ACTA

B

Jyrki Korpua

CONSTRUCTIVE MYTHOPOETICS IN J. R. R. TOLKIEN'S *LEGENDARIUM*

JYRKI KORPUA

CONSTRUCTIVE MYTHOPOETICS IN J. R. R. TOLKIEN'S *LEGENDARIUM*

Academic dissertation to be presented with the assent of the Doctoral Training Committee of Human Sciences of the University of Oulu for public defence in Keckmaninsali (HU106), Linnanmaa, on 13 November 2015, at 12 noon

Korpua, Jyrki, Constructive Mythopoetics in J. R. R. Tolkien's *Legendarium*.
University of Oulu Graduate School; University of Oulu, Faculty of Humanities, Literature
Acta Univ. Oul. B 129, 2015
University of Oulu, P.O. Box 8000, FI-90014 University of Oulu, Finland

Abstract

This doctoral dissertation discusses constructive mythopoetics in J. R. R. Tolkien's *legendarium*, the mythopoetic logics and elements on which Tolkien's texts and his fantasy world are constructed.

My aim in this research is to create a reading of Tolkien's fiction that shows that it is possible to discern a mythopoetic code in Tolkien's *legendarium*. My hypothesis is that Tolkien's mythopoetic fiction aims to be coherent on the levels of languages, myths, and inter- and intratextual background. This coherence can be found throughout the various texts and fragments of Tolkien's fiction. From the cosmogonical creation myth of *The Silmarillion*, to the fairy-story lightness of *The Hobbit* and the quest fantasy of *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien's fiction has its roots in the mythopoetic logics of his theory of creative writing (or *myth-making*). Tolkien is the *sub-creator*; he is creating myths and building his own world. For Tolkien, God is the primary creator, but the author is the (sub-)creator of his own creation. This is consistent throughout Tolkien's *legendarium*, despite the fact that whilst creating his fiction, Tolkien is "pretending" to be a translator of mythical pseudo-historical documents.

In the main chapters, my research logics trace the inner timeline of Tolkien's *legendarium*. Starting from the creation of the world, I move onto the long fall and struggle and to the end of the world. When discussing the theme of creation, I focus on the concept of creation on the intratextual level of Tolkien's *legendarium* as well as on Tolkien's aesthetics of creative work. In the end of the dissertation, I turn my attention also to the creative work of the reader.

My theoretical approach is influenced by both Northrop Frye's constructive theory of literature and Benjamin Harshav's theory of constructive poetics. I discuss the creative methods of speculative historical epic and the dichotomies of beginning and end, good and evil, mortality and immortality, spiritual and physical, and visibility and invisibility, as well as how these elements are manifested in Tolkien's mythopoetic vision. The structure of Tolkien's constructive mythopoetics is illuminated through the grand concepts of the Creation, the Existence, the Fall and the Struggle.

Keywords: constructive mythopoetics, fantasy, legendarium, mythopoetics, speculative fiction, Tolkien

Tiivistelmä

Väitöskirjani käsittelee konstruktiivista mytopoetiikkaa J. R. R. Tolkienin *legendaariossa*. Työ keskittyy ennen kaikkea mytopoeettiseen logiikkaan ja elementteihin, joiden kautta Tolkienin tekstit ja hänen luomansa fantasiamaailma rakentuvat.

Tutkimukseni muodostaa Tolkienin fiktion luennan, joka osoittaa, että Tolkienin *legendaariolle* voidaan löytää mytopoeettinen koodi. Tämä koodi havainnollistaa, että Tolkienin mytopoeettinen fiktio luo koherentin ja uskottavan kokonaisuuden kielen, myyttien sekä inter- ja intratekstuaalisten vaikutussuhteiden kautta. Tämä yhteenkuuluvuus ja koodi on nähtävissä, vaikka Tolkienin *legendaarion* osat ovat keskenään perin erilaisia, eri kirjallisuuslajeihin kuuluvia ja vaikka osa on julkaistu vain fragmentteina hänen kuolemansa jälkeen. Tolkienin mytopoeettinen logiikka ja luovan kirjoittamisen teoria näkyvät aina *Silmarillion*-teoksen kosmogonisesta luomismyytistä kevyen satumaiseen *Hobittiin* tai aina seikkailufantasiaan *Taru Sormusten Herrasta*. Tekijänä Tolkien näyttäytyy teoksissaan "alempana luojana" (*sub-creator*), joka kehittää myyttejä ja rakentaa fantasiamaailmaansa. Tolkienille Jumala on "ylempi luoja", johon kirjailija vertautuu fiktion tasolla.

Väitöskirjani tutkimuslogiikka seuraa Tolkienin *legendaarion* aikajärjestystä. Aloitan työni maailmanluomisesta, siirryn tämän jälkeen ns. pitkään tappioon ja haipumiseen sekä aina maailmanloppuun saakka. Luomisen teemaa käsitellessäni päähuomioni on sekä Tolkienin *legendaarion* teosten sisäisessä kertomuksessa että hänen kirjallisen luomisensa estetiikassa. Väitöskirjan loppupuolella käännän huomiotani myös lukijan "luomistyöhön" teoksia lukiessa.

Käyttämääni teoreettiseen näkökulmaan ovat vaikuttaneet erityisesti Northrop Fryen konstruktiivinen kirjallisuusteoria sekä Benjamin Harshavin konstruktiivinen poetiikka. Käsittelyssäni ovat myös spekulatiivisen historiallisen epiikan metodit sekä hyvän ja pahan, kuolevaisuuden ja kuolemattomuuden, henkisen ja fyysisen sekä näkyvän ja näkymättömän vastakkainasetteluparit, ja ennen kaikkea se, kuinka nämä vastakkainasetteluparit ja elementit näyttäytyvät Tolkienin mytopoeettisessa visiossa. Tolkienin fiktion konstruktiivinen mytopoetiikka havainnollistuu metafyysisten ja temaattisten käsitteiden Luominen (Creation), Olemassaolo (Existence), Lankeamus (Fall) ja Ponnistelu (Struggle) kautta.

Asiasanat: fantasia, konstruktiivinen mytopoetiikka, legendaario, mytopoetiikka, spekulatiivinen fiktio, Tolkien

Acknowledgements

It has been a long and winding road. This process has taken more than ten years and thousands of cups of coffee. At this final moment of *eucatastrophical* achievement, I would like to thank all of those who have helped and encouraged me during this decade of hard work.

First of all, I would like to thank the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Oulu for making all this possible. Especially, I thank the Faculty of Humanities, Tyyni Tani -fund, University of Oulu Graduate School, (the late) Graduate School of Culture and Interaction, and Oulun Yliopiston Akateemiset ry for grants and travel grants that permitted me to work on my research and also gave me opportunities to widen my approach on the subject.

Sincere gratitude goes to my Chief Advisor University Lecturer Pekka Kuusisto whose commitment to the completion of the work has been essential. Also, many thanks for the language consultation of the dissertation to University Teacher Andrew Pattison and Nikola Pantchev.

Gratitude for reading and commenting my texts in all of these years goes to all of my colleagues from the University of Oulu's Subject of Literature, especially my Kustos Professor Kuisma Korhonen, Emerita Professor Liisi Huhtala, and to the late Matti Savolainen, who have all read and commented on my text at some stage.

I would like to thank University Lecturer Klaus Brax from the University of Helsinki, and University Lecturer Jarkko Toikkanen from the University of Tampere for their precise work on the pre-examination of the thesis manuscript and for their precious comments on the subject. My sincere thanks go to Dr Dimitra Fimi from the Cardiff Metropolitan University for agreeing to be my Opponent for the public defence of my doctoral thesis.

Special thanks goes to my editorial colleague Ilmari Leppihalme, whom I have worked with many times in different collaborations, and to Hanna-Riikka Roine and Päivi Väätänen, my editorial colleagues in *Fafnir - Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research*. I would also like to thank my friends and colleagues from The Finnish Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy Research, especially Irma Hirsjärvi, Merja Polvinen, Liisa Rantalaiho and Markku Soikkeli for years of professional criticism and also for emphatic support.

In these years, I have also profited from the national and international seminars and conferences that I have participated during this working process. I

Contents

1   Introduction

1.1   Background and Research Questions

> What those marks were he had not said. Who now would know? The maker.
> And Saruman? But great though his lore may be, it must have a source.
> (Tolkien 1995: 245.)

This doctoral dissertation discusses constructive mythopoetics[1] in John Ronald
Reuel Tolkien's[2] (1892–1973) *legendarium*;[3] the logics and elements on which
Tolkien's texts and his fantasy world is constructed.

Tolkien's *legendarium* is undoubtedly a central example of mythopoetic
vision[4] in literary history. Tolkien was a writer and a scholar, a professor of
Anglo-Saxon at Oxford University and co-founder of the literary association "The
Inklings", of which, for example, fantasy writers C. S. Lewis and Charles
Williams were members. Nowadays Tolkien is known as the father of modern
fantasy and the writer of *The Lord of the Rings*, the most influential work on the
genre. *The Oxford companion to English Literature* (2000: 352) has called him
"the greatest influence within the fantasy genre". His position in the genre of
fantasy literature is monolithic.

My hypothesis is that Tolkien's mythopoetic fiction aims to be coherent on
the levels of languages, myths, and inter- and intratextual background. This
coherence can be found throughout the various texts and fragments of Tolkien's
fiction. From the cosmogonical creation myth of *The Silmarillion*, to the fairy-
story lightness of *The Hobbit*, or the quest fantasy of *The Lord of the Rings*,

---

[1] Mythopoetics in this case meaning creative myth-making. Often almost used synonymously,
mythopoeic means "productive of myth" (Nagy 2003: 239). Tolkien used the term "mythopoeia" in
his poem *Mythopoeia*, and the term has later been connected with authors of fantasy fiction who
integrate mythological themes and archetypes into fiction.

[2] Referred to in the text as J. R. R. Tolkien (or shortly Tolkien).

[3] Originally, a *legendarium* is a book or series of books comprising collection of legends. Tolkien
himself used the word *legendarium* to refer to his writing concerning his fictional fantasy world
Middle-earth in a letter to Milton Waldman in 1951 (Tolkien 1999: xvii). Since then, the word
legendarium has become commonly used by Tolkien scholars rather than "Tolkien's mythology". I
use the word *legendarium* to describe all Tolkien's texts that deal with Middle-earth although I am
aware that sometimes in Tolkien studies *legendarium* is used to denote especially Tolkien's "Elvish
legends", and that *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* are not considered a part of these. For me, all
Tolkien's texts concerning the legends of Elves (e.g. *The Silmarillion*) and the fictional history of
Hobbits (*The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*) form a complete and coherent *legendarium*.

[4] In this case: vision to create myths for artistic reasons.

Tolkien's fiction has its beginnings in the mythopoetic logics of his theory of creative writing (or *myth-making*). Tolkien is the *sub-creator*;[5] he is creating myths and building his own world.[6] For Tolkien, God is the primary creator, but author is the (sub-)creator of his own creation. This is consistent in Tolkien's *legendarium*, despite the fact that whilst creating his fiction, Tolkien is "pretending" to be a translator of mythical pseudo-historian documents.

My theoretical approach is influenced by both Northrop Frye's constructive theory of literature and Benjamin Harshav's theory of constructive poetics. I discuss the creative methods of speculative historical epic and the dichotomies of beginning and end, good and evil, mortality and immortality, spiritual and physical and visibility and invisibility, and how these elements are manifesting in Tolkien's mythopoetic vision. The structure of Tolkien's constructive mythopoetics is illuminated through the grand concepts of the Creation, the Existence, the Fall and the Struggle.

In the main chapters, my research logics follow the inner timeline of Tolkien's *legendarium*. Starting from the creation of the world, I move into the long fall and struggle and to the end of the world. In the beginning of the dissertation, I will discuss how Tolkien addresses the concept of creation, both in the texts that form his *legendarium* and in his theoretical essay *On Fairy-Stories* (a lecture in 1939, published in 1947). After that, I will interpret how Tolkien implements his theory of creation: 1) on the ontological level of his own created fantasy world; and, 2) on the poetic level of stories within this fantastic world.

I argue that it is possible to perceive a mythopoetic code in Tolkien's *legendarium*,[7] in the same way that Northrop Frye draws a code from the Judeo-Christian *Bible* on the levels of language, myths, metaphor and typology in his study *The Great Code*.[8] For Frye, his "Great Code" is connected with the tradition

---

[5] Tolkien uses the term sub-creation in his essay *On Fairy-Stories* to describe author's creation of fictional worlds. See 2.2.

[6] It should be stressed that although Tolkien is "creating myths" and using extant myths, these (re-)created myths are literary creation in their own right and do not derive from any pre-existing cultural tradition.

[7] Of course one has to keep in mind the suspicious atmosphere surrounding these kinds of great narratives or metanarratives in the postmodern era. Graham Nichol Frost writes about this in his critique of Frye's *The Great Code*: "Can we any longer really believe that there might be One Meta-Meaning hiding behind some archetypes and image patterns which just had to be ordered and foregrounded to reveal that meaning?" (Frost 2007). In my opinion, it is possible to stress this argument in the case of Tolkien's fiction.

[8] Also, both in *The Great Code* and in *Anatomy of Criticism* (Frye 1967: 17), when surveying the "greatest classics" of literary history, Frye refers to the "Order of Words" which allows the reader to see literary works in larger perspective and contexts. For this order of words, important parts were

of Biblical allegory. In a way, Frye draws an allegorical interpretation of the *Bible* that shows that the different, multilayered books of the *Bible* form a single narration, an aesthetic view of the world.[9] At first, it was the words of the poet William Blake that awakened Frye to this "mythological frame of our culture" (Cotrupi 2000: 14). Blake (2010) sees in the writing of his etching "Laocoön" (ca. 1820) that the *Bible*, the "Old & New Testaments are Great Code of Art". This argument inspired Frye to look for the inner code of the *Bible*.

The term code has many different meanings in the study of literature, for example for researchers such as Northrop Frye, Gérard Genette, Jurij Lotman or Umberto Eco. Douwe W. Fokkema differentiates five different codes operative in literary texts: 1) the linguistic code, which directs reader to read the text, 2) the literary code, which predisposes the reader to discover a particular coherence in the text, 3) the generic code, such as narrative or poetry, instructing the reader towards certain expectations, 4) the period code or sociocode, directing readers conventions of a period, and 5) the idiolect of the author. (Fokkema 1985: 646–647.) If we assume that a code is a system of rules for converting information into a selected medium, we could see that there is a (mythopoetic) code in Tolkien's fiction (his medium) that combines all (or most of) those differentiated meanings of code that Fokkema refers to. Tolkien's mythopoetic system – the code – directs readers to read the text, predisposes the reader toward the coherences of the text, formulates Tolkien's narrative, creates contextual circles of genre and period, and is also easily associated with the author himself.

Therefore, I use the term mythopoetic code to refer to Tolkien's mythopoetic system of converting different forms of texts into the coherent collection of his fictional *legendarium*. Both the *Bible* and Tolkien's *legendarium* are formulated from different kinds of texts from different genres, but both constitute a narrative entirety which starts from creation and ends in the apocalypse (with a promise of a better *new* world). Of course it has to be acknowledged that the textual entirety of the *Bible* was formed over a period of more than a thousand years; Tolkien's *legendarium* is (more) consistent on its aesthetics and quite coherent in its linguistic and narrative style.

---

conventional myths and metaphors, which work as communicable symbols which Frye calls archetypes (Frye 1967: 118).

[9] However, this aesthetic view of the world changes from generation to generation. As Erich Auerbach sees in his *Mimesis: Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur* (1946), the stories and narrative of the *Bible* are continuously represented in the everyday life of Western people.

In the end of my dissertation I will turn my attention to the creative work of the reader, that is, how Tolkien's texts defamiliarise and familiarise[10] the fantasy world in contrast with the reader's (alleged) cognitive world, therefore enabling the reader to imagine the fictional world of the *legendarium* and to "create" the fictional world in his, or her, imagination.

In this dissertation, I will draw a mythopoetic code for Tolkien's *legendarium* as well as for his usage of mythical, literary archetypes. Archetype, here, meaning something "original"[11], or at least a prototype that other objects (knowingly or unknowingly) either copy or emulate. For Frye, archetype is a "symbol, usually an image, which recurs often enough in literature to be recognizable as an element of one's literary experience as a whole" (Frye 1967: 365). Frye discusses that these patterns of imaginary, or fragments of significance, are oracular in origin, deriving from epiphanic, unhistorical times (see Frye 1951).[12]

Tolkien's constructive mythopoetics can be seen as functioning coherently as a closed fictional and mythological world, but it could also be seen as a collection of literary works clearly influenced by the intertextual fields of reference from other literary works, myths, allegories and cultural phenomenon, such as, for example, the *Bible* or *Kalevala* or old Scandinavian mythology. Accordingly, I will illuminate the different levels of Tolkien's mythopoetic code. The focus will move from the inner cosmogonical creation myth of the *legendarium* to the mythopoetic logics of Tolkien's creative work and to examples of Tolkien's constructive mythopoeia, such as his use of the Atlantis myth and the Ring motif.

Tolkien's texts convey meaning through many different fields and frames of reference.[13] The main focus of my work is on the intratextual[14] field of reference, Tolkien's own texts, but I will also illuminate other relevant contextual circles of reference. Some of the texts from Tolkien's contemporaries (such as the Inklings) will be addressed as an inner contextual circle of reference; and for some

---

[10] For the concepts, I use the so-called "Cambridge" spelling: 'familiarisation', rather than the American, or modern "Oxford spelling": familiarization'.

[11] If, in fact, we can even imagine something "original" in this post-postmodern era.

[12] On philosophical and metaphysical level, these ("original") archetypes can be also compared to Plato's theory of pure forms and theory of ideal. For example in Plato's *Cratylus* 439–440, *Sophist* 246–250, and *Republic* 472c–480e.

[13] For these concepts, see chapter 1.4. See also Harshav 2007: 4–5.

[14] Although the term intertextuality would normally be used to refer to links to other texts, a related kind of link might be called intratextuality – involving internal relations within the text or texts. See for example Chandler 2004.

elements the outer contextual circle of reference – the so-called tradition – will be discussed, as far as they are relevant for my research.

This division between different fields of reference could be seen as addressing the different approaches to works of literature, which Benjamin Harshav, for example, refers to as historical poetics and descriptive poetics. Descriptive poetics is concerned only with certain features of literature and disregards the distances in time, whereas historical poetics is concerned with the issues of literary history, such as the system of genres as a whole, and also with the evolution of the literary system and periods and literary movements in history (Harshav 2007: 231). In the dissertation, I will focus on both the descriptive poetics and the historical poetics in Tolkien's *legendarium* because I see them both as crucial in the logics of Tolkien's mythopoetic vision. Of course, a degree of normative poetics will be touched on here, for example later when concerning contemporary researchers' genre definitions of Tolkien's works.

Then again, from the internal perspective, the central focus will be on Tolkien's aesthetics and Tolkien's creative method: the sub-creation. Tolkien, in his article *On Fairy-Stories*, describes this method in terms of the author's independent invention, inheritance and diffusion, and by the concept of imagination (Tolkien 1983: 121, 138–139). I will read Tolkien's aesthetics in the continuum of the tradition of such constructive creative theories as Sir Philip Sidney's *The Defence of Poesie* (1595[15]) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's literary theory described in *Biographia Literaria* (1817).

My method for researching Tolkien's mythopoetics is constructive. My focus is on the "big picture" of Tolkien's *legendarium*. As Lubomir Doležel points out, we need "a theory of *poiesis* which demonstrates the invention of new stories in and through new texts" (Doležel 1998: ix). Therefore, as my theory of poiesis and as a method to organise the inter- and intratextual references of Tolkien's texts I use an approach called constructive poetics. This method, introduced by Harshav, implies that a work of literature is a text that invites the reader to evoke or project a network of interrelated constructs. The work of literature is not just a narrative but a text which projects a fictional world or an internal field of reference – which I call intratextual – creating meaning through the evocation of frames of references (such as scenes, characters, or ideas). This theory of constructive

---

[15] In the year 1595 it was also published with the title *An Apology for Poetry* by Olney. Ponsonby's publication under the title *The Defence of Poesie* is considered the "more authoritative of the two". (Sidney 1968: v.)

poetics accommodates the detecting and researching of the code of Tolkien's *legendarium*.

Using methods of constructive poetics also necessitates the question of historical poetics in Tolkien's *legendarium*. I will research Tolkien's creative methods in comparison with the historical novel, since Tolkien's intratextual references – references between his own texts – create an illusion of (fictional) older eras. The so-called fictional and factual history, the tools that authors of the historical novel use, become interesting in Tolkien's fiction because his *legendarium's* seemingly factual sources are created by the author.[16] I will study the archaistic language[17] employed in Tolkien's *legendarium* and the usage of intratextual fictionality in the background stories, myths and legends that form the credibility and coherent basis for Tolkien's texts.

The fundamental basis of Tolkien's *legendarium* is formed in three separate works: *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again* (1937), *The Lord of the Rings* (1954–55, six books, originally published in three parts) and *The Silmarillion* (1977, posthumously). *The Hobbit* is a fantasy book, and a children's book, essentially about an episodic adventure[18] to win back a treasure stolen by an evil dragon, written in a fairy-tale mode. *The Lord of the Rings* is perhaps the most popular quest-tale[19] and epic fantasy[20] of the 20th century, addressing grand themes such as world domination, apocalyptic visions, the battle between Good and Evil (and the poor individuals caught up in this battle), heroism, and both success and failure. In *The Lord of the Rings*, the basic task and quest is to destroy the "One Ring", which in wrong hands could bring about the destruction of all Middle-earth. Thirdly, posthumously published, *The Silmarillion* is a collection of Tolkien's works edited by his son Christopher Tolkien (b.1924). The

---

[16] Gergely Nagy has earlier discussed this subject of intertextual relations and "genuine allusions" compared to "pseudo-allusions" in his article "The great chain of reading: (Inter-)textual relations and the technique of mythopoesis in the Túrin story" (2003). See also Chance 2004: 10.

[17] In this case: "the imitation of those linguistic and bibliographic codes that make up an historical literary idiom" (Wisner 2010: 62).

[18] In part written in the spirit of the medieval *roman d'aventures*. Not so much an epic quest, but a lighter *adventure*.

[19] In part resembling the medieval *chansons de geste*, epics about heroic deeds. Compared to *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings* is more a *quest*, than an *adventure*.

[20] Keeping in mind the vast understanding of the word epic. Scholes & Kellogg in their study *The Nature of Narrative* write that: "Behind the epic lie a variety of narrative forms, such as sacred myth, quasi-historical legend, and fictional folktale, which have coalesced into a traditional narrative which is an amalgam of myth, history, and fiction" (Scholes & Kellogg 1966: 12).

mythologically oriented stories of *The Silmarillion* form the backbone of the cosmogony and cosmology in Tolkien's *legendarium*.

This dissertation builds partly on the work I did in my master's thesis.[21] The thesis studied Tolkien's aesthetics and concept of fantasy and his Platonic[22] vision of the writer as a sub-creator and the act of writing as sub-creation, based on Tolkien's views of the idea in his essay *On Fairy-Stories*. In the thesis, I also discussed the mythological elements of Tolkien's fantasy world, which derive from the Old English *Beowulf*, the Icelandic *sagas*, the Finnish *Kalevala* and from the Judeo-Christian *Bible*. In the two main chapters dealing with Christian Platonism, I surveyed the cosmogony and cosmology of *The Silmarillion* against the background of Plato's *Timaeus*.

In the present work, one of my objectives is to create a constructive reading of Tolkien's *legendarium* which shows how Tolkien used mythopoeia, i.e. invented and used myths, to create a fictional literary history. Or, to use Northrop Frye's words, I am interested in how Tolkien "displaced" myths.[23] I use the word constructive to refer to the artistic purpose behind the creation of Tolkien's highly original and complex literary works. The term constructive is of course usually used in different contexts,[24] but the major (philosophical) starting point here is that Tolkien is deliberately creating – constructing – a new "mythology": a new fictional literary *legendarium*. This constructive strategy of fictional world creation is addressed from both the inner and outer perspectives and contexts. That is, I will first ask how the writer creates the world and what his aesthetic purposes for doing so are. Secondly, I ask how the reader formulates these constructed elements into a coherent, plausible fiction that he, or she, can relate to and believe in. As this constructive strategy – the code of the *legendarium* – will be approached from both the internal and external perspectives, the materials of

---

[21] Korpua, *Kristillisplatonisia ja muita mytologisia elementtejä J. R. R. Tolkienin teoksessa Silmarillion* (2005), in English the title could be translated as: "Christian Platonic and Other Mythological Elements in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Silmarillion*".

[22] Ancient Greek philosopher Plato (ca. 429/427–348/347BC), and the concepts of *Platonism* and *Christian Platonism* will be discussed in chapter 2.2.1. Plato's constructive use of myths as a tool in his dialogues informs primarily my attention to Plato in this dissertation.

[23] See for example Russell 2000: 82–90. Frye writes on "displacing" and "recovery" of myths in, for example, *The Secular Scripture* (Frye 1976: 159–190), *Anatomy of Criticism* (Frye 1967: 131–223) and in *Myth and Metaphor* (Frye 1990: 3–17).

[24] Originally, the so-called "literary constructivism" started in Russia with the *Literaturnyi tsentr konstruktivistov* (Literary Center of Constructivist) in 1923. It perceived "culture as an all-embracing and comprehensive phenomenon, penetrating all spheres of human existence and activity". Hence, it fostered "the idea of creating not only literature but also its broad theoretical foundations". (Możejko 1993: 18).

the texts and contexts that these (internal) materials evoke will be examined likewise. For example, when a reader reads about a Hobbit called Bilbo Baggins in the beginning of *The Hobbit*, he, or she, is likely to ask certain questions subconsciously, such as: "What is a Hobbit?", "What kind of a name is Bilbo Baggins?" (since Bilbo might refer to some direction and "Baggins" refers to somewhere else), and "What kind of a book is this?", or, "What is the style in which this book is written?". Therefore, a text is never just its letters, but consists of multiple layers and many contextual fields of reference, both intentional and unintentional.

As central elements of Tolkien's constructive poetics, I will illuminate the concepts of the Creation and the Existence, and the Fall and the Struggle. These elements of the *legendarium* will be read through dichotomies of Beginning/End, Good/Evil, Mortality/Immortality, Physical/Spiritual, and Visibility/Invisibility. Along with these dichotomies and juxtapositions, selected central fantastic elements and functions will be discussed. These textual elements are the Song of Ainur as a method of Creation within the *legendarium*, the Atlantis-like island kingdom of Númenor as a mythopoetic example of fall from greatness in the *legendarium*, The Great Ring as a centrally functioning magical artefact in *The Lord of the Rings*, and the race of Hobbits as a familiarising element for the actual readers of the *legendarium*.

Tolkien's *legendarium* is a vast, diverse and complex creative work. Tolkien's objective was to create a fictional literary history using mythopoetic aesthetics and re-imagining of myths. In a way, he succeeded in this with *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, and his vision was finished posthumously with *The Silmarillion* and *The History of Middle-earth*-series (1983–96), collections edited by Christopher Tolkien. Tolkien himself pointed out that he wanted his *legendarium* to be "a body of more or less connected legends, ranging from the large and cosmogonic, to the level of romantic fairy-story" (Tolkien 1999: xi).[25] Tolkien's *legendarium* could be seen as a crucial example of 20th century transformation of pre-modern myths and modern text. Similarly, the mythopoeia of Tolkien's *legendarium* could be seen as a modernisation of pre-modern myths.

An important scholar for my research is Canadian literary theorist Northrop Frye (1912–1991), one of the first critics to address Tolkien's literature

---

[25] See also Flieger & Hostetter 2000: xi–xiii.

constructively.[26] I form a constructive reading of how Tolkien's texts – mainly *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings* – instantiate the aspects of many theories of contemporary literature. In addition, I will discuss the concepts of myth and genre. There, the question of familiarisation (*Heimlich*) and defamiliarisation (*uncanny*, *Das Unheimliche*) in Tolkien's mythopoetics becomes relevant when focusing on how Tolkien constructs a fictional world for readers to relate to, and on how Tolkien uses familiar or defamiliar elements that activate myths for the contemporary audience.

Tolkien creates a fictional mythology dedicated to England, England being – of course – a real, actual place compared to the "unreal", fictional world of Middle-earth. Tolkien invents a coherent "other" world (of Middle-earth and its surroundings) for readers in a real existing plane. In *Heterocosmica*, his study on fictional semantics, Doležel ponders this concept of reality and "possible worlds".[27] For example, the one-world frame's best-known theories of fictionality are based on the "assumption that there is only one legitimate universe of discourse (domain or reference), the actual world" (Doležel 1998: 2).[28] Therefore, in philosophical logics, as Bertrand Russell saw it, fictional entities do not exist and fictional terms lack references (Doležel 1998: 2–3). Then again, this would make all the intratextual references and all the internal reference fields of Tolkien's *legendarium* "empty", and non-existing; and this of course cannot ultimately be the case, since these references "exist" in the fictional universe of Tolkien's *legendarium*. Doležel goes on to argue that "fictional worlds of literature - - are a special kind of possible worlds; they are aesthetic artifacts constructed, preserved, and circulating in the medium of fictional texts" (1998: 16). These worlds of literature are "constructs of textual poiesis" and "can be

---

[26] Frye addresses *The Lord of the Rings* in his notebooks from 1956 to 1958 (Frye 2007: 111 & 274), and later mentions Tolkien in both *Secular Scripture* and in the *Notebooks on Romance*. See also Fisher 2008.

[27] Fictionality is nowadays a popular topic in logic and philosophy, and the main questions in the debate have been: "What is the ontological character of nonexisting fictional particular?" and "What is the logical status of fictional representations?" (Doležel 1998: 1.) In the dissertation, I will not be focusing on the ontological and logical levels of Tolkien's fictional world.

[28] Another contemporary scholar who has addressed these questions is Swiss-born Marie-Laure Ryan, who embraces fictional world-making (as a theory of possible worlds) and transmediality in her central work Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory. There, Ryan uses the concept of possible worlds, originally developed by philosophers of the analytic school, as a useful tool for the semantics of fictive works. The theory of (artistically) possible worlds that both Doležel and Ryan are addressing is also examined in the works of late 20th century theorists such as Umberto Eco, Saul Kripke, David Lewis, Doreen Maître, Brian McHale, Ruth Ronen, and Kendall Walton. (Ryan 2005: 446–449.)

heterogeneous in their macrostructure" (Doležel 1998: 23). This, in the mode of fantasy literature, is well seen in Tolkien's *legendarium*.

As a creator of a literary fantasy world build on myths, Tolkien is a mythographer.[29] This role of Tolkien as a mythographer of the English language has been noted by many scholars. Verlyn Flieger sees Tolkien as part of a long tradition of mythmakers in English Literature, such as Edmund Spenser, John Milton or William Blake (Flieger 2005a: ix). In the article collection *Tolkien's Modern Middle Ages*, Tolkien is seen as a continuum of the Victorian tradition of literary medievalists, and of a long list of earlier writers and composers such as James Macpherson, Mary Shelley, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Walter Scott, William Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites, and Richard Wagner (Chance & Siewers 2005: 2–3). Tom Shippey sees Tolkien's *legendarium* in comparison with, for example, such classical works of English language as *Beowulf*, *Pearl*, and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Shippey 2003: 5).

On the one hand, Frye finds traditional similarities between Tolkien and the Victorian fantasy of William Morris, Lewis Carroll and George MacDonald (Frye 1976: 4, 42–43), but on the other hand, also finds similarities on the level of language (archaistic and "invented") between Tolkien and the historical novels of Walter Scott and modernist novels of James Joyce (Frye 1976: 110). Flieger, too, sees similarities between Tolkien's and Joyce's mythmaking, although they are using myths in a different mode (Flieger 2005a: ix–x). This perhaps unsuspected resemblance between Tolkien and classical modernism on the level of mythopoetics is also seen by Jed Esty, who compares Tolkien with the canonical writer T. S. Eliot, a writer who also used myths in his writings (Esty 2004: 121–123). In his study, Esty writes that 20th century modern English literature[30] is concentrated on the "antipositivist and antihumanist philosophical turn" flowing from the central "authorities" and critics of modern society: Marx, Nietzsche, Darwin and Freud. This "broadly anti-Victorian social ethos of intellectuals, the galvanising events of World War I and the Russian Revolution; and the role of new structures of patronage and dissemination [is] endemic to literary circles in the early twentieth century." (Esty 2004: 3.) Of course, all of these authorities and events could have influenced Tolkien's writings.[31] Tolkien himself wrote in the foreword to the second edition of *The Lord of the Rings* that "[an] author cannot

---

[29] As in the Greek word *mythographos*, one who records, narrates or comments on myths.
[30] Of which, to my mind, J. R. R. Tolkien is a fundamental part.
[31] For example, for the influence of World War I, see Carpenter, *Biography*.

of course remain wholly unaffected by his experience, but the ways in which a story-germ uses the soil of experience are extremely complex - - (Tolkien 1995: xvii).

Although no one can be fully untouched by the surrounding era, in a way Tolkien's texts turn against the so-called modern directions of literature. Tolkien indeed is not only looking to the past, but also to the (Neo-Paganist) future. In his article about Tolkien's connections with the *Beowulf*-poet, Shippey suggests that "Tolkien might not be looking back into the pit of heathenism, but in 1936 [the publishing date of Tolkien's essay "Beowulf: The Monster and the Critics"] he could well be looking forward into it". Shippey sees that, at this point, Tolkien correctly foresees the future, since England in the 21st century is in many ways a "post-Christian" country. (Shippey 2007: 8.) Shippey's point is valid, of course, since Tolkien's texts are fundamentally concerned with both the problems of modernisation and secularisation. In a way, criticism of modernisation and secularisation is the major starting point of Tolkien's mythopoetics.

As an English 20th-century writer, Tolkien turned his attention and affection towards a much older literature history, and tried to integrate pre-modern myths and legends for the contemporary audience. Tolkien's texts reflect myths and stories from many different periods of history (for example ancient, medieval and renaissance literature) but familiarise these materials by using "modern" literary tools, such as 20th-century English language, and by choosing familiar, approachable protagonists: the Hobbits in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* – characters that apparently the reader can relate to.[32]

Tolkien's texts could be seen as functioning at the same time both in pre-modern, but also modern, or, as some researchers suggest, even postmodern modes of fiction. It could be added that this postmodernism is clearly in reference to a periodisation of "post" (after) modern, rather than what is usually addressed as the genre of postmodernism.

As Brian McHale, a central contemporary American literary theorist of postmodernism and narrative theory sees it in his influential works *Postmodernist Fiction* and *Constructing Postmodernism*, postmodernism is a manufactured artifact, and by extension, postmodernistic fiction is similarly artificial. In *Postmodernist Fiction*, McHale seemingly portrays a single, all-inclusive theory of postmodernist poetics, but in *Constructing Postmodernism*, McHale goes

---

[32] I have earlier addressed these elements in the articles Korpua, "Tutut vieraat hobitit" (2012) and Korpua, "Mythopoeia J. R. R. Tolkiena I oswajanie mitu" (2013).

farther and sees postmodernist poetics as a plurality of constructions.[33] In these works, McHale's purpose is to illuminate a comprehensive repertoire for fictional world-making. In similar fashion, although Tolkien's world-making is not "postmodern" as such, Tolkien's mythopoetic world-making is nevertheless linked with the poetics that McHale discusses. Fictional world-making in the works of writers such as James Joyce, Thomas Pynchon, William Gibson, and Umberto Eco (whose works McHale analyses) is comparable with Tolkien's theory of secondary creation. For example, Tolkien's construction of a mythopoetic secondary world tacitly acknowledges its artificiality, e.g. compared to the so-called primary world: Tolkien is deliberately creating and constructing a secondary world.

Researchers Jane Chance and Alfred Siewers see that Tolkien's fantastic works create a system of mythology for Middle-earth that can be recognised as modernist but also as "a critique through medievalism of modern that again is ultimately postmodernist" (4). In *Tolkien's Modern Middle Ages*, both Verlyn Flieger (2005b: 25) and Gergely Nagy (2005: 29–30), in their separate articles, see clear postmodernistic tones in Tolkien's fiction, although Flieger notes that Tolkien's "postmodernism", e.g. stories inside stories and metatextual references in *The Lord of the Rings*, are technically "not so innovative", since they were used by the *Beowulf*-poet twelve hundred years ago (Flieger 2005b: 25). Of course, for later postmodern fiction, Tolkien's texts have been influential, for example, as lodestars of high fantasy and postmodern fantasy. Then again, *The Lord of the Rings* can be seen not only as a major genre-defining popular work,[34] but also as a work that evades the canonised genre definitions. It can be seen, for example, as a fantasy novel, (for some) as fitting within the children's or young adult's genre, or alternatively, as a major English mythological work and a re-imagining of pre-modern (fictional) stories and legends.

Tolkien's literary works have been widely studied. For example, *Tolkien Encyclopedia: Scholarship and Critical Assessment* lists hundreds of studies on the subject. Drout et al. published their recapitulation *Scholarly Studies of J. R. R. Tolkien and His Works (in English)* in the year 2000 which indicated hundreds of individual studies on Tolkien's *legendarium* written in English. The past three decades have seen a flood of well-written contributions to the field of study which

---

[33] See McHale 1987 and McHale 1992.
[34] For example, with more than 150 million copies sold(Wagner 2007), *The Lord of the Rings* is either the first of second best-selling novel ever written

is nowadays called either "Tolkien studies" or "Tolkien scholarship". The mythological background of Tolkien's *legendarium* have been studied earlier on many occasions, such as by Tom Shippey in his studies *The Road to Middle-earth: How J. R. R. Tolkien Created a New Mythology* (1982) and *J. R. R. Tolkien: Author of the Century* (2000); and Verlyn Flieger in her studies *Splintered Light: Logos and Language in Tolkien's World* (1983), *A Question of Time: J. R. R. Tolkien's Road to Faerie* (1988), and *Interrupted Music: The Making of Tolkien's Mythology* (2005).

I therefore acknowledge the viral and versatile continuum of Tolkien studies, but my dissertation addresses in a new constructive way the totality of Tolkien's mythopoetics. My research: 1) systematically creates a synthesis of earlier studies, 2) manifests new emphasises on the ancient and medieval philosophical concepts of Christian Platonic mythopoetics and 20th-century myth making, and, 3) introduces (upon these bases) the mythopoetic code of Tolkien's *legendarium.* Therefore, the dissertation brings new and valuable arguments to Tolkien studies and to the research of literature and cultural studies.

The primary materials examined in the dissertation include Tolkien's *The Hobbit: or There and Back Again, The Lord of the Rings*, *The Silmarillion* and *The History of Middle-earth*, the last being a twelve-volume series that J. R. R. Tolkien's son Christopher has edited from his father's previously unpublished materials.

Concerning the outer contextual frame of reference, I develop my approach methodologically such that I do not only read how Tolkien's text is influenced by the tradition, but mainly how Tolkien's texts read the tradition, as well as how Tolkien's *legendarium* places itself in the tradition. My constructive method is primarily focused on literary history, intertextuality, and the history of ideas. Main references here are *Tolkien and the Invention of Myth*, and *Tolkien the Medievalist*, both edited by Jane Chance; *Tolkien's Modern Middle Ages*, edited by Jane Chance and Alfred K. Siewers; Verlyn Flieger's *The Splintered Light: Logos and Language in Tolkien's World*, and Tom Shippey's *The Road to Middle-earth. How J. R. R. Tolkien Created a New Mythology*.

1.2   The Mythopoetic Code of Tolkien's Legendarium

> In the beginning Eru, the One, who in the Elvish tongue is named Ilúvatar,
> made the Ainur of his thought; and they made a great Music before him. In
> this Music the World was begun; for Ilúvatar made visible the song of the
> Ainur, and they beheld it as a light in the darkness. (Tolkien 1999: 15.)

The great inner story – the mythopoetic code – of Tolkien's *legendarium* begins
with music – the Music of the Ainur – played by the divine spirits, the Ainur,[35]
made from the creator's thoughts, and executing (at first, it seems) the creator's
exact wishes. The timeline of Tolkien's *legendarium* reaches from the beginning
of his "cosmos" to its destruction – from start to finish, although this is not
exactly evident in his central fictional works. The main popular works, *The
Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, portray only a tiny temporal segment of
Tolkien's *legendarium*. As Gergely Nagy notes, on the story level *The Lord of the
Rings* spans few years, but *The Silmarillion* thousands (Nagy 2003: 243), and
then again, *The Silmarillion* is only a small part of the wider timeline.

The chart below shows that the timeline of Tolkien's *legendarium* is linear
and (in a way) Biblical. It begins with the creation of the world and ends with its
destruction, and hints at an apocalyptic future where everything will be healed
and unmarred again. The image reflects my research logic. I will start from the
creation of the world and chronologically move on to the long fall and struggle.

---

[35] Ainur (plural, singular is Ainu) refers to the immortal Spirits, or angelic beings of Tolkien's
legendarium. The Ainur living in "the created world" (physical world) are usually referred to as either
Valar (plural, singular is Vala) – higher angelic beings, or, Maiar (plural, singular is Maia) – lower
angelic beings.

Chart 1: The Timeline of Tolkien's *Legendarium*

Era:	Theme:	Active Inhabitants:	Source material in the *legendarium*:
Creation	"Arda Unmarred" & The Song of Ainur	Eru Ilúvatar and Ainur (Valar/Maiar)	"Ainulindalë"
Building the World	The First great cosmological battles between Good and Evil	Ainur (Valar/Maiar)	"Valaquenta" and the beginning of "Quenta Silmarillion"
The Fall	"Arda Marred"	Ainur (Valar/Maiar), Elves	"Quenta Silmarillion"
The Struggle	"Arda Marred" and "The Long Defeat"	Elves, Men (Hobbits)	"Akallabêth", *The Lord of the Rings* (*The Hobbit*)
The End	The Second Music & "Arda Healed"	All	*The History of Middle-earth* (e.g. *Morgoth's Ring*)

The chart above demonstrates my reading of Tolkien's legendarium. The constructive structure of the legendarium follows the given order: 1) Creation, 2) Building the World, 3) The Fall, 4) The Struggle, and 5) The End. Thus, it is a coherent cosmological account that starts with the creation of the world and ends with an apocalyptic vision of the end of the world. In the timeline, at first, the active inhabitants of the fictional world are immortal beings: the creator god Eru Ilúvatar and his offspring, the Ainur.

As the timeline progresses, the activity of these immortal beings diminishes. A similar structure can be seen in the Judeo-Christian *Bible*, where in the Old Testament (as Christians call it), God is active and Creation is described in detail. In the Christian New Testament, God's activity is seen through the incarnation of Christ and through the results of Christ's preaching, doings, and most importantly (for the context of Christian theology), his death and resurrection. Similarly, in Tolkien's *legendarium*, the immortal but created Elves[36] first take an active role in *The Silmarillion*, but in the (later) timespan of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, the activity moves from the race of Elves to the race of Men (and to the

---

[36] Elves are immortal, the "first born" race (compared to "second born" Men) in Tolkien's *legendarium*. The distinctions between Elves and Men have been discussed by, for example, Jonathan Evans (2003: 194–224). On Elves and Men, see chapter 2.1.2

Hobbits). After the storyline of *The Lord of the Rings*, comes the "Time of Men", which is in a way a reference to the more "realistic" ages that follow the cosmological battle between Sauron and "the Free Peoples of Middle-earth". In the end of this cosmological account, Tolkien describes that Melkor will once again find his way back to Arda, the created world, and the Great End will begin (Tolkien 2002a: 282). There shall be "the Last Battle" (Tolkien 2002e: 76), after which all corruption and evil deeds will be addressed and after that Arda will be healed (Tolkien 2002c: 333).[37]

The timeline, especially its beginning and ending, is written in the style of older mythological works, such as the *Iliad* and the *Kalevala*. As a writer Tolkien always had "a flair for verse", as John Hunter put it (2005: 67), and there is strong evidence in *The History of Middle-earth*, and in works published in Tolkien's lifetime that Tolkien appreciated reading and writing of poems, verse, and lyrical works. In Tolkien's *legendarium*, there is a vast quantity of both songs and poems, for example the diversity of poems and songs of the Hobbits, the Elves, the Riders of Rohan, and in *The Silmarillion*, the allusions to poems and songs of Valar, Elves, and Men.[38] Tolkien himself, as a medievalist and a professor of medieval literature, edited and published Old and Middle English poems,[39] and wrote many individual works on the subject. Tolkien's *legendarium* indeed began in verse form. In 1914, as a student at Oxford, Tolkien wrote "The Voyage of Eärendel", a fairy-tale poem, the beginning of Tolkien's fictional mythology (Flieger 2003a: 26). The same original story, re-written in prose later, operates as one of the major parts of *The Silmarillion* as well.

The long, almost sixty-year span of the writing work of Tolkien's *legendarium* began with a poem and the fictional creation of Tolkien's *legendarium* begins with music. Bradford Lee Eden (2003: 183) discusses that as a medievalist Tolkien understood the importance of music as a material for

---

[37] These concepts of the Last Battle (*Dagor Dagorat*, "The Battle of all Battles"), and The Second Music that will be played after the battle are of course quite abstruse, since these accounts were left out of *The Silmarillion*. As Christopher Tolkien describes in *The Shaping of Middle-earth* (Tolkien 2002b: 3–11 & 274–280) and in *Morgoth's Ring* (Tolkien 2002e: 199 & 367–433), J. R. R. Tolkien wrote many versions of his myths and abandoned many versions of both the basic text of *The Silmarillion* and accounts of his cosmogony and cosmology. Those stories published in *The Silmarillion*, although very impressive, are just one example of Tolkien's accounts of his mythopoetic cosmological myths. But, for the purpose of this research, it is important to keep in mind that Tolkien thought his fantasy world should have a beginning and an end.

[38] Rebecca Ankeny (2005), for example, emphasisesthe poetic, lyrical elements in Tolkien's fiction.

[39] See for example Chance 2003: 4.

creation in mythologies. Eden points out that Boethius' treatise *De instituione musica* divides music into three types in order of priority and importance: "the music of the universe, human music (vocal), and instrumental music" (Eden 2003: 184). In Tolkien's *legendarium* Ainur (with Eru) create the celestial music, the music of the universe, and I would argue that perhaps poetical texts too could be seen as a sort of "vocal music", since in the pre-modern period poems were sang and recited. For Tolkien, writing was a form of creating – even on the universal and religious scale. In his poem *Mythopoeia* Tolkien writes that "we make still by the law in which we're made" (Tolkien 1988: 87).

What is then the conception of Tolkien's *legendarium* that I am implying? Originally the word *legendarium* referred to a collection of texts of the lives of medieval saints. Tolkien used the term *legendarium* to refer to his collection of legends. Tolkien wanted to create legends ranging from the large and cosmogonic, to the level of romantic fairy-story (Tolkien 1999: xi), and his basic passion "was for myth - - and for fairy-story, and above all for heroic legend on the brink of fairy-tale and history - - " (Tolkien 1999: x–xi). Tolkien's *legendarium* functions on the level of myth, heroic legend, fictional "historicism", and fairy-tale. Accordingly, major methodological tools used here are Northrop Frye's theory of fictional modes, which he introduces in his study *Anatomy of Criticism*. Frye claims that fictions may be classified into five different categories based on the hero's "power of action": 1) myth, 2) romance, legend or folk tale, 3) high mimetic mode of most epic and tragedy, 4) low mimetic mode of most comedy and realistic fiction, and 5) ironic mode (Frye 1967: 33–34).[40] Tolkien's fantasy writing functions separately in all of these fictional modes but also on occasions combines them. This action of moving from one mode to another could be seen as either a familiarising or defamiliarising element. That is because once a character of comical or realistic (or even ironic) mode, such the Hobbits in *The Lord of the Ring*, moves from a lower mode to an upper mode, the expression of the circumstances is usually either familiarising or defamiliarising. For example for the reader, a higher mythical milieu is perhaps made more familiar and understandable. Then again, for the characters who are moving from mode to

---

[40] See chapter 2.3.2 for the theoretical framework. Frye's theory of literary modes and Tolkien's fiction have been earlier compared in some theoretical discussions, most distinguishingly in Shippey's *The Road to Middle-earth*. The first researcher to address this interesting schema was perhaps Christine Brooke-Rose in her study *A Rhetoric of the Unreal: Studies in Narrative and Structure, especially of the Fantastic*.

mode inside the story – the Hobbits – the milieu and its inhabitants are unfamiliar or even defamiliar.

As I mentioned earlier, the basis of Tolkien's *legendarium* is informed by three different works, which could be seen as functioning in different genres and modes. *The Hobbit: or There and Back Again* could be seen as the simplest form of fairy-story, or a story for children or younger audiences. *The Hobbit*'s literary tone is a tone of romantic fairy-story, and it is still mainly considered to be a children's book. Then again, Tolkien's mythopoeia and some aspects of the *legendarium* overlap with *The Hobbit*: some scenes, elements and references link it to the other texts of the *legendarium*.

The Hobbit, originally a separate work compared to the other writings concerning Middle-earth,[41] is for many scholars a troublesome text.[42] The main reason for this bafflement is often *The Hobbit*'s different tone compared to both the fantasy epic *The Lord of the Rings* and the more "biblical" textuality of *The Silmarillion*. At the time of its publishing, *The Hobbit* was a comparable success as a children's story, but Tolkien's higher fame as the "Godfather of Fantasy" was secured by the publishing of *The Lord of the Rings*.[43]

When Tolkien started to write *The Lord of the Rings*, he started it at his publisher's wishes as a sequel to *The Hobbit*. Tolkien's tone in the beginning of *The Lord of the Rings* is still quite similar to the tone in *The Hobbit*, but it changes as the story grows, and moves towards the literary tone of *The Silmarillion*. (Carpenter 1977: 226.)

It is now possible to see that Tolkien ranged his *legendarium* from the mimetically "lower" fairy-story of *The Hobbit* to the higher myth of *The Lord of the Rings*, and still higher to the cosmogonical and cosmological mythology of *The Silmarillion*, where myth and fictional history are vital. Tolkien writes that

---

[41] See for example Whittingham 2008: 35–36.

[42] For example Paul Kocher states that "the work often puzzles, sometimes repels outright. Those who manage to get past it are likely to go on to the later epic [*The Lord of the Rings*] with preconceptions which they find they must rapidly discard." (Kocher 1973: 19.) On the other hand, Harold Bloom in his introduction to *Modern Critical View: J. R. R. Tolkien* comments – in terms that I cannot fully approve – that he suspects "that *The Lord of the Rings* is fated to become only an intricate Period Piece, while *The Hobbit* may well survive as Children's Literature" (Bloom 2000: 2).

[43] The position of Tolkien as the "Godfather of Fantasy" is still very firm in the 21st century among writers and scholars of fantasy. For example, British fantasy writer China Miéville, who is usually considered the chief author among the New Weird genre, writes about Tolkien from this perspective in his article "There and Back Again: Five Reasons Tolkien Rocks" (Miéville 2009). Then again, Miéville had earlier described Tolkien in a famous quote as "the wen on the arse of fantasy literature" (See for example Doctorow 2003).

The Silmarillion "begins with cosmogonical myth: the *Music of the Ainur*", and moves on to the "*History of Elves*" (*The Silmarillion* xiv), and that "legendarium ends with a vision of the end of the world - - " (Tolkien 1999: xvii).

Tolkien's purpose was to create a mythology that he can dedicate "to England" (see chapter 2.3),[44] because there was, as Tolkien put it, Greek, Germanic, Scandinavian and Finnish mythology, but nothing English (Tolkien 1999: x–xi). As Flieger and Whittingham have it, Tolkien's generation was familiar with mythologies of Greece and Rome, but Tolkien's passion for myth was not directed by the so-called "Southern myth", but rather to the so-called "Northern Myth" of German, Scandinavian and Finnish origin (Flieger 2005a: 27–37, Whittingham 2008: 37–38). Tolkien's re-imagining and creation of myths therefore is a complex conception that functions, knowingly or unknowingly, within these external fields of reference.

In my view Tolkien's *legendarium* is a thematical collection of fictional myths of ancient and medieval origin. Tolkien knew very well the myths of the Middle Ages and his greatest literary passion was for the works from that period of time, such as *Beowulf*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and Icelandic *sagas*.[45] The Code of the *legendarium* is remodeled and displaced from the myths of these eras.

---

[44] Carpenter calls it "mythology for England", a statement which some scholars, such as Elizabeth Whittingham, have criticised. See for example Whittingham 2008: 35. A better phrasing could be "mythology dedicated to England", which I use.
[45] See for example Tolkien 1983. Tolkien also translated many Old English poems and stories into modern English, such as *Beowulf* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

1.3 Disposition of the Dissertation

The disposition of the dissertation is as follows. After the Introduction, I will discuss Tolkien's mythopoeia, starting with the chapter two, "The Creation and The Existence". The chapter will focus on both the *legendarium*'s intratextual creation myth and the inner-built cosmology of Tolkien's works, but also on Tolkien's creative methods and aesthetic theory.

In chapter 2.1 "The Song of Ainur: the Cosmogonical Creation Myth of *The Silmarillion*" I will focus on Creation in the *legendarium*. Sub-chapter 2.1.1 "Two Levels of Creation" focuses on the two levels of creation in Tolkien's *The Silmarillion,* and sub-chapter 2.1.2 "Cosmology and the Chain of Being" will focus on the intratextual ways that this fictional world is build.

In chapter 2.1.1 the creation myth of Tolkien's fantasy world is examined in comparison with a much older cosmogonical text, Plato's *Timaeus*. In the chapter, I will compare the cosmogony and cosmology of Tolkien's *The Silmarillion* with Plato's *Timaeus*. The main similarities are as follows: in both cosmogonies the world is made by a good creator; and in both cases the creator subsequently does not affect the created world directly, but through the actions of his own offspring.

After the preparatory comparison, I will continue on to Plato's model of two levels, comparing the cosmology of Tolkien's Middle-earth with that view. Plato's model of two levels is the main idea behind his theory of ideas. In *Timaeus*, Plato describes that the universe functions on two levels: the upper (the Ideal World) is infinite and more "real", and the lower (the Natural World) is in constant change and unreliable. The Ideal World can only be reached by mortals through dialectic reasoning. In Tolkien's cosmology the world is originally created from the model of an original vision. So the natural world itself is a copy of the original idea of the world. Creation's origin is therefore basically the same as in Plato's *Timaeus*.

Chapter 2.1.2 focuses on the chain of being in Tolkien's *legendarium*. There is a clearly distinguishable hierarchical chain of being in Tolkien's fictional cosmology, where some races and creatures are higher or lower in hierarchy than others. Highest in the hierarchy is Eru Ilúvatar, the creator god of Middle-earth. After Eru come the Ainur, The Holy Ones. After the spiritual creatures, come the races that Eru had created, which in *The Silmarillion* are called The Children of Ilúvatar (Ilúvatar is another name for Eru). They are Elves and Men. Elves are considered to be higher in hierarchy than Men because they are created first and resemble more the Ainur. After the Children of Ilúvatar come other intellectual rational beings in Tolkien's chain of being.

In chapter 2.2 "Mythopoetics in *On Fairy-Stories* and in the *legendarium*", I will focus on the basic elements of Tolkien's mythopoeia: his creative methods and the contextual circles of Tolkien's constructive mythopoetics. I will consider Tolkien's theory of fantasy using Tolkien's letters, books and his essay *On Fairy-Stories* as my main works of reference. The theory of the sub-creator and sub-creation is essential when discussing Tolkien's mythopoeia. Tolkien sees that humans are God's creation. Therefore for him all human imagination must come from God. Accordingly, Tolkien thought that all the myths that he created, although they could include mistakes, reflected one part of the infinite truth that is God. So for Tolkien, by making myths, inventing stories, and becoming sub-creators, "we" can reach the perfect state which prevailed before the fall. I will treat *On Fairy-Stories* as the main document of Tolkien's fantasy theory and his aesthetics.

In chapter 2.2 I will discuss how Tolkien's theory of fantasy relates to earlier philosophies of literary imagination, such as Sir Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesie* and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, which represent a similar line of thinking.[46] Both Sidney and Coleridge try to demonstrate how imagination in its more positive sense can draw us closer to the divine vision. Coleridge divides fantasy into primary and secondary classes, taking primary imagination as the living power and prime agent of all human perception and as a repetition in the finite (human) mind of God's eternal and infinite art of creation (Coleridge 1965: 167). This point is close to Tolkien's own idea of the poet as a sub-creator (secondary creator), that is, compared to God as the primary creator.

In chapter 2.3 "Fictional Mythology Dedicated to England", I will illuminate Tolkien's own reasoning behind the creation of the *legendarium*. What were his motives for creating such an invented mythology? Chapter 2.3.1 "The Speculative Historical Epic" will focus on Tolkien's mythopoeia as a mythographer of contemporary English language. In the *legendarium*, Tolkien uses creative methods that are common to the genre of the historical novel.[47] Tolkien creates a plausible fictional background for his work, in much the same way as Umberto Eco does in his novel *The Name of Rose* (*Il nome della rosa*, 1980), or Sir Walter Scott in many of his classical historical novels. I will study how Tolkien poses as a translator of historical texts, creating his own mythology and *legendarium*, as

---

[46] See for example Flieger 2005a: 147. Tania Carolina Wood has also compared Sidney's *Defence of Poesy* to Tolkien's *On Fairy-Stories* in an anthology *J. R. R. Tolkien and His Literary Resonances* (Wood 2000: 95–108).
[47] On these methods, see for example Lukács 1962.

well as how he creates fictional materials as his source materials for these translations..

In chapter 2.3.2 I will discuss the contextual circles of myth and genre, as well as their representation, for those contexts relevant to Tolkien's *legendarium*. I will discuss how Tolkien's *legendarium* is a fantasy fiction fundamentally derivative from the world of myths. The chapter focuses on how myths work on the levels of modes and motifs, and how Tolkien's mythopoetic vision uses different modes of literature. For the theoretical background I will use Frye's theory of fictional modes, motifs and archetypes, and how these relate to Tolkien's *legendarium*. I will concentrate on the contextual circles of fantasy theory in recent decades, examining, for example, how Tolkien's works can be placed in the genre logics that Farah Mendlesohn presents in her study *Rhetorics of Fantasy*. In the end of chapter 2.3.2, I will present a chart on how Frye's theory of modes and of the archetypal imaginary could be assimilated with the archetypal imaginaries of Tolkien's *legendarium*. This chart will illuminate how Tolkien's *legendarium* can be seen functioning in many literary modes, and that Tolkien's *legendarium's* mythic imaginary is compatible with classical mythological framework.

Chapter 3 "The Fall and the Struggle" will focus on the central element of the fall in the *legendarium*, and on the question of the main internal and external fields of reference that form Tolkien's fictional mythology. In the chapter, I will research the main functions of good and evil, and heroic, mythical heroes in the *legendarium*. Chapter 3.1 deals with "The Long Defeat" and chapter 3.2 with "Mythopoeia in Effect". The sub-chapter 3.2.1 deals with "Mythopoetic Allegories".

The concept of allegory in Tolkien's works has been a critical and difficult point in Tolkien studies. Tolkien himself said on many occasions that he disliked allegory – conscious and intentional allegory – in all of its possible forms (*The Silmarillion*, xii). These comments notwithstanding, he also produced at least one clearly allegorical text in his career: *Leaf by Niggle* (1945). For all his dislike of "intentional allegory", Tolkien could be seen as sharing a view, once again, with Coleridge who saw on the one hand "symbolism" as emerging spontaneously out of imagination, and "allegory", on the other hand, as artificial and conscious, almost mechanical, construction.[48]

---

[48] For Coleridge's view, see Tambling 77.

Tolkien's approach to allegory is arguably very strict and limited. For example, he disliked C.S. Lewis' latter *Narnia* texts, which he thought were too allegorical. As Shippey points out, it is clear that medieval allegorical texts such as Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590) and Old English poems *Pearl* (ca.1400) and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (ca. 1400) had an influence on Tolkien's works (Shippey 2003: 5). Added to this, many chapters in Tolkien's books could easily be understood allegorically – even primarily – in terms of Christian allegory. In the chapter, I will delineate why these parts of the *legendarium* should nonetheless be read as myths and part of Tolkien's mythopoetic vision – rather than (solely) allegorically.

Chapter 3.2.2 "Mythical Heroes" discusses selected characters in Tolkien's *legendarium* that function on comparison with both intratextual and intertextual fields of references. I see these heroic characters at the same time as intratextual mythic figures functioning within the fictional world (such as Túrin Turambar), but also as functioning in intertextual relation with the characters of such earlier works as the *Bible* and the Finnish *Kalevala*.

Chapter 3.3 will focus on chosen examples of constructive mythopoeia in Tolkien's *legendarium*. In the sub-chapter 3.3.1, I will discuss Númenor, the Fallen, from "the Akallabêth", the fourth part of *The Silmarillion*, considering it as a re-imagined Atlantis myth.[49] Tolkien's Akallabêth is a story about Middle-earth's greatest Human kingdom, Númenor. The island of Númenor is originally created as a gift from Valar to the highest Human race in Middle-earth for their actions in a great war against the evil Vala Morgoth. At the early stages of the kingdom's history the Númenoreans are good and moral. After thousands of years, however, the Númenoreans grow in power and become proud and forget the morality of their actions. The story tells how kingdom was destroyed after the Númenoreans started a war with Valar and try to become immortal themselves.

I will consider the Atlantis myth in the light of the overall theme of Tolkien's *legendarium*, as a story of fall from greatness. This seemingly Catholic (and Platonic) view of a *changeable world* – that everything "fades"[50] – could also be seen as the overarching theme of *The Silmarillion* and Tolkien's *legendarium*.

---

[49] As Tolkien writes: "the great 'Atlantis' isle of Númenor" (Tolkien 1999: xx).

[50] As Bradford Lee Eden writes: "There may be an unconscious decay of cosmological theory - - Each theoretical step taken away from the "Great Music", which set everything in motion, is a slow descent away from "the divine"". Eden also states that this is also a strong thread throughout the writings of Plato and Aristotle. (Eden 2003: 191.) The same can be seen in the Ancient times in the works of both Hesiod and Ovid.

In chapter 3.3.2, I will discuss the myth of the One Ring in Tolkien's *legendarium*. As a major intertextual field of reference, I will discuss the Platonic ring myth, The Ring of Gyges, discussed in the second book of the *Republic*. In Plato's story the shepherd Gyges, an ancestor of king Croesus of Lydia, finds a golden ring which makes its user invisible (*Republic* 359d–360d). I will show that that Tolkien's ring theme does not solely derive from Germanic and Scandinavian myths and European fairy-stories, as most researchers have pointed out, but may have some mythological background in Plato's myth. I will endeavour to show that Tolkien's theme of invisibility has similarities in Plato not only with respect to the two levels of Plato's ontology (levels of the ideal and changeable world), but also on the level of myth and morality.

Chapter 3.3.3, the last chapter of the dissertation before the conclusion, "Familiarisation and Defamiliarisation of Myth", illuminates how mythopoetics and contemporary language works as tools to familiarise or defamiliarise chosen elements of the *legendarium* for the reading audience. For the reader, this is the most important part of Tolkien's mythopoetics, since without these familiarising elements in the *legendarium* the text would become defamiliar and "alien" to us, even unreadable, I should say.

1.4 On Constructive (Mytho)Poetics

These tales are 'new', they are not directly derived from other myths and legends, but they must inevitably contain a large measure of ancient wide-spread motives and elements (Tolkien 1999: xvi).

Although Tolkien's tales are "new", they are still constructed myths, and this construction is effected by re-imagining older myths and legends, and by forming new ones and creating new mythographic connections. This construction is both an aesthetic measure – an attempt to make the text coherent and stable – but also a structural tactic. Tolkien's use of mythopoetics is creative and the formed *legendarium* is at the same time both extremely complex but also comprehensible for the reader. How is this double action possible?

I argue that Tolkien's constructive (mytho)poetics is a creative method which adroitly uses literary mediums such as inter- and intratextuality and familiarisation and defamiliarisation as tools of world-making. Inter- and intratextual references create plausibility, coherence and a type of realism in the text, and also function as familiar or defamiliar elements. Familiar elements

within the text make texts readable for contemporary audiences and also create an illusion of secondary creation. Familiar elements in the *legendarium* are, for example, the use of English language, the use of Hobbits as protagonists, or the use of familiar *flora* and *fauna*. Defamiliar elements are used in order to create, for example, horror, surprise and sublime sceneries. For example, defamiliar elements in the *legendarium* are encounters with monstrous beings such as Balrog, Nazgûl, Dragon or Giant Spiders, or sceneries where both the characters of the text and the reader feel defamiliar, such as Galadriel's Mirror or looking into a Palantir in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Tolkien's constructive mythopoetics is formed on inter- and intratextual references and diverse familiar and defamiliar mythic elements. Therefore, in the main chapters, I widely use the terms intertextuality, familiarisation and defamiliarisation, which of course can be understood semantically in different ways. In the next short preface, I will explain my usage of the terms. I will also explain the framework of **constructive poetics**, which I use methodologically and descriptively to elucidate Tolkien's mythopoetics in the main chapters. I use, in part, Benjamin Harshav's theory of constructive poetics to organise the inter– and intratextual materials of Tolkien's *legendarium* – although I am not creating simply a theoretically focused reading.

Harshav introduced the theory of constructive poetics[51] in order to create a systematic theory of literature – or a "grammar" of literature – that did not necessitate heavy terminology or bibliography. His approach does not assume that the work of literature is a text with fixed structures and meaning, but a text that invites the reader to project a network of interrelated constructs. In Harshav's view, a work of literature is not just a narrative, as studies in narratology claim, but something which projects a fictional world or internal field of reference. Harshav sees that texts convey meaning through the evocation of "frames of reference". Language in literature is bi-directional: it relates the internal field to the external field and vice versa.

Harshav sees works of literature as fictional texts in which truth values can be judged only within the specific frames of reference to which they are –or may be– related. Harshav states that in the case of a work of literature we are not dealing with isolated sentences or propositions, but with an internal field of reference – a whole network of interrelated referents of various kinds: characters, events, situations, ideas, dialogues, etc., upon which Harshav bases his theory of

---

[51] Collected in Harshav, *Explorations in Poetics* (2007).

"intergrational semantics". The language of the text contributes to the establishment of this internal field and refers to it at the same time. (Harshav 2007: 4–5.)

Harshav (2007: 5) points out that within this internal field of reference we judge the truth values of propositions using whatever other information from the same field that we have available. This, as will be stated in later chapters, makes the fictional historicism of Tolkien's *legendarium* coherent and credible in the internal field of reference of, for example, in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Harshav differentiates and defines a number of important terms, of which I will make use in the following chapters. These are the terms of a referent, a frame of reference, and a field of reference. The definitions of the terms are as follows:

> 1. A *referent* (*r*): is anything we can refer to or talk about, may it be a real object, an event, an idea, or a fictional, non-existent object.
>
> 2. A *frame of reference* (*fr*): is any semantic continuum of two or more referents that we may speak about: it may be a scene in time and space, a character, an ideology, a mood, a state of affairs, a plot, a policy, a theory, a psychoanalysis, the wind in the autumn trees, the mountains of Corsica, etc.
>
> *3*. A *Field of Reference* (*FR*): is a large, multidimensional, hypothetical universe, containing a multitude of contextual, crisscrossing, and interrelated *fr*s of various kinds. We may isolate such Fields as the USA, The Napoleonic Wars, Philosophy, the "world" of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, the world today, cultural memory, etc. I use the term "isolate" advisedly, since a Field or frame in this conception are not fixed ontological entities; their delimination depends on strategies of reference, understanding and explanation. Any fr, e.g. "a party" in *War and Peace*- -can be composed of many smaller *fr*s (characters, groups, dancing, drinks, etc.). (Harshav 2007: 5–6.)

Therefore, the fictional world in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* or *The Silmarillion* could form its own field of reference composed of many small frames of reference, such as, for example, the character of Frodo Baggins, fictional time of the Third Age,[52] "long expected party" at the beginning or *The Lord of the Rings*, or the defamiliarising element of the dragon Glaurung in *The Silmarillion*.

---

[52] Referring to the inner timeline of Tolkien's Middle-earth.

Harshav points out that these referents, frames of references and fields of references also create both an internal field of reference and an external field of reference, the terms that I use in chapter three. Harshav states that the unique feature of a work of literature is that it projects its own internal field of reference while referring to it at the same time (2007: 7).

Then again, Harshav's theory is not a simple constructual or formalist theory. He claims that if literary texts simply constituted internal fields of reference, separated from the world and from other texts, we could call them "fictions" and limit our analysis to their internal structure. This, however, is only half the story. Works of literature are usually not pure fictional worlds; their texts are not made of mere fictional propositions or a pure fictional language. Meanings in literary texts are related not only to the internal field of reference (which indeed, Harshav points out, is unique to it) but to external fields of reference as well. This double-layered nature of literary reference is an essential feature of literature. (Harshav 2007: 22.)

External fields of reference are any fields of references outside of a given text: for example the real world in time and space, history, a philosophy, ideologies, views on human nature, or other texts. A literary text may either refer directly to or invoke frames of references. As Harshav argues, this category includes not only such obvious external referents as names of places and streets, historical events and dates, or actual historical figures, but also various statements about human nature, society, technology, national character, psychology, religion, etc. (2007: 23). In this way, the theory can be applied when analysing literary texts of any genre: they all have their own referential fields and frames.

Harshav explains the technique of referential grounding using the term *anchoring*: how a new, constructed internal field of reference anchors itself to some accepted external frame of reference (2007: 25). For example, Tolkien's *The Silmarillion* is not (explicitly) anchored to any "real" historical time or place, but it is anchored to many mythological and national perceptions of history or textuality, such as Plato's cosmogony (see 3.3.1) or the contemporary English language (see 3.3.3).

It could be claimed that *individual* texts or books from Tolkien's *legendarium* form an individual external frame of reference for the *other* texts or books in Tolkien's *legendarium*. The textual material of the *legendarium* anchors each separate material onto a coherent internal field of reference from the chosen text. Thus *The Silmarillion* anchors to frames of reference such as "Tolkien's *legendarium*" or "Middle-earth", but also to other texts, such as *The Lord of the*

Rings and *The Hobbit*. These elements of inter- and intratextual reference I will examine further in the main chapters.

Traditionally, these types of links that bind particular literary works in succession were examined under the heading "influence". However, after the late 20thcentury, this concept has been questioned and displaced by the idea of **intertextuality**. (Doležel 1998: 199–200.) In my reading, intertextuality and constructive myth-making are mostly inseparable in the mythopoetics of Tolkien's *legendarium*.

Basically, intertextuality can be understood as a textual connection between text A and text B. Julia Kristeva sees intertexts as utterances absorbed into and transformed in the text.[53] Textual relations have been an object of much research in the last century. Many relations can be interpreted as relevant for the researcher, such as cultural intertextuality or interculturality, and interdiscursivity, which is a focus of thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Michel Pêcheu[54], and Gérard Genette[55].

In addition to these textual relations, my theory of constructive poetics also uses concepts of familiarisation and defamiliarisation that are also evident in the genre of fantasy literature. These concepts will be used in the main chapters to illuminate how Tolkien re-imagines myths for the contemporary reading audience.

The term **defamiliar**, or "the uncanny", was first identified in Ernst Jentsch's article "Zur Psychologie des Unheimlichen" ("On the Psychology of the Uncanny", 1906). However, the term was popularised by Sigmund Freud in his essay "Das Unheimliche" ("The Uncanny", 1919), where he expanded Jentsch's views and added many new perspectives to the term. In literature theory, the term "defamiliarisation" is often connected to both Russian formalism (especially Viktor Shklovsky) and modern and post-modern theories as an artistic technique forcing the audience to see common things in an unfamiliar or strange way – for example in related theories, such as in Bertolt Brecht's distancing effect, "making strange", alienation, or even defamiliarisation. Freud can be considered a powerful and influential mythologist (as Wittgenstein does), or even – by perhaps some overstatement – "the inescapable mythologist our age", as Harold Bloom suggests (1988: 228).

In Tolkien's texts, defamiliarising effects are usually those elements weird or alien for both the protagonists and the reading audience, or, especially in the case

---

[53] See for example Godard 1993: 568–569.
[54] More on the contemporary study of intertextuality can be found from, for example, Graham Allen's study *Intertextuality* (2000).
[55] See for example Genette 1979: 81–83.

of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, unfamiliar for the mediators (the Hobbits).

Freud, in his case study of E. T. A. Hoffman's short story "Der Sandman" ("The Sandman", 1817), thought that the subject of defamiliar was in the province of aesthetics: undoubtedly related to what is frightening, what arouses dread and horror (Freud 1989b: 339). Freud describes the etymology of the German word "*unheimlich*", which is obviously the opposite of "*Heimlich*" ("homely"), "*heimisch*" ("native") – the opposite of what is familiar – and writes that we are tempted to conclude that what is "uncanny" is frightening precisely because it is *not* known and familiar. Freud writes that naturally not everything that is new and unfamiliar is frightening. (Freud 1989b: 341.) In my point of view, the most interesting parts of Tolkien's *legendarium* are those that at first are unfamiliar for the reading audience but are effectively familiarised in the text from the point of view of more familiar protagonists, such as hobbits.

Freud writes about the artistic freedom of the writer and notes that the writer is not bound to realistic aesthetics. Freud explains that the writer creates a kind of uncertainty in us in the beginning by not letting us know, no doubt purposely, whether he is taking us into a real world or into a purely fantastic one of his own creation. He has a right to do either; and if he chooses to stage his action in a world peopled with spirits, demons and ghosts, like Shakespeare does in *Hamlet* and in *Macbeth*, we must bow to his decision and treat this setting as though it were real for as long as we put ourselves into his hands. (Freud 351.) Freud therefore believes in what Coleridge calls the reader's "willing suspension of disbelief" (Coleridge 1965: 168–169).[56] Although Freud evidently does not see fantastic fiction or fairy-stories normally as a creator of defamiliarisation. The fictional world is often too "familiar" and "homely" for the reader. (Freud 1989b: 369.) But later, the uncanny elements of fantasy literature (and fairy-tale) have been studied for example in the studies of Tzvetan Todorov[57] or Rosemary Jackson[58], for example.

Kendal Walton addresses these feelings of anxiety from a quite novel approach. For Walton, the emotions that the reader feels when reading fiction should be understood as so-called quasi emotions. For example, an instance of uncanny or defamiliar feeling when reading a horror story could be understood as

---

[56] On the subject, see chapter 2.2.1.
[57] In Todorov's *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to Literary Genre*.
[58] In Jackson's *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*.

"quasi fear" or "quasi fear sensation" (Walton 244–246). The range of these quasi sensations is of course wide and we might suspect that the reader reacts to elements of fiction via the normal range of psychological cognitive sensations, such as attraction, pity, anxiety, hate, envy, fear, etc.

Then again, Freud sees that the realm of fantasy and make-believe is first and foremost born of the play and games of children. And Freud compares the process of children's make-believe with the creative work of the writer (Freud 1989a: 131–132). Kendall Walton also addresses the importance of childhood. Walton sees that "[t]he activities in which representational works of art are embedded and which give them their point are best seen as continuous with children's games of make-believe" (Walton 1990: 11). This imaginative process is later active when for example the reader is reading a work of fiction. If we think about Tolkien's fiction, these elements of adolescent and/or adult make-believe are interesting, since some parts of Tolkien's *legendarium* are deliberately aimed at young audiences, and then again many parts of the *legendarium* fascinate young and old alike.

On the level of literary emotion, and make-believe, I see defamiliarisation as possible in the genre of fantasy fiction. But then again, familiarisation is a key element for the popularity of fantasy, since readers want to "step inside" a fantasy world that they can relate to. Therefore, especially in chapter 3.3.3, I will illuminate how Tolkien's aesthetic and creative methods affiliate with the theory of familiarisation and how Tolkien modernises the pre-modern myth, and familiarises it for the contemporary readers.[59]

---

[59] Tolkien himself was aware of that. In an interview with Henry Resnik, Tolkien says clearly that in *The Lord of the Rings* he tried to modernise myths and make them credible (Carter 1969: 157).

2   The Creation and the Existence

2.1   The Song of Ainur: The Cosmogonical Creation Myth in The Silmarillion

The collection of stories in *The Silmarillion* forms the basis of Tolkien's *legendarium*, since it tells the timeline of Tolkien's mythological world from the beginning until the end of the Third Age of Middle-earth: the end of *The Lord of the Rings* narrative.

   The Silmarillion itself is divided into five parts, of which the first three form "the real Silmarillion" and the last two, "Akallabêth" (The Downfall of Númenor) and "Of the Rings of Power and Third Age", being separate and independent works.[60] The so-called proper "Silmarillion" is divided into three parts: "The Ainulindalë" (The Music of the Ainur), "Valaquenta" (Account of the Valar), and "Quenta Silmarillion" (The History of the Silmarils).

   "The Ainulindalë", the first part of the *The Silmarillion*, contains the cosmogonical creation story of the *legendarium*, as well as the beginning of the cosmological account of the *legendarium*. It starts before the Creation of the World and introduces the creator "God" Eru Ilúvatar, and his offspring the Ainur. Eru and Ainur inhabit a place which is called "The Timeless Halls", which are described as "fair regions that he [Eru] had made for the Ainur" (Tolkien 1999: 6). Initially, outside of these Halls is only "Void" (Tolkien 1999: 6).

   In "The Ainulindalë", it is revealed that Evil, in the form of Melkor, the greatest of all Ainur, has its beginning before Time or the Great Music. At first Melkor is curious and becomes the first "individualist". Before Time was created, or the Music played, he went in the vast emptiness to search for the "Imperishable Flame", but could not find it. Melkor is described as the greatest of the Ainur: he "had been given the greatest gifts of power and knowledge, and he had a share in all the gifts of his brethren" (Tolkien 1999: 4).

   After this hint at Melkor's future role, the Song of Ainur, the Great Music**,** is played. Eru propounds the Ainur with themes of music; and the Ainur sing before him. Later, the Earth, which in the *legendarium* is called Arda, is created in a "mighty theme" given by Eru. In heaven-like timelessness the Ainur compose their Music, which is later revealed to be a Vision of the later "real" history of

---

[60] As Christopher Tolkien notes. See Tolkien 1999: vii.

Arda. After the Vision, the real, physical beginning of Arda is manifested by a single word of command by Eru: "Eä!"

During the Music, the role of forthcoming Evil is once again revealed. Melkor creates discord in the great theme that forms the Great Music. His first individualistic discord spreads among the Ainur, and Melkor's "own theme" confuses the Music – although later Eru declares that Melkor shall see "that no theme may be played that hath not its uttermost source in me [Eru]" (Tolkien 1999: 5–6). Thus, even though Melkor tries to disobey Eru's original theme, he is ultimately playing his role in the Music. Eru's words fill Melkor with shame, and Tolkien writes that through this shame came also "secret anger" (Tolkien 1999: 6). Thus the beginning of Evil is woven.

In the evolution of Evil in the *legendarium*, servitude, curiosity and individualism lead Melkor into envy; shame leads him into anger; and, later, power, envy, arrogance and desire turn him into violent tyrant. It is explained that Melkor turned his powers and knowledge to "evil purposes, and squandered his strength in violence and tyranny. For he coveted Arda and all that was in it, desiring the kingship of Manwë and dominion over the realms of his peers. From splendour he fell through arrogance to contempt for all things save himself, a spirit wasteful and pitiless." (Tolkien 1999: 23.)

Later, when the Ainur take physical (and visible) form in Arda, Melkor too takes a visible form, but "because of his mood and the malice that burned in him that form was dark and terrible" (Tolkien 1999: 11).

The Music of the Ainur itself is divided into four parts: the unveiling of the theme, and then three parts of Music. First, the theme is given to the Ainur, and second, the Music is sung. During the Music, Melkor breaks the harmony and tries to develop his own song, and deceives some of the Ainur into joining him. In the Music, this occurs three times, but every time Eru successfully overpowers Melkor's "rebellion" with new themes.

Eru is the only being in Tolkien's *legendarium* that can give existence to another being[61]. At first this was the reason for Melkor's envy, since "desire grew

---

[61] Despite of course natural reproduction, which is the method of population growth for many of species in the *legendarium*. Family trees of Elves, Men, Hobbits, and Dwarves play a part as a background information in for example *The Silmarillion*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth*. We also know that there is population growth via reproduction in the species of Orcs, since Bolg, the chief of Goblins (also: Orcs) in *the Hobbit* is described to be the son of the Orc leader Azog (Tolkien 1995: 1052), whose death scene in the hands a Dwarf Dáin Ironfoot is told in Appendix A of *The Lord of the Rings* (Tolkien 1995: 1049). Also, regarding

hot within him to bring into Being things of his own" (Tolkien 1999: 4). Eru creates the concept of the Music: the mighty theme. The Ainur, too, are conceived of Eru's thought, they are his "offspring". Eru's mighty theme is the primary essence of the Creation, but each Ainur gives his own secondary idea and theme to the Music, according to their attributes and powers. Thus, for example, Ulmo's music forms the element of Water, Manwë's music the element of Air, and Aulë the "substances of which Arda is made", the Earth. Is it possible that Melkor's discords ultimately serve to create the dichotomy of good and evil? And that this dichotomy makes it possible for the World to have its "eucatastrophical"[62] ending, since without evil and bad things, we would not have knowledge of the good things, and good endings?

Eru's primary theme is intermingled with each Ainur's secondary theme, and this creates a coherent, complex musical collaboration: Music according to Eru's original design and plan. Even Melkor's discording themes are blended with the original theme. Of his discordant music, the "most triumphant notes were taken by the other [Ainur] and woven into its own solemn pattern" (Tolkien 1999: 5).

In the Music, after the first theme is spoiled by Melkor's discord, Eru gives the Ainur a second theme, but the second theme also becomes corrupted by Melkor. But when Eru gives the Ainur the third theme, which Melkor tries to corrupt by force, it results in a strife that shakes and convulses the Halls. Eru Ilúvatar ends the Music with one single chord: "deeper than the Abyss, higher than the Firmament, piercing as the light of the eye of Ilúvatar" (Tolkien 1999: 5).

After the Music is sung, Eru takes the Ainur from the Timeless Halls into the "Void". There, Eru shows them a **Vision**. The Vision is a transliteration of their collaborative Music, now in a material, realistic form. The Ainur are shown the entire history of physical, changeable World. In the Vision, the Ainur see Elves and Men, the forthcoming Children of Ilúvatar, and the complexity of the physical World. Eru addresses and tells Melkor that "thou, Melkor, wilt discover all the secret thoughts of thy mind, and wilt perceive that they are but a part of the whole and tributary to its glory" (Tolkien 1999: 6). In the story, it is clearly stated that

reproduction, the problem with natural reproduction of Ents (after they have lost their "wives", the Endwives) is addressed in *The Lord of the Rings* (Tolkien 1995: 464–466).

[62] Eucatastrophical (or *eucatastrophe*) meaning a positive catastrophe or a good catastrophe. Tolkien used the term in his essay *On Fairy-Stories*(Tolkien 1983: 153–155) to demonstrate a sudden dramatic turn of events in fairy-stories, which result as a happy ending for the story. Both the appearing of the Eagles in the end of *The Hobbit's* decisive "Battle of Five Armies" and the destruction of the One Ring and (once again) the appearing of the Eagles in the final battle between forces of Mordor and forces of Gondor in The Field of Cormallenin *The Lord of the Rings* act as eucatasrophical scenes.

the creation of the Children of Ilúvatar has nothing to do with the Ainur, since the Children "were conceived by him [Eru] 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" (Tolkien 1999: 7).

After this, Eru removes the Vision and creates an actual World, Arda (or Eä). Tolkien describes (1999: 8)it as a "habitation set within the vast spaces of the World, which the Elves call Arda, the Earth - - ". This world is to be affected by Time.

Later in the "Ainulindalë" some of the Ainur choose to go "down", so to speak, to this World or Earth. These beings are later called Valar (and their subordinates called Maiar). After moving to the physical world, the Valar, who were mesmerised by the beauty of the Vision, are now astounded because "the beginning of the world" is nothing like the vision:

> But when the Valar entered the Eä they were at first astounded and at a loss, for it was as if naught was yet made which they had seen in vision, and all was but on point to begin and yet unshaped, and it was dark. For the Great Music had been but the growth and flowering of thought in the Timeless Halls, and the Vision only a foreshowing; but now they had entered in at the beginning of Time, and the Valar perceived that the World had been but foreshadowed and foresung, and they must achieve it. (Tolkien 1999: 10.)

After this the Valar and Maiar begin to "build" the World, and to govern it, in accordance with the Fate detailed in the Vision. This part is referred to as the **Realisation of the Vision**.

Melkor also descends to this created world, and while the Valar attempt to build the world and to prepare the world for its forthcoming inhabitants (the "Children of Ilúvatar", Elves and Men), Melkor attempts to destroy their work and become the ruler of the World. Therefore, the first actual period of time in the World comprises countless waves of creation, destruction, and re-creation.

The Valar must labour in order to unfold the foresung history, but Melkor's attempts make this hard. This begets the first War of Time and World. Manwë, the leader of the Valar, and his people fight against Melkor and his forces. The Valar are victorious, and despite Melkor's malice, the Earth is made ready for the Children of Ilúvatar to awaken.

So how is the Vision and Realisation constructed? Tolkien forms his *legendarium* in many cycles:

In the beginning Eru, the One, who in Elvish tongues is named Ilúvatar, made the Ainur of his thought; and they made a great Music before him. In this Music the World was begun; for Ilúvatar made visible the song of the Ainur, and they beheld it as a light in the darkness. And many among them became enamoured of its beauty, and of its history which they saw beginning and unfolding as in a vision. Therefore Ilúvatar gave to their vision Being, and set it amid the Void, and the Secret Fire was sent to burn at the heart of the World; and it was called Eä. (Tolkien 1999: 15.)

As the internal, chronological beginning of Tolkien's *legendarium,* there is "pre-existence". The fictional universe's timespan ranges from pre-existence to physical existence, and on to the end of the physical world. It is a linearly constructed world-view. At the beginning of the storyline there is not a physical, "real" world. Before the creation of the so-called (physical) "world", there is only "God", Eru, and the Ainur, conceived "of his thought". This era – before the Creation – could therefore be called spiritual pre-existence.

The physical world, and the concept of time along with it, is created by these immortal Beings. The cosmogony begins with tunes of Music and a vision of the (later physical) World, and lastly it is completed by the execution, and realisation, of this vision. In the last part of creation, the music is "made visible", as "a light in the darkness". The vision is given existence, and this creation – the World – is set at the centre of "the Void", of emptiness. And at the heart of this World, there is the "Secret Fire".

Although highly original, the creation myth in Tolkien's *The Silmarillion* is in part intertextually connected with the creation myth in Plato's *Timaeus*. *Timaeus* was a work fundamental in the formation of medieval thought (Eco 1986: 17); and also influenced later literary cosmological visions, and, as a 20th-century neo-medievalist writer, Tolkien knew the work very well. Plato's cosmological creation myth is, beside the *Bible'*s Genesis, the most important external field of reference for Tolkien's cosmogony in *The Silmarillion*: a prime example of Tolkien's mythopoeia, his creation of myths.

Before further examining Tolkien's cosmogonical myth, we might first take a look at the Christian Platonic theology behind Tolkien's cosmogony. In his survey of Christian theology, McGrath highlights the doctrine of the original "goodness" of creation, which is also the central point Plato made in *Timaeus* (29a). McGrath explains that the world "as we see it is not the world as it was intended to be - - . The existence of human sin, evil, and death are themselves tokens of the extent of

the departure of the created order from its intended pattern." (McGrath 2011: 221.) This concept of "restoration of creation to its original integrity" (McGrath 2011: 221), which Tolkien calls "unmarring", is also present in the *legendarium*:[63] The World is marred from the beginning, but it will be ultimately restored to its original faultless vision.

For Tolkien's *legendarium*, the link between music and harmony is crucial: in *The Silmarillion* the fictitious world is indeed created through music, Ainulindalë, the Music of the Ainur. The fundamental backdrop of Plato's cosmology and Plato's cosmogony is numeric congruence and universal harmony. Umberto Eco notes that the most ancient and best-established concept of this aesthetics of numerology of proportion is congruence (*congruentia*), the proportion of numbers, a concept that has its lineage in pre-Socratic times. Congruence expressed the essentially quantitative conception of beauty, which repeatedly crops up in Greek thought, for example in the thinking of philosophers such as Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle – and, as Eco sees it, received its classical formulation in the canon of Puluclitus and in Galen's subsequent exposition of Polyclitus' doctrines (Eco 1986: 28). Eco sees that the medieval conception of harmony originally derived from the theory of music (Eco 1986: 28–33). In this sense, Tolkien's mythopoetic cosmogony could be labeled neo-medievalist.

2.1.1 Two Levels of Creation: Vision and Realisation, and Physical and Spiritual Existence[64]

> And he [Eru Ilúvatar] showed to them a vision, giving to them a sight where before was only hearing; and they saw a new World made visible before them, and it was globed amid the Void, and it was sustained therin, but was not of it (Tolkien 1999: 6).

As we have seen, in the *legendarium*, the world is created on two levels: the divine vision shown by Eru Ilúvatar and the realisation. The problematic part of this creation on two levels is the beginning of Evil. Melkor (later Morgoth), one of the Ainur, rebels against Eru's will and jurisdiction which results in

---

[63] As McGrath also notes. See McGrath 2011: 314.
[64] Parts of my interpretation and analysis in this chapter has been earlier published in the article Korpua, "Good and Evil in J.R.R. Tolkien's *Legendarium*: Concerning Dichotomy between Visible and Invisible" (2014).

"corruption" and "marring" of the created world. Therefore the created world is never formed quite as it was intended to be.

This chapter discusses these aspects on two levels, focusing on the dichotomies of physical and spiritual existence, good and evil, and visibility and invisibility.

Cosmogony is an important feature for the construction of a coherent fictional world. Frye argues that all mythologies begin with cosmogonies, the creation myths, and that there are two main types of these myths, depending on whether men are looking up or down from their "middle earth". On the one hand, if looking down, we see the cycle of animal and plant life, and creation myths suggested by this would naturally be sexual ones, focusing invariably on some kind of earth-mother. On the other hand, if looking up, we see not different forms of life emerging but the same sun rising in the east. Frye (1976: 112) suggests that such creation myths tend to be associated with a sky-father who goes about his mysterious doings without nursing his children. Both Plato's creation myth in the *Timaeus* and Tolkien's creation myth in *The Silmarillion* are of the latter type: myths looking up to the sky.

Frye concludes that in the earth-mother creation myths death does not have to be explained: death is built into the whole process; but an intelligently made world of the second type could not have any death (or evil) at its genesis, so another myth (of a fall) is needed to complement it (Frye 1976: 112). This is evident in Tolkien's cosmogony and cosmology, where both the creation of evil and the fall, of Men and Elves alike, are described or hinted at. *The Silmarillion* is basically a story of the Fall of the Elves, and the subtext hints at the Fall of Men.

If we look at Tolkien's creation myth, first there is the cosmogony, the creation of the World, and then the cosmology, how the world is. There are many similarities in the structure of cosmogony, cosmography and cosmology if we compare Tolkien's *The Silmarillion* and Plato's *Timaeus*. My main focus on Plato's cosmology is not philosophical but structural: in Plato's structure the unique cosmos has a soul, it is spherical, and it is conditioned by time (Vlastos 1975: 29). One main aspect of Plato's cosmogony is that the world is created by the creator (Demiurge) who is good and cannot do anything evil or malevolent. After the creator has created the world, he quits it, and surrenders control to his children, the created gods.

In the *Timaeus* the creator is declared good, and therefore his creation is also good. The World is created on two levels: as the perfect original model on the one

hand, and as the physical, changeable world on the other. The created physical world is thus a likeness of the original true being:

> If the world is indeed fair and the artificer good, it is manifest that he must have looked to that which is eternal; but if what cannot be said without blasphemy is true, then to the created pattern. Everyone will see that he must have looked to the eternal; for the world is the fairest of creations and he is the best of causes. And having been created in this way, the world has been framed in the likeness of that which is apprehended by reason and mind and is unchangeable, and must therefore of necessity, if this is admitted, be a copy of something. (Plato *Timaeus*: 29a.)

The structure of the cosmology of Tolkien's fantasy world is essentially the same as Plato's: first the vision, then the realisation. The starting point of the cosmogony of Tolkien's *legendarium* is "The Music of the Ainur", which, although it is played by the Ainur, derives entirely from the creator.[65] At the beginning of *The Silmarillion*, after the music, the creator shows to the angelic beings an image:

> 'Behold your Music!' And he showed to them a vision, giving to them sight where before was only hearing, and they saw a new World made visible before them, and it was globed amid the Void, and it was sustained therein, but was not of it. And as they looked and wondered this World began to unfold its history, and it seemed to them that it lived and grew. And when the Ainur had gazed for a while and were silent, Ilúvatar said again: 'Behold your Music! This is your minstrelsy; and each of you shall find contained herein, amid the design that I set before you, all those things which it may seem that he himself devised and added.' (Tolkien 1999: 6.)

But after that, it is revealed in *The Silmarillion* that the image is not the real created world, but its model:

> - - and while the Ainur were yet gazing upon this vision, it was taken away and hidden from their sight; and it seemed to them that in that moment they perceived a new thing, Darkness, which they had not known before except in thought. But they had become enamoured of the beauty of the vision and engrossed in the unfolding of the World which came there to being, and their

---

[65] As Tolkien writes: "And thou - - shall see that no theme may be played that hath not its uttermost source in me, nor can any alter the music in my despite" (1999: 5-6).

minds were filled with it; for the history was incomplete and the circles of time not full-wrought when the vision was taken away. (Tolkien 1999: 9.)

Then the vision is taken away by Eru Ilúvatar and the real creation takes place. In Tolkien's *legendarium* Eru Ilúvatar creates the World in the Judeo-Christian tradition by the power of words:[66]

> Then there was unrest among the Ainur; but Ilúvatar called to them, and said: 'I know the desire of your minds that what ye have seen should verily be, not only in your thought, but even as ye yourself are, and yet other. 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; and those of you that will may go down into it.' And suddenly the Ainur saw afar off a light, as it were a cloud with living heart of flame; and they knew that was no vision only, but that Ilúvatar had made a new thing: Eä, the World that Is. (Tolkien 1999: 9.)

The main instrument of cosmogony is music. The music creates a vision. And this vision is the fundamental Idea and model for the cosmogony of the physical world. In *Splinted Light* Flieger (2002: 141) has pointed out that for Boethius, Dante, Chaucer and the Scholastics musical harmony was the first principle of cosmic balance.

Flieger concentrates on the function of cosmogonical music in Tolkien's *legendarium* and focuses on the aspect of interruptions in the creative music. Tolkien tells how Eru presents a musical theme to his celestial progeny, the Ainur, and invites them to make of his theme "a Great Music". The Ainur begin this "Music" which will be at once the pattern for and the agency of creation, but as their chorale of interchanging melodies grows in power and beauty, the Music is interrupted by a counter theme and must begin again. This happens twice, and in the midst of the last interruption Eru halts the performance. The choir falls silent, the Music ceases, and sorrow has been foreshadowed and foresung. Flieger comments that the great design of Eru's initial theme is not carried to its proper conclusion, and thus is not fully achieved. (Flieger 2005a: xiii.)

In Tolkien's *legendarium* there shall be a "Second Music" at the end of the world, at the end of Arda (the Created World). Whittingham has suggested that in this Second Music Melkor's (who choreographed the interruptions) discord will

---

[66] See also *Genesis* 1: 1–31.

be eliminated and with it the corrupting influence that marred the creation of Arda. This Second Great Music will be played by "the sons of Men" and the Ainur together, in the way that the Music originally was meant to be "played". (Whittingham 2008: 175.)

In Tolkien's cosmogony the Platonic creation myth is an inevitable influence. Both the central ancient Neoplatonist Plotinus and central renaissance humanist and Neoplatonist Marsilio Ficino saw that music reigns the cosmos:

> Plotinus had posited a harmony of sentient things and forces in the universe. There is an innate drawing power – he thought – in poems, songs, and prayers, and – as they vibrate – they shape the felt harmony of similar and opposite things. In the wake of Plotinus, Ficino casts music and songs as living forms of spirit.
>
> - - A planetary music, composed of effluvia from above, reigns in the cosmos. (Mazzotta 2001: 13.)

This is clearly the case in Tolkien's cosmology too. The Music, played at the beginning and given from "above" (or "Outside"), reigns in Tolkien's fictional cosmos. And in the *legendarium* the power of words and music is imperative. As Umberto Eco maintains, behind the aesthetics of beauty and reality, there should be congruence (Eco 1986: 28). From this congruence derives the belief in harmony, and harmony is the creative power in Tolkien's *legendarium*.

The Flame Imperishable, which is the heart of the created world in Tolkien's fictional *legendarium*, could be understood to resemble the Platonic Soul of the World. Plato writes that "in the centre he [creator] put the soul, which he diffused throughout the body, making it also to be the exterior environment of it - - " (*Timaeus* 34b).

In Tolkien's *legendarium* the Flame Imperishable is the heart of the World, as Eru Ilúvatar (as an active character) declares in *The Silmarillion*: "And I will send forth into the Void the Flame Imperishable, and it shall be at the heart of the World" (Tolkien 1999: 9). The Flame becomes the heart of the world because of its power of creation. As mentioned, Melkor was searching for the Flame in order to create something new but could not find it since it was "with Ilúvatar", which could lead to the interpretation that the heart of the World is "with Ilúvatar":

> He [Melkor] had gone often alone into the void places seeking the Imperishable Flame; for desire grew hot within him to bring into Being things of its own, and it seemed to him that Ilúvatar took no thought for the Void,

and he was impatient of its emptiness. Yet he found not the Fire, for it is with Ilúvatar. But being alone he had begun to conceive thoughts of his own unlike those of his brethren. (Tolkien 1999: 4.)

This first mention of these "thoughts of his own" could also be seen as a kind of individualism compared to the other Ainur. When Melkor creates the discords, which forces Eru to make the interruptions in the Great Music, this first opposition against Eru's thoughts allows some of the Ainur to follow Melkor on his "musical rebellion".

Some of these thoughts he [Melkor] now wove into his music, and straightway discord arose about him, and many that sang nigh him grew despondent, and their thought was disturbed and their music faltered; but some began to attune their music to his rather than to the thought which they had at first. (Tolkien 1999: 4.)

As all of this happens before the beginning of time in the *legendarium*, in "timelessness", it shows that in Tolkien's cosmology time is also created. It only affects the created *changeable* world, not the *unchangeable* world where the creator, Eru, lives –in a place which is described as the Timeless Halls. In *The Silmarillion* time begins after cosmogony, and at the moment the angelic beings enter the physical World. Tolkien writes that "the Ainur - - entered into the World at the beginning of Time" (1999: 15). The vision that was shown to the Ainur was a model, how the world should be. After that they "began their great labours in wastes unmeasured and unexplored, and in ages uncounted and forgotten - - " (Tolkien 1999:10).

What then is the role of future in this concept? If Eru dwells in the "timelessness" outside the world, what is the part of free will and fate in Tolkien's *legendarium*? Kocher has pointed out that many of the wise characters in Middle-earth have general glimpses of the future, but they are never more than vague and unspecific. The future is the property of Eru, the One who plans it. Kocher ponders whether the future is yet fixed in the sense that every link in the chain of its events is foreordained. His answer is that it cannot be, because in his encounter with Gollum Bilbo's choice to kill or not to kill is genuinely free, and only after it has been made is it woven into the guiding scheme. Kocher concludes that Tolkien leaves it at that. Human, or Hobbitic or Elvish or Dwarfish or Entish, free will coexists with a providential order and promotes rather than frustrates this order. (Kocher 1973: 12.)

C. S. Lewis has explained this complexity of the concepts of "free will" and "fate" starting from the theory deriving from Boethius, who then again used the theories of Plato, which greatly influenced Lewis' thoughts, too. Lewis sees that God, as eternal and not perpetual never foresees, He simply sees:

> If, as its doctrine of Providence implies, God sees all things that are, were, or will be –in a single act of mind, and thus foreknows my actions, how am I free to act otherwise than He has foreseen? Philosophia will not put Boehius off with the shift that Milton is reduced to in Paradise Lost (III, 117), that, though God foreknows, His foreknowledge does not cause, my act. For the question never was whether foreknowledge necessitates the act but whether it is not evidence that the act must have been necessary - - . Eternity is quite distinct from perpetuity, from mere endless continuance in time. Perpetuity is only the attainment of an endless series of moments, each lost as soon as it is attained. Eternity is the actual and timeless fruition of illimitable life. Time, even endless time, is only an image, almost a parody, of that plenitude; a hopeless attempt to compensate for the transitoriness of its 'presents' by infinitely multiplying them - - . And God is eternal, not perpetual. Strictly speaking, He never *fore*sees; He simply sees. Your 'future' is only an area, and only for us a special area, of His infinite Now. He sees (not remembers) your yesterday's acts because yesterday is still 'there' for Him; he sees (not foresees) your tomorrow's acts because He is already in tomorrow - - . Boethius has here expounded a Platonic conception more luminously than Plato ever did himself. (Lewis 1964: 88–90.)

The same could be the case with Tolkien's cosmology's Eru. He is free of time, since he lives in "Timeless Halls" outside the Created World. In his letter to Milton Waldman, Tolkien describes how his fantasy world is going to end: Tolkien's "Legendarium ends with a vision of the end of the world, its breaking and remaking" (1999: xvii). Like his world's fictitious creator Eru, Tolkien as a "Maker" also knows how his world is going to end. Eru (and Tolkien), as well as the God in Boethius' theory, know the future – they do not foresee, but see.

This residing outside the physical world in timelessness relates closely to creation on two levels. In medieval thought there was a view of the ideal world as a "plane of existence" that is connected with God himself and unreachable for mortal men. John Scotus Eriugene for example espoused this vision. (Eco 1986: 57.)

In Tolkien's cosmology the "upper" spiritual level and the "lower" physical level can be discerned, but also a kind of "shadow world" in between. On the upper spiritual level, at the starting point of creation, Eru showed the Ainur (later Valar) how the world would grow and develop, but the Idea, the exact ending, was not shown: "the Valar have not seen as with sight the Later Ages or the ending of the World" (Tolkien 1999: 9).

At the beginning of the physical world, the chosen Ainur (Valar and Maiar) moved within the Created World and began their labours there. In Tolkien's *legendarium*, in *The Silmarillion*, after the rebellion of the Númenorean Men, the Undying Lands or Valinor, where the Valar and Maiar dwell, and which Tolkien also calls Paradise, are removed by Eru to beyond the reach of mortal men: "Valinor (or Paradise) and even Eressëa are removed, remaining only in the memory of the earth" (Tolkien 1999: xxviii).

In a way after this Valinor is an interspace between the Ideal World and Changeable World, undying and unreachable,[67] but still part of the World. In a way, perhaps, resembling the plane of "the upper reaches of the world, the lower reaches of the heavens", where Väinämöinen went in the end of the *Kalevala* (1975: 337).

In Tolkien's *legendarium*, physical appearance is relevant to the cosmology of "Two Levels": the levels of the visible and the invisible world. In *The Silmarillion*, the immortal beings Valar and Maiar are able to take a physical form if they want to, but otherwise they are purely spiritual creatures. As regards the Maiar, Tolkien writes that they were seldom "visible to Elves and Men" (1999: 21) and that the Valar could "change form" or "walk unclad" (1999: 78) without physical form. Quite interestingly, those of the Ainur who turn evil, such as Melkor (later Morgoth) and Sauron, inevitably lose their power to change form or "unclad" themselves.[68]

---

[67] Unreachable for many, but not for all. The High Elves sail to Valinor in the Third Age of Middle-earth, and also the bearers of the Great Ring (Bilbo, Frodo, and even Sam Gamgee) travel there according to *The Lord of the Rings*. Also Gandalf returns there when his "task is done" in *The Lord of the Rings*.

[68] For Morgoth's loss of this power: Tolkien 1999: 78. Sauron lost the power much later: in the beginning of the Second Age, Sauron "put on his fair hue again" (Tolkien 1999: 341), but after the Fall of Númenor – when his physical form was destroyed – Sauron lost his power of shapechanging: "he had wrought for himself a new shape; and it was terrible, for his fair semblance had departed for ever when he was cast into the abyss at the drowning of Númenor. He took up again the great Ring and clothed himself in power; and the malice of the Eye of Sauron few even of the great among Elves and Men could endure (Tolkien 1999: 351). In *The Lord of the Rings,* Tolkien writes that Sauron is "at length taking shape and power again" (1995: 244).

For Tolkien, the word to describe good is light and the words to describe evil are dark, black, or shadow. The Valar are beings of light, whereas evil forces like Sauron are described as shadows. Shippey sees this as an important feature and goes on to ponder whether the shadows actually "exist". Shadows are the absence of light and thus do not exist, but are still visible and palpable all the same. This dichotomy of light and shadow, white and black, is vital in Tolkien's vision of evil. Mordor is the "Black-Land" "where shadows lie", or "where the shadows are". When Aragorn reports the assumed death of Gandalf to Galadriel and the Elves of Lothlórien, he says that he "fell into Shadow". Gandalf himself says that if his side loses, "many lands will pass under the shadow". Shippey points out that many times in *The Lord of the Rings* "the Shadow" becomes a personification of Sauron. (Shippey 2003: 146–147.)

Furthermore the Balrog, one of the most defamiliarising creatures in *The Lord of the Rings*, is also "a shadow". In the chapter "The Bridge of Khazad-Dûm", in one of most forceful episodes of *The Lord of the Rings*, the monstrous Balrog is described with the words of dark and shadow:

> Something was coming up behind them. What it was could not be seen: **it was like a great shadow**, in the middle of which was a dark form, a man-shape maybe, yet greater; and power and terror seemed to be in it and to go before it.
>
> It came to the edge of the fire and the light faded as if a cloud had bent over it. Then with a rush it leaped across the fissure. The flames roared up to greet it, and wreathed about it; and a black smoke swirled in the air - - .
>
> The dark figure streaming with fire raced towards them - - .
>
> The Balrog reached the bridge. Gandalf stood in the middle of the span, leaning on his staff in his left hand, but in his other hand Glamdring gleamed, cold and white. His enemy halted again, facing him, and the shadow about it reached out like two vast wings. It raised the whip, and the thongs whined and cracked. Fire came from its nostrils. But Gandalf stood firm.
>
> 'You cannot pass,' he said. The orcs stood still, and a dead silence fell. 'I am a servant of the Secret Fire, wielder of the flame of Anor. You cannot pass. The dark fire will not avail you, flame of Udûn. **Go back to the Shadow**! You cannot pass.'

Balrog made no answer. The fire in it seemed to die, but the darkness grew - - . (Tolkien 1995: 321–322. *Emphasis mine*.)

Gandalf orders the Balrog, "a great shadow", to go "back to the Shadow", to the emptiness. The origins of this terrible creature is described in *The Silmarillion,* where Tolkien writes about the Maiar spirits that fell and joined Melkor's forces:

> For of the Maiar many were drawn to his [Melkor's] splendour in the days of his greatness; and others he corrupted afterwards to his service with lies and treacherous gifts. Dreadful among these spirits were the Valaraukar, the scourges of fire in Middle-earth were called Balrog, demons of terror. (Tolkien 1999: 23.)

In *The Silmarillion*, Tolkien writes that "number [of Maiar] is not known to the Elves" (Tolkien 1999: 21), but of the Valaraukar Tolkien speculates in *The History of Middle-earth* that "[t]here should not be supposed more than say 3 or at most 7 ever existed" (Tolkien 2002e: 80), so Gandalf faces a rare enemy.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, the Nazgûl are also described as shadows. Originally, earlier in the *legendarium*'s timespan, the Nazgûl were nine mortal men who were given Rings of Power by Sauron and became his slaves and powerful undead[69] forces. Their role is described in the famous poem that is given as an epigraph for *The Lord of the Rings*:

> 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 Shadow lie. (Tolkien 1995: vi.)

---

[69] Undead meaning a creature (for example in mythic or fantastic literature) which is at the same time dead, but still behaves as if it were alive. Usually functioning as a monstrous and defamiliar creature, an aspect of horror.

The Nine, the Nazgûl, are ruled by the maker of the One Ring, they are one with the ring, and they are bound in the darkness and shadows by the One Ring. Tolkien writes that:

> Men proved easier to ensnare. Those who used the Nine Rings become 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 the world beneath the sun, and they could see things in world 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 become 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. (Tolkien 1999: 346.)

Thus the Nine, the Ringwraiths, became invisible to mortal eyes, and they "entered the realm of shadows". In *The Lord of the Rings*, it seems as if the Nazgûl do not have physical shapes at all, but they can sense the physical world and affect it. This provokes a discussion in *The Lord of the Rings*:

> 'Can the Riders see?', asked Merry. 'I mean, they seem usually to have used their noses rather than their eyes, smelling for us, if smelling is the right word, at least in the daylight - - .
>
> 'They themselves do not see **the world of light** as we do, but our shapes cast shadows in their minds, which only the noon sun destroys; and in the dark they perceive many signs and forms that are hidden from us: then they are most to be feared. And at all times they smell the blood of living things, desiring and hating it. Senses, too, there are other than sight and smell. We can feel their presence – it troubles our hearts, as soon as we came here, and before we saw them; they feel ours more keenly. Also,' he added, and his voice sank to a whisper, 'the Ring draws them.' (Tolkien 1995: 185. *Emphasis mine*.)

Tolkien is addressing a difference between "the world of light" and the world of shadow; the plane between the planes, in a way. Randel Helms sees that the sense of smell that the Nazgûl use in *The Lord of the Rings* is a reference to Heraclitus who commented that in Hades, the Greek Underworld and the abode of the dead in Greek Mythology, "the souls - - being but smoke, know each other only by scent" (Helms 1974: 91). The Nazgûl are no longer mortal, or living, since they are "undead". They have moved farther away from the "mortal senses". In Tolkien's *legendarium* this same dichotomy between visible and invisible, and its effect on senses, is also evident in the dichotomy between mortal and immortal.

The Nazgûl could "see" only those who also inhabit the shadow world. The One Ring, made by Sauron, makes its mortal user invisible to other mortal eyes. It "moves" its wielder into the shadow world, where the physical plane becomes blurred, and invisible things visible. When Frodo puts on the One Ring in *The Lord of the Rings*, he becomes invisible to mortal eyes, but visible to the eyes of the Nazgûl, and they become visible to Frodo:

> Immediately, though everything else remained as before, dim and dark, the shapes [Nazgûl] become terribly clear. He [Frodo] was able to see beneath their black wrappings. There were five tall figures: two standing on the lip of the dell, three advancing. In their white faces burned keen and merciless eyes; under their mantles were long grey robes; upon their grey hairs were helms of silver; in their haggard hands were swords of steel. Their eyes fell on him and pierced him, as they rushed towards him. Desperate, he drew his own sword, and it seemed to him that it flickered red, as if it was a firebrand. Two of the figures halted. The third was taller than the others: his hair was long and gleaming and on his helm was a crown. In the other hand he held a long sword, and in the other a knife; both the knife and the hand that held it glowed with a pale light. (Tolkien 1995: 191.)

However, the Nazgûl are not the only beings in Middle-earth who are able to see the invisible. The dichotomy between physical and spiritual does not affect the immortal creatures. When the Ainur enter the physical world they take physical shapes which are based on the Idea of Elves and Men – which the Ainur have seen in the Vision of Eru Ilúvatar – but even these shapes are for them like clothes are for humans:

> Now the Valar took to themselves shape and hue; and because they were drawn into the World by love of Children of Ilúvatar, for whom they hoped,

they took shape after the manner which they had beheld in the Vision of Ilúvatar, save only in majesty and splendour. Moreover their shape comes of their knowledge of the visible World, rather than of the World itself; and they need it not, save only as we use raiment, and yet we may be naked and suffer no loss of our being. Therefore the Valar may walk, if they will, unclad, and then even the Eldar cannot clearly perceive them, though they be present. (Tolkien 1999: 11.)

In my point of view, the most interesting character in the *legendarium* with respect to the dichotomies of good and evil, mortal and immortal, and physical and spiritual is Gandalf. In fact, in Tolkien's *legendarium* physical and spiritual changes are central to the habitus of Gandalf.

In the second book of *The Silmarillion*, Gandalf, called Olórin, is mentioned as a Maiar spirit who is fond of Elves, but prefers to remain unseen to them, or in disguise:

Wisest of the Maiar was Olórin. He - - dwelt in Lórien,[70] but his ways took him often to the house of Nienna, and of her he learned pity and patience - - . But of Olórin that tale ["Quenta Silmarillion"] does not speak; for though he loved the Elves, he walked among them unseen, or in form as one of them, and they did not know whence came the fair visions or the promptings of wisdom that he put into their hearts. In later days he was the friend of all the Children of Ilúvatar, and took pity on their sorrows; and those who listened to him awoke from despair and put away the imaginations of darkness. (Tolkien 1999: 22.)

Later, Olórin (now known as Mithrandir or Gandalf) becomes one of the Wizards, the Istari, who come over the Sea from the Undying Lands to help in a war against Sauron. Among the Saruman (known as Curunír), he is described as Chief of the Istari and "closest in counsel with Elrond and the Elves" (Tolkien 1999: 360). Then again, in *The Hobbit* he is a "helper" for the protagonist, and at the beginning of *The Lord of the Rings*, he is a familiar character to the Hobbits, although "[h]is real business was far more difficult and dangerous, but the Shire-folk knew nothing about it" (Tolkien 1995: 25).

---

[70] This is a reference to the original Lórien in Valinor, not to the forest of Lórien or Lothlórien which is one of the milieus in *The Lord of the Rings*. The original Undying Lórien is the name for the gardens of Vala Irmo (known also as Lórien), the master of vision and dreams. Lórien is described as "the fairest of all places in the world, filled with many spirits" (Tolkien 1999: 19).

In fact, in *The Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf is Dark Lord Sauron's main enemy, The Champion of Light, an "angelic being" sent from the West by the Valar. Tolkien even suggested in the posthumously published *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth* that Gandalf himself could have be Manwë, the King of the Valar, disguised as a "regular" angelic being of the race of Maiar and after that taken a mortal shape (1992: 540).

In the beginning of *The Lord of the Rings* Gandalf suggests that he is more than he appears to be in a scene where Bilbo has a problem with freely giving the One Ring to Frodo as an inheritance. This difficulty to "give away the One Ring" has much to do with the "possessiveness" of magical artefacts that Tolkien himself was addressing in *On Fairy-Stories*.[71] When Bilbo gets angry in the scene, Gandalf counters:

> Gandalf's eyes flashed. 'It will be my turn to get angry soon,' he said. 'If you say that again, I shall. Then you will meet Gandalf the Grey uncloaked.' He took a step towards the hobbit, and he seemed to grow tall and menacing; his shadow filled the room. (Tolkien 1995: 33.)

Then again, this impression that characters "grow in size" is a recurring element. Aragorn is described this way when he meets Frodo and his company for the first time: "He stood up, and seemed suddenly to grow taller. In his eyes gleamed a light, keen and commanding. Throwing back his cloak, he laid his hand on the hilt of a sword that had hung concealed by his side. They did not dare to move." (Tolkien 1995: 168.)

In a memorable scene in which Frodo offers the One Ring to the immortal and extremely powerful Galadriel,[72] she is also described as "tall beyond measurement":

> 'And now at last it comes. You will give me the Ring freely! In place of the Dark Lord you will set up a Queen. And I shall not be dark, but beautiful and

---

[71] Richard Mathews views that this "possessiveness of the ring/rings" is parallel to the "tale of Two Trees" from *The Silmarillion*. Mathews writes that "The Story of the Rings, like the tale of the Two Trees, is in one sense a fable of how advanced technology and craft produce artifacts of great power and temptation but induce theft and war." (Mathews 2002: 63.) Then again, this theme is of course parallel to the effect of the Silmarils in *The Silmarillion*, too.

[72] Galadriel's power is almost invincible in Middle-earth. Appendix B of *The Lord of the Rings* says that "Three times Lórien had been assailed from Dol Guldur, but besides the valour of the elven people of that land, the power that dwelt there was too great for any to overcome, unless Sauron had come there himself" (Tolkien 1995: 1069). I assume that "the power" that the text is referring to is Galadriel herself.

terrible as the Morning and the Night! Fair as the Sea and the Sun and the Snow upon the Mountain! Dreadful as the Storm and the Lightning! Stronger than the foundations of the earth. All shall love me and despair!'

She lifted up her hand and from the ring that she wore there issued a great light that illuminated her alone and left all else dark. She stood before Frodo seeming now tall beyond measurement, and beautiful before enduring, terrible and worshipful. Then she let her hand fall, and the light faded, and suddenly she laughed again, and lo! she was shrunken: a slender elf-woman, clad in simple white, whose gentle voice was soft and sad. (Tolkien 1995: 356.)

Gandalf's character in *The Lord of the Rings* goes through a dramatic change during the narrative. That is because he "dies", and afterwards "returns". In the chapter "The Bridge of Khazad-dûm", Gandalf battles with the Balrog and falls into a pit. In the pit, or abyss, he ends up killing the "monster", but his own physical shape dies. Gandalf explains to his friends that he was *sent back* to do his work: "Naked I was sent back – for a brief time, until my task is done" (Tolkien 1995: 491). After rising from the "death", Gandalf emphasises his disparity from the physical world on many occasions. When Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas mistake him for Saruman and try to attack him, Gandalf tells them that "None of you have any weapons that could hurt me" (Tolkien 1995: 484).

The opposing (evil) forces of *The Lord of the Rings* are given a different and more tragic ending. Sauron, after the destruction of the One Ring, rises for one last time as a huge shadow and then disappears with a breeze of wind:

[B]lack against the pall of cloud, there rose a huge shape of shadow, impenetrable, lightning-crowned, filling all the sky. Enormous it reared above the world, and stretched out towards them a vast threatening hand, terrible but impotent: for even as it leaned over them, a great wind took it, and it was blown away, and passed; and then a hush fell. (Tolkien 1995: 928.)

Paul Kocher discusses the "deaths" of immortal beings in Tolkien's *legendarium* and the similarities of the destruction of the Witch King of Angmar, the leader of the Nazgûl, at the hands of Éowyn, and the death of Saruman at the hands of Grima. Both of the death scenes focus on perishableness. Kocher sees that Saruman's death completes his downfall. His spirit rising from his shrunken body is dissipated by a wind from the West and the spirit is dissolved into nothing. Kocher sees that this "nothing" is a general knell for the passing of the lords of

evil in *The Lord of the Rings*, but also that Tolkien is careful never to say anything explicit about this "nothingness" to which they go. (Kocher 1973: 79.)

In *The Lord of the Rings* the One Ring does not affect Tom Bombadil, who is also an immortal creature:

> He [Frodo] slipped the Ring on. Merry turned towards him to say something and gave a start, and checked an exclamation - - . Merry was staring blankly at his chair, and obviously could not see him. He got up and crept quietly away from the fireside towards the outer door. 'Hey there!', cried Tom, glancing towards him with a most seeing look in his shining eyes. 'Hey! Come Frodo, there! Where be you a-going? Old Tom Bombadil's not as blind as that yet. Take off the golden ring! Your hand's more fair without it. (Tolkien 1995: 131.)

Earlier, when Tom Bombadil puts on the One Ring, he does not become invisible: "Tom put the Ring round the end of his little finger and held it up to the candlelight. For a moment the Hobbits noticed something strange about this - - . There was no sign of Tom disappearing!" (Tolkien 1995: 130.) Later, during the Council of Elrond, Gandalf explains that Bombadil "is his own master", and "the Ring has no power over him" (Tolkien 1995: 259), which underscores the fact that the One Ring affects mortals and that Tom Bombadil is not mortal.

As an animistic spirit, Tom Bombadil is unaffected by the One Ring of Sauron, but the effect of visibility and invisibility on mortal eyes is even more interesting when it comes to the Elves in Tolkien's *legendarium*. In *The Lord of the Rings* the One Ring has a "magical" capability to transfer its user to "a shadow world", which is something of a plane of existence between, or perhaps under, [73] the physical "middle-world" and spiritual "upper world". Tolkien describes that high Elves, those of the people of Eldar who have lived in both the Undying Lands of Valinor and in Middle-earth, live on "both sides" – in the physical and in the spiritual world (Tolkien 2002d: 212).

---

[73] This could be the case if one compares this with the planes of existence (or "worlds") in Ancient Greek, Scandinavian or Finnish cosmologies, for example. In the Norse cosmology, the Underworld Hel and Nilfheim are the abodes of the dead and in the *Kalevala* the old Finnish underworld is described as Tuonela, the realm of the dead. In Greek mythology the underworld is usually Hades. The world that humans and mortals inhabit is usually, both in Finnish and Scandinavian mythology, called "middle-earth", Midgard in *Eddas*. Originally, though, Midgard did not mean "middle-earth". Webster's dictionary relates that *Midgard* (from the Icelandic *midhgardhr*) literally means "mid-yard", i.e. the middle ground between heaven and hell, where human beings dwell (Carter 1969: 32).

In *The Lord of the Rings* when Frodo is attacked by the Nazgûl and is struck with the Morgul knife, he is injured and evil magic pulls him into a shadow life of the Nazgûl, of the undead. He is "beginning to fade", as Gandalf later explains at Rivendell (Tolkien 1995: 213). In an early version of the story, in *The Return of the Shadow*, Gandalf says that Frodo would have himself become an undead person, a shadow, if he would have put on the One Ring: "they would have made a wraith of you before long – certainly if you had put on the Ring again" (Tolkien 2002d: 206).

In the story, Frodo is quickly rushed to the Elves of Rivendell to be healed. On their way, they encounter Elf-lord Glorfindel, who has ridden from Rivendell in search of them. When Frodo, who is at this point "beginning to fade", sees Glorfindel, he sees him as he "really is": "To Frodo it appeared that a white light was shining through the form and raiment of the rider, as if through a thin veil" (Tolkien 1995: 204). Frodo sees the inner light of the Elf, the spiritual –and the immortal –power of the character. Frodo is about to be pulled into the "shadow land" where invisible things become visible, and visible (physical) things invisible.

Later Glorfindel's real being is again revealed when almost completely "faded" Frodo is attacked by the Nazgûl at the Ford of Bruinen. Frodo, nearly unconscious at the moment, is rescued by a miraculous uprising of the river (caused by Elrond) which bears the Black Riders into "the rushing flood" (Tolkien 1995: 209). Losing his last senses, Frodo sees his friends and companions trying to come to his aid:

> With the last failing senses Frodo heard cries, and it seemed to him that he saw, beyond the Riders that hesitated on the shore, a shining figure of white light; and beyond it ran small shadowy forms waving flames, that flared red in the grey mist that was falling over the world. (Tolkien 1995: 209.)

Frodo's mortal companions – the three Hobbits Sam, Pippin and Merry, and Aragorn – are the small shadowy forms, the grey mist is the rest of the physical world, and "a shining figure of white light" is Glorfindel. This is later revealed when Frodo asks Gandalf about the incident:

> 'I thought that I saw a white figure that shone and did not grow dim like the others. Was that Glorfindel then?

'Yes, you saw him for a moment as he is upon the other side: one of the mighty of the Firstborn. He is an Elf-lord of a house of princes. (Tolkien 1995: 217.)

This is an informing passage. Gandalf's words confirm Frodo's vision to be a real one, as his words usually refer to real knowledge of the cosmology in *The Lord of the Rings*. Frodo saw Glorfindel for a moment as he is "upon the other side". In this Platonic and Christian Platonic view, Frodo sees, one might say, the ideal shape of Glorfindel. Frodo was moving into a chthonic, demonic underworld, a plane for the shadows and undead. However, at the same time as his vision of the physical world is fading, his vision of things invisible to mortal eyes is evolving.

In *The History of Middle-earth* Tolkien discusses the relation of the Elves and undead more thoroughly when Gandalf explains to Frodo why the Elves do not fear the Nazgûl: "They fear no Ringwraiths, for they live at once in both worlds, and each world has only half power over them, while they have double power over both" (Tolkien 2002d: 212). Basically, the Elves live in "two worlds": the physical and unphysical.

This view of the dead, or undead, is shared in *The Lord of the Rings* by Legolas, who is an Elf of The Woodland Realm and son of Thranduil, King of Northern Mirkwood. Even though he is not one of the High Elves, Legolas says that he does "not fear the Dead" (Tolkien 1995: 764) when travelling with Aragorn to the Paths of the Dead, which is inhabited by undead creatures. For the immortal Elves, whose souls never leave the world, there is no need to fear the undead.

One could say that Tolkien's Elves, as immortal creatures, are at the same time "physical" and "spiritual". In Morgoth's Ring, Tolkien also discusses how the Eldar, the High Elves, will eventually become completely invisible to mortal eyes. Their spiritual side will "consume" their physical side:

As the weight of the years, with all their changes of desire and thought, gathers upon the spirit of the Eldar, so do the impulses and moods of their bodies change. This the Eldar mean when they speak of their spirits consuming them; and they say that ere Arda ends all **the Eldalië on earth will have become spirits invisible to mortal eyes, unless they will to be seen by some among Men** into whose minds they may enter directly. (Tolkien 2002e: 212. *Emphasis mine.*)

In the constructual mythopoetic code of Tolkien's *legendarium* there are dichotomies on many levels between the physical and the spiritual and between the visible and the invisible realms. These can be seen also in the great division: the dichotomy between mortal and immortal. Tolkien's *legendarium* unites these elements in a coherent cosmological vision.

2.1.2 Cosmology and the Chain of Being

The Cosmological account of Tolkien's *legendarium* is given clearly in *The Silmarillion*. An important text in the work is "Valaquenta", the second part of *The Silmarillion*, which is a short (under ten pages long) "account of the Valar and Maiar according to the lore of the Eldar" (Tolkien 1999: 15).

"Valaquenta" introduces the divine beings and their attributes, areas of responsibility and roles in the *legendarium*. There, accounts of Melkor and each of the fourteen other Valar are given, and some of the "lower" Maiar beings are introduced for the first time. Here, Sauron and Gandalf (under the name of Olórin), the forthcoming archrivals of *The Lord of the Rings*, are also addressed.

The major text of *The Silmarillion* is titled "Quenta Silmarillion", also referred to as "The History of the Silmarils" or "Silmarillion proper". It is a collection of tales and legends set in the so-called First Age of Middle-earth. The central storyline is the tragic story of the three jewels, the Silmarils, which are the most valued artefacts in the whole mythical history Tolkien's *legendarium*.

In "Quenta Silmarillion", the different phases of history before the ages of Sun are described. The first cycle, when the Valar live in a place called Almaren, is the Age of Lamps, also called "The Spring of Arda". These Lamps, Illuin and Ormal, are the first lights in Arda and illuminate the world before the creation of Sun or Moon. The age ends when Melkor destroys the Lamps. This foul act of destruction causes such devastation that "the shape of Arda and the symmetry of its waters and its lands was marred in that time, so that the first designs of the Valar were never after restored" (Tolkien 1999: 29). This devastation creates a new world, and starts a new phase in the history of Middle-earth.

After the catastrophe, the Valar move their seat of power to Aman, a continent far to the west of Middle-earth, and establish there a kingdom called Valinor, which in the *legendarium* will stand until the end of Time. Melkor's strongholds and fortresses are on the other side of the world. First, Melkor rules in Utumno and later in Angband, in the far north of Middle-earth.

After the destruction of the Lamps, the second cycle of light in Tolkien's *legendarium* is called the Age of Trees. Yavanna, one of the Valar, "Giver of Fruits" and "Queen of the Earth", creates two trees – Telperion and Laurelin – with the power of her song. But the light of the trees only affects Aman and Valinor, and the only other light in Middle-earth are the stars that Varda, the Queen of the Valar, creates.

In this Age of Trees, Elves, the first Children of Ilúvatar, awaken in the farthest east of Middle-earth, in a place called Cuiviénen. The awakening of the Elves forces the Valar to go to war against Melkor, whose plan is to corrupt the Elves and become their ruler, or "god". This war ends in the capture and imprisonment of Melkor. In the cosmological account it is revealed that some of the Elves journey to Valinor and become its residents, and how the tribes (and races) of Elves are divided after that. In this era, as a remarkable miraculous individual task, the Silmarils are made by Fëanor, the greatest of Elves. For the making of these jewels, Fëanor "summoned all his lore, and his power, and his subtle skill" (Tolkien 1999: 68). Mandos, the Doomsman of the Valar, foretold that "the fates of Arda, earth, and air, lay locked within them" (Tolkien 1999: 69).

This second age of light ends in a story called "The Darkening of Valinor". In the chapter, Melkor is naively released from his imprisonment. After that, with the help of defamiliar and horrific spider-like being called Ungoliant, Melkor attacks Valinor and destroys the Trees and steals the Silmarils from Fëanor's father Finwë, whom he kills during the robbery. As a result of this "darkening", the people of Fëanor, called the Noldor Elves, declare a "rebellion" against the Valar and decide to pursue Melkor in Middle-earth. Fëanor decides to win back the Silmarils and to avenge his father. The Noldor Elves choose not to listen to Manwë, the King of the Valar. After that, the Valar tell the Elves that if they choose to leave and fight Melkor on their own, they would not help them. Earlier, Manwë has told them that they had come to Valinor of their own free will and that the Valar had no desire to rule or control them.

The destruction of unanimity in Valinor results in the "flight of the Noldor" from Valinor, without the blessing of the Valar. Before fleeing, Fëanor and his seven sons swore a terrible oath of vengeance, to battle anyone who withheld the Silmarils from them, even the Valar. This all functions as the fall of the Elves, and everything they have to endure after this in Middle-earth is part of their struggle. After this, the unsuccessful and tragic war of the Noldor Elves and Melkor (Morgoth) forms the major part of "Quenta Silmarillion".

In the history of Tolkien's World, after the Age of Trees come the Ages of Sun. There, after the destruction of the Trees, the Valar create the Moon and the Sun. This age is also the time ofthe awakening of Men. Thus, in the cosmology the Elves are the people of the Stars, and Men are the people of the Sun. In the fictional history of Middle-earth, as is also the case in our own history, eras usually start and end with wars. The First Age of Sun, and the narrative of "Quenta Silmarillion", ends with the "War of Wrath". In this war the Valar, the Elves and some faithful Men finally manage to break Melkor's (Morgoth's) dominion over Middle-earth, and Melkor is "thrust through the Door of Night beyond the Walls of the World, into the Timeless Void" (Tolkien 1999: 306). But the price of victory is high, since the land of Beleriand, the western part of Middle-earth, is also destroyed in the course of the events (Tolkien 1999: 303).

The fourth part of *The Silmarillion*, the "Akallabêth", deals with the Second Age of Middle-earth, also known as the Second Age of Sun. It is an account of the rise and fall of Númenor, the island kingdom of the faithful Men, called the Dúnedain. The fifth part of *The Silmarillion*, "Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age", closely links the legends of *The Silmarillion* with the storyline of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. This is a short story that describes the events that take place at the end of the Second Age and the main events of The Third Age. Here, the origin of the Rings of Power is described, and the rise and fall of Sauron's evil empire is illuminated. The survey ends with a short summary of the plot of *The Lord of the Rings*.

Considering the legendarium as a constructed cosmological account (but also as a set of narratives), during its timespan the focus changes from Ainur to Elves, and later from Elves to Men (and to Hobbits).

> As I say, the legendary Silmarillion is peculiar, and differs from all similar things that I know in not being anthropocentric. Its center of view and interest is not Men but 'Elves'. Men come in inevitably: after all the author is a man, and if he has an audience they will be Men and Men must come in to our tales, as such, and not merely transfigured or partially represented as Elves, Dwarfs, Hobbits, etc. But they remain peripheral – late comers, and however growingly important, not principals. (Tolkien 1999: xv.)

From this quotation of Tolkien's letter to Milton Waldman, we can see that in *The Silmarillion* the main focus is not on human characters but on the race of Elves – or, earlier in the text, on the creation myth, and the divine spirits of Ainur. There

is clearly a chain of being in Tolkien's *legendarium*: a chain in which mortal Men are "lower" than the races of Elves or Ainur.

This chain of being, or *scala naturæ* – the concept of a hierarchal explanation of the universe, is also evident in the cosmology of Tolkien's *legendarium*. The concept itself is derived from Plato's and Aristotle's cosmological accounts and developed in Neoplatonism and in the Christian Platonism of the medieval era. Essentially, it details a strict hierarchal structure of all matter and life, starting from the creator (or God) and progressing downward from angels and demons to stars, moon, king, nobles, arcane men, animals, trees, plants, stones, metals and minerals.[74]

The chain of being in Tolkien's *legendarium* has some of its origins in the Christian Platonic tradition. In Tolkien's cosmology, immortal and mortal races and creatures are higher or lower in hierarchy than others. Highest in the hierarchy is Eru Ilúvatar, the creator of Middle-earth. After the creator come the Ainur, The Holy Ones, which are akin to Plato's created gods, quite as Eru Ilúvatar resembles Plato's Demiurge.

Flieger reads Eru's purpose in the cosmology from his name:

> The laws of movement that govern the macrocosm and microcosm, the universe and the individual, are laws of change – change of state, change of direction, change of nature. So, too, are the laws that govern Tolkien's fictive world. His Prime Mover, Eru, whose name - - may be related to Indo-European *er-*, 'to set in motion,' has through the Ainur imbued with change the world he set in motion, giving it ebb and surge, advance and retreat. It is a world in which the farthest point from light is also the beginning of the journey back. (Flieger 2002: 170.)

Flieger sees that Eru's name may be related to the ancient concept of The One, who sets things in motion, the so-called Prime Mover. But if Eru is the Prime Mover, then how did he set the world in motion if he himself is untouched by movement or change? The same question concerning the Prime Mover troubled thinkers of the ancient and medieval world: how have the movement in the changeable world started and what is the thing that does not move? C. S. Lewis argues that the central answer to this question comes from Aristotle:

> [As a] Prime mover he finds in the wholly transcendent and immaterial God who 'occupies no place and is not affected by time'. But we must not imagine

---

[74] See for example Lovejoy 1965: 59.

Him moving things by any positive action, for that would be to attribute some kind of motion to Himself and we should then not have reached an utterly unmoving Mover. How then does He move things? Aristotle answers - - 'He moves as beloved'. He moves other things, that is, an object of desire moves those who desire it. The *Primum Mobile* is moved by its love for God, and being moved, communicates motion to the rest of the universe. (Lewis 1964: 113.)

To the question that fixated ancient thinkers,[75] "what is behind this moving cosmos", Lewis answers once again with Aristotle's reasoning:

And beyond the Primum Mobile what? The answer to this unavoidable question has been given, in its first form, by Aristotle. 'Outside the heaven there is neither place nor void nor time. Hence whatever is there is of such a kind as not to occupy space, nor does affect it- - . Adopted by Christianity, the doctrine speaks loud and jubilant. What is in one sense 'outside heaven' is now, in other sense, 'the very Heaven', *caelum ipsum*, and full of God, as Bernardus says. (Lewis 1964: 96–97.)

This question (and answer) of the Primum Mobile, and Heaven beyond that, may have influenced Tolkien's imagination too, since he places his cosmology's Eru Ilúvatar in the "Timeless Halls" outside the "Created World".

In *The Silmarillion*, the Ainur are described as the offspring of Eru's thought (Tolkien 1999: 3) and in this way they are "a part" of Eru. In *The Book of Lost Tales Part One* Tolkien writes that Eru has created the Ainur by singing before the Creation: "Before all things he sang into being the Ainur first, and greatest is their power and glory of all his creatures within the world and without" (Tolkien 2002a: 52). In this way, the Ainur are also a part of creation, a foreshadowing of it.

Tolkien writes that some of the Ainur went to the created physical world and will remain there as long as the world will exist:

Thus it came to pass that of the Ainur some abode still with Ilúvatar beyond the confines of the World; but others, and among them many of the greatest and most fair, took the leave of Ilúvatar and descended into it. But this condition Ilúvatar made, or it is the necessity of their love, that their power should thenceforward be contained and bounded in the World, to be within it

---

[75] And still may baffle modern scientists.

for ever, until it is complete, so that they are its life and it is theirs. And therefore they are named the Valar, the Powers of the World. (Tolkien 1999: 9–10.)

The Ainur who go to the created world (the natural world, Arda) are divided hierarchically into two categories: the higher Valar (The Powers of the World), and the lower Maiar.[76] In Tolkien's *legendarium* Eru Ilúvatar lives "beyond the confines of the World" in the Timeless Halls, which cannot be reached by mortals, just as Plato writes that "the father and maker of all this universe is past finding out; and even if we found him, to tell of him to all men would be impossible" (*Timaeus* 28c).

The Valar are the "Powers of the Earth", but on some occasions they clearly do not, or perhaps cannot, manage all by themselves. The clearest example of this is seen during the "invasion" of Valinor by the rebellious Númenoreans, who demand immortality.[77] In the passage: "the Valar laid down their government of Arda" and called upon the One, who sank Númenor under the waves (Tolkien 1999: 334). Kocher has pointed out that this serves to show us that while the Valar have what Tolkien calls incomprehensibly great "demiurgic" powers, which they use in governing and guarding the affairs of Middle-earth, they are only agents of Eru and are in need of his direct intervention in major emergencies. Kocher points out that Tolkien does not go beyond this point in defining the relationship of the Valar to their superior, and that he has told us all we need to understand the literary-philosophical framework of his tale. (Kocher 2000: 24.)

The Ainur, as the offspring of Eru's thought, are not bound by physical appearances, they are spiritual creatures. The same can be assumed of Eru, too. Anne Freire Ashbaugh interprets (1988: 13) that Plato's Demiurge knows nothing of physical limitations or (human) physical restrictions. Perhaps, then, Eru and Ainur are pure spirits (*mentes*), as Lewis writes Dionysius thought angels to be (1964: 71). Tolkien himself writes in *The Road Goes Ever On* that the Valar (as part of the Ainur) took physical forms after they ended their demiurgic tasks and settled in Arda, the Created World (Tolkien 1967: 74).

In Tolkien's chain of being, after Eru and the Ainur, the spiritual creatures, come the races that Eru Ilúvatar had created, the Elves and the Men, who in *The*

---

[76] "With the Valar came other spirits whose being also began before the World, of the same order as the Valar but of less degree. These are the Maiar, the people of the Valar, and their servants and helpers." (Tolkien 1999: 21.)

[77] The Númenoreans only manage to get to the shore of Valinor before Eru Ilúvatar uses his Divine powers and changes the shape of the world (Tolkien 1999: 333–334).

Silmarillion are called the Children of Ilúvatar. The Elves are considered to be higher in hierarchy than Men because they are created first and resemble more the Ainur than the Men do. As Tolkien writes in *The Silmarillion*, "Now the Children of Ilúvatar are Elves and Men, The Firstborn, and the Followers" (Tolkien 1999: 7).

In the cosmology of Tolkien's *legendarium*, the races of both Elves and Men are formed of soul and body: *Fëa* and *Hröar*, as Elves call them (Tolkien 2002e: 304, 309). Through Finrod, an Elf, Tolkien describes how the Elves see these two – body and soul – functioning in perfect harmony: "[H]armony of hröa and fëa is, we [Elves] believe, essential to the true nature unmarred of all the Incarnate: the Mirröanwi as we call the Children of Eru" (Tolkien 2002e: 315).

Men, who are despaired by the fact that they are mortal, whereas Elves are not, believe that their *hröar* "were not by right nature short-lived, but had been made so by the malice of Melkor" (Tolkien 2002e: 304). To this, Finrod answers that it is impossible:

> You [Andreth, a human] claim, if you fully understand your own words, to have had imperishable bodies, not bounded by the limits of Arda, and yet derived from its matter and sustained by it. And you claim also (though this you may not have perceived) to have had *hröar* and *fëar* that were from beginning out of harmony. (Tolkien 2002e: 315.)

In Tolkien's cosmology body and soul are inseparable:

> But the body is not an inn to keep a traveller warm for a night, ere he goes on his way, and then to receive another. It is a house made for one dweller only, indeed not only house but raiment also; and it is not clear to me that we should in this case speak only of the raiment being fitted to the wearer rather than of the wearer being fitted to the raiment - - . For were it 'natural' for the body to be abandoned and die, but "natural" for the *fëa* to live on, then there would indeed be a disharmony in Man, and his parts would not be united by love. His body would be a hindrance at best, or a chain. An imposition indeed, not a gift. (Tolkien 2002e: 317.)

This is of course a classical view of the subject of soul and body. C. S. Lewis notes that "spirits" are the "subtle *gumphus*" required by Plato and Alanus to keep body and soul together, or as Donne says, "the subtile knot which makes us man" (Lewis 1964: 167).

Plato says in the *Charmides*, in a negative tone against physicians and medicine, that the body cannot be cured without the soul. In *Timaeus*, Plato asserts the symmetry of soul and body. Any defect of either is an occasion of the greatest discord. Thus for Plato, body and soul are in a way also inseparable. (Jowett 1964: 688.)

Lewis points out that in the early Middle Ages the Platonic belief that "we" had lived before we were incarnate on earth still hung in the air. Chalcidus had preserved what Plato says about this in *Phaedrus* (245a) and in *Timaeus* (35a, 41d). Lewis explains that these very difficult passages may not really imply the pre-existence of the individual soul, but could easily be thought to do so. Lewis sees that Origen held that all those souls which now animate human bodies were created at the same time as the angels and had long existed before their terrestrial birth. Even Augustine maintains that Adam's soul was already in existence while his body still "slept in its causes". (Lewis 1964: 155–156.)

In Tolkien's cosmology, the fates of Men and Elves are different. In *The Silmarillion* Tolkien writes that Elves' souls are immortal, and are immune to sicknesses, but their bodies could be destroyed:

> Immortal were the Elves, and their wisdom waxed from age to age, and no sickness nor pestilence brought death to them. Their bodies indeed were of the stuff of Earth, and could be destroyed; and in those days they were more like to the bodies of Men, since they had not so long been inhabited by the fire of their spirit, which consumes them from within in the courses of time. (Tolkien 1999: 117.)

Tolkien writes that the "doom of the Elves is to be immortal, to love the beauty of the world, to bring it to full flower with their gifts of delicacy and perfection, to last while it lasts, never leave it even when 'slain', but returning – and yet, when the Followers [Men] come, to teach them, and make way for them - - " (Tolkien 1999: xv).

Then again, the souls of the Elves are bound to Arda, the created World, but human souls are not bound to it. Tolkien writes that the world (Arda) of his *legendarium* "will not endure for ever. It was made by Eru, but He is not in it. The One only has no limits. Arda, and Eä itself, must therefore be bounded." (Tolkien 2002e: 311–312.)

Thus, Men are different from Elves because they are mortal. But what does this mortality mean? Are their souls still "immortal" or ever-lasting? In the

legendarium it is emphasised that the Elves do not know what happens to the souls of Men after they die:

> But Men were more frail, more easily slain by weapon or mischance, and less easily healed; subject to sickness and many ills; and they grew old and died. What may befall their spirits after death the Elves know not. Some say that they too go to the halls of Mandos; but their place of waiting there is not that of the Elves, and Mandos under Ilúvatar alone save Manwë knows whither they go after the time or recollection in those silent halls beside the Outer Sea. None have ever come back from the mansions of the dead, save only Beren son of Barahir, whose hand had touched a Silmaril; but he never spoke afterward to mortal Men. The fate of Men after death, maybe, is not in the hands of the Valar, nor was all foretold in the Music of Ainur. (Tolkien 1999: 117.)

Tolkien therefore describes in his "mythology of Elves" that the fate of Men is unknown. Whether they go to some unknown parts of Vala Mandos' halls of the dead, or to some other distant location, the Elves do not know. And *The Silmarillion* is of course written from the perspective of Elves. It is the mythical history of the Elves and therefore consists of their legends and stories.

Whereas the Elves and Men are described as "Children of Ilúvatar" in the *legendarium*, the races of Hobbits and Dwarves are essentially outsiders in comparison. At first, they are not a part of the original cosmological Idea or the final cosmogonical Creation. Then again, the Hobbits were originally also outsiders in Tolkien's own mythopoetic creation. They only arrive in the *legendarium* as an accidental creation, for the purpose of giving a comic aspect to Tolkien's story for children: *The Hobbit*. After this, due to writing *The Lord of the Rings* as a sequel to *The Hobbit*, the Hobbits are "accidently" written into the *legendarium*, and the fantasy world of Middle-earth was rooted fundamentally within the world of *The Silmarillion* and older parts of the "history of Elves".[78] From the perspective of contemporary readers, this is a fortunate happening, since without Hobbits Tolkien's fiction would not have become as popular and significant as it is.

But Hobbits are not the only outsiders in the *legendarium*. In *The Silmarillion* Dwarves are "created" by Vala Aulë, though their individual life comes from Eru

---

[78] See for example Carpenter 1977: 183–192.

Ilúvatar. Aulë's actions in making the dwarves are at first quite rebellious, since he tries to do it in secrecy, without Eru's knowledge:

> It is told that in their beginning the Dwarves were made by Aulë in the darkness of Middle-earth; for so greatly did Aulë desire the coming of the Children [Elves and Men], to have learners to whom he could teach his lore and his crafts, that he was unwilling to await the fulfilment of the designs of Ilúvatar. And Aulë made the Dwarves even as they still are, because the forms of the Children who were to come were unclear to his mind, and because the power of Melkor was yet over the Earth; and he wished therefore that they should be strong and unyielding. But fearing that the other Valar might blame his work, he wrought in secret: and he made first the Seven Fathers of the Dwarves in a hall under the mountains in Middle-earth. (Tolkien 1999: 37.)

But Eru Ilúvatar knows of Aulë's doings, and his speech to Aulë is also quite revealing on the level of authority and the chain of being. Eru is higher in hierarchy, and Aulë, his follower, is of course lower, and it is not in his power to create a race of mortals. Aulë could not give his creations a mind of their own or power of their own; he could only create un-autonomic things, *golems*[79] in a sense:

> Now Ilúvatar knew what was done, and in the very hour that Aulë's work was complete - - Ilúvatar spoke to him; and Aulë heard his voice and was silent. And the voice of Ilúvatar said to him: 'why hast thou done this? Why dost thou attempt a thing which thou knowest is beyond thy power and thy authority? For thou hast from me as a gift thy own being only, and no more; and therefore the creatures of thy hand and mind can live only by that being, moving when thou thinkest to move them, and if thy thought be elsewhere, standing idle. Is that thy desire? (Tolkien 1999: 37.)

But as Aulë repents and offers to destroy his work, if Eru wishes so, Eru Ilúvatar declares that he has accepted Aulë's offer, and the race of Dwarves is accepted as a part of the cosmology. Life and individual minds are given to them as a gift from Eru Ilúvatar:

> And the voice of Ilúvatar said to Aulë: 'Thy offer I accepted even as it was made. Dost thou not see that these things have now a life of their own, and speak with their own voices? Else they would not have flinched from thy

---

[79] In Jewish folklore a *golem* is an animated anthropomorphic being, created from matter, such as iron, earth, wood, etc.

blow [when Aulë promises to destroy them with a great hammer], nor from any command of thy will.' (Tolkien 1999: 38.)

After this Eru Ilúvatar still clarifies the place of the Dwarves in the chain of being. They cannot awaken before the Children of Ilúvatar, thus they cannot be the Firstborn, since this is the place of the Elves in the cosmography. Eru awakens them when the time is right, and he refers to Dwarves as children of Aulë, although "adopted" by Eru Ilúvatar:

> But I [Eru] will not suffer this: that these should come before the Firstborn of my design, nor that thy impatience should be rewarded. They shall sleep now in the darkness under stone, and shall not come forth until the Firstborn have awakened upon Earth; and until that time thou and they shall wait, though long it seem. But when the time comes I will awaken them, and they shall be to thee as children; and often strife shall arise between thine and mine, the children of my adoption and the children of my choice.' (Tolkien 1999: 38.)

Thus, while in *The Silmarillion* the Dwarves are adopted as Children of Ilúvatar, they are usually not represented as such in the *legendarium*. It is said in *The Silmarillion* that in the end the Dwarves will receive their place among the Children:

> - - and that he [Aulë] declared to their [Dwarves] Fathers of old that Ilúvatar will hallow them and give them a place among the Children in the End. Then their part shall be to serve Aulë and to aid him in the remaking of Arda after the Last Battle. (Tolkien, 1999: 39.)

Dwarves are adopted as children of Ilúvatar, but what then is the position of Hobbits in the chain of being? Hobbits are different compared to other races first of all in that they have never "been warlike, and they had never fought among themselves" (Tolkien 1995: 5). They do not seem to be habitants of a mythic or heroic world, but of a more peaceful fairy-tale.

In higher mythical *The Silmarillion*, because of the imagined Elvish background of the narrative, the Hobbits are called by an Elvish word *Periannath*. There is no explanation of the origins of *Periannath*, but in the last book "Of the Rings of Power" their position before the War of the Rings as outsiders of the great history of Middle-earth is revealed:

> [T]he Periannath, the Little People, the Halflings, who dwelt in the west of Eriador. And ere that they had been held of small account by Elves and by

Men, and neither Sauron nor any of the Wise save Mithrandir had in all their counsels given thought to them. (Tolkien 1999: 364.)

In the War of the Rings that ends the Third Age of Middle-earth, the Hobbits prove their capability of changing the history of Middle-earth:

> For, as many songs have since sung, it was Periannath, the Little People, dwellers in hillsides and meadows, that brought them deliverance.

> For Frodo the Halfling, it is said, at the bidding of Mithrandir took on himself the burden, and alone with his servant he passed through peril and darkness and came at last in Sauron's despite even to Mount Doom; and there into the Fire where it was wrought he cast the Great Ring of Power, and so at last it was unmade and its evil consumed. (Tolkien 1999: 365.)

In the end, this is of course *not* what really happens in Mount Doom. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo does not cast the One Ring into the Fire, but, importantly, he fails to do so. After Frodo's "failure", Gollum unwittingly destroys the One Ring, as he takes the One Ring from Frodo and trips and falls into the fire. This "changing" and remodeling of the story and remaking of intratextual myths is a repetitive concept in Tolkien's *legendarium*, where different fictitious stories and sources fluctuate and overlap each other from time to time.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, the Hobbits are explained to be relatives of Men, and more "human" than for example Dwarves or Elves:

> It is plain indeed that in spite of later estrangement Hobbits are relatives of ours: far nearer to us than Elves, or even Dwarves - - . The beginning of Hobbits lies far back in the Elder Days that are now lost and forgotten. (Tolkien 1995: 2.)

The position of the Hobbits as outsiders is seen in *The Lord of the Rings*, where nobody seems to be able to place the Hobbits in the chain of being, or the cosmological hierarchy. Consider, for instance, the scene where the Ent Treebeard is trying to place the Hobbits in his old lists, but finds this impossible:

> What are *you*, I wonder? I cannot place you. You do not seem to come in the old lists that I learned when I was young. But that was a long, long time ago, and they may have made new lists. (Tolkien 1995: 453.)

In response, Merry, one of the Hobbits, then states that: "we always seem to have got left out of the old lists, and the old stories" (Tolkien 1995: 454).

Later Hobbits Merry and Pippin suggest a new chapter for Treebeard's list of beings: "Half-grown hobbits, the hole-dwellers" (Tolkien 1995: 454). Still later, Treebeard adds Hobbits to the list in his own fashion, saying: "And hungry as hunters, the Hobbit children, the laughing-people, the little people" (Tolkien 1995: 572). And thus Hobbits get their position in the chain of being, as one of the "free peoples" of Middle-earth.

2.2 Tolkien's Mythopoeia in On Fairy-Stories and in the Legendarium

> 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**. (Tolkien 1983: 122. *Emphasis mine*.)

In his essay *On Fairy-Stories* Tolkien establishes his theory of the writer as a sub-creator comparable to the creator – the God – in Tolkien's own Roman Catholic beliefs. In this theory the author is a sub-creator creating a secondary world, which in the fantasy literature of Tolkien's time was usually known as Faërie. As Flieger writes, *On Fairy-Stories* is Tolkien's "creative manifesto, explicating the principles - - of his own mythological fiction" (Flieger 2003a: 27).

The view of the author as a creator of (literary) worlds is of course not a new one, but classical. Theories of a world created by a divine spirit or god, and Platonic mimetic versions of that world created by poets and authors are known throughout western civilization. There are similarities in the etymologies of the words poet and creator. In Greek the word for poet is *poiein*, which at the same time means *to make*, *to create*, and *to form* (Heninger 1974: 287). In *Timaeus* Plato uses demiurge (dēmiourgos) to refer to the creator of the world.[80] The word demiurge had the common meaning of an artisan or craftsman, a maker of things. Plato invented the cosmogonical myth to describe how well organised and formed the created world is and that it is made by a "skilful" artisan.

In the renaissance, the Neoplatonic mimetic view of the poet or author as a creator flourished, and God was indeed (in some sense) likened to a poet. Italian

---

[80] The word demiurge is unfortunately usually translated into English as *God*. See for example *The Dialogues of Plato*, translated into English by B. Jowett (1964).

renaissance humanist Christophoro Landino writes that "God is the supreme poet, and the world is His poem" (Heninger 1974: 292). Authors' comparisons and assumed contacts with transcendent divinity were common in the ancient and pre-modern world, where writers were seen as instruments of God or gods, as inspired oracles (Frye 1967: 55, 60). In Platonic poetical inspirations, the author is possessed by a god, who speaks through him, and the author does not even know what he is doing (Tigerstedt 1969: 63). *Divine frenzy* takes over the poet (Mazzotta 2001: 47), and he composes his works through divine dispensation.

C. S. Lewis discusses different passages from Plato's dialogues on the subject. He finds the most interesting is from Plato's *Apology* (31c–d), where Plato explains why Socrates abstained from political life. Plato's Socrates-character in the dialogue says that the reason is that "[s]omething divine and deamoniac - - happens to me - - . It has been so ever since I was a boy. There comes a voice which, whenever I hear it, always forbids something I am about to do, but never commands" (Lewis 1964: 40).[81] Could this be seen as a sign of an outside influence on the thinker or writer?

Owen Barfield also cites Plato's treatment of the subject of divine inspiration. In *Timaeus*, Plato points out that the seer need *prophetae* to interpret the meaning. Plato writes that no one attains to true and inspired consciousness while in full possession of his wits, but either the power of his intellect is restricted in sleep, or is changed by some disease of divine possession. Plato adds that the task of *remembering* this divine vision, whether it be a waking or a sleeping one, and of understanding it, is reserved for reason and the full consciousness. Barfield illuminates that the seer himself, while he is still "raving" and "remains in the inspiration", cannot be the judge of his own vision. (Barfield 1976: 169–170.)

Tolkien takes his place in a long tradition of inspired authors. Tolkien writes that his stories "arose in my mind as 'given' things" (1999: xii). In his biography of Tolkien, Humphrey Carpenter goes farther and writes that when Tolkien wrote *The Silmarillion*, he believed that in one sense he was writing the truth. Carpenter sees that Tolkien hoped his stories were in some sense an embodiment of a profound truth. In *On Fairy-Stories*, and in the story *Leaf by Niggle*, Tolkien suggests that a man may be given by God the gift of recording "a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality of truth." (Carpenter 1977: 91.)

---

[81] It has to be stressed that Plato's word *daemoniac* (δαιμόνιον) has very little to do with the later Christian concept of "daemons" or "demons". As Lewis points out, "divine" and "daemoniac" may be synonyms, but Plato later draws a clear distinction between them and declares "daemons" as creatures of a middle nature between gods and men (Lewis 1964: 40).

In fact, this idea of common discursive property of stories is shared by postmodernism.[82] Indeed, the whole subject of "authorship" and "originality" has been a matter of debate for a long time, especially since the era of post-structuralism. Roland Barthes argues that "the text is a tissue of quotations - - . The Writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writing, to counter the ones with the others - - ." Claude Lévi-Strauss hews closer to Tolkien when he writes that: "I don't have the feeling that I write my books, I have the feeling that my books get written through me - - I never had, and still do not have, the perception of feeling my personal identity." (Chandler 2004.) A similar kind of method is also vital in Tolkien's mythopoetic writings.

The basics of Tolkien's creative method of sub-creation can be found from the celebrated theory of fantasy literature, *On Fairy-Stories*, first held as a lecture and subsequently written as a study on fairy-stories, but read more influentially since then as a theory on Tolkien's own writings.

In his essay, Tolkien uses the terms of the author's independent invention, inheritance and diffusion. All of these terms focus on the textual relations of stories, origins of stories, and the intertextual connections between stories. Tolkien writes that fairy-stories are ancient. Related texts appear in very early records, and can be found universally wherever there is language. (Tolkien 1983: 121.) The theory of the origins of fairy-stories is in some way linked with the theory of myths, which I will discuss later in the chapter.

In Tolkien's view, researchers that try to trace the background of fairy-stories are confronted with the problems of independent invention (or independent evolution) of similar inheritance from a common ancestry, as well as diffusion at various times from one or more centres. All three issues have evidently played a part in producing the intricate web of extant stories. Of these three, in Tolkien's opinion, invention is the most important and fundamental, and also the most mysterious. Tolkien writes that the other two must ultimately lead back to an inventor, or storymaker. He writes that diffusion, borrowing in space,[83] only refers to the problem of origin elsewhere. At the centre of the supposed diffusion, there is a place where an inventor once lived. It is similarly the case with inheritance, borrowing in time, in that way we arrive at last only at an ancestral inventor.

---

[82] See for example Hutcheon 1988: 124.
[83] The theory of the author borrowing from the textual space is also common in contemporary postmodern theories of literature. See for example Allen 2000.

Tolkien therefore believes – quite understandably –that at the origin of any mythopoeia, literary creation, myth-making or fairy-story-making, there is an inventor or creator. Tolkien writes that "if we believe that sometimes there occurred the independent striking out of similar ideas and themes or devices, we simply multiply the ancestral inventor but do not in that way the more clearly understand his gift" (Tolkien 1983: 121).

2.2.1 Tolkien and Traditional Constructive Poetics: Concerning Sidney and Coleridge

Tolkien's aesthetics in *On Fairy-Stories* ponder the concepts of imagination, literary belief and literary pleasure. All of these concepts can be seen to reflect classical theories which are linked to Tolkien's own theory, such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* (1817) or Sir Philip Sidney's *The Defence of Poesy* (1595).

In her article "Is Tolkien a Renaissance Man?" Tanya Caroline Wood compares Tolkien's essay *On Fairy-Stories* to Sidney's *The Defence of Poesie*. Wood argues that Sidney is searching for an original meaning of the word poet (*poiein*), as a creator – especially as a creator of another "nature". Wood writes that both Tolkien and Sidney believe that authors create a secondary world with the creative power of imagination that God has given them. (T. Wood 2000: 99.) As a work concerned with the creative methods and mimetic nature of literature, Sidney's work was the most influential literary theory of the era, where he both respects the tradition and celebrates the poet's willingness to experiment.

In philosophical tones, Sidney's *The Defence of Poesy* could be seen as a predecessor of Tolkien's literary view. And on some occasions, Sidney writes on the same subjects as I do in this dissertation: mythopoetics. For example, Sidney sees the historical character of Solon as a Poet who wrote in "verse the notable Fable of Atlantick Iland, which was continued by Plato", and quite disappointingly, that Plato's myth, the Ring of Gyges was just a "meere tale", not a "flower" of poetry (Sidney 1968: 5).

Sidney, following Plato and Aristotle's reasoning, sees that "Poesie" is an "Art of Imitation", mimetic, a "representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth to speak Metaphorically. A speaking Picture, with this end to teach and delight." (Sidney 1968: 9.) But despite this "act of imitation", Sidney in his work compares the poet with the historian and philosopher, and comes to the conclusion that the

poet is better of the three, and that "no other humaine skill can match him" (Sidney 1968: 13).

Sidney's *Defence of Poesie* is in one sense "a defence of Plato", whose attack on poets in *The Republic* is of course famous. For Sidney, Plato in his attack never meant poets "in general", but only meant those with erring opinions "of the Deitie". Sidney's defence of Plato is justly done in the light of Plato's dialogue *Ion*, where Plato gives – as Sidney points out – "a high, and rightly divine commendation unto Poetrie". Sidney writes that "Plato banished the abuse, not the thing", and that Plato should be the patron of poets, not the adversary. (Sidney 1968: 34.) This vision was later shared by many thinkers and writers; for example, in the Romantic period Percy Bysshe Shelley in his theories of poetry connected Platonism and poetry, writing on the "Ideal world of the Poet", and saw the writer's imagination in some ways as an ideal "truth" (Schulze 1966: 12).

For Tolkien's mythopoetics and imaginative writing, both truth and belief are important. In *On Fairy-Stories* Tolkien writes about Imagination and the complex human capability to form images of things not actually present (or even real):

> The human mind is capable of forming mental images of things not actually present. The faculty of conceiving the images is (or was) naturally called Imagination. But in recent times, in technical not normal language, Imagination has often been held to be something higher than the mere image-making, ascribed to the operations of Fancy (a reduced and depreciatory form of the older word Fantasy); an attempt is thus made to restrict, I should say misapply, Imagination to 'the power of giving to ideal creations the inner consistency of reality'. (Tolkien 1983: 138.)

In *On Fairy-Stories* Tolkien makes an effort not to restrict artistic imagination to the level of mere images of the real world. Tolkien as a fantasy writer keeps his door open to non-real or sub-realistic fantasy worlds as well. Tolkien writes about the human imagination, and that the fantastic device of human language can create potent and credible secondary belief, and thus can accomplish a rare achievement of art, narrative art, art of story-making, as Tolkien writes, "in its primary and most potent mode" (1983: 140).[84]

---

[84] These questions of real and non-real have of course been widely discussed by researchers. One contemporary scholar of these theories was American philosopher Nelson Goodman (1906–1998), whose influential works *Languages of Art: an Approach to a Theory of Symbols* and *Ways of Worldmaking* are seen as a fundamental turning point in the analytic approach to artistic issues in Anglo-American philosophy. For Goodman, "art is not sharply divided, in goals and means, from

Tolkien's view of mythopoeia, secondary creation, secondary belief and imagination is, in some ways, closely connected to Samuel Taylor Coleridge's often-cited theory of literary aesthetics. In *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge writes – in a Neoplatonic tone –about primary and secondary imagination; primary imagination Coleridge holds to be a mimetic repetition in the human mind of the infinite imagination of God, and secondary, its echo, a kind of mortal, artistic, re-creative imagination:

> The imagination then I consider either as primary, or secondary. The primary imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still, at all events, it struggles to idealize and to unify. (Coleridge 1965: 167.)

Here Coleridge is simply rejecting the view, prominent in his era, of the human mind as an empty page (*tabula rasa*) upon which external impressions are impressed. Coleridge famously divides this phenomenon of creativeness into imagination and fancy. He sees fancy as a mode of human memory, as the employment of passive and mechanical tasks, the accumulation by association of fact and documentation of what is seen:

> Fancy, on the contrary, has no other counters to play with but fixities and definites. The fancy is indeed no other than a mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space; and blended with, and modified by the

science and ordinary experience". On the contrary, Goodman sees elements of art as "symbols that classify parts of reality for us, as do such things as scientific theories and what makes up common, ordinary knowledge." (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*). Also, Alan Paskow comments in *The Paradoxes of Art: An Phenomelogical Investigation* that we do not need to view artworks as a separate kind of entity from other things in our world. Paskow sees that artworks and fictional characters could be viewed as internal components of the world. Paskow's main interest is on the ways that readers (for example) interact with works of art. Paskow's work is mainly interested in the reality of fictional beings, and on the touching points of "real" and "fiction", the same emotional responses that Kendal Walton is addressing in his *Mimesis as Make-Believe: on the Foundations of the Representational Arts*. There, Walton constructs the so-called "make-believe theory", a theory of artistic response that illuminates the process that I, in this dissertation, address as familiarisation of fictional texts for the reader. Walton addresses, for example, the distinction between fiction and nonfiction, and explores the reader's emotional reactions to literary representations (Walton 1990).

empirical phaenomenon of the will which we express by the word *choice*. But equally with the ordinary memory it must receive all its material ready made from the law of association.(Coleridge 1965: 167.)

On the one hand, Rosemary Jackson sees that Coleridge's partition of imagination and fancy emphasises malleable abilities of the human mind (Jackson 1981: 20). Stephen Prickett, on the other hand, writes that Coleridge, as the greatest Victorian theorist of fantasy, conceptualises the human mind in order to show how imagination draws us nearer to the divine (Godly) vision (Prickett 1979: 9). This sort of thinking is connected with Tolkien's Platonic vision of literary creation.

As stated earlier, Owen Barfield, could be seen as a intermediary between Coleridge and Tolkien's views of creative literary methods. Barfield widely examines Coleridge's ideas of philosophy in a collection of his 1960's lectures taught at Drew University, titled *What Coleridge Thought* (1971). Like Coleridge, Barfield sees poetry and artistic creation as an instrument for pondering the marvels of creation. In *Poetic Diction* Barfield writes that "[g]reat poetry is the progressive incarnation of life in consciousness - - . It is only when we have risen from beholding the creator into beholding Creation that our morality catches for a moment the music of the turning spheres". (Barfield 1976: 181.) This Pythagorean view of music, or cosmic harmony, as a creative form plays a vital part in Tolkien's fiction as well.[85] The cosmogony of Tolkien's fantasy world is affected by music in the *legendarium*. The world is created in an event orchestrated by the creator (Eru Ilúvatar).

Owen Barfield goes as far as to declare that imagination – and not for example science– is the only way that the world can be really "known". Barfield states that:

> Science deals with the world which it perceives but, seeking more and more to penetrate the veil of naïve perception, progresses only towards the goal of nothing, because it still does not accept in practice (whatever it may admit theoretically) that the mind first creates what it perceives as objects, including the instruments which Science uses for that very penetration. It insists on dealing with 'data', but there shall be no data given, save the bare percept. The rest is imagination. **Only by imagination therefore can the world be**

---

[85] Tolkien's theory of music as a creative force and the medieval concept of the "music of spheres" have been discussed in detail by Bradford Lee Eden (2003: 183–193).

82

known. And what is needed is, not only that larger and larger telescopes and more and more sensitive calipers should be constructed, but that the human mind should become increasingly aware of its own creative activity. (Barfield 1976: 28. *Emphasis mine*.)

This world-knowing poetics is well absorbed in Tolkien's literary theory. Barfield sees this "meaningful" literature as *poetic diction*, saying that "when the words are selected and arranged in such a way that their meaning either arouses, or is obviously intended to arouse, aesthetic imagination, the result may be described as *poetic diction"* (Barfield 1976: 41). This literature can be seen as a same sort of creative action as Coleridge's vision of poetry as "the best words in the best order", or as Barfield says, "the best language" (1976: 58).[86]

Tolkien comments on Coleridge's theory of literary belief, the concept of "willing suspension of disbelief", in *On Fairy-Stories*, in a chapter dealing with children's reading habits. Tolkien sees that children are capable of literary belief when the story-maker's art is good enough to produce it, but dislikes the concept of willing suspension of disbelief as imprecise. On the occasion, Tolkien invokes (once again) his theory of secondary creation:

> 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 laws 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. If you are obliged, by kindliness of circumstance, to stay, then disbelief must be suspended (or stifled), otherwise listening and looking would become intolerable. But this suspension of disbelief is a substitute for the genuine thing, a subterfuge we use when condescending to games or make-believe, or when trying (more or less willingly) to find what virtue we can in the work of an art that has for us failed. (Tolkien 1983: 132.)

Belief in fantasy – what Tolkien calls "secondary belief" to distinguish it from primary belief in experiential reality–arises from the conjunction of psychological

---

[86] Barfield sees that since Plato's time the study of language has been mainly lingual, developed mainly by grammarians and logicians, having their emphasis still, until only recently, on the external *forms* of words. Barfield is in fact quite surprised that the extraordinarily intimate connection between *language* and *thought* (the Greek word *λόγος* combining, as Barfield sees, both meanings) has not led philosophers to turn their attention to the subject long ago. (Barfield 1976: 60.)

affect and ideational structure, and as Tolkien notes, it is quite different from Coleridge's "willing suspension of disbelief".

So, in some ways, Tolkien's vision differs from Coleridge's theory of "suspension of disbelief". Gary K. Wolfe has pointed this out, noting that Tolkien's "secondary belief" is quite a different thing than Coleridge's "suspension of disbelief", in that belief is what enables genuine emotions to be aroused from impossible circumstances" (Wolfe 1982: 10–11).

Tolkien's concept of a credible Secondary World which the reader can relate as true (and therefore to "suspense his disbelief") are closely connected to the concept of high fantasy or epic fantasy, the names fantasy researchers nowadays use to refer to literature where consistent and credible fantasy worlds that differ from our (real) physical world are created.[87] Tolkien's works are considered archetypical high fantasy.

Wolfe sees that as Tolkien's stories advance, by the time the reader has begun the second volume of *The Lord of the Rings*, he or she "is well located in the author's symbolic universe and does not expect many new 'impossibilities' to occur" (Wolfe 1982: 5). That is to say, the disbelief of the text diminishes during the reading process.

Coleridge used the concept of literary faith, though he called it poetic faith, in *Biographia Literaria* to describe the creative process by which he and William Wordsworth created their classical poetry collection *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). Coleridge writes that his poems were designed to be more of a supernatural model, whereas Wordsworth was writing in a more realistic model:

> In this idea originated the plan of the *Lyrical Ballads*; in which it was agreed that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that **willing suspension of disbelief** for the moment, **which constitutes poetic faith**. Mr Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object to give the charm of novelty to things of every day - - . (Coleridge 1965: 168–169. *Emphasis mine*.)

In addition to this, the aesthetic views of Tolkien and Coleridge seemingly aim at the same purpose: literary pleasure. Coleridge sees that works of science aim at the truth, but works of art aim at pleasure: "[a] poem is that species of

---

[87] See for example Carter 1973, Gamble & Yates 2008.

composition which is opposed to works of science by proposing for its immediate object pleasure, not truth" (Coleridge 1965: 172).

Tolkien seems to cherish this view, since in the year 1971, in a letter to Peter Szabó Szentmihály, he writes that his books aim strictly at literary pleasure, and his objective is not to preach or teach (1981:414). Of course, Tolkien's statement notwithstanding, this seems to be a rather simplistic interpretation of his creative oeuvre. In Tolkien's *legendarium*, there are also other, more substantial, elements at work than just simple "literary pleasure", as this dissertation concerning Tolkien's constructive mythopoetics has indicated.

Tolkien's aim is thus imaginative fantasy, or *phantasia*, of which the ancient Greek meaning is almost synonymous. In *On Fairy-Stories*, Tolkien writes on the concept of fantasy using the word not as a synonym of its contemporary meaning of imagination, but giving the word fantasy a new meaning – at a theoretical extent which he himself does not fully understand at the time – using "fantasy" as a combination of both the older meaning as an equivalent of imagination, but in the same time describing the word in terms of his own sub-creative art form, "the fantasy":

> The mental power of image-making is one thing, or aspect; and it should appropriately be called Imagination. The perception of the image, the grasp of its implications, and the control, which are necessary to a successful expression, may vary in vividness and strength: but this is a difference of degree in Imagination, not a difference in kind. **The achievement of expression, which gives (or seems to give) 'the inner consistency of reality', is indeed another thing, or aspect, needing another name: Art, the operative link between Imagination and the final result; Sub-creation.** For my present purpose I require a word which shall embrace both the Sub-creative Art in itself and a quality of strangeness and wonder in the Expression, derived from the Image: a quality essential to fairy-story. **I propose therefore –to use Fantasy for this purpose:** in a sense, that is, which combines with its older and higher use as an equivalent of Imagination the derived notions of 'unreality' (that is, unlikeness of the Primary World), of freedom from the domination of observed 'fact', in short of the fantastic- -
> . 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. (Tolkien 1983: 138–139. *Emphasis mine*.)

Tolkien therefore sees the unreality of things in literature as a virtue. He sees fantasy as a *higher* form of art, not *lower*, as had been declared by many other critics. For example, in the *Republic*, Plato writes disparagingly of poets as "imitators" of real existence and says that imitators of the unrealistic are even worse than other artists (595a–602d). As a fantasist Tolkien of course does not embrace this view, but at the same time, in some ways he shares the aesthetical view of the later Platonists and Neoplatonists.

John Dillon points out that for Plato and for later Platonism the status and role of imagination (or *phantasia*) is quite low. The concept is discussed by Plato in the *Sophist* (264a–b) and also by Aristotle in *De Anima* (III). For Platonism, imagination is seen as activity of the "lower" soul, dependent upon sense-perception, from which the soul must purify itself. (Dillon 1990b: 55.) Later, in the Neoplatonic philosophy, Plotinus assigns to *phantasia* once again its Platonic role, but also (in *Enneads* IV) speculates on the immortality of an individual soul, and the survival of the personality. For Plotinus memory is functioning in the faculty of imagination, on which he finds memory to be based.[88]

At this point, we may turn our focus back to Tolkien's fiction, and to the death scene of King Aragorn in Appendix A of *The Lord of the Rings*. There, at his dying moment, Aragorn says that in the afterlife, beyond the circles of earth, there is "more than memory" (Tolkien 1995: 1038). Plotinus sees that memory is based on imagination, and that it is a fundamental part of the immortality of an individual soul. Tolkien's fictive character wants to believe that his soul is in fact immortal, and that beyond this World there is "more than memory", but implying "memory" also. I would argue that the character of Aragorn therefore imagines the possibility of both afterlife and the memory of life before that. What then is this hope of "more than memory"? A Meaning to it all, one assumes? Perhaps that is the "sudden glimpse of the underlying reality of truth" that Tolkien hoped his *legendarium* to imply. At this point, we may turn our attention more thoroughly to Platonism in general.

---

[88] See Dillon1990b: 55.

2.2.2 Christian Platonic Mythopoetics: Philosophy of Afterlife

The focus here is on the Platonic and Christian Platonic metaphysical, cosmological, philosophical (and in some way theological) logics of the mythopoetics in Tolkien's *legendarium*. There is of course a long leap in tradition, even in the selected aspects, from Plato to Tolkien's aesthetics. My point is not to say that Tolkien willingly, or uncritically, drew from the tradition. On the contrary, Tolkien, in my opinion, was in some ways a traditional successor of the aesthetical tradition of Christian Platonism. Then again, it has to be stressed that Tolkien was an author of fiction, and *not* a theologian or philosopher. The range of possible Christian Platonism or any other philosophical influence is only limited to his *legendarium*'s cosmology and only forms an internal field of reference there. Kocher discusses the underpinnings of this point cleverly, saying that "Tolkien is not a philosopher or a theologian but a literary artist who thinks" (Kocher 2000: 11).

As the first traditional background and a major external reference for Tolkien's mythopoetics, we have Plato's writings. Plato is of course considered one of the main influences among philosophy, learning and critical thinking in the Western world. Plato's dialogues (thirty-six of them known today) lay the foundations of both Western philosophy and science. Plato's influence is major in the tradition of aesthetics, although a major part of the tradition is informed by *Neoplatonism* and later fundamentally "Platonic" writings on the subject.[89]

Tolkien was a Catholic and his mythopoetics is clearly influenced by both Catholic theology and Platonic philosophy, and could be summarised as Christian Platonic in heritage. The term Christian Platonism can be used as a basic name for the combination (in some aspects) of Judeo-Christian theology and philosophy and Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophy. It can be said that especially Neoplatonism was a major influence on Christian theology throughout Late Antiquity, for example during the Christian period of the late Roman era, and the Middle Ages, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

Next, I will illuminate chosen parts of the tradition – from Platonism to Christian Platonism – that helped to form a common Inkling philosophy of aesthetics, shared in part by both C. S. Lewis and Tolkien, and also by Owen Barfield.

---

[89] The term Neoplatonist, which is of modern origin, denotes a group of thinkers, beginning with Plotinus, who, as Coulter states, did not consider themselves "*Neo*platonists", but Platonists "pure and simple, faithful to the fundamental doctrines of their Master" (Coulter 1976: 1).

This shared influence between the writers has of course been argued earlier, and sometimes critically denied, in Tolkien studies. For example, Ralph C. Wood in his article "Conflict and Convergence on Fundamental Matters in C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien" sees the matter quite differently than I. Wood claims that "[C. S.] Lewis was a Platonist at heart. For him the world is the shadow of another. There is an invisible divine realm hovering over the visible world, making the natural order into a land of shadows and reflections of the really real." (R. Wood 2003: 322.)

Wood sees that Lewis' Platonism gives him an understanding of the universe as a seamless whole in which the inner and outer, the upper and lower, the divine and the natural are deeply intertwined (R. Wood 2003: 323). Wood sees Lewis not as a Christian Platonist, but as a Platonist Christian. As to Tolkien, Wood argues that he was "no sort of Platonist at all". (R. Wood 2003: 325.) Wood sees Tolkien as merely espousing a kind of Aristotelian metaphysics. That is, for Tolkien the "transcendent reality is to be found in the depths of this world rather than in some putative existence beyond it" (R. Wood 2003: 325). Wood explains that this is the reason why Tolkien sets his reader down in the midst of Middle-earth, and why there is no time voyage or space travel in his fiction, no slippage through the back of the wardrobe into a magical realm. Wood sees that Tolkien seeks to convince readers that "his imaginative world is utterly real, having no other foundation than its own laws and conventions" (R. Wood 2003: 325). These are of course valid points, but Tolkien's Platonism should not be overlooked on these statements alone.

For example, the *legendarium*'s resemblance to a "portal fantasy" has been discussed by Farah Mendlesohn, who views that despite the reputation of *The Lord of the Rings* as a "full secondary world", it is in fact a familiar quest fantasy: Frodo moves from a small, safe, and well-understood world into the wild, unfamiliar world of Middle-earth. Mendlesohn sees that only in *The Silmarillion*, a book told from within the world, about people who know their world, does Tolkien create a "full secondary world fantasy", which Mendlesohn calls *immersive fantasy* (2008: 2-3).[90]

And as another correction, Tolkien did start a fictional story about time travel. This story was titled "The Lost Road", a fragment of which is published in *The History of Middle-earth Volume 5,* and which was part of a writing project or proposal meant to include both C. S. Lewis and Tolkien. Tolkien writes in a letter

[90] For more on the subject of genre, see chapter 2.3.2.

to Michael Tolkien in 1963 that "we decided to divide: he [Lewis] was to do space-travel and I time-travel. My book was never finished, but some of it (the Númenorean-Atlantis theme) got into my trilogy eventually". (Tolkien 1981: 342.) As a major thematical inspiration, Platonic myth was important for Tolkien, as can be seen from the earlier excerpts in which Tolkien quotes his "Atlantis theme".

C. S. Lewis, a friend and an important figure in the close contextual circle of fellow writers for Tolkien, points out that Plato's visions of ethics and monotheism that were later used by Christian thinkers were in fact received from Plato's predecessors and only later modified by Plato (Lewis 1964: 2). In this way Plato's dialogues are of course a continuum of a long Greek tradition – not just from Heracletian and Socratic philosophy.

For Christian theology, Plato's emphases of monotheism as well as the account of the "afterlife" at the end of the Republic were fruitful material. At the end of the *Republic*, Plato put an account of the afterlife in the mouth of Er the Armenian, who had returned from the dead. The influence is felt in Roman literature, as Lewis points out, where Cicero (106–43BC) in his own *Republic* ends his story with the similar vision (Lewis 1964: 23). Plato's mythical vision of the afterlife in the myth of Er greatly influenced both the Roman World and the later Christian West.

Cicero also draws on Platonic ethics. Concerning suicide, Cicero writes that we should not "hasten to join the happy company" of heaven. He sees that all good men must retain the soul in the body's fetters and not depart from human life. Otherwise, Cicero says, you may be held to have deserted the duty allotted by God to man. Lewis states that this prohibition of suicide is Platonic. Lewis assumes that Cicero is following a passage from Plato's *Phaedo* in which Socrates makes a remark of suicide as "unlawful". Stating that "whether we accept or not the doctrine that taught the body is a prison and we must not break from it, at any rate we men are certainly the property of gods, and property must not dispose of itself", Lewis then declares that this pronouncement of Christian ethics is indisputable. (Lewis 1964: 25.)

In the *legendarium* Tolkien discusses attitudes towards death and killing. In Gandalf's voice, Tolkien writes that "Many that live deserve death. And some that die deserve life. Can you give it to them? Then do not be too eager to deal out death in judgment. For even the wise cannot see all ends." (Tolkien 1995: 58.) This both Platonic and Christian attitude towards killing, and also suicide, can be seen in the *legendarium* on occasion.

In the tale "Of Túrin Turambar" in *The Silmarillion* as well as in *The Children of Húrin* (2007, posthumously), the tragic story ends in a double-suicide scene of both the human hero Túrin and his sister Nienor, which is portrayed as bitter, mad and terrible. Tolkien describes the aftermath of Túrin's suicide: "But Mablung and the Elves came and looked - - upon the body of Túrin, and they grieved; and when Men of Brethil came thither, and they learned the reasons of Túrin's madness and death, they were aghast; and Mablung said bitterly: 'I also have been meshed in the doom of the Children of Húrin, and thus with my tidings have slain one that I loved.'" (Tolkien 1999: 270.)

Another revealing scene in Tolkien's *legendarium* on the subject of suicide is Denethor's death scene in *The Lord of the Rings*. Denethor, Lord of the City of Minas Tirith and Steward of Gondor, once a perhaps valiant "defender of the West", now devastated and grim, chooses as his last desperate act to burn himself and his son Faramir in self-immolation. Denethor's rather insane monologue, with yelling and repetition, addresses the question of dying and the difference of dying like a "heathen king" or dying and being embalmed like Númenorean and Gondor civilised people are accustomed to do:

> 'Why? Why do the fools fly?' said Denethor. 'Better to burn sooner than late, for burn we must. Go back to your bonfire. And I? I will go now to my pyre. To my pyre! No tomb for Denethor and Faramir. No tomb! No long slow sleep of death embalmed. We will burn like heathen kings before ever a ship sailed hither from the West. The West has failed. Go back and burn!' (Tolkien 1995: 807.)[91]

In the end of the scene Gandalf, with the help of Pippin, manages to save Faramir from death, but Denethor still commits suicide by self-immolation on a pyre. On the moment of Denethor's death, Tolkien writes intriguingly that afterwards Denethor "was ever again seen by mortal men" (1995: 836). His ending is tragic, as it is of course for those that commit suicide in the *legendarium*.

---

[91] In this quotation, the phrase of "Better to burn sooner than late - - " has quite interesting (aleatoric) references to the lines "It's better to burn out/Than to fade away" on two Neil Young's song's "My, My, Hey, Hey (Out of the Blue)" & "My, My, Hey, Hey (Into the Black)" appearing on Young's album *Rust Never Sleeps* (1979). These lines became infamous when rock star Kurt Cobain used them in his suicide note in 1994. Similar phrases were also used in the 1980s popular fantasy movie Highlander, directed by Russell Mulcahy, where an immortal antagonist The Kurgan shouts in a Christian church that: "I have something to say! It's better burn out, than to fade away!" (*Highlander* 1986). Any connection between these lines and Tolkien's fiction is of course aleatoric, or even dubious.

This quite allegorical vision of death and afterlife functions in Tolkien's *legendarium*, as well as in Lewis' *Narnia* series. In the seventh book of the *Narnia* series, *The Last Battle* (1956), the story ends in the final chapter titled "Farewell to the Shadowlands". In a Christian Platonic ending, Lewis describes the "Changeable World" as "Shadowlands" and the Heaven-like afterlife, where the children in the *Narnia* series can be analysed to be moving to, as the "Ideal" world. Lewis gives his series a fictitious and more completely "happy-ever-after" ending than perhaps any other fairy-story:

> And as He [the lion Aslan] spoke, He no longer looked to them like a lion; but the things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them. And for us this is the end of all the stories, and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on for ever: in which every chapter is better than the one before. (Lewis 1974: 165.)

In the end of *The Lord of the Rings* Tolkien describes main protagonist Frodo Baggins sailing away to the divine West (away from the mortal world) in a quite Christian and Platonic way. Of course, there can also be seen the influence of both the Legend of Elysium and the Legend of Avalon in the chapter.[92] In Ancient Greek and Roman legend Elysium refers to an island, the resting place or afterlife for the blessed ones, described by writers such as Hesiod, Virgil and Plutarch. Avalon, from the Arthurian *legendarium*, refers to the resting place of King Arthur, where he is taken to recover after the Battle of Camlann. In *The Lord of the Rings* Frodo Baggins cannot stay in Middle-earth because he is "too deeply hurt" (Tolkien 1995: 1006). Frodo sails to the far West, to the land of Valinor in the ships of the Elves, who are leaving Middle-earth. Tolkien describes the events as follows:

> - - [T]he sails were drawn up, and the wind blew, and slowly the ship slipped away down the long grey firth; and the light of the glass of Galadriel that Frodo bore glimmered and was lost. And the ship went out into the High Sea

---

[92] There are of course many other such references to *Locus amoenus* ("pleasant place") in mythological, epical and Utopia literature such as Gimlé mentioned in *Prose Edda* and *Völuspá*, or Aaru in the Nile Delta myths.

and passed on into the West, until at last on a night of rain Frodo smelled a sweet fragrance on the air and heard the sound of singing that came over the water. And then it seemed to him that as in his dream in the house of Bombadil, the grey rain-curtain turned all to silver glass and was rolled back, and he beheld white shores and beyond them a far green country under a swift sunrise. (Tolkien 1995: 1007.)

The place where Frodo is going is as divine as Tolkien can let his Hobbit characters into. The glass of light of Galadriel, which Frodo has earlier received as a present in the story, disappears when moving to the "Undying Lands", because it belongs to mortal Middle-earth, and not to the immortal lands. The Elvish culture of Tolkien's *legendarium* mixed with heavenly visions of singing, sweet flavours and dream-like atmosphere captivates Frodo. The "grey rain-curtain turned all to silver glass and was rolled back", writes Tolkien in delicately chosen words. The almost heavenly resting place for Frodo is the "white shores" and "far green country" of Valinor.

Quite interestingly, in the extremely popular movie series representation of *The Lord of the Rings*, directed by Peter Jackson, the chosen narration parts are taken out of the original context and some parts of the text are given even more Christian Platonic meaning. In the third movie, "The Return of the King", the phrases from the book, originally told by the narrator are moved (and rendered) and put into the mouth of Gandalf to give a theological and philosophical view of the afterlife to a Hobbit, Peregrin "Pippin" Took:

End? No, the journey doesn't end here. Death is just another path- - .One that we all must take. The grey rain-curtain of this world rolls back, and all turns to silver glass - - . And then you see it - - . White shores - - and beyond. A far green country, under a swift sunrise. (*The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* 2003)

Tolkien himself writes on the human and non-human afterlife of his fictional characters on many occasions, for example in *The Silmarillion* when describing The Halls of Mandos, the waiting place of the souls of the Elves. I have mentioned already the death scene of King Aragorn, found in full length in Appendix A, part v, of *The Lord of the Rings* titled "Here Follows a Part of the Tale of Aragorn and Arwen". At the end of this emotional, romantic and tragic short story, Tolkien describes the death of King Aragorn. On his deathbed, Aragorn encourages his beloved wife Arwen to believe that they will meet again

in the afterlife, beyond "the circles of the world": "Behold! we are not bound for ever to the circles of the world, and beyond them is more than memory. Farewell!" (Tolkien 1995: 1038.)[93]

The allegorical textualities of all three above citations are remarkable. "The grey rain-curtain - - being rolled back" and "beyond them [the circles of the world] is more than memory" could be seen as a promise of life after death, and as a promise of life after this world – and outside of this world.

Even in the death scene of Boromir in *The Lord of the Rings* one can sense this belief in the afterlife, but also feel the bitterness of death. Boromir has earlier betrayed the Fellowship, but then tries to reconcile this by fighting and dying for the Hobbits. In the scene, Aragorn seems to imply that Boromir is in some ways forgiven:

> Aragorn knelt beside him. Boromir opened his eyes and strove to speak. At last slow words came. 'I tried to take the Ring from Frodo,' he said. 'I am sorry. I have paid.' His glance strayed to his fallen enemies; twenty at least lay there. 'They have gone: the Halflings: the Orcs have taken them. I think they are not dead. Orcs bound them.' He paused and his eyes closed wearily. After a moment he spoke again.
>
> 'Farewell, Aragorn! Go to Minas Tirith and save my people! I have failed.'
>
> 'No!' said Aragorn, taking his hand and kissing his brow. 'You have conquered. Few have gained such a victory. Be at peace! Minas Tirith shall not fall!'
>
> Boromir smiled.
>
> 'Which way did they go? Was Frodo there?' said Aragorn.
>
> But Boromir did not speak again.
>
> 'Alas!' said Aragorn. 'Thus passes the heir of Denethor, Lord of the Tower of Guard! This is a bitter end - - .' (Tolkien 1995: 404.)

Bitterness of death is of course the unescapable "pain of Men". It is also the reason why the highest Kingdom of Men, Númenor, falls:

> 'Death was ever present, because the Númenoreans still, as they had in their old kingdom, and so lost it, hungered after endless life unchanging. Kings

---

[93] See also Kocher 2000: 25.

made tombs more splendid than houses of the living, and counted old names in the rolls of their descent dearer than the names of sons. Childless lords sat in aged halls musing on heraldry; in secret chambers withered men compounded strong elixirs, or in high cold towers asked questions of the stars. (Tolkien 1995: 662–663.)

In the death scene of Aragorn, "The last of the Númenoreans", Elf-lady Queen Arwen feels the bitterness of death that mortals have to come to terms with:

[Aragorn:] Nay, lady, I am the last of the Númenoreans and the latest King of the Elder Days; and to me has been given not only a span thrice that of Men of Middle-earth, but also the grace to go at my will, and give back the gift. Now, therefore, I will sleep.

[Arwen:] - - But I say to you, King of the Númenoreans, not till now have I understood the tale of your people and their fall. As wicked fools I scorned them, but I pity them at last. For if this indeed, as the Eldar say, the gift of the One to Men, it is bitter to receive.' (Tolkien 1995: 1037–1038.)

After the bitter death, there is still the hope of afterlife. Tolkien has outlaid for contemporary Christian theology a theory of *eucatastophe*, the so-called "good catastrophe". McGrath writes that the success of Tolkien's works has influenced Christian Theology, and led some to explore his distinctive literary notion of a eucatastrophe as a means of setting the resurrection in context. For Tolkien, a eucatastrophe is "the joy in a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth" found in a good ending not expected, yet utterly consistent with all that went beforehand. (McGrath 2011: 314.) This can be seen as a basis of Tolkien's fiction, which Tolkien himself in a letter to Father Robert Murray in 1953 commented on (talking particularly of *The Lord of the Rings*) as a "fundamentally religious and Catholic work" (Tolkien 1981: 172).[94]

2.2.3 The Inklings and the Power of Words

Next, I will illuminate the background of the previously mentioned common Inkling philosophy, shared by the Christian Platonic group of writers "the Inklings", of which Tolkien was part in the early 20th century in Oxford. J. R. R. Tolkien was a crucial part of the informal literary club known as the Inklings, and

---

[94] See also Pearce 1999: 100, Whittingham 2008: 14.

the club's literary views, aesthetics and politics can be seen as one external, contextual field of reference relevant for the creation of Tolkien's *legendarium*.

Esty writes that "the so-called Oxford Christians", or Inklings, played "popular variations on the domestic quest romance and to reenchant the English landscape" (Esty 2004: 118). There are similarities in the nativist romance of the Inklings and the later works of T. S. Eliot. They all share conservative and religious formation and were well associated to English literary circles. (Esty 2004: 118.)

The Inklings were founded by Tolkien and his academic friends in Oxford in the 1930s. The central figures of the Inklings were originally Tolkien and C. S. Lewis. A third noted fantasy writer to participate in the Inklings was Charles Williams (1886-1945), who was taken into the "circle" in 1939. (Carpenter 1978: xiii.) The fourth important figure was Owen Barfield.

The original Inklings had been founded by an Oxford student, Edward Tangya Lean, in the 1920s. The club existed so that members could read unpublished compositions aloud and ask for comments and criticism. (Carpenter 1978: 57.) Later the name Inklings was restored by C. S. Lewis for an undetermined and unelected group of friends who gathered about Lewis and met in his room at Magdalen College in Oxford. Tolkien was an active member since the new beginning. (Carpenter 1978: 67.) Before The Inklings, in 1926, Tolkien himself had formed a reading club called Coalbiters or *Kolbítar* (a jesting Icelandic name meaning "men who lounge so close to the fire in winter that they bite the coal") in which old Icelandic sagas and myths were read aloud. Lewis was also a member of the group. (Carpenter 1978: 27.) After that, the newly formed Inklings started to read aloud the unpublished writings of its members, and commented and criticised these. For example, Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* was one of the books that were first read aloud to the Inklings (Carpenter 1978: xiii).

Carpenter sees certain influence of the group on its members. Tolkien, Williams and Lewis all later became renowned fantasy writers. Barfield for his part became a well-known philosopher and wrote philological and linguistic books. Carpenter discusses the common literary aesthetics and politics of the Inklings, the common Inklings philosophy of aesthetics. Tolkien, Lewis and Williams all wrote stories in which myth plays an important part. Yet each of the three uses myth in quite a different way: Williams takes the already existing Arthurian myth and uses it as a setting for metaphysical odes. Lewis uses Christian myth and reclothes it for his didactic purposes. Tolkien invents his own

mythology, his *legendarium*, and draws stories of many different kinds from it. (Carpenter 1978: 156.)

Lewis and Williams' usage of myth was of course not as simple as Carpenter thoughts would suggest. For example, Lewis used Christian myths on many occasions, such as in *Narnia* series, but he also wrote many science fiction novels which are not so simply analysed. Carpenter also simplifies Tolkien's use of myth. Tolkien did invent his own mythology, but he also used existing myths in forming it. For example, Tolkien, albeit in a somewhat superficial way, uses the most familiar Christian myth, the undying Christ.[95] In *The Lord of the Rings* Gandalf the Grey "dies" in the mine of Moria, but returns for a short while as Gandalf the White, like a resurrected Christ, to fulfill his task. In the text, Gandalf explains what happened to his companions: "darkness took me, and I strayed out of thought and time, and I wandered far on roads that I will not tell – naked I was sent back – for a brief time, until my task is done" (Tolkien 1995: 491). But Gandalf's part as an allegorisation of Christ should not be so easily pronounced, since the differences between the characters are of course more notable than the similarities.

One of the points that explain the aesthetics and literary similarities and common philosophy of Tolkien and Lewis is to be found in their literary background. Both had since childhood been interested in the "Northern writings" of the Old Norse and Icelandic sagas and myths, and also in the fantasy books of William Morris, who himself was influenced by Norse-style poetry and drama. (Carpenter 1978: 29.) This of course also explains why both were members of Coalbiters.

For Tolkien, C. S. Lewis was not a literary influence as it is ordinarily understood, but sheer encouragement. Carpenter writes that Tolkien thought he owed Lewis an unpayable debt, since Lewis was for a long time Tolkien's only audience. (Carpenter 1978: 32.) But Charles Williams was never appreciated by Tolkien. Carpenter writes that Tolkien found Williams' books wholly alien, and sometimes very distasteful, occasionally ridiculous (1978: 121).

Owen Barfield was only a rare visitor to the Inklings, but he still was a respected member. Barfield's books influenced Tolkien a great deal. Barfield was the only one (as Tolkien saw) that could "tackle C. S. Lewis, making him define

---

[95] Myths of dying and rising god, undying god or death-rebirth-deity can be found in many religions and mythologies, Christ is just one of the examples. Other examples include mythic stories such as Norse god Baldr, Greek Dionysus or Semitic goddess Ishtar.

everything". (Carpenter 1978: 177.) Barfield also had a great debate with Lewis, which the Inklings called "the Great War", and tried to convince Lewis that imagination and aesthetic experience did lead, if not automatically to objective truth, then at least to a better understanding of the world. (Carpenter 1978: 37.) Lewis did not accept all of Barfield's points, but it might be said that Tolkien did on many occasions. This can be seen in Tolkien's theory of sub-creation, which tried to achieve fundamental truth. Barfield therefore was an important part of the Inklings, even though he was only a rare guest, and he himself only seldom wrote fiction.

Verlyn Flieger discusses the influence of the Inklings on Tolkien in *Splintered Light* (1983). Flieger sees that Tolkien is independent of Lewis and Williams, but "manifests a surprising similarity of thought with the 'other Inkling', the less known, less popular, but the most influential of all – Owen Barfield, the unobtrusive fourth to the big three". Flieger suggests that, saving the Beowulf poet, Barfield's theory of interdependence of myth and language is the primary influence on Tolkien's mythos. (Flieger 2002: xxi.)

Tolkien was well aware of Barfield's influence, as Flieger also notes. Tolkien himself wrote that the only philological remark he thinks of in *The Hobbit* is on page 221 of the first edition, and it is a point that will be missed by any who have not read Barfield, and probably by those who have (Tolkien 1981: 22). The lines in question, describing Bilbo's reaction to his first defamiliar sight of the dragon Smaug and his treasure, read as follows: "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" (Flieger 2002: xxi). Here, Tolkien is of course describing the "evolution" of language, which for Tolkien is a "marring", or corruption, of language.

Barfield's *Poetic Diction* is the centre of his theory of philological Platonism, focusing on the area between word and meaning. In the book, Barfield comes to the conclusion that myths are closely associated with the very origin of all speech and literature. (Carpenter 1978: 41.) Flieger writes that Barfield's theory holds that myth, language, and humanity's perception of the world are interlocked and inseparable. Language in its beginnings made no distinction between the literal and metaphoric meaning of a word, as it does today. (Flieger 2002: 37–38.) That is just what Tolkien means by stating that the language has changed, and there are no words to express the precise feeling (Flieger 2002: xxi). Flieger uses the Gospel of Saint John as an example. The opening sentence – very meaningful for the Christian Platonists – says: "In the beginning was the Word", translating the

Greek *logos* as "word". To John and his audience, *logos* would have conveyed (along with *word*), "speech", "reason", "organizing principle", and "cosmic harmony." Nowadays people have to choose one the meanings, because word, percept and concept have altered so that the former wholeness has been fragmented. (Flieger 2002: 38–39.)

Flieger discusses that both the secondary world of Tolkien's fiction and the force field that holds it are built out of words. Tolkien's response to words, to their shape and sound and meaning, was closer to that of a musician than a grammarian. (Flieger 2002: 33.) Tolkien writes in *On Fairy Stories* that God is the first creator and the writer is the secondary creator, sub-creator. The writer's tools of sub-creation are words (Flieger 2002: 41). This theory of a secondary world created by words is, on these grounds, constantly Christian Platonic.

The power of names and words can be seen in Tolkien's *legendarium*. In Chapter IV of *The Two Towers* Treebeard discusses names and meanings on many occasions. In a dialogue between the Ent Treebeard and Hobbits, Treebeard indirectly declares that names are important, and that they do have power. He is in fact quite surprised when the Hobbits are so eager to openly pronounce their names to him. Treebeard takes this as a compliment, saying: "I am honoured by your confidence". Soon after, concerning his own name, he declares the following:

> For I am not going to tell you my name, not yet at any rate - - . 'For one thing it would take a long while: my name is growing all the time, and I've lived a very long, long time; so my name is like a story. Real names tell you the story of the things they belong to in my language, in the Old Entish as you might say. (Tolkien 1995: 454.)

In Tolkien's *legendarium* names really are important, and they do have some strange power in them.[96] This can be seen in the *legendarium* on many other occasions, for example in the chapters concerning Dwarf names and Elf names. On the Dwarf names, Tolkien writes that "Gimli's own name, however, and the names of all his kin, are of Northern (Mannish) origin. Their own secret and 'inner' names, their true names, the Dwarves have never revealed to any one of alien races. Not even on their tombs do they inscribe them." (Tolkien 2002f: 296.)

---

[96] That is of course an old revelation, which can be found in many religious and mythological texts, such as *The Bible* and *Quran*. In fantasy literature such themes can be found for example in Ursula K. Le Guin's *Earthsea* series.

The Elves in the *legendarium* are not as secretive about their real names, but it is also made clear that the names of the Elves are quite special too. Concerning the Elven names, Tolkien writes that:

> The Eldar in Valinor had as a rule two names, or *essi*. The first-given was the father-name, received at birth. It usually recalled the father's name, resembling it in sense or form; sometimes it was simply the father's name, to which some distinguishing pre-fix in the case of a son might be added later when the child was fullygrown. The mother-name was given later, often some years later, by the mother; but sometimes it was given soon after birth. For the mothers of the Eldar were gifted with deep insight into their children's characters and abilities, and many had also the gift of prophetic foresight.(Tolkien 2002f: 339.)

Later, Tolkien describes that in exile (in Middle-earth) some of the Elves also used "self names" (*kilmessi*) and "after names" or "nicknames" (*epessë*) (Tolkien 2002f: 339). Therefore, it was possible for an Elf to have three or more names, as can be seen from the Elven lady Galadriel, who is described in the *legendarium* to be known by names such as Alatáriel, Artanis and Nerwen. Ralph C. Wood emphasises this, and sees that the meaning of names, etymologies and onomastic depth undergirds every name in Tolkien's *legendarium*, and can be seen as a mark of a finely-honed craftsmanship (R. Wood 2003: 317).

The uniqueness and even magicality of names is seen throughout the classical mythologies, and even in Platonic and later in Christian Platonic theology and philosophy. Dillon comments that the power of names, or the "magician's knowledge of names", was one of the basic presuppositions of magical practice in the antique world. "This applies to knowing the proper name or names of a given god or daemon, or to being in possession of the formulae of power, strings of meaningless words or sounds designed to capture the attention and compel the services of some supernatural or natural force". (Dillon 1990a: 203.) The theory of magical power of names was later used by later Platonists and seen used in combination with the "doctrine of cosmic sympathy" (Dillon 1990a: 207.)

Words are extremely important also in Tolkien's *legendarium*. For example – keeping in mind the etymologies of both "spell" as a mystical or magical aspect, and "spelling" as a formulating (for example writing or speaking) of words – in *The Lord of the Rings*, in the chapter "A Journey in the Dark", Gandalf is trying to find the *right words* to open the doors of Moria, the greatest of Dwarven mines.

Gandalf's precise words are "I once knew every spell in all the tongues of Elves or Men or Orcs, that was ever used for such a purpose" (Tolkien 1995: 299).

In the next chapter, "The Bridge of Khazad-Dûm", Gandalf again uses lingual spells. This time Gandalf is trying to close the door, but after this spell, a demonic creature (Balrog) comes to the other side of the door and tries to open the door with a "counter-spell". After this, Gandalf uses even more powerful words – "a word of Command" – and this finally destroys the door:

> I could think of nothing to do but to try and put **a shutting-spell** on the door. I know many; but to do things of that kind rightly requires time, and even then the door can be broken by strength.

> 'As I stood there I could hear orc-voices on the other side: at any moment I thought they would burst it [the door] open - - . Then something came into the chamber – I felt it through the door, and the orcs themselves were afraid and fell silent. It laid hold on the iron ring, and then it perceived me and my spell.

> 'What it was I cannot guess, but I have never felt such a challenge. **The counter-spell** was terrible. It nearly broke me. For an instant the door left my control and began to open! I had to speak **a word of Command**. That proved too great a strain. The door burst in pieces. Something dark as a cloud was blocking all the light inside, and I was thrown backwards down the stairs. All the wall gave way, and the roof of the chamber as well, I think. (Tolkien 1995: 318–319. *Emphasis mine.)*

Words in Tolkien's *legendarium* are even cosmological crafting material. In Tolkien's cosmology, the world is created with words and music (see chapter 2.1.1). The creator, Eru Ilúvatar, the One, gives the Ainur themes and they form the world with their voices. And in the final and the most important phase of creation, Eru uses words to create the visible world:

> Therefore I say: Eä! Let these things Be! –And suddenly the Ainur saw afar off a light, as it were a cloud with a living heart of flame; and they knew that this was no vision only, but that Ilúvatar had made a new thing: Eä, the World that Is. (Tolkien 1999: 319.)

After the Creation, the Ainur (Valar and Maiar) also use words, and songs of power, as Bradford Lee Eden has pointed out: "creational energy is demonstrated by means of the Valar's respective powers in singing" (Eden 2003: 186). Lingual

spells and words of power are functional in Tolkien's fantastic *legendarium*. The same can be seen in many North European mythologies, for example in the *Kalevala*, where lingual spells and powerful singing is the force of magic. The key character Väinämöinen is described as an "Eternal Bard" and his power is in his powerful voice, which in the cosmogonical beginning exerts order over chaos (*Kalevala* 1975:8–14).

2.3   Fictional Mythology Dedicated "to England"

Tolkien indicates the motivation for his mythopoetic vision in a letter to Milton Waldman, in 1951. Tolkien writes about the myths, the material he has been looking for, and the lack of *truly* English Mythology:

> I am not 'learned'*[97] in the manners of myth and fairy-story, however, for in such things (as far as known to me) I have always been seeking material, things of certain tone and air, and not simple knowledge. Also – and here I hope I shall not sound absurd – **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**, save impoverished chap-book stuff. (Tolkien 1999: xi. *Emphasis mine.*)

Tolkien continues his statement by declaring that the Arthurian (culturally mixed) mythology was not appropriate enough. It had been affected by the Christian religion too much and did not accord with what Tolkien sought:

> Of course there was and is all the Arthurian world, but powerful as it is, it is imperfectly naturalized, associated with the soil of Britain but not with English; and does not replace what I felt to be missing. For one thing its 'faerie' is too lavish, and fantastical, incoherent and repetitive. For another and more important thing: it is involved in, and explicitly contains the Christian religion. (Tolkien 1999: xi.)

---

[97] The original "*Footnote": "though I have thought *about* them a good deal" (Tolkien 1999: *Silmarillion* xi).

Tolkien objected to views that his mythopoeia allegorises Christian religion or his own faith. He also objected to calling the Arthurian *legendarium* an "English" mythology.[98] Tolkien's aim was to dedicate a mythology to England. Tolkien himself writes about his fiction that "[t]hese tales are 'new'" (1999: xvi), and that his object was to create tales which he "could dedicate simply: to England, to my country" (Tolkien 1999: xii).

In many Tolkien studies Tolkien's intention is referred to as a desire to create "a mythology *for England*", as Humphrey Carpenter calls it in Tolkien's authorised biography (1977: 89). Whittingham (2008: 35) has pointed out that what Carpenter calls "a mythology for England", however well known, is a misnomer. A more precise phrasing would be then a mythology dedicated to England.

Tolkien's mythopoetic purpose is to create a coherent mythology. Tolkien uses many different modes of literature in order to succeed in this purpose. Then again, we might ask what the reasons for making such a legendarium are, and what motivates the different parts of the *legendarium*?

Flieger examines the motives that drove Tolkien and finds: his literary inclinations, his bent toward myth and fairy-tale, and many biographical influences, such as the impact of the World War I on him and his friends (Flieger 2002: 15). Flieger explains that for Tolkien "[m]yths embody the quest of meaning in an otherwise random universe" (Flieger 2002: 11). Among other motives, Flieger discusses "literary ambition" and "a search for cultural identity" (Flieger 2002: 7, 12).[99]

Whittingham explains that Tolkien drew from the myths that he knew, particularly from the Scandinavian and Finnish mythologies. Tolkien's motif was "to create a secondary world, a world with its own myths, languages, beings, and history" (Whittingham 2008: 35).

This process of creating took a long time to carry out. Tolkien began his work by placing various myths and tales in the context of the framework. Whittigham (2008: 35) writes that Tolkien later "revised, started anew, dropped one framework for another, turned from one interest to another, and his stories grew and evolved". The evolution was long and painful, and the intratextual frame of reference – and the whole textual body of the *legendarium* – is vast, complex and

---

[98] Then again, this objection did not stop Tolkien from writing a long (but unfinished) poem about King Arthur. This, *The Fall of Arthur*, was published posthumously in 2013.

[99] See also Whittingham 2008: 35.

in many major parts unfinished, as can be seen from Tolkien's posthumously published *The History of Middle-earth* series.

When Tolkien died in 1973, he had created what Flieger characterises as "a body of overlapping, competing, endlessly revised, and often incomplete texts, the outcome of more than half a lifetime's worth of invention" (Flieger 2002: 15). The evolution of the *legendarium* sometimes ends up even to contradict Tolkien's own philosophical and theological views and motifs. Whittingham writes that "*The Silmarillion*, with its cosmogony, theogony, cosmology, metaphysics, and eschatology, grew out of real-world mythologies and sometimes reflected and other times contradicted Tolkien's own ideas about God and man's relationship to the divine" (Whittingham 2008: 36).

2.3.1 The Speculative Historical Epic

> This book is largely concerned with Hobbits, and from its pages a reader may discover much of their character and a little of their history. Further information will also be found in the selection from the Red Book of Westmarch that has already been published, under the title of *The Hobbit*. The story was derived from the earlier chapters of the Red Book, composed by Bilbo himself, the first Hobbit to become famous in the world at large, and called by him There and Back Again, since they told of his journey into the East and his return: an adventure which later involved all the Hobbits in the great events of that Age that are here related. (Tolkien 1995: 2.)

The prologue of *The Lord of the Rings* starts with the above quotation in which Tolkien formulates the fictional background of his fiction. Tolkien's *legendarium* is a work of coherently build mythopoeia. Tolkien is a mythographer of contemporary language for contemporary readers and he is using many literary tools in his pursuit to do so. His fictional intratextual references and internal reference fields create a sense of coherence and fictional historicism for the fantasy world of Middle-earth.

Thus, Tolkien writes that *The Lord of the Rings* is based on "the Red Book of Westmarch" (Tolkien 1995: 1), which is a non-existing, fictional book. "The Red Book of Westmarch" is an etymological reference to the so-called Four Ancient Books of Wales – *the Red Book of Hergest*, *the Black Book of Carmarthen*, *the Book of Aneirin*, and *the Book of Taliesin*, plus a fifth, *the White Book of Rhydderch* (Flieger 2005a: 56). *The Red Book of Hergest* and *the White Book of*

Rhydderch are also the main manuscript sources of modern English-language translations of Welsh tales, *The Mabinogion* (or *The Mabinogi*).[100]

Shippey discusses that Tolkien pretended to be a translator. As time went on, Tolkien "felt obliged to stress the autonomy of Middle-earth – the fact that he was only translating analogously". (Shippey 2003: 117.) Tolkien feigned not only to translate textual material, but also create a whole manuscript tradition behind his own text. Tolkien pretended to be a translator, and because of that, all the inconsistencies between for example *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* can be explained by different background materials.

In one aspect Tolkien pretends to be a translator, but his creative method is far more complex than that assumption shows, as has been seen in the earlier chapters. But this claim of "authenticity" is an interesting one. Tolkien gives all his *legendarium's* parts a credible background; credible of course only inside his *legendarium's* internal field of reference. These intratextualities create a feeling of a plausible, coherent secondary creation. In *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, John Clute says that Tolkien's "is the most detailed of all invented fictional worlds, perhaps rivaled only by Austin Tappan Wright's *Islandia*" (Clute 1979: 609).[101]

The Lord of the Rings and *The Hobbit* are based on "the Red Book of Westmarch". *The Hobbit*, or "earlier selections from the Red Book", as he calls it, Tolkien describes to be written by Bilbo Baggins (Tolkien 2002f: 29), and the later parts of "the Red Book" were written by Bilbo, Frodo Baggins, Sam Gamgee and their descendants, as declared in the preface of *The Lord of the Rings* in an account of the history of this fictive "Great Book":

> This account of the end of the Third Age is drawn mainly from the Red Book of Westmarch. That most important source for the history of the War of the Rings was so called because it was long preserved at Undertowers, the home of the Fairbairns, Wardens of the Westmarch. It was in origin Bilbo's private diary, which he took with him to Rivendell. Frodo brought it back to the Shire, together with many loose leaves and notes, and during S.R. 1420-1 he nearly filled its pages with his account of the War. But annexed to it and preserved with it, probably in a single red case, were the three volumes, bound in red leather, that Bilbo gave to him as a parting gift. To these four volumes there

---

[100] *The Mabinogion*, translated by Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones (1949), *The Mabinogion* translated by Jeffrey Gantz (1976) and *The Mabinogi and Other Medieval Welsh Tales* translated by Patrick Ford (1977). See also Flieger 2005a: 57.
[101] *Islandia* (1942) is of course a grand design as an utopian novel, but it is "only" one novel, compared to Tolkien's *legendarium's* vast and multilayered texts.

was added in Westmarch a fifth containing commentaries, genealogies, and various other matter concerning the hobbit members of the Fellowship. (Tolkien 1995: 14.)

After this account, Tolkien also describes the other versions of the book as follows:

The original Red Book has not been preserved, but many copies were made especially of the first volume, for the use of the descendants of the children of Master Samwise. The most important copy, however, has a different history. It was kept at Great Smials, but it was written in Gondor, probably at the request of the great-grandson of Peregrin, and completed in S. R. 1592 (F. A. 172). Its southern scribe appended this note: Findegil, King's Writer, finished this work in IV172. It is an exact copy in all details of the Thain's Book in Minas Tirith. That book was a copy, made at the request of King Elessar, of the Red Book of the Periannath, and was brought to him by the Thain Peregrin when he retired to Gondor in IV 64. (Tolkien 1995: 14.)

In a preface of *The Hobbit*, Tolkien also describes his translation work. Tolkien starts the text with an explanation of why he uses modern English to tell the tale: "This is a story of long ago. At that time the languages and letters were quite different from ours of today. English is used to represent the languages". (Tolkien 1975: 11.)

Dependence on translations has been of course a fundamental part of Western culture altogether, since *The Bible*, the single most important book for European culture for more than a thousand years, has always been known to most readers in translations, and the same has been also the case with Platonic philosophy. Northrop Frye argues that Christian scholarship has been from the beginning dependent on translation – for example "Septuagint" Greek translation of the Old Testament, and St. Jerome's "Vulgate" Latin translation (Frye 2006: 21). Yet, as Frye points out, "everyone concerned with language is aware of the extent to which reading a translation is settling for the second best" (Frye 2006: 22). For Tolkien as a philologist, the concept of many different versions and translations of his own fictional *legendarium* is easily understandable feature, since most medieval texts – which could be seen as a major part of his works' external reference field – are known to readers of this day also as different versions and different translations. Tolkien's purpose is to create a credible background for his texts.

The Silmarillion, as Christopher Tolkien describes, "is a compilation, a compendious narrative, made long afterwards from sources of great diversity (poems, and annals, and oral tales) that had survived in agelong tradition; and this conception has indeed its parallel in the actual history of the book, for a great deal of earlier prose and poetry does underlie it, and it is to some extent a compendium in fact and not only in theory." (Tolkien 1999: vi.)

The same tone of coherent fictional background functions in all parts of Tolkien's *legendarium*. Tolkien describes that the fictional Elven folklore described in *The Silmarillion* is based on the preserved works of fictional character called Ælfwine of England, whom Tolkien describes as meeting Elves on the island of Tol Eressëa on his sea voyages. Ælfwine translated Elven folklore into Old English, and later Tolkien translated these into modern English.

> The tales are feigned to be translated from the preserved works of Ælfwine of England (c.900 A.D.), called by the Elves Eriol, who being blown west from Ireland eventually came upon the 'Straight Road' and found Tol Eressëa the Lonely Isle. He bought back copies and translations of many work. I do not trouble you with the Anglo-Saxon forms. (Tolkien 2002e: 5.)

Of *The Silmarillion*, according to Tolkien, the first part "Ainulindalë" was originally "written by Rúmil of Túna and was told to Ælfwine in Eressëa (as he records) by Pengoloð the Sage" (Tolkien 2002e: 8).

Then again, from *The History of Middle-earth*, the Elven mythic and cosmogonical tale "Of the Beginning of Time and its Reckoning" is "drawn from the work of Quennar Onótimo", who wrote also "Annals of Aman & Beleriand", "Counting of Years" and "Tale of Years" (Tolkien 2002e: 50). Thus, in his speculatively fictive way, Tolkien is only a translator of these earlier Elven tales.

In the *legendarium*, Tolkien is also writing a fictional history of languages. For example, Tolkien writes that "according to Elvish historians the Elven-folk, by themselves called the *Quendi*, and Elven-speech were originally one" (Tolkien 2002f: 29). Later the Elves were scattered and their languages changed. Tolkien writes that, at some point, Ælfwine the Mariner asked Pengoloð the Wise of Gondolin why the tongues of the Elves changed and were sundered (Tolkien 2002f: 395). There is also a straight evolution of languages in Tolkien's fictional historism. This happens with the other languages in Tolkien's cosmology too. Tolkien writes that at the time of "the Red Book" the language had gone through an evolution, and cites changes in the names for the days of the week that:

[I]n the language of the date of the Red Book these names had become written: *Sterday* (or *Stirday*), *Sunday*, *Munday*, *Trewsday*, *Hevensday*, *Mersday*, *Hiday*; and *Hevensday* was universally pronounced *Hensdy* and often written *He'nsday*. (Tolkien 2002f: 123.)

Tolkien's mythopoetic work could be compared with the works of such mythographers as Elias Lönnrot and to the work made by Scottish poet James Macpherson (1736–1796).[102] Macpherson's collection *Poems of Ossian* (or: *The Works of Ossian*, 1765) is one the greatest works of fictional archaism in the Western literature. Originally, in the 18th century, Macpherson's pseudo-3rd century poetry, which Macpherson claimed was authentic, was by the critics such as Samuel Johnson declared as forgery.[103]

Malcolm Laing in his 1805 preface for *The Poems of Ossian* writes about the authenticity of poetry, based on ideas originating from his dissertation on Macpherson's poetry. Laing argues that "our modern Ossian has acquired the rank of a classical poet", and that this should not be the case:

In Ossian there are some hundred similes and poetical images, which must either be original, or derived from imitation. If the poems are authentic, they must be original; and their casual coincidence with other poetry can possess only such a vague resemblance - - . If the poems, however, are not authentick, these similes and poetical images must be derived from the classicks, scriptures, and modern poetry, with which the author's mind was previously impregnated, and, however artfully disguised, they may be traced distinctly to their source. (Laing 1974: v–vii.)

Thus, for Laing, and many other contemporary critics, Macpherson's re-imagining of older eras of literary history and claims of authenticity of the text were unpardonable.

Tolkien's work has not received such a "stigma", because Tolkien of course never declared his texts seriously and critically authentic – and because the sources he is "translating", such as sources from Hobbit or Elven folk-lore, are all understood as fictional – but then again Tolkien's speculative fiction has often

---

[102] See for example Shippey 2007: 21–22.

[103] In *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* Samuel Johnson writes that "I believe they [poems of Ossian] never existed in any other form than what which we have seen. The editor, or author, never could show the original; nor can it be shewn by any other; to revenge reasonable incredulity, by refusing evidence, is a degree of insolence, with which the world is not yet acquainted; and stubborn audacity is the last refuge of guilt." (Johnson 2005.)

been criticised, especially by literally realistically orientated critics because of its fantastic and unreal content.[104]

Shippey sees that similar results that Tolkien did with his *legendarium* was achieved also by other philologist-creators. Lönnrot's the *Kalevala* is "now viewed with suspicion by scholars, because Lönnrot, like Walter Scott with his *Border Ballads*, did not just collect and transcribe, but he wrote, rewrote and interpolated, so that you cannot tell what is by him and what is 'authentic'." Shippey remarks that "similar accusations of interference and meddling have been made about the Grimms and their *Fairy-Tales*". (Shippey 2001: xxxiv.)[105]

Tolkien's mythopoetic fiction is also compared to the work of the makers of historical novel, such as Walter Scott.[106] Richard Maxwell has pointed out that in the nineteenth-century criticism it was commonplace to declare that Scottish novelist Walter Scott's *Waverley* (1814) introduced historical fiction to the world. Maxwell sees that one famous twentieth-century work has helped perpetuate this somewhat dubious idea, and that is Georg Lukács' *The Historical Novel*, a study which begins by denying that there is a meaningful connection between the "so called historical fiction" of the seventeenth century and the historical novel as it arose just after the fall of Napoleon. (Maxwell 2009: 2–3.)

This is exactly the point Lukács makes. His Marxist vision of historical novel sees the historical novel arousing at the beginning of the nineteenth century at about the time of Napoleon's collapse. He writes that novels with historical themes are to be found in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, too, and, should one feel inclined, one can treat medieval adaptations of classical history or myth as "precursors" of the historical novel, but one will find nothing there that sheds any real light on the phenomenon of the historical novel. Lukács sees that

---

[104]Even though, as Richard Mathews writes, Tolkien "emphasises that fantasy is not avoidance of the actual but a means of more complete understanding" (Mathews 2002: 57). Tolkien's fiction is therefore not intentionally escapism, but on the contrary quite the opposite.

[105] As a Finn, to Shippey's views of Lönnrot's *Kalevala* – shared by many works in Anglo-American Tolkien studies – I shall offer a few trivial corrections: the Finnish *Day of Kalevala*, officially the *Day of Finnish Culture*, is not celebrated on the day that *Kalevala* was first published, but on the day that Lönnrot signed the preface of the first edition of *Kalevala*. And secondly, scholars of Finnish culture and literature, as well as Lönnrot did in his time, admit the constructivism of the published *Kalevala*. As the Finnish Literary Society in its introduction writes: "[in making the expanded version] Lönnrot moved further and further away from his source texts in compiling the New Kalevala. With regard to his method, Lönnrot explained: "I felt myself to have the same right which, according to their conviction, most singers bestow on themselves, namely, to be able to order the runes as they are best suited to be joined together," or, in the words of a rune: "I conjured myself into a conjurer, a singer came of me. That is, I considered myself as good a singer as they." (Finnish Literary Society).

[106] For example by Shippey 2007: 21–22.

the so-called historical novels of the seventeenth century are historical only as regard their purely external choice of theme and costume. (Lukács 1962: 15.)

Lukács points out that writers of the 18th century, such as Swift, Voltaire and Diderot, set their satirical novels in a "never and nowhere", which "nevertheless faithfully reflects the essential characteristics of contemporary England and France" (Lukács 1962: 16). One can say the same on Tolkien too, as will be discussed later on: Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is set in a secondary world, but for example the milieu of Shire reflects that of 18th or 19th century pre-industrial England.

Lukács sees that soon after Lessing, in the Sturm and Drang, the problem of the artistic mastery of history already appears as a conscious one. For Lukács, Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen* not only ushers in a new flowering of historical drama, but it has a direct and powerful influence on the rise of the historical novel in the work of Walter Scott (Lukács 1962: 18). Scott's historical novel could be seen as the direct continuation of the great realistic social novel of the eighteenth century (Lukács 1962: 30). Lukács sees that Scott both continues and extends Goethe's tendency towards historic (Lukács 1962: 55). This kind of a "hero's journey" is simply a tendency for a character of historical novel to first live a heroic life, and after that, return to simple everyday life. This tendency, common also in the fairy-stories, is easily seen in Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, and in some extension also in *The Lord of the Rings*.[107]

Maxwell writes about the chronological frame of historical novels, seeing that no matter how detailed a chronology becomes, it will always have empty spaces. There is a difference between attitude towards those blanks by both historians and writers of fiction: a historian might find such empty spaces rather alluring, but a writer would find them as an opportunity for fictional interpolations. (Maxwell 2002: 19.) One might say that many parts of Tolkien's *legendarium* unpublished in his time were attempts to fill the empty blanks of Tolkien's chronological framework for *The Lord of the Rings*, and attempts to make the chronological framework of *The Silmarillion* more functional.

Therefore, Tolkien uses some methods that are common in the genre of historical novel in his *legendarium*. Tolkien creates a plausible fictional background for his work, in the same way as Umberto Eco in his *novel The Name*

---

[107] This tendency in fairy-stories has been studied vigorously. For example, in the major studies of the genre, such as Vladimir Propp's *The Morphology of the Folk Tale* (1928, in Russian), Joseph Campbell's *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, or Tzvetan Todorov's narrative theory in *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*.

of the Rose (*Il nome della rosa*, 1980) or Walter Scott in many of his classical historical novels. This creates a sense of familiarisation in the fictional universe. It also facilitates the "suspension of disbelief" and creates credibility for the secondary world: the fictional fantasy world, which the reader accepts as a coherent environment in the texts.

The differences and similarities of fiction and fact have of course been considerations of literary theory and criticism literally from the beginning of theoretical orientation. In the *Poetics* Aristotle discusses the difference between fact and fiction – of history and poetry. Aristotle sees that "it is not the function of the poet to narrate events that have actually happened, but rather, events such as might occur and have the capability of occurring in accordance with the laws of probability and necessity" (*Poetics* IX 1). Aristotle sees that the works of historians of his time, such as Herodotus, do not differ from poets in their writing of prose or verse. The difference, Aristotle sees, lies in "the fact that the historian narrates events that have actually happened, whereas the poet writes about things as they might possibly occur" (*Poetics* IX 2). In my view, this notion makes the writing of fiction inherently speculative – it is a writing of things "that might occur".

In Tolkien's *legendarium*, this speculative illusion is created with quasi-historiality of the fantasy world that is altogether coherent. As mentioned earlier, one of the critical focuses' of Coleridge's theory was the illusion created through literature, the difficulty of keeping up the illusion, and the possible breaking of the illusion. Thus there is a simple juxtaposing of both historical knowledge and the reader's (re)assumption, and the illusion created by a literary work of art.

Many of the classical historical novels can, at the one hand, be seen as functioning at the same time in the context of the contemporary writing period, and on the other hand trying to form the illusion of an older era – the period the text is referring to. Then again there are other external fields of reference that the text could be seen as referring to as well.

Eco points out that *The Three Musketeers* (*Les Trois Mousquetaires*, 1844) by Alexandre Dumas, père, is a classist novel. It has its background in both in classical and medieval literature, but it deals with characters familiar to us. Eco calls them "superuomo di massa", supermen of the masses. Eco sees that Athos equals mythical Greek hero Achilleus, Porthos equals hero Ajax, and Aramis

equals biblical character of Joseph.[108] As characters, they are like "displaced" mythical heroes.

When discussing his own historical novel *The Name of the Rose*, Eco differentiates three models of historical novels. 1) In the first, the past is a fairy-story-like construction, a scenery where there appears to be a free zone for imagination to work. The fictional world is quite distant from our known (realistic) world. Clearly, this model can be seen at work in Tolkien's *legendarium* as well. 2) In the second, there is an illusion of past, which is populated with familiar historical characters, but the main part of the fiction is on adventure. The psychology of the main characters has little to do with a real era, which the novel tries to cover. This model is not employed in Tolkien's *legendarium*. Although Tolkien is building "an illusion of past", it is only realistic inside his created world. 3) And thirdly, there is the so-called "real historical novel", as Eco describes it, where the characters and elements of plot are fictional, but from these elements a truthful image of past and historical era is drawn, even more real than in theoretical history books. Eco writes that with the *The Name of Rose* in this sense, he wanted to write a historical novel. (Eco 1985: 74–75.) Tolkien's *legendarium* of course cannot have this kind of historicity, since the image of past and historical era that it is portraying, is fantastic.

In Tolkien's mythopoetics, the main tool that creates the authenticity and feeling of "older era" is the archaistic language. This lingual ability can also be seen as an element of defamiliarisation. For Frye, Tolkien's "special languages" and textual archaism are closely related to symbolic visual emblem. Frye sees that the invented languages of Tolkien come at the end of a long tradition, including the synthetic Gothic of *Ivanhoe* and the "yea-verily-and-forsooth lingo" in which William Morris wrote his later prose romances and translations. Frye discusses though that the synthetic languages, "however absurd they often sound", do seem to belong to romantic decorum: Frye raises also two very different contemporary examples of Nigerian story of *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (1952) and Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange* (1962). For Frye, the special language can have even dreamlike quality, as he sees in Lady Gregory's brutal "drivel" in Joyce's *Ulysses*. (Frye 1976: 110.)

One of Tolkien's intentions – perhaps crucial – was to activate pre-modern myths for contemporary readers. Tolkien's intratextual references, I argue, create

---

[108] This theoretisation can be read from Eco, *Il superuomo di massa* (1978). Partial translation in English in Eco 1995.

an illusion of older eras. In his theory of the historical novel, Hans Vilmar Geppert calls this an "Illusion der unmittelbaren Darstellung" (Geppert 1976), kind of direct depiction, a coherent image. Likewise in Tolkien's works, there is no factual history behind the stories, but an invented history, credible inside his *legendarium*.

The situation becomes complex when Tolkien refers to his own created *legendarium* (then only unpublished works) in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*. *The Lord of the Rings* for example is full of intratextual references to "old stories" or legends, of which some were later published in *The Silmarillion* or in *The History of the Middle-earth* series: for example the story of Tinúviel (or Beren and Lúthien), which is recounted by Aragorn (during the scene still called Strider by the narrator) in the first book of *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, when the Hobbit character Sam Gamgee wanted to hear an old story:

> 'Then tell us some other tale of old days,' begged Sam, 'a tale about the Elves before the fading time. I would dearly like to hear more about Elves; the dark seems to press round so close.'

> 'I will tell you the tale of Tinúviel,' said Strider, 'in brief – for it is a long tale of which the end is not known; and there are none now, except Elrond, that remember it aright as it was told of old. It is a fairy tale, though it is sad, as are all the tales of Middle-earth, and yet it may lift up your hearts.' (Tolkien 1995: 187.)

Tolkien wrote many versions of the stories that form his *legendarium*, and the stories can be found published in many forms. A good example is the tale of the tragic hero Túrin Turambar. Tolkien first started writing on the subject in 1917, in the story then titled "Turambar and the Foalóke". One version of the story was published in *The Silmarillion* in 1977, under the title "Of Túrin Turambar". Other different versions have been published in *The Unfinished Tales*, *The Book of Lost Tales part II* and finally in most complete form in the posthumous text *The Children of Húrin* (2007). The title refers to the main characters Túrin and his sister Lalaith, who are children of Húrin, yet another epic hero of the *legendarium*.

There are also intratextual stories and myths used in other parts of the *legendarium*. For example, Elves at first in *The Lord of the Rings* function as folklore for the Hobbits. Sam Gamgee, for example, "recalls old tales of elf-ships sailing west from the Grey Havens, leaving the folk of Middle-earth" (Gasque 2000: 5). The evil kingdom of Mordor is also described more as a nightmarish

story for the Hobbits: "[a] name the hobbits only knew in legends of the dark past, like a shadow in the background of their memories; but it was ominous and disquieting" (Tolkien 1995: 42); or later: "a shadow on the borders of old stories" (Tolkien 1995: 50).

2.3.2 Contextual Circles of Myth and Genre

> Those days, the Third Age of Middle-earth, are now long past, and the shape of all lands has been changed; but the regions in which Hobbits then lived were doubtless the same as those in which they still linger: the North-West of the Old World, east of the Sea. (Tolkien 1995: 2.)

As seen from the quote above, Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is situated in a mythical era, "long past"[109], but Tolkien claims that the world is the same as the reader's (real, factual) world. Tolkien's *legendarium* therefore is not originally based on "another world", even though Middle-earth is – in our concept – a fantasy world. The Hobbits used to live – and still live – in the "North-West of the Old World", precisely in "England" (real or non-real), as will be discussed later in this dissertation. But as the *legendarium* makes contextual external references to "our world", it is still "mythical". This chapter focuses on myth and genre. What is constructed or re-imagined myth, and how is it used in the *legendarium*? What is the genre, or what are the genres, of Tolkien's literary works? This sub-chapter will focus on these questions. Then, in the end of chapter, I will present a chart (see chart 2.) on how Frye's theory of modes and of the archetypal imaginary could be assimilated with the archetypal imaginaries of Tolkien's *legendarium*.

Tolkien's *legendarium* is situated in an era that is "long past", a mythic prehistory of our world. In The Great Code. The Bible and Literature, Northrop Frye discusses on Giambattista Vico's three ages in the cycle of history: a mythical age (or age of gods), a heroic age (or age of an aristocracy), and an age of the people. According to Vico, after these periods comes a ricorso (a return), and the whole process starts all over again. Each of these ages produces "its own kind of language", which Vico calls the poetic, the heroic (or noble), and the vulgar. Frye's names for these different types of languages are hieroglyphic, the hieratic and the demotic. (Frye 2006: 23.)

---

[109] Maybe this era has something to do with the epiphanic, unhistorical time that Frye is referring to, and where Frye sees the archetypal imaginary of our (mythic) literature emerging from (see Frye 1951).

Frye explains that the era before Plato was hieroglyphic, and with "Plato we enter a different phase of language, one that is "hieratic", partly in the sense of being produced by an intellectual elite" (Frye 2006: 25). As an example of "a Viconian ricorso in literature", Frye sees the rise of the European culture in the early Christian period after the destruction of the Roman Empire (Frye 2006: 30).

This kind of temporal trichtotomy could be seen in Tolkien's *legendarium*. The early part of *The Silmarillion*, the cosmogonical "Ainulindalë" and cosmological accounts of "Valaquenta" refer to an age of "gods": an era when the creator Eru and his offspring the Ainur create the World, and when Ainur enter the created World. Even Tolkien's style of writing is mythic and poetic, in a Biblical way:

> Then the voices of the Ainur, like unto harps and lutes, and pipes and trumpets, and viols and organs, and like unto countless choirs singing with words, began to fashion the theme of Ilúvatar to a great music; and a sound arose of endless interchanging melodies woven in harmony that passed beyond hearing into the depths and into the heights, and the places of the dwelling of Ilúvatar were filled to over-flowing, and the music and the echo of the music went out into the Void, and it was not void. (Tolkien 1999: 3–4.)

After that, in *The Silmarillion*, and in the parts of the *legendarium* situated in the same era, such as *The Children of Húrin*, the focus moves from the divine Ainur to Elves and Men: towards more familiar characters of elven and human heroes (and anti-heroes). The cycle in the history of Middle-earth is heroic, and the writing more hieratic, as can be seen from the following scene when Túrin Turambar climbs to meet the dragon Glaurung in a battle:

> Then Turambar summoned all his will and courage and climbed the cliff alone, and came beneath the dragon. Then he drew Gurthang [his sword], and with all the mights of his arm, and of his hate, he thrust it into the soft belly of the Worm, even up to the hilts. But when Glaurung felt his death-pang, he screamed, and in his dreadful throe he heaved up his bulk and hurled himself across the chasm, and there lay lashing and coiling in his agony. And he set all in a blaze about him, and beat all to ruin, until at last his fires died, and he lay still. (Tolkien 1999: 265–266.)

In *The Lord of the Rings,* the heroic age coincides (and impacts) with the age of people: that is, the age of the Hobbits, and of (more or less) un-heroic humans. This is also the point that Saruman makes in his monologue in *The Fellowship of*

the Ring, when he tries to assure Gandalf that their future as Istari, the Wizards (also known as "The Wise") would be to rule the coming non-heroic time of Men:

> "The Elder Days are gone. The Middle Days are passing. The Younger Days are beginning. The time of the Elves is over, but 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 goof which only the Wise can see." (Tolkien 1995: 252.)

The Hobbit with its different literary tone is of course more written in the vulgar or demotic language. A good example of this "vulgar" speech is the language used by the trolls, Bert, Tom and William (Bill). Despite their vulgar appearance and behaviour, Trolls are also quite unfamiliar characters for the milieu, since they speak with "modern" cockney accents:

> 'Mutton yesterday, mutton today, and blimey, if it don't look like mutton again tomorrer,' said one of the trolls.
>
> 'Never a blinking bit of manflesh have we had for long enough,' said a second. 'What the 'ell William was a-thinkin' of to bring us into these parts at all, beats me – and the drink runnin' short, what's more,' he said jogging the elbow of William, who was taking a pull at his jug.
>
> William choked. 'Shut yer mouth!' he said as soon as he could. 'Yer can't expect folk to stop here for ever just to be eat by you and Bert. You've et a village and a half between yer, since we came down from the mountains- - . (Tolkien 1975: 39.)

Then again, we can say that all these fictional ages of Middle-earth, and different tones of language of the *legendarium* are mythical in some sense: Tolkien's *legendarium* is in all of its parts closely related to a fictional mythology, and could be seen as operating in many ways on the level of basic myths.

We could even argue fundamentally that J. R. R. Tolkien's *legendarium* is primarily fantasy fiction deriving from the world of myths. Tolkien's creative method uses myths, activates them, modernises them, and familiarises them. Different myths, such as Platonic myth or Scandinavian and Kalevala myths, form wide range of different external fields of reference for Tolkien's *legendarium*. Of course, myths are at the centre of Tolkien's poetics and his *legendarium*. Myths are one of the main focus areas of contemporary literary theory.

115

Scholes & Kellogg point out the great difference between the epic story-teller's traditional story (*mythos*, in ancient Greece), and fact, truth or entertainment:

> The epic story-teller is telling a traditional story. The primary impulse which moves him is not a historical one, nor a creative one, it is *re*-creative. He is retelling a traditional story, and therefore his primary allegiance is not to fact, not to truth, not to entertainment, but to *mythos* itself – the story is preserved in the tradition which the epic story-teller is re-creating. The word *mythos* meant precisely this in ancient Greece: a traditional story. (Scholes & Kellogg 1966: 12.)

So, as Scholes & Kellogg see, mythic story-teller is re-creating the story: likewise as Tolkien pretends to be a translator, or re-teller of stories. Tolkien is re-creating myths. Tolkien's creative method uses myths, activates them, and modernises them. Myth is also one of the main concepts in Tolkien's On Fairy-Stories. In his letter to publisher Milton Waldman, Tolkien describes that:

> [B]asic 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. (Tolkien 1999: x–xi.)

Flieger in her *Interrupted Music*, as well as Whittigham later, sees Tolkien trying to follow the footsteps of mythographers of folk tales, such as Grimm brothers, Elias Lönnrot and John Francis Campbell. Tolkien is following his literary "instinctive bent towards myth and fairy-tale", his "search for cultural identity" and "literary ambition". (Flieger 2005a: 6–7, 11–12.)[110]

This attitude to myths can be seen in the romanticism of Finnish poet Eino Leino (1878–1926), who, like Lönnrot, is a mythographer of *Kalevala* poems for 19th- and 20th-century audiences. Leino thinks that language and myth are inseparable. He used the concept of myth in comparison with Freud's view that myths are kind of secular dreams shared by all humanity, representing for mankind the same as dreams represent for an individual. From this Freudian background Carl Gustav Jung later introduced his theory of myths as a representation of the collective unconsciousness (*das Kollektiv Unbewusste*). (Oksala 1983: 83.)

---

[110] See also Whittigham 2008: 35.

The concept of myth is complex and of course has been a matter of discussion for the last centuries. For Frye, myth – in its literary context – means: "first of all *mythos*, plot or narrative", and in general, the "sequential ordering of words" (Frye 2006: 49). Frye therefore objects the contemporary meaning of myth as something "not really true", since for Frye, mythical means the opposite of "not really true": "it means being charged with a special seriousness and importance". Frye's examples include sacred stories that illustrate a "specific social concern". Frye sees that after the rise of metonymical language, stories have been used as "concrete illustrations of abstract arguments", which is close to the role of Platonic myths. (Frye 2006: 50–51.)

Joseph Pearce sees myth as a tool for Tolkien's personal theological belief and for his literary creative methods. Pearce writes that one result of Tolkien's Christianity was his development of the philosophy of myth that underpins his sub-creation. Pearce states humorously that Tolkien is "a *mis*understood man because he is a *myth*understood man". Pearce sees that for Tolkien, myth was not a leap from reality but a leap into reality. For most modern critics a myth is merely another word for a lie or a legend, but intrinsically *not* true. For Tolkien, myth had the opposite meaning. It was the only way that certain transcendent truths could be expressed in intelligible form. (Pearce 1999: xiii–xiv.) So this is pretty much the same notion that Frye made.

What then is the type of myth that Tolkien uses in his literary works? The simplest way of answering the question is to focus on the genre and themes upon which Tolkien's books are constructed. By these tools, Tolkien's *legendarium* could be seen as a collection of classical myths re-written for contemporary readers. Tolkien is rediscovering the pre-modern myth and writing a new mythology, or re-writing mythology. His myth is therefore a "re-written myth" in a 20th century *genre-fantasy*, a genre which in the opinion of many researchers owes it sheer existence – in contemporary magnitude – to Tolkien's fiction.

When *The Lord of the Rings* was published in 1954–55 it was compared in good-natured criticism to much older and fundamentally classic works of literature, such as Edmund Spencer's *The Faerie Queene* (1590), John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), or Dante's *Divine Comedy* (1308–21).[111]

When *The Silmarillion*, with its old fashioned myth-making and biblical language, was published posthumously in 1977 it attracted even more courageous

---

[111] On which occasion Tolkien wrote, in 1967 in a letter to Charlotte and Denis Plimmer that: "I do not seriously dream of being measured against Dante, a supreme poet" (Tolkien 1981: 377).

comparisons. *The Silmarillion* was compared to classical works such as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid* or *The Book of Chronicles* of the *Bible*.

For contemporary critics it was hard to see Tolkien as a modern writer. He was compared to older mythographers of English language such as William Blake or John Milton. Debbie Sly writes that Tolkien's mythological cosmology is fundamentally medieval, although touched by 20th century's cataclysms (Sly 2000: 109). Tanya Caroline Wood even ponders if Tolkien is a "renaissance writer", as stated earlier (T. Wood 99). Then again, 21st century's criticism, like Richard Mathews' *Fantasy: The Liberation of Imagination* (2002), sees that Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* – the twentieth century's most influential work in the genre – "breathed new life into fantasy" (Mathews 2002: 54) and thus vitalised, modernised and re-created the genre.

Richard C. West sees Tolkien in a long continuity of writers of myths and historical novels, such as Walter Scott, Robert Louis Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling, George MacDonald and Lord Dunsany. West calls Tolkien and his contemporaries T. H. White and C. S. Lewis "medieval authors". West writes that Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* can be categorised as a novel, but its fantastic nature fits ill into the traditional idea of the novel as a "reflection of real life". Therefore West calls *The Lord of the Rings* "the twentieth-century romance". (West 1970: 9–10.) Harold Bloom combines the genres of romance and fantasy fiction, calling *The Lord of the Rings* a "fantasy-romance" (Bloom 2000: 1). That is exactly the point Tolkien himself makes. He writes in a letter to Peter Szabo Szentmihaly that *The Lord of the Rings* is not a "novel", but a "heroic romance", representing much older and a very different type of literature (Tolkien 1981: 414). We might say that it is written in completely different genre than a modern English novel.[112]

But Tolkien could, and one might say must, be seen as a contemporary 20th century writer. Jed Esty compares Tolkien with a canonical writer T. S. Eliot, who also used myths in his writings (Esty 2004: 121–123). Esty sees both Tolkien and Eliot as a same kind of mythographers of the 20th century literature. Then again Esty makes rather hasty assessments, as declaring that Charles Williams was "a close associate of - - of the so-called Oxford Christians J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis. Like Tolkien and Lewis, Williams made his career by crafting Christian materials onto popular fiction." (Esty 2004: 75.) I cannot fully approve the

---

[112] On his preface of *The Children of Húrin*, Christopher Tolkien calls the tale "a heroic fairy romance" (Tolkien 2007: 10). A genre definition suitable for many of Tolkien's so-called novels.

opinion, for in my account Tolkien is not "re-Christianing" myths and Tolkien's books are certainly not "crafting of Christian material onto popular fiction".

Esty argues that "Tolkien uses narrative fantasy to engage and employ the kinds of Christian quests that emerge as shrouded allegory in Eliot's poetry" (Esty 2004: 121). In the other hand, Esty makes precise assessments of both Tolkien's and Eliot's "anti-modernist nostalgia" and sees Tolkien's works as part of a distinctive romantisation of Englishness that flourished in the 1930s. Comparing Tolkien to figures like Vaughan Williams, Benjamin Britten, the artists John and Paul Nash, and politicians like Winston Churchill and Lord Reith – who all, Esty writes, invested in the "myth of an atavistic transhistorical Englishness". (Esty 2004: 121–122.)

However, there are some appropriate points: Tolkien is certainly a 20th century writer romanticising his view of anti-anthropomorphic mythology, constructed from pre-modern myths for contemporary audience, an audience that Tolkien saw foremost as English, the residents of the country for which he was ultimately writing his "mythology". In the myths Tolkien used, some part are certainly religious myths deriving from the *Bible* or other Christian sources, but there are myths that derive from other sources, such as Finnish, Scandinavian, Germanic and old-English mythologies.

Shippey in his study *Tolkien: Author of the Century*, in statement that can hardly be denounced,[113] sees that "[t]he dominant literary mode of the twentieth century has been the fantastic" (Shippey 2001: vii). Shippey goes on to defend the genre of the fantastic from the critics – one can say, from those especially of the realistic genre – who condemn fantasy as "escapism": saying that "readers and writers of fantasy are fleeing from reality". 20th century writers of the fantastic mode, such as Tolkien, George Orwell, William Golding or Kurt Vonnegut, are combat veterans involved personally in the most traumatically significant events of the century, who "had to find some way of communicating and commenting on them". (Shippey 2001: viii.)

As a writer, Shippey sees Tolkien being a "philologist before he was a mythologist, and a mythologist, at least in intention, before he ever became a writer of fantasy fiction" (Shippey 2001: xvi). But after his philological and mythological ambitions, Tolkien is of course a fantasy writer. Shippey sees Tolkien as a Chrétien de Troyes of the 20th century: "Chrétien, in the twelfth century, did not *invent* the Arthurian romance, which must have existed in some

---

[113] One only has to look at book sales in the 20th or 21st century.

form before his time, but he showed what could be done with it - - '' Tolkien, in same way, "did not *invent* heroic fantasy, but he showed what could be done with it; he established a genre whose durability we cannot estimate". (Shippey 2001: xviii–xix.) There was a vivid tradition of epic and heroic fantasy before Tolkien, English and Irish writers such as E. R. Eddison or Lord Dunsany, and also the American tradition of pulp-writers from magazines such as *Weird Tales* or *Unknown* (Shippey 2001: xxiv).[114] Genre-defining works such as Eddison's *The Worm Ouroboros* (1922), Lord Dunsany's *The King of the Elfland's Daughter* (1924), or even Robert E. Howard's *Conan*-series (1932–36) were familiar for some readers of Tolkien's fiction.

Frye sees Tolkien's traditional background deriving from the genre of romance. Frye postulates the tradition from Sydney's *Arcadia* (and similar works), and sees the genre continuing after the development of novel as "Gothic" stories, such as of Mathew Gregory Lewis' *The Monk* (1796), and its Victorian successors. For the successors, Frye sees William Morris as the most interesting figure of this tradition, mostly for his encyclopedic approach to romance, which Frye calls "his ambition to collect every major story in literature and retell or translate it". Frye implicates Tolkien in the same "rise of genre fiction" of the 1950s as science fiction, writing that: "In the Twentieth century romance got a new lease of fashion – with the success of Tolkien and the rise of what is generally called science fiction". (Frye 1976:4.)

William Morris, an English 19th century artist and writer, medievalist and translator of ancient and pre-modern texts,[115] was in many ways a traditional predecessor for Tolkien.[116] Mathews see that both Tolkien and Morris share a common impulsive to write – that psychologically they both share "a personal background of displacement and loss" (Mathews 2002: 55).

Morris' intention was to bring back the beauty of the Middle Ages, drawing from old French poetry and romance, and from Northern Sagas. Morris "wanted to make his contemporaries appreciate the Northern Sagas", and as an artist (designer and illustrator) he "revived old patterns as well as made new ones, largely under the influence of the old". (Cole 1948: xiii.) The same can be said of

---

[114] Lin Carter, for example, sees William Morris', Lord Dunsany's, and E. R. Eddison's heroic fantasy romance resembling Tolkien's fiction in many ways (Carter 1969: 134–151).
[115] Such as Virgil's *Aeneids*, Homer's *The Odyssey*, and Icelandic *Völsung Saga*.
[116] As has been argued, for example, by Chester N. Scoville in his article "Pastoralia and Perfectability in William Morris and J. R. R. Tolkien" (2005: 93–103), or, in John R. Holmes' article "Tolkien, *Dustsceawung*, and the Gnomic Tense: Is Timelessness Medieval or Victorian?" (2005: 44).

Tolkien, who certainly wanted his contemporaries to appreciate his re-imagining of old myth. And certainly, in his literature, Tolkien revived many of the older stories, but at the same time made them into something completely new and different.

Morris' work as a "reteller or translator of literature" was of course familiar to Tolkien, who in some occasions explained his gratitude for this earlier mythographer. In his letter to his wife-to-be Edith Bratt (later Edith Tolkien) as early as in the year 1914, Tolkien writes that his ambition at the time was to write a short story in a fashion of William Morris' romances:

> Amongst other work I am trying to turn one of the stories – which is really a
> very great story and most tragic – into a short story somewhat on the lines of
> Morris's romances with chunks of poetry in between - - . (Tolkien 1981: 7.)

The story, on which Tolkien is referring, as Carpenter states in his notes to his edition to *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien*, is "The Story of Kullervo", *Kalevala*-based story on a hero Kullervo's tragic life, a story that was left unfinished, but proved to be the starting point for Tolkien's story of Túrin Turambar in *The Silmarillion* (Carpenter 1981: 434), a story that was published as a complete version posthumously in *The Children of Húrin*.[117]

Tolkien's sympathies for Morris' fiction is seen again much later in the year 1960, when in a letter to Professor L. W. Forster Tolkien illuminates that he personally thinks that the war-scenes in *The Lord of the Rings* are not affected directly by the World Wars. Tolkien argues that although the scenes in *The Lord of the Rings* on The Dead Marches and the approaches to the Morannon owe something as a level of landscape to Northern France after the Battle of Somme, but they owe more to William Morris and his Huns and Romans, as in *The House of the Wolfings* or *The Roots of the Mountains*. (Tolkien 1981: 303.) Tolkien clearly declares his passion for Morris' fiction and the genre of romance by calling *The Lord of the Rings* "a romance", as declared earlier.

Thus, what are the genres of Tolkien's *legendarium*? Shippey points out that *The Lord of the Rings* in a way created its own genre, a genre or sub-genre of heroic fantasy trilogy, totally unknown before, but one that has now become extremely popular. Shippey asks, is *The Lord of the Rings* still a novel, or is it a romance or an epic? (Shippey 2001: 221.) Shippey answers the question using the

---

[117] *The Story of Kullervo*, an original unfinished story by Tolkien, was published for the first time in August 2015. Although the story acts as one of the foundation stones for Tolkien's mythopoetic fiction, the story itself is based on *Kalevala* and is not part of Tolkien's *legendarium*.

comprehensive description of literary modes from Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*,[118] which will be discussed later in this chapter. At this point, it is only meaningful to say that Shippey sees *The Lord of the Rings* as romance, but as a romance "which is in continuous negotiation with, and which follows many of the conventions of, the traditional bourgeois novel" (Shippey 2001: 223). Tolkien's fiction uses different genres and modes of literature as a purpose to form and create a vast internal field of reference: *the legendarium;* with many different operative external reference fields.

Raymond H. Thompson studies the similarities and differences of romance and contemporary fantasy and sees many similarities that can be seen represented in Tolkien's *legendarium*. Thompson sees that proving the hero's values is important in both the "modern" fantasy – as Thompson calls the genre – and medieval romance. The "danger inherent in the ambitious pursuit of power" is the subject of both *The Lord of the Rings* and T. H. White's *The Once and Future King* (1958), as well as of the medieval romances of Alexander and the 14th century English alliterative *Awntyrs off Arthure*. (Thompson 1982: 213.)

As for the genre of Tolkien's *legendarium*, it could be said that it is variable. As mentioned earlier in "The Introduction", all three books which form the basis of the *legendarium* functions in different genres and modes. *The Hobbit* could be seen as the simplest form of fairy-story, or a story for children or younger audiences. *The Hobbit*'s literary tone is a tone of romantic fairy-story, and it is still mainly considered to be a children's book. *The Lord of the Rings* is an *epic-romance* and *epic-fantasy* or a *heroic-fantasy*. *The Silmarillion*, in my opinion, is a mythological *heroic-epic* of the highest form.

It is possible to see that Tolkien ranged his *legendarium* from the mimetically "lower" fairy-story of *The Hobbit* to the higher myth of *The Lord of the Rings*, and still higher to the cosmogonical and cosmological mythology of *The Silmarillion*, where myth and fictional "history" is vital.

Then again, it is surprising and quite peculiar to find out that when Tolkien was writing a sequel for *The Lord of the Rings*, the unfinished "The New Shadow" that has been published in *The History of Middle-earth*, he was writing in yet another genre: a genre, which Christopher Tolkien calls "thriller". From the short published fragment we can as well say that it has not the level of excitement, suspense or tension usually found in the genre of thriller, but it is

---

[118] As I mentioned earlier, this has been also discussed by Christine Brooke-Rose in her study *A Rhetoric of the Unreal: Studies in Narrative and Structure, Especially of the Fantastic* (1981).

definitely not written in the same mode as *The Lord of the Rings*. "The New Shadow" was not published in Tolkien's lifetime, and it was never meant to be published. Christopher Tolkien quotes his father saying that: "There would be no tales worth of telling in the days of the King's Peace". He continues that his father disparaged the story that he had begun saying that: "I could have written a 'thriller' about the plot and its discovery and overthrown – but it would be just that. Not worth doing." Christopher Tolkien points out that it would nonetheless have been a very remarkable thriller, and that one may well view its early abandonment with regret. (Tolkien 2002f: 418.) Tolkien's *legendarium's* fantasy therefore never fully moves in the direction of that genre, but that kind of works, such as Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897)[119] have been made in fantasy literature earlier and also later on[120].

If all three separate main works (*The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings,* and *The Silmarillion*) of the *legendarium* shall be taken as contemporary 20th century "fantasy" or "fantastic literature", then what is the exact fantasy genre that for example *The Lord of the Rings* is written in? I take the opportunity to use Farah Mendlesohn's definitions of fantasy from her *Rhetorics of Fantasy*, which introduces a functional system of classification for the genre. In the book, basically, Mendlesohn introduces four different categories of fantasy: *The Portal-Quest Fantasy*, *The Immersive Fantasy*, *The Intrusion Fantasy*, and *The Liminal Fantasy*.

The Portal-Quest Fantasy is "simply a fantastic world entered through a portal - - . Crucially, the fantastic is *on the other side* and does not 'leak'. Although individuals may cross both ways, the magic does not." (Mendlesohn 2008: xx.)

The Immersive Fantasy "invites us to share not merely a world, but a set of assumptions. At its best, it presents the fantastic without comment as the norm both for the protagonist and for the reader: we sit on the protagonist's shoulder and while we have access to his eyes and ears, we are not provided with an explanatory narrative." The *Immersive Fantasy* Mendlesohn holds out to closest to science fiction: "once the fantastic becomes assumed, it acquires a scientific cohesion all of its own." (Mendlesohn 2008: xx.)

---

[119] Stoker's *Dracula* was chosen by International Thriller Writers as one of the "Top 100 thrillers of all time" (Schmidt 2012).
[120] For example contemporary novels by Stephen King or Dean Koontz.

In *Intrusion Fantasy*, Mendlesohn sees the fantastic as the bringer of chaos. She explains that "fantastic" could be "the beast in the bottom of the garden, or the Elf seeking assistance. It is horror and amazement. It takes us out of safety without taking us from our place. It is recursive", but not necessarily unpleasant. (Mendlesohn 2008: xxi–xxii.)

The Liminal Fantasy is rare. As M. John Harrison has said, of the existence of the transliminal moment, the points when we are invited to cross the threshold into the fantastic, "but choose not do so". The result is that the fantastic leaks back through the portal. Mendlesohn prefers the concept of *liminal* to Tzvetan Todorov's *hesitation* or *uncertainty*, because she thinks that 'hesitation' is only one strategy employed by these writers. (Mendlesohn 2008: xxiii.)

Mendlesohn sees Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* as a *Portal-Quest Fantasy* and *The Silmarillion* as *Immersive Fantasy*. She goes on to explain that, despite the reputation as a "full secondary world" *The Lord of the Rings* is in fact a *Quest Fantasy* – most familiar of the kind. The structure of the narrative outlined is: "Frodo moves from a small, safe, and understood world in the wild, unfamiliar world of - - Middle-earth". (Mendlesohn 2008: 2–3.) The same can be said of *The Hobbit*, which is clearly a Quest Fantasy, although as I earlier declared, it has more to do with Adventure, than a Quest. The point of moving through a "portal" ("the boundaries of The Shire", for example) into a un- and defamiliar "Outside World" is of course the point that I make, for example in the chapter 3.3.3 *The Silmarillion*, Mendlesohn describes as the *Immersive Fantasy*: "the book told within the world, about people who know their world" (Mendlesohn 2008: 2–3).

Regarding the works of Tolkien and C. S. Lewis Mendlesohn is surprised how few are the examples of adventure rhetorics, which are usually associated with modern heroic fantasy. Mendlesohn sees a rare moment of adventure rhetorics in one of the only real "action scenes" of *The Lord of the Rings*, the start of the chapter "The Choices on Master Samwise". (Mendlesohn 2008: 36.) In certain parts, Tolkien's *legendarium* can be seen as adventurous. But then again, the contemporary "adventure rhetorics" from for example the *pulp-fantasy* cannot usually be found there.

On the sub-genre of *The Lord of the Rings*, Mendlesohn sees the scenes on The Shire working in "immersive" style. Although she sees *The Lord of the Rings* as a Portal-Quest Fantasy, because "most of the book takes place in a world strange to the protagonists, a condition that makes it very hard for them to question what they see." Then again, Mendlesohn points out that Tolkien

pioneered the argument to create a coherent fantasy world, with its own history, archaeology, geology, and its own languages. (Mendlesohn 2008: 67.)

Mendlesohn goes as far as to argue that in the creating The Shire, Tolkien found immersive depth that cannot be found in the other parts of *The Lord of the Rings*:

> Tolkien, for all his depth and breadth of detail, for all the maps he draw, and his care in the detail in the depiction of Middle-earth, came closest to creating a fully immersive fantasy world only when he wrote of the Shire (and later in *The Silmarillion* which is told "from the inside"). Once out in the great world, his hobbits only ever see the surface of things; they never truly understand the world they move through. In contrast, the Shire has visible depth: perhaps Tolkien's ideal place, it is a locale ruled by a combination of paternalism and anarcho-communalism. Decisions are made in the pub and people band together to carry them out, whether they are decisions to raid Sharkey's den or to plant the harvest. (Mendlesohn 2008: 67.)

Mendlesohn sees that the Hobbit sections are written in the immersive style (2008: 32). What Mendlesohn therefore sees as immersive style of fantasy, are for me the familiarising elements of the *legendarium*. Tolkien's external references to ruric pre-mechanised England, written in the genre of fantasy literature.

Once again, Mendlesohn's analysis of Tolkien's *legendarium* shows clearly that Tolkien's fiction acts within the scope of many genres and sub-genres. The Portal-Quest Fantasy converges with immersive style, and heroic fantasy elements are woven within a Quest Fantasy. This clash of genres has been noted widely by Tolkien scholars. For example Lin Carter sees the elements of epic, *chanson de geste* and romance working in Tolkien's *legendarium*. He sees these elements of *chanson de geste* and romance borrowed from heroic and epic narrative, for example "the larger-than-life hero, heroine, and villain, as well as the strong element of the supernatural, the occasional act of direct divine intervention into mortal affairs, and the preoccupation with the dual epic themes of quest and warfare as standard plot motifs" (Carter 1969: 121–122.) These elements, modes and motifs can of course all be found in Tolkien's *legendarium*.

Tolkien's *legendarium* is a complex fictional mythology written by an author in many different modes and driven by different motifs. Next, in order to illuminate Tolkien's *legendarium's* modes and motifs, with the contrast of different external and internal fields of references, I will use Northrop Frye's theory of the fictional modes as a baseline.

Frye in his *Anatomy of Criticism* declares that fictions "may be classified, not morally, but by the hero's power of action, which may be greater than ours, less, or roughly the same" (Frye 1967: 33). Summarily, Frye separates fiction into five categories: 1) Myth (1), when protagonist is superior in kind to "us", and to the fictional environment, a divine being, as Frye says. 2) Romance, when protagonist is superior in degree to "us" and to the fictional environment, moving from "myth" into "legend" of fantasy. 3) High mimetic mode, when protagonist is superior in degree to "us", and other men, but not to his environment, a leader and hero of most epic and tragedy. 4) Low mimetic mode, when protagonist is not superior to "us", other men, or his environment – a hero of realistic fiction. And lastly: 5) Ironic mode, when the protagonist is inferior to "us".

Tolkien's mode of writing in the *legendarium* varies. Shippey sees that Frye's framework allows us to place *The Lord of the Rings*, and lets us see "why it is an anomaly" (Shippey 2001: 221). Shippey sees *The Lord of the Rings* functioning in all the five levels of Frye's framework.[121] Shippey's thoughts on *The Lord of the Rings* are quite convincing. Of course we can itemise on some of the wordings, such as, that Gandalf, Bombadil and Sauron are not "exactly divine being", which they, in fact, inside Tolkien's cosmology are. Shippey addresses the class of Maiar, invented by Tolkien, as "something intermediate".

Then again, as "characters",[122] Gandalf, Bombadil and Sauron do work very near the mode of myth, as Shippey argues, but their level of function differs from

---

[121] The Hobbits, Shippey discusses, are very clearly low mimetic, most of the time. Of the Hobbits, Sam Gamgee, on the other hand, even more than Gollum, tends to sink towards the ironic. Shippey even compares his relationship with Frodo Baggins with the most famous ironic or romantic pairing in the history of Western literature, that of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza from Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605–15). Then again, nearly all the human characters of *The Lord of the Rings* occupy a higher level. For example Éomer or Boromir are characteristic figures of high mimesis: leaders, kings and heroes, but still mortal, without supernatural powers. However Aragorn, Shippey writes, though staying on the level of other humans much of the time, is still different: "he can summon the dead, he can compel the *palantír* to his will, he lives in full vigour for 210 years, and he is able to control his death". Shippey sees that Aragorn, and his non-human companions like Legolas, Gimli, and Arwen, and all the non-human species of Middle-earth, are figures of *romance*. For Shippey, finally the characters like Gandalf, Bombadil and Sauron, are very close to the level of myth. Shippey writes "that they are not exactly 'divine beings', but they are not human either, something intermediate (in fact Gandalf and Sauron are both Maiar, a class of being invented by Tolkien)". Shippey even invents a "sixth level" outside Frye's categorisation, which one could call "true myth", or gospel, or revelation, or (in Tolkien's word) *evangelium*. Then again, Shippey says that Tolkien refuses to reach out for that category, only hinting to that direction – in the direction "of mythic meaning". (Shippey 2001: 222–224.)

[122] Character being quite peculiar name to call Sauron (*in the Lord of the Rings*), who only appears narrated by other characters of the story in few shadowy and dreamy scenes, such as the *analeptic*

each other. The scenes where Tom Bombadil appears in the first book of *The Lord of the Rings* the text itself still functions in very much a fairy-tale mode. Bombadil, despite his "shrouded power" and elemental force as perhaps a spirit of nature, is still quite a humoristic and comical character. On the scenes of his first appearance in the story, Tom Bombadil sings a tune Tolkien describes as "nonsense":

> Hey dol! merry dol! ring a dong dillo!
>
> Ring a dong! hop along! fal lal the willow!
>
> Tom Bom, jolly tom, Tom bombadillo! (Tolkien 1995: 116.)

This is quite far away from the mythic tone, but closer to some Victorian fantasy and Lewis Carroll's style nonsense fantasy fiction for adolescence audience. Then again the character, Tom Bombadil, is in the *legendarium* "superior in kind both to other men and to the environment", as Frye (1967: 33–34) states the protagonist of *mythic* mode to be. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Tom Bombadil is referred to quite prestigious or even divine names: he is called "the Master of wood, water, and hill" (Tolkien 1995: 122), and Frodo calls him "Master" almost every time addressing him.[123] When Frodo asks Bombadil's wife Goldberry who Tom Bombadil is, Goldberry answers in a quite Biblical way:

> Fair lady! said Frodo again after a while. 'Tell me, if my asking does not seem foolish, who is Tom Bombadil?'
>
> 'He is,' said Goldberry, staying her swift movements and smiling. (Tolkien 1995: 122.)

This expression of Bombadil as "He is" caused some trouble with the Catholic readers and clusters because for some, the phrasing "He is" resembles too much the nomination God uses in *The Book of Exodus*, in Hebrew "ehje ašer ehje" – "I am that I am", referring to Yahweh (*Exodus* 3:14).[124]

In 1954, in a letter to Catholic book dealer Peter Hastings, Tolkien defended himself thoroughly and philologically:

---

scene where Pippin looks at the Palantír. On the other hand, Sauron (known as Gorthaur the Cruel) is quite active character in the later parts of *The Silmarillion*.

[123] See for example Tolkien 1995: 123, 124, 129.

[124] Frye sees that for scholars this is more accurately rendered "I will be what I will be", meaning that "we might come closer to what is meant by the word "God" if we understood it as a verb, and not a verb of simple asserted existence but a verb implying a process accomplishing itself" (Frye 2006: 35).

As for Tom Bombadil, I really think you are being too serious, besides missing the point. (Again the words used by Goldberry and Tom not me as commentator - - . But Goldberry and Tom are referring to the mystery of *names* - - . You may be able to conceive of your unique relation to the Creator without a name – can you: for in such a relation pronouns become proper nouns? But as soon as you are in a world of other finites with a similar, if each unique and different, relation to Prime Being, who are you? Frodo has asked not 'what is Tom Bombadil' but 'Who is he'. We and he no doubt often laxly confuse the questions. Goldberry gives what I think is the correct answer. We need not go into the sublimates of 'I am that am' – which is quite different from *he is*. (Tolkien 1981: 191–192.)

Despite the answer, there is definitely something "divine" in Tom Bombadil. Even in Tom Bombadil's own answer later to Frodo's question "Who are you" makes it clear that he is in fact not a *mortal*, referring that he was in (at least those parts of) Middle-earth before both the Big People (Men) and little People (Hobbits), or Kings (referring to Númenorean Men), or the Dark Lord (meaning Morgoth, the first Enemy, or Sauron, his apprentice):

Eldest, that's what I am. Mark my words my friends: Tom was here before the river and 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 where bent. He knew the dark under the stars when it was fearless – before the Dark Lord came from Outside. (Tolkien 1995: 129.)

The phrasing that Bombadil was here "before the Dark Lord came from Outside" hints that Bombadil has existed since the creation of Middle-earth. He is not an analogy of a Christian or Jewish God, but in the cosmology he is a definite "power", maybe a spirit of Pacifism as Tolkien alluded in his letter to Naomi Mitchison in 1954, calling Bombadil's view "a natural pacifist view":

Tom Bombadil is not an important person – to the narrative. I suppose he has some importance as a 'comment' - -. he represents something that I feel important, though I would not be prepared to analyze the feeling precisely. I would not, however, have left him in, if he did not have some kind of function. I might put it this way.

The story is cast in terms of a good side, and a bad side, beauty against ruthless ugliness, tyranny against kingship, moderated freedom with consent against compulsion that has long lost any object save mere power, and so on; but both sides in some degree, conservative or destructive, want a measure of control. [B]ut if you have, as it were taken 'a vow of poverty', renounced control, and take your delight in things for themselves without reference to yourself, watching, observing, and to some extent knowing, then the question of the rights and wrongs of power and control might become utterly meaningless to you, and the means of power quite valueless. **It is a natural pacifist view, which always arises in the mind when there is a war**. (Tolkien 1981: 178–179.) (*Emphasis mine*.)

Tom Bombadil is written on the level of myth: he is a mythic figure of pacifism, an anthropomorphised view of "peace", but not a clear allegory as such. Tolkien suggested that Bombadil shares "a natural pacifist view" which always rises when there is war. He discussed that *The Lord of the Rings* is basically, as a narrative, a story of good versus evil and both sides focus on the concept of "control". The modes and motifs of the epic are, as Tolkien phrases them above: "beauty against ugliness", "tyranny against kingship", and "conservative or destructive" measure of control.

Another (non-human) character in *The Lord of the Rings* who can be discussed as an example of almost neutral position is the leader of the Ents, Treebeard. At first Treebeard does not choose a side in the war although he declares that he is not on the side of Orcs. Treebeard comments on that saying: "I am not altogether on anybody's *side*, because nobody is altogether on my *side*, if you understand me: nobody cares for the woods as I care for them, not even Elves nowadays" (Tolkien 1995: 461).

In the end, Treebeard does not remain neutral in the War of the Rings. In *The Two Towers*, the Ents attack Saruman's fortress of Isengard and in a dramatic scene Saruman's power is destroyed by these creatures that symbolise "wild nature". Simply put, in Tolkien's mythopoetic vision, Saruman, symbolising industrialisation and mechanised "modernism" is destroyed by the Ents, symbolising counterblow of Nature.

Shippey's discussion on Fryean theory of modes is mostly concerned with characters of Tolkien's fiction, but Frye's theory of modes and symbols can be researched also from the context of Tolkien's *legendarium's* constructive shape

and on the contextual field of motifs. In *Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye's purpose is clearly to form a structural theory for the principles of literature.

Frye saw mythical archetypes as an important part of this structural theory, they are recurring images and symbols which occur on the texts. On the chart below, I demonstrate that Frye's theory of modes and of the archetypal imaginery could be applied (with modifications) to Tolkien's *legendarium*'s structural elements as well. There, different mythic "worlds" in literature are divided in the chart, on the vertical scale, to Divine World, Human World, Animal World, Vegetable World, Mineral World, Fire World and Watery World, depending on which elements and elemental characters are central. On the horizontal scale, there are different modes of text: Apocalyptic, Romantic, High Mimetic, Realistic and Demonic. These examples are then compared with elements of Tolkien's *legendarium*, and examination of these chosen elements is given after the chart.

Chart 2: Frye's Structures of Archetypal Imagery (adjusted from Denham 1979: 61) & Archetypal Equivalents in Tolkien's *legendarium*

	Apocalyptic	**Romantic**	**High Mimetic**	**Realistic**	**Demonic**
Divine World	Society of Gods	Parental wise men with magical powers	King idealised as divine	Spiritual vision anchored in empirical psychological experience	Stupid powers of nature, machinery of fate
In the *legendarium*	Eru, Ainur	Gandalf	Aragorn, Galadriel	Frodo	Ungoliant, Melkor
Human World	Society of Men	Children and innocence	Idealised human forms	Common, typical human situations, parody of romance	Society of ecos in tension, tyrant-leader
In the *legendarium* (as "mortal world")	Númenor - the greatest kingdom of Men	Men before the Fall, The Shire (at some point)	"The Reunited kingdom" (of Arnor and Gondor)	The Shire (at some point)	Isengard, Gondon under the rule of Denethor
Animal World	Lamb of God, Dove	Pastoral lamb, birds, horses and hounds	Eagle, lion, horse, swan, falco, etc.	Ape, tiger	Beast of prey, tiger, wolf, vulture, dragon
In the *legendarium*	Great Eagles, Huan	Eagles and ravens in *The*	Horses of Gandalf and	"Normal" animals of the	Dragon, Giant Spiders

130

	Apocalyptic	Romantic	High Mimetic	Realistic	Demonic
		Hobbit	Glorfindel	Middle-earth	
Vegetable World	Paradisal garden and tree, Arcadian imagery of green world	Garden of Eden (*The Bible*, Milton), *Locus amoenus*	Formal gardens (in background)	Farms, painful labour of man, peasants	Sinister forest or enchanted garden, Tree of forbidden knowledge
In the *legendarium*	The Two Trees, Valinor	Lórien, Cuiviénen, place where the Elves "awoke"	Gardens of Númenor or Gondor	Peasants and farms of the Shire	Old Forest, Mirkwood
Mineral World	Jerusalem, Highway and road, "The Way"	Tower, castle	Capital city with court at center	Labyrinthine modern city, Stress of loneliness and lack of communication	Desert, rocks, waste land
In the *legendarium*	The Lost Road, Númenor	Towers and castles in *The Lord of the Rings*	Minas Tirith	Cities and villages; for example Bree, or Lake-town in *The Hobbit*	Mordor
Fire World	Seraphim and Cherubim, Saint's Halo	Fire as purifying symbol	King's crown, Lady's eyes	Fire as ironic and destructive, Prometheus	Malignant demons, will-o'-the-wisps, spirits broke from hell, Burning cities
In the *legendarium*	Imperishable Flame	Gandalf's "Secret Fire"	Inner fire of the Silmarils, (and of the Children of Ilúvatar)	Fire as light or as a mean of heating (for example by the Dwarves in *The Hobbit*)	Balrog, Dragon fire, The Pyre of Denethor
Watery World	Water of life, Baptism	Fountains, pools, fertilising rains	The disciplined river (Thames)	Sea as destructive element, Moby	Water of death, Spilled blood, Sea monsters

	Apocalyptic	Romantic	High Mimetic	Realistic	Demonic
In the *legendarium*	Ulmo's water	Fountains of the Elves, The Mirror of Galadriel	The Great River of Anduin, The Sea	Dick Drowning, Places of shipwreck	Watcher in the Water

Explanations should be given in order to understand this chart. First of all, the examples of characters or "creatures" and elements or metaphors of the *legendarium* work in many different modes and genres. In the Divine World, the mode moves from Ainur and Eru to the Romantic mode of Gandalf and to the High Mimetic mode of Aragorn, the idealised king, and to the (more) realistic and familiar mode of Frodo as a Realistic – but Divine – element. There is of course intermingling between the modes. Frodo, for example, in the narrative, moves from Realistic to High Mimetic, or at some point to the Romantic mode. In the Divine World, Melkor is not such a Fryean example of "Stupid powers of nature", but a Divine-Demonic character: distant, chthonic and terrifying. Ungoliant, for example, is equally suitable. It is a defamiliar "Dark Spider" (which is the meaning of its name in Elven language of Sindar), a terrible spirit in the shape of a Giant Spider. It (or she) is described as a "shape as spider of monstrous form, weaving her black webs in a cleft of the mountains. There she sucked up all light that she could find, and spun it forth again in dark nets of strangling gloom, until no light more could come to her abode; and she was famished." (Tolkien 1999: 77.)

In the Human World of Frye's theory, which I call the "Mortal World" in the *legendarium*, the modes range from the "Society of Men" of Númenor through the distant past and Romantic innocence of Men before the Fall, to the High Mimetic model society of The Reunited Kingdom in the end of *The Lord of the Rings*, when the "Return of the King" promises the start of the Age of Men, under the rule of Aragorn. The more Realistic "mortal world" could be seen – at some point – in the portrayal of The Shire in *The Lord of the Rings*, and the Demonic Mortal World could be seen in the depictions of the mortal parts of Mordor, or the tyrant-ruling of Isengard under Saruman and Gondor under the rule of Denethor in *The Lord of the Rings*.

The elements of the Animal World are diverse. For example, Huan, a great wolfhound of Valar Oromë in *The Silmarillion* has been granted special powers

by the Valar. Huan could easily be seen as an Apocalyptic element of the Animal World. Dragons as well as Giant Spiders could be seen as Demonic elements of the Animal World. Between these extremities are the Romantic archetypes of animals, such as eagles and crows in *The Hobbit*, or High Mimetic almost magical horses of Gandalf and Glorfindel, to name a few. Then again, the Realistic mode in the Animal World is seen in all the so-called "normal" animals of the Middle-earth.

In the Vegetable World, Tolkien's *legendarium* is as multifaceted as in the Animal World. Tolkien's usage of flora and fauna ranges from the realistic modes of literature to mythical, fantastic and to the genres of medieval romance and fairy-stories. The Vegetable World of the *legendarium* has its "paradisal imagery" of Valinor (also known as Aman) and its mythical era of "The Two Trees", described in *The Silmarillion* (Tolkien 1999: 31–32). Romantic mode can be seen, for example, in the Vegetable World of Lórien in *The Lord of the Rings*. High Mimetic elements can be seen in the sceneries of Númenor and Gondor, Realistic in the elements of peasantry and farming of The Shire and the most revealing examples of "sinister forest" in the milieus of Old Forest in *The Lord of the Rings* or Mirkwood in *The Hobbit*.

The archetypes of the mineral world in the *legendarium* range from the Apocalyptic almost philosophical and metaphysical element of "The Lost Road" to the Demonic wasteland and defamiliar milieu of Mordor. "The Lost Road" in the *legendarium* is a reference to a "Straight Road" that once connected the mortal world of Middle-earth with the land of Valar (Valinor), but which had been removed from mortal reach after the Fall of Númenor. As Tolkien writes in *The Silmarillion*: "And those that sailed furthest set but a girdle about the Earth and returned weary at last to the place of their beginning; and they say: 'All roads are now bent'- - [but] "the loremasters of Men said that a Straight Road must still be, for those that were permitted to find it." (Tolkien 1999: 337–338.) Then again, Romantic castles and towers are commonplace in the *legendarium*'s heroic romance and new(er) cities and villages depict a more Realistic mode, whereas the High Mimetic tone of Mineral World is most clearly seen in the milieu of Minas Tirith, which in the later Third Age of Middle-earth has become the capital city of Gondor with a fortress at its centre.

The Fire World and the Watery World in the *legendarium* could be seen in a dichotomial resemblance. In the *legendarium*, fire and water are both frightening (and defamiliar), but also noble (and even familiar). For example, Gandalf is "a servant of the Secret Fire, wielder of the flame of Anor", but his enemy the

Balrog is of "dark fire" (Tolkien 1995: 322). Hence fire can be either "good" or "evil". Eru Ilúvatar, the creator, is the maker and "ruler" of "Imperishable Fire" (Tolkien 1999: 4), which is the most clear example of Apocalyptic mode of the Fire World in the *legendarium*. Vala-Ulmo's water is the example of this Apocalyptic mode in the Watery World (Tolkien 1999: 8–9) and the Demonic mode of this world is seen in, for example, the monstrous being called the "Watcher in the Water" by the dwarves of Moria in *The Lord of the Rings* (Tolkien 1995: 314).

In the Romantic mode, Gandalf's "Secret Fire" is a fire as purifying symbol and the "magical" Mirror of Galadriel in *The Lord of the Rings* could be as such in the Watery World. Then again, the High Mimetic mode could be seen in the Inner Fire of both Silmarils and the Elves. Of the Silmarils, Tolkien writes in *The Silmarillion* that "[l]ike the crystal of diamonds it appeared, and yet was more strong than adamant, so that no violence could mar it or break it within the Kingdom of Arda. Yet that crystal was to the Silmarils but as is the body to the Children of Ilúvatar: the house of its inner fire, that is within it and yet in all parts of it, and is its life." (Tolkien 1999: 68.) The High Mimetic archetype of disciplined form of Watery World could be seen, for example, in the Great River of Anduin in *The Lord of the Rings*. In the *legendarium*, Realistic modes of both Fire and Water are seen in many occasions. For example, the dwarves use fire as a giver of light or means of heating in *The Hobbit*. Then again, water is seen in many parts as a realistic and dangerous element, for example by hydrophobic Sam Gamgee in the early parts of *The Lord of the Rings*.

Tolkien's *legendarium* is a coherent fictitious work of literary art created from these archetypes and various elements, essentially constructed and intermingled with different elements in different modes that are restrained by different motifs. Frye, in *Anatomy of Criticism*, uses Dante's The Divine Comedy as an example of constructive motifs: a sense of the verbal pattern in a literary text, which, in my view, form a part of the internal reference fields of texts. Frye discusses that the literal meaning of Dante's *The Divine Comedy* is not historical: not at any rate a simple description in a biographical way what "really happened" to Dante, writer himself. Frye writes that "if a poem cannot be literally anything but a poem, then the literal basis of meaning in poetry can only be its letters, its inner structure of interlocking motifs". (Frye 1967: 77.)

That assumption forces us to ponder what is "the literal basis of meaning" in Tolkien's *legendarium*? What are the inner structures of interlocking motifs in

Tolkien's texts? Of these, the central motif of the fall (and the struggle) will be discussed in the next chapter.

3   The Fall and the Struggle

3.1   Long Defeat

The recurring elements that have symbolic significance in Tolkien's texts are comprehensive. Through the modes of myth, fairy-tale, and epic fantasy, Tolkien uses in his *legendarium* the motifs of loss and victory, tragedy and *eucastrophe*, the promise of a better future, but then again the feeling of permanent loss or "marring". Repetitions of these motifs form a literary mood for Tolkien's collection of myths.

Constant marring, weariness and corruption of the created world are recurring motifs in Tolkien's *legendarium*[125]. In *Morgoth's Ring,* Tolkien writes that "in Eä [meaning the World] according to the Tale nothing endures endlessly without weariness and corruption" (Tolkien 2002e: 376).

The same motif can be seen in *The Lord of the Rings* when the character Galadriel, the ruler of the Elves of Lórien, discusses both her and her husband Celeborn's past life and fate in Middle-earth. Galadriel recalls her life as "the long defeat" by saying that "He [Celeborn] has dwelt in the West since the days of dawn, and I [Galadriel] have dwelt with him years uncounted; for ere the fall of Nargothrond or Gondolin I passed over the mountains, and together through ages of the world we have fought the long defeat." (Tolkien 1995: 348.)

This vision of life as a long defeat is shared by Elrond, another Elf-character and the ruler of the Elven people of Rivendell in the *legendarium* in the times of *The Lord of the Rings*. In the epic, in the chapter "The Council of Elrond", Elrond reminisces the (pointless) victories and many defeats in the history of Elves and Men with a melancholic tone:

> 'I remember well the splendour of their [Elves and Men] banners,' he [Elrond] said. 'It recalled me the glory of the Elder Days and the hosts of Beleriand, so many great princes and captains were assembled. And yet not so many, nor so fair, as when Thangorodrim was broken, and the Elves deemed that evil was ended for ever, and it was not so.'
>
> 'You remember?' said Frodo, speaking his thought aloud in his astonishment. 'But I thought,' he stammered as Elrond turned towards him, 'I thought the fall of Gil-Galad was a long age ago.'

---

[125] See also Korpua 2014.

'So it was indeed,' answered Elrond gravely. 'But my memory reaches back even to the Elder Days. Eärendil was my sire, who was born in Gondolin before its fall; and my mother was Elwing, daughter of Dior, son of Lúthien of Doriath. I have seen three ages in the West of the world, and many defeats, and many fruitless victories. (Tolkien 1995: 236–237.)

One might suggest that this motif of "loss" and "long defeat" is a Christian and Catholic one. One of the basic assumptions in the Christian faith is that true mercy, salvation, and happiness can only be found in the afterlife.

Alister McGrath discusses this eschatological vision in his *Christian Theology*. The term eschatology, meaning a "discourse about the end", derived from the Greek term *ta eschata*, "the last things", and in the Christian faith relates to matters such as expectations of resurrection and judgment. For the Christian belief, it is characteristic that time is linear, not cyclical. McGrath writes that "[h]istory had a beginning: it will one day come to an end". McGrath discusses the distinction in contemporary theology on the concept of eschatology and the concept of *apocalypsis*, meaning "unveiling", "disclosure" or "revelation". Nowadays eschatology refers to a branch of Christian theology concerned with the "last things", such as the resurrection of the dead, Heaven and Hell. The term "apocalyptic", however, is sometimes used to refer to a particular genre or type of literature that has an interest with the "last things". (McGrath 2011: 444–445.)

Tolkien writes about the eschatological ending of the *legendarium* in a quite apocalyptic way, although this mythical ending also has something to do with the Scandinavian myth Ragnarök.[126] Tolkien writes that in the end the evil (and its personification Melkor) will come to a final end and the world of Men shall be "avenged":

Then shall the last battle be gathered on the fields of Valinor. In that day Tulkas shall strive with Melko[r], and on his right shall stand Fionwë and on his left Túrin Turambar, son of Húrin, Conqueror of Fate, coming from the halls of Mandos; and it shall be the black sword of Túrin that deals unto Melko[r] his death and final end; and so shall the children of Húrin and all Men be avenged. (Tolkien 2002e: 76.)

---

[126] Whittingham discusses Tolkien's "end of world", The Second Music, The Last Battle and Arda Healed or New Arda. In the Last Battle, Whittingham sees parallels to the Scandinavian myth Ragnarök and the biblical "Book of Revelation". See Whittingham 2008: 9, 131.

Though Tolkien's *legendarium* is full of stories of pessimistic life visions, despair and defeat, still in the end, all shall be avenged and the world made anew. In a quite Christian worldview, there is always the possibility of "ultimate victory".[127]

Elizabeth Whittingham, in a kind of a biographistic view, makes a remark that "death and loss" were part of Tolkien's youth, but that these elements were offset by the consolation of "friendship and faith" (Whittingham 2008: 13). In a way, these are the main motifs of the *legendarium*. Tolkien himself was of course concerned with this kind of "excessive interest" in personal details. In his letter to Deborah Webster in 1958, Tolkien writes that this kind of interest "distracts attention from the author's works". Tolkien sees that only "one's guardian Angel, or indeed God Himself, could unravel the real relationship between personal facts and an author's work. Not the author himself (though he knows more than any investigator), and certainly not so-called 'psychologists'". (Tolkien 1981: 288.)[128]

Then again, the Christian faith could be seen behind these motifs of stories. Joseph Pearce in his *Tolkien: Man and Myth* discusses how Tolkien recognises significant facts behind his text: how he was born in the 19th century and lived his early years in a kind of a "Shire in a pre-mechanical age", and most importantly: he is a Christian, and a Roman Catholic (Pearce 1999: xii–xiii).[129] In his letter to Father Robert Murray in 1953, Tolkien writes that "*The Lord of the Rings* is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision" (Tolkien 1981: 172).[130]

Tolkien writes that "[t]hat is why I have not put in, or have cut out, practically all references to anything like 'religion', to cults or practices, in the imaginary world. For the religious element is absorbed into the story and the symbolism." (Tolkien 1981: 172.)

These absorbed elements in the stories are formed in different overlapping motifs, different referents and frames of referents that form an internal field of reference. Motifs, such as a "quest to save our (way of thinking of the) world", "eucatastrophe" in the end of the quest that gives a glimpse of the "real truth behind the story" – in this case kind of a Christian faith – and motif-elements such as "death and loss", "marring of the world", and in the end an eschatological "ultimate hope" are fundamental in Tolkien's *legendarium*. These motifs could be seen forming a *theme* for the story, the central topic or subject of the *legendarium*.

---

[127] See Whittingham 2008: 9.
[128] See Whittingham 2008: 13.
[129] See Whittingham 2008: 13.
[130] See also Pearce 1999: 100, Whittingham 2008: 14.

Frye discusses this term of mode by using as a background the classical concept of *dianoia*: "the idea or poetic thought (something quite different, of course, from other kinds of thought) that the reader gets from the writer". Frye discusses that the best translation of *dianoia* is "theme", and that literature with this ideal or conceptual interest may be called *thematic*. Frye further explains that when readers ask: "How is this story going to turn out?", they are asking a question about the plot, but when the readers ask: "What's the point of this story?", the question relates to *dianoia*, and indicates that themes have their elements of discovery just as plots do. (Frye 1967: 52.)

In Tolkien's fiction, the narrative plots can usually be easily defined. In *The Hobbit*, the plot can be summarised quite simply as follows: a middle-class, early middle aged and quite comic protagonist Bilbo Baggins is lured to an adventure with the wizard Gandalf and a band of dwarves. The adventure's objective is to get back the Dwarf treasure, which an evil dragon, Smaug, has stolen. Bilbo leaves his idyllic and familiar home, does some adventuring in unfamiliar surroundings, including encounters with trolls, goblins, eagles and finally the dragon. In the end, Bilbo returns to his idyllic home, but he is a somewhat changed character. The story is a classical "there and back again"-styled fairy-story.

As a narrative, *The Lord of the Rings* is quite simply a "there and back again" story. Essentially, the objective of the epic's quest is to destroy the evil One Ring that can bring destruction to all "good peoples" of Middle-earth. The plot follows the Hobbit protagonist Frodo Baggins' and his varying companions' quest to destroy the One Ring. In the narrative, it takes the protagonists more than 250 pages to understand that their task is to "destroy" the One Ring in the chapter "The Council of Elrond", which is the fourteenth chapter in the book. To simplify the plot, the protagonists destroy the One Ring, and in the end return to their idyllic home of the Shire, however, the Shire has changed during their absence, and they have to "reconstruct" it.

The plots can be easy to describe, but the themes are not so easily interpreted. *The Hobbit* is a fairy-story adventure. Perhaps the original theme of *The Hobbit* is comically adventurous. Then again, originally, in a sub-theme there could be a guideline that it is possible and useful to leave your comfortable lifestyle, in a kind of *carpe diem* way, and find your own adventure. Later, when *The Hobbit* became intertextualised and mingled with *The Lord of the Rings* and the rest of the *legendarium*, the theme changed once again. There can be seen a glimpse of the forthcoming *The Lord of the Rings*. The first edition of *The Hobbit*, published

in 1937, was at first not intended to be a part of the *legendarium*.[131] Next editions intertextualised *The Hobbit* with *The Lord of the Rings*, changed both the character Gollum and the role of the One Ring itself, and changed the theme of the latter part of *The Hobbit* (after the fifth chapter "Riddles in the Dark") into somewhat darker; as can be seen from Tolkien's changes to the manuscripts in *The Return of the Shadow* (Tolkien 2002d: 75, 79–81, 261). The theme changes because Tolkien began writing *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* to be a part of the same *legendarium*.

Then again, in *The Lord of the Rings* the major theme is essentially the same as in *The Silmarillion*. As the motifs mentioned earlier indicate, Middle-earth is a place of constant struggle, of constant change, and "marring". It is a place of "many defeats" and "fruitless victories" as Elrond states (Tolkien 1995: 236–237); an existential battlefield, or a place of "long defeat", as Galadriel says (Tolkien 1995: 348); and a changing plane of evident destruction, where "nothing can endure endlessly without weariness and corruption" (Tolkien 2002e: 376).

In the end Tolkien's *legendarium* promises a "final victory" against evil and a eucastrophic apocalypse. But in the stories, for the reader, the major theme is sad and melancholic. The third part of *The Silmarillion*, "Quenta Silmarillion", ends in a manifestation of a theme that is not promising of a joyful end to the world. In this manifestation the melancholic vision of Tolkien's fictive universe is quite clearly declared:

> Here ends the SILMARILLION. If it has passed from the high and beautiful to darkness and ruin, that was of old the fate of Arda Marred; and if any change shall come and the Marring be amended, Manwë and Varda may know; but they have not revealed it, and it is not declared in the dooms of Mandos. (Tolkien 1999: 306)

3.2   Mythopoeia in Effect

How does such mythopoetics between internal and external referential fields manifest in Tolkien's texts? A clear example of this so-called "Mythopoeia in Effect" is the metaphorical and (even) allegorical language that Tolkien is using when addressing important elements and examples of the *legendarium*. Tolkien's texts, especially *The Lord of the Rings*, have been judged by some critics as

---

[131] See for example Douglas A. Anderson's edition: *The Annotated Hobbit* (2002).

allegorical texts. For example, when it was first published in the 1950s, it was criticised as an allegorical narrative about the Second World War and the "threat" of the Atomic Bomb. Tolkien of course objected to these views unconditionally. Tolkien writes, in his foreword for the second edition of *The Lord of the Rings* that there is no "inner meaning" or "message" in the text (Tolkien 1995: xvi). Tolkien goes on convincing his readers that the main parts of the works have been created before the Second World War started, and that "nothing in it was modified by the war that began in 1939 or its sequels" (Tolkien 1995: xvi).

But then again, all the main works of the 18th or 19th century fantasy have been included in the list of allegorical texts: For example Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, C. S. Lewis's *The Last Battle*, Roald Dahl's *James and the Giant Peach*, Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, George MacDonald's *Princess and the Goblin*, and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*. Fantasy, therefore, on some level, certainly has something to do with allegory. And the dichotomy between the mimetic level of text and the allegorical level of text has been an important critical debate in fantasy research for the last century.

In Tolkien's *legendarium*, textual allegories and metaphorical language function as a part of the writer's constructive mythopoetics – as Tolkien's own intention as a builder of a fictive fantasy world, a secondary creator. Therefore, the secondary creator becomes the creator of a secondary creation, as the "mythopoeia in effect" evokes. In the next sub-chapters, I will discuss how these allegories of Tolkien's text function in the framework of constructive mythopoetics and show examples of a metaphorical "hero's journey" in Tolkien's *legendarium*.

3.2.1 Mythopoetic Allegories

'It is said that the Hornburg has never fallen for 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 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.'

'Do not judge the counsel of Gandalf, until all is over, lord,' said Aragorn.

'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

142

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. (Tolkien 1995: 527.)

There are external and internal references and even metaphoric and allegorical language in the quote above. Théoden, the king of Rohan, is surrounded by the opposing Saruman's forces, who in quite an allegorical way use fire and the "devilry from Orthanc", orcish weapons of "mass-destruction". Théoden swears that he will not have his end here, metaphorically "taken like an old badger in a trap". That proves to be true later, when he dies in the Battle of the Pelennor Fields. His ending, as he predicted, will later be worth a song, since a song was made on the death of the king – and others lying in the Mounds of Mundburg (Tolkien 1995:831). In the quote above, one could see references to the wars of the 20th century, which Tolkien of course knew closely from his own personal context.

As Jeremy Tambling (2010: 1) sees, allegory has been, until recently, neglected by the modern study of literature, and reading for allegory has been regarded "as getting in the way of an immediate response to a text, missing out on its vital, literal sense". Tolkien also disliked this "mechanical", "artificial", and "predictable" allegory, as did Coleridge earlier.[132]

What is then the relationship of allegory and Tolkien's use of mythopoeia? The use of allegory in Tolkien's *legendarium* has become a critical and difficult point in Tolkien studies. The main source for the difficult grasp on the subject has been of course Tolkien himself, who declared on many occasions, for example in his letter to the publisher Milton Waldman that he disliked allegory –conscious and intentional allegory – in all of its possible aspects (Tolkien 1999: xii).

As I argued earlier in the Introduction, the question of allegory is not easily disclosed. Despite the saying that Tolkien "disliked allegory", he produced at least one clearly allegorical text: *Leaf by Niggle* (1945). Arguably Tolkien's approach to allegory is very strict and limited. Tolkien has, for example, declared his dislike for C.S. Lewis' *Narnia* series which he thought were too allegorical.[133]

---

[132] For Coleridge's views, see Tambling 2010: 77–80.
[133] Narnia and all that part of Lewis' work remained out of Tolkien sympathy (Carpenter 1977: 201).

It is clear that medieval allegorical texts such as Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590), and the Old English poems *Pearl* (ca.1400) and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (ca. 1400) influenced Tolkien's *legendarium* (Shippey, *The Road to Middle-earth* 5). However, many chapters in Tolkien's texts could be easily understood allegorically – and even majorly as a Christian allegory.[134] In this chapter, I will delineate why these parts of the *legendarium* could be read as myths and part of Tolkien's vision – rather than (solely) allegorically.

Allegory as a term, as a Latin version of a Greek word, appears in Cicero's (106–43BC) *De Oratore* and in the work of his near contemporary Philodemus of Gadara (ca. 110–35BC) (Tambling 2010: 20). Coulter in his study on Neoplatonism sees tradition of allegorical reading of texts as indisputably important. Coulter discusses allegory in the sense of *allegorism* or *allegorisation* (German *Allegorese*):

> The systematic interpretation of a text (usually of considerable length) on the assumption that the author *intended* that the reader seek beneath the surface some second or indirect meaning, or meanings, which, in the view of the interpreter, can be related to the apparent or direct meaning in a fairly systematic way. (Coulter 1976: 25.)

Coulter's strict way of allegory and allegorisation could be seen in a reference to Tolkien's view of the subject. Coulter discusses that allegory in this sense differs, at least in an extent, from the "figure allegory", as it was understood by the ancient rhetoricians. Coulter sees that the genuine difference is the fact that they mostly concerned themselves with "figures" and limited allegorical "passages", not entire works. (Coulter 1976: 25.) Ancient rhetoricians therefore were looking for simply allegorical "elements". This style of reading was criticised by Tolkien, for example, when he commented that Rayner Unwin was doing the same when he assimilated *The Lord of the Rings* with the *Nibelungenlied* and Wagner. In a letter to Rayner Unwin's father, publisher Stanley Unwin, Tolkien commented on the subject: "Do not let Rayner suspect 'Allegory'" (Carpenter 1977: 202).

There is also the question of the so-called Christian allegory, which was a problem for Tolkien, as can be seen in his dislike for C. S. Lewis' Narnia series. Perhaps that was a major reason for Tolkien's dislike of the term *allegory*? In his

---

[134] Tolkien's texts and connections between them and Christianity have been researched in many studies. See for example *The Ring and the Cross: Christianity and The Lord of the Rings*, edited by Paul E. Kerry (2009).

study, *Piers Plowman and Christian Allegory*, David Aers discusses the ideological history of Christian allegorisation. As a key to the theory of Christian allegory Aers sees the so-called "historical Incarnation of God". (Aers 1975: 15.) Aers quotes M-D. Chenu arguing that medieval culture had inherited a situation where the *Bible* and Christianity were "blocked up by the categories of Hellenistic culture deployed by Philo and Origen". Chenu attributed this process explicitly to the effects of Platonism and as a modern theologian founds it incongruous with the historicity of Christianity. (Aers 1975: 16.) Therefore it is almost impossible, or unimportant, to detect any difference in Christian allegorisation and Neoplatonic or Christian Platonic concept of allegory. But then again, many scholars have seen a great difference between old Ancient usage of allegory and later Christian allegory.

M. W. Bloomfield discusses that ancient Greeks and Romans managed history by "reducing it to nature". On the contrary, he discusses that the Christian tradition, following the Hebraic emphasis, sees history revealing religious truth and God's will. Discussing Bloomfield's conceptualisation Aers asks, where lays the unique role of history and events in Christian allegory? (Aers 1975: 18–19). As I discussed in the chapter 2.2, Tolkien saw his *legendarium* hinting a glimpse of "Truth" and even God's will. Maybe this could be seen as a key point for possible allegorisation in Tolkien's texts, although, Frye writes that in "Christian theology the principle of analogy can readily be invoked without recourse to allegory" (Frye 2006: 28).

In *The Inklings*, Humphrey Carpenter fictionalises conversations between participants of the Inklings group in their meeting on Thursday evenings. In one of those conversations, Carpenter illustrates his vision of Tolkien's concept of allegory. In a fictional dialogue Carpenter says, through the mouth of his Tolkien-character that "any attempt to explain the purport of myth or fairytale must use allegorical language". He continues that "the more 'life' a story has, the more readily it will be susceptible of allegorical interpretations". Later Carpenter makes his Tolkien-character also say that: "I suppose all my stuff - - is mainly concerned with the Fall, with mortality, and with the Machine - -. [B]y the Machine I mean the use of all external plans or devices, instead of the development of inner powers and talents - -. The Machine is merely our more obvious modern form." (Carpenter 1978: 140.) In my opinion, Carpenter's fictionalised vision could be quite accurate, since the main internal motifs in the *legendarium* are Fall,

mortality – or "Escape from Death [135] "–, and an anti-modernistic tone of cosmography.

As Carpenter argues, Tolkien saw the story of Christ from the Bible as a "true myth", as a myth that "really happened" (Carpenter 1978: 148). The eucatastrophical myth of the Christian theology – a true myth in Tolkien's opinion – of Christ's incarnation as a man and his later martyr death for the sake of all mankind was central for Tolkien.[136]

This Christian theory was searching for the literal and allegorical levels of the text. G. W. H. Lampe argues that the approach "rests, not on an interpretation of history but on a particular quasi-Platonist doctrine of the literal sense of Scripture – the outward form or 'letter' of the sacred writings – to the eternal spiritual reality concealed, as it were, beneath the literal sense". For medieval thinkers the *Bible* was "a mysterious collection of enigmas" and history became "the outward shell or husk containing and hiding from the uninstructed the inner truth of mystery". (Aers 1975: 17.)

As an example of the allegorisation of the *Bible* in the later Middle Ages, there is the theory of Denis the Carthusian (1402–71). Denis' exegesis of the third chapter of *Genesis* shows his interpretation of the allegorical level of the *Bible*. For example "tree of Life" equals Christ, but also the death-dealing "tree of Knowledge" is Christ in an allegorical level. Following the medieval tradition, Denis sees that "as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive".[137] Therefore, God's action "in history will transform the first great 'sin', enacted around the tree of Knowledge, into a *felix culpa*, and so, in a way, the tree of Knowledge will become the tree of life". (Aers 1975: 29–30.) In Tolkien's *legendarium* there is also "a Fall" – mythical, if not strictly allegorical. Tolkien writes that there is the "fall of Angels", which is "quite different in form, of course, to that of Christian myth" (Tolkien 1999: xv–xvi).

Therefore, allegory and myth should be at some point considered in the same context. Clifford, for example, sees that the concept of allegory is closing on to a concept of myth. Allegory, like myth, "presupposes an audience who will respond

---

[135] "The Escape from Death", which Tolkien declares in *On Fairy-Stories* to be the "oldest and deepest desire", the "Great Escape" (Tolkien 1983: 153). On the other hand, in the intratextualities of the *legendarium*, Tolkien's elves, since they are *immortal* and do not die, fantasise about the "Escape from Deathlessness". See Shippey 2003: 237 and Flieger 2005a: 46.
[136] Also, Aers discusses that medieval theory saw God's historical incarnation as the key to all Christian allegory (Aers 1975: 19).
[137] See 1. Corinthians 15: 22.

to it in specific ways: to consider its authors' conception of this response is not necessarily to indulge in the 'intentional fallacy'". (Clifford 1974: 36.)

Myth, like allegory, is concerned with a complex system of explanation. They both attempt to offer means by which we can interpret "our relationship to the past, to the forces operating in the psyche, and to the facts and processes of the world around us". The essential difference between them is that "myth is in an important sense pre-literary, while allegory is a literary mode that borrows from myth, subordinating it to its own purposes". (Clifford 1974: 54.)

Tolkien's mythopoeia, the creative myth-making, is therefore in many ways connected to the allegorisation of language. Symbols, myths, and allegory are difficult concepts to differentiate and should therefore be treated as loosely intermingling tropes as Frye does in his theory. Tolkien admits that his text uses symbols. For example, in his letter to Milton Waldman, Tolkien declares that Elrond, the mythical Half-Elf lord of Rivendell, symbolises ancient wisdom and lore:

> Elrond symbolises throughout the ancient wisdom, and his House represents Lore – the preservation in reverent memory of all tradition concerning the good, wise, and beautiful. It is not a scene of *action* but of *reflection*. Thus it is place visited on the way to all deeds, or 'adventures'. It may prove to be on the direct road (as in The Hobbit); but it may be necessary to go from there in a totally unexpected course. So necessarily in *The Lord of the Rings*, having escaped to Elrond from the imminent pursuit of present evil, the hero departs in a wholly new direction: to go and face it at its source. (Tolkien 1999: xxiii.)

Tolkien, therefore, understood the symbolic, or even allegorical, level of his text, and the whole *legendarium* could be read as such. In *The Lord of the Rings*, as discussed earlier, Tom Bombadil could be sees as "a spirit of pacifism", or Saruman could be allegorised as a malevolent "spirit of industrialisation".

Moreover, Tolkien himself would not approve of such a simple allegorisation. In *On Fairy-Stories,* he writes on the subject of seeing the gods of mythologies as "nature-myths" or "personifications" of some functions. Jeremy Tambling writes that these personifications could be seen as different from allegory, or they may be "the essence of allegory", as it was for artist and poet John Ruskin (1819–1900) (Tambling 2010: 42–43).

For example, the Greek Olympian gods could be seen as personifications of the sun, of dawn, of night, etc. Or the Norse god Thórr could be seen as a personification of thunder, and his hammer, Mjölnir as lightning. Tolkien

contradicts this, and discusses that even as such presumptions could be made, Thórr has a very marked character, or personality, which "cannot be found in thunder or in lightning" (Tolkien 1983: 123). Therefore, allegorical reading of these mythological texts is possible, put this reading is not the final rendition of the text. Thus Saruman could be seen as echoing the negative spirit of industrialisation and "Machine", but it is not all that Saruman, as a character, is.

Shippey points out that Tolkien was perfectly capable of using allegory himself, and that he did so several times in his academic works, usually with devastating effect (Shippey 2001: 161). Shippey sees that Tolkien disliked vague allegories, those which didn't work. Tolkien accepted allegories readily in their proper place, which was either advancing an argument or else constructing brief and personal fables (Shippey 2001: 164). The first one of these Tolkien himself used in his essay "Beowulf: The Monster and Critics" (1936), where Tolkien moves from critical language into allegory, and the second one Tolkien used in his short story "Leaf by Niggle" (1945), which is basically an allegory of the artist's creative progress.

In his foreword to the second edition of *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien wrote that he preferred history, true or feigned, and that many of the readers might confuse "applicability" with "allegory". He understood that "applicability" resides in the freedom of the reader, and allegory in the purposed domination of the author. (Tolkien 1995: xvii.)[138]

Additionally, Tom Shippey makes some allegorical assumptions concerning *The Lord of the Rings*. He points out that the example of the character Saruman certainly stands for some kind of "mechanical ingenuity, smithcraft developed into engineering skills". In *The Lord of the Rings,* Treebeard says regarding Saruman that "He has a mind of metal and wheels"; Saruman's Orcs use a kind of gunpowder at the Battle of Helm's Deep, and later Saruman uses a kind of napalm against the Ents. (Shippey 2001: 170.) Engineering skills, industrialism or mechanical innovations in the hands of "evil forces" is of course not a new point in epic literature; the same tone against modern inventions could be seen in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, where Satan in the Sixth Book invents "devilish machines" against his enemies for the War in Heaven.

Shippey also discusses views of the "socialistic suggestions" clinging to Saruman, and compares him to Denethor, the Steward of Gondor, whom Shippey sees as an "arch-conservative" character (2001: 171–172). Denethor is an "anti-

---

[138] See also Shippey 2001: 164.

modern character of the past". When, in *The Lord of the Rings,* in the last moments of his life, Gandalf asks Denethor "what then would you have - - if your will could have its way?" Denethor answers: "I would have things as they were in all the days of my life - - and in the days of my longfathers before me". (Tolkien 1995: 836.)[139] It is interesting to see that, although Denethor is "a character of the past", and "against the modern", he is not, for Tolkien, or for most of the readers, a positively received character. In fact, he is a negative character, an antagonist of sort.

Yet again, in many parts, Tolkien's *legendarium* is (pro-)conservative, anti-modernistic, and in some themes Christian. But it is theologically Christian? Tolkien writes that *The Lord of the Rings* is fundamentally religious and Catholic, saying that it was first unconsciously so, and consciously in the revision work (Tolkien 1981: 172). Of course we have to see this statement also in its context, since it was written in a letter to Father Robert Murray, S.J., a close friend of the Tolkien family and a Catholic priest. For a friend and a priest, in my mind, Tolkien wanted to explain his *legendarium's* absence of religious elements to his benefit.

One might ask if *The Lord of the Rings* is a fundamentally religious work, is it so allegorically? Dante has distinguished two forms of allegory: "the allegory of poets", and "the allegory of theologians". He writes that in the allegory of the poets, the truth is "hidden under a beautiful fiction", and that there is no necessary truth in the literal story being told. But for Dante, the *Bible* is characterised by the allegory of theologians, and in there, both the literal level and the allegorical level are true. (Tambling 2010: 26.) Although Dante is speaking of allegory, and not of myth, Dante's vision still draws closer to Tolkien's vision of the "myth of Christ" as a "True Myth".

Shippey has pondered on this question of Tolkien's works "fundamental" religiousness. Shippey sees that *The Lord of the Rings* is not Catholic, nor religious, nor even Christian. As Tolkien himself says, there is almost no hint of any religious feeling at all in the characters or in their societies, not even where one would most likely expect it. Shippey points out that this absence of religion in the societies of Middle-earth – for example the society of the Hobbits – is unlike any human societies we know of; and in this sense he calls Middle-earth a "Never-never Land". (Shippey 2001: 179.) Of course, one might object that there are the semi-religious funeral traditions, such as, for example, the ones seen in

---

[139] See also Shippey 2001: 173.

The Lord of the Rings by the Men of Rohan, or by the Dwarves in Moria, or in the scene of Túrin Turambar's death in *The Silmarillion*. And there are of course the religious elements in the life styles of the people of Gondor, and of Númenoreans; both Black (and evil) Númenoreans worshipping Morgoth, or the so-called Faithfull (and good) Númenoreans, worshipping the Valar.

Furthermore, the character Frodo in *The Lord of the Rings* is in some ways almost a Christ-like figure.[140] Frodo is not an allegory of Christ, but in some ways perhaps an analogue. Frodo of course is not messianically killed for the "sins of the humankind", but he tries to deliver the Free People of Middle-earth from Evil by fulfilling a Quest to destroy the One Ring – although, in the end Frodo himself does not succeed in destroying it. In the final dramatic scene in the Crack of Doom, Frodo loses his will to destroy the One Ring and instead claims it for himself. He fails his Quest, but in a miraculous eucatastrophic moment this "failing" is forgiven. In one of the most physically mimetic scenes of *The Lord of the Rings* Gollum – Frodo's "nemesis" and previous holder of the One Ring before the Hobbits Frodo and Bilbo – attacks Frodo and regains the long lost Ring. After regaining the One Ring, Gollum, overwhelmed with joy and excitement, loses his balance while dancing and falls with the One Ring into the Pit, thus destroying both himself and the One Ring.

After the destruction of the One Ring, Frodo is somewhat psychologically changed. He becomes a distant character who rarely acts in any of the forthcoming chapters. He is calm, wise, and even philosophical, "grown", as Saruman later describes: "You have grown, Halfling – You are wise, and cruel. You have robbed my revenge of sweetness, and now must go hence in bitterness, in debt to your mercy" (Tolkien 1995: 996).

Frodo never completely recovers from the physical and emotional stress of the quest, from his many injuries sustained during the quest and, finally and most severely, from the destruction of the One Ring itself. In the end of *The Lord of the*

---

[140] In the intertextual level, Shippey finds lots of similarities and differences between Frodo and Christ. Shippey writes that, although Frodo is send to his mission, he is not the Son of God, he buys for his people only a limited, worldly and temporary happiness, and in the end he does not get sacrificed and become "Christ Crucified". (Shippey 2003: 204.) Although the rest of Frodo's life in *The Lord of the Rings*, is a kind of sacrifice, because after he has "succeeded" in his task, he has to leave Middle-earth and move to Valinor, the land of immortals, and he does not get the benefits of saving the world in his mortal life.

Also, an interesting theological reading on Frodo and Christ is made by Olli-Pekka Vainio in his article "Philomythius Misomythiukselle". Vainio sees Frodo as a character who has to go through a *kenosis* ("the self-emptying" of one's own will in order to become receptive to God's will) and remaking of his personality in his way to Mordor". (Vainio 2003: 127.)

Rings, as mentioned earlier, Frodo sails to the West, to the Undying Lands, where he can find peace and rest. For Sam Gamgee, Frodo's loyal companion, the most troubling thing after the War of the Ring is the fact that the people of Shire – the fellow Hobbits – do not appreciate Frodo's quest and his sacrifices. This is reminiscent of the *Bible,* where Jesus testifies that "a prophet hath no honour in his own country" (John 4: 44).[141]

Shippey sees that the closer the myths of Middle-earth approach to the Christian one, the sadder they become. (Shippey 2001: 212–213.) Tolkien's *legendarium* is carrying out its function as a mediator between, on the one hand, "Christian belief and literature of the pre-Christian heroic world"; and on the other hand, between "Christian belief and the post-Christian world in which Tolkien thought himself increasingly to be living" (Shippey 2001: 213). Christian elements could be seen as *medium* – fantastic examples for us of the "Truth" – or even in the level of metaphorical language.

These myths of Middle-earth that could also be discussed allegorically, could also be seen in metaphorical language in the examples of Platonic myth which I will be later discussing. The Atlantis myth of Númenor is simply in its mode a story of "fall from the grace". The myth of invisibility concerning Plato's Ring of Gyges and Tolkien's The Great Ring is basically a myth of "moral agendas", of "right and wrong", and of "good and evil". The Myth of Creation in both Plato and Tolkien deals with the difference between the "ideal" world and the "real" world. Or: How can the original ideas of the World be achieved, or is it even possible?

Ralph C. Wood discusses the Catholic elements of the *legendarium*, discussing that, as a Roman Catholic, Tolkien's conviction was that God's implanted natural law underlies everything created. Wood sees that Tolkien was not troubled by the fact that readers failed to perceive the implicitly Christian character of *The Lord of the Rings*, because he wanted his work to stand on its own merits: "to glorify God as a compelling and convincing story, not it to be propped up with even so noble a purpose as evangelism". (R. Wood 2003: 318.) Wood sees communal life and *ecclesial* company at the very centre of *The Lord of the Rings*, saying that there is nothing individualistic to be found anywhere in Tolkien. The Fellowship of the Ring always functions as a unity. Even when the Fellowship is split – after "the betrayal of the Judas-like Boromir" – there is no

---

[141] See also Shippey 2001: 186.

solitude. Frodo and Sam serve as companions, and Aragorn and the other separated members of the Fellowship also act communally. (R. Wood 2003: 320.)

As for the myth of Christ, Wood claims that Tolkien is not writing an allegory. Gandalf, as well as Frodo, could be compared to Christ: Gandalf dies in the battle with the Balrog and descents into an abyss, just as he is resuscitated from death to newness of life. Yet Wood sees that Gandalf "is not resurrected to die no more". Wood claims that while Gandalf possesses Christ-like qualities, so do Aragorn and, by the end, Sam Gamgee. Wood sees that there is no clear equivalence between Gandalf and Christ, whereas Aslan in C. S. Lewis' *Narnia* series is clearly an allegory of Christ. (R. Wood 2003: 328–329.)

Conversely, there is of course many, in some way, biblical chapters in *The Lord of the Rings* after Gandalf is "returned from the Death". The most striking is the one when Gandalf appears to the party of Aragorn, Gimli, and Legolas. Tolkien writes that the three cannot recognise Gandalf, whose Elvish name, Mithrandir, is also mentioned in the text, mistaking him for the other wizard, Saruman:

> The old man [Gandalf] was too quick for him [Gimli]. He sprang to his feet and leaped to the top of a large rock. There he stood, grown suddenly tall, towering above them. His hood and his grey rags were flung away. His white garments shone. He lifted up his staff, and Gimli's axe leaped from his grasp and fell ringing on the ground. The sword of Aragorn, stiff in his motionless hand, blazed with a sudden fire. Legolas gave a great shout and shot an arrow high into the air: it vanished in a flash of flame.
>
> 'Mithrandir!' he cried. 'Mithrandir!'
>
> 'Well met, I say to you again, Legolas!' said the old man.
>
> They all gazed at him. His hair was white as snow in the sunshine; and gleaming white was his robe; the eyes under his deep brows were bright, piercing as the rays of the sun; power was in his hand. Between wonder, joy, and fear they stood and found no words to say.
>
> At last Aragorn stirred. 'Gandalf! he said. 'Beyond all hope you return to us in our need! What veil was over my sight. Gandalf!' (Tolkien 1995: 484–485.)

This scene has a close resemblance to the Biblical account of Christ's appearance on the Road to Emmaus, where, after his crucifixion, Christ appears to the

disciples, who do not recognise him. At first, when they meet Christ on the road, their "eyes were holden". And afterwards, when Christ disappears from their sight during an evening meal, they finally recognise him and "their eyes were opened" (Luke 24: 13–32, Mark 16: 12–13).[142]

One certainly religious element in Tolkien's *legendarium*, forming a continuous internal field, seems to be the fundamental belief that the Elves and some of Men (the faithful ones) have on Eru Ilúvatar, the creator. In *The History of Middle-earth* series, in *Morgoth's Ring*, Tolkien makes his characters Andreth and Finrod discuss Eru, the One, in quite a theological level. In the *legendarium*, Andreth is a wisewoman of Men from the House of Bëor,[143] who lives in the First Age of the Sun, in an era when Middle-earth is largely dominated by the evil Vala Morgoth. Finrod Felagund is the King of Nargothrond, an Elven lord and brother of Galadriel.

In this intratextual and internal reference text, which was published posthumously, Andreth and Finrod discuss, one might say, religious beliefs of both Men and Elves. Andreth says that those of the "Old Hope" say that one day "the One will himself enter into Arda, and heal Men and all the Marring from the beginning to the end" (Tolkien 2002e: 321).This certainly eschatological view is then contradicted by Finrod, who does not think that Eru could "fit" inside Middle-earth. He says: "How could Eru enter into the thing that He has made, and then which He is beyond measure greater? Can the singer enter into his tale or the designer into his picture?" (Tolkien 2002e: 322.)

Afterwards, Finrod discusses his vision, shared perhaps by most of the Elves that Eru is "in" Middle-earth already:

'He is already in it, as well as outside,' said Finrod. 'But indeed the "in-dwelling" and the "out-living" are not in the same mode.'

- - But they speak of Eru Himself *entering into Arda*, and that is a thing wholly different. How could He the greater do this? Would it not shatter Arda, or indeed all Eä? (Tolkien 2002e: 322.)

---

[142] Or in the New International Version: "they were kept from recognizing him", and, "[t]hen their eyes were opened" (Luke 24: 13–32.)

[143] The House of Bëor was the most famous of families of so-called "Faithful Men", for example, the human heroes Húrin, Túrin and Tuor were part of that House. Later descending from Tuor's son Eärendil were the Kings of Men in the Second and Third Age of Middle-earth, such as Elros and later Aragorn, the forthcoming King in *The Lord of the Rings*. In the family tree of the House of Bëor, Andreth was the aunt of Bregolas, the great-grandfather of Túrin Turambar.

After this, Finrod sees that the ways of Eru are, of course, mysterious and cannot be predicted: "If Eru wishes to do this, I do not doubt that He would find a way, though I cannot foresee it. For, as it seems to me, even if He in Himself were to enter in, He must still remain also as He is: the Author without." (Tolkien 2002e: 322.)

What is the interesting "Author without" that Finrod is referring to? Is this once again a reference to Tolkien's theory of secondary creation? Theologically God could be seen as a creator of the story of life, the Author of everything. An author of fiction could be seen as a secondary creator creating a secondary world, a fictional world. Could the fictional creator – in this case Eru – of the (secondary) fictitious world be seen also as a kind of "tertiary creator"? Eru is absent from the text of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, appearing only in second hand references, but in the text of *The Silmarillion,* he is present. In the first section "Ainulindalë", Eru is one of the functional characters of the text. In this sense, the character Eru, in my opinion, cannot represent the authority of the writer. In the latter part of the *legendarium*, however, Eru could be seen as a kind of "author of the story": the future is described to be only known by Eru, and fate and history are, in a way, in his dominion.

Fleming Rutledge, in his theological survey of Tolkien's texts *The Battle for Middle-Earth. Tolkien's Divine Design in The Lord of the Rings,* sees that Tolkien's references to "God" in *The Lord of the Rings* are explicit. Rutledge points out that Tolkien is referring to "the Writer of the Story", "the Great Author", and "the supreme Artist", and sees that Tolkien came to think of "his story as a reflection of, or adumbration of, the biblical drama of redemption". (Rutledge 2004: 21.)

As for the external references, Elizabeth Whittingham discusses that Tolkien, as a devout Catholic, knew the two Genesis creation stories and other references to the formation of the world in the Jewish Scriptures, known to Christians as the Old Testament, and in the Christian New Testament. Whittingham points out that Deborah Webster and Ivor A. Rogers refer to the Bible of Judaism and Christianity as a "principal mythic" source for Tolkien's mythology. These various texts contributed to what Tolkien calls the "Cauldron of Story", from which he drew in developing his mythology. (Whittingham 2008: 39.)

This has been largely discussed. Shippey notes in *The Road to Middle-earth* that "the design of The Silmarillion" parallels "the history of Genesis" (Shippey 2003: 235). Similarly, Brian Rosebury has referred to the first part of *The Silmarillion*, Ainulindalë, as "the Elves' version of Genesis" (Whittingham 2008:

44). In *Tolkien: Man and Myth*, Pearce devotes an entire chapter to "The Creation of Middle Earth" and finds it "scarcely surprising" that Tolkien's tale "bears a remarkable similarity to the Creation story in the book of Genesis" (84).[144] This has also been discussed by John William Houghton in his article "Augustine in the cottage of lost play. The *Ainulindalë* as asterisk cosmogony" (Houghton 2003: 171–182).

But these are not certain elements of Christian allegory, but more or less elements of cosmogonical and cosmological myths. Therefore, with all this in consideration, it is possible to say that in Tolkien's *legendarium,* the religious and semi-religious elements are used on the level of myth and mythopoeia, and not on the level of precise allegory.

3.2.2 Mythical Heroes

One could say that Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are 20th century's ultimate quest fantasies. As mentioned earlier, the plots in both texts are basically the same: the Hobbit protagonist/protagonists start in idyllic, familiar Hobbiton (or Shire), and travel into archaic wild lands to confront many dangers. In the end of the stories, the heroes – Bilbo Baggins in *The Hobbit,* and Frodo Baggins and his companions in *The Lord of the Rings* – have completed their quest, and return back to the familiar Shire. In both cases, the heroes have grown and chanced in the journey, but at the same time, something has happened back in the Shire. In *the Hobbit,* fellow Hobbits think that Bilbo is dead and try to sell his properties. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Saruman and other "bad people" have taken control of the Shire, and the Hobbits have to reclaim their own country.

In *the Hobbit*, Bilbo Baggins' journey as a proper hero starts only after he finds the One Ring, and after he finds his own courage. Before that, Bilbo encounters some dangerous situations involving trolls and goblins, but in the encounters he is more of an unsuccessful bystander. In the latter part of the book, Bilbo becomes the hero, and he is also declared a hero by his fellow companions, the dwarves and the wizard Gandalf. *The Hobbit* is thus a classical "hero's journey", resembling ancient heroic myths and legends, and medieval fairy story motifs, and showing growth of the character.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, the hero's journey is essentially the same as in *The Hobbit*: the two main protagonists, Frodo Baggins and Sam Gamgee, grow to be

---

[144] See also Whittingham 2008: 44.

real heroes and save the world. Their quest is so difficult that it is easy to say that they could not have completed it solely by themselves. *The Lord of the Rings* is a classic example of the value of friendship and of "team spirit" in a quest fantasy. As in *The Hobbit*, as well in *The Lord of the Rings*, the hero's journey does not really begin until the latter part of the book.

It is also interesting to examine the hero's journey in Tolkien's *The Silmarillion*, which is a different kind of narrative, written in the purest epic high-fantasy tone that cannot be easily matched to any other work of the genre. There is not much growth of character in the hero's journey in *The Silmarillion*, since the "journey" appears to be more or less predestined to fail, or to succeed.

The heroic legend "Of Beren and Lúthien", in the heart of *The Silmarillion,* is written in Tolkien's *legendarium's* most romantic tone. In its context, it is a story of a human hero's (Beren) great adventures to gain a possibility to marry an Elvish "princess" (Lúthien). It deals with a classical human myth of escape from death, but also with an Elvish myth of escape from immortality, or "deathlessness", as Flieger sees it (2005a: 46). The purpose of Beren and Lúthien's journey is to make it possible to stay together in life and there-after, and in this, their journey is successful. In the end of the story, after Beren's death and Lúthien's return to the Blessed Lands of Valinor, they are joined in the afterlife: "[Lúthien] might return to Middle-earth, and take with her Beren, there to dwell again, but without certitude of life or joy. - - [T]he fates of Beren and Lúthien might be joined, and their paths leads together beyond the confines of the world". (Tolkien 1999: 221.)

A clear hero's journey is seen also in *The Silmarillion's* chapter "Of the Voyage of Eärendil and the War of Wrath". In the story, Eärendil is an offspring of both Elves and Men, who inherits from his father one of the three Silmarills: the mystical and powerful elven-gems, which – by some point – rule the fate of the Elves of Middle-earth in *The Silmarillion*.

Eärendil's fate is to make a journey to the Undying, Blessed Lands of Valinor and plead for the Valar to come to Middle-earth and overthrow Morgoth, The Dark Lord. Eärendil sails to Valinor in his great ship Vingilot, and is confronted with many adventures in his journey, both on land and at sea. Eärendil's plea for the Valar is successful, because he represents both Men and Elves. The Valar decide to destroy Morgoth's oppression and ruling in Middle-earth by war, which is named the War of Wrath, and which ends the main story of *The Silmarillion*, the "Quenta Silmarillion".

In the end Morgoth is overthrown and thrusted "into the Timeless Void" (Tolkien 1999: 306). Eärendil is promoted to the skies, where he forever journeys with his ship, Vingilot, and together they form a new star – Gil-Estel, the Star of High Hope:

> Now fair and marvellous was that vessel [Vingilot] made, and it was filled with a wavering flame, pure and bright; and Eärendil the Mariner sat at the helm, glistening with dust of elven-gems, and the Silmaril was bound upon his brow. Far he journeyed in that ship, even into the starless voids; but most often was he seen at the morning or at the evening, glimmering in sunrise or sunset, as he came back to Valinor from voyages beyond the confines of the world - -. Now when first Vingilot was set to sail in the seas of heaven, it rose unlooked for, glittering and bright; and the people of Middle-earth beheld it from afar and wondered, and they took it for a sign, and called it Gil-Estel, the Star of High Hope. (Tolkien 1999: 300–301.)

In addition to being a mariner and a voyager who brings salvation to the free people of Middle-earth, Eärendil also does a superb heroic act in the War of Wrath. He leads the birds in the battle with the Morgoth's dragons in the sky, and becomes a dragon slayer by slaying the mightiest dragon of all time in Middle-earth, Ancalagon the Black:

> But Eärendil came, shining with white flame, and about Vingilot were gathered all the great birds of heaven and Thorondor was their captain, and there was battle in the air all the day and through a dark night of doubt. Before the rising of the sun Eärendil slew Ancalagon the Black, the mightiest of the dragon-host, and cast him from the sky; and he fell upon the towers of Thangorodrim, and they were broken in his ruin. (Tolkien 1999: 302–303.)

Eärendil is a great voyager and his journey as a hero is straight-forward. Like in classical myths, he becomes a star in the sky,[145] and he brings hope to the hearts of Elves and Men. He becomes a dragon slayer and a great hero in the greatest of all wars in Middle-earth, the War of Wrath. In the end, he is the greatest champion of both Elves and Men. The character Eärendil assimilates with many mythical

---

[145] Common, for example, in the Greek mythology. For example, in the myths of Cassiopeia and Andromeda, or Aquila and Aquarius in the myth of Ganymedes. The most similar myth is perhaps that of Argo which was the ship of the heroic Argonauts that was, after the voyage of the search for the Golden Fleece, placed amongst the stars.

heroes from other fields of reference; for example such characters as Saint George the Dragon Slayer, Jason, Baldr or even Apollo.

Heroes in Tolkien's *legendarium* could be seen functioning with referential fields to other mythologies and having common features and attributes with these. Tolkien addresses these intertextualities in his highly original created myths:

> There are other stories almost equally full in treatment, and equally independent and yet linked to the general history. There is the *Children of Húrin*, the tragic tale of Túrin Turambar and his sister Níniel of which Túrin is the hero: a figure that might be said (by people who like that sort of thing, though it is not very useful) to be derived from elements in Sigurd the Volsung, Oedipus, and the Finnish Kullervo. (Tolkien 1999: xix.)

Here, in the quotation above, Tolkien is addressing the question of both intertextuality and intratextuality. Tolkien argues that his "independent" stories are linked to the general history inside Tolkien's *legendarium*: the internal fields of reference, but also that these stories are deriving intertextual (outer) elements; though Tolkien considers such a searching for external intertextualities "not very useful". I do not agree; therefore this chapter will focus on the intertextual fields of references in the *legendarium*.

Tolkien's narrative and linguistic tone changes from text to text, but still his aesthetic background stays the same. That is because intertextual references in Tolkien's texts are drawn from the same sources, the same internal fields of reference, despite the fact that he is writing fairy-story in *The Hobbit* or higher mythology in *The Silmarillion*.

These artistic tools construct the inner code of Tolkien's *legendarium*. It is created from the intertextual materials forming the field of reference for the *legendarium*, and from the intratextual links between the materials which form the internal field of reference for the *legendarium*. This makes up, what I call the mythopoeia in effect.

William Blisset calls *The Lord of the Rings* the last masterpiece of medieval literature (Timmons 2000: 1). Tolkien took his main influences from medieval literature and wrote in kind of a medieval tone. Still Tolkien's traditional background is not as easily pronounced. In *The Silmarillion,* there are intertextual similarities and reflections to many different books, mythologies and myths. In *The Silmarillion,* there can be seen many reflects of the Judeo-Christian *Bible*, Icelandic sagas, Finnish *Kalevala*, Ancient Greek myths, and other sources. In

this chapter, I will give a few examples of how Tolkien's *legendarium* reads the *Bible* and the *Kalevala* from its chosen parts.

Elements from the *Bible* are not easy to find in Tolkien's *legendarium*, because Tolkien tried to make his Middle-earth into a fantasy world without direct religious connotations. Tolkien wrote that he disliked the Arthurian world, because it explicitly contains the Christian religion, and that, to Tolkien, seemed a fatal mistake. He wrote that myth and fairy-story must reflect and contain in solution elements of moral and religious truth, but not explicit religions in the form of the primary real world. (Tolkien 1999: xi.) Therefore, some elements of the *Bible* can be found in Tolkien's *legendarium*, but not that many directly religious elements.

There are many strong heroic, symbolic characters in the *legendarium*. In my view, Tolkien's *legendarium* reads the *Bible* at level of symbols. It uses some powerful characters from it, such as Dragon/Satan and Christ. Tolkien's dragons are mainly derived from *Beowulf* and Icelandic, Norse, and Germanic myths, but they also have the same symbolic value as snakes and dragons in the *Bible*. In the *Bible*, the snake is the most evil of all animals (Genesis 3: 1). In "The Book of Revelation", the (seemingly) same ancient snake is now known as the dragon, the devil and Satan (Rev. 12: 7–9). In the Christian mythology, Satan used to be the chief angel of God, but then revolted against God and was cast out of Heaven. In *The Silmarillion,* Melkor used to be the highest angelic being, Ainur (or Valar in the Middle-earth)*,* after the creator, Eru, God of Tolkien's world. Tolkien wrote that "Melkor is the *supreme* spirit of Pride and Revolt, *not* just the chief Vala of the Earth, who has turned to evil" (Tolkien 2002a: 375). Melkor and Satan both symbolise pride and evil.

As discussed in the earlier chapter, Tolkien uses the old myth of a dying god in the *Lord of the Rings*. In the New Testament of the Christian *Bible*, Christ is the personification of God (and also "The Son of God"), who dies, and by dying, brings salvation to all mankind who believe in Him. This myth of dying god/gods can be also found in the stories of Hercules, Orpheus, and Balder, as well as in the *Bible* (Frye 1967: 36). In Tolkien's *legendarium,* the "dying god" is most clearly represented by the characters Frodo and Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings*, but dying or assumed death is an important role in the *legendarium*. Ruth S. Noel claims that in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, Frodo is assumed to have died six times, and Bilbo, Bard, Merry, Pippin, Sam, Aragorn, Eowyn, and Bill the Pony at least once. Moreover, Gandalf dies and returns. (Noel 1977: 27.)

Analogical and mythological similarities between Frodo and Christ were discussed in the earlier chapter, but in *The Lord of the Rings*, the character Gandalf resembles Christ in some ways even more than Frodo does. In *The Lord of the Rings*, the wizard Gandalf is the Dark Lord Sauron's main enemy, The Champion of Light, angelic being, send from the West by the *Valar*, the God-like powers of Middle-earth. As mentioned earlier, Tolkien suggested in the posthumous *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth* (1980) that Gandalf could have even been Manwë, the King of *Valar* himself, disguised as a "regular" angelic being of the race of *Maiar*, and taken a mortal shape (Tolkien 1992: 540). If that really were the case, then even Gandalf's arrival in Middle-earth would further still resemble Christ's incarnation as a normal human in the *Bible*.

In *The Lord of the Rings,* Gandalf dies in the mines of Moria, and returns from the death afterwards. When he returns, he is stronger, better and glorified, even Christ-like. In the *Bible,* after Christ is resurrected from the death and returns, he is more like The God that he originally is. Likewise, in *The Lord of the Rings,* Gandalf is more angelic after his resurrection. He uses his original angelic power more openly.

In Tolkien's *legendarium,* the influence of the Valar in Middle-earth is also much like God's influence on humans in the *Bible*. In the Christian *Bible*, in the Old Testament, God affects the lives of normal humans much more directly, as in *The Silmarillion,* the Valar still have direct contact with Elves and Men. In the New Testament of the *Bible*, God does not affect humans as directly any more. God's direct influence is the sending of Christ, His only Son. Similarly, after the first ages of *The Silmarillion*, Valar have changed their strategy. Their influence changes to more indirect, and they only fight the Dark Lord Sauron by sending to Middle-earth five of their own kind in human shape and form, Istari or the Wizards, of whom Gandalf is the greatest. Tolkien writes that the Istari were restricted from using force against the enemy, their purpose was to unite all the free people to fight against Sauron, and not to become their leaders (Tolkien 1992: 535). Gandalf's influence in *The Lord of the Rings* is not as much in force and power, but in wisdom and speech; much like the power of Christ in the *Bible*.

Christ is not the only character from the *Bible* and Christian mythology that has traces or analogues in Tolkien's *legendarium*. In his letter to Ruth Austin in the year 1971, Tolkien admitted that he used Virgin Mary as a background for Galadriel, the most powerful Elf in *The Lord of the Rings* and in the Third Age of Middle-earth. Of course the similarities of Mary and Galadriel are only superficial, and in the level of image, not in the level of narrative:

I think it is true that I owe much of this character [Galadriel] to Christian and Catholic teaching and imagination about Mary, but actually Galadriel was a penitent: in her youth a leader in the rebellion against the Valar (the angelic guardians). At the end of the First Age she proudly refused forgiveness or permission to return. She was pardoned because of her resistance to the final and overwhelming temptation to take the Ring for herself. (Tolkien 1981: 407.)

Like Mary, Galadriel is the most respected female character of her mythology. Galadriel has concrete power, which Mary is also found to have in Catholic myths. In *The Lord of the Rings* Galadriel's function is to be an encourager and a motherly figure for the "messianic" Frodo, on his last great quest to Mordor to destroy the One Ring.[146]

There is still one more biblical character that Tolkien himself used to describe as a character from his *legendarium*, and that is Noah (or Noach). Tolkien's Noachian figure is found in his Atlantis myth of the island of Númenór. Númenór was the greatest civilisations of Men and was placed half way between Middle-earth and Valinor, the land of immortals and home to the Valar. In the end of the story of Númenór, the island sinks into the sea, and only the so-called Faithful survive. These Faithful Númenóreans (or Dúnedain) did not turn evil and worship Sauron and Darkness, as the Kings of Númenór did, but remained faithful to Valar and Eru. And because they were faithful, they were spared, and when the devouring wave of water rolled over Númenór, the Faithful were aboard their nine ships, and great western wind swept their ships away from the island and saved their lives (Tolkien 1999: 335). In this instance, Tolkien's *legendarium*'s "Noah" is Elendil, the leader of the Faithful. Later in the text he establishes a new kingdom and civilisation, and becomes the King of Gondor and leader of the Dúnedain in Middle-earth, just like the biblical Noah is the founder of the new human civilisation after the Flood.

Tolkien was aware of the similarities between the mythological images of Noah and Elendil, because, in his letter to Milton Waldman, he called the situation Noachian:

So ended Númenor-Atlantis and all its glory. But in a kind of Noachian situation the small party of the faithful in Númenor, who had refused to take

---

[146] These analogues have been discussed for example by Michal W. Maher in his article "'A land without stain': Medieval images of Mary and their use in the characterisation of Galadriel" (Maher 2003: 225–236).

part in the rebellion (though many of them had been sacrificed in the Temple by the Sauronians) escaped in Nine Ships (Vol. I. 379, II. 202) under the leadership of *Elendil* (= Ælfwine, Elf-friend) and his sons *Isildur* and *Anárion* - -. (Tolkien 1981: 206.)

Another clear external field of reference is formed on the intertextual references from the *Kalevala*. Of course there are also other external fields of references which could be researched, such as ancient Greek or Roman mythic elements, or elements from the *Eddas* or Scandinavian mythology.

As early as in the year 1911,Tolkien discovered the *Kalevala*, the poems which are the central collection of Finnish mythology, and he was thrilled about it (Carpenter 1977: 49). In the *Kalevala,* Tolkien saw a complete and important mythology that he thought England lacked (Carpenter 1977: 59). It was because of the *Kalevala* that Tolkien first tried writing a legend in verse and prose. In 1914, Tolkien wrote his own "The Story of Kullervo" based on *Kalevala*'s character Kullervo (Carpenter 1977: 73), which later became the foundation of the *legendarium*'s story of Túrin Turambar.

"Of Túrin Turambar" is written in a tone of tragedy. The story's central character, Túrin, is an anti-hero who wants to be a hero, whose life is tragic from the start to finish. Turin's tale deals with the Finnish national epic *Kalevala*'s story of Kullervo, with the same myths of a slave-prince and an oedipalian myth of incest, but also deals with the heroic myths of dragon slayers, deriving mostly from Scandinavian and Germanic myths.[147] The story itself is dark, gloomy and joyless. Turin's terrific but tragic journey affects the reader's emotions. In the predestined story, after Túrin's mother has sent his young son over the mountains, Tolkien writes that "thus was the fate of Túrin woven" (Tolkien 1999: 236). Túrin is cursed and doomed from the beginning by an evil fate, constructed by the Dark Lord Morgoth. Túrin's journey, therefore, is to fulfill his tragic tale.

In the story, Túrin loses his family, and he is raised as a slave, and constantly tormented by his oppressors. Like Kullervo, Túrin seeks revenge, and finds it. He manages to kill the great dragon Glaurung in a great heroic deed. But before that, in the middle of his tragic adventures, Túrin also weds a lady, who is – unknowingly to both – his sister. When the truth is revealed, the sister kills herself. Afterwards, Túrin also commits suicide.

---

[147] See also Flieger 2005a: 32, 41, Shippey 2003: 261, 265–266.

By Tolkien, the myth of Túrin Turambar is often called "The Children of Húrin" because it tells the story of the hero Húrin's two children, Túrin and his sister Nienor (or Níniel). Tolkien's biographer Humphrey Carpenter writes that Túrin's fight with the great dragon inevitably suggests comparison with Sigurd and Beowulf, while Túrin's unknowing incest with his sister and his suicide were derived quite consciously from the *Kalevala* (Carpenter 1977: 96). Incest has been a popular mythological theme since the beginning of literature and human culture, in a kind of an "alarming myth", as a myth of moral tuition. Túrin's tragic life may also have some echoes from the myth of Oedipus from Sophocles' famous tragedy *Oedipus the King* (ca. 429BC).

Túrin's suicide and Kullervo's suicide are in the end very similar in style and narrative. Both heroes kill themselves with a sword, by first asking the sword to take their lives.[148] Both kill themselves because of their act of incest, and because their sisters have also committed suicide. Both heroes' sisters also commit suicide by drowning themselves. Túrin Turambar is a classic tragic hero. His story is influenced by the stories of Oedipus, Kullervo, Beowulf, Sigurd and Saint George. Tolkien himself wrote that the story is derived from elements of Sigurd, Oedipus and Kullervo (Tolkien 1999: xix). Túrin's suicide is more intimately connected, in my view, to the story of Kullervo than any of Tolkien's stories to any other mythological elements. In the scene where Túrin commits suicide, he asks his mythical sword Gurthang to kill him:

> 'Hail Gurthang! No lord or loyalty dost thou know, save the hand that wieldeth thee. From no blood wilt thou shrink. Wilt thou therefore take Túrin Turambar, wilt thou slay me switfly?' And from the blade rang a cold voice in answer: 'Yea, I will drink thy blood gladly, that so I may forget the blood of Beleg my master, and the blood of Brandir slain unjustly. I will slay thee swiftly.' Then Túrin Turambar set the hilts upon the ground, and cast himself upon the point of Gurthang, and the black blade took his life. (Tolkien 1999: 270.)

---

[148] Of course, this kind of dialogue with a sword is a recurring scene in epic or fantastic literature. For example, in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606), the play's (anti)hero Macbeth hallucinates seeing a dagger and asks questions from it, although the dagger does not answer. In the 20th and 21st century, fantasy writers such as Terry Pratchett in his *Discword* series or Mercedes Lackey in *The Heralds of Valdemar* series, and Brent Weeks in *The Night Angel* series use talking swords as "characters"; perhaps as a homage to either Tolkien's fiction, or for the old Anglo-Saxon mythology.

In the *Kalevala*, in a similar way, Kullervo asks his sword, whether it will kill him:

Kullervo Kalervon poika, tempasi terävän miekan;

katselevi, kääntelevi, kyselevi, tietelevi.

Kysyi mieltä miekaltansa, tokko tuon tekisi mieli

syöä syyllistä lihoa, viallista verta juoa.

Miekka mietti miehen mielen, arvasi uron pakinan.

Vastasi sanalla tuolla: ››Miks en söisi mielelläni,

söisi syyllistä lihoa, viallista verta joisi?

Syön lihoa syyttömänki, juon verta viattomanki.‹‹

Kullervo, Kalervon poika, sinisukka äijön lapsi,

pään on peltohon sysäsi, perän painoi kankahasen,

kären käänti rintahansa, itse iskihe kärelle.

Siihen surmansa sukesi, kuolemansa kohtaeli. (*Kalevala* 1992:

321.)

In the English version, the scene is as follows:

Kullervo, son of Kalervo, drew his sharp sword;

he looks at it, turns it over, questions it, inquires of it.

He asked the sword its wish, whether it wanted

to eat guilty flesh, drink sinful blood. The sword knew the man's mind, understood what the warrior said:

it answered with these words: "Why should I not eat as I want,

eat guilty flesh, drink sinful blood? I eat the flesh of an innocent person, drink the blood of a sinless one, too."

Kullervo, son of Kalervo, blue-stocking son of an old man,

pushed the hilt into the field, pressed the butt into the heath,

turned the point against his breast, struck himself onto the point.

On that he contrived his death, met his end. (*Kalevala* 1975: 255.)

Tolkien planned an important role for Túrin also after his death in the "after life". In *The History of Middle-earth,* Tolkien writes that in the End of the World, in the Last Battle, Túrin will be the avenger of all Men, and by that their greatest hero:

Then shall the last battle be gathered on the fields of Valinor. In that day Tulkas shall strive with Melko[r], and on his right shall stand Fionwë and on his left Túrin Turambar, son of Húrin, Conqueror of Fate, coming from the halls of Mandos; and it shall be the black of sword of Túrin that deals unto Melko his death and final end; and so shall the children of Húrin and all Men be avenged. (Tolkien 2002c: 76.)

Even after his tragic death and many anti-heroic acts, Túrin's reputation inside the fictive world of Middle-earth is not "anti-heroic", since Elrond in *The Lord of the Rings* calls him one of the great human warriors. Intratextually, Túrin is a "hero", despite his many villainous acts. This has perhaps something to do with Tolkien's own sympathies for the misunderstood and mistreated tragic characters such as Kullervo, Túrin, or even Beowulf.[149]

But Tolkien's *legendarium* reads the *Kalevala* in other aspects as well. The greatest Elven smith of all time, Fëanor, resembles the great smith Ilmarinen of the *Kalevala*, and Fëanor's greatest achievement and labour, the Silmarils, resemble the Sampo of the *Kalevala*, which was the greatest single work done by Ilmarinen.

Both the Silmarils, which were three great jewels, and the Sampo are objects desired and wanted by anyone who sees them. They both also have some great and unknown powers. *The Silmarillion* deals greatly with the war of the Silmarils, as the *Kalevala* deals with the theft of the Sampo. Furthermore, the theft of one of the Silmarils in the story of Beren and Lúthien is an important part of *The Silmarillion*. And in the end of both stories, they are forever lost from their makers and are disintegrated all over the world.

Before that, when the Sampo is stolen from the Northern Land back to Kalevala, the land of the *Kalevala*'s heroes, the theft follows the same path as the theft of one of the Silmarils in *The Silmarillion*. In the *Kalevala*, the heroes manage to steal the Sampo because Väinämöinen puts to sleep the people of

---

[149] See for example Flieger 2003b.

Pohjola ("North Farm") by playing his *kantele*, a lute-like instrument (*Kalevala* 354).[150]

This is echoed in *The Silmarillion*, where Beren and Lúthien steal one of the Silmarils back from Melkor. Beren is the greatest human hero in *The Silmarillion*, and Lúthien is a "semi-angelic" being, because her father is the Elven king Thingol, and her mother, Melian, is one the Maiar, the spirits who govern Middle-earth. Beren and Lúthien manage to steal one of the Silmarils from Melkor's crown, because Lúthien sings and thus puts Melkor and all of his court to sleep:

> [A]nd out of the shadows began a song of such surpassing loveliness, and of such blinding power, that he [Melkor] listened perforce; and a blindness came upon him, as his eyes roamed to and fro, seeking her. All his court were cast down in slumber, and all the fires faded and were quenched - - she cast her cloak before his eyes, and set upon him a dream, dark as the Outer Void where once he walked alone. Suddenly he fell, as a hill sliding in avalanche, and hurled like thunder from his throne lay prone upon the floors of hell. The iron crown rolled echoing from his head. All things were still. (Tolkien 1999: 212–213.)

Beren and Lúthien run away after they have managed to take one of the Silmarils. This Silmaril is later inherited by their son, Dior, and after him by his daughter, Elwing. In the end of Quenta Silmarillion, the third book of *The Silmarillion*, Elwing bears the Silmaril when she and her husband Eärendil travel to the Undying Lands of Valinor, and ask the Valar to aid in the desperate struggle against Melkor. After this, the Valar finally decide to destroy Melkor, and aid Men and Elves in their war.

Because of that, Eärendil and Elwing became the saviors of Middle-earth, but they could never again return to Middle-earth from the Undying Lands. As discussed earlier, Eärendil later rises to the sky with his ship Vingilot and becomes a star of new hope, bearing the Silmaril with him, and illuminating all of Middle-earth. The sons of Fëanor, who had fought long and hard to get the Silmarils from anyone keeping them, could now see where the Silmaril is, unreachable in the sky:

> Now when first Vingilot was set to sail in the seas of heaven, it rose unlooked for, glittering and bright; and the people of Middle-earth beheld it from afar

---

[150] In English: "The whole household of North Farm and all the people of the community he put into a long sleep, put to sleep for quite a long time" (*Kalevala* 1975: 281).

and wondered, and they took it for a sign, and called it Gil-Estel, the Star of High Hope. And when this new star was seen at evening, Maedhros spoke to Maglor his brother, and he said: 'Surely that is a Silmaril that shines now in the West?' (Tolkien 1999: 300–301.)

In the *Kalevala,* the Sampo breaks in a fight, and its pieces spread in all directions. Väinämöinen takes some of the parts, his enemy Louhi gets the handle, and other pieces fall into the water and create a wealth in the lakes and rivers (*Kalevala* 1975: 367–369).

This distribution of valuables is also seen in *The Silmarillion*. In the end of "Quenta Silmarillion" the Silmarils are also spread all over the world. The Dark Lord Melkor is vanquished by the *Valar*, and the last two Silmarils are taken from his crown. After that, Maedhros and Maglor, the last two[151] remaining sons of Fëanor, who, at the beginning of Quenta Silmarillion, swore an oath to reacquire the Silmarils that their father made from any being holding them, attack the forces of the *Valar*, *Maiar* and Elves and steal the Silmarils.

This is actually the fourth "stealing of Silmarils" in *The Silmarillion*: Originally Melkor stole the Silmarils from Fëanor's father Finwë in Valinor, and after that Beren and Lúthien stole one of the Silmarils back from Melkor, and thirdly the Forces of Valinor took the Silmarils back from Melkor. However, in this "reclaiming" of Silmarils, because of their evil deed, the sons of Fëanor have lost their right to the jewels, and the Silmarils have their own different destiny:

> Each of them [Maedhros and Maglor] took to himself a Silmaril, for they said: 'Since one is lost to us, and but two remain, and we two alone of our brothers, so it is plain that fate would have us share the heirloom of our father. But the jewel burned the hand of Maedhros in pain unbearable; and he perceived that - - his right thereto had become void, and that the oath was vain. And being in anguish and despair he cast himself into a gaping chasm filled with fire, and so ended; and the Silmaril that he bore was taken **into the bosom of the Earth**. And it is told of Maglor that he could not endure the pain with which the Silmaril tormented him; and he cast it at last **into the Sea**, and thereafter he wandered ever upon the shores, singing in pain and regret beside the waves. (Tolkien 1999: 304–305.*Emphasis mine*.)

So, one of the Silmarils ends up in the bosom of the Earth, one in the Sea, and one (as earlier mentioned) into the Sky with Eärendil. Just like the Sampo in the

---

[151] Two remaining sons out of seven brothers.

Kalevala, the Silmarils in the end are scattered all over the world, into three different elements.[152]

Another intertextual similarity between the *Kalevala* and Tolkien's text has been seen by Shippey in the departing of Väinämöinen in the end of the *Kalevala* and the departing of the Elves in Tolkien's *legendarium* (Shippey 2007: 34). In the *Kalevala's* hubristic end, Väinämöinen is disappointed with the appearance of the Christ-figure, the new king of Kalevala, and sails away from the mortal realms.

In a kind of Arthurian, or even Christ-like, way, Väinämöinen promises to return if his crafts and might will be needed again. Like the Elves, who sail to the West but do not completely leave the worlds boundaries, Väinämöinen does not either leave the plane of "this world" completely. Väinämöinen goes into "yläisihin maaemihin, alaisihin taivosihin" (*Kalevala* 1992: 427). In Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr.'s English translation: "toward the upper reaches of the world, to the lower reaches of the heavens" (*Kalevala* 1975: 337).[153]

Eru Ilúvatar, Tolkien's *legendarium's* god-figure, has also been intertextually connected to both Ancient Indo-European sources, but also etymologically to the *Eddas*. Robert A. Collins points out a connection to the *Eddas* through the name Ilúvatar, saying that the creator's name incorporates not only the Indo-European "father" (Sindarin *atar* and Sanskrit *pitar*), but also the Latin *vates* (poet or seer) – emphasising the character of the creator as an artist. Collins sees that, in making his creator *vates*, Tolkien, as a philologist, must have noticed that the Old Norse Odin and the Germanic Woden have the same linguistic root as the Latin tag: Germanic gods, too, were conceived as poets and creators. (Whittingham 2008: 42–43.) In the case of the etymological intertextualities between Tolkien's *legendarium* and the *Kalevala*, I would add that Tolkien's name for the creator, Eru Ilúvatar, resembles the air spirit Ilmatar (or Luonnotar), mother of Väinämöinen,[154] the Eternal Bard, the chief protagonist of the *Kalevala*.

---

[152] Intertextual similarities between the loss of Sampo, and the loss of Silmarils, have been discussed earlier by Shippey 2007: 35. I also addressed these questions in my Master's Thesis: Korpua 2005: 27-29.

[153] Väinämöinen, as a central character of the *Kalevala*, is an interesting one. Matthew Bardowell explores the parallels between Väinämöinen's creative role as an "eternal singer" in the *Kalevala* and Tolkien's use of music in his cosmogony (Whittingham 2008: 42).

[154] This is of course a reference to the *Kalevala*, and not to the earlier Finnish tradition. In the *Kalevala*, Ilmatar is the mother of Väinämöinen, but this has also been seen as an editorial work of Lönnrot, since this is not the case in earlier folk-lore, where Väinämöinen is either born alone or his mother's name is Iro. For the background, see for example Anna-Leena Siikala: "Kalevala myyttisenä

In the *Kalevala*, Ilmatar is impregnated by a storm, and when Ilmatar drifts into the sea, a scaup[155] settles on Ilmatar's knee, mistaking it for an island, an lays seven eggs which she then begins to brood. The brooding makes Ilmatar move her leg and the eggs break, becoming the created universe. Hence, there is certainly something in common with Ilmatar, who is responsible for the creation of the world of the *Kalevala*, and Ilúvatar, the creator in Tolkien's *legendarium*.

3.3 Examples of Constructive Mythopoeia

Next, I will discuss three main examples of how constructive mythopoeia functions in Tolkien's *legendarium*. Examples of these motifs are numerous. First, the motif of a "drowned land", or Atlantis, will be discussed more closely in the next sub-chapter. Then, the motif dealing with morality or amorality and the concept of the One Ring will be discussed in the chapter 3.3.2. The final chapter 3.3.3 will focus on familiarisation and defamialiarisation of myth in Tolkien's *legendarium*.

3.3.1 Númenor: an Atlantis myth

> The Men of Three Houses were rewarded for their valour and faithful alliance, by being allowed to dwell 'westernmost' of all mortals, in the great 'Atlantis' isle of *Númenóre*. The doom or gift of God, or mortality, the gods of course cannot abrogate, but the Númenóreans have a great span of life. (Tolkien 1999: xx.)

In this quotation, Tolkien describes the starting point of his Atlantis myth, the myth of Númenor. In the beginning, Númenor was a utopian island raised from the sea as a gift for the "Loyal Men", who fought on the side of the Valar in the War of Wrath that ended Morgoth's reign of evil and the First Age of Middle-earth. Later in the *legendarium*, thousands of years afterwards, the people of Númenor were corrupted, and started a war against the Valar, and that led to the downfall of the island and to the destruction of the Númenorean culture. Only a

---

historiana", in: *Kalevalan kulttuurihistoria* (2008) or Väinö Kaukonen: *Lönnrot ja Kalevala* (1979) and *Kalevala Lönnrotin runoelmana I* and *II* (1988–89).
[155] Or a duck in some translations.

small party of survivors, those loyal to the Valar survived, and later formed the Kingdom of Gondor (and later Arnor) in Middle-earth.[156]

Númenor is mentioned many times in the *legendarium*. Its rise and fall is the central story of *The Silmarillion's* fourth part "Akallabêth". Its milieu is described in a posthumous romantic story "Aldarion and Erendis" that was published in the *Unfinished Tales*. Númenor is also featured in the appendices to *The Lord of the Rings* and in many parts of *The History of Middle-earth*-series.

Essentially, the story of Númenor is an Atlantis myth. Next, for the understanding of the concept, I will discuss Plato's myth of the Atlantis in the dialogues *Timaeus* and *Critias* and Tolkien's story of the downfall of Númenor in *The Silmarillion*. Both Plato's myth and Tolkien's story deal with an island in the west, which is occupied by an advanced human civilisation that has some kind of divine genealogy. In both stories, the inhabitants of the island turn greedy and proud, and try to rule all the other nations. Both stories end with a divine intervention of gods (or God) that destroys the island – Eru Ilúvatar in Tolkien's *legendarium*, and presumably Zeus in Plato's story. "Akallabêth", as an Atlantis myth, has indisputably been influenced by Plato's story of Atlantis. Plato's Atlantis is one of the most known literary utopias and island utopias.

The tradition of literary utopias is long and versatile, and the history of utopias is much older than the word *utopia* itself. The Greek word utopia (ūtopos) means a place which does not exist. Nowadays utopia is commonly understood to be a place that is at once *imaginary* and *ideal*.[157] The word *utopia* itself was created by Thomas More (1478–1535), whose novel *Utopia* (1516) is one of the basic works of the utopian literature. Although More's work was genre-defining, the field of utopian literature is of course much wider including, for example, Plato's myth of Atlantis, and, as *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature* edited by Gregory Clayes argues, "Platonism, classical mythology, golden ages of both eastern and western, ideals of lost worlds, fantastic voyages, inhabited moons and planets, imaginary social and political experiments, nations, empires and ideal commonwealths" (Clayes 2010a: xi). In other words: almost every kind of literature focusing on imaginary, ideal, and "fantastic" landscapes.

---

[156] In the *legendarium*, there is also the so-called "Black Númenoreans", who were not "loyalists", but survived in the remote parts of Middle-earth where Númenoreans had colonies at the time of the destruction of the island. One of these, in *The Lord of the Rings,* is "Mouth of Sauron", the Lieutenant of the Tower of Barad-dûr. He is described as one "of the race of those that are the Black Númenoreans; for they established their dwellings in Middle-earth during the years of Sauron's domination, and they worshipped him, being enamoured of evil knowledge" (Tolkien 1995: 870).

[157] See for example Carey 2000.

Significant works in the tradition of the literary utopia are also Plato's dialogues *The Republic*, *Critias* and *Timaeus*; Tomaso Campanella's (1568–1639) *La citta del Sole* (1611); Francis Bacon's (1561–1626) *The New Atlantis* (1627); and David Hume's (1711–1776) *The Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth* (1752).

Krishan Kumar discusses (1987: 2) that "Utopian ideas and fantasies, like all ideas and fantasies, grow out of the society to which they are a response", and that Utopian "Arcadian idyll is apparent in the anti-urban (and later anti-industrial) fantasies of scores of later writers up to our own time, most notoriously perhaps in England" (Kumar 1987: 3). Tolkien's (at the start) utopian fantasy of arcadian Númenor, and also Tolkien's anti-industrial sceneries, therefore, were quite typical for English writers of earlier literary periods. Tolkien is once again taking his place in a long tradition of myth-makers and mythographers of the English language.

Then again, Tolkien's Númenor is intertextually connected to the Platonic myth of Atlantis. Kumar discusses that in the long tradition of utopias, Plato comes rather late, since utopian themes reach back to the earliest Greek writings, such as Hesiod's *Works and Days* (Kumar 1987: 3).

In the end of Tolkien's story of Númenor and Plato's myth of Atlantis, the described ideal utopian society of the fantastic island turns bad, evil, and malevolent. The ideal society turns upside down, and negative developments – both political and philosophical – change the progress.

In this way, Tolkien's Númenor also reads and re-imagines the external reference field of Plato's Atlantis myth. Plato's dialogues *Timaeus* and *Critias* include all Plato's textual material dealing with Atlantis. In *Timaeus,* Plato explains the creation of the universe and the order of nature, and, therefore, *Timaeus* is often considered to be the centre of his cosmogonies, cosmologies and natural sciences.[158] At the beginning of the dialogue, Plato puts the story of Atlantis to emphasise the meaning of the city of Athens in his cosmology, and to warn that every great civilisation in the *changeable world* could fall quickly from grace.

Plato writes that "in this island of Atlantis there was a great and wonderful empire which had rule over the whole island and several others, and over parts of the continent - - This vast power, gathered into one, endeavoured to subdue at a

---

[158] It is also important to remember that the dialogue is put into the mouth of a Pythagorean philosopher, and not Socrates'. Therefore, we should not hastily regard *Timaeus* as the most important of Plato's dialogues. See also Jowett 1964: 631–633.

blow our country and yours and the whole of the region within the straits" (*Timaeus* 25a–b). Later Plato describes how Atlantis was destroyed: "there occurred violent earthquakes and floods; and in a single day and night of misfortune all your warlike men in a body sank into the earth, and the island of Atlantis in like manner disappeared in the depths of the sea" (*Timaeus* 25d).

The reasons for the destruction of Atlantis remain unclear in *Timaeus*, but are revealed in *Critias*, which is a fragment designed to be the second part of a trilogy, of which *Timaeus* was the first part (Jowett 1964: 781). In *Critias*, Plato describes the geography of Atlantis, and of the beauty and greatness of the island's inhabitants. To prove the divine background of the kings of Atlantis, Plato describes how the first king of Atlantis, Atlas, descended directly from Poseidon, the god of sea in the Greek mythology. But at the time as Atlantis was destroyed, this divine heredity had declined:

> For many generations, as long as the divine nature lasted in them, they were obedient to the laws, and well-affectioned towards the god, whose seed they were; for they possessed true and in every way great spirits, uniting gentleness with wisdom in the various chances of life, and in their intercourse with one another - - . but when the divine portion began to fade away, and became diluted too often and too much with the mortal admixture, and the human nature got the upper hand, they then, being unable to bear their fortune, behaved unseemly, and to him who had an eye to see grew visible debased, for they were losing the fairest of their precious gifts; but those who had no eye to see the true happiness, they appeared glorious and blessed at the very time when they were becoming tainted with unrighteous ambition and power. (Plato: *Critias* 120e–121b.)

Critias ends in the middle of the sentence, but right before the ending, it is told that Zeus, the god (or king) of gods in the Greek mythology, paid special attention to Atlantis and its inhabitants because of their "woeful plight" and decided to inflict punishment on them. Therefore the destruction of Atlantis, described in *Timaeus,* could be interpreted as to having been conducted by Zeus.

Both Plato's Atlantis and Tolkien's Númenor are great island kingdoms in the far west. In the *legendarium,* Númenor is described as a gift from the Valar ("gods") to the only faithful Human tribe (called Edain): "A land was made for the Edain to dwell in, neither part of Middle-earth nor of Valinor, for it was sundered from either by a wide sea, yet it was nearer to Valinor" (Tolkien 1999: 310).

172

Like the king of Atlantis, also the first king of Númenor, Elros, had a divine background. His foremothers were from the immortal races of Eldar (Elves) and Maiar (lower "gods" than the Valar in the *legendarium*): "Elros and Elrond his brother were descendant of the Three Houses of the Edain, but in part also both from the Eldar and the Maiar; for Idril of Gondolin and Lúthien daughter of Melian were their foremothers" (Tolkien 1999: 312).

In the *legendarium*, the Númenóreans lived on an island near Valinor, the undying lands of the Valar, and after thousands of years of glory, they became envious of the immortals living there, because they were mortals and even their kings' divine heredity was fading: "They said to themselves: 'Why do the Lords of the West sit there in peace unending, while we must die and go we know whither, leaving our home and all that we have made?'" (Tolkien 1999: 315) The Númenóreans were banned by the Valar to sail to the undying lands, and that also disturbed them, because immortal Elves (Eldar) sailed from time to time to Númenor from the undying lands.

Tolkien describes how the Númenóreans became restless:

Now this yearning grew even greater with the years; and the Númenóreans began to hunger for the undying city that they saw from afar, and the desire of everlasting life, to escape from death and the ending of delight, grew strong upon them; and ever as their power and glory grew greater their unquiet increased - - . Thus it was that a shadow fell upon them: in which maybe the will of Morgoth was at work that still moved in the world. And the Númenóreans began to murmur, at first in their hearts, and then in open words, against the doom of Men, and most of all against the Ban which forbade them to sail into the West. (Tolkien 1999: 315.)

Both Tolkien's Númenor and Plato's Atlantis are destroyed by divine intervention. In Akallabêth, the people of Númenor wage war against the Valar, because Sauron persuades them to do so. Randel Helms in his early and often justly criticised study[159] of the subject describes Númenor's destruction as Biblical and even compares Sauron to Satan:

Towards the end of the Second Age, Sauron bewitched the king of Númenor and most of his subjects, telling them that 'everlasting life would be his who possessed the Undying Lands, and that Ban was imposed only to prevent the

---

[159] Neil D. Isaacs goes even so far as to declare Helms' study "enormously simple-minded" (Isaac 2000: 114).

Kings of Men from surpassing the Valar.' Deceived, the Númenóreans committed Middle-earth's Original Sin, their kingdom was destroyed, and Sauron fell with them. The 'bodily form in which he long had walked perished; but he fled back to Middle-earth, a spirit of hatred borne upon a dark wind. He was unable ever again to assume a form that seemed fair to men, but became black and hideous' (III, p. 317). Sauron's story aligns, point by point, with Satan's. (Helms 1974: 75–76.)

Eru Ilúvatar, the God in Tolkien's *legendarium*, destroys the beautiful island of Númenor because of the Númenóreans' attack against the undying lands:

Ilúvatar showed forth his power, and he changed the fashion of the world; and a great chasm opened in the sea between Númenor and the Deathless Lands, and the waters flowed down into it, and the noise and smoke of the cataract went up to heaven, and the world was shaken - - . And Andor, the Land of Gift, Númenor of the Kings, Elenna of the Star of Eärendil, was utterly destroyed. (Tolkien 1999: 334.)

C. S. Lewis writes that, according to Macrobius, nearly the whole human race has frequently been destroyed by great global catastrophes; nearly, because there has always been a remnant. Macrobius sees that Egypt has never been destroyed; that is why Egyptian records remount to an antiquity elsewhere unknown. According to Lewis, this idea goes back to Plato's *Timaeus* which in its turn may have been influenced by the delightful story in Herodotus: the story of Hecataeus the historian, visiting the Egyptian city of Thebes. (Lewis1964: 61–62.) In Tolkien's *legendarium*, this kind of constant destruction of old kingdoms and realms is apparent. There are many destroyed kingdoms of both Elves and Men in the fictitious history of Middle-earth, but of all the kingdoms of Men, Númenor is the most famous of them all.[160]

Tolkien's Akallabêth is also a story of fall from greatness, of which remnants remain. The stories of the glory of Númenor, but also the remnants and descendants of the Númenoreans: the kingdom of Gondor, for example, in the Third Age of Middle-earth, and King Aragorn in the end of the *Lord of the Rings*.

---

[160] Kingdoms from the history of Elves that might be compared to Númenor are the hidden and closed kingdoms of Gondolin and Doriath. A major part (and destruction) of the tale of Gondolin is told in *The Silmarillion* and there are references to the kingdom in both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. As told in *The Silmarillion*, The Fenced Land of Doriath, ruled by Sindar Elves in the Elder Days of Middle-earth and the First Age of the Sun was destroyed after the War of Wrath when all the land of Beleriand was sunk into the sea.

Akallabêth as a story of fall is clearly a Christian Platonic view of a changeable world, but it could be seen as the main theme of *The Silmarillion* and Tolkien's *legendarium*.

The spirit of Númenor is still felt in *The Lord of the Rings*. In the end of the Second Age of Middle-earth, Sauron is defeated because the "Men of Westernesse came to - - aid" (Tolkien 1995: 51). Later, Gondor is described as a land where "the old wisdom and beauty brought out of the West remained long in the realm of the sons of Elendil the Fair, and they linger there still - - " (Tolkien 1995: 667).

Even Sam Gamgee can feel this "air of Númenor" when he and Frodo Baggins meet Faramir from Gondor:

> 'you said my master had an elvish air; and that was good and true. But can I say this: you have an air too, sir, that reminds me of, of, – well, Gandalf, or wizards.'

> 'Maybe,' said Faramir. 'Maybe you discern from far away the air of Númenor. Good night!' (Tolkien 1995: 667.)

Then again, Númenor is an important traditional background for Faramir. He describes this as a recurring dream later in the text to Eowyn in the Houses of Healing in Minas Tirith:

> 'It reminds me of Númenor,' said Faramir, and wondered to hear himself speak. 'Of Númenor?' said Éowyn.

> 'Yes,' said Faramir, 'of the land of Westernesse that foundered, and of the great dark wave climbing over the green lands and above the hills, and coming on, darkness unescapable. I often dream of it.' (Tolkien 1995: 941.)

3.3.2 The One Ring and the Ring-motif

> When Bilbo opened his eyes, he wondered if he had; for it was just as dark as with them shut. No one was anywhere near him. Just imagine his fright! He could hear nothing, see nothing, and he could feel nothing except the stone of the floor.

> Very slowly he got up and groped about on all fours, till he touched the wall of the tunnel; but neither up nor down it could he find anything: nothing at all, no sight of the goblins, no sign of dwarves. His head was swimming, and he was far from certain even of the direction they had been going in when

he had his fall. He guessed as well as he could, and crawled along for a good way, till suddenly his hand met what felt like a tiny ring of cold metal lying on the floor of the tunnel. It was a turning point in his career, but he did not know it. He put the ring in his pocket almost without thinking; certainly it did not seem of any particular use at the moment. (Tolkien 1975: 67.)

In this scene from *The Hobbit,* Bilbo Baggins finds the One Ring, which is the artefact of vital importance later in *The Lord of the Rings.* Here, the narrator argues that finding the One Ring was, for Bilbo Baggins, "a turning point in his career", but he might as well be writing of Tolkien himself. Since for Tolkien's career as a writer of fiction (and fantasy), the ring-theme starting in *The Hobbit,* and developing later in *The Lord of the Rings*, was of great importance.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, the One Ring is fatal for mortals:

A mortal, Frodo, 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. And if he often uses the Ring to make himself invisible, he *fades*: he becomes in the end invisible permanently, and walks in the twilight under the eye of the dark power that rules the Rings. Yes, sooner or later – later, if he is strong or well-meaning to begin with, but neither strength nor good purpose will last – sooner or later the dark power will devour him. (Tolkien 1995: 46.)

The One Ring is the central plot motif of the story, as Gandalf says in *The Lord of the Rings*: "This is the Master-ring, the One Ring to rule them all. This is the One Ring that he has lost many ages ago, to the great weakening of his power. He greatly desires it – but he must *not* get it." (Tolkien 1995: 49.)

The central theme is that Sauron, the Enemy, tries to get the One Ring back, and the forces opposing Sauron try to prevent it. Later, the opposing (Good) forces decide to destroy the One Ring, and that forms the central Quest in the narrative. Sauron's only pursuit is to get the One Ring, since:

He only needs the One; for he made that Ring himself, it is his, and he let a great part of his own former power pass into it, so that he could rule all the others. If he recovers it, then he will command them all again, wherever they be, even the Three, and all that has been wrought with them will be laid bare, and he will be stronger than ever. (Tolkien 1995: 50.)

That is the basic plot of the story, but there are also many moral and philosophical questions concerning the ring-motif. Therefore, I discuss Tolkien's *legendarium's* ring-theme and Plato's myth of The Ring of Gyges from the second book of *Republic*. In Plato's story, the shepherd Gyges finds a golden ring which makes its user invisible (*Republic* 359d–360d). I will show that Tolkien's ring-theme is not solely derived from Germanic and Scandinavian myths and fairy-stories as some researchers have pointed out, but may have some mythological backgrounds in Plato and in the Platonic tradition.

Tolkien's theme of invisibility has similarities to Plato not only in regards of the two levels of ontology (levels of the ideal and changeable world), but also on the level of myth and morality. Tolkien himself wrote many times about the moral aspect of owning a ring of invisibility – for example, think about H. G. Well's *The Invisible Man* (1897). Plato writes about the morality of owning a ring of invisibility:

> Suppose now that there were two such magic rings, and the just put on one of them and the unjust the other; no man can be imagined to be of such an iron nature that he would stand fast in justice. No man would keep his hands off what was not his own when he could safely take what he liked out of the market, or go into houses and lie with any one at his pleasure, or kill or release from prison whom he would, and in all respect be like a god among men. Then the actions of the just would be as the actions of the unjust; they would both tend to the same goal - - . (Plato: *Republic* 360b–c.)

As I mentioned earlier, the invisibility altogether has definitely something to do with two levels of ontology.[161] The Elves in Tolkien's *legendarium* are immortal, and the immortal beings stay visible in "The Shadow world of invisibility" as well, because they live in the same time in "both worlds" – and in between.

Furthermore, the discovery of the Ring of Gyges in Plato's *Republic* and the discovery finding of The Great Ring in Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, and later described in *The Lord the Rings*, resemble each other. In Plato's *Republic*, Gyges is a shepherd and the ancestor of Croesus of Lydia, who finds the ring of invisibility in a cave:

> - - [T]here was a great storm, and an earthquake made an opening in the earth at the place where he [Gyges] was feeding his flock. Amazed at the sight, he descended into the opening, where, among other marvels which form part of

---

[161] Or three levels – also the Shadow world at the middle, or under.

the story, he beheld a hollow brazen horse, having doors, at which he stooping and looking in saw a dead body of stature, as appeared to him, more than human; he took from the corpse a gold ring that was on the hand, but nothing else, and so reascended. (Plato: *Republic* 359d.)

After that, Gyges finds out that the ring can be used to make him invisible:

Now the shepherds met together, according to custom - - into their assembly he [Gyges] came having the ring on his finger, and as he was sitting among them he turn the collet of the ring to the inside of his hand, when instantly he became invisible to the rest of the company and they began to speak of him as if he were no longer present. (Plato: *Republic* 359d.)

In Tolkien's *legendarium*, in *The Hobbit*, the main protagonist Bilbo Baggins gets lost in the mountains after an attack by the evil orcs, and finds The Great Ring in a cave in the mountains, where the One Ring's previous holder, Gollum, has lost it. In *The Lord of the Rings,* Tolkien briefly describes the situation:

The party was assailed by Orcs in a high pass of the Misty Mountains as they went towards Wilderland; and so it happened that Bilbo was lost for a while in the black orc-mines deep under the mountains, and there, as he groped in vain in the dark, he put his hand on a ring, lying on the floor of a tunnel. He put it in his pocket - - .

Trying to find his way out, Bilbo went on down to the roots of the mountains, until he found he could go no further. At the bottom of the tunnel lay a cold lake far from the light, and on an island of rock in the water lived Gollum - - . He possessed a secret treasure that had come to him long ages ago, when he still lived in the light: a ring of gold that made its wearer invisible - - . (Tolkien 1995: 11.)

After finding the One Ring, Bilbo uses it chiefly for helping his friends (Tolkien 1995: 13), as does also Bilbo's heir Frodo, who is the protagonist in *The Lord of the Rings* and the next holder of The Great Ring. There is a difference between Plato's story and Tolkien's *legendarium*, mainly because the Hobbits are not so easily corrupted by the ring. Of course, it has to be stressed that in the long run also the Hobbits become corrupted. A few times in *The Lord of the Rings* Frodo is unable to withstand the power of the Ring. Most importantly, Frodo fails to destroy the Ring in *The Return of the King*. Frodo's words in the scene itself are philosophically (and theologically) very interesting, because Frodo *chooses not to*

178

do his task: "I do not choose now to do what I came to do. I will not do this deed." (Tolkien 1995: 924.)

The other magical rings in the *legendarium* also mingle with invisibility and morality. For example, the Nine Rings that were also made by Sauron, and were given to nine powerful human men. In one of the revealing passages in *The Silmarillion*, Tolkien writes that the Nazgûl "could walk, it they would, unseen by all eyes in this world beneath the sun, and they could see things in worlds invisible to mortal men"; and "they became forever invisible save to him that wore the Ruling Ring, and they entered into the realm of shadows". (Tolkien 1999: 346.)

This quotation is revealing for two different reasons. First, it reveals that visibility and invisibility are mortal things: the Nazgûl became invisible to "mortal eyes". The Nazgûl "entered into the realm of shadows", which in my point of view is a realm between the real physical world of Tolkien's *legendarium*, and the upper spiritual level. As declared earlier, those of the immortal elven race, which have lived in the undying lands of the west,[162] live at the same time on both levels.

Secondly, as the chosen passage declares, that mortal men all get corrupted, sooner or later, by the rings, "according to their native strength and the good or evil of their wills in the beginning". This is also the point Plato made in *Republic*:

> And this [the story of Gyges] we may truly affirm to be a great proof that a man is just, not willingly or because he thinks that justice is any good to him individually, but of necessity; for wherever anyone thinks that he can safely be unjust, there he is unjust. For all men believe in their hearts that injustice is far more profitable to the individual than justice, and he who argues as I have been supposing will say that they are right. If you could imagine anyone obtaining this power of becoming invisible, and never doing any wrong or touching what was another's, he would be thought by the lookers-on to be an unhappy man and a fool, although they would praise him to one another's faces, and keep up appearances with one another from a fear that they too might suffer injustice. (Plato: *Republic* 360c–d.)

---

[162] This land, known in the *legendarium* as Aman or Valinor, is a land in the far west, where the angelic beings Valar (the powers of the world) and the rest of the elves, live. The land is also forbidden for mortals.

For the Elves, the invisibility is a quite different thing. Tolkien writes that, as immortal beings, the Elves will later become altogether invisible if they want to (Tolkien 2002e: 212).

The Rings of Power have the power to change their mortal users invisible, and later on, they will become "shadows". They will become "nothing". As Tom Shippey discusses, when he asks, what "things were not that were?" The answer is shadows. (Shippey 2007: 16.). Shadows are not really anything; they are only a reflection of something else. Maybe, in the case of the Nazgûl, they are a reflection of the former heroes that have become wraiths.

In Plato's *Republic*, in his famous Simile (or analogy) of the Cave, Plato describes a scenario in which that, which people take to be real, could in fact be an illusion. In the analogue, the people (prisoners) in the cave see only shadows of men and objects, not knowing that they are only shadows. In the dialogue, Plato asks that "do you think they have seen anything of themselves, and of one another, except the shadows?" (*Republic* 515b). The figures of sight (shadows), and the figures of sound (echoes), in the analogue, are only the lowest form of perception – the perception of shadows, as Plato discusses (*Republic* 511e). Plato's Simile of the Cave has been taken in the Christian Platonic theology as a part of the Christian doctrine of the "invisibility" of God.

For Tolkien's *legendarium*, the invisibility is, for mortals, moving from the physical world into the world of shadows. And the world of shadows is, as we have seen, a world of undead and un-life.

The obvious intertextual field of reference for Tolkien's ring myth is the Platonic myth of the Ring of Gyges from the *Republic*, but there are many other intertextual references to the ring-motifs. A magical ring, as a referent, has external references to many other myths of magical rings in the literary history. Mythical and magical rings have often been important artefacts in mythic and fantastic literature.[163]

The myth of Gyges was not solely Plato's, since it was a typical ancient myth. The legend of Gyges as the founder of the Mermnad dynasty of Lydian kings could be found in the stories of Herodotus, Nicolaus Damascus, Plutarch, as well as in Plato's *Republic* and Cicero's *De Officiis*. In Cicero's version, there is also a magical ring of invisibility. (Oksala 1983: 255–256.)

---

[163] For example, for Finnish readers, the magical (cursed) "Ring of the King" of Zachris Topelius' historical epic *Fältkärns berättelser* (or, *Välskärin kertomuksia* in Finnish, 1853–67) is a very interesting parallel story. The cursed ring is a major motif in Topelius' epic. In the text, like in *The Lord of the Rings*, when the ring is destroyed, the curse is removed and the "forces of good" prevail.

The myth was popular in later the Romantic period as well, because it can be found in Hans Sach's poem "Die Nacket Königin aus Lydia"; Lafontaine's fable *Le roi Candaule et le maître en droit*; Théophile Gautier's short story *Le roi Candaule* (1844); Friedrich Hebbel's tragedy *Gyges und sein Ring* (1853–1854); and later, André Gide's drama *Le roi Candaule* (1901). (Oksala 1983: 255–256.)

In the Greek versions, there is an inscription in the Ring of Gyges that reads *εύτυχίανκρύπτω*, or, roughly translated, "I shall hide my happiness". In the Herodotus' version, this can be seen in Gyges' words. In the story, Gyges is the bodyguard of king Candaules, who believes his wife to be the most beautiful woman on Earth. The king insists on showing Gyges his wife naked in order to show her beauty. The queen, who sees Gyges staring at him, gives Gyges the choice of either murdering her husband and making himself the king, or being put to death himself. In the end, Gyges murders Candaules, and becomes the king. At the beginning, Gyges had said the words to Candaules that echoes the later inscriptions in the Ring of Gyges: "Let each look on his own." (Herodotus 1952: 3.)

In *The Lord of the Rings,* there is also an inscription on the One Ring, the Ruling Ring. The text, written in an ancient mode of Elvish scripture but in the language of Mordor, is two lines taken from a known Elven poem, which in Common Tongue (here: English) goes: "One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them" (Tolkien 1995: 49). The One Ring in Tolkien's *legendarium* does not "hide", but rules, and binds.

Another ring myth from *The History* by Herodotus could also form an external referent to Tolkien's *legendarium* – although this intertextuality could be interpreted as a traditional referent. The story in question is the story of Polycrates and Amasis, and the ring of Polycrates.

According to Herodotus, Polycrates was a king of Samos, and a man of good fortune, and his successes were constant, and his prosperity endless. Amasis sends a letter and a counsel to Polycrates saying that Polycrates should be alerted. Amasis' warning says that noone will succeed in all his undertakings, and Polycrates should avoid forthcoming failure by throwing away his most valuable treasure, or possession:

> It is a pleasure to hear of friend and ally prospering, but thy exceeding prosperity does not cause me joy, for as much as I know that the gods are envious. My wish for myself and for those whom I love is to be now successful, and now to meet with a check; thus passing through life amid

alternate good and ill, rather with perpetual good fortune. For never yet did I hear tell of any one succeeding in all his undertakings, who did not meet with calamity at last, and come to utter ruin. Now, therefore, give ear to my words, and meet thy good luck in this way: bethink thee which of all thy treasures thou valuest most and canst least bear to part with; take it, whatsoever it be, and throw it away, so that it may be sure never to come any more into the sight of man. Then, if thy good fortune be not thenceforth chequered with ill, save thyself from harm by again doing as I have counseled. (Herodotus 1952: 98.)

Having read the letter, Polycrates thought that the advice was good, and he chose his signet-ring as his most valuable possession. The ring was said to be an emerald set in gold, and a workmanship of Theodore, son of Têlecles. Polycrates went to open sea, a long way from any island, and throws the ring into the deep of the ocean. Herodotus explains that five or six days afterwards a fisherman caught a fish that he held so large and beautiful that it deserved to be a present to the king. So the fisherman took the fish and gave it to king Polycrates. In the end of the story, the servants cut open the fish, and they found the signet of their master in its belly. (Herodotus 1952: 98.) What is the moral of the story? Is it that, what you throw away, you will find awaiting you in the end? That we cannot hide from our old ghosts? Or is it that you cannot throw away your good fortune?

Either way, Frye argues that the same theme dominates the story told by Wagner and retold by Tolkien: a story of "a stolen ring that has to be given back, a return that achieves its recreation by a creatively negative act, a cancelling out of a wrong action" (Frye 1976: 185).

Tolkien of course objected the claims that he "retells a story of Wagner". Shippey has pointed out that connections with Wagner are the most obvious example of dubious references. Tolkien hated that people connected *The Lord of the Rings* with *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (Shippey 2003: 343). Tolkien's famous line from the letter to Allen & Unwin Publishers in 1961 says that "[b]oth rings were round, and there the resemblance ceases" (Tolkien 1981: 306). Shippey discusses that despite this, there are many similarities in the stories as well: for example, the motifs of a riddle contest, the cleansing fire, and the broken weapon preserved for the heir (Shippey 2003: 343–344). But of course, sheer "retelling" of Wagner's story is not the case.

Furthermore, throwing the ring into the sea, as Polycrates in the story of Herodotus does, is discussed in *The Lord of the Rings*. In the Counsel of Elrond, Glorfindel suggests that the One Ring should be tossed to the sea:

> 'Then,' said Glorfindel, 'let us cast it into the deeps, and so make the lies of Saruman come true. For it is clear now that even at the Council his feet were already on a crooked path. He knew that Ring was not lost for ever, but wished us to think so; for he began to lust for it himself. Yet oft it lies truth is hidden: in the Sea it would be safe.' (Tolkien 1995: 259.)

As the myth of Polycrates tells us, this is not the right way to act. Wise enough, Gandalf answers to Glorfindel that things thrown away could be found:

> 'Not safe for ever,' said Gandalf. 'There are many things in the deep waters; and seas and lands may change**.** 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.' (Tolkien 1995: 259–260.)

The story of Polycrates is well-known, and has many independent and related stories in the history of literature, both older and more recent. In the tradition of historical novels, in *Three Musketeers* by Alexander Dumas, the characters refer to the story when planning on throwing a ring into the river Seine. There the ring acts as a holy and precious relic:

> I don't at all understand you, but I believe all you say to be true. Let us return to my ring, or rather to yours. You shall take half the sum that will be advanced upon it, or I will throw it into the Seine; and I doubt, as was the case of Polycrates, whether any fish be sufficiently complaisant to bring it back. (Dumas 1930: 310.)

In the literary history, magical rings are commonplace: from the folk tales of Aladdin, to mythological accounts of *Edda*, *Volsunga Saga,* or German *Nibelungenlied*. For example in *Nibelungenlied,* the supernatural powers of queen Brunhild (or Brynhilrd) come from a magical ring. The Queen loses her powers when Siegfried removes her ring, secretly and carefully: "Einen Ring von Goldezoger von ihrer Hand. So heimlich und behutsam, daβ sie nichts davon empfand" (*Das Nibelungenlied* 1959: 199). Even Gustave Flaubert, who Richard Maxwell sees less inclined to allow supernatural visitations, such as the Ring of

Gyges, "emphasizes the fetishistic charisma of his magical artifact" (Maxwell 2009: 205).

Intratextually, the One Ring is both an important magical artefact, and also an element that functions as a central story motif. *The Lord of the Rings* was written originally as a sequel to *The Hobbit*. It changed from a fairy-tale styled children's book into an epic fantasy because of the One Ring, and because of the connection that the One Ring creates to the earlier *legendarium* (that was partly later published as *The Silmarillion*). The One Ring functions as a mediator between the epic high-fantasy world of the "real" *legendarium*, and of more familiar *The Hobbit*-style characters of *The Lord of the Rings*, especially the Hobbits themselves. The One Ring transfers the story and the characters to a grimmer, more dangerous world of the earlier heroic *legendarium*.

The One Ring is the central plot element in *The Lord of the Rings*. In the intratextual references Tolkien describes how it was made by the evil lord Sauron in the Second Age of Middle-earth. It was designed to deceive the Elves, and to give Sauron dominion over the so-called "Free Peoples of Middle-earth".

In the story, The One Ring is ultimately evil, and it will corrupt its bearer, regardless of the bearer's intents. Sauron made it for a purpose of ruling. In the end of *The Lord of the Rings*, when the Ring is destroyed, Sauron's dominion ends. Therefore, the power of the One Ring is both Sauron's utmost Desire, but at the end also his Destruction.

The One Ring is a great example of the motifs of Fall and Struggle in the *legendarium*. Its ownership will eventually end in a catastrophic fall. And being a bearer of the One Ring, as Frodo is in *The Lord of the Rings*, is an ultimate struggle. As Frodo describes when he is trying to climb to the Mount of Doom, to destroy the One Ring:

'I can't manage it, Sam', he said. 'It is such a weight to carry, such as weight.'

Sam knew before he spoke, that it was vain, and that such words might do more harm than good, but in his pity he could not keep silent. 'Then let me carry it a bit for you, Master,' he said. 'You know I would, and gladly, as long as I have any strength.'

A wild light came into Frodo's eyes. 'Stand away! don't touch me!' he cried. 'It is mine, I say. Be off!' His hand strayed to his sword-hilt. But then quickly his voice changed. 'No, no, Sam,' he said sadly. 'But you must understand. It my burden, and no one else can bear it. It is too late now, Sam dear. You can't

help me in that way again. I am almost in its power now. I could not give it up, and if you tried to take it I should go mad.' (Tolkien 1995: 916.)

3.3.3 Familiarisation and Defamialiarisation of Myth[164]

Pippin sat with his knees drawn up and the ball between them. He bent low over it, looking like a greedy child stooping over a bowl of food, in a corner away from others. He drew his cloak aside and gazed at it. The air seemed still and tense about him. At first the globe was dark, black as jet, with the moonlight gleaming on its surface. Then there came a faint glow and stir in the heart of it, and it held his eyes, so that now he could not look away. Soon all the inside seemed on fire; the ball was spinning, or the light within were revolving. Suddenly the lights went out. He gave a gasp and struggled; but he remain bent, clasping the ball with both hands. Closer and closer he bent, and then became rigid; his lips moved soundlessly for a while. Then with a strangled cry he fell back and lay still.

The cry was piercing. The guards leapt down from the banks. All the camp was soon astir.

- -

'Peregrin Took!' he [Gandalf] said. 'Come back!'

The hobbit relaxed and fell back, clinging to the wizard's hand. 'Gandalf!' he cried. 'Gandalf! Forgive me!'

'Forgive you?' said the wizard. 'Tell me first what have you done!'

'I, I took the ball and looked at it,' stammered Pippin; 'and I saw things that frightened me. And I wanted to go away, but I couldn't. And then he came and questioned me; and he looked at me, and, and, that is all I remember.'

'That won't do,' said Gandalf sternly. 'What did you see, and what you say?'

- -

---

[164] Parts of my interpretation and analysis in this chapter have been earlier published in the articles Korpua, "Tutut vieraat hobitit" (2012), and Korpua, "'Mythopoeia J. R. R. Tolkiena i oswajanie mitu" (2013).

In a long hesitating voice Pippin began again, and slowly his words grew clearer and stronger. 'I saw a dark sky, and tall battlements,' he said. 'And tiny stars. It seemed far away and long ago, yet hard and clear. Then the stars went in and out – they were cut off by things with wings. Very big, I think, really; but in the glass they looked like bats wheeling round the tower. I thought there were nine of them. One began to fly straight towards me, getting bigger and bigger. It had a horrible – no, no! I can't say.

'I tried to get away, because I thought it would fly out; but when it had covered all the globe, it disappeared. Then *he* came. He did not speak so that I could hear words. He just looked, and I understood.

'"So you have come back? Why have you neglected to report for so long?"

'I did not answer. He said: "Who are you?" I still did not answer, but it hurt me horrible; and he pressed me, so I said: "A hobbit."

'Then suddenly he seemed to see me, and he laughed at me. It was cruel. It was like being stabbed with knives. I struggled. But he said: "Wait a moment! We shall meet again soon. Tell Saruman that this dainty is not for him. I will send for it at once. Do you understand? Say just that!" (Tolkien 1995: 578–579.)

In this quotation from *The Lord of the Rings,* Peregrin "Pippin" Took looks into a palantír, a Seeing Stone, a powerful magical artefact in the *legendarium*. In this defamiliarised scene Pippin sees the real "Lord of the Rings", Sauron, the arch-enemy of the "free people". This is also the only occasion in the epic when Sauron is seen as an active character in the storyline. Despite his unfamiliar (or even defamiliar) appearance to the Hobbit, he speaks (telepathically) in a modern language which we as readers can understand, although his speech is perhaps translated by Pippin's unconscious mind.

In this chapter, my main focus is on the familiarising element of the Hobbit characters in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. I discuss how Hobbits – as a literary element – function as mediators of myth for the 20th and 21st century audiences. In these scenes, in Kendal Walton's terminology, the reader has quasi emotions towards these characters and/or creatures.[165]

Literary texts use elements which create a sense of "familiarity" to the reader. In the case of Tolkien's texts, these elements could be interpreted as, for example,

---

[165] See Walton 1990: 244–246.

creating a coherent fictive world by overlapping realistic imagery of familiar flora and fauna or milieus and realistic narration; or, by Tolkien's use of linguistic skills, for example, the modern English language. This effect of realism is used in order to familiarise Tolkien's fantasy world to the reader.

However, theoretically familiarisation could be approached from the juxtaposition of defamiliarisation, or the unfamiliar. In Tolkien's texts, the defamiliarising effects are usually those elements weird or alien to both the protagonists and/or the reading audience, or, especially in the case of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, unfamiliar to the mediators, the Hobbits. In my point of view, the most interesting parts of Tolkien's *legendarium* are those that at first are unfamiliar for the reading audience, but are effectively familiarised in the text from the point of the view of the more familiar protagonists, such as the Hobbits.

Tolkien's *legendarium* is a thematic collection of fictional myths that are based on the pre-modern myths of the "western culture". Tolkien's texts could be seen as a crucial example of the 20th century transformation of pre-modern myths and contemporary literature, and Tolkien's *legendarium's* mythopoeia could be seen as a familiarisation of pre-modern myths. Tolkien's texts reflect myths and stories from many different periods of history; for example, ancient, medieval and renaissance literature, and familiarise these materials by the use of contemporary literary tools.

Tolkien as a 20th century writer romanticised his view of anti-anthropomorphic mythology, constructed for the contemporary audience; an audience that Tolkien saw foremost as English. It is possible to point out that Tolkien ranged his *legendarium* from the mimetically "lower" fairy-story of *The Hobbit* to the higher fantasy of *The Lord of the Rings*, and still higher to the cosmogonical and cosmological mythology of *The Silmarillion*, where myth and fictional "history" is vital. Tolkien writes that *The Silmarillion* "begin[s] with a cosmogonical myth: the *Music of the Ainur*", and moves into the "*History of Elves*", and that his "legendarium ends with a vision of the end of the world" (Tolkien 1981: 149). This "change of tone" is easily observed in Tolkien's *legendarium*, which – as I argued earlier – could be seen as functioning in different genres and modes.

Tolkien's mythopoeia uses different tools to integrate pre-modern myths and legends. An important familiarising effect is the usage of "modern" literary tools, such as the modern English language and choosing familiar protagonists in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. In *The Silmarillion*, where the protagonists are harder to find and the characters are defamiliar for the contemporary reader, the

book becomes unreadable, or harder to read, for most parts of the reading audience. Thus, the questions of familiarisation and defamiliarisation become relevant in understanding the popularity of the *legendarium.*

On the subject of familiarisation I focus on the race of Hobbits as a literary tool for Tolkien to familiarise his *legendarium's* pre-modern myth and romance for the contemporary reading audience. Tolkien's Middle-earth is a coherent and complex secondary creation, where encounters and conflicts between fictive ethnic groups and races are commonplace in the narrative. Tolkien populates Middle-earth with characters ranging from different human societies – with different languages and habits – to other humanoids and fantasy creatures; such as Elves, Dwarves, Orcs, or Hobbits.

My main point is that Hobbits at the same time work as a familiarising object for the readers, but they are "outsiders" to the surrounding milieu, Middle-earth outside the Shire: outside the idyllic home of the Hobbits.

Northrop Frye argues that most romances move in their narrative development from the idyllic to the higher mythic tone, and then back (Frye 1967: 43). Richard F. Hardin discusses the same when he claims that in romance, an effect of moral dualism is that romantic heroes and villains inhabit, respectively, a happy world above the muddle of every-day life and an exciting, dangerous, or "demonic night world" below it (Hardin 2000: 145).

That is also the case in Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, where Hobbit protagonists move from idyllic and homely (*familiar*) milieus of their homes to the surrounding, sinister world where they at times feel themselves as "outsiders". Narrative methods are the same even though *The Hobbit* is originally written as a children's novel and *The Lord of the Rings* could be described more likely as an epic romance.

Hobbit protagonists could be seen as an answer to the question of familiarisation in Tolkien's *legendarium*. In *The Hobbit* the main character Bilbo Baggins, a Hobbit, resembles a homely, early middle-age, middle-class Englishman living comfortably alone in his bachelor house in the idyllic, rural countryside of the Shire, which in close ways echoes the English countryside of the 18th or 19th century before the industrial revolution. In the story, Bilbo is forced out of his comfortable life onto a dangerous and adventurous quest with the wizard Gandalf and the dwarves to claim back the dwarves' treasure which an evil dragon, Smaug, has stolen.

In the story, after a variety of different kinds of tasks and quests, the Hobbit protagonist evolves in a fairy-story way from an incapable character into a hero:

Bilbo Baggins becomes the only one of the book's characters brave enough to even converse with the terrible dragon.

In the story, revealingly sub-titled "There and Back Again", in the end, Bilbo Baggins returns to his idyllic home as a changed and transformed character. The idyllic countryside of the Shire resembles England, but the other parts of the book's milieus have older and more mythical appearances. Danger lurks everywhere, and even if the book is written in a fairy-story mode, it has a kind of a medieval tone in the story-telling, especially in the latter part of the book.

The familiarisation of pre-modern myths, locations and milieus is even plainer in *The Lord of the Rings*. The book starts as a sequel to *The Hobbit*, but the writing tone changes early into a more adult and more epic style. The main protagonist in *The Lord of the Rings* is once again a Hobbit, Frodo Baggins, who starts a dangerous and difficult quest with his fellow Hobbits Sam Gamgee, Peregrin "Pippin" Took and Meriadoc "Merry" Brandybuck. As has been argued, the four Hobbits in the book represent Tolkien's contemporary Englishmen, simplified and caricatured.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, the more contemporary perspective of the Hobbits is put in contrast with – for example – the old-English, Anglo-Saxon, way of life of the Rohirrim; the mythical fairy-story livelihood of the Elves in the milieus of Rivendel and Lothlórien; and traditionally-orientated milieu of Gondor, resembling a kind of mixture of ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman cultures. These milieus are defamiliar to the Hobbit characters, and readers relate to the unfamiliar surroundings from the perspective of the Hobbit characters. Therefore, Tolkien's Secondary Creation, his "make-believe", is made "real" or quasi-realistic for the reader. Unfamiliar surroundings and milieus, and Tolkien's fantasy's horror elements of beasts, monsters and mythological creatures act as defamiliarisation for the contemporary reader, but the Hobbit characters act as familiarisators or "middlemen".

Tolkien's *The Hobbit* has on occasion been compared, quite surprisingly, to another 20th century novel from a different literary genre, Sinclair Lewis' *Babbit* (1922).[166] Understandably the relevance has been seen in the similarities of the titles (*Hobbit* and *Babbitt*), but also in the themes of the stories. Lewis' *Babbitt* is a satire of American culture, society and behaviour, criticising middle-class American life and individuals. Although the story is way different than *The*

---

[166] For example, in Mark Atherton's article "Hobbitry and Babbitry: Tolkien and the Origins of *The Hobbit*". See Atherton 2012.

Hobbit, there can be seen some similarities in the main characters. Both Tolkien's Bilbo Baggins and Lewis' George F. Babbitt undergo a drastic change of character when drawn out of the comfortable middle-class, idyllic life. Tolkien's Bilbo Baggins – as well as Babbitt – can be seen as representations of a modern middle-classed, comfort-seeking western man.

Tolkien himself, as a middle-age, middle-class, comfort-seeking Englishman compared himself to a Hobbit. In 1958, in a letter to Deborah Webster Tolkien writes:

> I am in fact a Hobbit (in all but size). I like gardens, trees and unmechanized farmlands, I smoke a pipe, and like good plain food (unrefrigerated), but detest French cooking; I like, and even dare to wear in these dull days, ornamental waistcoats. I am fond of mushrooms (out of a field); have a very simple sense of humour (which even my appreciative critics find tiresome); I go to bed late and get up late (when possible). I do not travel much. (Tolkien 1981: 288–289.)

This passage is of course revealing also in its anti-modernistic tone. *The Lord of the Rings* could be seen as an anti-modernistic and anti-industrialist book. In *The Lord of the Rings,* mechanical devices and modern inventions are declared evil, for example in the case of Saruman's inventions in *The Two Towers,* or again in *The Return of the King's* chapter "The Scouring of the Shire".

Joseph Pearce writes about the "hobbitness" and the Englishman behind the myth in his *Tolkien: Man and Myth*, and sees the Hobbits in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* as an imaginative incarnation and personification of "Englishness" (Pearce 1999: 153). According to Humphrey Carpenter, Tolkien once told an interviewer that, in his mind, the Hobbits represent English people, saying that "[h]obbits are just rustic English people, made small in size because it reflects the generally small reach of their imagination – not the small reach of their courage or latent power" (Carpenter 1977: 176).

And the milieu of the Shire, where the Hobbits in the books live, resemble England. In 1956, Tolkien wrote to his publisher Rayner Unwin that the Shire is based on idyllic rural English countryside:

> The Shire is based on rural England and not any other country in the world - - The toponomy of The Shire - - is a "parody" of that of rural England, in much the same sense as are its inhabitants: they go together and are meant to. After all the book is English, and by an Englishman. (Tolkien 1981: 250.)

Hobbits in *The Lord of the Rings*, and "a Hobbit" Bilbo Baggins in *The Hobbit*, could be seen as mediators from the "world of myths" towards Tolkien's contemporary 20th century audience. In a way, Tolkien's mythopoetic vision in the books aims to familiarise the *legendarium's* epic world to the reading audience, but at the same time, the Hobbit protagonists are unfamiliar (*defamiliar*) to the other characters in the *legendarium*, and the surrounding Middle-earth is usually defamiliar to the Hobbits.

This can be seen many times in the narrative. For example in *The Lord of the Rings*, when the Hobbits feel themselves unfamiliar in milieus such as Bree, Lórien, Minas Tirith, Rohan, or Mordor; or in the adventurous, nearly perilous trips such as the way from Bree to Rivendell, or, from Rivendell to Lórien, and later to Minas Tirith. Even in the end of *The Lord of the Rings,* the once familiar Shire has become defamiliar to the protagonists. And in the end, Frodo Baggins – a changed and transformed character – is no longer a familiar fellow Hobbit, but defamiliar to the other Hobbits in the Shire. Frodo alienates from his people, and in the end – because of his "traumas" – leaves Middle-earth. In the end, Frodo becomes a mythical character, a hero – quite like "a King Arthur of Hobbits", leaving for his Avalon.

However, one of the most interesting characters dealing closely with familiar and defamiliar elements is of course Gollum, who functions by both familiarising and defamiliarising effects. In *The Hobbit*, in the first encounter with the Gollum in the chapter "Riddles in the Dark", Gollum functions as a defamiliar, frightening opposition to the scared Bilbo Baggins. It is a "foe" in the dark. Later, in both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings,* Gollum could be seen as both a comical and pitiful, but also as a sad and nostalgic character. Gollum is a sorrowful example of the power and addictiveness of the One Ring. Gollum, once a character pretty similar to Hobbits, is now an abomination. It is both familiar to the Hobbit characters: for example in its usage of language, such as riddles; but also defamiliar, since he it is like their corrupted "evil twin".

For the case of Hobbits as defamiliar (or even alien) characters in Middle-earth, quite interesting is the scene in *The Lord of the Rings* where an Ent, Treebeard, first encounters two Hobbits. Treebeard finds it impossible to place Hobbits in his long list of the humanoids and animals, saying that "you do not seem to fit in anywhere!" (Tolkien 1995:453.) In response, Merry then states that "we always seem to have got left out of the old lists, and the old stories" (Tolkien 1995: 454). They might have been left out of "the old stories", but in Tolkien's *legendarium* this "alienness" of Hobbits is an important tool of familiarisation.

I dare to suggest that without the "middle-men" of Hobbits, without those familiarising characters to the contemporary reading audience, J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* would not have become the cornerstone of 20th century fantasy, or any fiction, and Tolkien would not have become the "godfather of fantasy literature" that he is today.

4   Conclusions

This dissertation discussed constructive mythopoetics in J. R. R. Tolkien's *legendarium*; the logics and elements on which Tolkien's texts and his fantasy world is constructed. The research aims to create a constructive, an idea historical, and intertextual reading of Tolkien's fiction and to show that it is possible to perceive a clear constructive code to Tolkien's *legendarium*.

My statement is that Tolkien's mythopoetic fiction is constructed to be coherent on the levels of languages, myths, and inter- and intratextual backgrounds. This coherent code can be found throughout the various texts and fragments of Tolkien's fiction. Even when writing in many different tones and modes, Tolkien is the sub-creator of his own fantastic world: he is rewriting or remodeling chosen intertextual references, he is creating new intratextual myths, and he is functioning as a coherent world builder. As part of this sub-creating, Tolkien is "pretending" to be a translator of mythical pseudo-historian documents. This is done to interlink the referential fields to each other, but also to give his sub-creating credibility, narrative depth and a feeling of familiarity.

The main chapters of the dissertation followed the inner timeline of the *legendarium*, but also my individual research logics. Therefore, the text started from the creation of the fictive fantasy world *Eä* (or *Arda*), of which the Middle-earth is a part of. After that, I moved into the long fall and struggle, and discussed Tolkien's vision for the end of his fictive, created world.

In the second chapter, when discussing the creation, I focused on both the concept of creation in the intratextual level of Tolkien's *legendarium* and on Tolkien's aesthetics of creative work. In the end of the dissertation, in the third chapter, I turned my attention to the creative work of the reader. The second chapter itself concentrated on the creation in Tolkien's *legendarium*. Chapter 2.1 focused on the cosmogonical creation myth as itself and also in comparison to Plato's creation myth his dialogue *Timaeus*. In focus were the models of two levels of existence in Tolkien's *legendarium* and the chain of being in Tolkien's *legendarium*. Chapters 2.2 and 2.3 discussed more thoroughly Tolkien's mythopoetics in the textual level. In chapter 2.2, the main focus was on the levels of creative writing and literary aesthetics. In chapter 2.3, Tolkien's *legendarium*'s mythopoetic code was seen in a contextual reference to concepts of myth and genre, and as a tool to create a fictional mythology dedicated to Tolkien's home country, England.

In the third chapter, the focus moved from the creation myth and cosmology and reasoning behind this creation to the central motifs and modes of the *legendarium* itself. The chapter is named "The Fall and the Struggle", because fall and struggle reflect Tolkien's vision of the lives of his fictional characters in his melancholic fantasy world. This is especially evident in *The Silmarillion* and all those texts of the *legendarium* that function in the modes of myth, romance or high mimetics. The sub-chapters focused on the concepts of the "long defeat" (3.1), allegory (3.2.1) and on hero's mythical journey (3.2.2). The last chapter, 3.3, showed elements of Tolkien's constructive mythopoeia, focusing on the intertextual readings of the story of Númenor as an Atlantis myth (3.3.1), the ring myth in *The Lord of the Rings* (3.3.2) and familiarisation and defamiliarisation of these mythical materials to the reading audience (3.3.3) – although familiarising and defamiliarising elements could be seen functioning inside the story world of the *legendarium* as well; for example, in the case of the Hobbits travelling from their familiar and safe homeland to the dangerous and unfamiliar outside world.

My theoretical approach in this dissertation is influenced by both Northrop Frye's constructive theory of literature and by Benjamin Harshav's theory of constructive poetics. I discussed the creative methods of speculative historical epic and the dichotomies of beginning and end, good and evil, mortality and immortality, spiritual and physical, and visibility and invisibility, and how these elements are manifesting in Tolkien's mythopoetic vision. The structure of Tolkien's constructive mythopoetics is illuminated through the grand concepts of the Creation, the Existence, the Fall and the Struggle.

This dissertation is an attempt to read the constructive mythopoetic code of Tolkien's *legendarium*. Tolkien's texts have been influential, for example, as the lodestar of the fantasy literary genre, and, since the 1950s and 1960s, as a starting point of a major fantastic turn of the literary history. Tolkien's, of course, has been widely studied before this dissertation, and I do acknowledge the vastness of the field of Tolkien studies. However, as I stated in the Introduction, my dissertation addresses in a new constructive way the totality of Tolkien's mythopoetics. My research: 1) systematically creates a synthesis of earlier studies, 2) manifests new emphases on the ancient and medieval philosophical concepts of Christian Platonic mythopoetics and 20th-century myth-making, and 3) introduces (upon these bases) the code of Tolkien's *legendarium*. Therefore, the dissertation's purpose is to bring new and valuable arguments to Tolkien studies and to the research of literature and cultural studies.

From my point of view, after this enormous reading and writing work, I believe that I have perceived a code to Tolkien's *legendarium*. This code is in his mythopoetics: the constructive way of his (sub-)creating. Or, to put it more poetically: there is a vision, the realisation of the vision, and the promise of an apocalyptic thereafter that reflects both on the stories of the *legendarium* and on the creative work behind these stories. Tolkien's *legendarium* aims to work in many levels, and succeeds in this. Tolkien's mythopoetic system – the code – creates a coherent, understandable and credible fantasy world with its vivid history and mythical backgrounds, and an apocalyptic future. Through the concepts of the Creation and the Existence we, as readers, are given explanations of the cosmogony and cosmology of Tolkien's fictive world. Then, through the examples of the Fall (or falls), we are given explanations why the ideal world became corrupted and marred, and why the lives of the characters in Tolkien's fiction is ruled by continuing Struggle. But then again, according to this code, we are also given a glimpse or a hint of eucatastrophic ending and a promise of a better future for the whole fictive creation. Therefore, Tolkien's *legendarium's* mythopoetics and his whole fantastic work is ruled by aesthetic and philosophical (or theological) vision of creation and recreation.

As a final judgment of the dissertation, I should say that the logics of Tolkien's work could be defined, as I have done, but the whole amount of his fictive work is not as easily methodologically obtained. Therefore, my focus is on the essence of Tolkien's *legendarium*, not in single details of his creative work. The methods used to achieve this reading were from constructive mythopoetics and from the idea historical literary studies. As Frans Ilkka Mäyrä comments, the etymology of "method" is illuminating: "the Greek *methodos* (pursuit) consists of *meta* (with, after) and *hodos* (way, journey)", and in the end "knowledge cannot be found in explications: it is embodied in the road itself" (Mäyrä 1999: 295). This road into Tolkien's *legendarium* has been very interesting to travel, but as Tolkien himself writes, the road itself goes on forever – it is, in its way, eternal:

The Road goes ever on and on

Down from the door where it began.

Now far ahead the Road has gone,

And I must follow, if I can,

Pursuit it with eager feet,

Until it joins some larger way

Where many paths and errands meet.

And whither then? I cannot say. (Tolkien 1995: 35.)

This truly has been a pursuit, a journey, a road.

List of References

Abrams, M. H. 1973: *Natural Supernaturalism. Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Abrams, M. H. 1976: *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*. London: Oxford University Press.

Aers, David 1975: *Piers Plowman and Christian Allegory*. London: Edward Arnold.

Allen, Graham 2000: *Intertextuality: The New Critical Idiom*. London: Routledge.

Anderson, Douglas A. 2003: ""An industrious little devil": E. V. Gordon as friend and collaborator with Tolkien." In: *Tolkien the Medievalist*. Ed. Jane Chance. New York: Routledge, 15–25.

Ankenny, Rebecca 2006: "Poem as Sign in The Lord of the Rings". In: *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* Vol. 16, Issue 2, Summer 2005. Pocatello: Idaho State University, 86–95.

Aristotle 1968: *Poetics. A Translation and Commentary for Students of Literature*. Trans. Leon Golden. Eaglewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Inc.

Ashbaugh, Anne Freire 1988: *Plato's Theory of Explanation. A Study of the Cosmological Account in the Timaeus*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Atherton, Mark 2012: *There and Back Again: J. R. R. Tolkien and the Origins of The Hobbit*. London: I. B. Tauris.

Baltasar, Michaela 2004: "The Rediscovery of Myth". In: *Tolkien and the Invention of Myth*. Ed. Jane Chance. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 19–34.

Barfield, Owen 1976: *Poetic Diction. A study in meaning*. 3rd ed. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

Blake, William 2010: "Laocoön".
http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Laocoon_%8Blake%29(29th of March, 2015).

Bloom, Harold 1973: *The Anxiety of Influence: a Theory of Poetry*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bloom, Harold 1975: *A Map of Misreading*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bloom, Harold 1988: *Poetics of Influence*. Ed. John Hollander. New Haven: Henry R. Schwab.

Bloom, Harold 2000: "Introduction". In: *Modern Critical Views: J. R. R. Tolkien*. Ed. Harold Bloom. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 1–2.

Brisson, Luc 2004: *How Philosophers Saved the Myths: Allegorical Interpretations and Classical Mythology*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Brooke-Rose, Christine 1981: *A Rhetoric of the Unreal: Studies in Narrative and Structure, Especially of the Fantastic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Campbell, Joseph 1973: *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*. 2nd edition. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Carey, John 2000: "Introduction". In: *The Faber Book of Utopias*. Ed. John Carey. London: Faber and Faber.

Carpenter, Humphrey 1977: *J. R. R. Tolkien. A Biography*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Carpenter, Humphrey 1978: *The Inklings. C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, Charles Williams, and their friends*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Carpenter, Humphrey 1981: "Notes". In: Tolkien, J. R. R.: *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien*. Ed. Humphrey Carpenter. London: George Allen & Unwin (Publishers) Ltd.

Carter, Lin 1969: *Tolkien: A Look Behind The Lord of the Rings*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Carter, Lin 1973: *Imaginary Worlds – the Art of Fantasy*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Cassirer, Ernst 1972: *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*. Trans. Mario Domandi. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Chance, Jane 2003: "Introduction". In: *Tolkien the Medievalist*. Ed. Jane Chance. New York: Routledge.

Chance, Jane 2004: *Tolkien and the Invention of Myth*. Ed. Jane Chance. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky.

Chance, Jane & Siewers, Alfred K. 2005: "Introduction: Tolkien's Modern Medievalism". In: *Tolkien's Modern Middle Ages*. Ed. Jane Chance & Alfred K. Siewers. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1–13.

Chandler, Daniel 2004: *Semiotics: The Basics*. London: Taylor & Francis Group.

Clayes, Gregory 2010a: "Preface". In: *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*. Ed. Gregory Clayes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, xi–xiii.

Clayes, Gregory 2010b: "The origins of dystopia: Wells, Huxley and Orwell". In: *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*. Ed. Gregory Clayes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 107–134.

Clifford, Gay 1974: *The Transformations of Allegory*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Clute, John 1979: "Tolkien, J(ohn) R(onald) R(euel)". In: *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*. Ed. Peter Nicholls. London: Granada, 608–609.

Cole, G. D. H 1948: "Introduction". In: William Morris: *Selected Writings. Centenary Edition. Stories in Prose. Stories in Verse. Shorter Poems. Lectures and Essays*. Ed. G. D. H. Cole. New York: Random House.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor 1965 (1817): *Biographia Literaria. Or biographical sketches of my literary life and opinions*. Ed. George Watson. London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd.

Cotrupi, Caterina Nella 2000: *Northrop Frye and the Poetics of Process*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Coulter, James A. 1976: *The Literary Microcosmos. Theories of Interpretation of the Later Neoplatonism*. New York: Leiden E. J. Brill.

Denham, Robert D. 1979: *Northrop Frye and Critical Method*. https://macblog.mcmaster.ca/fryeblog/critical-method/preface.html (16thof April, 2014).

Dillon, John. 1990a: "The Magical Power of Names in Origen and Later Platonism". In: *The Golden Chain. Studies in the Development of Platonism and Christianity*. Aldershot: Variorum.

Dillon, John 1990b: "Plotinus and the Transcendental Imagination". In: *The Golden Chain. Studies in the Development of Platonism and Christianity*. Aldershot: Variorum.

Doctorow, Cory 2003: "Miéville on Tolkien". http://boingboing.net/2003/11/02/mieville-on-tolkien.html (6th of August, 2013).

Doležel, Lubomír 1998: *Heterocosmica. Fiction and Possible Worlds*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press.

Drout, Michael; Wynne, Hilary & Higgins, Melissa 2000: "Scholarly Studies of J. R. R. Tolkien and His Works (in English)". In: *Envoi* vol. 9, no. 2 (Fall 2000). Wilmington: Envoi Publications, 135–165.

Dumas, Alexander 1930 (1844): *Three Musketeers Volume II*. New York: J. H. Sears & Company, Inc.

Eco, Umberto 1985: *Reflections on the name of the Rose*. Trans. William Weaver. London: Secker & Warburg.

Eco, Umberto 1986: *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*. Trans. Hugh Bredin. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Eco, Umberto 1995: *The Role of the Reader. Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Eden, Bradford Lee 2003: "The "music of the spheres". Relationships between Tolkien's The Silmarillion and medieval cosmological and religious theory". In: *Tolkien the Medievalist*. Ed. Jane Chance. New York: Routledge, 183–193.

Esty, Jed 2004: *A Shrinking Island. Modernism and National Culture in England*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press: Princeton.

Evans, Jonathan 2003: "The anthropology of Arda. Creation, theology, and the race of Men". In: *Tolkien the Medievalist*. Ed. Jane Chance. New York: Routledge, 194–224.

Finnish Literary Society: "The Publification of the Kalevala". http://www.finlit.fi/kalevala/index.php?m=154&s=159&l=2. (5th of September, 2013).

Fisher, Jason 2008: "The Imaginative and the Imaginary: Northrop Frye and Tolkien" http://lingwe.blogspot.fi/2008/12/imaginative- and-imaginary-northrop-frye.html. (10th of July, 2013).

Flieger, Verlyn 1997: *A Question of Time. J. R. R. Tolkien´s Road to Faërie*. Kent: The Kent State University Press.

Flieger, Verlyn 2002: *Splintered Light. Logos and Language in Tolkien's World*. Rev. ed. Kent: The Kent State University Press.

Flieger, Verlyn 2003a: ""There would always be a fairy-tale": J. R. R. Tolkien and folklore controversy". In: *Tolkien the Medievalist*. Ed. Jane Chance. New York: Routledge, 26–35.

Flieger, Verlyn 2003b: "Tolkien's Wild Men. From medieval to modern". In: *Tolkien the Medievalist*. Ed. Jane Chance. New York: Routledge, 95–105.

Flieger, Verlyn 2005a: *Interrupted Music. The Making of Tolkien's Mythology*. Kent: The Kent State University Press.

Flieger, Verlyn 2005b: "A Postmodernist Medievalist?". In: *Tolkien's Modern Middle Ages*. Ed. Jane Chance & Alfred K. Siewers. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 17–28.

Flieger, Verlyn & Hostetter, Carl F. 2000: "Introduction". In: *Tolkien's Legendarium. Essays on The History of Middle-earth*. Ed. Verlyn Flieger& Carl F. Hostetter. Westport: Greenwood Press, xi–xiv.

Fokkema, Douwe W. 1985: "The Concept of Code in the Literature Study". *Poetics Today*, Vol 6., No 4., 1985. Durham: Duke University Press. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1771958. (6th of November, 2014).

Frenzel, Elisabeth 1988: *Stoffe der Weltliteratur. Ein Lexikon Dichtungsgeschichtlicher Längsschnitte*. Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag.

Freud, Sigmund 1989a: "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming". In: *Art and Literature*. Ed. Albert Dickson. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 129–142.

Freud, Sigmund 1989b: "The Uncanny". In: Art and Literature. Ed. Albert Dickson. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 335–376.

Frost, Graham Nichol 2007: "Decoding the Code". http://canlit.ca/reviews/decoding_the_code. (6th of November, 2014).

Frye, Northrop 1951: "The Archetypes of Literature". In: *The Kenyon Review*, Winter 1951, Vol. XIII, No. 1. http://www.kenyonreview.org/kr-online-issue/kenyon-review-credos/ selections/northrop-frye-656342 (27th of March, 2015).

Frye, Northrop 1967/1957: *Anatomy of Criticism. Four Essays by Northrop Frye*. New York: Atheneum.

Frye, Northrop 1976: *The Secular Scripture. A Study of the Structure of Romance*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Frye, Northrop 1990: *Myth and Metaphor. Selected Essays 1974-1988*. Ed. Robert D. Denham. Charlottesville & London: University Press of Virginia.

Frye, Northrop 2006: *The Great Code. The Bible and Literature. Collected Works of Northrop Frye*. Volume 19. Ed. Alvin A. Lee. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Frye, Northrop 2007: *Northrop Frye's Notebooks for Anatomy of Criticism. Collected Works of Northrop Frye*. Volume 23. Ed. Alvin A. Lee. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Gamble, Nikki & Yates, Sally 2008: *Exploring Children's Literature*. London: Sage.

Gasque, Thomas J. 2000: "Tolkien: The Monsters and the Critters." In: *J. R. R. Tolkien. Modern Critical Views*. Ed. Harold Bloom. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 3–10.

Genette, Gérard 1980 (1972): *Narrative Discourse*. Trans. Jane E. Lewin. Oxford: Basil Blackwell: Oxford.

Genette, Gérard 1992 (1979): *The Architext. An Introduction*. Trans. Jane E. Lewin. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Genette, Gérard 1993 (1991): *Fiction & Diction*. Trans. Catherine Porter. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Geppert, Hals Vilmar 1976: *Der "andere" historiche Roman. Theorie und Strukturen einer diskontinuierlichen Gattung*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.

Godard, Barbara 1993: "Intertextuality". In: *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory. Approaches, Scholars, Terms*. Ed. Irena R. Makaryk. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 568–571.

Goodman, Nelson 1976 (1968): *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*. Hackett Publishing Company: Indianapolis.

Goodman, Nelson 1978: *Ways of Worldmaking*. Hackett Publishing Company: Indianapolis.

Hardin Richard F. 2000: *Love in a Green Shade. Idyllic Romances Ancient to Modern*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Harshav, Benjamin 2007: *Explorations in Poetics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Helms, Randel 1974: *Tolkien's World*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Heninger, Jr., S. K. 1974: *Touches of Sweet Harmony. Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics*. San Marino: Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery.

Herodotus 1952: *"The History of Herodotus". Great Books of the Western World. 6. Herodotus, Thucydides*. Ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins. Trans. George Rawlinson. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannia, Inc..

Holmes, John R. 2005: "Tolkien, Dustsceawung, and the Gnomic Tense: Is Timelessness Medieval or Victorian?" In: *Tolkien's Modern Middle Age*s. Ed. Jane Chance & Alfred K. Siewers. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 43–58.

Houghton, John William 2003: "Augustine in the cottage of lost play. The Ainulindalë as asterisk cosmogony". In: *Tolkien the Medievalist*. Ed. Jane Chance. New York: Routledge, 171–182.

Hunter, John 2005: "The Reanimation of Antiquity and the Resistance to History: Macpherson-Scott-Tolkien". In: *Tolkien's Modern Middle Ages*. Ed. Jane Chance & Alfred K. Siewers. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 61–75.

Hutcheon, Linda 1988: *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. New York: Routledge.

Isaacs, Neil D. 2000: "On the Need Writing Tolkien Criticism". In: *J. R. R. Tolkien. Modern Critical Views*. Ed. Harold Bloom. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 113–118.

Jackson, Rosemary 1981: *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*. London: Methuen.

Johnson, Samuel 2005 (1775): *A Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland*. The Project Gutenberg eBook. Transcribed from the 1775 edition with the corrections noted in the 1785 errata by David Prince. www.gutenberg.org/files/2064/2064-h/2064-h.htm (18th of March, 2015).

Jowett, B. 1964: "Introduction". In: *The Dialogues of Plato. Volume III. Cratylus, Phaedrus, Theaetetus, Sophist, Statesman, Philebus, Timaeus, Critias*. Trans. B. Jowett. 4th edition. London: Oxford University Press.

J. R. R. Tolkien Encyclopedia. Scholarship and Critical Assessment 2007. Ed. Michael D. C. Drout. New York: Routledge.

Jusdanis, Gregory 1991: *Belated Modernity and Aesthetic Culture: Inventing National Literature.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Kalevala: or Poems of the Kalevala District 1975. Ed. Elias Lönnrot. Trans. Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Kalevala 1992. Juva: WSOY.

Kocher, Paul 1973: *Master of Middle-earth. The Achievement of J.   R.   R.   Tolkien*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Kocher, Paul H. 2000: "Cosmic Order". In: *J. R. R. Tolkien. Modern Critical Views*. Ed. Harold Bloom. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 11–26.

Korpua, Jyrki 2005: *Kristillisplatonisia ja muita mytologisia elementtejä J. R. R. Tolkienin teoksessa Silmarillion*. MA thesis. Oulu: Oulun yliopistopaino.

Korpua, Jyrki 2012: "Tutut vieraat hobitit". In: *Portti* 4/2012. Tampere: Tampereen Science Fiction seura ry, 84–88.

Korpua, Jyrki 2013: "Mythopoeia J. R. R. Tolkiena i oswajaniemitu". In: *Aiglos* 1/2013. Katowize: Slaski Klub Fantast, 73–82.

Korpua, Jyrki 2014: "Good and Evil in J. R. R. Tolkien's Legendarium: Concerning Dichotomy between Visible and Invisible". *Fafnir – Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research*, Volume 1, March 2014. http://journal.finfar.org/articles/korpua. (19th of March, 2014).

Kumar, Krishan 1987: *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*. New York: Basil Blackwell Ltd.

Laing, Malcolm 1974: "Preface". In: *The Poems of Ossian & c. Containing the Poetical Works of James Macpherson, Esq*. Ed. Malcolm Laing. New York: AMS Press Inc..

Landa, Ishay 2003: "Slaves of the Ring: Tolkien's Political Unconscious". In: *Historical Materialism*, Vol. 10, No. 4, January 2003. London: Ebsco Publishing, 113–134.

Lazo, Andrew 2003: "A Kind of mid-wife: J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis – sharing influence". In: *Tolkien the Medievalist*. Ed. Jane Chance. New York: Routledge, 36–49.

Lewis, C. S. 1964: *The Discarded Image. An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lewis, C. S. 1967 (1936): *The Allegory of Love. A Study in Medieval Tradition*. London: Oxford University Press.

Lewis, C. S. 1974 (1956): *The Last Battle: a Story for Children*. Harmondsworth: Puffin Books.

Lewis, Sinclair 1992: *Main Street & Babbitt*. New York: Library of America.

The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King 2003. Dir. Peter Jackson. New Line Cinema.

Lovejoy, Arthur O. 1965: *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea*. New York: Harper & Row.

Lukács, Georg 1962: *The Historical Novel*. New York: Penguin Books, 1962.

Macpherson, James 1974: *The Poems of Ossian & c. Containing the Poetical   Works   of James Macpherson, Esq*. Ed. Malcolm Laing, Esq. New York: AMS Press Inc.

Maher, Michael W. 2003: ""A land without stain": Medieval images of Mary and their use in the characterization of Galadriel". In: *Tolkien the Medievalist*. Ed. Jane Chance. New York: Routledge, 225–236.

Manuel, Frank E. & Manuel, Fritzie P. 1979: *Utopian Thought in the Western World*. Oxford: Basill Blackwell.

Mathews, Richard 2002: *Fantasy. The Liberation of Imagination*. New York: Routledge.

Maxwell, Richard 2009: *The Historical Novel in Europe, 1650-1950*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mäyrä, Frans Ilkka 1999: *Demonic Texts and Textual Demons. The Demonic Tradition, the Self, and Popular Fiction*. Tampere: Tampere University Press.

Mazzotta, Giuseppe 2001: *Cosmopoiesis. The Renaissance Experiment*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

McGrath, Alister E. 2011: *Christian Theology. An Introduction*. 5th edition. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

McHale, Brian 1987: *Postmodernist Fiction*. New York: Methuen.

McHale, Brian 1992: *Constructing Postmodernism*. London: Routledge.

Melberg, Arne 1995: *Theories of Mimesis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mendlesohn, Farah 2008: *Rhetorics of Fantasy*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

Miéville, China 2009: "There and Back Again: Five Reasons Why Tolkien Rocks". Guest blog in Omnivocarious-site, June 15 2009.http://www.omnivoracious.com/2009/06/there-and-back- again-five-reasons-tolkien-rocks.html (21st of January, 2013).

Možejko, Edward 1993: "Constructivism". In: *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory. Approaches, Scholars, Terms*. Ed. Irena R. Makaryk. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 18–20.

Nagy, Gergely 2003: "The great chain of reading. (Inter-)textual relations and the technique of mythopoesis in the Túrin story". In: *Tolkien the Medievalist*. Ed. Jane Chance. New York: Routledge, 239–258.

Nagy, Gergely 2004: "Saving the Myths: The Re-creation of Mythology in Plato and Tolkien". In: *Tolkien and the Invention of Myth*. Ed. Jane Chance. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 81–100.

Nagy, Gergely 2005: "The Medievalist('s) Fiction: Textuality and Historicity as Aspects of Tolkien's Medievalist Cultural Theory in a Postmodernist Context". In: *Tolkien's Modern Middle Ages*. Ed. Jane Chance & Alfred K. Siewers. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 29–41.

Das Nibelungenlied 1959. Ed. Helmut de Boor. Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlaugsbuchhandlung.

Nitzsche, Jane Chance 1979: *Tolkien's Art ′A Mythology for England′*. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd.

Noel, Ruth S. 1977: *The Mythology of Middle-earth*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Oksala, Teivas 1983: *Eino Leinon tie Paltamosta Roomaan*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.

O'Neill, Timothy R. 2000: "The Individuated Hobbit". In: J. *R. R. Tolkien. Modern Critical Views*. Ed. Harold Bloom. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 83–92.

The Oxford Companion to English Literature 2000. Ed. Margaret Drabble. 6th edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Paskow, Alan 2004: *The Paradoxes of Art: A Phenomenological Investigation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pearce, Joseph 1999: *Tolkien: Man and Myth*. London: HarperCollinsPublishers.

Plato 1964a: *The Dialogues of Plato. Volume II. Republic, Gorgias, Parmenides*. Trans. B. Jowett. Fourth Edition. London: Oxford University Press.

Plato 1964b: *The Dialogues of Plato. Volume III. Cratylus, Phaedrus, Theaetetus, Sophist, Statesman, Philebus, Timaeus, Critias*. Trans. B. Jowett. Fourth Edition. London: Oxford University Press.

Plato 2007: *Ion, or, On the Illiad*. Ed. Albert Rijksbaron. Boston: Brill.

Prickett, Stephen 1979: *Victorian Fantasy*. Hassocks: The Harvester Press, 1979.

Propp, Vladimir 1968: *Morphology of the Folk Tale*. Trans. Laurence Scott. Austin: The American Folklore Society and Indiana University.

Russell, Ford 2000 (1998): *Northrop Frye on Myth*. New York: Routledge.

Ruthven, K. K. 1976: *Myth*. London: Methuen & Co Ltd.

Rutledge, Fleming 2004: *The Battle for Middle-Earth. Tolkien's Divine Design in The Lord of the Rings*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Ryan, Marie-Laure 1991: *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Ryan, Marie-Laure 2005: "Possible-worlds theory". In: *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* 2005. Ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn & Marie-Laure Ryan. London: Routledge, 446–450.

Schmidt, Bryan Thomas 2012: "15 Science Fiction and Fantasy Thrillers Worth Your Time". http://www.sfsignal.com/archives/2012/06/15-science-fiction-and-fantasy-thrillers-worth-your-time (9th of September, 2013).

Scholes, Robert & Kellogg, Robert 1966: *The Nature of Narrative*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Schulze, Earl J. 1966: *Shelley's Theory of Poetry. A Reappraisal*. The Hague: Mouton & Co., Printers.

Scoville, Chester N. 2005: "Pastoralia and Perfectability in William Morris and J. R. R. Tolkien". In: *Tolkien's Modern Middle Ages*. Ed. Jane Chance & Alfred K. Siewers. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 93–103.

Shippey, Tom 2001: *J. R. R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*. London: HarperCollinsPublishers.

Shippey, Tom 2003: *The Road to Middle-earth. How J. R. R. Tolkien created a New Mythology*. Revised and Expanded Edition. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Shippey, Tom 2007: *Roots and Branches. Selected Papers on Tolkien by Tom Shippey*. Zollikofen: Walking Tree Publishers.

Sidney, Sir Philip 1968: *The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney. Volume III. The Defence of Poesie, Political Discourses, Correspondence, Translation*. Ed. Albert Feuillerat. London: Cambridge University Press.

Sly, Debbie 2000: "Weaving Nets of Gloom: "Darkness Profound" in Tolkien and Milton". In: *J. R. R. Tolkien and His Literary Resonances*. Views of Middle-earth. Ed. George Clark & Daniel Timmons. Westport: Greenwood Press, 109–120.

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/goodman-aesthetics (4th of July, 2015)

Tambling, Jeremy 2010: *Allegory*. New York: Routledge.

Thompson, Raymond H. 1982: "Modern Fantasy and Medieval Romance: A Comparative Study". In: *The Aesthetics of Fantasy Literature and Art*. Ed. Roger C. Schlobin. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press &The Harvester Press, 211–225.

Tigerstedt, E. N. 1969: *Plato's Idea of Poetical Inspiration. Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum*. Societas Scientarum Fennica Vol. 44 Nr. 2. 1969. Helsinki: Suomen Tiedeseura.

Timmons, Daniel 2000: "Introduction". In: *J. R. R. Tolkien and His Literary Resonances. Views of Middle-earth*. Ed. George Clark &   Daniel   Timmons.   Westport: Greenwood Press.

Todorov, Tzvetan 1975: *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary   Genre*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Tolkien, J. R. R. 1967: *The Road Goes Ever On*. London: George   Allen   &   Unwin (Publishers) Ltd.

Tolkien, J. R. R. 1975 (1951): *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again*. New edition. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

Tolkien, J. R. R. 1981: *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien*. Ed. Humphrey Carpenter. London: George Allen & Unwin (Publishers) Ltd.

Tolkien, J. R. R. 1983: *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Tolkien, J. R. R. 1988 (1964): *Tree and Leaf*. London: HarperCollinsPublishers.

Tolkien, J. R. R. 1992 (1980): *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Tolkien, J. R. R. 1994: *The Lays of Beleriand. The History of Middle-earth. Volume III. Ed. Christopher Tolkien*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Tolkien, J. R. R. 1995: *The Lord of the Rings*. 4th edition. London: HarperCollinsPublishers.

Tolkien, J. R. R. 1999 (1977): *The Silmarillion*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: HarperCollinsPublishers.

Tolkien, J. R. R. 2002a: *The Book of Lost Tales. Part I. The History of   Middle-earth. Volume 1*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: HarperCollinsPublishers.

Tolkien, J. R. R. 2002b: *The Shaping of Middle-earth. The History   of   Middle-earth. Volume 4*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: HarperCollinsPublishers.

Tolkien, J. R. R. 2002c: *The Lost Road and Other Writings. Language and Legend before The Lord of the Rings. The History of Middle-earth. Volume 5*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: HarperCollinsPublishers.

Tolkien, J. R. R. 2002d: *The Return of the Shadow. The History of The Lord of The Rings. Part 1. The History of Middle-earth. Volume 6*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: HarperCollinsPublishers.

Tolkien, J. R. R. 2002e: *Morgoth's Ring. The Later Silmarillion. Part One. The Legends of Aman. The History of Middle-earth. Volume 10*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: HarperCollinsPublishers.

Tolkien, J. R. R. 2002f: *The Peoples of Middle-earth. The History of Middle-earth. Volume 12*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: HarperCollinsPublishers.

Tolkien, J. R. R. 2007: *The Children of Húrin*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: HarperCollinsPublishers.

Vainio, Olli-Pekka 2003: "Philomythus Misomythukselle". In: *Perusta* 3/2003. Kauniainen: Perussanoma Oy, 124-128.

Vlastos, Gregory 1975: *Plato's Universe*. London: Oxford University Press.

Wagner, Vit 2007: "Tolkien proves he's still the king". The Star. http://www.thestar.com/entertainment/2007/04/16/tolkien_proves_hes_still_the_king.html (2nd of April, 2014).

Walton, Kendall L. 1990: *Mimesis and Make-Believe. On the Foundations of the Representational Arts*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Whittingham, Elizabeth 2008: *The Evolution of Tolkien's Mythology. A Study of the History of Middle-earth*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc.

West, Richard C. 1970: "Contemporary Medieval Authors". In: *Tolkien Journal no. 11*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin J. R. R. Tolkien Society, 9–10.

Wisner, Linell B. 2010: *Archaism, or Textual Literalism in the Historical Novel*. Diss. Knoxville: University of Tennessee.

Wolfe, Gary K. 1982: "The Encounter with Fantasy". In: *The Aesthetics of Fantasy Literature and Art*. Ed. Roger C. Schlobin. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press & The Harvester Press, 1-15.

Wood, Ralph C. 2003: "Conflict and Convergence on Fundamental Matters in C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien". In: *Renascence: Essays on Values in Literature*, Vol. 55, No. 4. Milwaukee: Marguette University, 315–338.

Wood, Tanya 2000: "Is Tolkien a Renaissance Man? Sir Philip Sidney's Defence of Poesy and J. R. R. Tolkien's "On Fairy-Stories"". In: *J. R. R. Tolkien and His Literary Resonances. Views of Middle-earth*. Ed. George Clark & Daniel Timmons. Westport: Greenwood Press, 95–108.

114. Hautala, Terhi (2013) Ikääntyneiden kuuntelijoiden puheen ymmärtäminen kognitiivisesti vaativassa tilanteessa

115. Leinonen, Riitta-Marja (2013) Palvelijasta terapeutiksi : ihmisen ja hevosen suhteen muuttuvat kulttuuriset mallit Suomessa

116. Mertala, Petteri (2013) Kuvalla voi olla merkitystä : Suomen ja Espanjan väliset suhteet vuosina 1917–1946

117. Alaniska, Kari (2013) Kalojen kuninkaan tie sukupuuttoon : Kemijoen voimalaitosrakentaminen ja vaelluskalakysymys 1943–1964

118. Enwald, Heidi (2013) Tailoring health communication : the perspective of information users' health information behaviour in relation to their physical health status

119. Känsäkoski, Helena (2014) Value creation in childhood obesity care and prevention

120. Myllykangas, Mikko (2014) Rappeutuminen, tiedostamaton vai yhteiskunta? : lääketieteellinen itsemurhatutkimus Suomessa vuoteen 1985

121. Kangasvuo, Jenny (2014) Suomalainen biseksuaalisuus : käsitteen ja kokemuksen kulttuuriset ehdot

122. Harjuniemi, Jenna (2014) Kön, språk och kognition : semantiska och begreppsliga strukturer hos svenska femininavledningar och deras finska och tyska ekvivalenter

123. Jylhä, Eva-Jo (2014) The creation of the Small New England Town in Alice Hoffman's Massachusetts novels : a cultural imagological study

124. Mäkinen, Leena (2014) Narrative language in typically developing children, children with specific language impairment and children with autism spectrum disorder

125. Anttila, Tero (2014) The power of antiquity : the Hyperborean research tradition in early modern Swedish research on national antiquity

126. Ylipulli, Johanna (2015) Smart futures meet northern realities: anthropological perspectives on the design and adoption of urban computing

127. Saviniemi, Maija (2015) On noloa, jos ammattilaiset tekevät tökeröitä kielioppivirheitä : toimitushenkilökunnan kielenhuoltotiedot, -käytännöt ja -diskurssit

128. Uusitalo, Ari (2015) Hyvästit, potkut vaiko lobbauksen hedelmä? : Yhdysvaltain suhtautuminen Filippiinien itsenäisyyskysymykseen ja sen ratkaisuun 1929–1934