tookish woke up inside him, and he wished to go and see the great mountains, and hear the pine-trees and the waterfalls, and explore the caves, and wear a sword instead of a walking-stick. (*TH* 19)

He soon wears a sword instead of a walking-stick. Later, when he finds himself alone in the Goblin tunnels, Bilbo finds comfort and courage upon realising that his sword is actually "a blade made in Gondolin for the goblin-wars of which so many songs had sung" (*TH* 82). He draws his sword, thereby being unexpectedly drawn by it into a world of heroic legends, and becoming "a character in one of those long, ancient stories that have spanned ages of wonder and tragedy" (Olsen, *Exploring* 86). Very soon, he boasts to Gollum about his "blade which came out of Gondolin," implicitly taking pride in being connected to the grand stories of old (*TH* 86; Olsen, *Exploring* 109).

Similarly, on the stairs of Cirith Ungol (the pass of the spider) before they enter Mordor, Sam reminds Frodo of the tale of Beren, which gives both of them a small measure of strength to keep acting despite their despair (Madsen 43). Sam tells, Beren "never thought he was going to get that Silmaril from the Iron Crown in Thangorodrim, and yet he did, and that was a worse place and a blacker danger than ours. But that's a long tale, of course, and goes on past the happenings and into grief and beyond it" (*LOTR* 712). Aragorn has told the same tale quite early on in the story, describing it as "a fair tale, though it is sad, as are all the tales of Middle-earth, and yet it may lift up our hearts" (*LOTR* 191). Remembrance of the tale indeed lightens the two Hobbits' moods in spite of the danger they are in. Sam's imagining themselves put in a similar story to be "told by the fireside, or read out of a great big book" cheers Frodo so much that "he laughed,

a long clear laugh from his heart. Such a sound had not been heard in those places since Sauron came to Middle-earth" (*LOTR* 712). Frodo and Sam use legendary narrative as "a source of positive inspiration," and manage to find the strength not to "dwell too much on the possibility of defeat" although their chances of success are too small, and the consequences of failure are too devastating (Bolintineau 268).

As Irwin maintains, readers of Tolkien's works are never allowed to "forget the comprehensive lore that surrounds actors and events," and are continually reminded of "the long continuity of tradition behind the immediate happenings," which, in turn, enables a perspective to be maintained as to the relationship of small events to large patterns, and of current happenings to occurrences in antiquity (161, 163). Sam tells that the Silmaril recovered by Beren and Lúthien eventually "went on and came to Eärendil," and suddenly realises that Frodo's phial contains the same light as the Silmarils, and that their story is the continuation of Beren and Lúthien's, which ultimately goes as far back as the beginning, when Yavanna created the Two Trees and Fëanor captured their light in his Silmarils (*LOTR* 712; Bowman, "The Story" 150). Sam exclaims, "why, sir, I never thought of that before! We've got – you've got some of the light of it in that star-glass that the Lady gave you! Why, to think of it, we're in the same tale still! It's going on. Don't the great tales never end?" (*LOTR* 712). As Sam notices, their lives are moulded by the past as much as their present ordeal moulds the future. One of the points Tolkien makes in his works, according to Nagy, "is about the essential continuity of tradition: the supposition that traditions are an integral part of the present, and that old stories lie behind our new ones" ("Saving" 86). Baltasar argues, "[i]t is this interaction with story that Tolkien found so important in his portrayal of myth at work," and the scene described above

> illustrates myth as very much alive, not merely representative of the past or as a mode of explanation. Here, myth is an active component of the present and of the future, and those who are confronted by it find themselves engaged in it. [This passage] portrays myth in full function, as a means of experience, a continuous story changed by its progression, shifting according to those who become involved in it. (22)

Tolkien in such scenes makes it possible to recover a refreshed view on legendary narrative – the view that it is actually "morally and emotionally relevant" to the present,

because the past resembles the present and thus can become "a positive example, a model and a comforter" (Bolintineau 268). Eliade, in the same vein as Tolkien, maintains that myth is "living, in the sense that it supplies models for human behaviour and, by that very fact, gives meaning and value to life" (*Myth* 1-2). He further argues that "by 'living' the myths one emerges from profane, chronological time and enters a time that is of a different quality, a 'sacred' time at once primordial and indefinitely recoverable" (18). Tolkien also invites his readers into this primordial time by means of his examples of living myth. He puts myth into close contact with the present, and shows it to be real by overlapping myth and history, examples of which can be found in ancient characters like Elrond (Hiley 845). Although in *The Hobbit*, Elrond is described only as "one of those people whose fathers came into the strange stories before the beginning of History," in *The Lord of the Rings*, the readers learn about his lineage, which is told in detail in *The Silmarillion*: six thousand five hundred-year-old Elrond is the son of Eärendil the Morning Star, and great-great-grandson of Melian the Maia, one of the former Ainur (*TH* 60; *LOTR* 243; *TS* 124, 296). Like Tom Bombadil and Treebeard, Elrond has been an eyewitness to events now legendary, and his accounts of these events, which are "receding into a mythic past, […] suddenly gain an immediacy and relevance" to what is happening at present (Hiley 845). This pattern – realisation of myth, as Basney calls it – is a repeated pattern in Tolkien's works, and it encourages the readers to apprehend the relevance of myth to contemporary events (188).

Reading Tolkien's works leads people to the understanding that by retelling and living myths, legends, and fairy-stories, and by contemplating the similarity between mythical situations and their own, readers, like Tolkien's characters, can not only invite these into their lives, but also invite themselves to enact, or re-enact, these stories (Bolintineau 268). What Greenwood describes as "this present age where the struggle to do the right things becomes harder and less clear-cut day by day," Tolkien's story provides the readers with a much needed sense of direction (178). As Bettelheim maintains, problems are not always solved "through rational comprehension of the nature," and for this reason, fairy-stories, which Tolkien describes as "lower mythologies," have "unequalled value," because they neither "pretend to describe the world as it is," nor "advise what one ought to do;" instead, they enable people to find

their own solutions (Bettelheim 7, 25; Tolkien, "Fairy" 123). Like Théoden acknowledges the wisdom conveyed through ancient traditions, readers must also treasure the wisdom of all peoples, and be trained in all the wisdom traditions, "as these have been kept alive and made imaginatively real in story, legend, and myth" (Raboteau 399-400). Tolkien calls for his characters and his readers to recognise their personal link to the moral and philosophical traditions of the past, because, as the examples of Boromir and Denethor illustrate, "the alternative is disaster" (Kraus 138). To conclude,

> [w]e need myths that will help us to identify with all our fellow-beings, not simply with those who belong to our ethnic, national or ideological tribe. […] We need myths that help us […] to see beyond our immediate requirements, and enable us to experience a transcendent value that challenges our solipsistic selfishness. We need myths that help us to venerate the earth as sacred once again, instead of merely using it as a 'resource'. This is crucial, because unless there is some kind of spiritual revolution that is able to keep abreast of our technological genius, we will not save our planet. (Armstrong, *Short History* 142-43)

A visit to Tolkien's Middle-earth is what people need in order to find the opportunity to experience myth, thereby becoming able to identify with beings other than themselves, to see beyond their immediate settings, to appreciate the natural world as a place of wonder, and to find the necessary courage and inspiration to commit small acts of heroism to save what is worth saving in the world.

CONCLUSION

In 1911, when he was a nineteen-year-old student at Oxford, Tolkien formed a clique with Christopher Wiseman, Rob Gilson, and Geoffrey Smith, which they would soon call the "T.C.B.S. (Tea Club and Barrovian Society)," a group that had great influence on Tolkien and his works through the emotional and intellectual friendship he found in its members (Carpenter, *Tolkien* 68-69, 192; Grotta 29). When World War I broke out, all T.C.B.S. members were called to service, from which only two would return. The death of Gilson at the Great War in 1916, whose friendship Tolkien referred to as "Friendship to the Nth power,"[72] was a great blow on him (*Letters* 10). Nearly 60,000 British soldiers died on the same day as Gilson (Croft 79), which, as Tolkien wrote to Smith from the front, led him to deep contemplation: "I went out into the wood […] last night and also the night before and sat and thought" (*Letters* 10). Flieger finds it obvious here that Tolkien was struggling to come to terms with violent, unnecessary, untimely, meaningless death, and that his letter "confronts all the difficult questions – about the purpose of life and the significance of death – and gropes desperately for some comprehensible answers" (*Green* 277). The T.C.B.S. members were not only dear friends, but they also hoped to achieve great deeds together, as Tolkien wrote in the same letter: "TCBS had been granted some spark of fire – certainly as a body if not singly – that was destined to kindle a new light, or, what is the same thing, rekindle an old light in the world" (*Letters* 10). Six months later, after Tolkien was sent home from the front with trench fever, he learned of Smith's death, which was another blow for Tolkien to recover from. Not long before, Smith had written to Tolkien,

> [m]y dear John Ronald, publish by all means. I am a wild and whole-hearted admirer, and my chief consolation is that if I am scuppered tonight – I am off duty in a few minutes – there will still be left a member of the great T.C.B.S. to voice what I dreamed and what we agreed upon. For the death of one of its members cannot, I am determined, dissolve the T.C.B.S. Death is so close to me now that I feel – and I am sure you feel, and all the three other heroes feel, how impuissant it is. Death can make us loathsome and helpless as individuals, but it cannot put an end to the immortal four! A discovery I am going to communicate to Rob before I go off to-night. And do you write it also to Christopher. May God bless you, my

[72] Tolkien here uses a mathematical metaphor to describe the intensity of his friendly feelings for Gilson.

> dear John Ronald, and may you say the things I have tried to say long after I am not there to say them, if such be my lot. (qtd. in Garth, *Great War* 118; Carpenter, *Tolkien* 121)

Tolkien and his close friends shared a sense of responsibility to accomplish some profound good in the world; therefore, their death placed an even greater responsibility on Tolkien's shoulders (Whittingham 18). This sense of duty shaped his whole work, which, Tolkien says in a letter, he started to write in his sick-bed, "on leave after surviving the Battle of the Somme in 1916" (*Letters* 221). Tolkien writes elsewhere that by composing what would later constitute the core of *The Silmarillion*, he was committing "escapism," or "really transforming experience into another form and symbol with Morgoth and Orcs […] and it has stood me in good stead in many hard years since" (*Letters* 85). As Sale comments, by means of this withdrawal, "Tolkien could create one of the most powerful visions we have of the very world from which he was fleeing" (*Modern* 197). By taking to "escapism," Tolkien was converting his horrible experiences into a form whose applicability would help his readers to recognise or recover such fundamental truths as the true nature of evil, and to find ways of fighting against it.

As stated elsewhere in this thesis, Tolkien denies allegory, but acknowledges the applicability of his work. In the foreword to the second edition to *The Lord of the Rings*, he writes that an author "cannot of course remain wholly unaffected by his experience," and mentions his war experience: "one has indeed personally to come under the shadow of war to feel fully its oppression […] By 1918, all but one of my close friends were dead" (*LOTR* xxiv). As Grotta observes, Tolkien did not "*intentionally* translate his war experiences" into his works; "nonetheless, they are there" (52). Critics especially point to Tolkien's portrayal of desolate battlefields and landscapes, in which they find similarities between these and the fields of the Somme in France, where Tolkien was involved in trench warfare.[73] Tolkien himself admits this similarity in one of his letters: "[t]he Dead Marshes and the approaches to the Morannon owe something to Northern France after the Battle of the Somme" (*Letters* 303).

[73] e.g., Croft 17, 24; Dickerson and Evans 303; Flieger, *Green* 252-53; Garth, *Great War*, "Frodo" 45; Johnson 104; Jones 35, 157; Sale, *Modern* 227; Sammons, *War* 124.

Possibly because of Tolkien's transformation of war experience into symbol, Shippey places him among war writers who, like Tolkien, have personally been involved in war, and communicated their thoughts and experience via fantasy[74] (*Road* 374). These authors, after "close or even direct first-hand experience of some of the worst horrors of the twentieth century" like industrial war and impersonal, industrialised massacre, have been left with "an unshakable conviction of something wrong, something irreducibly evil in the nature of humanity, but without any very satisfactory explanation for it" (*Author* xxx, 120-21). Their favouring non-realistic modes has its roots in their feeling that "they were writing about subjects too great and too general to tie down to particular and recognisable settings," and that "old literary patterns were unable to cope with the twentieth-century experience of evil" ("Post-War" 92, 90). Tolkien felt no differently. He chose fantasy not as a way of turning his back on the horrors of his time, but as a way of communicating and commenting on them (*Author* viii). He acknowledged the potential of the fantastic mode, which Lewis describes in his "Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What's to Be Said" as follows:

> The Fantastic or Mythical is a Mode available to all ages for some readers; for others, at none. At all ages, if it is well used by the author and meets the right reader, it has the same power: to generalise while remaining concrete, to present in palpable form not concepts or even experiences but whole classes of experience, and to throw off irrelevancies. But at its best it can do more; it can give us experiences we have never had and thus, instead of 'commenting on life', can add to it. (*On Stories* 48)

Like Shippey, Flieger argues that Tolkien did not consciously recreate his war experience in words like Edmund Blunden, Wilfrid Owen, Robert Graves, and Siegfried Sassoon, but turned to mythology, fairy tale, and fantasy (*Green* 24). The reason, as Flieger puts it, is that "the function of a mythology is to give meaning to existence, to put human life inside a larger frame, to address if not always answer the fundamental

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[74] Shippey explains, "many of the originators of the later twentieth-century fantastic mode […] are combat veterans, present or at least deeply involved in the most traumatically significant events of the century," and calls them a group of "traumatized authors" who all turned to fantasy: Tolkien was at the Battle of the Somme, Kurt Vonnegut was bombed in Dresden, George Orwell saw the rise of fascism, C. S. Lewis was shot on the battlefield, and Ursula Le Guin's mother Theodora Kroeber wrote of Ishi, the last survivor of the genocide of the Yahi Indians of California (*Author* viii, xxx). In another article, Shippey describes these authors as "post-war fabulists" ("Post-War" 90).

questions – why are we here? What is our place in the scheme of things? Why do we live? Why do we die?" (279). Answering these questions means finding meaning in one's life, and life becomes meaningful only through self-worth, in other words, when an individual values oneself as a good person after positioning oneself in relation to good and evil, which, Huttar claims, "are always present, in any age, as real possibilities: the nature of temptation does not change, nor do the roles played by ambition and greed, [and] the tendency of power to corrupt" (5). It is not difficult to distinguish between good and evil: like Aragorn says to Éomer, the meaning of "good and ill" or right or wrong has not changed in time or from culture to culture (*LOTR* 438). Morality is neither spatially, temporally, nor culturally relative (Dickerson 134). Tolkien, focusing on these issues in all his works, albeit in a non-realistic mode, should be acquitted of the charges of escapism. Le Guin's words may better explain why: "*That* is escapism, that posing evil as a 'problem,' instead of what it is: all the pain and suffering and waste and loss and injustice we will meet all our lives long, and must face with over and over and over, and admit, and live with, in order to live human lives at all" (*Language* 65-66). By portraying characters who are unable to resist ambition, greed, and power, and who fail to face the pain, suffering, waste, loss, and injustice they encounter and ultimately give in to despair, Tolkien has achieved to show his readers what to avoid in order to "live human lives at all" (Le Guin, *Language* 65-66).

Tolkien's achievement demonstrates how a "framework of fantasy can provide context for the exploration of serious concerns" (Spacks 99), and how this framework can be employed "to articulate deeply felt philosophies and to project utopian visions of better worlds which human beings are capable of realizing with their own powers" (Zipes, *Breaking* 149). As stated in the previous chapters, in all his works, Tolkien focuses on the potential of the ordinary individual to achieve heroic deeds of an epic scale, like Beren, and later, Eärendil in *The Silmarillion*, Bilbo in *The Hobbit*, and Frodo, Sam, Merry, and Pippin in *The Lord of the Rings*. The ultimate victory against evil, which comes after the One Ring is destroyed, in Curry's words,

> is made possible by countless acts of courage, kindness, and help, both small and great, from unknown people and forces, in unforeseen circumstances, that together provide an opportunity to do the simple good things of life – food, water, green and growing things – that extends through conviviality and creativity to an appreciation

> of life itself, at once natural and spiritual, as the ultimate value. And it succeeds as much, if not more, by the efforts of the humble and ordinary as those of the mighty. (*Defending* 150)

The heroism of the humble individuals not only ends in heroic deeds that eventually save the world, but also leads to improvement, maturity, wisdom, and self-actualisation. However, only after these individuals have recovered their perspectives on their own limited world as well as on the wider world are they able to recover their full potential. Tolkien's works are the best examples to illustrate that fantasy "can help prevent [one's] imagination from getting stuck within the narrow confines of a few anxious or wish-fulfilling dreams circling around a few narrow preoccupations" (Bettelheim 119). Identification with the Hobbit characters helps readers to acknowledge the fact that ignoring their responsibilities in mitigating if not eradicating the problems of the world and confining themselves in their narrow comfort zones will deprive them of the opportunities of finding meaning in their lives, which, like Bettelheim observes, is essential for every individual: "[i]f we hope to live not just from moment to moment, but in true consciousness of our existence, then our greatest need and most difficult achievement is to find meaning in our lives. It is well known how many have lost the will to live, and have stopped trying, because such meaning has evaded them" (3).

By making it possible to identify with his Hobbits and to experience with them "heroism, self-sacrifice, ancient wisdom, and great beauty," Tolkien reminds people that there are weightier concerns and higher values in life than respectability, routine, and comfort (Bassham, "Adventurous" 13). The Hobbits start out as provincial characters, knowing and caring little about the wider world, and are transformed into cosmopolitans by their travels. Like Gandalf says, "[n]ot all those who wander are lost," and sometimes one finds oneself wandering (*LOTR* 170). In the course of their travels, the Hobbits go through a number of challenging experiences, which, Bassham states, can make one wiser in two important ways: "they can *deepen our self-understanding* and they can *broaden our experiences*" ("Adventurous" 11). It is possible to see both of these factors at work in the Hobbits, which might lead one to the application of this knowledge into one's own life. Knepp believes the transformation of the Hobbits to encourage the reader "to take the same journey" (45), and gives himself as an example of how much the people in the primary world might need this kind of transformation:

> I can identify with the hobbits. Like nearly everyone else growing up in Wichita, Kansas, I was a provincial who feared foreigners, liked predictable conversations, scorned weirdos, and mocked the people of our town who lived on the other side of the Arkansas River. (Our shopping mall was Towne East, whereas *theirs* was Towne West. What a funny name for a mall!) (46)

This is indeed not very different from the Hobbits' finding the others living on the opposite side of the river "queer" (*LOTR* 22, 94). On the other hand, those who take the opportunity to step outside their narrow world's borders are able to immerse themselves in the cultures of strangers, and recognise that they have equally valid ways of living (Knepp 46). Tolkien portrays many characters in his works who, after exposure to a foreign culture, come to appreciate "the other," like the Hobbits who eventually recover their perspective on what is unfamiliar, or like Gimli who comes to feel deep respect for the Elves. Knepp draws attention to an important point in the necessity of this recovery in the primary world: deprivation of acceptance, tolerance, and appreciation leads to counter-cosmopolitanism, which is most obvious today in religious extremists, "who believe that they have the one correct way to live and that other cultures are unfortunate products of human corruption" (54). These beliefs lead to hatred and violence, which are not only directed towards people with different beliefs, but also with different sexual orientations, gender identities, and ethnic backgrounds. The world has witnessed the extent of such violence at the hands of Hitler and Stalin, who, Appiah indicates, were outspoken opponents of cosmopolitanism (xvi). Living in the same age as "a mad, whirlwind, devil […] that ruddy little ignoramus Adolf Hitler," and "that bloodthirsty old murderer Josef Stalin" (*Letters* 55, 65), Tolkien must have seen the necessity of promoting cosmopolitanism via any possible medium; therefore weaving into his works what Appiah describes as the "two strands that intertwine in the notion of cosmopolitanism:" universal concern and respect for legitimate difference (xv).

These ideals come to life in the various alliances of Elves, Dwarves, Men, Hobbits, and even the Ents, the Maiar, and the Valar against evil: the Valar gather a host of Valinor Elves against Morgoth during the First Age, Elves and Men form the Last Alliance against Sauron in the Second Age, and all the Free Peoples of Middle-earth unite against Sauron in the Third Age, as described in detail in the previous chapters. All these alliances are selfless acts of heroism, which are motivated by a sense of belonging

to a global community and of responsibility towards the wider world. Gandalf's words to Frodo in the following excerpt summarises what responsibility means to the individuals of Middle-earth (Dickerson 138): "'I wish it need not have happened in my time,' said Frodo. 'So do I,' said Gandalf, 'and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given, us'" (*LOTR* 51). Individuals in the primary world cannot choose the times in which they live, either, but they can choose what to do with the time they are given. They can acknowledge that "'heroism' is the only way out, not because it comforts […] but because it supplies some meaning in human terms where the universe supplies none. The human condition is tragic, but must be faced up to" (Parker 608-9). In order to find the strength and inspiration required for taking heroic action, they could turn to wisdom traditions – fairy-tales, legends, and myths.

The idea of a sense of obligation to others is repeated throughout Tolkien's works. Acknowledging this sense fundamentally means taking not only the citizens of the whole world but also future generations into account. The Council of Elrond decide against giving the Ring to Tom Bombadil, over whom it has no power, because it will only be a short-term solution to "postpone the day of evil" (*LOTR* 265). The suggestion to cast it into the depths of the sea is also rejected, because the Ring would not be safe there forever: "seas and lands may change.[75] And it is not our part here to take thought only for a season, or for a few lives of Men, or for a passing age of the world. We should seek a final end of this menace, even if we do not hope to make one" (*LOTR* 266). As Bowman states, this is a perspective "that takes on an ethical dimension" ("The Story" 162). When individuals decide to do good for the global community with the limited amount of time they are given, they usually take responsibility for the future of the world, too. This stand supports Light's arguments for the longer perspective of not only human welfare, but also the welfare of other living things with which humans share the earth. Given the dominant position of humankind on the planet, Light maintains, it is the humans' duty to be concerned about environmental sustainability in the long run, and act accordingly in order to alleviate the possible negative consequences of their actions for the people and places they do not or will not know

[75] like when the seafloor shifted and the island of Númenor sank into the sea

(160-63). This idea is so central to Tolkien's work that he gets Gandalf to revisit it and elaborate on it throughout *The Lord of the Rings*. In his conversation with Denethor, the Steward of Gondor, Gandalf lays out the principles of stewardship:

> Well, my lord Steward, it is your task to keep some kingdom still against that event, which few now look to see. In that task you shall have all the aid that you are pleased to ask for. But I will say this: the rule of no realm is mine, neither of Gondor nor any other, great or small. But all worthy things that are in peril as the world now stands, those are my care. And for my part, I shall not wholly fail of my task, though Gondor should perish, if anything passes through this night that can still grow fair or bear fruit and flower again in days to come. For I also am a steward. (*LOTR* 758)

Responsible for "all worthy things that are in peril," for anything that can "grow fair or bear fruit or flower," Gandalf is actually the steward of all the natural world, and it is his "task" to protect it. Gandalf's attempt to raise the awareness of Denethor of his stewardship duties is a means for Tolkien to raise a similar awareness in the people of the primary world. Gandalf's speech to the Captains of the West in "The Last Debate" sheds more light on this concept of stewardship:

> Other evils there are that may come; for Sauron is himself but a servant or emissary. Yet it is not our part to master all the tides of the world, but to do what is in us for the succour of those years wherein we are set, uprooting the evil in the fields that we know, so that those who live after may have clean earth to till. What weather they shall have is not ours to rule. (*LOTR* 879)

The destruction of the Ring and Sauron's defeat does not mean evil is totally eliminated from Middle-earth, but the important thing is whether or not individuals have assumed responsibility for the time and place they live in. No one can "master all the tides of the world," but everyone has the power in them to protect "all worthy things that are in peril;" all they have to do is make a decision, and do their best to leave "a clean earth to till" to the future generations (*LOTR* 879, 758). This, briefly, is what people should remember in order to assume their duties as the stewards of the earth. As reminded by a number of Tolkien's characters, the present generation of the world do not *own* the world; like they have inherited it from their ancestors, they will eventually leave it to the future generations. Taking this longer perspective also means that they must abandon unsustainable, profit-minded approaches towards the earth's natural resources.

Tolkien offers many clues in his works as to what is really valuable in life, as typically acknowledged by the Elves and Hobbits, and as eventually recovered by most of his other characters. Bassham identifies six important lessons to be learned from Tolkien's works: take delight in simple things, make light of your troubles, get personal, cultivate good character, cherish and create beauty, and rediscover wonder, which can be applied to the primary world, as supported by the findings of psychologist David G. Myers ("Six Keys" 50).[76] During Bilbo's second stay in Rivendell on his return journey, it is possible to catch a glimpse in the Elves' song of the really valuable things in life:

> *The stars are far brighter*
> *Than gems without measure,*
> *The moon is far whiter*
> *Than silver in treasure;*
> *The fire is more shining*
> *On hearth in the gloaming*
> *Than gold won by mining*. (*TH* 342)

While all Tolkien's characters who pursue wealth, power, status, or prestige fall in some way or another, those who are able to take delight in everyday pleasures and live humbler, simpler lives find lasting happiness. Through recovery, Tolkien enables his readers to see simple, familiar things in a new light and to appreciate them more. The eucatastrophes, especially that of *The Hobbit*, point to the same fact. In all the works of Tolkien, readers can witness what evils and miseries fall both on those who pursue treasure and power and on others who come after them; on the other hand, they see that when people give up "dominatory and fixed perceptions," they "receive the world back as a gift" (Milbank 44). Experiencing countless losses, pain, and suffering before the happy ending finally comes, Tolkien's good characters transform into wiser individuals, and having identified with these characters from the very beginning, the readers go through a similar transformation. As Dickerson observes,

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[76] In the "Epilogue" of his *Pursuit of Happiness*, Myers provides a list of factors that enable happiness, which they have determined at the end of hundreds of studies of well-being (205). The results show that whereas wealth or over-ambitious goals do not buy happiness, the following do: fit and healthy bodies, realistic goals and expectations, positive self-esteem, feelings of control, optimism, outgoingness, supportive friendships that enable companionship and confiding, a socially intimate, sexually warm, equitable marriage, challenging work and active leisure, punctuated by adequate rest and retreat, a faith that entails communal support, purpose, acceptance, outward focus, and hope (206).

> Tolkien's *fictional* characters are in some important way *real* people, or are drawn from real human nature. They live out or encounter the profoundest of human experiences and emotions, choices and challenges. When we read Tolkien's books, we look in a mirror. What we see in Tolkien's characters is ourselves. What we see in his world is our world. It is not a never-never land. (5)

Tolkien's works provide an opportunity to look at the familiar world from a refreshed perspective both through recovery and eucatastrophe, and through an escape into the world of fairy-story, legend, and myth. One learns to take delight in the simple and the fundamental, rises above the triteness of the familiar and appreciates the wider world, finds courage and inspiration in the heroism of legendary figures, most of whom are as humble and ordinary characters as anyone in the primary world, and rediscovers a sense of wonder, which is a pre-requisite in developing a new attitude to our world. As Lewis observes, Tolkien's work "has done things to us. We are not quite the same [people]" (*On Stories* 90), and as Le Guin says, this is the exact function of myth: "[w]hen the genuine myth rises into consciousness, that is always its message. You must change your life" (*Language* 73). Tolkien's great tale has been able to give a similar message to many of its readers – that they must change their lives. Reading Tolkien does not, as many would assume, result in a flight from reality; on the contrary, it has enabled many readers not only to cope with the reality at hand by substituting everyday experience with new insights into the primary world, but also to find in themselves a willingness and courage to transform it, and to discover in Middle-earth and its mythology clues as to how to do it.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: What is Fantasy?

In one view, the distinguishing trait of fantasy is its impossible and imaginary content. Donald A. Wollheim asserts that pure fantasy deals with "subjects recognizable as nonexistent and entirely imaginary […] rendered plausible by the reader's desire to accept it during the period of reading" (11). Gary Wolfe in his *Critical Terms for Science Fiction and Fantasy*, provides a brief definition of fantasy before he goes on to list some important comments on the fantastic made by other prominent critics: "[a] fictional narrative describing events that the reader believes to be impossible" ("Fantasy" 271). Wolfe argues that fantasy first and foremost deals with the impossible: "[t]he criterion of the impossible is the first principle generally agreed upon for the study of fantasy" (223). However, he adds, the fact that a literary work fulfils the criterion of impossibility does not necessarily admit it into the realm of fantasy:

> The notion of impossibility in fantasy […] must be more public than the schizophrenic's hallucination, yet less public than myth and religion. It must […] be part of an implied compact between author and reader – an agreement that whatever impossibilities we encounter will be made significant to us, but will retain enough of their idiosyncratic nature that we still recognize them to be impossible. ("Encounter" 224-25)

Wolfe ends his essay claiming that a fantasy is as successful as it enables the reader to recognise that impossibility is a necessary strategy for approaching some profound and intense reality (234). S. C. Fredericks mentions two characteristics of fantasy: "the impossible" and "the conceivable." He states that fantasy writers "take as *their point of departure* the deliberate violation of norms and facts we regard as essential to our conventional conception of 'reality' in order to create an imaginary counter-structure or counter-norm" (37). He adds that fantasy worlds must assume a clear relationship with the real world, and therefore, serve some reality-function. According to John Clute, fantasy is an extremely "porous" term, and it has been used to describe anything "which this culture or that – and this era or that – deems unrealistic" (311). He describes a fantasy text as "[telling] a story which is impossible in the world as we perceive it" when set in this world. When this story is set in another world, the otherworld will be

impossible, but the stories might be possible in that world's terms. In this, a fantasy text is "a self-coherent narrative" (311).

Apart from the presence of the impossible, another group of critics focus on the supernatural and the marvellous as an indispensable element of fantasy: Colin Manlove writes that fantasy 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" (*Modern* 1). He links wonder with the "contemplation of […] strangeness;" with ways of seeing as much as with emotional response (7). For Manlove, fantasy may or may not "evoke wonder" depending on the reader as well as on the text ("Nature" 16). Wonder is "anything from crude astonishment at the marvellous to a sense of 'meaning-in-the-mysterious' or even the numinous" (22). Manlove's "supernatural" is synonymous with "the impossible:" "of another order of reality from that in which we exist and form our notions of possibility" (*Modern* 3). For him, the essence of fantasy lies in its content, and the supernatural or the impossible takes up such a substantial part of a book as to be the true subject of the work. C. S. Lewis, a fantasist and a scholar who very generously contributed to the theory of fantasy, defines fantasy as "any narrative that deals with the impossibles and preternaturals" (*Experiment* 50). Ann Swinfen argues "the marvellous" to be the essential ingredient lying at the heart of fantasy, and describes "the marvellous" as "anything outside the normal space-time continuum of the everyday world" (5). She emphasises the existence of this marvellous element outside the world of empirical experience. Echoing this argument that fantasy deals with events and phenomena which cannot be understood or explained within the boundaries of reason and science, Tymn, Zahorski, and Boyer claim,

> [f]antasy, as a literary genre, is composed of works in which nonrational phenomena play a significant part. That is, they are works in which events occur, or places or creatures exist, that could not occur or exist according to rational standards or scientific explanations. The nonrational phenomena of fantasy simply do not fall within human experience or accord with natural laws as we know them. (3)

Laetz and Johnston's list of criteria for a work to be considered fantastic also includes the supernatural as a requisite. In their view, "fantastic narratives are fictional action

stories with *prominent* supernatural content" (emphasis added, 167). Further, audiences must take this content as supernatural. Myths and religious fiction are not fantasy since many people who read these believed, or do believe, in God(s), angels, and the like. For such critics as W. R. Irwin, however, a rich content of the supernatural is not sufficient in itself for a work to be classified as fantasy. He claims "fantasy results when the supernatural is shown as present and acting of itself because it is real" (155). When the supernatural is simply a subject matter, when it fails to transform ordinary human life and environment, and when it is used as a means of recommendation of certain values or codes of conduct, the work remains outside the range of fantasy.

The fantastic, for Tzvetan Todorov, depends not only on the narration of strange events, but also on the way these events are read. Fantasy is "that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event" (25). Followed by many critics, Todorov himself was following others in his definition of the fantastic, a fact Jonathan Perkins draws attention to in his article titled "Finding Todorov in Russian Literary Criticism." Perkins quotes Fyodor Dostoyevsky, who wrote in a letter to an aspiring author that

> [t]here are limits and rules about the use of the fantastic in art. The fantastic must be so close to the real that you almost have to believe in it. Pushkin, who gave us almost all artistic forms, wrote Pikovaia dama – the high point of the art of the fantastic. You believe that Hermann really had a vision, exactly in accordance with his view of the world, and yet, at the end of the story, i.e. when you have read it through, you cannot make up your mind: did this vision come out of Hermann's nature or is he really one of those who are in contact with another world, evil and hostile to the souls of men. (370)

Todorov says that his definition has its origins in the nineteenth-century critic Vladimir Solovyov, who wrote, in the authentically fantastic, there always remains in the end the possibility of a simple explanation of the seemingly supernatural phenomena, and the possibility of a hesitation between the natural and supernatural causes of these phenomena "creates the fantastic effect" (25-26). However, for other critics, this hesitation, ambiguity, and uncertainty that Todorov finds essential causes the reader to "los[e] that moment which is the agonistic encounter of deep, strong reading" (Bloom, Clinamen 240). Todorov's definition of the fantastic is rather restrictive since it allows only those works that remain in the state of hesitation to be called "fantastic," and it

excludes much of the work regarded today as such. Nevertheless, it has been used and elaborated on by many later critics of fantasy.

Soon after Todorov's work was translated into English, Eric S. Rabkin developed a very similar theory of literary fantasy, but offered a broader definition to include works which had been excluded by Todorov as "marvellous." Rabkin agrees with Todorov, but distinguishes between "the fantastic" and "fantasy," describing the former as a component of many works and genres, and the latter as a genre. Rabkin writes that things that are not inherently fantastic become so from a certain point of view. For the fantastic element to occur, "the perspectives enforced by the ground rules of the narrative world must be diametrically contradicted" (*Literature* 8).[1] This perspective enables the reader to accept the supernatural phenomena and events presented in the text. Italo Calvino draws attention to this indeterminacy as the source of the power of fantastic literature. In his introduction to *Fantastic Tales* (1983), he writes that the essence of the literature of the fantastic is the problem of the reality of what we see as opposed to the reality of the world of thought, and adds, "the most powerful effects [of the literature of the fantastic] lie in this hovering between irreconcilable levels of reality" (vii).

Although some critics have defined fantasy in terms of its tendency to embrace the impossible, the supernatural, the marvellous, and the non-rational, some others have focused on its capability to present reality. Take, Eleanor Cameron, for example, who claims that although fantasy world is divorced from reality, it contains both the truth of the imagined world, and that of the human condition (44). Ursula K. Le Guin claims, "fantasy is true, of course. It isn't factual, but it is true" (*Language* 40). She emphasises that fantasy is "a different approach to reality, an alternative technique for apprehending and coping with existence. It is not anti-rational, but para-rational; not realistic, but surrealistic, superrealistic, a heightening form of reality" (79). On a similar note, Peter Malekin claims, "the fantastic is not make-believe: rather it shapes the reality we thought real" (42). He believes the fantastic to examine apparent reality, and fantastic literature to be an attempt to outline alternative ways of comprehension. What fantastic

[1] Rabkin calls this diametric contradiction of ground rules "dis-expected" – a variation on Coleridge's idea of the "willing suspension of disbelief" (*Literature* 174).

literature does is mirror true reality. Lloyd Alexander argues that fantasy is "truth pretending to be a dream" (165). Not only does he emphasise the element of truth, but he also believes logic to be a requisite for fantasy: "[i]f there is one guideline to observe in fantasy, it is logic. Logic gives the solid support every fantasy must have." Douglass Parker suggests three interwoven criteria determining the success of a given fantasy: "the solidity and variety of the developed structure, its relation to reality, and its viability" (598). He claims the first criterion to involve the very essence of fantasy: a fantasy must create a self-consistent and varied structure that is logically complete. This quality is also the most difficult on the part of the writer to attain since s/he has chosen to create in the void, where the laws of everyday reality do not apply.

Still other critics focus on the subversive nature of fantasy. For them, what fantasy seeks to do is challenge the status quo. Gary Wolfe emphasises that even some science fiction and fantasy writers themselves hold this view when he quotes from Ray Bradbury, who wrote that "each fantasy assaults and breaks a particular law" and "attempts to disrupt the physical world in order to bring change to the heart and mind" (*Evaporating* 66). In her *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion,* Rosemary Jackson, after emphasising the difficulty of theorising about fantasy owing to its resistance to narrow categorisation, defines fantasy as a literature of desire, and asserts that it ventures into the non-existent in order to challenge the existing order (141). Richard Mathews agrees that fantasy is a literature of liberation and subversion stating that "[i]ts target may be politics, economics, religion, psychology, or sexuality. It seeks to liberate the feminine, the unconscious, the repressed, the past, the present, and the future" (xii). Likewise, Lynette Hunter believes the fantasist's power and primary aim to be "to free people from the domination of observed fact" (72). Brian Attebery similarly defines fantasy as "any narrative which includes as a significant part of its makeup some violation of what the author clearly believes to be natural law" (*Fantasy Tradition* 2). What the fantasy writer offers is "an explicitly impossible narrative" ("Fantasy" 15). S. C. Fredericks also mentions intellectual subversiveness, a feature of fantasy through which it makes the readers sensitive to their bad beliefs, and open to new, better ones. He adds, "[f]antasy thus seems to appeal to the intellectual non-conformist in us all" (40).

A number of critics take the fantastic – as a genre, a mode, or an impulse – like mimesis, as a component in all literature. Kathryn Hume, for example, defines fantasy as a deliberate departure from "the limits of what is usually accepted as real and normal" (xii). According to Hume, fantasy is a deliberate departure from "consensus reality," which is recognisable to the reader, but not necessarily to the characters, as Todorov and Rabkin emphasise (21, 23). Similarly, Dieter Petzold suggests, "to qualify as 'fantasy,' fiction needs to express a *conscious* departure from, even a rebellion against the principle of mimesis" (15). He does not regard such genres as the animal fable and chivalric romance as fantasy fiction, and highlights the "conscious" quality of this departure.

Samuel R. Delany asserts that what fantasy deals with is situations which are contrary to fact, a feature he names "subjunctivity." Delany explains what this means as follows:

> Subjunctivity is the tension on the thread of meaning that runs between word and object. [For] a piece of reportage, a blanket indicative tension informs the whole series: *this happened*. […] The subjunctivity for a series of words labelled as naturalistic fiction is defined by *could have happened.* […] Fantasy takes the subjunctivity of naturalistic fiction and throws it in reverse. […] the level of subjunctivity becomes *could not have happened.* And immediately it informs *all* the words in the series. (10-11)

Joanna Russ elaborates on Delany's notion of subjunctivity by adding that fantasy embodies a "negative subjunctivity." She argues that "fantasy is fantasy because it contravenes the real and violates it," and she continues to claim that it is this "negative subjunctivity" that comprises the main pleasure of fantasy (16).

Appendix 2: Approaches towards Fantasy: A Brief Survey

In order to understand the reasons behind the scorn for fantasy, it is important to examine how fantasy has been evaluated through the history of literary criticism. The earliest approaches towards fantastic literature were markedly negative, and Plato's *The Republic* is a case in point. In Book II of *The Republic*, Plato, through Socrates, argues for censorship on traditional stories about the gods, and says that gods must only be presented as they truly are – good. He warns against the fault of telling lies, of inaccurate representations made of the nature of gods and heroes. Young people cannot differentiate what is allegorical from what is literal, and whatever they are exposed to at early ages is likely to become permanent in their minds; therefore the tales they hear must be models of virtuous thoughts. In Book III, Plato distinguishes between two kinds of narratives; simple narrative (in which the narrator is the poet himself) and narrative through imitation, and argues against the use of the latter, emphasising the role of good art in forming good character. Book X of *The Republic* begins by Plato congratulating himself on banishing imitative poets from his city:

> 'There are many reasons,' I said, 'why I feel sure we have gone about founding our city in the right way, but I am thinking particularly of poetry.'
> 'What it particular about poetry?'
> 'Our refusal to accept any of the imitative part of it […] imitative poetry is the last thing we should allow.' (313)

Imitative poetry is exiled on charges of sowing evil seeds in the hearts and minds of the individuals in an ideal society. Plato criticises mimetic art – be it painting or poetry – claiming that the products of imitation are far removed from and inferior to truth because they are copies of copies. Poets, like painters, are imitators; they never reach the truth; they lack the expertise and knowledge the makers and users have, otherwise they would not have settled for being mere poets. The imitative poet aims to stimulate the irrational element in the soul; he arouses and feeds "an inferior part of the soul," and "by making this strong destroys the rational part" (326). However, the most serious charge against imitative poetry is its potential to corrupt even good people. Plato concludes that there is no place for imitative poetry in Callipolis, but only for hymns to

the gods and praises of good men. When even the mimetic poet is exiled, one can infer that the fantasist is one step further removed from Plato's ideal realm.

Plato's student Aristotle offers a counter-argument in *The Poetics.* Although he does not exactly welcome the fantastic, he argues against Plato's rejection of the marvellous. He expresses that poetry, or literature, is "a fundamental intellectual activity basic to humanity's 'desire to know'" (Sandner 17). According to Aristotle, art is the fulfilment and perfection of the real rather than the opposite of real; true art, like philosophy, is a means to attain the truth:

> The poet must depict the tragic flaw, yet ennoble the character. Since Tragedy is an imitation of men better than the ordinary, it is necessary for the tragic poet to observe the method of good portrait-painters; for they reproduce the distinctive features of the original, and yet, while preserving the likeness of a man, ennoble him in the picture. So, too, the poet in imitating men who are quick to anger, or are easy-going, or have other infirmities of disposition, must represent them as such, and yet as kind and honourable. (52)

Aristotle justifies the employment of the impossible element as long as it gives the text a more astounding effect. He argues against the claim that the representation of the poet is untrue: it is represented as it ought to be rather than it is or has been (87). Aristotle also allows room for the marvellous and the "irrational," which he considers to be "the chief factor in the marvellous," and highlights pleasure-giving aspect of the marvellous (81). According to Sandner, Aristotle's argument has been influential to later discussions of the formal elements of the genre of the fantastic (16).

Fantasy has always been a prevalent genre in the literature of the world, and as Richard Mathews suggests, humans have an aboriginal impulse towards fantasy as exemplified by such ancient fantastic texts as the Assyrian/Babylonian *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (ca. 2000 BCE), Homer's *The Odyssey* (ca. 750 BCE), and *Aesop's Fables* (ca. 620-560) (xv, 10). Indeed, much of the world literature, oral or written, contains a great number of elements that would be regarded as fantastic from a twentieth-century point of view. Artists of the world have never ceased to create fantastic works, and even during the Middle Ages, when fantasy was most frowned upon, they composed (or wrote down) some of the most important texts that fantasy readers, writers, and scholars treasure: *Beowulf*, *Eddas*, *Divine Comedy*, *Canterbury Tales*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Night*,

Robin Hood, and *Piers the Plowman*, to name a few (Mathews xv). The fantastic found its way into various modes: epic, prose, poetic, romance, ballad, and allegory (Hyles and Murphy 2). However, fantasy was once again dismissed as a frivolity during the Middle Ages, this time by the Christian Church. Works held in high esteem by classical philosophers were frowned upon by medieval clerics, and since the Church was virtually the only source of education, book production, and library maintenance during this period, it had great impact on the educated and the layperson alike. Although secular literature in the vernacular managed to survive, a great body of the works created – or at least written down – in the medieval times comprised theological works, or works devoted to religious subjects, mostly written in Latin. M. H. Abrams draws attention to an interesting point regarding these works: a great number of them were written in the heroic style, probably in an attempt to make the unfamiliar and strange events and characters of the Bible intelligible to the ordinary folk of a formerly pagan society. Abrams maintains, "Moses and St. Andrew, Christ and God the Father share the attributes of a Beowulf, are represented as heroes who performed famous deeds […] In Caedmon's *Hymn* the creation of heaven and earth is seen as a mighty deed, an "establishment of wonders" not altogether unlike Hrothgar's building of the hall Heorot in *Beowulf*" (*Norton* 4-5). The magical and the supernatural, immersed in the old culture's monsters – "horrible shapes and shapeless horrors" – also found their way into Arthurian romances and Chaucer's tales (Hyles and Murphy 2). However, a large number of the secular works produced in this period were lost, either because very few of them – if any – were written down (most storytellers were illiterate), or because even if they were recorded by an interested and literate hearer, they were not kept in such well-maintained libraries as those in monasteries.

Although Christianity spread throughout Europe during the Middle Ages, the worship of pagan gods was prohibited, and worshippers were persecuted, Paganism was still a strong force in some parts of the continent until as late as the eleventh century.[2] Christianity had not managed to eradicate the older pagan traditions completely; and works produced in this period contained a great number of fantastic elements such as

[2] Some Eastern European countries like Lithuania were not Christianised until the fourteenth century (Berend 35).

the improbable and the supernatural. Similarly, medieval clerics, in their endeavour to convert people into Christianity, took to creating mystery plays, and acting them out in churches or on decorated wagons which moved about the town. The fantastic elements in the Bible were utilised in an effort to reach illiterate audiences and familiarise them with stories from the Old and New Testaments. Brian Tierney asserts that although the Church admonished the creation of secular literature, it used classical texts as a means to its own ends (31). Jack Zipes, on a similar note, alleges that "with the gradual rise of the Christian Church, which began to exploit magic and miraculous stories and to codify what would be acceptable for its own interests," and "wonder tales and fairy tales were declared sacrilegious, heretical, dangerous, and untruthful" ("Cross-Cultural" 850). Zipes adds, between stigmatising, censuring, or criticising fantasy works and creating its own fairy tale tradition of "miraculous stories in which people were to believe and still believe," the Church chose the latter (850). Nevertheless, the fact that the Church exploited fantastic elements did not prevent it from condemning fantastic stories as heretical. The employment of the fantastic by the Church in such a manner ironically placed religion next to "myth, epic, surrealism, the grotesque, the absurd, allegory and symbolism […] by which the fantastic, the improbable, and the impossible are rationalized" (Hyles and Murphy 1).

There have been many attempts to challenge this negative attitude towards fantastic literature. British poet and critic Sir Philip Sidney's *The Defence of Poesy*[3] was one such attempt to justify poetry, if not fantasy, when written sometime between 1579 and 1585.[4] What Sidney calls "poetry" is, in fact, fiction (and might as well be fantastic fiction), as can be inferred from his definition of poetry as an art of imitation with an aim "to teach and delight," as well as from his reluctance to defend certain types of poetry; those that "imitate the inconceivable excellencies of God," and those that "deal with matters philosophical" (86). The poetry he chooses to defend is pure fiction, created by the "right poets," who "imitate to teach and delight, and to imitate borrow nothing of what is, hath been, or shall be; but range, only reined with learned discretion,

[3] Published posthumously in 1595. In the same year, a second edition of the work was printed by another publisher under the title *An Apology for Poetry* (Maslen 1).

[4] Most scholars believe it to have been written during the winter of 1579-80 (e.g., Maslen 2).

into the divine consideration of what may be and should be" (86-87). These poets make no claim to represent actual things and people, but deal with "what should or should not be" (103). Sidney, alluding to the etymology of the word "poet" claims that poets can create things that are better than or different from those made by nature: "[nature's] world is brazen, the poets deliver a golden" (85).

Sidney also argues against the utilitarian idea that literature in general is useless by asserting that it "plant[s] goodness even in the secretest cabinet of our souls" (90). Poets envision ideal pictures, which represent particular examples of universal virtues, and create verbal imitations of these, which equip the audience with a "true lively knowledge" (90). Not only do these images, these "speaking pictures," appeal to the audience's emotions, but they speak to their rational minds as well, and as such, they move them to take action (86-87). R. W. Maslen, in his introduction to the third edition of *The Defence of Poesy*, describes Sidney's poet as "not just a fabricator of imaginary objects but a shaper of people, who works on his readers' minds and through these on the societies they inhabit" (43). David Sandner, in a note on Sidney's work, comments,

> 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's production of secondary worlds. Indeed, the influence of [*The Defence of Poesy*] has been widespread and foundational to literary criticism of the fantastic generally. (19)

In the sixteenth century, the fantastic came up in the works of such distinguished writers as Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe, and William Shakespeare. Even so, Mathews claims, in the 1600s, "new systems of learning from the Renaissance brought about a rejection of superstition in favor of science and reason" (2). After classical philosophers, and medieval Churchmen, the Enlightenment would undermine fantastic literature yet again.

The attitude towards creative imagination was shaped in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by humanism, the Renaissance, and the Reformation. The first enabled experimental thought, the second revived the classical notion of man as a creative being, and the third challenged the supreme authority of the Roman Catholic Church ("Enlightenment"). The scholars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, like their

Classical counterparts, held the view that there was regularity in nature, and its governing principle was the reasoning mind ("History of Europe"). One influential figure in this period was the seventeenth-century French mathematician and philosopher Descartes, with his application of mathematical reasoning to the mysteries of the world. Another was Isaac Newton, English physicist and mathematician, who, like Descartes, viewed the universe as a mechanism ("Enlightenment"). This idea of the universe governed by certain simple and discoverable laws gave rise to the belief that "man, guided by the light of reason, could explain all natural phenomena and could embark on the study of his own place in a world that was no longer mysterious" (H. M. Campbell 198). Another distinguished philosopher, John Locke, in his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, advocated that the human mind at birth was a blank slate, which one fills through experience, causing Christian concepts like original sin and personal salvation to be questioned. This essay, as one of the primary sources of empiricism in modern philosophy, influenced many philosophers of the Enlightenment ("Enlightenment"). Another work of Locke's, *Some Thoughts concerning Education*, had enormous influence on the practice of child rearing for long years after it appeared in 1693. It went through many editions, and was translated into several languages. In this book, Locke describes children as "white Paper, or Wax, to be moulded and fashioned as one pleases" (187). He believes that children's minds must be educated "to produce virtuous, useful, and able Men in their distinct Callings" (lxiii). He focuses on shaping the intellect and the tools that would be of benefit in creating useful individuals in turn, and dismisses such useless activities as poetry and gaming: "[p]oetry and Gaming, which usually go together, are alike in this too, that they seldom bring any Advantage, but to those who have nothing else to live on" (152). He suggests that books like *Aesop's Fables* be used, but as learning aids when the child learns to read, or when he learns Latin, but he cannot refrain himself from issuing a warning:

> When […] he begins to *read*, some easy pleasant Book, suited to his Capacity, should be put into his Hands, wherein the Entertainment that he finds might draw on him, and reward his Pains in Reading, and yet not such as should fill his Head with perfectly useless Trumpery, or lay the Principles of Vice and Folly. To this Purpose, I think *Aesop's Fables* the best. (133)

The belief in the negative effects of imaginative literature on children is shared by other

writers and philosophers, suggests Margaret Ezell in an essay on John Locke: "[John] Bunyan listed the reading of romances as one of the sins of Mr. Badman,[5] and Robert Boyle considered the reading of such books as a boy to be the source of his disturbingly strong and willful fancy" (143). Ezell also draws an interesting parallel between John Locke and Daniel Defoe in their fear of irrational caregivers: just as Locke warns parents of the corrupting influence of servants, who are incapable of differentiating right from wrong, Daniel Defoe "worries about children being cared for by women (who possess a lesser share of rational powers)" (150). Women, devoid of rational powers and inferior in mental faculty, were not to be trusted. Jack Zipes attributes the treatment of fairy tales with suspicion to the fact that these tales were originated and disseminated by women ("Cross-Cultural" 850).

Fantasy was not held in high esteem in adult literature, either. Fairy tales were despised as belonging in the nursery and the servants' quarters; an attitude of mind Locke might have been reflecting when he warned parents against the corrupting influence of servants (Lüthi 21). As Zipes notes, "rational judgment and distrust of imagination were to be the guiding principles of the new enlightened guardians of Puritan culture and utilitarianism for the next two centuries" (*Victorian* xiii). Kotzin draws attention to a similar conclusion by Edwin Sidney Hartland, president of the Folklore Society between 1899 and 1901, who observed that the sixteenth and seventeenth-century objection to the fantastic killed much of the earlier English fairy tales (131). The obsession with reason and rationality once again banished the fantastic from the literary scene.

The view of poetry during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was very different from the romantic theories of inspiration and imaginative creation, and poetic creation was associated with purely intellectual powers (Cowl vi). The two fundamental principles of neo-classical criticism were the imitation of nature and the moral purpose of art. It was assumed that the main function of poetry was to act as a moral teacher, and in order to do this, poets should employ vivid examples (Youngren 267). One figure to challenge this assumption was English poet, dramatist, and literary critic John Dryden,

[5] In *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, published as a companion to *The Pilgrim's Progress* (Ezell 143).

who, according to Salter, "broke with the formal canons of neo-classical criticism, [and] laid the foundations of Romantic aesthetics" (39).

Dryden believes in the instructive value of poetry; however, he disagrees that poetry is a mere imitation of nature. In "An Account of the Ensuing Poem" prefixed to *Annus Mirabilis*, Dryden writes to Robert Howard that all poems are, or ought to be, products of imagination, and a lively description is required to set before the readers' eyes "the absent object, as perfectly, and more delightfully than nature" (*Poems* 158). Dryden, like Aristotle, thinks a poet is a maker, and adds that what a poet creates is not a mere copy, or an imitation of nature, but an invention. For Dryden, pleasure and imagination are of primary importance. In his essay "A Parallel of Poetry and Painting," he says:

> Aristotle tells us, that imitation pleases, because it affords matter for a reasoner to inquire into the truth or falsehood of imitation, by comparing its likeness, or unlikeness, with the original […] As truth is the end of all our speculations, so is the discovery of it is the pleasure of them; and since a true knowledge of nature gives us pleasure, a lively imitation of it, either in poetry or painting, must of necessity produce a much greater: for both these arts […] are not only true imitations of nature, but of best nature, of that which is wrought up to a nobler pitch. They present us with images more perfect than the life in any individual; and we have the pleasure to see all the scattered beauties of nature united by a happy chemistry, without its deformities or faults. (*Verse and Prose* 332)

Dryden was such a dominant figure in the literary scene of the Restoration that this period came to be known as the Age of Dryden. His celebration of the freedom of the imagination, as well as his insistence that poetry must delight, especially – and paradoxically – during a period when science and reason prevailed, has been an important influence on the poetics of later critics, one of whom, for Salter, is Joseph Addison (30).

Paul Kristeller says, "[s]uch dominating concepts of modern aesthetics as taste and sentiment, genius, originality and creative imagination did not assume their definite modern meaning before the eighteenth century" (497). Indeed, this is when the term "aesthetics" was coined. One important literary figure of this period is Joseph Addison,

whose essays on "The Pleasures of the Imagination" are considered to be "the first complete statement of an aesthetic theory in England" (Kallich 308).[6]

Addison ends a cycle of papers in *The Spectator* announcing that he will next enter upon an essay on the pleasures of the imagination, in which he hopes to suggest his readers "what it is that gives beauty to many passages of the finest writers" (321). Addison, like many before him, considers the imagination to lie somewhere in between sense and understanding. In essay number 411, he contends that the pleasures of the imagination are "not so gross as those of sense, nor so refined as those of the understanding" (324). However, unlike his predecessors, Addison thinks that the imagination has a positive and intermediary role between these two. In the next essay, he goes on to list the sources of the pleasures of the imagination as the great, the uncommon (later, "the new"), or the beautiful (327). This theory of Addison attracted a great deal of attention and following, owing probably to Francis Hutcheson, the leading aesthetician of his day in England, who used Addison's terminology to describe his "Pleasant Perceptions." Hutcheson wrote of his "Pleasant Perceptions:" "[t]hese we may call, after Mr. Addison, the Pleasures of the Imagination" (17). Addison starts his famous essay "No. 419" with a definition of fantasy, quoting from Dryden:

> There is a kind of writing, wherein the poet quite loses sight of nature, and entertains his reader's imagination with the characters and actions of such persons as have many of them no existence, but what he bestows on them. Such are fairies, witches, magicians, demons, and departed spirits. This Mr. Dryden calls 'the fairy way of writing,' which is, indeed, more difficult than any other that depends on the poet's fancy, because he has no pattern to follow in it, and must seek altogether out of his own invention. (362)

In order to create this kind of writing, the poet must have "an imagination naturally fruitful and superstitious," and he must also be "very well versed in legends and fables, antiquated romances, and the traditions of nurses and old women" (362). For Addison, the fantastic is as powerful as the poet's ability to create something out of his own invention, and to invoke the spirit of a superstitious past. Shakespeare is the genuine expert in this kind of literary creation with nothing but his fancy, or his genius, to

[6] Many other literary critics regard Addison as the founder of modern aesthetics (e.g., Sandner 21; Saccamano 83; Walker 65; Thorpe 316, 324).

depend upon. Addison finds Shakespeare's imaginary characters natural, and adds that if there are such beings in the world, they are likely to talk and act like they have been represented in his plays. Like Dryden, he dismisses "men of cold fancies, and philosophical dispositions" who object to this kind of poetry as "it has not probability enough to affect the imagination" (363). His response to this also echoes Dryden: there may be many beings in this world other than humans. The representation of such beings opens the mind to speculation. "[A]t least, we have all heard so many pleasing relations in favour of [such representations] that we do not care for seeing through the falsehood, and willingly give ourselves up to so agreeable an imposture" (363). Fairy kind of writing does not attempt to represent truth, but to provide pleasure. Addison concludes his essay declaring that poetry addresses itself to the imagination, "as it has not only the whole circle of nature for its province, but makes new worlds of its own" (365).

One other distinctive point in Addison's criticism, according to Youngren, is his insistence that the pleasures of the imagination can be derived from all fields of human knowledge (282). While his predecessors believe poetry to be superior to philosophy and to history, Addison writes,

> [a]s the writers in poetry and fiction borrow their several materials from outward objects, and join them together at their own pleasure, there are others who are obliged to follow nature more closely, and to take entire scenes out of her. Such are historians, natural philosophers, travellers, geographers, and in a word, all who describe visible objects of a real existence. (366)

Echoes of Dryden and Addison can also be heard in Richard Hurd's *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762). In his tenth letter, he argues "this wicked poetry," this "fairy kind of writing," as Dryden calls it, deals with "poetical truth" rather than "philosophical[7] or historical truth" (91). Imagination has much more to do than experience in the poet's world, and besides, the poet has a supernatural world in which "he has Gods, and Faeries, and Witches at his command;" how could he know or experience these in this world? (93). His understanding of "belief" is very similar to Coleridge's "willing suspension of disbelief for the moment" (*Biographia* 2: 2). This letter also serves as a defence of fairy tales, where Hurd responds to an unfavourable piece of criticism

[7] "Philosophical" should be taken to mean "scientific" in this context.

against them, and later emphasises that the readers are best pleased when they are made to conceive phenomena that contradict their reason:

> [It has been argued that fairy tales] are unnatural and absurd; that they surpass all bounds not of truth only, but of probability; and look more like the dreams of children, than the manly inventions of poets. […] This criticism […] supposes that poets, who are liars by profession, expect to have their lies believed. Surely they are not so unreasonable. They think it enough, if they can but bring you to *imagine* the possibility of them. (88)

On the one hand, the negative attitude towards fairy tales, or towards any work of art which was the product of pure imagination, has been attributed to the prevailing climate of empiricism. On the other hand, empiricism has been considered to enhance the role and importance of imagination (Youngren 281-82). Eventually, the recognition of the powers of the imagination has had a significant impact on the attitude towards fantastic literature. Addison insisted on the pleasurable powers of the imagination rather than its role in achieving truth. He regarded pleasure as the principal function of poetry, and highlighted the role of imaginative activity in improving one's body and soul. As M. A. Goldberg puts forward, Addison prepared the way for the early Romantics by focusing on theories of pleasure and sublimity instead of problems of knowledge and reality (504). Unlike the philosophers and writers of the Enlightenment who relied on reason, the Romantics focused on imagination. The Romantic period was, as Dieter Petzold puts it, "a time when an enlightened, basically pragmatic view of reality had become prevalent," and on the other hand "the eighteenth-century axiom that literature should copy nature was being radically challenged" (15-16). William Blake was soon to write in his *Jerusalem* of the imagination, "Imagination, the real and eternal world of which this vegetable universe is but a faint shadow" (Bloom and Harley 90). His distinction of imagination or "visionary fancy" from fable or allegory in "A Vision of the Last Judgment" has been an important contribution to the discussions of the fantastic (Wolfe, *Evaporating* 6). Most famously, Samuel Taylor Coleridge described imagination as "the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception" (*Biographia* 1: 295).

The influence of Samuel Taylor Coleridge as the major aesthetician of the Romantic era on the literary criticism of the fantastic cannot be ignored. In his *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge gives his theory of the imagination, and distinguishes between the faculties of

fancy and imagination. For him, fancy is "no other than a mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space" (1: 296). Imagination, on the other hand, is superior to fancy in its scope and creativity. For Coleridge, the imagination is "esemplastic" – not only is it an active, but also a synthesizing, unifying power (1: 294).

Until the eighteenth century, "imagination" and "fancy" had often been used somewhat synonymously to refer to the realm of fairy tale or make-believe (Wimsatt and Brooks 386). By the end of the eighteenth century, the distinction between imagination and fancy was well established, imagination having assumed a superior position by its relation to creative powers. As stated by Sandner, "[t]he shift in attitudes toward the imagination had a profound effect on the writing of non-realistic literature in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries" (12).

Coleridge's letter to Thomas Poole, dated 16 October 1797, on his own childhood reading could be regarded as another contribution of his to the criticism of the fantastic. In this letter, he highlights the role of fairy tales in the development of the imagination:

> For from my early reading of fairy tales and genii, etc., etc., my mind had been habituated *to the Vast*, and I never regarded *my senses* in any way as the criteria of my belief. I regulated all my creeds by my conceptions, not by my *sight*, even at that age. Should children be permitted to read romances, and relations of giants and magicians and genii? I know all that has been said against it; but I have formed my faith in the affirmative. I know no other way of giving the mind a love of the Great and the Whole. (*Letters* 16)

Although fairy tales have existed as part of culture for thousands of years, they have not always been considered worthy of a serious person's attention, and very few of Coleridge's contemporaries would have shared his enthusiasm for fairy tales. Hugh Rhodes, who, in 1577 in his *Boke of Nurture*, had warned parents to keep their children away from feigned fables and vain fantasies, would have found more like-minded individuals to agree with him (Egoff 23). As Lewis says, "[a]bout once every hundred years some wiseacre gets up and tries to banish the fairy tale" (*On Stories* 37). Centuries later, many critics still rejected fairy tales, and one example is Sarah Trimmer, an English writer and critic of children's literature with her own periodical *The Guardian of Education* (Maxwell 50). Trimmer's main concern was religious instruction, and children's literature as a means of didacticism. She dismissed fantastic tales without a

moral purpose, i.e., anything imaginative, and claimed that even moral instruction would be imperfect, if not erroneous, unless based on religion. She wrote,

> [w]orks of fancy highly wrought, such as the Tales of the Genii, the Arabian Nights' Entertainment, and the like, I would not put into the hands of young people till their religious principles are fixed, and their judgment sufficiently strong to restrain the imagination within due bounds. […] *Novels* certainly, however abridged, and however excellent, should not be read by young persons, till they are in some measure acquainted with real life. (309-10)

In his "The Evolution of a Word," Stephen Prickett, too, quotes Mrs Trimmer to give a glimpse of the popular attitude of the time before he goes on to list more examples. Trimmer wrote "[w]e cannot approve of those [books] which are only fit to fill the heads of children with confused notions of wonderful and supernatural events, brought about by the agency of imaginary beings (8). Maria and Richard Edgeworth, in their *Practical Education*, commented, "[w]e do not allude to fairy-tales for we apprehend these are not now much read;" and Anthony Nesbit (ironically, grandfather of E. Nesbit, writer of many tales of fantasy and magic) warned, "[b]eware of reading tales and novels, for they generally exhibit pictures that never had any existence, except in the airy imaginations of the brain" (qtd. in Prickett 7, 8). Sarah Trimmer and Maria and Richard Edgeworth represent literary critics of the first half of the nineteenth century very well, the former favouring a moral didacticism in children's literature with a particular emphasis on religious instruction, the latter, on reason. Charles Lamb, sharing Coleridge's keenness on fairy tales, and furious over Trimmer's verdict on fantastic stories, wrote in a letter to Coleridge,

> *Goody Two-Shoes* is almost out of print. Mrs Barbauld's stuff has banished all the old classics of the nursery; and the shopman at Newbery's hardly deigned to reach them off an old exploded corner of a shelf, when Mary asked for them. Mrs B's and Mrs Trimmer's nonsense lay in piles about.... Science has succeeded to Poetry no less in the little walks of children than with men. Is there no possibility of averting this sore evil? Think what you would have been now, if instead of being fed with Tales and old wives' fables in childhood, you had been crammed with geography and natural history? (qtd. in Maxwell 50)

Fortunately, fairy tales managed to survive in chapbooks[8] (Kotzin 133). People from underprivileged backgrounds were able to read fairy tales in chapbooks, and they told them to their own children, and to the children they were nursing. However, not much respected in its chapbook literature format, they were under the threat of extinction. Francis Cohen mourned for the disappearance of the old tales:

> Scarcely any of the *chap books* which were formerly sold to the country people at fairs and markets have been able to maintain their ancient popularity; and we have almost witnessed the extinction of this branch of our national literature. Spruce modern novels, and degenerate modern Gothic romance, romance only in name, have expelled the ancient 'histories' even from their last retreats. (91)

The fantastic would soon lose the prominence it had gained during the Romantic era with the emergence of a Victorian aesthetic shaped by urbanisation, industrialisation, and utilitarianism, and with the rise of the principle of "realism." Gary Wolfe draws attention to the influence of Victorian authors on the later criticism of the fantastic by quoting George Eliot, who was a highly respected literary figure of the time (*Evaporating* 7). Eliot would write in her first novel, *Adam Bede* (1859), "[f]alsehood is so easy, truth so difficult. The pencil is conscious of a delightful facility in drawing a griffin – the longer the claws, and the larger the wings, the better; but that marvellous facility which we mistook for genius is apt to forsake us when we want to draw a real unexaggerated lion" (151). Eliot's remarks foreshadowed the discourse concerning fantastic literature which would last for more than a century. Wolfe finds this devaluation, or at least devalorisation of the fantastic ironic since it began "at a time when the outlines of the modern popular genres of the fantastic were first being laid down" (*Evaporating* 7). This was the period of the appearance of the Gothic novel, and of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), which, for Le Guin, is "the first great modern fantasy" (Introduction 10).

David Sandner argues that nineteenth-century critics often focused on the importance of fantasy as children's literature rather than fantasy as a genre as exemplified by the writings of Dickens, Ruskin, MacDonald, and Chesterton (10). Fairy tales were to

[8] Chapbooks were cheap, illustrated, pocket-sized booklets which emerged to meet the demand for accessible reading material as a result of the rise of the literacy rate among lower, working classes in England (Egoff 28).

regain popularity, but they were still approached by many as a literature for children and for common people like servants. The objective of fairy tales was considered to be entertainment as well as instruction. Still, having grown up with fairy tales, acquired an "appetite for fantasy," and "preserve[d] childhood's pure delight in imagination," mature readers continued to look for fantastic adult books (Mathews 17-18). Just as Romantics used fairy tale motifs in their poetry, Victorian authors made great use of fairy tales in their novels. Harry Stone contends that Dickens attempted at a method of integrating the fairy tale with reality, the result being "a more profound or complete realism" (197). Michael Kotzin argues, English Victorians such as Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and Charlotte and Emily Brontë integrated fairy tales with the realistic novel, and "they created an adult genre not restricted by the naive style, simple happy endings, country settings, or utter supernaturalism of most fairy tales, but enlarged by the universal motifs and fantastic worlds of the tales" (142). Even "staid" poets like Alfred Tennyson "strayed often into the shadowy realm of the supernatural," and used fairy tales in their work (Hyles and Murphy 5). The recognition of fairy tales was to such a degree that they were packaged as household items (Zipes, "Towards a Theory" 4). Published In 1812 and 1815, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's collection of fairy tales was titled *Children's and Household Tales*. In 1823, the collection was printed in England in one volume, translated by Edgar Taylor, and beautifully illustrated by George Cruikshank. Taylor's preface is worth quoting at length:

> The popular tales of England have been too much neglected. They are nearly discarded from the libraries of childhood. Philosophy is made the companion of the nursery: we have lisping chemists and leading-string mathematicians: this is the age of reason, not of imagination; and the loveliest dreams of fairy innocence are considered as vain and frivolous. Much might be urged against this rigid and philosophic (or rather unphilosophic) exclusion of works of fancy and fiction. Our imagination is surely as susceptible of improvement by exercise, as our judgement or our memory; and so long as such fictions only are presented to the young mind as do not interfere with the important department of moral education, a beneficial effect must be produced by the pleasurable employment of a faculty in which so much of our happiness in every period of life consists. (xvi)

Grimms' collection was enjoyed throughout Europe. The fairy tale was finally recognised as good literature for children, but Edgar Taylor wrote in the preface to the Grimm collection that fairy tales are for children and adults alike. He said these tales "tickle the palate of the young, but are often received with as keen an appetite by those

of graver years" (xv). W. H. Auden, in his 1944-review in *The New York Times*, recommended the book to adults saying that it was "[a]mong the few indispensable, common-property books upon which Western culture can be founded […] It will be a mistake if this volume is merely bought for a child; it should be, first and foremost, an educational 'must' for adults" ("In Praise"). However, although fairy tales were accepted by a large number of Victorians, they were valued not as much for mere imaginativeness as for didacticism. Even Taylor, in his preface to the Grimm collection highlights the benefits of fairy tales in providing a moral education as well as pleasure to children, and says that "they are not only amusing," "but instructive by the purity of their morality" (xxi). This moral value of fairy tales would be appreciated in decades to come. In his 1908-essay "Fairy Tales," G. K. Chesterton furthered the argument that fairy tales are moral both because they are innocent and because they are didactic. He believed fairy tales to promote a single idea, "the idea that peace and happiness can only exist on some condition," which is the core of ethics (72).

Edgar Taylor's translation was printed with an introduction by the distinctive prose stylist and art critic John Ruskin, who, like Coleridge did in his letter, focused on the importance of fantasy to children, and regarded fairy tales as the best kind of children's literature. His argument for fantasy, as well as his own literary fairy tales, played an important role in popularising the genre. Ruskin believed each fairy tale to be "the remnant of a tradition possessing true historical value," and he objected to the endeavour to shamelessly change fairy tales "to suit particular tastes, or inculcate favourite doctrines," because "it directly destroys the child's power of rendering any such belief as it would otherwise have been in his nature to give to an imaginative vision" (ix, x). He claimed if children were allowed to have "joy or awe in the conception of [the fairy tale] as if it were real," they would be able to exercise their reasoning skills (xi). He argued, children who were brought up to be well-educated, disciplined persons did not need moral fairy tales, because they would find a unique and powerful "teaching" in the "courses of any tradition of old time" as long as it is honestly delivered (ix). Ruskin did not only highlight the pedagogical value of fairy tales, but he also appreciated imaginative creation. While praising Cruikshank's illustrations, he said, "the power of genuine imaginative work, and its difference from that which is

compounded and patched together from borrowed sources, is of all qualities of art the most difficult to explain" (xiv).

Ruskin, following Romantics in highlighting the imaginative value of fairy tales, also reflected the Victorian attitude towards them in stressing their educational value. Like Dickens, Ruskin greatly admired historian and essayist Thomas Carlyle, who objected to the new world where utilitarianism, urbanisation, industrialisation, and science prevailed (Kotzin 147). Carlyle, in his essay "Signs of the Times," had written "[w]ere we required to characterise this age of ours by any single epithet, we should be tempted to call it, not an Heroical, Devotional, Philosophical, or Moral Age, but above all others, the Mechanical Age" (34). He added that this process of mechanisation would impact not only human behaviour, but also feeling: "[t]hese things [...] indicate a mighty change in our whole manner of existence. For the same habit regulates not our modes of action alone, but our modes of thought and feeling. Men are grown mechanical in head and heart, as well as in hand" (37).

If part of the popularity of *Grimms' Fairy Tales* was due to its beautiful illustrations, a greater part of it was a result of the brothers' ability to transform the tales of an oral storytelling tradition into literary texts. According to Zipes, Brothers Grimm established the oral and literary tales they collected as a literary genre and virtually transformed that genre into an institution (*Brothers Grimm* xvii). Grimms' collection and an academic study on these tales' origin which was printed with later editions of the collection inspired similar works to be published. Anthony Montalba wrote in the preface of his collection of fairy tales that he hoped English readers had forever "cast of that pedantic folly" of condemning fairy tales "as mere idle things, or as pernicious occupations for faculties that should be always directed to serious and profitable concerns" (9). In 1835, Hans Christian Andersen's first book of fairy tales, *Tales, Told for Children*, appeared. When his tales were translated and published in other European countries, Andersen

became an instant celebrity. Fairy tales, translated and newly written, filled bookshops, and was now defended by influential Victorian authors.[9]

One other ardent defender of fairy tales was Charles Dickens. John Forster, biographer, critic, and a friend of Dickens, wrote in *The Life of Charles Dickens* that Dickens was intensely fond of old nursery tales,[10] and that "he had a secret delight in feeling that he was here only giving them a higher form" (223). Not only did Dickens utilise these old tales when he wrote his supernatural tales (most importantly his Christmas books), but he also emphasised their importance both in his fiction and non-fiction. For Dickens, reason and fancy are not opposites; reason cannot exist without fancy. One can only "com[e] upon Reason through the tender light of Fancy" (*Hard Times* 233). In his novels, Dickens illustrated the fact that a childhood spent without fairy tales impedes one's moral and emotional development by portraying such characters as the Gradgrind children, who were brought up by a father emphasising cold facts and figures over fancy, and educated by a teacher filling them with facts and killing any spark of fancy in the bud. Gradgrind children have never "associated a cow in the field with that famous cow with the crumpled horn who tossed the dog who worried the cat who killed the rat who ate the malt, or with that yet more famous cow who swallowed Tom Thumb" (12). Philosopher and economist John Stuart Mill, was a living example of the results of a similar education. In his *Autobiography*, Mill described a nervous breakdown he experienced at the age of twenty, after which he realized that an education devoid of feeling and imagination failed to result in a fulfilling life. Mill said, he recovered through the cultivation of his aesthetic sensibilities by reading poetry, and described

[9] Between 1841 and 1863 in England, Ambrose Merton, Felix Summerly, and Anthony Montalba collected *The Old Story Books of England, Home Treasury,* and *Fairy Tales from All* Nations, respectively. Many prominent British authors published fairy tales during this period: Charles Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol* (1843) and *The Cricket on the Hearth* (1846), John Ruskin; *The King of the Golden River* (1851), William Thackeray; *The Rose and the Ring* (1855), Charles Kingsley; *The Water Babies* (1863), George MacDonald; *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872) and its sequel *The Princess and Curdie* (1873), Andrew Lang; *The Gold of Fairnilee* (1888), *Prince Prigio* (1889), *and Prince Ricardo of Pantouflia* (1893), to name a few (Kotzin 140, 142).

[10] Maria Tatar writes in her introduction to *The Grimm Reader* that Charles Dickens once commented Little Red Riding Hood was his first love, and he felt it would have been perfect bliss if he could have married her (xxxii).

Wordsworth's poetry "a medicine for my state of mind" (151). He condemned the banishment of imaginative works from "the hands of youth" in favour of "catalogues of physical facts and theological dogmas" (460). Until he died in 1873, he put in a great deal of effort to advocate the necessity of imaginative input and the inadequacy of absolute rationalism in cultivating the mind.

Dickens's *Hard Times* is an illustration of the need to balance fanciful, rationalistic, and religious discourses in children's literature; however, it is in "Frauds on the Fairies," originally published in *Household Words* in 1853, that he offers one of the most influential defences of the value of imagination and of fairy tales in the history of literary criticism. Elaine Ostry thinks, Dickens's defence of the fairy tale is typical in its passion among Romantics and "fantasists," their Victorian heirs: Dickens, like other fantasists, inherited the values Romantics placed on "folk and romance traditions, the child, and imagination," and "opposed the moral didactic claim that the fairy tale, fancy, and the imagination were useless, if not dangerous" (34).

For Dickens, fairy tales nurture a number of positive qualities: "[f]orbearance, courtesy, consideration for poor and aged, kind treatment of animals, love of nature, abhorrence of tyranny and brute force – many such good things have been first nourished in the child's heart by this powerful aid" ("Frauds" 97). He finds fairy tales socially and morally valuable, and states that it is absolutely essential that fairy tales be respected in "an utilitarian age, of all other times," since "a nation without fancy, without some romance, never did, never can, never will, hold a great place under the sun" (97). Dickens uses fairy tales to moral ends, but he criticises those who exploit them to promote morality. For Dickens, the matter is one of tone; fairy tales *do* teach morals, but implicitly and fancifully. What he criticises is the author's didactic tone, accompanied by an over-emphasis of the moral lessons that are either implicit or non-existent in the original fairy tale.

Despite Dickens's bitter criticism, it was not an uncommon practice to exploit fairy tales for the sake of moral didacticism. Moralistic writers, unable to eradicate fantastic stories, often adapted the fairy tale material available to them to disseminate their own views on morality. As Alan Richardson argues, "the relation of didactic writers to the

fairy tale might better be described as one of appropriation than one of censorship" (37). Writers with a didactic aim produced many exemplary and cautionary tales, presenting good children as examples, and bad children as a warning in hopes of offering alternatives to fairy tales. Besides as a tool for didacticism, fairy tales were used by Victorian writers as a means of social criticism. According to Jack Zipes, all writers who criticised the effects of the industrial revolution, such as injustice and inequality, interestingly "employed the fairy tale at one point" (*Victorian* xvi). Sometimes they would help improve conditions, too. The immense popularity of Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies*, where Kingsley, through his Tom the chimney sweep, attacked forced child labour, arguably increased popular support for Lord Shaftesbury's campaign that finally ended in the 1875 Chimney Sweeping Act, forbidding the use of children in the chimney-sweeping trade (Shore 567).

The nineteenth century was the time when fantasy flourished not only in the fairy tale form, such as William Morris's "The Hollow Land" and "Golden Wings" (1856) and George MacDonald's *Phantastes: A Faerie Romance for Men and Women* (1858), but also in literary nonsense like Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), in horror tales like Robert Louis Stevenson's *Doctor Jekyll and Mister Hyde* (1886) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), in utopias like William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890), and in science fiction novels like H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895) and *War of the Worlds* (1898) (Arata 52). Stephen Arata argues that even those works that are normally left out of the genre "such as Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories, Rudyard Kipling's Anglo-Indian stories, and Joseph Conrad's sea tales – often possess the feel of modern parables or myths" (52).

Richard Mathews considers Morris, an artist, and MacDonald, a theologian, the pioneers of fantasy as a modern literary genre. According to Mathews, their contribution to fantasy literature is twofold; they offered an antithesis to the popular realistic modes of the time by establishing "radical, imaginative, antirealistic modes of fiction;" and they "recovered long-neglected vocabulary, syntax, and patterns of archetypal invention similar to many of the long-lost texts being rediscovered" (16). MacDonald's preface to his *The Light Princess, and Other Fairy Tales* is another great contribution of his to the literary criticism of fantasy. In this essay, MacDonald stresses the importance of

inventing a world with an inner consistency: "[t]o be able to live in a moment in an imagined world, we must see the laws of its existence obeyed. Those broken, we fall out of it" (65). Later, he emphasises that a fairy tale is not an allegory although it may contain it to some degree (67). Lin Carter agrees that Morris is a prominent contributor to the genre with his creation of a coherent fantasy world which the reader is not required to accept as real. The world Morris creates is "an imagined state of being," "we are not meant to accept it as a real place," and his characters and adventures are not "symbolic or allegorical" (Carter, Introduction vii). Another inarguable pioneer was Lewis Carroll, whose *Alice* books "improved both the climate and the audience for fantasy" (Mathews 17). Unlike other children's books of the period, *Alice* was neither didactic, nor moralistic; on the contrary, it was fantasy for its own sake. Claudia Nelson attributes the popularity of *Alice* books to this "antididacticism" (75). Another reason for this popularity is their appeal to adults who found in the books' magical, inventive, and nonsensical worlds something quite unique. Rosemary Jackson ascribes this uniqueness to the presentation of "a confused topsy-turvy world which lays no claim to re-present absolute meaning or 'reality'" (141).

Fantasy writers owe much to these authors and their early twentieth-century successors who laid the foundation of the genre: Morris's successor Lord Dunsany, who published his first book of short stories, *The Gods of Pegāna*, in 1905, prepared the way for many authors, such as J. R. R. Tolkien, and Ursula Le Guin, who "followed his example of constructing an elaborate invented mythos for an imaginary reality" (Mathews 22). Dunsany was one of the first to invent a mythology, a genesis, and a secondary world, as Tolkien would call it. Carter and Le Guin also think, Lord Dunsany, with his vivid style, was highly influential in popularising fantasy fiction and caused many young writers to attempt to write in his style (Carter, *Realms* 2; Le Guin, *Language* 85). Chesterton foreran C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien in giving a tangible form to his religious concerns in his books. David Lindsay's posthumously acclaimed masterpiece *A Voyage to Arcturus* (1920), which Tolkien says he "read with avidity" (*Letters* 34), inspired C. S. Lewis to write two of his interplanetary novels (Lindskoog). E. R. Eddison's secular, heroic fantasy *The Worm Ouroboros* (1922) advanced the fantasy novel "in ways that fully appealed to the tastes of the modern reader" (Mathews 25).

By the mid-twentieth century, a large body of fantastic works had been produced, and critics and literary scholars started to direct their attention to the evaluation of fantastic literature. Explorations by Russian and French scholars soon prompted Anglo-American critics and scholars to take an interest in "fantasy" as descriptive of a literary genre. The emergence of a new kind of narrative which violated conventional codes called for a theorisation of fantasy and for a definition, and soon "theoreticians began the serious work of contesting and refining definitions, and trying to figure out where the potential limits of the genre might and ought to lie" (Stableford xlvi). The first definitions involved the impossible content. As there have always been critics who dismissed fantasy as a triviality, some twentieth-century writers also displayed intolerance towards it. Examples of such can be found in W. R. Irwin's *The Game of the Impossible*, where he quotes from Louis MacNeice and Kingsley Amis: MacNeice wrote that "[t]he fantasies of mere Fancy […] seem not inevitable but arbitrary; they have surface but no depth; they amuse but they do not nourish; they are almost a form of doodling," and Kingsley Amis, interestingly favouring science fiction over fantasy, asserted that science fiction "maintains a respect for fact or presumptive fact, fantasy makes a point of flouting these; for a furniture of robots, space ships, techniques, and equations it substitutes elves, broomsticks, occult powers, and incantations" (33). The first major work changing the direction of the literary criticism of fantasy was Tzvetan Todorov's *The Fantastic* (1970, English translation 1973). As Clyde Northrup maintains, "Todorov's structuralist/formalist approach to defining the fantastic ties it directly to the real, or the expectations of both character in the text and reader outside the text toward what is real and what is fantastic" (814).

Todorov claims that fantasy arises as a moment of hesitation when confronted with something incredible – a hesitation between rational explanation and the acceptance of something supernatural. He describes the fantastic as an evanescent mode rather than an autonomous genre by distinguishing it from the genres of the uncanny and the marvellous. He asserts that uncanny stories maintain the laws of nature, and stories which seem to be supernatural are given a natural explanation in the end (as in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland).* On the other hand, the marvellous introduces new laws of its own, which are supernatural, and assumes acknowledgement of the improbable and

inexplicable (as in *The Arabian Nights*). The fantastic is located somewhere between the two, between the actual reality and some form of reality which is not actual, as a result of which neither the hero, nor the intended reader is able to make up her/his mind as to where s/he is. As long as the hero/reader remains in this state of hesitation about the natural or supernatural character of narrated events, the fantastic operates. For Todorov, "[*t*]*he reader's hesitation* is the first condition of the fantastic" (31). The moment this indeterminacy is resolved, the reader loses her/his sense of the fantastic, and the fantastic is left behind. If these events are confirmed as natural, the reader is in the sphere of the genre of the uncanny; otherwise, s/he is in the domain of the genre of the marvellous. So, the fantastic is a hesitant in-between state; it destroys itself when the indeterminacy is lost. However, Todorov's evaluation of Kafka's *Metamorphosis* might be pointing to a flaw in his theory of the fantastic. The story opens with a supernatural event – Gregor Samsa wakes up in his bed one morning to find that he has turned into an enormous insect. This is accepted immediately, both by the character and the reader, and it does not lead to a hesitation, or into astonishment, which means they are in the realm of the marvellous. The event is impossible, but it ends by becoming paradoxically possible, which indicates the realm of the uncanny. However, Todorov concludes, "Kafka's narratives relate both to the marvellous and to the uncanny; they are the coincidence of two apparently incompatible genres" (172). Neither was he right in his determination that the fantastic died with the nineteenth century: "[t]he fantastic has had a relatively brief life span. It appeared in a systematic way around the end of the eighteenth century […] a century later, we find the last […] examples of the genre […]. [W]hy does the literature of the fantastic no longer exist?" (166).

Eric Rabkin, one of the many ardent followers of Todorov, claims that the fantastic is limited to "a direct reversal of ground rules," and fantasy is the "polar opposite [of] Reality" (*Literature* 14-15). The fantastic is not simply the unreal, but "reality turned precisely 180° around" (28). He illustrates this with an excerpt from Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, where Alice tells a tiger lily that she wishes the flower could talk, and is utterly astonished when it talks back. He proposes, it is Alice's astonishment that signals the fantastic, not the flower's ability to talk. As long as a text sets the notion that flowers cannot talk as a ground rule, their talking will strike the

reader as fantastic. Another example is when Alice finds a small cake, eats it, does *not* grow in size, and is equally surprised. Here, the ground rule has been that Alice will grow to a larger height after eating a cake marked "EAT ME."[11]

Rabkin emphasises this 180° reversal of ground rules in a later work where he writes,

> [t]he key to the fantastic, then, is not to be found in simple comparison with the real world but in examination of the reading process. We find the reader reaction that characterizes the fantastic, a parallel of Alice's astonishment, when operative ground rules are reversed. Whether those rules come from our projection of the outside reality or are established by the inside reality of the text, the fantastic is an affect generated as we read by the direct reversal of the ground rules of the narrative world. (*Worlds* 20-21)

However, his notion of fantastic reversal is somewhat ambiguous: it is both an escape from and a reminder of the world escaped (*Literature* 48). On the one hand, we recognise the fantastic reversal "playing on and against our whole experience as people and readers;" on the other hand, "a real Fantasy uses the fantastic so essentially and so constantly that one never escapes its grip into the security of a fully tamed world for more than a moment" (41, 218). Robert Scholes considers it "an error" on the part of Rabkin "to have founded a theory of fantasy upon what I would call surrealism," and he adds, Todorov too made an error when he "appropriated the word fantasy for what most of us would call the uncanny" ("Boiling Roses" 4).

While critics in Europe were busy agreeing or disagreeing with Todorov, on the other side of the Atlantic, fantasy author Ursula K. Le Guin was giving speeches and writing articles on fantasy and science fiction, which were later collected in *The Language of the Night* in 1979. Like Aristotle, who put the poet before the historian due to his ability to portray "what may happen" as opposed to "what happened," Le Guin puts the fantasists on a pedestal with their ability to talk about human life "as it is lived, and as it might be lived, and as it ought to be lived" (*Language* 53). She has noticed that many Americans "look upon all works of the imagination either as suspect, or as contemptible," and wishes to find out why Americans are afraid of dragons. The answer

[11] Rabkin considers *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* to be "a true Fantasy," whereas works comprising inner consistency to be fairy tales (*Literature* 37).

lies in "our Puritanism, our work ethic, our profit-mindedness, and even our sexual mores" (35).[12] The excuses Le Guin cites for Americans' rejection of fantasy can be heard anywhere in the world: "I do not have the time," "I used to read fantasy as a child/teenager," or "I live in the real world." According to Le Guin, fantasy, "the language of the night," is like psychoanalysis in that it is "a journey into the subconscious mind" (90). "The great fantasies, myths, and tales are indeed like dreams: they speak from the unconscious to the unconscious, in the language of the unconscious – symbol and archetype" (57). For Le Guin, what makes a book fantasy is the style rather than the presence of magic or supernatural beings and places. The reason why style is essential to the fantastic as a form is explained by Le Guin as follows:

> In fantasy there is nothing but the writer's vision of the world. There is no borrowed reality of history, or current events, or just plain folks at home in Peyton Place. There is no comfortable matrix of the commonplace to substitute for the imagination, to provide ready-made emotional response, and to disguise flaws and failures of creation. There is only a construct built in a void, with every joint and seam and nail exposed. To create what Tolkien calls "a secondary universe" is to make a new world. A world where no voice has ever spoken before; where the act of speech is the act of creation. The only voice that speaks there is the creator's voice. And every word counts. (91)

Another critic from across the Atlantic, Robert Scholes discusses the so-called escapist nature of fantasy in his *Structural Fabulation* (1975). Fantasy has been considered escape literature, transcending reality, "telling tales of […] transcending the human condition" by many critics who insisted that art can and ought to represent the actual (Jackson 174). Not only fantasy, but fiction on the whole, as Scholes states, is a way of relieving anxiety so that life could be bearable (5). He finds "escapism" "a dirty and degrading word," and states that just as sleep cannot be considered an escape from being awake since it is essential for our bodily functions, fiction is essential for us since it tames our fears by organizing them into a meaningful and valuable form (5). Fantasy deals with human realities, like any other literature:

> Fantasy has claimed with considerable vigor a special status in literature. It has insisted that it is capable of non-realism, of an imaginative divorce between fictional models it constructs and the world we all experience. This claim, too, has

[12] Brian Attebery similarly thinks Americans "began as a nation hostile to fantasy," and finds three reasons for this: Puritanism, the Enlightenment, and materialism (*Fantasy Tradition* 185).

> proved unfounded. No man has succeeded in imagining a world free of connection to our experiential world, with characters and situations that cannot be seen as mere inversions or distortions of that all too recognizable cosmos. Thus, we must acknowledge that reality inevitably eludes our human languages, we must admit as well that these languages can never conduct the human imagination to a point beyond this reality. If we cannot reach it, neither can we escape it. And for the same reason: because we are in it. All fiction contributes to cognition, then, by providing us with models that reveal the nature of reality by their very failure to coincide with it. (7)

For Scholes, if all fiction is escapism, fantasy, then, is the most escapist genre. However, the fact that fantastic escape need not appeal more directly to the intellect does not deprive it from new ideas, new values, or new social systems. Although the feelings it arouses are pleasurable, its aim is more than entertainment. It is true that when one is reading, s/he transfers her/his consciousness temporarily from her/his empirical surrounding to a perceived one that competes with the former during the act of reading. Yet, this competition of the imagined world with the empirical world can be seen as desirable if one is interested in the freedom and the liberation of the mind through art. Moreover, as Scholes suggests, reality cannot be recorded; therefore, all writing is construction and all creation is fantasy: "[w]e do not imitate the world, we construct versions of it. There is no mimesis, only poiesis. No recording, only constructing" (7). Fantasy is not only substituting the ordinary with the new, but also substituting the everyday experience with new insights into our minds as well as into our world. It involves the very act of imagining the world, of giving shape to the signs that make up the whole of the world, that is, the concretised world being read. The fantasy writer tries to persuade the reader at least to consider another interpretation of reality, no matter how different it is from our own. Fantasy challenges the reader's expectations of what is real by contrasting it with a surreal fictional representation of reality in the text. The reader's forming the world of fantasy is a kind of liberation of the mind from the limitations of the empirical fact, which in turn enables the readers to cope with the reality at hand.

In 1976, W. R. Irwin uses the word "fantasy" to refer to those narratives that play the game of the impossible. While characterising fantasy as anti-real, Irwin highlights the potential of fantasy to create fact while at the same time it contradicts the possible. For him, the basic quality of fantasy is "an overt violation of what is generally accepted as

possibility; it is the narrative result of transforming the condition contrary to fact into 'fact' itself" (4). Irwin later asserts that the main concern of the writer of fantasy is dealing with "what is not, pretending that it is" (192). The requisite for fantasy is narrative sophistry applied with an aim to "make nonfact appear as fact;" the presentation of the persuasive establishment and development of an impossibility (9). This "arbitrary construct of the mind" is under the control of logic and rhetoric, which are elementary in persuading the reader. (9) Wayne Booth similarly focuses on the indispensability of rhetoric in asserting and maintaining the impossible. He believes that the purpose of the rhetoric of fantasy is to convince the reader that a creation contradicting fact as one knows it is existentially valid (v).

Stephen Prickett, in his introduction to *Victorian Fantasy* (1979), recapitulates Scholes's idea that all writing is construction stating, "[a]ll fiction is an artefact. 'Realism' is always an illusion" (3). He regards fantasy as "ultimately the most philosophic form of fiction, giving scope to man's deepest dreams and most potent ideas" (3). Like Le Guin, he believes in the role of fantasy in discovering our dark side and finding a medium to express it:

> Over the last two hundred years fantasy has helped us to evolve new languages for new kinds of human experience; it has pointed the way towards new kinds of thinking and feeling. In seeking to preserve and recreate a world we were in danger of losing, it has also created far other worlds and other seas. By them we have been able to hold a mirror to the shadowy and more mysterious sides of our own, and see reflected in a glass darkly mysteries not otherwise to be seen at all. (3)

Another milestone in the criticism of the fantastic is Rosemary Jackson's *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (1981). Jackson's claim is that fantasy is subversive, rebellious, and revolutionary. "The fantastic traces the unsaid and the unseen of the culture: that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made 'absent'" and aims to "make visible the invisible and to discover absence" (4). Jackson's approach towards fantasy is similar to those of Scholes and Prickett in that she, too, says, "all imaginary activity is fantastic, all literary works are fantasies" (8). She reaches this conclusion through etymology: "[f]antastic" means "that which is made visible, visionary, unreal" (8). One characteristic of literary fantasy that Jackson pinpoints is "its obdurate refusal of prevailing definitions of the 'real' or 'possible'" (14). Her idea is

that the fantastic acts as a parasite upon the real since it recombines and inverts the real rather than escape from it (20). Jackson also claims that fantastic narratives confuse elements of both the marvellous and the mimetic, and adds,

> [fantastic narratives] assert that what they are telling is real – relying upon all the conventions of realistic fiction to do so – and then they proceed to break that assumption of realism by introducing what – within those terms – is manifestly unreal. They pull the reader from the apparent familiarity and security of the known and everyday world into something more strange, into a world whose improbabilities are closer to the realm normally associated with the marvellous. (34)

However, in Nicholas Ruddick's words, this argument implies that the fantastic is only secondary to the real, and it is only valid if "one assumes the primacy of the real and of the artistic mode – realism – whose job it is to reflect it faithfully" (xiv).

Jackson later echoes Todorov's notion of hesitation: the narrator and the protagonist are both unsure as to the reality of the events, which lies at the centre of the fantastic as a mode. Also Todorovian is her distinction between fantasies moving towards the realm of the marvellous, or towards that of the uncanny. Jackson claims it is the former ones "which have been tolerated and widely disseminated," because

> [a] creation of secondary worlds […] uses 'legalized' methods […] to establish other worlds, worlds which are *compensatory*, which fill up a lack, making up for an apprehension of actuality as disordered and insufficient. These fantasies *transcend* that actuality. Their romance base suggests that the universe is, ultimately, a self-regulating mechanism in which goodness, stability, order will eventually prevail. (173-74)

According to Jackson, the function of fantasy is to express desire in a subversive guise. However, not all fantasies attempt to do what Jackson claims, and one example is *The Lord of the Rings*. When Tolkien's work does not fit into her theory, Jackson concludes that it is a failed fantasy, and so are works by such authors as Kingsley, Le Guin and Lewis. These authors, she says, "look back to a lost moral and social hierarchy, which their fantasies attempt to recapture and revivify" (2). Shaun Hughes challenges this view claiming that "Tolkien's work, especially *The Lord of the Rings*, is a living example of the 'literature of subversion'" as people living behind the former iron curtain secretly circulated it while struggling with their frustrations before they

eventually overthrew the oppressive cultural order (810). Sara Upstone, with a similar aim, quotes from M. Kamenovich's report on the White House demonstrations in Moscow in August 1991: "for us Tolkien was never any kind of 'escape' […] many people remembered Tolkien when they made their barricades" (58). She also writes of American anti-war protestors during the Vietnam War, who related the struggle of the Hobbits to their own anti-establishment struggle (57).

Brian Attebery also criticises Jackson, stating that "[h]er comments on the genre converge curiously with those who condemn it from the perspective of mimetic theory: it evades reality" (*Strategies* 21). He says Jackson should have broadened her theory to fit the exception instead of using her own theory as a standard. For Attebery, the fantastic element is proclaimed via supernatural beings, supernatural events, or magical objects, which fantasy treats without hesitation or doubt. According to him, besides the fundamental alteration of reality, what the works grouped as fantasy have in common is a sense of wonder. "Fantasy invokes wonder by making the impossible seem familiar and the familiar new and strange," he writes (*Fantasy Tradition* 3). He believes this sense of wonder to be a crucial aspect of every successful fantasy. Furthermore, he distinguishes "high fantasy" from "the field of fantasy as a whole" (12). Works regarded as high fantasy are claimed to show a consistency in five particulars: setting (an inaccessible other world), structural organisation (a series of events arranged in a fixed sequence), role and character of the protagonist (an ordinary person to whom extraordinary things happen), types of secondary characters (as extraordinary as they can be), and ways of tying events to values and ideas (the actions of the characters, who uphold moral and intellectual standards, reflect a coherent and extractable order). In a later work, Attebery distinguishes between fantasy as mode, fantasy as genre, and fantasy as formula. Fantasy-as-formula is "restricted in scope, recent in origin, and specialized in audience and appeal" whereas fantasy-as-mode is "a stance, a position on the world as well as a means of portraying it" (*Strategies* 2). The formula is the basic form, and it is basically a commercial phenomenon; the mode is a way of telling stories and it describes a general impulse that can even be found in realism; and the genre studies a wider scope. He believes mimesis and fantasy to be the two modes at the ends of a scale, and adds that although they are contrasting modes, they are not opposites;

rather, they coexist in any given work (3). He concludes that fantasy is "a form that makes use of both the fantastic mode, to produce the impossibilities, and the mimetic, to reproduce the familiar" (16-17).

The rise of the realistic novel may have contributed to the dominance of the principle of mimesis in literature; however, since Plato and Aristotle, who declared imitation the fundamental nature of literature, literature has long been discussed in mimetic terms. Kathryn Hume, in *Fantasy and Mimesis* (1984), challenges this attitude, and maintains that classical philosophers "tore a hole in western critical consciousness" by establishing a negative attitude towards fantasy (xii). Hume argues against those theorists who assume that mimetic representation is "the essential relationship between text and the real world" (5). She disagrees "that the essential impulse behind literature is mimetic, and that fantasy is therefore a separable, peripheral phenomenon" (8). She proposes that literature is the product of both mimesis and fantasy, and that most mimetic works of art contain fantastic elements. She goes on to describe mimesis as the desire to imitate everyday experience, and fantasy as the desire to change the given reality and thus to activate our minds. She adds, "[w]e need not try to claim a work as a fantasy any more than we identify a work as mimesis. Rather, we have many genres and forms, each with a characteristic blend or range of the two impulses" (20). The view that fantasy is intrinsic to all literature has also been held by later critics, for whom fantasy "ceases to be peripheral and becomes central" (Aichele 327).[13]

Modernist theories of fantasy, George Aichele comments, "depend upon the metaphysical polarity of real and non-real," and start from the premise that fantasy is secondary to reality (324). However, as John Timmerman reminds, "fantasy has a central place in the western tradition as a whole" (2). Nicholas Ruddick adds, a glimpse into "the body of myth, folk and fairy tale, legend and fable that constitutes the foundation of Western – and world – literature" could suffice to demonstrate that "most of world literature, at least from our own late twentieth-century Western standpoint, is

[13] In addition to Attebery and Hume, Northrop Frye in *An Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) and Eric S. Rabkin in *The Fantastic Literature* (1976) propose similar arguments to Hume's as to the presence of fantasy as a mode or an impulse in all literature.

fantastic," and that "classic realism of the nineteenth-century variety is the special case" (xiv). Postmodernism, on the other hand, does not consider literary fantasy to refer to what is excluded from the realm of reality. "Rather, it expresses the fragmentation and indeed the impossibility of any self-identical referent; the fantastic is the potential within language […] to speak the incoherence at the heart of every allegation of reality" (Aichele 325). S. C. Fredericks asserts, fantasy challenges our knowledge of "what constitutes reality," demonstrates its relativity, and acts as "an intelligent critique of hyper-rationalism" (41). He writes,

> [i]n a world where we have long been used to intellectual pluralism, where our notion of what realities are possible is less certain every decade, and where a relativistic attitude toward knowledge is still rapidly increasing, more than ever we are open to Fantasy narratives, hoping to discover in their relational interplay between the real and the imaginary ways to sharpen our own individual senses of how to decide what is or is not real. (41)

Donald Morse similarly questions the concept of reality when trying to define fantasy. He quotes from George P. Landow, who says, "[f]antasy and our conception of what is fantastic depend on our view of reality," which is highly relative because it varies from one individual to another as well as in time (1). Morse then adds another criterion determining one's approach to reality: location. He claims what is considered fantastic in one country may well be taken as real or part of everyday reality in another (2).

The great body of critical work on fantasy has enabled authors and audiences of fantastic works to recognise the potential of fantasy to reflect upon reality, albeit in a non-realistic mode. Today, the value of fantasy is more commonly acknowledged than perhaps any other time in its long history.

Appendix 3: Shklovsky's and Brecht's Theories of Defamiliarisation and Alienation

For Shklovsky, the purpose of art is "to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar'" (12). Shklovsky challenges the idea that "[a]rt is thinking in images," and disagrees that art "clarif[ies] the unknown by means of the known" (5-6). Rather, defamiliarisation in art makes one see an object anew by emphasising "seeing" rather than "recognising." "After we see an object several times, we begin to recognize it. The object is in front of us and we know about it, but we do not see it – hence we cannot say anything significant about it. Art removes objects from the automatism of perception" (13). By making familiar things seem strange, art revitalises their perception, which has become habitual, and helps one to "recover the sensation of life" (11-12). Art exists to cope with "habitualization," which "devours works, clothes, furniture, one's wife, and the fear of war," and "to make one feel things," thus to reconnect with reality (12). Boym emphasises that Shklovsky's defamiliarisation has always been an estrangement for the sake of the world's renewal rather than estrangement from the world. She supports her argument by quoting his later reflections on his own theory: sixty-five years later, Shklovsky defined defamiliarisation as "a form of world wonder, of an acute and heightened perception of the world" (599). Despite its similarity at first glance to what Tolkien calls recovery, Shklovsky's formalist notion of defamiliarisation is quite different. Formalist critics think, it is literary devices that defamiliarise one's perception of reality. "Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object. The object is not important," Shklovsky writes (12). As Selden explains, when Formalists read literary texts, they aim to "discover their 'literariness' – to highlight the devices and technical elements introduced by writers in order to make language literary" (38). Shklovsky, too, focuses on the linguistic properties of literary language.

Bertolt Brecht uses the term "alienation effect (A-effect)" to describe a process that forces the spectators to "adopt a critical distance" to what is on stage (Féral and Bermingham 461). Brecht wants to change the "detached state" of the spectators, who stare at the stage rather than see it, and then leave the theatre with feelings that "remain

unaltered" (187-88). In order to transform their attitude "from general passive acceptance to a corresponding state of suspicious inquiry," the spectators would need to develop a "detached eye," which can be achieved by "a technique of alienating the familiar" (192). Brecht argues,

> [a] representation that alienates is one which allows us to recognize its subject, but at the same time makes it seem unfamiliar. […] The new alienations are […] designed to free socially-conditioned phenomena from that stamp of familiarity which protects them against our grasp today. For it seems impossible to alter what has long not been altered. We are always coming on things that are too obvious for us to bother to understand them. What men experience among themselves they think of as 'the' human experience. (192)

For Brecht, alienation is a process that equips the spectators with a critical eye to cast "upon the reality that is to be presented" (Féral and Bermingham 466). This is possible if the spectators fail to identify themselves with the characters on the stage (Brecht 190). They must not lose themselves "unreservedly in the events on the stage," either (203). The aim here is "to appear strange and even surprising to the audience," alienating the audience from the illusory reality on stage, and suspending their emotional involvement with the characters (92). This, in turn, decreases "the powerful and potentially limiting effects of empathy" (Franks and Jones 194).