

Romancing the Ring: Romance Tropes in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*

by

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Abstract

This dissertation is an exploration of the Romance tropes that exist in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. It concentrates on the numerous Romance tropes and details evident in Tolkien's characters and setting while focusing on how these tropes function within the greater Romance genre. Examples from various other Romances are used to augment the argument, but particular mention is made of the Romances or pieces of literature that Tolkien translated and worked on in his lifetime, including: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Sir Orfeo*, *The Pearl*, *The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún*, *The Fall of Arthur*, and *Beowulf*. The dissertation focuses on Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, which has been responsible for the renaissance of modern fantasy in the twentieth-century. It begins by raising the contentious issue of whether Tolkien's book may be regarded as a Romance. The work of Helen Cooper (2009), Gillian Beer (1970) and Northrop Frye (1973 and 1976) forms the basis of this theoretical discussion. The Romance tropes evident in the analysis of the characters and setting of *The Lord of the Rings* provide an interesting starting point for further discussion of the Romance tropes that exist elsewhere in Tolkien's work, and one hopes that more research into this will follow.

Key Terms: J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*; Romance literature; Fantasy; Medievalism; Romance Characters; Romance Setting; Romance Tropes; Hero; Lady; Heroine; Shadow; Master; White Lady; Secondary World; Helen Cooper; Gillian Beer and Northrop Frye.

‘The Road Goes Ever On And On, Down From The Door Where It Began’ (Tolkien, 2001: 34): An Introduction

Gillian Beer (1970: 78) in her work, *The Romance*, and Helen Cooper (2009: 80-81) in her text, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare*, deem *The Lord of the Rings* to be an exemplar (or perhaps even the renaissance) of twentieth century Romance¹. This is unsurprising considering that *The Lord of the Rings* exhibits so many traits and tropes of a literature that for centuries has been associated (if not become synonymous) with Romance literature (Cooper, 2009: 80). This dissertation will analyse the tropes and traits of Romance literature that are apparent in *The Lord of the Rings*, paying particular attention to the tropes and traits that are exhibited in the characters and settings that Tolkien uses in his book. The dissertation will also focus on Tolkien’s famous translations of Romance and proto-Romance texts, such as *The Fall of Arthur* (written in 1930 but published posthumously in 2013), which is Tolkien’s reworking of Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte Darthur, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (1929), *The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún* (published posthumously in 2009 but written in 1926), *Sir Orfeo* (1929), *The Pearl* (1929) and *Beowulf* (translated in 1937 but only published posthumously in 2014),

¹ The word Romance is a highly ambiguous term because of the various different classes or classifications of Romance. The genre of Romance can of course be viewed depending on a variety of factors: first, by geographical setting and the culture of the Hero (the Romances of Rome vary to those of Britain and France, and vice versa; second, by the audience (the high or chivalric Romances written for the nobility or aristocracy differ greatly from the more popular Romances that were intended for a much wider audience of the lower gentry; third, by the subject matter (chivalric or heroic Romances focus on martial prowess and pursuits while courtly Romances focus more on romantic love and the service of a Lady by the Knight). As such in my discussion I will focus more on the Romance structures – those mentioned by Cooper (2009), Beer (1970) and Frye (1976) – which exist in the majority of Romances.

as well as the influence that these texts had on the writer and his work. The tropes and traits that are inherent in these translated texts will be viewed in relation to Romance theory, with a specific focus on the work of Helen Cooper (2009), Gillian Beer (1970) and Northrop Frye (1973).

Addressing *The Lord of the Ring's* connections to Romance, Cooper (2009: 4) states that: '[i]t is no coincidence that the authors who kick-started the modern equivalent of the Romance, C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien, were two of the leading medieval scholars of the mid-twentieth century.' This affinity for Romance and Medieval literature is to be expected, especially since the height of Romance literature coincides with the Medieval period (that era of knights and ladies from the sixth to the sixteenth century [Sweeney, 2000: 2]). Tom Shippey (2001: 223) in his book, *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*, also states that: 'In brief, then *The Lord of the Rings* is a Romance,' and even, when speaking on Tolkien's originality and how he led the way forward in fantasy literature, Shippey (2001: xviii) compares Tolkien to Chrétien de Troyes, who '...in the twelfth century, did not invent the Arthurian Romance, which must have existed in some form before his time, but showed what could be done with it' (Shippey, 2001: xviii). Shippey (2001: xviii) explains that: 'One of the things that Tolkien did was to open up a new continent of imaginative space for many millions of readers, and hundreds of writers – though he himself would have said that it was an old continent which he was merely rediscovering,' and this continent was naturally the continent of Romance, with which Tolkien was well-versed and familiar (Salu, 1979: 256). Derek Brewer (Salu, 1979: 249) even asserts that: '[t]o understand *The Lord of the Rings* we have to understand the true nature of Romance; and that Romance can be understood as the kind of thing that *The Lord of the Rings* is.' Significantly, one of the earliest mentions of *The Lord of the Rings* being a Romance appears in the first review of the book. C.S. Lewis (Mathews, 1978: 15), a long-time friend of Tolkien's and one of *The Lord of the Rings*' first readers, writes that:

This book is like lightning from a clear sky. To say that in it heroic Romance, gorgeous, eloquent, and unashamed, has suddenly returned at a period almost pathological in its anti-romanticism, is inadequate. To us, who live in that odd period, the return – and the sheer relief of it – is doubtless the important thing. But in the history of Romance itself – a history which stretches back to the *Odyssey* and beyond – it makes not a return but an advance or revolution: the conquest of new territory.

Nor are the authors and academics alone in considering *The Lord of the Rings* to be a Romance. There are numerous times throughout Tolkien's letters where he identifies his text as a Romance. For instance, when Tolkien realised that *The Lord of the Rings* would not be the child-friendly sequel to *The Hobbit* (1937) that his publishers Allen Unwin & Co were expecting, he sent a letter to Sir Stanley Unwin stating that: 'My work has escaped from my control and I have produced a monster: an immensely long, complex, rather bitter, and rather terrifying Romance, quite unfit for children' (Carpenter 2000:97). Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 257) then says in a letter to Christopher Bretherton that after the success of *The Hobbit*, 'I then offered them the legends of the Elder Days, but their readers turned that down. They wanted a sequel. But I wanted heroic legends and high Romance. The result was *The Lord of the Rings*,' which was written while Tolkien continuously worried whether '[t]he authorities of the university might well consider it an aberration of an elderly professor of philology to write and publish fairy stories and Romances' (Carpenter, 2002: 165). However, Tolkien perhaps states his thoughts and intentions with regard to *The Lord of the Rings* and Romance most clearly in his letter to Peter Szabó Szentmihályi. Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 329) writes quite emphatically while discussing the genre of his masterpiece that: 'I have very little interest in serial literary history, and no interest at all in the history or present situation of the English 'novel'. My work is not a 'novel', but an 'heroic Romance' a much older and quite different variety of literature.'

Perhaps Tolkien's intention to create or fashion his own 'heroic Romance' was due to his scholarly and personal affinity for Romance literature (Salu & Farrell, 1979: 256), especially since as Tolkien (2001: xv) aptly states '[a]n author cannot of course remain wholly

unaffected by his experience [and] the ways in which a story-germ uses the soil of experience are extremely complex.’ Other than a few fragments or unfinished texts, such as *The Fall of Arthur* (written in 1930 but published posthumously in 2013), which was intended to be Tolkien’s reworking of Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte Darthur*, only a part of which was ever completed, there are six full texts that Tolkien translated and that have been subsequently published: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (1929), *The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún* (published posthumously in 2009 but written in 1926), *Sir Orfeo* (1929), *The Pearl* (1929) and *Beowulf* (translated in 1937 but only published posthumously in 2014). Each of these texts has a very distinctive storyline, but they also all have certain similarities and in certain regards, all adhere to various Romance tropes and traits.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, *Sir Orfeo* and *The Pearl*, composed probably by the same enigmatic author in the eleventh century are all medieval Romances (Tolkien, 1990:13). *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* tells the story of Sir Gawain’s quest to a strange castle in search of the Green Knight, who has previously challenged Sir Gawain to withstand a stroke from the giant’s axe. Sir Gawain learns a valuable lesson about the virtues of a knight in his quest (and ultimately earns the symbol that he wears from the outset of the poem: the pentangle) thereby becoming one of the greatest Arthurian Heroes (Tolkien, 1990). In *Sir Orfeo*, which is a retelling of the Orpheus myth, when Sir Orfeo’s wife, Heurodis (a Romance version of Eurydice [Perry, 2003: 563]), is abducted by the King of the Otherworld, Sir Orfeo spends ten years looking for her. Accompanied solely by his harp, with which he performs many marvellous deeds, such as charming animals and putting whole Fairy courts to sleep, Sir Orfeo finally rescues his wife and returns home to his kingdom a Hero (Tolkien, 1990). *The Pearl* relates the heartbreaking narrative of a man who has lost his priceless and irreplaceable ‘pearl ring’, which the audience finds out is actually his daughter. The unnamed man lies down in a forest after weeping and finds himself transported to an otherworldly place near a river, on the other side of which stands a beautiful woman adorned all in white and gold, whom he assumes is his pearl. She in turn instructs the man about the kingdom of

Heaven and about loss and many other Christian concepts, while he tries to cross over to her. The man watches as the pretty youth is taken away by a host dressed all in white, the procession of the faithful entering the City of God, and he finally plunges into the water. But the moment he touches the water he wakes and resolutely dedicates his life to the heavenly pearl and not any earthly pearl (Tolkien, 1990).

The Fall of Arthur is of course a reworking of part of one of the most famous pieces of Romance literature: Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*. As such it contains many of the Romance elements of the original. Although unfinished, it outlines the final events of Arthur's life, including the death of many of the Knights of the Round Table, and the destruction of Arthur's kingdom. The pinnacle moment of Arthur's death and journey to Avalon to recuperate from his wounds is outlined in the notes that Tolkien wrote, and clearly shows the connection between Arthur's journey to the isle of Avalon and Frodo's journey to Valinor in *The Lord of the Rings*, which Tolkien suggests are synonymous (Tolkien, 2013: 189; Tolkien, 2013). Tolkien's *The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún*, however, which tells the story of the Hero Sigurd, who sets off with a magic ring, which renders the wearer invisible but which is also cursed, and a reforged sword to slay the dragon Fáfnir, is taken from a larger work known as the *Völsungasaga*, which is an Old Norse saga from the thirteenth century (Tolkien, 2009: viii). The section that Tolkien chose to translate and rework, however, is very much akin to Romance and contains many Romance plot lines and tropes, such as the Hero setting off on a quest with a magical object and a sword in order to defeat a monster (Cooper, 2009: 78). Sigurd journeys to rescue the Valkyrie, Brynhild, from a ring of fire and lightning. But Brynhild will not marry Sigurd unless he has returned his family to the kingship. So Sigurd travels to Worms where he meets Gudrún and her three brothers. Unfortunately, Gudrún's mother feeds Sigurd a potion that makes him forget Brynhild and fall in love with Gudrún. After many trials and tribulations Brynhild comes to Worms and plots Sigurd's downfall, due to what she perceives as his betrayal. She organises for one of Gudrún's brothers to kill Sigurd in his sleep. As he lies dying he tells Gudrún that: 'Brynhild wrought

this: best she loved me, worst she dealt me, worst belied me. I Gunnar never grieved nor injured; oaths I swore him, all fulfilled them!' (Tolkien, 2009: 174). Sigurd's cursed ring, however, betrays Gudrún's family who are all slaughtered by the Huns.

Similarly, Tolkien (2002: 127), in his ground-breaking treatise, *Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*, was able to declare that: '*Beowulf* is not an 'epic', not even a magnified 'lay,' because it exhibits many Romance traits and tropes befitting '...an heroic-elegiac poem' (Tolkien, 2002: 127). *Beowulf* is a ninth-century poem that was written in England but set in Scandinavia and it narrates the adventures of the eponymous hero. In the poem, King Hrothgar of Denmark rules over a golden hall, Heorot, which is plagued by a monster, Grendel, which slaughters many of Hrothgar's people after their feast in the night (thus disturbing the normality of the society [Frye, 1973: 189; Cooper, 2009: 88]). Beowulf journeys to Denmark to rid Hrothgar's kingdom of Grendel and then Grendel's mother. Beowulf returns to Geatland with his reward from Hrothgar (including many rings) and becomes King after the rightful king and heir are killed in battle. After fifty years of a peaceful reign, Beowulf faces the threat of a dragon when a thief awakens the beast by stealing a golden cup from its hoard. Beowulf slays the dragon, but is mortally wounded in the process and dies (Tolkien, 2014). Due to the questing adventures of Beowulf and the slaying of monsters for personal glory (not to mention the internal viewpoint of Beowulf) *Beowulf* demonstrates many Romance elements; so much so that various academics (including as mentioned above Tolkien himself) have questioned whether *Beowulf* has been categorised incorrectly (Breizmann, 1998: 1029). Tolkien, especially as a man exhibiting a '...taste for philology and for Romance,' (Carpenter, 2002: 165) further emphasizes the famous Anglo-Saxon poem's association with Romance, by connecting *Beowulf*, the tales of Arthurian Romance and his own work in a letter to W.H. Auden. In the letter, Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 183) bemoans that *The Lord of the Rings* has been criticized as a work functioning mostly on a 'political' level. He writes to clarify that his text is not wholly concerned with 'politics' but rather with errantry and the Romantic ideal, in the same way that:

The feats of arms in Arthurian Romance, or Romances attached to that great centre of imagination, do not need to “fit into a politically purposive pattern”. So it was in the earlier Arthurian traditions. As also in *Beowulf*...for in it an author tried to fit a deed of “errantry” into a complex political field. *Beowulf*’s personal objects in his journey to Denmark are precisely those of a later Knight: his own renown, and above that the glory of his lord and king; but all the time we glimpse something deeper.

The mention of the word ‘errantry’, as in for instance a knight errant (which describes the Hero in many Romances), is synonymous with Romance, a form of literature that as has been mentioned relies on a quest structure for its impetus (Cooper, 2009: 8). And Tolkien is not alone in his supposition that *Beowulf* is not an epic text but one that displays Romantic elements. Natalia Breizmann (1998: 1022), in her article, *Beowulf as Romance*, agrees with Tolkien’s interpretation, saying that it is possible ‘...to read *Beowulf* as a Romance,’ or at the very least as a prototypical Romance akin to *The Odyssey*, which also relies on a solitary questing Hero who slays monsters in order to find his way home to the woman he loves (Heng, 2003: 1). Breizmann (1998: 1029) states that:

If epic can be described as a narrative of society, then Romance is a narrative of the individual. The plot of *Beowulf* presents a fictive history of a nation and is in this sense “epic”. However, the plot also resembles an archetypal quest story, of the sort that reaches its apogee in the courtly literature of the High Middle Ages – a story with elements of fantasy. The motif of adventure in which the protagonist fights monsters as well as human opponents and performs other deeds of valour is widespread in medieval Romance. For this reason it is possible to read *Beowulf* as a Romance.

Since it seems that Tolkien’s story-germ invariably grew from so much Romance-infused soil (Tolkien, 2001: xv) perhaps Brewer’s estimation that ‘[t]o understand *The Lord of the Rings* we have to understand the true nature of Romance; and that Romance can be understood as the kind of thing that *The Lord of the Rings* is,’ (Salu & Farrell, 1979: 249) is not by any means incongruous, particularly since Tolkien’s work is often considered to mark the restoration of Romance literature in the twentieth century (Mathews, 1978: 15; Cooper, 2009: 4). *The Lord of the Rings*, of course, contains many Romance tropes and traits that are akin to those found in most of the texts that Tolkien translated and studied (not to

mention countless other Romances). A better understanding of Romance will undoubtedly elucidate ‘the kind of thing that *The Lord of the Rings* is’; however, in order to comprehend the inner-workings of Romance literature it is perhaps more beneficial to understand where Romance originated and what this has to do with *The Lord of the Rings*.

Romance literature, which took its name from the word *romanz*, which ‘...itself initially meant the vernacular languages (especially French) as distinct from Latin,’ (Cooper, 2009: 8) is essentially a genre that focuses on ‘[t]he clash of good against evil, quests, protagonists of mysterious birth, monsters and the supernatural,’ (Cooper, 2009: 8) all of which *The Lord of the Rings* exhibits. But most of all Cooper (2009: 12) stresses that: ‘Romances, like novels, can appeal to readers of every level of intelligence, although (unlike the most intellectually demanding, and therefore élitist, novels) they always do their audience the kindness of placing a primacy on telling good stories.’ Geraldine Heng (2003: 1), author of *Empire Of Magic: Medieval Romance And The Politics Of Cultural Fantasy*, explains that since:

Romance, of course, has no beginning, no identifiable moment or text in which it is possible to say, here is the location of the origin. Before the Middle Ages, and the first usages of the Old French grapheme, “Romanz,” to signify an expanding category of fabulous narratives of a literary kind, something, we feel, existed that was already Romance-like, that preceded the medieval concretions. Casting back in time, we speak of “Ancient” or “Greek” Romances, of the *Odyssey* (but not the *Iliad*) as a “Romance,” and of the “Romances” of Alexander the Great that descend from the third century of the Common Era (or as early as the fourth century B.C.E.), as if we intuitively know what Romances are, and are not.

This intuitive knowledge often implies that there is something innate in the appreciation and evaluation of Romance (Beer, 1970: 35). Gillian Beer (1970: 46) and Helen Cooper (2009: 22) agree with Geraldine Heng’s contention that Romance did not originate *ab initio* in the twelfth century, nor that it was established almost exclusively in France (as is contended by certain scholars including M.H. Abrams [2009: 44]); and both of them discuss Homer’s *Odyssey* as either being a prototypical Romance (Cooper, 2009: 26) or as one of the first pieces of literature exhibiting Romance features or tropes in western literature (Beer, 1970:

22). Peter Conrad (2006: 14), in Cassell's *History of English Literature*, lends credence to this claim by stating that '[t]he dichotomy [between epic and Romance] is that between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; between assault on a citadel and finding your way, at meandering leisure, back home; between the wrathful Achilles and the wily Odysseus,' which echoes Northrop Frye's assertion (Frye, 1973: 154) that '[a]ll literary critics are either *Iliad* critics or *Odyssey* critics. That is, interest in literature tends to center either in the area of tragedy, realism, and irony [as found in epic], or in the area of comedy and Romance.' The *Odyssey* undoubtedly contains Romance elements or tropes that would be considered the cornerstones of many later classic Romances: the overarching elements of love (Odysseus journeying on a marvellous quest to return to his wife) and the quest are only two such examples.

According to M.H. Abrams (2009: 44), Romance's '...standard plot is that of a quest undertaken by a single knight in order to gain a lady's favour,' and that it usually '...stresses the chivalric ideals of courage, loyalty, honour, mercifulness to an opponent, and elaborate manners,' while simultaneously delighting '...in wonders and marvels.' Tolkien's text adheres to Abrams's definition of Romance, especially since Frodo and Aragorn (Tolkien's reluctant and Hero Knight respectively) embark on a quest to accomplish many great endeavours; Gimli (Tolkien's version of a Dwarven Knight) performs many heroic deeds to gain the Lady Galadriel's favour; and Tolkien undoubtedly stresses the chivalric ideals of 'courage, loyalty, honour, [and] mercifulness to an opponent' through his portrayal of the members of the Fellowship of the Ring and the relationships that they forge throughout the narrative of *The Lord of the Rings*, but especially in Frodo's treatment of Gollum and Tolkien's authorial view (Carpenter, 2002: 153) that: '...it is the Pity of Bilbo and later Frodo that ultimately allows the Quest to be achieved.' However, there are many other discernible ways that the *Odyssey* and *The Lord of the Rings*, both consistently and cognisantly, adhere to the precepts or tropes of the Romance genre.

Helen Cooper (2009: 10) in her book, *The English Romance in Time*, constructs a list of general Romance memes², a term she uses to denote ‘a unit within literature that proves so useful, so infectious, that it begins to take on a life of its own’ (Cooper, 2009: 3). Cooper (2009: 3) also suggests that the word meme actually represents ‘...an idea that behaves like a gene in its ability to adapt, mutate, and therefore survive in different forms and cultures’ due to its capacity to replicate faithfully and abundantly. This corresponds to the concept of literary tropes that survive throughout forms of literature and thus are used repeatedly throughout successive eras of literature (Blackmore, 1999: 63-66). Helen Cooper (2009: 8) asserts that ‘[t]he[se] memes of Romance are none the less largely the same ones that have been made familiar through works such as the Narnia series and *The Lord of the Rings*, and their many derivatives, including *Harry Potter* and Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials*.’ In this way she connects many of the tropes or tenets that can be found in *The Lord of the Rings* with what she terms the memes (which are the equivalent of tropes) of Romance literature. Cooper (2009: 10) writes that:

Romances are characterized by exotic settings, distant in time and place, or both; subject-matter concerning love or chivalry, or both; and high-ranking characters – all qualities that separate the dramatic Romance from earlier more quotidian emphases of classical comedy, and the narrative Romance from the later more quotidian emphases of the novel. Equally important elements in recognizability are a series of features that serve to distinguish Romance from the Old French epic, the *chanson de geste*. These include the shaking loose of the narrative from precise time and space; quests; magic and the supernatural; a concern less with the communal good than with the individual hero’s inward thoughts, feelings, and aspirations, and, frequently, those of the heroine too; and a happy ending as normative, that ending often incorporating a return from an encounter with death – a symbolic resurrection. Typical of the treatment of all these elements in Romance is a concern with ideals, especially secular ideals, and with human perfectibility within a social context. Even if perfection is not achieved, even if a hero in some way fails or the ending is not happy, the ideals themselves are not therefore treated with cynicism.

² This term is only used in relation to Cooper (2009) because she herself uses this word, much in the same way that Frye (1976) uses the word archetype or topoi.

The Lord of the Rings unquestionably fulfils many of these requirements for Romance literature. It takes place in the exotic, otherworldly setting of Middle-Earth; its subject-matter deals with both love (the love between Lady and Knight) and chivalry (the chivalric ideals of the Knight mentioned before); it has high-ranking characters (Lord and Ladies of a court); it has elements of magic and the supernatural (in large part due to the Wizards); it has a central Hero and Heroine (or two) with whom the audience becomes intimately familiar; it has a symbolic resurrection of the Hero; it deals with and cherishes heroic ideals such as ‘...courage, loyalty, honour, mercifulness to an opponent, and elaborate manners’ (Abrams, 2009: 44); it has a happy ending (even though the Hero does ultimately fail in his quest); and above all it centres on a quest that the Hero undertakes for the greater good of the society. As Derek Brewer (Salu & Farrell, 1979: 251) states, the Hero’s journey in *The Lord of the Rings* is the equivalent of: ‘[t]he characteristic *passage* of Romance [which] is from untried youth to adulthood, emergence from (or rejection of) the rule of parents, then establishment of the self, and of a stable relationship with the beloved.’ In their discussion of the characters in Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*, Stuart Lee and Elizabeth Solopova (Lee & Solopova, 2005: 30) suggest that Tolkien’s characters remain true Romance characters because, unlike epic characters that remain static (Lee, 2005: 29), *The Lord of the Rings*’ characters ‘...are not devoid of development, internal contradictions or struggle, as is evident in Aragorn, who hesitates following the path for which he is destined by birth, or Galadriel, who overcomes temptation when Frodo offers her the Ring.’ Tolkien (2007: 145) explains this phenomenon by stating that though the epic narrator views the events he describes ‘...as from a hill-top looking back into a dark valley in which the sun has not yet risen – through a telescope, we might say,’ the Romance narrator looks at them ‘...through a microscope, seeing the actions of men as involving problems of religion, of morality, and even of plain balanced good sense.’

The Lord of the Rings, therefore, stringently adheres to the tropes or memes of Romance in numerous ways: firstly in the nature of the world that the characters inhabit and secondly in

the characters that inhabit Middle-Earth and take part in the narrative. Derek Brewer (Salu & Farrell, 1979: 259) writes that: 'As in all good Romance, the creation of an imaginative world,' which is so evident in *The Lord of the Rings*, uses elements of diverse genres, and as such '[t]raditional literature, involving myth, folktale, dream is often particularly powerful in this, and Tolkien is particularly happy calling on such resources.' This skill of intermingling demonstrates Tolkien's aptitude at utilising various mediums and modes – myth, folklore and Romance – in order to craft his secondary world. Gillian Beer (1970:2) says that the Romance world, although strange to us at first, is often made more familiar by the characters with which we can identify because the Romance's '...remote sources are domesticated and brought close to present experience primarily because they are peopled with figures whose emotions and relationships are directly registered and described with profuse sensuous detail.' The readers of Romance rely on the characters for much of the narrative development of the tale, but without the 'profuse sensuous detail' which encompasses the worlds of Romance the reader (and the characters) would have nowhere to journey to, and the whole point of the story would be lost. The realms, and the various settings, therefore, allow the reader the opportunity to move unhindered through the fictional world of imagination, which is, as Beer (1970: 89) and Cooper (2009: 104) suggest, the true virtue of Romance literature. Certainly, Romance literature without the quest of the Hero (and thereby the reader) would be meaningless (Frye, 1973: 245). Gillian Beer (1970: 3) thus explains that the world of Romance: '...frees us from our inhibitions and preoccupations by drawing us entirely into its own world – a world which is never fully equivalent to our own altogether though it reminds us of it if we are to understand it at all.' And that though, '[i]t oversteps the limits by which life is normally bounded. The world of Romance is ample and inclusive, sustained by its own inherent, often obsessive laws,' with which the reader becomes familiar as the tale unfolds.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, as in the majority of the Romances (Cooper, 2009: 71), Middle-Earth is not merely a representation of another mystical world (even though Tolkien's Arda

may seem unlike any world with which the reader might be familiar), but a version of the Earth, merely at a much older time. The word Arda is in fact derived from the Old High German *Erda*, which is translated as Earth (Tyler, 1973: 298), and as such Tolkien set his narrative in our world because, at least in his own creative processes and mind, he was not writing a group of interrelated stories that had taken place in some distant realm (Arda can also mean *realm* as well in Quenya, one of the High Elven languages [Tyler, 1973: 298]) but rather creating a mythology for his native land, which he felt it regrettably lacked (Snyder, 2013: 124). Therefore, the lands that encompass Middle-Earth must correspond to the Earth itself; however, the sources are often so remote (such as Tolkien's reliance on the court structure of the twelfth century for Gondor's kingship or Anglo-Saxon culture of the eighth century for the land of Rohan) that Tolkien's world seems another place entirely. Helen Cooper (2009: 71) explains that the reason for this 'distance' is part of the Romance tradition, and that generally '[t]he characteristic setting for a quest Romance is most simply described as *somewhere else*. Even if it is given a location, it is in a form its real-world inhabitants might not recognize.' However, this '*somewhere else*' in Romance 'is always rooted in a recognizable this-worldly society, even if voyages to exotic lands or the Otherworld were allowed' (Cooper, 2009: 8). Perhaps the reason for this separation in time is, especially in Tolkien's case, partly attributable to Tolkien's theory of stepping through '...a door on Other Time, and if we pass through, though only for a moment, we stand outside our own time' (Tolkien, 1964: 34). For this reason it seems that the precise foundations of Middle-Earth seem to negate the present, so that in one moment Middle-Earth appears somewhat comparable to our own world (the sense of adventure and the oppression of evil are concepts that modern day audiences can easily relate to), and yet in the very next moment it seems completely dissimilar to anything remotely plausible in this world (the reliance on courtly love and the feudal structures of kingship and lordship might not be fully grasped by a society for whom these are outdated structures). The Romance tradition, of which Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is an excellent example, does not then exclude the movement of the reader from his or her world into the world of Romance, even if the world is

a representation of our own. In this case the Romance world is such an archaic model of our own world that it might as well be a new fantastic world crafted anew in the mind of the Romancer. As Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 131) writes in a letter explaining the connection between his Arda and our own world:

The new situation, established at the beginning of the Third Age, leads on eventually and inevitably to ordinary History, and we here see the process culminating. If you or I or any of the mortal men (or Hobbits) of Frodo's day had set out over sea, west, we should, as now, eventually have come back (as now) to our starting point. Gone was the 'mythological' time when Valinor (or Valimar), the Land of the Valar (gods if you will) existed physically in the Uttermost West, or the Eldaic (Elvish) immortal Isle of Eressëa; or the Great Isle of Westernesse (Númenor-Atlantis). After the Downfall of Númenor, and its destruction, all this was removed from the "physical" world, and not reachable by material means. Only the Eldar (or High-Elves) could still sail thither, forsaking time and mortality, but never returning.

Yet, Tolkien is not alone in creating a secondary world that is clearly an echo of our own. The tales of King Arthur, epitomized for English readers by *Le Morte Darthur*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *The Faerie Queene*, are set in renderings of the British Isles; while *Beowulf*, *The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún*, as well as *Sir Orfeo* are all set on the European continent. Malory, like Tolkien, is even reportedly interested in

...turning the more implausible stories [of King Arthur] into a legendary history of the land that he and his readers inhabit. What matters for Malory is that the traces of Britain's heroic past are "still there", that the countryside preserves the evidence of its originary moment. Yet, even in Malory, [much like Tolkien] once his knights have left those named locations, the landscape loses its familiarity and its geographical precision (Cooper, 2009: 71).

Perhaps the reason for this interest in basing Romance worlds on the real world is that Romance writers view themselves as piecing together history and myth rather than creating fantastical stories and this is unquestionably true in relation to Tolkien's work. Humphrey Carpenter (2002: 15) describes Tolkien speaking about *The Lord of the Rings*, saying:

He explains it all in great detail, talking about his book not as a work of fiction but as a chronicle of actual events; he seems to see himself not as an author who has made a slight error that must now be corrected or explained away, but as a historian who must cast light on an obscurity in a historical document.

The impossible worlds of Romance, however, would not be possible without the setting and scenery, which much like the other motifs and memes of Romance, adhere to strict structures that are inherent within the genre. One such obvious exemplar of setting within Romance is the positioning of the lands of Mordor in the East, while Valinor, its counterpoint, is in the West. Timothy O'Neill (1979: 94) explains that this setting is quite conventional since in Romance and other texts '[t]he wholesome unconscious parts of Man lie to the West; [while] the destructive, moribund beast of the unconscious lurks in the East. The one refreshes, binds together; the other tears asunder, decays,' which is immediately apparent in the antithesis of Gandalf and Sauron. Gandalf, one of the Maiar and Istari, is sent by the Valar in the West as an envoy to rekindle the hearts of mankind and bind them together in the war against Sauron; while Sauron, once a fair Maia arrayed in the *fanar* or luminous veil of the Valar, is the beast or Shadow (the Villain) lurking in the East, tearing Middle-Earth asunder. Therefore, without much necessary explanation, Tolkien sets Sauron as the enemy of Arda by placing his Land of Shadows, Mordor, in the East of Middle-Earth. Mordor is also described as a sterile wasteland, being an extension of the corrupt Lord that rules over it, which fulfils the Romance trope of destruction as an indicator of the influence of benefic (good) and malefic (evil) forces (Frye, 1973: 181).

This dissertation will, therefore, analyse the various ways that *The Lord of the Rings* incorporates Romance tropes or memes in creating both the Secondary World (to use a Tolkienian expression) including a variety of the settings within the narrative, and more importantly the characters that control the narrative of Tolkien's greatest work (Shippey, 2001: xi). In the chapters to follow, particular attention will be paid to the tropes or memes that are included in Cooper's definition of Romance (Cooper, 2009: 10) as well as on the Romance characteristics identified by Beer (1970), Frye (1973) and Cooper (2009) to shape a theoretical discussion of Tolkien's characters and narrative settings. Mention will be made, where appropriate, of various Romance texts (especially those works previously mentioned

on which Tolkien worked or published) thereby drawing connections between Tolkien's work and earlier Romances.

This dissertation also hopes to strengthen the sparse research that exists on the connection between Romance literature and Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Although Gillian Beer (1970), Helen Cooper (2009) and Tom Shippey (2000) all make passing references to *The Lord of the Rings* and Romance studies they do not touch on any specifics other than to mention that *The Lord of the Rings* can be considered a Romance. Derek Brewer (1979), however, does discuss Tolkien's work as a Romance but he does not go into as much depth as might be necessary for the scholarly appreciation of either Romance or *The Lord of the Rings*. It is therefore hoped that this more in-depth study will expand on the research already conducted, especially with its keen focus on the tropes of Romance, as well as the characters that are often associated with the aforementioned tropes.

‘A Great Force of Character’ (Carpenter, 2002: 135): An Introduction to Characters in Romance

As previously stated the memes of Romance, as Helen Cooper (2009: 10) calls them, undoubtedly form the backbone to *The Lord of the Rings*. The Romance tropes and features that concern the characters, whether they simply partake in, or wholly drive, the narrative of the book are perhaps easily perceptible for a modern audience because of the repetitive nature of Romance characters. As Northrop Frye (1973: 151) suggest in his classic work, *The Anatomy of Criticism*, that: ‘The mode of Romance presents an idealized world: in Romance heroes are brave, heroines beautiful, villains villainous, and the frustrations, ambiguities, and embarrassments of ordinary life are made little of. Hence its imagery presents a human counter-part of the apocalyptic world which we may call the analogy of innocence.’ Cooper (2009: 10), in her book *The English Romance in Time* defines the involvement of the characters in the Romance narrative by stating that Romances are firstly characterised by ‘...exotic settings, distant in time and place, or both...,’ with the main ‘...subject-matter concerning love or chivalry, or both...,’ and lastly that they are ‘...concern[ed] less with the communal good than with the individual hero’s inward thoughts, feelings, and aspirations, and, frequently, those of the heroine too.’ Gillian Beer (1970: 10) in *The Romance* appears to agree with both Cooper and Frye when she states that often readers of Romance feel comfortable with all these themes, tropes, motifs and memes because they:

[C]an think [of them] rather [as] a cluster of properties: the themes of love and adventure, a certain withdrawal from their own societies on the part of both reader and Romance hero, profuse sensuous detail, simplified characters (often with a suggestion of allegorical significance), a serene intermingling of the unexpected and the everyday, a complex and prolonged succession of incidents usually without a single climax, a happy ending, amplitude of proportions, a strongly enforced code of conduct to which all characters must comply.

From these three definitions it might seem that as long as a text fulfils some of the requirements stated above then it must be considered a Romance; or that there are certain

stock features or characters that appear again and again in every Romance without any original creativity on the part of the author. Yet to state it so simply would be an injustice. It cannot be said that Romance merely uses an accumulation of characters and characteristics that make their appearances in every text and which contain no original traits of their own. But there are certain similarities that come to light: a certain thread or parallel that links the genre of Romance in much the same way that tropes and motifs make recurrences in fictions of any comparable genre. For instance superhero fiction, such as comic books, which Geraldine Heng (2003: 89) believes to be the progeny of Romance literature, are so formulaic that the making of one is described by Stan Lee, who created several celebrated superheroes in his own right, as applying the superhero formula: an essence that must be distilled onto the pages of the story in the same way that the pigments must be applied on comic book proof pages (Lee, 2002: 57-58). Northrop Frye (1973: 304) proposes that Romance uses a similar process in the establishment of characters. He writes that:

The Romancer does not attempt to create “real people” so much as stylized figures which expand into psychological archetypes. It is in the Romance that we find Jung’s libido, anima, and shadow reflected in the hero, heroine, and villain respectively. This is why the Romance so often radiates a glow of subjective intensity that the novel lacks, and why a suggestion of allegory is constantly creeping in around its fingers.

Therefore according to Frye the Romance writer employs archetypes – or psychological manifestations which were made famous by the psychologist Carl Jung – in the place of actual characters. This may explain why Romance characters tend to be representations or embodiments of particular concepts or beliefs. As such the Hero is often the embodiment of all things virtuous: like the eponymous Arthurian knight in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, a Romance Hero must possess all five of the virtues of a knight: ‘franchise, felaghsip, clanes, cortasie and pity,’ (Jones, 1972: lines 652-654) which Tolkien translates as generosity, fellowship, chastity, chivalry, and piety or pity (Tolkien, 1990: 652). Frye (1973: 118) explains the concept of archetypes as symbols of human experience in this way:

If archetypes are communicable symbols, and there is a center of archetypes, we should expect to find, at that center, a group of universal symbols. I do not mean by this phrase that there is any archetypal code book which has been memorized by all human societies without exception. I mean that some symbols are images of things common to all men, and therefore have a communicable power which is potentially unlimited.

Hence, since characters embody certain archetypes, they also tend to be steeped in allegory (although Tolkien notably detested allegory and the application of allegorical readings to works of literature, stating in the introduction (2001: xv) to his masterpiece: 'I cordially dislike allegory in all its manifestations, and always have done so since I grew old and wary enough to detect its presence.'). However, perhaps not even Tolkien could escape the awareness that Heroes are often the incarnation of morality (even if they display the secular or moral ideals of the time that the Romances were written). The Hero might have his (or in the case of a Heroine her) flaws or faults, but intrinsically the Hero is a virtuous being, a force for good (although perhaps the type of virtue that the Hero displays is more accurately qualified as a will-in-action form of virtue rather than a saintly form of virtue). The reader consequently expects a Hero to be a moral and upstanding presence (allowing room for slight deviations or eccentricities), who usually does not go through any significant changes, other than becoming more heroic. As Frye (1973: 186) maintains '...a central character never develops or ages [but] goes through one adventure after another until the author himself collapses.'³

Charles Manlove (1975:148) describes this familiarity with Romance features and characters as a process of memory. He suggests that perhaps the characters in Romance are so familiar because readers realise almost as if in '...a haunting memory that [they have] met all these knights and ladies, all these monsters and enchanter, somewhere before.' The

³ Frye is not here denying that Romance Heroes change in the progression of their story (he of course mentions or maps the progression and changes that a Hero undergoes) but is rather saying that the Hero of one Romance is so akin to another (because the Hero is an archetype) that it might as well be the same Hero in each new Romance.

characters are especially familiar because the memes that shape the genre of Romance rely on certain character traits that are invariably reused; but that is not to say that Tolkien did not individualise his characters or create innovative and idiosyncratic ways to introduce the familiar intermingled with the unfamiliar. Beer (1970: 10) rather eloquently calls this process of Tolkien's '...a serene intermingling of the unexpected and the everyday.'

It is not that Tolkien did not have the creative prowess to imagine new and unheard of characters, plots and themes; but merely that he knew that were he to neglect the memes and tropes of the genre that he was working in his audience would be the first to object to the oversight. They would soon question: what good a Hero was without a sword? And what else would an errant knight do with his time if he was not slaying beasts and fiends in defence of a beautiful lady? Therefore it is understandable that particular characters exist in Romance simply because they are what the reader expects to find. Tolkien does not disappoint his audience: his inclusion of a Hero, Heroine, Lady, Master, Shadow and White Goddess⁴ stays true to the elements and dictates of Romance; but he still manages to find a variety of ways to intermingle 'the unexpected and the everyday'. In *The Lord of the Rings* the reader is introduced to mortal characters such as Aragorn, Théoden, Éomer, Éowyn, Faramir and Boromir – all men and women akin to the reader in their humanity, but still superior; and to the immortal characters such as the Elves, Elrond, Arwen, Galadriel and Legolas, and the Wizards Gandalf and Saruman, who are so similar to the mortal characters

⁴ Although there is no single authority that mentions these characters in one treatise these labels were chosen from texts that deal with Romance characters. The Hero, Lady and Heroine are rather generic Romance characters, but their subject matter is taken primarily from Helen Cooper (2009). The Shadow, Master and White Goddess are all Jungian archetypes, but the subject material regarding these figures is mostly drawn from O'Neill's (1979) book in which he discusses the Jungian archetypes in relation to *The Lord of the Rings*.

that the differences are at first sight seemingly insignificant until these characters pass over into the miraculous; and also to characters that are perhaps not exactly the same as any of the usual human characters: the Dwarf, Gimli; the Hobbits, Frodo, Bilbo, Sam, Pippin and Merry; and a host of Orcs, Uruk-hai, and Ents, who are led by Treebeard. Only then does the reader realise that he or she has seen something out of the ordinary.

The Hero With Two Faces: The Hero

As Cooper states, Romances are ‘...concern[ed] less with the communal good than with the individual hero’s inward thoughts, feelings, and aspirations...’. The Hero is the driving force of the action in the tale; and as such he is frequently regulated by, and has to satisfy, more Romance tropes and memes than any of the surrounding characters. Several significant elements and features of Romance guide the path of the Hero. These tropes have been catalogued by various writers – such as Abrams (2009), Beer (1970), Cooper (2009), Frye (1973), Heng (2003), Manlove (1975), Raglan (1936) and Shippey (2001). Many of the characteristics and traits that the Romance scholars mentioned above have discussed apply to the Heroes of *The Lord of the Rings*. Lord FitzRoy Raglan (2003: 16), for instance, wrote an entire treatise devoted to the characteristics and stylistic patterns of the Hero, titled *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth and Drama*, in which he lists an extensive list of archetypal traits that are shared by Heroes in literature. He used an array of Romance Heroes in order to compile his list of tropes; but he used one example more than any other: the legend of Arthur told in Malory’s *Le Morte Darthur*. The importance of this fifteenth-century work cannot be overestimated in its influence on Romance, and even on the works of Tolkien, who attempted to rework Malory’s opus into his own *Fall of Arthur* (2014). Professor Christopher Snyder (2013: 74) in his discourse on the sources for Tolkien’s world, *The Making of Middle-Earth*, explains the importance of *Le Morte Darthur* for Tolkien and especially *The Lord of the Rings*:

“Whoso pulleth out this sword of this stone and anvil, is rightwise king born of all England.” This famous line first appears in *Le Morte Darthur*, written by Sir Thomas Malory while in prison during the closing years of the War of the Roses and published by England’s first printer, William Caxton, in 1485. Malory traces the story of Arthur from his conception at Tintagel castle to his departure for Avalon and the subsequent deaths of Guinevere and Lancelot. For Malory, Arthur was an *English* king, at the centre of the greatest collection of knights the world has ever known: the Fellowship of the Round Table. The magnum opus of Arthurian Romances, *Le Morte Darthur*, was a text much discussed and admired by J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis. Tolkien’s “high style” – the chivalric speech of the characters like Aragorn and Faramir – is quite similar to Malory’s prose style. Both the glowing sword Sting and Andúril, “The Flame of the West,” resembles Arthur’s sword

Excalibur, which, according to Malory, shone like thirty torches, and both Andúril and Excalibur have magical scabbards.

As Snyder implies by his reference to the swords and the prose styles, many of the tropes that Romance literature exhibits are evidenced in *The Lord of the Rings*; but never more so than in the book's Heroes, who are very closely linked to Malory's titular Hero. Yet, before an analysis of the Hero's traits and features can be achieved, and how these characteristics fit into the overall Romantic discussed schema can be discussed, it is perhaps imperative to first establish who the Hero or Heroes in *The Lord of the Rings* might be.

In the first section of *The Lord of the Rings* – which some erroneously call the first book, believing that the work is a trilogy – which is titled *The Fellowship of the Ring*, the reader is introduced to several figures who all seem capable of being Heroes. The Fellowship that sets out from Rivendell to help Frodo destroy the One Ring has an assortment of characters that almost invariably show heroic courage and perform a variety of heroic deeds; but perhaps the one character that stands above them all, and therefore becomes one of the central Heroes, is the character entrusted by Gandalf to guide the Hobbits safely from Bree to Rivendell and who fights off several Ringwraiths single-handedly to save Frodo's life, thus preventing them from retrieving the Ring for their Master. Aragorn is the first heroic-seeming figure that the reader is presented with, even though at first the reader may doubt his intentions. Samwise Gamgee (usually a positive voice of reason) also does not trust Strider, which is the name that Aragorn uses as a Ranger. Aragorn reminds Sam of this mistrust at the end of the novel (Tolkien, 2001: 1034) when he says: "Yes, Sam, Strider," said Aragorn. 'It is a long way, is it not, from Bree, where you did not like the look of me? A long way for us all, but yours has been the darkest road.'" His character in the novel is therefore appropriately described by Ansen Dibell in Christopher Snyder's *The Making of Middle-Earth* (2013: 56) as one of chance, but also an essential part of the plot of the book:

J.R.R.Tolkien has confessed that about a third of the way through *The Fellowship of the Ring*, some ruffian named Strider confronted the Hobbits in

an inn, and Tolkien was in despair. He didn't know who Strider was, where the book was going, or what to write next. Strider turns out to be no lesser person than Aragorn, the unrecognized and uncrowned king of all the forces of good, whose restoration to rule is, along with the destruction of the evil Ring, the engine that moves the plot of the whole massive series of *The Lord of the Rings*.

However, in the same way that Aragorn stands above the rest as the most obvious Hero, Frodo, whose burden it is to bear the Ring to Mount Doom, often seems like the most unlikely of Heroes. He is young and small of stature; he is a Hobbit, representative of a folk that Aragorn describes as '...nothing more than children to your eyes...' (Tolkien, 2001: 424) and who are more interested in the cultivation of vegetables than the minutiae of the outside world; he is often unsure of himself and doubts which path he must ultimately take; and he offers his entrusted burden, the One Ring, to two others along the way. Had they accepted, this would have ultimately meant triumph for Sauron and his forces. In a letter to Hugh Brogan, Tolkien says that: 'Frodo is not intended to be another Bilbo. Though his opening style is not wholly un-kin. But he is rather a study of a Hobbit broken by a burden of fear and horror – broken down, and in the end made into something quite different,' which emphasizes that throughout Tolkien's text Frodo is not expected to be entirely heroic, but by the end of the book he is established as (or perhaps even formed into) a Hero. Manlove (1975:174-175) discusses the apparent absurdity of Tolkien choosing such a Hero for *The Lord of the Rings* by saying that:

At the centre of his [story], Tolkien has set out to place an ethic of heroic endeavour: the Ring-bearer against the whole might of Sauron. Yet he has chosen no conventional hero, no Beowulf nor Aeneas nor Roland of almost unthinking honour or courage, but a little man, a four-foot Halfling of a race happiest just to eat and sleep.

But this unusual choice of Hero is in keeping with Tolkien's wishes and Romance literature. In a letter to W.H. Auden, Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 163) explains that: 'I myself saw the value of Hobbits, in putting earth under the feet of 'Romance', and in providing subjects for 'ennoblement' and heroes more praiseworthy than the professionals: *nolo heroizari* is of course as good a start for a hero.' The inclusion of Tolkien's desire to create subjects (or

characters) for ‘ennoblement’, and in particular the concept of *nolo heroizari*, which is the transliteration of the Attic Greek phrase $\nu\omicron\lambda\omicron \chi\epsilon\rho\upsilon\zeta\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota$ or ‘I do not want to be a hero’, is in keeping with Tolkien’s aspiration for ‘putting earth under the feet of ‘Romance.’” As such, in accordance with Romance’s traits and tropes, and Tolkien’s own desires, Tolkien’s Heroes, above all the Hobbits, Frodo and Sam, as he himself says (Carpenter, 2002: 131), are not altogether desirous of the heroic mantle. Cooper (2009: 167) comments that this notion of *nolo heroizari* is often employed by Romance writers, whose Heroes, although essentially up to the task, frequently have to accept the heroic responsibilities thrust upon them (or even the Quest at hand) rather than actively pursuing heroic endeavours⁵. *Sir Orfeo* is an example of a Romance work that exhibits a reluctant Hero (or *nolo heroizari*). After his wife, Heurodis, is abducted by the King of the Otherworld, Sir Orfeo wanders the forest aimlessly for ten years before finally tracking down his wife, which shows that he never sets out on his particular quest, but has the quest forced upon him as a result of his wife’s disappearance (Tolkien, 1990: 23-89). This action forces him to become heroic, in much the same way as Frodo, who is without a doubt the most reluctant Hero in Tolkien’s entire oeuvre, takes on the quest to destroy the One Ring because he can withstand the effects of the Ring perhaps far longer and better than any of the other members of the Fellowship (Tolkien, 2001: 55). In both cases the necessity for Heroic deeds far outweighs the reluctance of the would-be

⁵ Other than in *Sir Orfeo* the truly reluctant Hero is rare. What is meant by the expression *nolo heroizari* is that although Heroes in Romance are capable of heroic deeds they do not always actively pursue them, as is the case with epic heroes. Often they are given opportunities to be heroic and decide to undertake the Quest or deed that eventually makes them worthy Heroes. For instance, in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Gawain does not go out and find the Green Knight in order to battle him, but rather accepts the challenge when presented to him (even when all other refuse). The same can be said of Frodo who does not go out to challenge Sauron, but rather decides to undertake the Quest to destroy the One Ring because he felt a sense of duty to do so.

Hero. Tolkien also names his reluctant Hero rather aptly. Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 168) explains in a letter that ‘Frodo is a real name from the Germanic tradition. Its Old English form was *Fróda*. Its obvious connexion is with the old word *fród* meaning etymologically “wise by experience”.’ Frodo is thus a Hero who gains his wisdom (or in his case particularly his heroic prowess) through experience. These moments of hardship and courage forge Frodo into a Hero. Although, perhaps after viewing Tolkien’s intentions for Frodo – being expected to travel into the heart of Mordor to destroy the one object that Sauron is searching for, and to overcome Shelob in her lair at ‘...the end of the Fourth Book of that great Romance,’ – it is no small wonder that Frodo displays such reluctance at donning the mantle of Hero. Even Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 91) himself admits that he had ‘...got the hero into such a fix that not even an author will be able to extricate him without labour and difficulty.’

Seemingly in every way, Frodo is the antithesis of Aragorn, who is sure of his skills, shows determination, has already lived many years, can defend himself suitably with a sword, and has travelled far and wide in Middle-Earth, learning much about the ways of the world. And yet there are moments when they are very similar (Tolkien, 2001): they both come from high or distinguished families that exist outside of the norm; they are both orphans; they are both under the tutelage of Gandalf the Wizard; they both use disguises to protect their identities; they both are bound by the powers of prophecy and fate; they both reach their true potential upon receiving their renowned weapons; they both fight for love, albeit of a different kind; they are both blessed by the White Goddess, who bestows a symbol of light on both of them; and they both undergo a symbolic death and resurrection. Perhaps with so much in common it is not a preposterous notion that Aragorn and Frodo, whom Manlove (1975:175) says ‘...grows into being a hero as his journey proceeds’, are in fact Tolkien’s way of ‘intermingling the unexpected and the everyday’. After all the Oxford Dictionary (2010: 154) defines the meaning of the word Hero (although primarily in a modern sense) as: ‘The chief character in a book, who is typically identified with good qualities, and with whom the reader is expected to sympathize,’ which definitely applies to Aragorn and Frodo, both of whom

share *The Lord of the Rings*' narrative and are central to the action as main characters. However, perhaps since the older (or classical) sense of the word Hero denotes someone of heightened ability of courage, it might be correct to point out that perhaps Frodo is more of a modern Hero (filled with good qualities with whom the reader sympathises) while Aragorn is more a classical Hero (a figure of heightened ability, courage and martial skill). Northrop Frye's seminal work on the patterns of the Hero in literature, *The Anatomy of Criticism*, also lists four distinguishable aspects to the quest-myth that Romance heroes undergo and all of these aspects can be evidenced in the narrative of Frodo and Aragorn's heroic existence. Although at first they seem extreme descriptions, they are more generally considered as the four modes of heroism – conflict with a monster, symbolic death, heroic transformation and rebirth or recognition (or perhaps in this case the return of the king). Northrop Frye (1973: 192) writes:

First, the *agon* or conflict itself. Second, the *pathos* or death, often the mutual death of hero and monster. Third, the disappearance of the hero, a theme which often takes the form of *sparagmos* or tearing to pieces. Sometimes the hero's body is divided among his followers, as in Eucharist symbolism: sometimes it is distributed around the natural world, as in the stories of Orpheus and more especially Osiris. Fourth, the reappearance and recognition of the hero.

Aragorn II, son of Arathorn, is the heir of Isildur and rightful claimant to the thrones of Arnor and Gondor. He is the last of one the greatest royal houses in Middle-Earth and as such his royalty is recognised as being essential to his storyline. As Peter Kreeft (2005: 44) writes: 'We all know what a true king is. Something in us longs to give him our loyalty and fealty and service and obedience. He is lost but longed for and some day will return, like Arthur. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Arthur's name is 'Aragorn.'" And yet when the reader first meets him he does not appear to be anything more than a dark and suspicious-looking stranger in an even darker common-room of The Prancing Pony:

Suddenly Frodo noticed that a strange-looking weather-beaten man, sitting in the shadows near the wall, was also listening intently to the Hobbit-talk. He had a tall tankard in front of him, and was smoking a long-stemmed pipe curiously carved. His legs were stretched out before him, showing high boots

of supple leather that fitted him well, but had seen much wear and were now caked with mud. A travel-stained cloak of heavy dark-green cloth was drawn close about him, and in spite of the heat of the room he wore a hood that overshadowed his face; but the gleam of his eyes could be seen as he watched the Hobbits. (Tolkien, 2001:134)

Frodo questions the innkeeper, Barliman Butterbur, about this stranger and the answer which the old man gives does not lead the reader to change his or her mind in any way. Butterbur (Tolkien, 2001:134) says:

He is one of the wandering folk – Rangers we call them. He seldom talks: not but what he can tell a rare tale when he has the mind. He disappears for a month, or a year, and then he pops up again. He was in and out pretty often last spring; but I haven't seen him about lately. What his right name is I've never heard: but he's known round here as Strider. Goes about at a great pace on his long shanks; though he don't tell nobody what cause he has to hurry.

This is the reader's first introduction to Strider, who seems nothing more than a weather-beaten Ranger from the North; although as the tale progresses the reader learns that there is much more to Strider than at first is to be believed. For the concealment of a Hero's true identity is of course quite a common Romance trope, which has been used in many different Romances over the ages. Thomas Malory in his *Le Morte Darthur* tells how the prototypical Romance Hero, King Arthur, is hidden by Merlin with Sir Ector, the father of Sir Kay, who will become one of Arthur's most trusted knights (Malory, 1984: 23). Merlin does this to protect the young Arthur, who is an orphan after the death of his father, Uther Pendragon, from any contenders to the throne who might wish to harm the young prince. Arthur is given a new name and his identity is concealed (even from himself) to protect him from his enemies. In much the same way, Aragorn (the use of a similar-seeming name is not lost on the perceptive reader) is hidden with Elrond in Rivendell under an assumed name to protect him from Sauron's forces. Aragorn is content to be known as Strider by the people of Bree for it conceals his true identity from the outside world. However, much like Arthur, he is destined to be a king; and also like Arthur he will need a legendary sword in order to claim his throne. Later on in the house of Elrond (Tolkien, 2001:241), Aragorn's true identity is revealed to the

reader and those characters, such as the Hobbits, who did not know the truth from the beginning:

“And who are you, and what have you to do with Minas Tirith?” asked Boromir, looking in wonder at the lean face of the Ranger and his weatherstained cloak. “He is Aragorn, son of Arathorn,” said Elrond; “and he is descended through many fathers from Isildur Elendil’s son of Minas Ithil. He is the Chief of the Dúnedain in the North, and few are now left of that folk.”

Frodo Baggins, who of course clearly does not come from as illustrious a house as Aragorn, does, however, come from a very distinguished family, especially by Hobbit standards. He is the son of Drogo Baggins and Primula Brandybuck, both from prestigious families in Hobbit society, and both known for their unusual ways – the Bagginses are known to be Elf-friends and adventurers, while the Brandybucks love the water, all of which are traits that are deemed unconscionable in the Shire (Tolkien, 2001: 23). He is an orphan who is adopted by Bilbo Baggins, a wealthy cousin renowned for his odd affiliations and his love of the outside world; the Gaffer (Sam’s father) tells the reader about Frodo’s parents in the first chapter of the book (Tolkien, 2001: 23): ‘...And Mr Drogo...went out *boating* on the Brandywine River; and he and his wife were drowned, and poor Mr. Frodo only a child and all.’ Frodo is also described as quite an eccentric Hobbit: he is frequently seen travelling with Elves, he can speak Elvish, he does not mind the water, and he knows a great deal about the world beyond the Shire (Tolkien, 2001: 25). In many ways he is chosen by Bilbo to be his heir not only because they share the same birthday, the twenty-second of September, but because they similarly share a love of travel (although both do not like travel plans forced on them, which seems to happen often when Gandalf enters their lives), and both of them are fascinated by the affairs of the various peoples of Middle-Earth. It also seems that they both hide their true identities on their respective travels: Bilbo pretends to be a burglar in *The Hobbit*, whereas Frodo assumes the name of Mr Underhill (an astute reference to where he lives – literally under a hill) when he reaches Bree in order to disguise his arrival from any that might be in the service of the Dark Lord (Tolkien, 2001:126). Frodo’s hiding of his

identity is then driven by the same motives as Aragorn and Arthur: a necessity to conceal his true character in order to survive.

‘An Old Grey Man, Bent and Troubled’ (Tolkien, 2001: 12): The Master⁶

The connection between Frodo’s and Aragorn’s hidden identities is similar in another way to Arthur’s concealed identity; in the same way that the Wizard, Merlin, gives Arthur a new identity, the Wizard, Gandalf, who is certainly based in part on Merlin, both gives Frodo his new name and reveals Aragorn’s true identity to Frodo and the reader. Gandalf instructs Frodo to use the nom de plume, Mr Underhill, while travelling to Bree, saying that ‘...you will have to go, and leave the name of Baggins behind you. That name will not be safe to have, outside the Shire or in the Wild. I will give you a travelling name now. When you go, go as Mr. Underhill’ (Tolkien, 2001: 45). He also uses Aragorn’s Ranger name, Strider, in his letter to Frodo in the Inn of the Prancing Pony, telling Frodo to ‘[m]ake sure that it is the real Strider. There are many strange men on the roads. His true name is Aragorn,’ (2001:147) thereby connecting Frodo, Mr Underhill, Aragorn and Strider in a single letter. This so-called concealment is a testament to the fact that both the Heroes of *The Lord of the Rings* look to Gandalf for guidance. This reliance on the Master – a sometimes wise and wizened character with a long flowing white beard reminiscent of depictions of Merlin, and in more

⁶ The term Master has been taken from Timothy O’Neill’s (1979) book on the use of Jungian archetypes in *The Lord of the Rings*. The description of the Master is taken from the Jungian archetype and it is O’Neill that makes the connection between Gandalf and the Master figure, who is usually a guide for the Hero in archetypal theory. There is, however, evidence of Tolkien using the word Master in relation to Gandalf upon the Wizard’s arrival in Middle-Earth. Although Master is a generic term of status used elsewhere in *The Lord of the Rings*, such as when Nob calls the Hobbits ‘Masters’ (although he does make it slightly derogatory with the addition of the adjective ‘little’) it does seem out of place that Círdan the Shipwright, a high status Elf, would use this term in the same way as the stableman in Bree. The word in this dissertation is used in the same way as found in O’Neill’s discussion of Gandalf being a Master figure.

recent times, Albus Dumbledore – is another Romance meme or trope that is usually associated with the Hero. The Master also has very specific capabilities and features that identified him as a worthy guide for the Hero.

Besides his usual appearance – ‘An old man was driving it all alone. He wore a tall pointed blue hat, a long grey cloak, and a silver scarf. He had a long white beard and bushy eyebrows that stuck out beyond the brim of his hat’ (Tolkien, 2001: 24) – the Master’s use of magic defines him as a character. The Master, like the Wizard Merlin before him, is therefore responsible for introducing, as C.N. Manlove (1975: 17) calls it ‘...a substantial and irreducible element of the supernatural with which the mortal characters in the story or readers become on at least partly familiar terms.’ He is the Master of Magic, and that quality is the true defining influence that sets Romance apart from other genres. Helen Cooper (2009: 137) insists that: ‘Romance promises a world of dragons and giants, magic weapons and protective rings, flying horses and self-steering boats. [As such] Magic and the supernatural rank high among the distinguishing features of the genre, the most recognizable elements of family resemblance.’ This eager acceptance of magic, Claire Delacroix (1998: 4) explains, is due to the fact that ‘[i]n the medieval period, there seems to linger the possibility of magic, the danger of things unseen, the prospect of daring adventure.’ The use of magic in Tolkien’s world is as subtle and unquestioned as in most other Romances (Sweeney, 2000: 12). There are, however, sporadic scenes in which magic becomes a palpable force that prominently captures the reader’s attention. And nearly all of them (barring a few that contain the Lady Galadriel) have Gandalf as the driving force. A particular scene in Théoden’s halls, which occurs before Gandalf ‘heals’ Théoden of the madness and mental and physical decay caused by Gríma Wormtongue’s words and Saruman’s poisonous influence, is one such powerful example. Gandalf begins by chanting a line of verse in honour of Galadriel for ‘[w]hite is the star in [her] white hand,’ which refers to Narya, the Ring of Water. Tolkien (2001: 503) describes the scene in religious terms,

which only strengthens the connection between Gandalf's magic and his position as an emissary of the divine Creator. Tolkien (2001: 503) writes that:

Thus Gandalf softly sang, and then suddenly he changed. Casting his tattered cloak aside, he stood up and leaned no longer on his staff; and he spoke in a clear cold voice. "The wise speak only of what they know, Gríma son of Galmod. A witless worm have you become. Therefore be silent, and keep your forked tongue behind your teeth. I have not passed through fire and death to bandy crooked words with a serving-man till the lightning falls." He raised his staff. There was a roll of thunder. The sunlight was blotted out from the eastern windows; the whole hall became suddenly dark as night. The fire faded to sullen embers. Only Gandalf could be seen, standing white and tall before the blackened hearth.

As witnessed in the depiction of Gandalf's power, the Master's magic is usually associated with the element of fire, especially since the archetypal Master figure, Merlin, is often linked to the creation of and control of the irrepressible power of fire (Goodrich, 1990: 43). Thus Gandalf is described in *The Lord of the Rings* as '...the old man, Gandalf the Wizard, whose fame in the Shire was due mainly to his skill with fires, smokes, and lights' (Tolkien, 2001: 25). The connection to Merlin not only through appearance but also through the control of magic and fire strengthens Gandalf's role as the Master figure in Tolkien's book. It is also for this reason, that Tolkien (2001: 1060) constructs a scene in *The Lord of the Rings's* appendix which shows Gandalf, known also as Mithrandir (Sindarin for 'Grey-wanderer' [Tyler, 1973: 307]), receiving the Ring of Fire from Círdan, the Shipwright:

Círdan later surrendered his [Ring of Power] to Mithrandir. For Círdan saw further and deeper than any other in Middle-Earth, and he welcomed Mithrandir at the Grey Havens, knowing whence he came and whither he would return. "Take this ring, Master," he said, "for your labours will be heavy; but it will support you in the weariness that you have taken upon yourself. For this is the Ring of Fire, and with it you may rekindle hearts in a world that grows chill. But as for me, my heart is with the Sea, and I will dwell by the grey shores until the last ship sails. I will await you."

It is interesting to note that even in Tolkien's text Círdan addresses Gandalf as 'Master' when he bestows the Ring of Fire (or Narya [Tyler, 1973:479]) on the Wizard. The Ring of Fire is, of course, particularly apt for Gandalf in his role as Master. The association with fire – an element which is essential for life (particularly in the form of heat), but which is at the same

time very dangerous – is indicative of the need for the Master and his respectable position in the narrative. Northrop Frye (1973: 152) states that: ‘Fire in the innocent world is usually a purifying symbol, a world of flame that none but the perfectly chaste can pass, as in Spenser’s castle of Busirane, the refining fire at the top of Dante’s purgatory, and the flaming sword that keeps the fallen Adam and Eve away from Paradise.’ For this reason, Gandalf’s connection to fire, as a self-proclaimed ‘...servant of the Secret Fire, wielder of the flame of Anor,’ (Tolkien, 2001: 167) suggests him to be a purifying influence in Middle-Earth, especially since he is sent to purge Middle-Earth of Sauron’s evil. Círdan hints at this ‘mission’ since being able to see ‘further and deeper than any other in Middle-Earth’ he knows ‘...whence [Mithrandir] came and whither he would return,’ and what his labours in Middle-Earth would entail. Gandalf is sent by the Valar to aid Middle-Earth against the might of Sauron (but not through the use of his own force or power, which might have been corrupted by the Ring). Tolkien, in a letter (Carpenter, 2002: 156), writes that although Gandalf is a Maia (an unearthly or ‘angelic’ spirit in the heavenly order of Tolkien’s cosmos [Tyler, 1973: 505]):

There are naturally no precise modern terms to say what he was. I would venture to say that he was an incarnate “angel” – strictly an *αγγελος* that is, with the other Istari, Wizards, “those who know”, an emissary from the Lords of the West, sent to Middle-Earth, as the great crisis of Sauron loomed on the horizon. By “incarnate” I mean they were embodied in physical bodies capable of pain, and weariness, and of afflicting the spirit with physical fear, and of being “killed”, though supported by the angelic spirit they might endure long, and only show slowly the wearing of care and labour.

The Master is there to aid the Hero, but is also there to steer the narrative’s action in the correct course: as such he is a stabilising force that adds a sense of order in direct contravention to the chaos created by the antagonist (Cooper, 2009: 67). Christopher Grabner, in his essay, ‘Human, Semi-Human, Non-Human and Super-Human Selves in Flux: Morphological Pluralism in J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*’, suggests that the Wizards ‘...function as mediators between the various races and their lands. Moreover, they embody a bridge between the worlds of good and evil, the realms of mortality and eternity’

(Coelsch-Foisner, 2004: 58-59). In fact, often in Romance literature, the Master is the antithesis of the supernatural evil in the work. As Merlin is the force that often works against the machinations of the enchantresses, Queen Mab and Morgan Le Fay (Goodrich, 1990: 5), Gandalf is often seen to be the opposing force to Sauron: 'As Gandalf is uniter and rekindler, Sauron is division and decay. The foes are well matched' (O'Neill, 1979: 93). Even Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 181) suggests in a letter that: 'Gandalf's opposite was, strictly, Sauron, in one part of Sauron's operations; as Aragorn [the Hero] was in another,' and principally when Gandalf the White is acting against the machinations of the Dark Lord, Sauron. Gandalf makes this distinction between the two clearly evident in his words to Frodo about why a Hobbit might be able to destroy the Ring:

[T]here is only one Power in this world that knows all about the Rings and their effects; and as far as I know there is no Power in the world that knows all about Hobbits. Among the Wise I am the only one that goes in for Hobbit-lore: an obscure branch of knowledge, but full of surprises. Soft as butter they can be, and yet sometimes as tough as old tree-roots. I think it likely that some would resist the Rings far longer than most of the Wise would believe. (Tolkien, 2001: 470)

This proves to be true. Gandalf's high estimation of Hobbits, and Sauron's complete ignorance of them (or at least his underestimation of them as viable enemies) turns out to be the determining factor in the success of Frodo and Sam's quest to destroy the One Ring. Tolkien evidences this dependence on the Master's guidance and wisdom in Aragorn's speech at the King's coronation: "By the labour and valour of many I have come into my inheritance. In token of this I would have the Ring-bearer bring the crown to me, and let Mithrandir set it upon my head, if he will; for he has been the mover of all that has been accomplished, and this is his victory" (Tolkien, 2001: 946). However, the greatest test of Gandalf's function as a wise and benevolent Master is when Frodo offers Gandalf the Ring because he considers the Wizard to be 'wise and powerful' (Tolkien, 2001: 60). Gandalf rejects the Ring, saying: "Do not tempt me! For I do not wish to become like the Dark Lord himself. Yet the way of the Ring to my heart is by pity, pity for weakness and the desire of strength to do good. Do not tempt me!" This pity is the same heroic skill that Gandalf imparts

to Frodo, which in due course rules the fate of them all, and which will be discussed in detail further on. Gandalf knows, as any true Master would, that he needs to guide the narrative forward and let the Hero accomplish the heroic feats on which the narrative is reliant, even though the Master has the power to perform deeds in his own right. Gandalf demonstrates his acceptance of this role when he tells Frodo, “And now the decision lies with you. But I will always help you.’ He laid his hand on Frodo’s shoulder. ‘I will help you bear this burden, as long as it is yours to bear. But we must do something, soon. The Enemy is moving.” (Tolkien, 2001: 60).

Since Romance Heroes tend to be orphans it makes sense that a substitute father figure would need to provide tutelage in order to train the would-be Hero, not in the art of battle, but rather in the art of achieving heroic stature – and often in the art of becoming king. Merlin assists Arthur on his path to becoming King, and then afterwards in the golden age of Camelot, to stabilise a troubled kingdom and in a similar way, the reader of *The Lord of the Rings* is aware that without Gandalf it seems unlikely that Aragorn will become King, or that Frodo will succeed in his quest to destroy the One Ring. Gandalf views Aragorn as a friend, saying ‘And my search [for Gollum] would have been in vain, but for the help that I had from a friend: Aragorn, the greatest traveller and huntsman of this age of the world’ (2001:57); and the reader can tell from Aragorn’s speech that he feels both indebted to Gandalf and truly respectful of all he is doing for Middle-Earth. When Gandalf returns as The White, Aragorn says of him: ‘The Dark Lord has Nine. But we have One, mightier than they: the White Rider. He has passed through the fire and the abyss, and they shall fear him. We will go where he leads,’ (Tolkien, 2001: 490) acknowledging his willingness to follow wherever Gandalf may take them. In this way the relationship between Master and pupil could be likened to a grandmaster moving pieces in a game of chess, all in an effort to preserve his king (although the concept of freewill is never denied to those that Gandalf mentors and guides). For Frodo, however, since there can only be one rightful king, Gandalf becomes more of a tutor in the competencies that a Hero should possess in a Romance world, which

Middle-Earth undoubtedly is. As previously mentioned, a Hero, even one that is as unassuming or unprepared as Frodo needs to exhibit the traits of a Hero in order to be a true hero – ‘franchise, felaghsip, clanes, cortasie and pity’. Frodo notably laments the return of Sauron and the quest he must undertake in order to vanquish him saying: ‘I wish it need not have happened in my time,’ (Tolkien, 2001: 56), but Gandalf answers his lament in true Masterly fashion by replying: ‘So do I, and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us’ (Tolkien, 2001: 56). Also very early on in *The Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf teaches Frodo about pity, telling him how pity or mercy – ‘Pity, and Mercy: not to strike without need’ (Tolkien, 2001: 58) – could rule the fate of them all. When Frodo learns that Gollum is still alive after all the terrible deeds he has done, the Hobbit laments that ‘He [Gollum] deserves death.’ To which Gandalf replies:

“Deserves it! I daresay he does. 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 judgement. For even the very wise cannot see all ends. I have not much hope that Gollum can be cured before he dies, but there is a chance of it. And he is bound up with the fate of the Ring. My heart tells me that he has some part to play yet, for good or ill, before the end; and when that comes, the pity of Bilbo may rule the fate of many – yours not least.” (2001: 58)

These prophetic words by Gandalf turn out to be very accurate because at the end of the book Frodo is unable to destroy the Ring. He cannot throw it into the fires of Orodruin, thereby fulfilling his quest. It is only after a struggle between Frodo and Gollum that the Ring falls into the fires and Sauron is destroyed. Frodo remarks on his unwillingness to part with the Ring, recalling Gandalf’s words in the process:

“But do you remember Gandalf’s words: *Even Gollum may have something yet to do?* But for him, Sam, I could not have destroyed the Ring. The Quest would have been in vain, even at the bitter end. So let us forgive him! For the Quest is achieved, and now all is over.” (Tolkien, 2001: 1098)

Thus, as Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 153) writes in a letter, it is pity, ‘...the pity of Bilbo [which] may rule the fate of many,’ (Tolkien, 2001: 58) that ‘...ultimately allows the Quest to be

achieved.’ Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 246) is able to say authoritatively that: ‘Frodo indeed ‘failed’ as a hero, as conceived by simple minds: he did not endure to the end; he gave in.’ In fact, if not for the fortuitous intervention of Gollum (and Gollum’s sharp teeth) the Ring (and the finger on which it was slipped) would have stayed on Frodo’s hand,

Until Sauron himself came. In any case a confrontation of Frodo and Sauron would soon have taken place, if the Ring was intact. Its result was inevitable. Frodo would have been utterly overthrown: crushed to dust, or preserved in torment as a gibbering slave. (Carpenter, 2002: 246)

As such, the intervention of fate, which Tolkien viewed as an important force in Middle-Earth – for ‘[b]ehind that there was something else at work, beyond any design of the Ring-maker’ (Tolkien, 2001: 55) – accomplishes the destruction of the One Ring more than the courageous feats of arms of Frodo and Sam (although the transport of the Ring is, of course, particularly courageous). However, it is not only Frodo and Aragorn that benefit from Gandalf’s guidance and tutelage. The other Hobbits – Sam, Merry and Pippin – are instructed on how to be heroic in their own right. Gandalf leaves them on the path to the Shire, although in hindsight it appears to the reader that he knows what is awaiting them – Saruman has enslaved the Shire and threatens to destroy the home they love. The Wizard says to the Hobbits:

“I am with you at present,” said Gandalf, “but soon I shall not be. I am not coming to the Shire. You must settle its affairs yourselves; that is what you have been trained for. Do you not yet understand? My time is over: it is no longer my task to set things to rights, nor to help folk to do so. And as for you, my dear friends, you will need no help. You are grown up now. Grown indeed very high; among the great you are, and I have no longer any fear at all for any of you.”

This speech foreshadows the departure of Gandalf from Middle-Earth, mirroring Merlin’s own departure from Camelot, but it also provides the opportunity for the Hero to stand on his own, having learned all that the Master might teach.

The Hero Continued

The estimation that Gollum might have a larger role to play in the fate of the Ring is not the only moment of a prophetic utterance in *The Lord of the Rings*. It often appears as if the action of the book is guided by an outside hand, a force which the Greeks called Fate. Professor Christopher Snyder, a celebrated Tolkien scholar, argues that “Fate” (a classical concept) is occasionally mentioned in *The Lord of the Rings*, but more common is the word “doom” (a medieval term).’ Both terms – fate and doom – are related to the same external force controlling the outcomes of the action, although that does not exclude the idea of freewill. Snyder (2013:171) explains:

In a recently published philological note, Tolkien himself draws attention to the linguistically connected Sindarin words *amar*, “world,” and *amarth*, “fate” (Quenya *umbar*), making the point the Eldar saw fate as the fixed, unalterable (by its inhabitants) way of the physical world, or at least the Earth. This fate “affected an individual person,” and was “not open to modification by his free will.” What has been preordained from creation can be moved or destroyed, but cannot – even by the Valar – be changed into something else. Tolkien gives the example of Bilbo being *fated* to find the Ring, but retaining his will in deciding what to do with it, just as Frodo was *fated* to be the Ring-bearer, but not to necessarily destroy it.

Romance theorists call instances when Fate is revealed, when the inner-workings of providence are momentarily laid bare to be occasions of prophecy. Gillian Beer (1970: 79) explains Romance’s reliance on prophecy (and thereby Fate) by saying that since: “Romance, being absorbed with the ideal, always has an element of prophecy,” the Hero must be bound to it. In fact the elements of prophecy – ‘the ‘Wicked Day of Destiny’ as Malory will call it’ (Vinaver, 1957: 519) – is so strong in Arthurian Romances that it seems to haunt Arthur even in death. Malory (1984: 226) wrote: “And men say that he shall com agayne, and he shall wyne the Holy Crosse. And many men say that there ys written upon the tumber thys vers: ‘*Hic iacet Arthurus, Rex quondam Rexque futurus,*’” or ‘Here lies Arthur, the once and future king.’ Both Frodo and Aragorn as the central Heroes of *The Lord of the Rings* have prophetic or fate-based elements associated with them. As Janet Brennan Croft

(2011: 155) mentions, Tolkien revisits these elements of fate as he does many other structural or elemental features of Romance:

J.R.R. Tolkien's works can be described, among many other ways, as fractal. Like artworks generated by fractal equations, the same themes repeat over and over again, level after level; any place you slice through, you find the same structure, the same motifs, reinforced through repetition and variation, down to the very heart of the work. One subject we find treated this way in Tolkien is the complex one of fate and free will; the ultimate hopeless futility of fighting one's *wyrd* is contrasted with the virtues on willingly working in harmony with the destiny of the wider world. We find this theme repeated at many levels, from overarching concepts common to Tolkien's entire oeuvre to the level of genre, plot, character, setting, and recurring motif; from the cosmic conflicts of the Valar to the mortal affairs of Men.

This repetition and variation is evidenced by the prophecies that surround the two central Heroes of *The Lord of the Rings*: Aragorn and Frodo. The prophecy surrounding Aragorn is twofold: the first part is that he is born the heir of Isildur and so the rightful future King of Gondor, provided he can survive his trials and win his throne; the second part is included in a poem written for him by his friend and the finder of the Ring of Power, Bilbo Baggins. He says (Tolkien, 2001:164) that:

All that is gold does not glitter,
Not all those who wander are lost;
The old that is strong does not wither,
Deep roots are not reached by the frost.
From the ashes a fire shall be woken,
A light from the shadows shall spring;
Renewed shall be blade that was broken,
The crownless again shall be king.

The reader is introduced to these lines of verse upon Frodo's arrival at Rivendell, and they reveal much to the reader about Aragorn's past – he is a Ranger and therefore wanders far and wide, but of course he is never lost being '...the greatest traveller and huntsman of this age of the world.' – but the reader also learns what must come to pass if Aragorn is to be King – the blade that was broken must be renewed. This element of prophecy allows the reader to associate the reforged sword, Andúril, mentioned in the next chapters with Aragorn's success. This association between the Hero and the sword is one of the greatest

tropes of Romance (Cooper, 2009: 36), for Arthur only becomes King Arthur by pulling Excalibur from the stone. Apart from the prophecy of the King and the Sword, Aragorn also fulfils a later prophecy at the end of the book when he heals Merry, Éowyn and Faramir in the Houses of Healing. As Ioreth, the eldest of the women serving in the Houses says: 'The hands of the king are the hands of a healer, and so shall the rightful king be known' (Tolkien, 2001:844). Since Aragorn heals the stricken, rumours of the return of the King soon pour across the city.

The element of fate associated with Frodo, however, is related not to a sword but rather to the Ring of Power. Gandalf tries to comfort Frodo after telling him about the danger of the Ring, and the inevitable journey he must make into even greater danger in order to destroy it. Frodo expresses the wish that the Ring had never come to him and Gandalf answers him (Tolkien, 2001: 55) by saying that: 'Behind that there was something else at work, beyond any design of the Ring-maker. I can put it no plainer than by saying that Bilbo was *meant* to find the Ring, and *not* by its maker. In which case you also were *meant* to have it. And that may be an encouraging thought.' The concept of fate and doom seem to coalesce in this explanation of why Frodo is *meant* to have the Ring, especially in Frodo's mind. Either way, what is certain within the constructs of *The Lord of the Rings* and from the text itself is that Frodo was meant to be a Ring-bearer in the same way that Aragorn is fated to be King; both destinies are ideal and inevitable.

To further knit these two elements of prophecy and fate together Tolkien creates a dream in which Aragorn and Frodo appear with their respective prophetic symbols side by side: Aragorn and his sword and Frodo and the Ring. In *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Boromir comes to Elrond's council with a dream he has had about which he wants Elrond's help; it is either a great coincidence or else fate that he should come at a time that the answers to his dream are themselves coming to Rivendell to seek Elrond's guidance. A dream in which glimpses of the future or of the faraway present is shown is, not surprisingly, a powerful

recurring concept in Romance literature (Beer, 1970: 89). As Rudi Künzel (2002: 215) explains in his *Medieval Dreams* 'Dreams can be conceived of as actual interventions of supernatural powers in the experiential worlds of individuals ("a divinity appears to someone in his sleep"), as active communication between the dreamers and another world.' Boromir's dream can be considered as such a prophetic intrusion in the narrative. Bruckner (2010: 135) explains that the function of the dream vision is that it gives the reader a glimpse of the future possibilities, which only draws attention to what must be achieved in the narrative of the text. Bruckner (2010: 135) writes that: 'On the one hand, these dream visions provide accurate predictions of a specific future action whose imminence is thus enhanced.' In Boromir's dream, therefore, not only are Aragorn and Frodo referred to, but the word *Doom*, which as mentioned before is synonymous with the Grecian concept of fate, is again used by Tolkien in relation to the Ruling Ring – echoing the line in the Ring Lore, 'Nine [Rings] for Mortal Men doomed to die' (Tolkien, 2001: 50). Boromir explains that 'In [his] dream [he] thought the eastern sky grew dark and there was a growing thunder, but in the West a pale light lingered, and out of it [he] heard a voice, remote but clear.' The voice told him to:

Seek for the Sword that was broken:
In Imladris it dwells;
There shall be counsels taken
Stronger than Morgul-spells.
There shall be shown a token
That Doom is near at hand,
For Isildur's Bane shall waken,
And the Halfling forth shall stand.

The importance of the sword in Romance literature cannot be overestimated, because without it, the Hero does not have much hope of completing his quest or vanquishing his foe. William Shakespeare writes in *Hamlet* (Edwards, 2001: 556) that 'clothes maketh the man,' and in Romance the expression would undoubtedly become that 'the sword maketh the Hero.' The arming of the Hero is one of the most common Romance tropes; in fact it might be said that a Hero does not truly even exist as a Hero until he has his sword. As mentioned previously, Arthur does not become King Arthur before pulling Excalibur from the stone in

Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*; nor is Gawain a true knight until he is arrayed in his full armour (including Excalibur, which he has borrowed from Arthur) in the medieval telling of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. *The Companion to Medieval Romance* (Kenlin, 1995: 289) explains that the reliance on the sword in Romance literature has much to do with the history of the sword in medieval times:

The importance of this weapon in a warrior society does not need to be stressed. Indeed, the sword was a functioning piece of military equipment until comparatively modern times, and it was and remains a symbol of significance. A good sword was a very valuable possession, and in Anglo-Saxon times it was often passed on from generation to generation, or returned to the lord on the user's death according to the custom of heriot whereby the weapon was merely lent to the user for his lifetime. The importance of the sword in medieval times is emphasised by the fact that some were given names in literature. As a symbol the sword could signify ideas such as political or spiritual right, or physical chastity. Arthur's right to a kingdom is proved by his singular ability to pull the sword from the stone or anvil. Galahad, who is to achieve the Grail, also pulls a sword from a stone, and Sigmund draws Branstock from an oak.

In *The Lord of the Rings* the sword is equally important since it is representative of the societies of Middle-Earth, which are reminiscent of the feudal structures found in the medieval era (Rohan is unquestionably influenced by the Anglo-Saxon cultures that Tolkien studied and wrote about [Shippey, 2002: 134]). The sword is also an important factor in defining the Hero's character in the story. In a way the revelation of the sword allows the reader to discern that the Hero is now worthy to undertake the required quest, or that he now has the means to slay the beast that is the antagonist of the work.

Christopher Snyder (2013: 105) mentions in his book, *The Making of Middle-Earth*, that the swords in Tolkien's Legendarium have entered into the same sphere of eminence as other swords from Romance literature because they set apart the Heroes that bear them. He writes that 'Named swords are commonplace in medieval legend; thus Thorin's Orcrist (Sindarin "Goblin-cleaver") and Gandalf's Glamdring ("Foe-hammer") join such Hero-weapons as Arthur's Excalibur ("From Steel," from the Latin *caliburnus*), Beowulf's Hrunting (Old English "Thrusting"), and Sigurd's Gram (Old Norse "Wrath").' Snyder goes on to further

explain the role of two swords that feature heavily in *The Lord of the Rings* (2013: 106): Andúril, the blade that is forged from the shards of Narsil, which was the sword that Isildur used to cut the One Ring from the hand of Sauron, and Sting, which is the Gondolinian dagger that Bilbo Baggins finds in *The Hobbit* and bequeaths to Frodo in *The Lord of the Rings*. Both of these blades go far to signify the worthiness of the respective Heroes – in fact Frodo seems to become much more heroic upon receipt of Sting – but perhaps the most recognisable sword in Tolkien’s masterpiece is the one whose reforging is foretold of in the prophetic verse written about Aragorn. In the chapter ‘The Ring Goes South’, after the forming of the Fellowship of the Ring, Aragorn declares (2001: 155) that: ‘The Sword-that-was-Broken shall be reforged ere I set out to war,’ creating a link between the Quest and the reforging of the blade. It is for this same reason that in *The Two Towers* at the Battle for Helm’s Deep when the people shout “Andúril! Andúril goes to war. The Blade that was Broken shines again!” (Tolkien, 2001: 367), instead of Aragorn’s name it does not seem out of place because the two have become almost synonymous. In this way, in the reader’s mind at least, Aragorn’s purpose and the sword become intertwined, thereby producing ‘...a serene intermingling of the unexpected and the everyday’ (Beer, 1970: 67). A sword, even one as remarkable as Andúril, is of course nothing more than a sword, but the purpose it serves as a symbol for the Hero’s cause is extraordinary. The description of the renewing of Aragorn’s sword (Tolkien, 2001: 156) is full of symbolic meaning for him as a Hero, and clearly defines him as the opposing force to Sauron, who is described often in relation to darkness and shadow:

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

The inclusion of the seven stars, the sun and the moon on the blade – all symbols of light which has intense meaning in Romance literature – elucidates Aragorn’s status as the

central Hero and distinguishes him as the antithesis of Sauron, who is referred to as the Dark Lord. In this way, in great part due to the sword, Aragorn becomes the Hero he was fated to be because the link between the Sword of Elendil, which initially cut the Ring from Sauron's hand thereby defeating him for the first time, and the fact that Aragorn is Elendil's heir is made apparent to the reader. For after the forging of Andúril, Aragorn is now truly the heir of Elendil (and of course Isildur) because he wields the weapon that was once rightfully theirs, which also allows the reader to conclude that since the sword was Sauron's undoing before it will likely be his undoing again; there is even a suggestion (Tolkien, 2001: 455) that Sauron fears the blade (or perhaps rather what it represents). From the moment that Aragorn, his *nouveau nom de guerre*, takes up his new weapon he is no longer called Strider in *The Lord of the Rings* (except perhaps by the Hobbits who first knew him as that), which demonstrates that his heroic status has been achieved. In the meeting between Aragorn and Éomer, when the Riders of Rohan challenge his crossing of their land, Aragorn shows his mettle as a Hero and claims the right both as Elendil's heir and the bearer of the blade that last belonged to the fallen king. Tolkien writes (2001: 423) that:

Aragorn threw back his cloak. The elven-sheath glittered as he grasped it, and the bright blade of Andúril shone like a sudden flame as he swept it out. "Elendil!" he cried. "I am Aragorn, son of Arathorn, and am called Elessar, the Elfstone, Dúnadan, the heir of Isildur Elendil's son of Gondor. Here is the Sword that was Broken and is forged again! Will you aid me or thwart me? Choose swiftly!"

Although Sting, Bilbo's sword which he bestows on Frodo, does not have as eminent a legacy as Andúril, it does serve a similar purpose to Aragorn's sword: it makes him heroic. The weapon, which is no bigger than a dagger by men's standards, is part of the trolls' hoard that Gandalf and Bilbo find in *The Hobbit*. In the same treasure trove Gandalf discovers his sword, Glamdring or 'Foe-hammer', which he uses in battle in both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Glamdring and Sting are both forged in Gondolin – a fallen Elven city from the Elder Days of Middle-Earth whose most famous son was Eärendil, who is spoken of often in *The Lord of the Rings* (Tyler, 1973: 124). Glamdring's identity is known to Elrond, who is a

descendant of Eärendil, but Sting unfortunately, being nothing more than a knife or dagger, is unnamed and unidentified. The blade, which is the size of a sword for a Hobbit, remains nameless until the company reach Mirkwood and giant spiders attack them. Bilbo kills a spider with his newfound weapon the first time he uses it in battle, which prompts him to name the sword with the words, “I will give you a name,” he said to it, “and I shall call you Sting” (Tolkien, 1999: 62). Bilbo, who at the start of the travels has no time for adventures, now becomes far more heroic because he is armed with a sword. Sting allows him to perform many other heroic accomplishments, such as saving all the dwarves more than once or escaping Gollum with the Ring.

In the same manner, Sting bestows a form of heroic prowess on Frodo. Bilbo gives Sting to Frodo to help him on his journey, and the scene Tolkien describes reiterates the excellent qualities of the sword:

He took from the box a small sword in an old shabby leathern scabbard. Then he drew it, and its polished and well-tended blade glittered suddenly, cold and bright. “This is Sting,” he said, and thrust it with little effort deep into a wooden beam. “Take it, if you like. I shan’t want it again, I expect.”

Before Frodo receives Sting he is portrayed as timid and fearful, but after he gains his sword he is much more traditionally or physically heroic. He even manages to stab a troll while travelling through the Mines of Moria. When Boromir notches and drops his sword unable to strike the mountain troll (perhaps Tolkien’s way of hinting at Boromir’s ultimate and unheroic betrayal) Frodo,

[s]uddenly, and to his own surprise, felt a hot wrath blaze up in his heart. “The Shire!” he cried, and springing beside Boromir, he stooped, and stabbed with Sting at the hideous foot. There was a bellow, and the foot jerked back, nearly wrenching Sting from Frodo’s arm. Black drops dripped from the blade and smoked on the floor. (Tolkien, 2001: 189)

Frodo, a Hobbit, is therefore able to achieve with Sting (no more than a dagger or knife for men) something that a full size warrior with a broad sword is incapable of, which showcases

Sting's superior qualities and Frodo's heroism. Directly after Frodo wounds the mountain troll with Sting, Aragorn addresses Frodo by his full heroic designation. "One for the Shire!" cried Aragorn. 'The hobbit's bite is deep! You have a good blade, Frodo son of Drogo!' (Tolkien, 2001: 190). This emphasizes both the importance of the sword and that now there are Aragorn, son of Arathorn and Frodo, son of Drogo (the resemblance in each of the two names creates a sort of mirror effect for the reader).

Another connection that Sting and Andúril share is that they have both belonged to previous owners that are known to the reader, which is a familiar Romance trope (Cooper, 2009: 189). Sting has belonged to Bilbo while Andúril has belonged to Elendil, both of whom in their own unique ways have proved their heroism, and had their fates intricately linked with the Ring; Elendil dies in battle with Sauron and his death spurs Isildur to strike the Ruling Ring from Sauron's hand; whereas Bilbo finds the Ring after it abandons Isildur and Gollum. The convention is that for a sword to be considered extraordinary it must have an intricate history or back-story. In a legend from the Arthurian cycle, possibly first recounted in the thirteenth century work, *Estoire de Merlin*, which was one of the main sources for Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*, Arthur gains his sword, Excalibur, from the Lady of the Lake. Eugène Vinaver, in his *King Arthur's Sword or The Making of a Medieval Romance*, narrates (1957: 523) how, in true Master form,

Merlin leads Arthur to the edge of a lake; from beneath the waters rises an arm in a sleeve of rich silk holding a sword. A mysterious lady then appears "par déviers la mer", and using an invisible bridge to reach the centre of the lake she takes the sword and gives it to Arthur. It is this sword which will henceforth bear the name Escalibor.

Therefore it makes sense that when Arthur, who is mortally wounded, instructs Sir Bedevere to take Excalibur and throw it into a nearby lake, '...there cam an arme and an honde above the watir, and toke hit and cleyght hit, and shoke hit thryse and braundysshed hit, and then vanysshed with the swerde into the watir' (Malory, 1984: 224). The Lady of the Lake thereby takes back the gift she has given: or perhaps Arthur returns the sword because as Vinaver

(1957: 521) asserts 'He knew that the sword with which a feudal lord armed his vassal was given, like all feudal privileges, in return for the vassal's reverence and faith.' And since he no longer needed Excalibur it was '...returned to the [Lady of the Lake] on the user's death according to the custom of heriot whereby the weapon was merely lent to the user for his lifetime' (Kenlin, 1995: 289). Therefore the fact that Frodo and Aragorn both use blades with profound pasts which are bequeathed to them by eminent and celebrated former owners seems simply another indication of how Tolkien adheres to Romance conventions (it is also mentioned that both swords are passed down to heirs: Frodo leaves Sting to Sam when he sails from Middle-Earth while Aragorn's son, Eldarion, inherits Andúril upon his father's death [Tyler, 1973: 415&20]).

In Thomas Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*, a work whose title can be translated as the Death of Arthur, it seems surprising that Arthur does not die – at least not in the narrative. Malory describes Arthur being grievously wounded, but the reader never actually witnesses Arthur die. He sails away to the Isle of the Blessed, known as Avalon, where the author and Bedevere hope Arthur will recover from his wounds – 'For I muste into the vale of Avylyon to hele me of my grevous wounde' (Malory, 1984: 225). Malory recounts that many believe the legendary king is dead (although many others disagree), but he does not comment on the veracity of the rumours; instead he intrudes on the narrative to contend as a historian (Malory, 1984: 226) that 'Thus of Arthur I fynde no more wrytten in bokis that bene auctorysed, nothir more of the verry sertaynté of his dethe harde I never rede'. The author, therefore, reports rather the prophetic script written purportedly on King Arthur's tombstone: '*Hic iacet Arthurus, Rex quondam Rexque futurus,*' which lends credence to the theory of King Arthur's messianic return. Perhaps the belief in Arthur's alleged return, which has endured for centuries, is due in part to a Romance trope popular in several Romances of the era. This trope would come to define the Hero in many Romances: so much so that a return from death is commonplace, if not entirely expected, in many of the genres that are descended from Romance. Helen Cooper (2009:11) states in her description of the memes

of Romance that Romances ‘...often incorporate a return from an encounter with death – a symbolic resurrection.’ In *The Lord of the Rings* both Frodo and Aragorn encounter death in one shape or another, returning unscathed, and thereby accomplishing a form of symbolic resurrection.

During the Fellowship’s flight from the Mines of Moria, Frodo is struck by a spear and pinned to a wall by a huge Orc-chieftain. Aragorn, knowing that the Company cannot linger long for fear of further attacks lifts up Frodo and carries him through into the next room. When Frodo tells Aragorn that he can walk (Tolkien, 2001: 191), ‘Aragorn nearly drop[s] him in his amazement. ‘I thought you were dead!’ he crie[s].’ For a short while the reader is as amazed as Aragorn because as he later asserts (Tolkien, 2001: 191): “That spear-thrust would have skewered a wild boar!” Frodo does not explain to the Fellowship until much later that he has been saved by a mithril coat that he received from Bilbo at the same time that he was given his sword, Sting (another heirloom of Bilbo’s previous adventure – Frodo now carries three items from *The Hobbit*, and of course the trinity has great significance in Romance [Cusimano, 2010: 1]). All Gandalf says to Frodo (Tolkien, 2001: 191) is: ‘You take after Bilbo. There is more about you than meets the eye, as I said of him long ago.’ Frodo is again thought dead in *The Two Towers* after Shelob, the giant spider, attacks him. Sam, who is now titled ‘Samwise the Hobbit, Hamfast’s son’ to show his heroism after wounding Shelob with Sting believes Frodo is dead and takes the Ring and the sword, Sting, to continue with the quest alone; but he soon learns that Frodo is only stunned and will wake up when Shelob’s venom wears off. When Sam saves Frodo from the Tower of Cirith Ungol, the reader is once more relieved. Frodo returns from the brink of death for his third symbolic resurrection in *The Return of the King* (three revivifications, one in each of the three sections of *The Lord of the Rings* is connected to the symbolic repetition of the number three in Romance writings, which may have been symbolic allusions to the trinity [Cusimano, 2010: 56]). At the edge of Mount Doom – a name that captures the fate-filled purpose of the destruction of the Ring, as well as symbolizing the Doom of Sauron, Gollum and for a short

moment perhaps even Frodo, the Ring-bearer – Frodo struggles with Gollum over the Ring (Tolkien, 2001: 924). The two of them teeter on the edge of the chasm, but at the last moment Gollum falls into the fires of Mount Doom, destroying his Precious in the process. Tolkien writes (2001: 925) that ‘There was a roar and a great confusion of noise. Fires leaped up and licked the roof. The throbbing grew to a great tumult, and the Mountain shook,’ which makes the reader wonder about the fate of Frodo. When Sam carries him out of the doors of Orodruin – as with the last two instances that Frodo has been carried – the reader does not know for certain if Frodo is still alive or not, especially since Tolkien describes the destruction of the mountain as so devastating that it seems doubtful that were Frodo on the edge of Orodruin he would have survived when the ‘[f]ires leaped up and licked the roof.’ However, as Sam stands ‘...there upon the dark threshold of the Sammath Naur, high above the plains of Mordor...’ and watches as Sauron, Barad-dûr, Mount Doom and the Ringwraiths are destroyed, he suddenly hears a voice by his side say: ‘Well, this is the end, Sam Gamgee’ (Tolkien, 2001: 926). Frodo, like Aragorn, has gone through a heroic transformation, which this symbolic death has finalised: as a Hero he is now no longer a Ring-bearer; but a Ring-destroyer, and that action has transformed him into a Hero, especially in the eyes of the free peoples of Middle-Earth. The final symbolic connection to death that Frodo exhibits is perhaps his greatest connection to King Arthur: this is the fact that neither of them dies in the narrative of their own respective stories. As Snyder explains (2013: 77): ‘Tolkien himself described Frodo’s departure with the elves to the Undying Lands in the West as “an Arthurian ending,” i.e., similar to the departure of Arthur to Avalon, where he is joined on a ship by Elves or queens. Both Frodo and Arthur leave to be healed of the “grievous wounds,” and both voyages may be symbolic of death.’ This gift of healing and restoration is of course Frodo’s reward for all his heroic accomplishments; and much like Arthur it seems that he will remain the rest of his days in the land of the Elves, where there are ‘...white shores and beyond them a far green country under a swift sunrise’ (Tolkien, 2001: 1007).

Aragorn, unlike Frodo, does not have a near-death experience in *The Lord of the Rings* that he miraculously returns from (although in Peter Jackson's film version of *The Two Towers* Aragorn does fall off a cliff into the Entwash and for a while everyone thinks he is dead). His association with death and his symbolic resurrection are far more powerful because he '...passe[s] into the shadows under the black Dwimorberg, the Haunted Mountain, in which [i]s the Gate of the Dead,' (Tolkien, 2001: 768) after which he is symbolically reborn as the King of Gondor. When Aragorn summons the dead at the Stone of Erech to fulfil their past oaths and fight against Sauron, it is the first instance mentioned where the standard of his future house as King of Gondor – the black banner with the white tree – is unfurled (Tolkien, 2001: 771). Aragorn becomes the King whose return is alluded to in the title of the last section of *The Lord of the Rings – The Return of the King*. He is even called 'The King of the Dead' (Tolkien, 2001: 771) by the people in the surrounding villages, which is perhaps his first royal designation. His symbolic death then occurs rather in that he sets aside his past life, and identity, and arises as what he is fated to be: Elessar, the Elfstone, Dúnadan, the heir of Isildur Elendil's son, and the rightful King of Gondor and Arnor. However, it is not an easy death. Aragorn does not ride with the dead following behind him – an image inundated with allusions to the Book of Revelations: '*Et ecce equus pallidus et qui sedebat desuper nomen illi Mors et inferus sequebatur eum.*' – because he wants to walk this path; he is at first doubtful of it being the right course. But he realises that '[n]o other road will serve,' for he goes '...on a path appointed' (Tolkien, 2001: 168). Aragorn says to Éowyn (Tolkien, 2001: 168) that: 'I do not choose paths of peril, Éowyn. Were I to go where my heart dwells, far in the North I would now be wandering in the fair valley of Rivendell.' Aragorn must travel the Paths of the Dead, and thereby, having left his old life behind, he must become the foretold King, in order to save Middle-Earth. But Aragorn the Ranger and Aragorn the King are two sides of the same coin. As such, Tolkien (2001: 384) frequently reveals glimpses of Aragorn's regal (yet concealed) nature:

"Fear not!" said a strange voice behind him. Frodo turned and saw Strider, and yet not Strider; for the weatherworn Ranger was no longer there. In the

stern sat Aragorn son of Arathorn, proud and erect, guiding the boat with skilful strokes; his hood was cast back, and his dark hair was blowing in the wind, a light was in his eyes: a king returning from exile to his own land.

Like the Paths of the Dead, into which Aragorn must proceed, the forest is another location that the Hero must enter to prove himself worthy as a Hero. In Romance literature the forests, which are expansive and yet exceptionally dangerous, are the wild borderlands where often evil lurks and magic happens. This location, unlike the paradisaal bowers, is not an incarnation of perfection, but is rather an essential untamed and forbidden locale into which the Hero is driven in the fulfilment of the quest. This place is without a doubt presented as '[d]angerous, mysterious, idyllic, tranquil or liberating, [and] greatly [appealing] to the imagination,' (Pin, 2008: 1) which is why Annick Pin (2008: 1) mentions in *Into the Wild: The Role of the Forest in Sir Orfeo, Sir Perceval of Galles and Ywain and Gawain* that often '[i]n the Middle English verse Romances, especially, the forest is one of the most prominent locations, as it frequently forms the scene where large parts of the action take place. Indeed, many of these Romances feature a protagonist who goes into the wild.' The forest or wilderness, as this natural and feral location might be termed, is filled with adventures, and '[t]hese adventures usually lead to the main events of the narrative' (Pin, 2008: 6). But the Hero does not enter this prohibited place out of a desire to see the woods for they are '...all dark and black, and the home of dark black things' (Tolkien, 2001: 450). There is a greater purpose that brings the Romance Hero to the borderlands outside of the norms and confines of society: a hunt, a journey with no other road, or the search for something that is hidden within. Sir Gawain enters the dense forests in Bertilak's realm, aware that in all probability he is walking to meet his doom; Beowulf enters the foul, wolfhaunted marshes to hunt for Grendel's mother, cognisant of the fact that a similar doom to that which awaits Gawain is likely waiting for him as well; and both the Hobbits, Merry and Pippin, and the company led by Aragorn enter Fangorn forest because of necessity. But the Romance Hero must proceed into those dangers no matter what lurks in the distance in order to achieve his quest. For this reason, the wilderness can frequently be viewed as a

defining setting that lies in the Hero's path, '...where one might easily experience dangerous or marvellous adventures, [thereby] often provide[ing] a setting where knights can test their chivalric qualities and prove their worth (Saunders, 1993: 80).

The forests or wildernesses in Romance '...are usually presented in a similar manner and play a similar role, so that it is possible to speak of a standard or stereotype. In these stories, the hero – often a knight – generally leaves court and goes into the forest, located outside society and civilisation, in order to hunt' (Pin, 2008: 1), but during his time in the forest his heroic skills are put to the test and he needs to endure hardships and battle (and mysterious encounters with supernatural forces) in order to find his way back to society having accomplished his intended mission. Helen Cooper (2009: 70) writes that: 'The Romance forest is the place that conceals brigands and monsters, where the knight's claims to chivalry are tested, his values and sense of self tested,' and which after the slaying of the monster or the survival of the forest's dangers bestows a great deal of heroic authority on the anticipated Hero, in effect marking him as a Hero. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, for instance, Sir Gawain sets out into a wild and overgrown forest in order to find the Green Knight, who is waiting to kill him. The apparent certainty of Sir Gawain's death is further accentuated by the untamed condition of the forest, in which the oppressive and dangerous essence of nature (as evidenced by the Green Knight, who is undoubtedly a representative of that otherworldly forest) is made more and more palpable as Sir Gawain progresses. The *Pearl-* and *Gawain-*poet describes the: '[m]ony klyf [Gawain] ouerclambe in contrayez straunge/Fer floten fro his frendez fremedly he rydez,' (Tolkien, 1929: 713-714) which can be translated as '[m]any a cliff must [Gawain] climb in country wild; Far off from all his friends, forlorn must he ride' (Borroff, 2000: 713-714); and then Gawain finds his way

Into a forest ful dep, þat ferly watz wylde
Hi3e hillez on vche a halue and holtwodez vnder
Of hore okez ful hoge a hundreth togeder
þe hasel and þe ha3þorne were harled al samen
With ro3e raged mosse rayled aywhere.
(Tolkien, 1929: 741-745)

Marie Borroff (2000: 741-5) in her modern translation renders those lines so that they tell how Gawain travels

Into a forest fastness, fearsome and wild
High hills on either hand, with hoar woods below
Oaks old and huge by the hundred together
The hazel and the hawthorn were all intertwined
With rough ravelled moss, that raggedly hung.

These lines encapsulate the overgrown and uncultivated aspect of the forest. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien's Fangorn forest embodies this same wild and untamed quality, even incorporating the Romance notion that '[w]hat lies out of sight – and if you are travelling through a forest, you can't see very far at all – is either irrelevant, or [more often than not] potentially threatening' (Cooper, 2009: 70). This association between danger and the liminal boundaries of the Forest was so ingrained in the mindset of Romance writers and their audience that '[t]he philosophers of the twelfth-century school of Chartres adopted the word *silva*, forest, as their term for chaos, matter that had not been given created form; and it may not be coincidence that Romance was developing its own characteristic landscape of forest at the same time' (Cooper, 2009: 70). For this reason, when Pippin and Merry are taken by the Orcs and Uruk-hai at the conclusion of *The Fellowship of the Ring* and Aragorn and Legolas and Gimli are forced to enter Fangorn forest to search for them, Aragorn insists that they not be '...daunted by Fangorn, since need drove [the Hobbits] into that dark place' (Tolkien, 2001: 479). Gimli even jokes that he does not know what daunts him more 'Fangorn, or the thought of the long road through Rohan on foot,' and for a Dwarf unaccustomed to lengthy travels (and perhaps one who has no affinity for the wood) that is quite a dilemma. Legolas to soothe his fellow-travellers' minds peers into the 'shadows' (this word is of course synonymous with evil in Tolkien's writing) and declares that: 'No, [the forest] is not evil; or what evil is in it is far away. I catch only the faintest echoes of dark places where the hearts of the trees are black. There is no malice near us; but there is watchfulness, and anger' (Tolkien, 2001: 479-480). This declaration by Legolas lends the

forest a form of sentience (as is seen in many other ominous forests of Romance literature) which is appropriate in a Romance work, where trees often come to life (Old Man Willow is a Tolkienian example of this). True to form, Tolkien describes his expansive forest filled with ‘...the huge branches of the trees,’ in similar ways to the *Pearl-* and *Gawain*-poet, as ‘[o]ld beyond guessing,’ with ‘[g]reat trailing beards of lichen [that] hung from [the branches], blowing and swaying in the breeze’ (Tolkien, 2001: 448); but that description also contains elements that Tolkien would incorporate into his tree-men, the Ents. The trees of Fangorn for the most part are primeval, gnarled, covered in ‘...weeping, trailing, beards and whiskers of lichen,’ and ‘...half covered with ragged dry leaves that have never fallen’ (Tolkien, 2001: 449). In this way they are much like the Ents, both ancient and decrepit in ways typical of the depictions of forests in Romance literature (Cooper, 2009: 70).

In keeping with Tolkien’s ambition to create a myth for the real-world, however, he based his forests Mirkwood and Fangorn on real-world locations. In a letter to his son, Michael, Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 289) writes that his forest ‘...is not an invention of mine, but a very ancient name, weighted with legendary associations. It was probably the Primitive Germanic name for the great mountainous forest regions that anciently formed a barrier to the south of the lands of Germanic expansion.’ In Tolkien’s work though, this ancient place becomes part of the expected Romance tropes, in which Heroes journey into forests in pursuit of heroic aspirations, and often find themselves face-to-face with supernatural forces. For instance, in *The Two Towers*, the remainder of the Fellowship do not find the Hobbits in Fangorn (as Gawain finds the Green Knight) for the Hobbits have been rescued by one of the oldest creatures in Middle-Earth, Treebeard, the Ent. The Hobbits thus fulfil the reader’s expectations of a Romance forest by encountering a supernatural being which accompanies them in (or rather carries them along into) their future endeavours, and as Annick Pin (2008: 6) states ‘[t]hese adventures usually lead to the main events of the narrative.’ Together with the Ents, the Hobbits march on Isengard, Saruman’s stone fortress to put an end to his ‘...plotting to become a Power. [For] [h]e has a mind of metal and wheels; and he does not

care for growing things, except as far as they serve him for the moment. And now it is clear [to Treebeard and the Ents] that he is a black traitor' (Tolkien, 2001: 463). This will have far-reaching effects in the narrative. The destruction of Saruman's forces allows Rohan to march to war unimpeded in order to support Gondor in its battle with Sauron, especially since Saruman no longer '...threatens the Men of Rohan and draws off their help from Minas Tirith' (Tolkien, 2001: 485).

In the meantime, Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas, concerned about the presence of '...an old bent man, leaning on a staff, and wrapped in a great cloak; his wide-brimmed hat pulled down over his eyes,' (Tolkien, 2001: 448) whom they speculate to be Saruman (or an evil phantom of Saruman), proceed into the forest and chance upon a supernatural force unlike any they (or the reader) could have conceivably imagined. Tolkien (2001: 456) states that upon encountering the old man – who betrays '...a quick glint of white, as if some garment shrouded by the grey rags had been for an instant revealed,' (Tolkien, 2001: 456) further proposing Saruman's presence – the small company draw their weapons to try and prevent him from speaking in case he ensnares them in a spell, but

The old man was too quick for [them]. 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.

The old man is then revealed to be not Saruman, but another White Wizard, whom the remainder of the Fellowship are astonished to see for they have thought that he had fallen '...into shadow [and] remained in Moria and did not escape' (Tolkien, 2001: 209). The old man clothed in 'white garments that shone,' much like '...the raiment of the Holy Ones, the *fanar* or luminous veils worn by the Valar or Maiar when they appeared to Elves or Men,' (O'Neill, 1979: 91) is none other than Gandalf the White, who having '...passed through fire and death,' (Tolkien, 2001: 556) is sent back '...for a brief time, until [his] task is done'

(Tolkien, 2001: 514). The use of fire magic signifies Gandalf's return since as '...a servant of the Secret Fire, wielder of the flame of Anor,' (Tolkien, 2001: 167) he is the antithesis of the darkness and shadow, with his physical description enforcing his power and his association with the colour white: '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' (Tolkien, 2001: 457). Gandalf further accentuates his newfound power and status as a White Wizard when he warns Gimli, after the Dwarf intimates that Saruman is still dangerous, that: '[S]o am I, very dangerous: more dangerous than anything you will ever meet, unless you are brought alive before the seat of the Dark Lord' (Tolkien, 2001: 509). This reveals that the White Rider's task (here Rider may suggest Knight in accordance with the equestrian nature of that class) is to help in the destruction of the Dark Lord (as such he is the male equivalent of the White Lady or Goddess figure epitomized by Galadriel). This turning of the tide, as Gandalf calls it, is without a doubt one of the single greatest 'main events of the narrative'. His return gives renewed impetus to the battle for Middle-Earth and directs the action for the rest of *The Lord of the Rings*.

The forests of Middle-Earth are therefore the same as the forests of the rest of Romance literature: the Heroes enter a forbidden and wild wooded setting and encounter supernatural beings or forces that forever shift the course of the narrative, so much so that the Heroes that exit the forest are often not the Heroes that enter it – they are changed, as if by some fairy power (Cooper, 2009: 70). Tolkien's characters are irrevocably altered in the same way that Sir Orfeo and Sir Gawain are changed by their encounters in the forests of Romance. Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas, Pippin and Merry are all compelled to cross into Fangorn forest, and their experiences inside that wilderness help to guide the characters' storylines (not to mention the characters themselves) in unique ways. The small company that enters Fangorn to search for the Hobbits leaves Fangorn forest forever altered, for they leave with the White Rider, whose task it is to set right the evils wrought by the Dark Lord Sauron. Gandalf the White (as opposed to Sauron the Black) will therefore rekindle the hearts of men and guide

them in the war of the Rings, which is why Aragorn asserts that '[b]eyond all hope you return to us in our need' (Tolkien, 2001: 514). Even the Hobbits, Pippin and Merry, are transformed. The Ent draught or the draught of Fangorn, of which Legolas claims '[s]trange songs have been sung...', (Tolkien, 2001: 597) has dramatically increased their size; and they both go on to accomplish much in the story, even joining the Ents in bringing about the downfall of Isengard, until the reunion of the Fellowship outside the gates of Isengard. The two Hobbits then become knights of Gondor or Rohan respectively.

Our Lady of Romance: The Lady

Aragorn's mention of that place '...where his heart dwells...' is one of the rare references to his heart belonging to Arwen Evenstar, the daughter of Lord Elrond. This adoration of a beautiful lady is one of the main components of Romance literature; in fact it is partly why Romance literature initially became so popular, and perhaps why its popularity has endured since the genre's introduction in the twelfth century (Beer, 1970: 60). C.S. Lewis (1946: 3) discusses this reliance on love in his *The Allegory of Love*, maintaining that: 'It seems to us natural that love should be the commonest theme of serious imaginative literature...which will probably have an end, and which certainly had a beginning in eleventh-century Provence.' For the reader, though, it is one of the memes of Romance that is most identifiable, particularly for a readership that might otherwise be bewildered by the presence of the myriad of overarching otherworldly features that form the foundations of Romance literature. As Beer (1970: 2) mentions: '[Romance's] remote sources are domesticated and brought close to present experience primarily because they are peopled with figures whose emotions and relationships are directly registered and described with profuse sensuous detail.' The manifestation of familiar human emotions, especially an all-encompassing emotion such as love, allows the reader to identify with the protagonist and the object of his affections in very personal ways, particularly since the reader is not often able to relate to the Hero's other endeavours, such as the slaying of beasts or the donning of armour. To illustrate the influence the admiration of the Lady has on Romance literature, Alfred Lord Tennyson, in his nineteenth-century sequence of twelve Romance poems, *The Idylls of the King*, which tells the story of King Arthur (and which is heavily based on Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*) writes the following lines on Queen Guinevere (1989: lines 474-80):

For indeed I knew
Of no more subtle master under heaven
Than in the maiden passion for a maid,
Not only to keep down the base in man,
But teach high thought, and amiable words
And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
And the love of truth, and all that makes a man.

The admiration of the Lady and all that that admiration entails, at least as Tennyson portrays it, appears to be a noble pursuit, intended not only to ‘keep down the base in man,’ but to ‘teach him high thought, and amiable words,’ among many other proficiencies. Therefore, it appears that the ‘maid’, as Tennyson refers to the Lady of Romance literature, makes many valuable contributions to improving the nature of the Hero or Heroes of Romance. This concept of the Lady who through her virtues, enhances the character of her Knight was well-established in Romance literature and based on the intricacies of courtly love, which had far-reaching influences on the role of women (or rather the feminine) within the literature of the twelfth- and thirteenth-century (Cooper, 2009: 178). *The Companion to Medieval Romance* (Kenlin, 1995: 349) explains that:

Courtly love as a literary phenomenon reflects one of the most far-reaching revolutions in social sensibility in Western culture – the dramatic change in attitude towards women that began in the late eleventh century, spread throughout western and northern Europe during the twelfth century, and lingered through the Renaissance and on into the modern world where traces can still be found. In its essential nature, courtly love, or *fin’ amors*, as the Provençal poets called it, was the expression of the knightly worship of a refining ideal embodied in the person of the beloved. Only a truly noble nature could generate and nurture such a love; only a woman of magnanimity of spirit was a worthy object. The act of loving was in itself ennobling and refining, the means to the fullest expression of what was potentially fine and elevated in human nature.

The beloved, therefore, became an object to be adored, and that adoration would perfect and ennoble the Hero (or Knight), which, as C. S. Lewis (1946: 3) asserts in *The Allegory of Love*, has strong connections to the Christian ideal in Romance literature – Love (here more akin to Platonic love) of course being a refining force in Christian mythology. Lewis (1946: 49) contends: ‘That Christianity in a very general sense, by its insistence on compassion and on the sanctity of the human body, had a tendency to soften or abash the more extreme brutalities and flippancies...in all departments of human life,’ which perhaps explains why Romance writers maintained the courtly relationship between the Knight and the Lady. Numerous verses in Biblical scripture, as Lewis suggests, make reference to love, but verses seven and eight from the Book of John: ‘Beloved, let us love one another: for love is

of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love,' (*King James Bible*, 1999: 918) contain the same sentiment evidenced in courtly Romance (and might even have passed as dialogue from such a Romance).

However, many modern academics who have written on courtly love or the feminine in Romance literature – Jane Burns (1993), Judith Butler (1997), Susan Crane (1994), Simon Gaunt (1995) and Giselle Gos (2012) – have maintained that '[f]emale subjectivity remains a theoretical question in medieval Romance, a genre in which the feminine and the female have often been found to exist primarily as foils for the production of masculinity and male identity, the other against which the masculine Hero is defined' (Gos, 2012: 2). These scholars have disagreed with C.S. Lewis' (and others) observations that Romance literature is supportive, if not entirely sympathetic, to feminine characters, suggesting that Romance literature views the female and feminine as objects (of desire) within the narrative rather than characters in their own right (Gaunt, 1995: 92). Therefore, if the above poetic lines on Guinevere were to be analysed for a second time with this contention in mind, the critic might notice that Tennyson in his estimation of the 'maid' (now viewed perhaps with a suggestion of derision) mentions nothing about her virtues, focusing instead on the virtues she bestows on her male counterpart. As Simon Gaunt (1995: 92) explains, in *Gender and Genre*, the '...masculine subject [frequently]...acquires his identity through a relationship with a woman.' Gaunt (1995: 71-72) writes that:

Since all surviving Romances from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are as far as we know male authored, "women," or more accurately femininity in these texts, is a metaphor men use to construct their own subjectivity. Female characters in Romance are not real women, but figures within a male discourse. If in Romance men evolve and assume new identities through love and their relations with women, it follows that what this engagement with femininity articulates is the construction within a male discourse of masculinity through its relationship with femininity construed as the other.

Helen Cooper, however, in her treatise *The English Romance in Time*, has recently attempted to overturn this assumption by making an ‘...unabashed defence of the [R]omance heroine’ (Cooper, 2009: 165). She argues (2009: 216) that Romance makes the motif of the active and desiring Lady and Heroine (Cooper does not make a distinction between the two) a central feature of Romance. Through her studies of various Romances, Cooper has endeavoured to portray the feminine as an active subject within the narrative structure of the text, thereby allowing her to become a fully-functioning character and not merely an object of male desire or ‘...[a] foil for the production of masculinity and male identity, the other against which the masculine Hero is defined.’ Cooper (2009: 220) suggests, having reviewed a variety of works, that ‘[t]he Romance texts provide overwhelming evidence for a belief in the desirability of active female desire and for the exploration of women’s subjectivity.’

The important female characters in *The Lord of the Rings* – Arwen, Éowyn, Galadriel and Shelob – appear to adhere to Cooper’s assertion that Romance texts are capable of female subjectivity since each of them in her individual ways achieves her own independence as a character (or subject); these feminine figures (sacrificing none of their femininity) are not only active participants in the narrative of the text but responsible for shaping, or guiding the progression of the storyline. As Leslie Donovan (Chance, 2001: 110) explains in her essay in *Tolkien: The Medievalist*: ‘Tolkien’s Galadriel, Shelob, Éowyn and Arwen are characters whose words and actions in *The Lord of the Rings* provide a...polyphony of motives that shift the plot’s course of events as well as the reader’s expectations of an appropriate outcome.’ This can be evidenced by the agency and authority (Gos, 2012: 29) that Tolkien bestowed on his female characters: they are all capable of their own volition, power and heroic accomplishments. For instance, in *The Lord of the Rings*, Arwen Evenstar is Aragorn’s beloved, and although she does not take much part in the endeavours that lead to the destruction of the One Ring (the true impetus of *The Lord of the Rings*), this does not mean that she has no influence over her own fate. Arwen willingly chooses the Doom of Men, as

Tolkien words it, over an immortal life so that she can remain with Aragorn; she lingers in Middle-Earth after his death to abide 'the loss and silence', which seems to be the price for abandoning her immortality (Tolkien, 2001: 1037). She does this not because she is the object of Aragorn's affections, but rather, as Tolkien suggests, because he is the object of her own desires. Galadriel, the Elf Queen, who is frequently addressed as Lady in the text, is not only able to impart visions of '...things that were, things that are, and things that yet may be,' but she is moreover a Ring-bearer, the keeper of Nenya, the Ring of Adamant, one of the three Rings which were given to the Elves, and which Sauron had no hand in (Tolkien, 2001: 176-177; Tyler, 1973: 189-191). As such she wields enormous power, so much so that Frodo offers her the Ring, which she wisely refuses (Tolkien, 2001: 356). Éowyn, Lady and Shieldmaiden of Rohan, is a female character who actively participates in the narrative. She is the only person on the battlefield that is able to slay the Witch-king of Angmar, the leader of the Ringwraiths, because as foretold '[n]o living man may hinder...' the Black Rider (Tolkien, 2001: 823). In the moment of his death she is described as heroic for '...she did not blench...' since, as Tolkien writes (2001: 823), she is a '...maiden of the Rohirrim, child of kings, slender but as a steel-blade, fair but terrible.' She retains her beauty (and femininity) but she is also portrayed as formidable and deadly (not surprisingly she is associated with a steel-blade, which is the emblem of heroism).

Despite the disparity between the two arguments on female subjectivity in Romance literature, what can be discerned is that the Romance Heroine has far more subjectivity than her Epic counterpart. Professor Richard Jebb (1913:17-21) in *Greek Literature*, which became the definitive resource for the study of Epic literature in the twentieth century, mentions three generic feminine roles in Epics: the wife, whether noble or vengeful; the goddess or monster (with many of the same characteristics as the wife); and the slave girl, who often turns out to be the love interest. Otherwise very few other roles are given to women within Epics, and of course, even if they do appear in the narrative, women do not take part in any meaningful or significant way (Gaunt, 1995: 35). Paul Innes (2013: 152)

discusses this apparently misogynistic phenomenon in his book, *Epic*, in which he mentions that the ‘...exclusion of women’s experience from the Epic tradition...’ as well as ‘...the voice denied to women [were] because of the Epic masculine heroism, fate and religion...’. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien does not deny female characters subjectivity and furthermore allows them to feature prominently in the text. Accordingly, in correlation with Helen Cooper’s and Gillian Beer’s analysis of the Heroine, two main types of Heroine appear in *The Lord of the Rings*: the passive Heroine, who can be associated with the Lady, who is the beloved or love interest of the Hero; and the active Heroine, who takes two forms: the Heroine, who is the feminine aspect of the male protagonists in the text and who is the embodiment of the ancient Valkyrie; and the Temptress, who is the embodiment of all the female figures from Romance that are associated with darkness, such as Grendel’s mother. (Cooper, 2009: 223).

C.S. Lewis (1946: 45) in *The Allegory of Love* states that: ‘The love which is to be the source of all that is beautiful in life and manners must be the reward freely given by the lady, and only our superiors can reward.’ The love between Aragorn and Arwen does not overwhelm the narrative in *The Lord of the Rings*. It features instead in elusive moments of transcendence and intimation when either Aragorn or another character alludes to the relationship between the two of them. The reader never explicitly sees them embracing, and yet is aware that Aragorn and Arwen must be taking part in the rituals of courtly love, restructuring, in their own way, the reverence and veneration observed in numerous Romances between the Knight and Lady. The meeting between Aragorn and Arwen, which Tolkien regarded as ‘the most important of [the tales told in] the Appendices’ (Carpenter, 2002: 181), is perhaps Tolkien at his most sentimental, principally as the scene seems to depict a form of the serendipitous love-at-first-sight moment that is so specific to Romance literature. Tolkien describes (Tolkien, 2001: 1033) how in his twentieth year Aragorn is walking through the woods in Rivendell when he views the Lady Arwen, who has recently returned from her stay in Lothlórien with her grandmother, Galadriel:

And suddenly even as he sang he saw a maiden walking on a greensward among the white stems of the birches; and he halted amazed, thinking that he had strayed into a dream, or else that he had received the gift of the Elf-minstrels, who can make the things of which they sing appear before the eyes of those that listen. For Aragorn had been singing a part of the Lay of Lúthien which tells of the meeting of Lúthien and Beren in the forest of Neldoreth. And behold! there Lúthien walked before his eyes in Rivendell, clad in a mantle of silver and blue, fair as the twilight in Elven-home; her dark hair strayed in a sudden wind, and her brows were bound with gems like stars.

The mention of Beren and Lúthien – the tale of which Aragorn tells the Hobbits during their flight to Rivendell – has great significance because it creates a mirror reflection between the two pairs of lovers in Tolkien’s Legendarium: the two lovers in *The Lord of the Rings* and their ancestors Beren and Lúthien, whose story is told in *The Silmarillion*. Both Aragorn and Arwen are descendants of Beren and Lúthien – the first union of immortal Elf and mortal Man – and their respective stories have marked similarities. Lúthien is called the Morning Star of the Elves because she is the most beautiful of the Elves at the height of their glory in Middle-Earth, while Arwen is titled the Evenstar (Undómiel) because she is the loveliest representation of Lúthien’s light in an age when the glory of the Elves is waning. As Galadriel (Tolkien, 2001: 355) pronounces, even ‘...Lothlórien will fade, and the tides of Time will sweep it away. We must depart into the West, or dwindle to a rustic folk of dell and cave, slowly to forget and to be forgotten’ (Tolkien, 1983: 197; Tyler, 1973: 34&101). In addition, more than their beauty, Arwen and Lúthien share another familiar connection: they are both Elven-maids who sacrifice their immortality to remain in Middle-Earth with the mortal men their hearts desire (perhaps no more active role can be thought of than willingly choosing death). Lúthien Tinúviel, after Beren is mortally wounded goes to sing for Mandos, the Doomsman of the Valar, so that Beren might be released from death. The Valar agree to return Beren to Middle-Earth but only if Lúthien forfeits her gift of immortality; she immediately consents and remains with Beren all her worldly days: together they found a line of great kings (Snyder, 2013: 193). This account may be Tolkien’s way of inverting the Orpheus myth, including its Middle English manifestation, *Sir Orfeo*. In this way Tolkien is

bestowing a great deal of agency and identity on one of his female characters by having an Elf-maiden essentially rescue a warrior. Arwen Undómiel, although not to save Aragorn's life, surrenders her eternal life for love, remaining with Aragorn to restore the line of Gondorian and Arnorian Kings; she tells Frodo (Tolkien, 2001: 768) that he may have her place in the last ship to the Grey Havens: "For I am the daughter of Elrond. I shall not go with him when he departs to the Havens: for mine is the choice of Lúthien, and as she so have I chosen, both the sweet and the bitter." It is also perhaps revealing, and endearing, that Tolkien referred to his wife, Edith, as his own Lúthien Tinúviel: in one of his letters Tolkien (2000: 417) writes that: '[In 1909] I met the Lúthien Tinúviel of my own 'personal Romance' with her long dark hair, fair face and starry eyes, and beautiful voice,' which perhaps also refers to the fact that Edith had to make a choice to marry him, and together they sacrificed much to be together (Edith of course had to break her engagement to another man to marry Tolkien) (Carpenter, 2002: 79).

Arwen and Lúthien, however, are not the only characters that share certain similarities. Aragorn and Beren, both mortal Men, have comparable tasks in order for them to win the hands of their immortal loves. Elrond, Arwen's father, instructs Aragorn that unless he becomes King of Gondor and Arnor he cannot marry Arwen (Tyler, 1973: 25). As Christopher Snyder explains (Snyder, 2013: 48) this motif of an impossible challenge is a way for Tolkien to remain true to the earlier Romance motif that can be found in *Culhwch and Olwen*, an eleventh century Welsh tale in which Culhwch must first accomplish a series of seemingly unachievable tasks before Olwen's father will allow him to marry her. Snyder (Snyder, 2013: 50) says that 'Tolkien follows this folklore motif [of *Culhwch and Olwen*] in the *Silmarillion* tale of Beren and Lúthien, where the Elvish king Thingol tells Beren that he must retrieve one of the Silmarils from Morgoth himself in order to win Lúthien's hand in marriage.' In both instances, Beren and Aragorn, achieve their particular tasks and thereby win their ladies' hands; but in order for Aragorn to do so a much larger and more unyielding hindrance must be overcome. Aragorn alludes to this obstacle in Lothlórien. When asked by the Lady

Galadriel what his heart desires, he answers: 'Lady, you know all my desires, and long held in keeping the only treasure that I seek. Yet it is not yours to give me, even if you would; and only through darkness shall I come to it,' which demonstrates the fact that to gain Arwen he will need to become King by ridding Middle-Earth of Sauron and his forces. Consequently, Beren and Aragorn must both contend with their respective Dark Lords – Morgoth and Sauron – so that they might gain their hearts' desires; for order must be restored if Tolkien's eucatastrophic moment is to be achieved. Morgoth and his servant Sauron, whom Beren even defeats with Lúthien's help, must be overthrown if the reader is to '...get a piercing glimpse of joy, and heart's desire, that for a moment passes outside the frame, rends indeed the very web of story, and lets a gleam come through' (Tolkien, 1964: 16). This moment of joy and elation can only be realised because of the transcendent ecstasy that fulfilled love provides, especially in Romance (Shippey, 2001: 208). And as M.H. Abrams reiterates in his *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (2009:44): 'the standard plot [of Romance] is that of a quest undertaken by a single knight in order to gain a lady's favour.'

Perhaps, though, the greatest similarity that Beren and Aragorn share is the dream-like state in which they meet their respective love interests or Elven-maids. In *The Silmarillion* – in which '...the Romance of the mortal Beren and the elf-maid Lúthien forms the heart of this great saga...' (Snyder, 2013: 184) – the first glimpse that Beren has of Lúthien, therefore becomes the archetype for Aragorn's initial encounter with Arwen. Tolkien (1983: 197-198) writes that as Beren was:

But wandering in the summer in the woods of Neldoreth he came upon Lúthien, daughter of Thingol and Melian, at a time of evening under moonrise, as she danced upon the unfading grass in the glades beside Esgalduin. Then all memory of his pain departed from him, and he fell into an enchantment; for Lúthien was the most beautiful of all the Children of Ilúvatar. Blue was her raiment as the unclouded heaven, but her eyes were grey as the starlit evening; her mantle was sewn with golden flowers, but her hair was dark as the shadows of twilight. As the light upon the leaves of trees, as the voice of clear waters, as the stars above the mists of the world, such was her glory and her loveliness; and in her face was a shining light.

For Beren and Aragorn the dream-like state which the two of them enter into when first encountering Lúthien and Arwen – thus the description of Aragorn ‘...thinking that he had strayed into a dream...’ – is significant because it is representative of another Romance trope that is often associated with the Lady. Works in which a dream or dream-vision is central to the narrative were exceedingly fashionable from the twelfth century up until the Renaissance, a period of time which is often considered to be the zenith of Romance literature (Cooper, 2009: 233-234). Its popularity, however, has endured in Romance, especially in the motif of crossing over, in which a character moves from an ordinary world much like our own to the an alternative otherworldly realm in which the Romance narrative is enacted (such as passing through a wardrobe and ending up in Narnia); or the movement from a contented everyday existence to an existence that is full of the unexpected (such as an ordinary Hobbit going on an extraordinary adventure). Christopher Snyder (2013: 67) while discussing this motif in relation to the first acquaintance of Beren and Lúthien, and Aragorn and Arwen, states that: ‘What these narratives share - and indeed, what it may be said that all stories of crossing-over share – is a place of possibility, where the narrative begins with a sense of being stuck or even trapped and then moves into a place of freedom or expansiveness.’

Perhaps one of the finest examples of this escape into a dream-like state, and one which might be considered the prototype for numerous subsequent dream-vision forms of literature, can be found in a twelfth-century poem ‘...from one of the great poets that Tolkien rated perhaps higher than Shakespeare, though we do not know his name. [He wrote the poem] called *Pearl*, and Tolkien remained involved with it all his life’ (Shippey, 2001: 196). As Anthony Spearing (1973: 2) asserts in *Medieval Dream-poetry*, ‘*Pearl* is a dream-poem in which the Dreamer meets a beautiful lady, crowned with a single orient pearl; in this poem the lady is represented as being a transfigured version of an object that is precious to him in his waking life.’ Even from that short description, connections to Beren and Aragorn’s dream-like state and the manifestation of a beautiful Lady (almost as if an unearthly apparition) who

then becomes precious to them in 'waking life', are unmistakably apparent, especially since the *Pearl's* poetic persona claims he too '...entred in þat erber grene,' before 'Fro spot [his] spyryt þer sprang in space/[His] body on balke þer bod in sweuen.' Tolkien, (1979: 34) in his translation of *Pearl*, renders these lines as 'From that spot [his] spirit sprang apace/On the turf [his] body abode in trance.' The *Pearl*-poet goes on to describe the poetic persona's initial view of the fair maiden, or Lady, with these words:

Mony ryal ray con fro hit rere
At þe fote þerof þer sete a faunt
A mayden of menske, ful debonere
Blysnande whyt watȝ hyr bleaunt.

Tolkien (1979: 37) translates, in a prose style that is comparable to Malory's or indeed reminiscent of Tolkien's own poetic verses in *The Lord of the Rings*, as:

And beams in splendour lift their light
A child abode there at its base
She wore a gown of glistening white
A gentle maid of courtly grace.

These similarities between the three narratives are not mere coincidence, but rather, as Spearing (1973: 3-7) suggests, part of the dream-vision literature cycle, in which a figure (almost always a male dreamer) stumbles into a dream from a natural place, such as a forest or garden, and gains a glimpse of something truly magnificent and exquisite (usually with allegorical or religious significance) or some form of guide to show him the true path, which will undoubtedly have a tremendous impact on his waking life. This concept is no less true for Beren and Aragorn since they each encounter in their waking-dreams an Elven-maid who through her love (and perhaps more importantly the demands set by her father in order to preserve that love) guides them to achieve their true purpose: to defeat the darkness and become the Heroes they were destined to be. Bruckner (2010: 135) writes therefore that '...these dream visions provide accurate predictions of a specific future action whose imminence is thus enhanced,' and which confirms that in order to gain their respective loves

and thereby gain the rewards that the dream-visions promise, the two Heroes will have to accomplish those heroic endeavours that are set for them.

Nor is the description of the lovers' meeting devoid of symbolism. Both Arwen and Lúthien are portrayed as having dark hair, being dressed in blue, adorned with either gold or silver (untarnished precious metals), and associated with light which either shines around them, or, as it seems to the dreamers, emanates from them. This depiction of the two Elven-maidens is particularly noteworthy because it is reminiscent of the representations of the Maiden of Christianity, the Blessed Virgin Mary, encompassing many attributes or physical descriptors that are associated with her. Mary is conventionally depicted in art with dark hair, her raiment is either blue and gold or blue and silver, she is often portrayed as enveloped or encircled by light, and very often she is surrounded by stars (probably as an allusion to the star that heralded Jesus' birth) (Hahn, 2001: 256-259). Whether intentional or not, the inclusion of this kind of symbolism is in keeping with Tolkien's views on religion and his magnum opus. He once wrote in a letter (Carpenter, 2002: 142) that '*The Lord of the Rings* is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision. That is why I have not put in, or have cut out, practically all references to anything like 'religion', to cults or practices, in the imaginary world. For the religious element is absorbed into the story and the symbolism.' Mary, the mother of Christ, 'Our Lady, upon which all [Tolkien's] own small perception of beauty both in majesty and simplicity is founded,' (Carpenter, 2002: 142) is of course the archetypal Lady, and to a staunch Catholic such as Tolkien, who was brought up revering her and all she represented, she must have held special meaning; and therefore she must also have influenced his literature because as Tolkien (2001: xv) mentions in the foreword to *The Lord of the Rings*, '[a]n author cannot of course remain wholly unaffected by his experience.'

For these reasons the adoration of the Lady, which ennobles and refines the heroic stature of a mortal man, is threefold: for believers she reflects the Virgin Mary, who symbolises the

gift of salvation by interceding to make the sinner worthy of acceptance into the Kingdom of Heaven, especially as Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 43) views that the ‘...beautiful devotion to Our Lady has been God’s way of refining so much our gross manly natures and emotions, and also of warming and colouring our hard, bitter, religion’; for the *Pearl*-poet the young maid is a symbol for the precious pearl that he has lost, and his dream leads him to accept this loss or the death of his daughter in the waking world; and for Beren and Aragorn, Lúthien and Arwen, are two Elven-maids, who are both to become ‘...the source of all that is beautiful in life...,’ whom they encounter in a dream-like fugue. Both of these Ladies encourage the two Heroes to accept their true paths and thereby become Heroes in their own right through the acceptance of their love. Tom Shippey (2001: 200) weaves this motif of dream and reality together in his justification of Tolkien’s magic timelessness, in which he mentions the *Pearl*-poet, Tolkien and Shakespeare, who used dream-visions in his plays, especially *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, in order to create a union between the otherworldly and the ordinary. Shippey contends (2000: 200) that:

Like Shakespeare, the Warwickshire man, the Staffordshire *Pearl*-poet was in touch with true traditions, of English poetry, of otherworld vision, or real-world insight, and unlike Shakespeare he had never been lured away from them. His dreamer’s state of liminal uncertainty, in which he is both aware of the physical and literal world, and conscious of some deeper symbolic meaning, is exactly the state of mythic or magic timelessness which I believe Tolkien aimed from time to time to reach.

In the same way that *The Lord of the Rings* has many characters who accomplish heroic deeds, it has several characters that are embodiments of the Lady and as such exhibit those same requisite virtues – the ability to ennoble and refine a character and thereby facilitate the achievement of a form of heroic status. Arwen Evenstar, though she is the most noticeable Lady in the narrative because she is the love interest of one of the book’s main protagonists, is descended from a character that is perhaps one of the greatest feminine figures in Tolkien’s entire Legendarium: the Lady Galadriel – though as Snyder (2013: 72) contends: ‘Both Galadriel and Arwen are radiantly beautiful healers of fairy realms...’. Known by her sobriquets the Lady of the Woods or the Lady of Lothlórien, Galadriel is also one of

the most influential characters in the book: her arrival in Middle-Earth predates the destruction of Morgoth, the forging of the One Ring, and the meeting of Beren and Lúthien. She has walked in the fated forests of Neldoreth an age before the two lovers ever meet. As the Lady of Lothlórien she aids the Fellowship of the Ring in one of the darkest times in the narrative of the book – after the loss of Gandalf – and it appears that without her gifts, which she generously bestows on the members of the Fellowship, many ‘...things that were, things that are, and things that yet may be...,’ would not have come to pass. There would have been no leaves of Lórien to aid Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas in tracking Merry and Pippin after they are abducted by the Uruk-hai, no rope to help Sam and Frodo across the Deadlands, no light ‘...in dark places, when all other lights go out’ and Shelob, the Giant Spider, is attacking, and finally no box of Lothlórien soil to revitalise the Shire after the destruction caused by Saruman and his forces.

However, perhaps the most endearing role that Galadriel plays in *The Lord of the Rings* is as the figure of the beloved for one of the most unlikely lovers in the whole of Middle-Earth: Gimli, the Dwarf. In contrast to Arwen and Aragorn’s courtship and devotion which takes place mostly in brief mentions or references within the text or completely outside of the narrative, Gimli’s Knight-like worship of the Lady Galadriel is a continuous re-enactment of a series of courtly love rituals and conventions that endure throughout the entire storyline. His esteem is, in fact, one of the most obvious instances of Tolkien’s adherence to the principles of courtly love, which are well-defined due to their recurrences in Romance literature. Some of the most obvious conventions or precepts of courtly love will be familiar to (if not in part understood by) the reader without any prior academic knowledge of Romance because of their survival in Romance’s literary descendants (Heng, 2003: 89). A few of the most general and widely used conventions of courtly love include a Knight, who is one of the protagonists of the work of literature, seeing a beautiful Lady, who is usually older, married and of a higher social status, and falling immediately and overpoweringly in love. The Knight vows to serve his Lady with the same obedience and loyalty that he owes his liege lord. This love

and obeisance inspires him to perform many heroic deeds in order to win the Lady's affections and favour; thus courtly love is considered to exhibit an ennobling or refining influence because it enables the Knight to achieve prominence through feats of arms, which ultimately secures his heroic status. The Knight will regularly challenge others to prove that his Lady is the loveliest; and will often give his life in defence of his beloved, whether from physical assaults or vociferous insults. The Lady, if she does not return the Knight's adoration or passion, which is often the case in courtly Romance, does not spurn these advances or devotion either. Gifts or tokens of affection, with immense symbolic meaning, such as rings, garments or, as is the case with Guinevere and Lancelot, locks of hair, are traditionally exchanged between the Lady and the Knight. The Knight often describes the intensity of his feelings for his beloved and as such the lovesick Knight – crying or sighing with an inability to sleep, drink or eat – became a popular figure in Romance literature. Accordingly, women begin to play an increasingly important and active role in such works. After all, as Lewis (1946: 50) suggests in *The Allegory of Love*, the Lady was the magnificent *domina* – the commanding 'mistress' – and the Knight was only her *servus* – a lowly but faithful 'servant' (Kenlin, 1995: 349-356; Lewis, 1946: 2-149).

Nearly all of these conventions are evident in Gimli's adoration of the Lady Galadriel⁷. The fact that Tolkien has a Dwarf fall in love with an Elven Queen makes the situation more akin to the comic parody of courtly love that is found in some Romances (Cooper, 2009: 156); however, Gimli transcends this comic aspect and becomes a true Knight. Unlike in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, when the vainglorious Braggadocio who pretends to be a

⁷ Tolkien does, however, scrupulously resist any suggestion of an erotic element to the courtly love scenario between Gimli and Galadriel, which might seem unexpected given the conventions of this literary structure. However, there are instances of courtly love Romance that do not exhibit any form of an erotic element, and consummation of a sexual desire is incredibly rare in courtly Romance (Kenlin, 1995: 352).

Knight to impress Britomart and ultimately makes a fool of himself (III, IX, ii), Gimli does become a worthy Knight in Galadriel's eyes, which is evidenced by her continued kindness to her Dwarf admirer (Tolkien, 2001: 169; 180). Even from their initial meeting in Lothlórien, Tolkien devises and depicts a sequence of courtly love practices which Gimli enacts throughout the narrative of *The Lord of the Rings*. The moment that Gimli lays eyes on the Lady Galadriel he becomes a Knight-like persona that indubitably plays his part in the courtly love schema. The moment in which Galadriel shows her courtesy as a Lady, and thereby wins unswerving adoration and loyalty, she becomes his Lady, for whom he will abandon the jewels in his stone halls and leave the shores of Middle-Earth, a deed seemingly inconceivable for a Dwarf. In the beginning of the courtly love re-enactment, Galadriel demonstrates her authority as a Lady predominantly in the compassionate manner in which she treats Gimli, the Dwarf, who is perhaps the most undesirable or unwelcome of guests (for there is much mistrust and animosity between the Dwarves and Elves), even after the fact that he has not been overjoyed at (and is in fact quite vocal about his aversion to) entering her realm. As soon as the company enters the land of Lothlórien, the severe unease and enmity that exists between the Elves and Dwarves becomes increasingly perceptible; and matters only become more tense as the journey progresses into the forests of Lórien. Haldir, the Fellowship's elf-guide to the city of Caras Galadhon, upon learning that there is a Dwarf in the company says: 'A Dwarf! That is not well. We have not had dealings with the Dwarves since the Dark Days. They are not permitted in our land. I cannot allow him to pass' (Tolkien, 2001: 159). And even though Frodo assures Haldir that Gimli has been selected by Elrond to be part of the Fellowship and that he is a brave and faithful companion, Haldir still instructs Legolas, also an Elf although from a different part of Middle-Earth, to '...have an eye on that Dwarf!' (Tolkien, 2001: 159). The situation becomes even more dire when the travellers enter into the Naith of Lórien and Haldir insists that Gimli alone must be blindfolded because he is not allowed to proceed unhindered into the innermost sanctums of Lórien (this is of course an overt insult to the Dwarf). Gimli duly refuses and says that he will return to his homeland where he is '...known to be true of word...' (Tolkien, 2001: 163); he is

then told that should he retreat, he ‘...would be slain before [he] saw...’ (Tolkien, 2001: 163) the concealed sentinels waiting for him. Tolkien conscientiously uses the word ‘free’ more than once, along with the word ‘prisoner’ to reaffirm the unfairness of the circumstance. Aragorn intercedes and, as a faithful friend, says that the entire Fellowship will progress blindfolded. However, Gimli, to spite Legolas, who has censured him for his stubbornness and refusal to accept this inequity by uttering, ‘A plague on Dwarves and their stiff necks!’, replies that he ‘...will be content [to be blindfolded], if only Legolas shares [his] blindness’ (Tolkien, 2001: 163). When Legolas, in anger, protests that as a kinsman he should travel unconstrained, Aragorn says to Legolas: ‘Now let us cry: “a plague on the stiff necks of Elves!”’ (Tolkien, 2001: 164) and maintains the company will all be blindfolded. Thus they proceed through the Naith for a short while until word comes from the Lady of the Wood that the whole Fellowship, ‘...may walk free, even the Dwarf Gimli’ (Tolkien, 2001: 165). This is the first kindness that Galadriel bestows on Gimli, and it leads the Elf, Haldir, to ask for pardon from the Dwarf, and asks for him to ‘...[l]ook on [the Elves] now with friendly eyes’ (Tolkien, 2001: 165). For a moment it seems that the antagonism between Dwarf and Elf has ended as a result of the Lady Galadriel’s intervention. Nevertheless, the enmity is soon rekindled once Gimli comes before the Lord and Lady of the Wood. Celeborn is disparaging upon hearing that Gandalf has fallen in his battle with the Balrog, a fiend whose emergence Celeborn attributes to the greed of the Dwarves. He therefore suggests that Gimli be removed from Lothlórien. Galadriel, however, rebukes her husband and reiterates that Gimli has been granted admittance to their realm. The Lady then addresses Gimli not as an outsider, but rather as an esteemed member of the Fellowship of the Ring. She speaks to him endearingly of the pools of Kheled-zâram, the springs of Kibil-nâla and the many-pillared halls of Khazad-dûm, which are the quintessential centres of Dwarvendom in Middle-Earth, and which were founded by Durin, one of the most renowned of Dwarves. Tolkien (2001: 169) writes that:

[Galadriel] looked upon Gimli, who sat glowering and sad, and she smiled.
And the Dwarf, hearing the names given in his own ancient tongue, looked

up and met her eyes; and it seemed to him that he looked suddenly into the heart of an enemy and saw there love and understanding. Wonder came into his face, and then he smiled in answer. He rose clumsily and bowed in Dwarf-fashion, saying: "Yet more fair is the living land of Lórien, and the Lady Galadriel is above all the jewels that lie beneath the earth!"

For a Dwarf to announce that walls of wood are fairer than halls of stone, and that an Elven Lady is a nonpareil to (or even more exceptional than) the jewels beneath the earth, which are surely the compelling force in a Dwarf's existence, is a truly remarkable proclamation. By her act of courtesy, Galadriel has refined the nature of a Dwarf, who moments before, was mistrusted, and sitting 'glowering and sad' (Tolkien, 2001: 169) after having been reproached for the accursed Balrog, which was said to have been unleashed through his kin's avarice. Having changed his viewpoint (perhaps a form of ennobling of the spirit) Gimli no longer views Lothlórien as source of antipathy, but rather as a place of beauty, and that is the true power of the Lady, to, as Tennyson (1989: lines 478) suggested, '...teach high thought, and amiable words'. In this way Galadriel is akin to the peace-weaver of Medieval literature: the most eminent exemplar of which is Queen Wealhþeow, who is '...the superior gift-giver and civilising force...' in *Beowulf*, a work which Tolkien spent his life translating, discussing and teaching (Carpenter, 2002: 101). In this way Tolkien is going beyond conventional Romance motifs to incorporate Anglo-Saxon figures whom he imbues with additional characteristics found in *Beowulf*, which as previously mentioned may have more Romance features than at first thought (Breizmann, 1998: 1022) and other Medieval literature (in which it must be said that courtly queens and ladies, such as Guinevere and Lady Bertilak are also expected to and frequently do keep the peace in the court [Green, 2002: 78]). Gillian Overing (1990: 54) in *Language, Sign, and Gender in Beowulf*, explains that the peace-weaver, a word which comes from the Old English *freodu-webbe* meaning both peace-weaver and woman (Overing, 1990: 1), is an essential high-ranking female character who does not use her strength or force to weave peace or accordance between acrimonious individuals or factions but rather is '...the person whose function it seems to be to perform openly the action of making peace by weaving to the best of her art a tapestry of

friendship and amnesty.’ Overing suggests that the peace-weaver uses her rank, her beauty, her words and her gifts to enact the ties of kinship and to achieve a circumstance of concord.

Following, therefore, in Wealhþeow’s role as gift-giver and peace-weaver, which is aligned with the intrinsic worth of the courtly Lady, Galadriel again shows her graciousness when she bestows a gift on each of the members of the Fellowship. Each of her gifts has a specific, or perhaps symbolic, meaning for the traveller, and as she comes to Gimli she asks him to name his heart’s desire. He answers (Tolkien, 2001: 178): ‘None, Lady, it is enough for me to have seen the Lady of the Galadhrim, and to have heard her gentle words.’ But Galadriel insists that he must have a gift and urges him again to mention ‘...something that [she] could give,’ to which he finally replies ‘...a single strand of your hair, which surpasses the gold of the earth as the stars surpass the gems of the mine.’ The Lord Celeborn and the other Elves are astonished, but Galadriel is honoured by his adoration, especially when she asks what he would do with such a gift Gimli answers: ‘Treasure it, Lady, in memory of your words to me at our first meeting. And if ever I return to the smithies of my home, it shall be set in imperishable crystal to be an heirloom of my house, and a pledge of good will between the Mountain and the Wood until the end of days.’ Galadriel rewards him with three strands of hair, which Gimli cherishes through the rest of the narrative, as he does the Lady of the Wood, who comments that: ‘It is said that the skill of the Dwarves is in their hands rather than in their tongues, yet that is not true of Gimli’ (Tolkien, 2001: 180). The bestowing of the lock of hair is of course a symbolic gift of affection (from the Lady to Knight) and is reminiscent of Chrétien de Troyes’ Arthurian Romance, *Lancelot, le Chevalier de la Charrette* (de Troyes, 1914: 140), in which Guinevere sends Lancelot a lock of her hair, and the narrator interposes to say that: ‘Never will the eye of man see anything receive such reverence as when [Lancelot] begins to adore these tresses’ (de Troyes, 1914: 140). Gimli thereafter reveres Galadriel’s strands of hair in a similar manner. He keeps the hair close to his heart, and upon leaving Lothlórien, he even becomes analogous to the lovesick Knight. Tolkien (2001: 184) writes that:

The travellers now turned their faces to the journey; the sun was before them, and their eyes were dazzled, for all were filled with tears. Gimli wept openly. "I have looked the last upon that which was fairest," he said to Legolas his companion. "Henceforward I will call nothing fair, unless it be her gift." He put his hand to his breast. "Tell me, Legolas, why did I come on this Quest? Little did I know where the chief peril lay! Truly Elrond spoke, saying that we could not foresee what we might meet upon our road. Torment in the dark was the danger that I feared, and it did not hold me back. But I would not have come, had I known the danger of light and joy. Now I have taken my worst wound in this parting, even if I were to go this night straight to the Dark Lord. Alas for Gimli son of Glóin!"

Henceforth Gimli, son of Glóin, demonstrates an unembellished admiration for Galadriel, and an appreciation for her people, the Elves, so much so that upon receiving his portion of lembas bread he exclaims to the Elves that: 'You are kindly hosts!' (Tolkien, 2001: 178). He even begins a life-long friendship with Legolas, a friendship which occasions a great deal of disbelief or scepticism from several characters in the narrative – for instance Éomer bemoans: 'The world is all grown strange. Elf and Dwarf in company walk in our daily fields; and folk speak with the Lady of the Wood and yet live' (Tolkien, 2001: 421). In fact, Gimli's esteem for the Lady Galadriel, which is naturally shared by the reader, contributes to such a dramatic modification in his character that he undoubtedly exhibits an occasion when '[t]he act of loving was in itself ennobling and refining, the means to the fullest expression of what was potentially fine and elevated in human nature' (Kenlin, 1995: 349). His friendship with Legolas, which would not have been possible without their shared appreciation of the Lady of the Woods, dramatically influences Gimli's heroic status, not to mention his very existence. Before Lothlórien, Gimli, as can be expected of a Dwarf, is interested only in the pools of Kheled-zâram, the springs of Kibil-nâla and the many-pillared halls of Khazad-dûm; but afterwards he becomes much more concerned with his friendships with Aragorn and Legolas, with the glorification and admiration of his beloved, who is more fair than all the jewels beneath the earth, and with the events taking place in Middle-Earth – in essence he abandons the sheltered or secluded nature of a Dwarf (Tyler, 1973: 75). As Aragorn mentions, before the Fellowship enters Lothlórien, in reply to Boromir's assertion that: '...it is said that few come out who once go in; and of that few none have escaped unscathed,' no

one leaves the forest without going through some form of transformation. He (Tolkien, 2001: 156) says to Boromir: 'Say not *unscathed*, but if you say *unchanged*, then maybe you will speak the truth.' Perhaps Galadriel's blessing, which accompanies her gift to Gimli, is in part responsible for his change, for she says (Tolkien, 2001: 180): 'These words shall go with the gift. I do not foretell, for all foretelling is now vain: on the one hand lies darkness, and on the other only hope. But if hope should not fail, then I say to you, Gimli son of Glóin, that your hands shall flow with gold, and yet over you gold shall have no dominion.'

As much as any Knight in Romance literature, Gimli hereafter protects Galadriel (if even just the mention of her name or memory) in the same way that he guards the tomb of his kinsman, Balin, in the Mines of Moria – with his axe (Tolkien, 2001: 134). When Éomer insults the Lady of the Wood (more through inherent human misgiving than on purpose) Gimli warns him to take heed of his words, even though Éomer is surrounded by a hundred and four horsemen, for he speaks: '...evil of that which is fair beyond the reach of your thought, and only little wit can excuse you.' Éomer replies: 'I would cut off your head, beard and all, Master Dwarf, if it stood but a little higher from the ground.' And here is the first expression of the comradeship between the Elf and Dwarf: "He stands not alone," said Legolas, bending his bow and fitting an arrow with hands that moved quicker than sight. 'You would die before your stroke fell'" (Tolkien, 2001: 418). Aragorn intervenes and Éomer relents, saying 'So many strange things have chanced that to learn the praise of a fair lady under the loving strokes of a Dwarf's axe will seem no great wonder' (Tolkien, 2001: 422). But the slight to Galadriel remains a thematic concern until the end of the story. Éomer declares after seeing the Lady Galadriel with his own eyes at the crowning of Aragorn – 'For there are certain rash words concerning the Lady in the Golden Wood that lie still between us' (Tolkien, 2001: 968) – that he was wrong and that she is indeed lovely. However he (Tolkien, 2001: 968) adds that: 'I will not say that she is the fairest lady that lives. Had I seen her in other company, I would have said all that you could wish. But now I will put Queen Arwen Evenstar first, and I am ready to do battle on my own part with any who deny me.'

Shall I call for my sword?’ This is another example of a Knight, here Éomer, exhibiting a willingness to battle for a Lady. Gimli, in spite of this, relents and utters that Éomer has ‘...chosen the Evening; but [his] love is given to the Morning. And [his] heart forebodes that soon it will pass away for ever’ (Tolkien, 2001: 969). This is a predictive reference to Galadriel’s departure from Middle-Earth since at the end of *The Lord of the Rings* ‘...the Third Age was over, and the Days of the Rings were passed, and an end was come of the story and song of those times’ (Tolkien, 2001: 1121). Gimli, nonetheless, does not let it utterly pass away, but instead follows the Lady of the Woods into a land where no Dwarf has ever gone. The last account that the Red Book of Westmarch contains reveals the ultimate fates of the companions that made up the Fellowship of the Ring (Tolkien, 2001: 1245):

But when King Elessar gave up his life Legolas followed at last the desire of his heart and sailed over the Sea. We have heard tell that Legolas took Gimli Glóin's son with him because of their great friendship, greater than any that has been between Elf and Dwarf. If this is true, then it is strange indeed: that a Dwarf should be willing to leave Middle-Earth for any love, or that the Eldar should receive him, or that the Lords of the West should permit it. But it is said that Gimli went also out of desire to see again the beauty of Galadriel; and it may be that she, being mighty among the Eldar, obtained this grace for him. More cannot be said of this matter.

In Romance literature there is one central location that is associated with the Lady more than any other. That location is the bower (a secluded space where frequently either aid or romantic assignations take place). Klára Petříková (2006: 1) in *The Topos of the Bower in Middle English Verse Romance* writes that: ‘The space of the lady’s bower is at the very heart of Romance. It is in this emotional, most private of spaces that love, the main ingredient of the genre, finds its expression,’ and as such it is a place of safety and seclusion. Aragorn and Arwen are described as meeting in the woods of Lothlórien (Tolkien, 2001: 1037), but their story is only told in the later annals of Tolkien’s history, and as such they are a rare example of the lovers meeting in seclusion. Instead, in *The Lord of the Rings*, the bower is defined as an inner space, usually a wooded area in a forest or a wooded hall, where the characters find salvation and succour. For instance, the Fellowship of the Ring receive a large amount aid and comfort after their dangerous and weary travels through the

Mines of Moria when they enter the forested-land of Galadriel and Celeborn, whose hall in Caras Galadhon is a secluded bower in ‘...the bole of the tree and canopied by a living bough...’ (Tolkien, 2001: 345). The gifts that the company obtain from Galadriel, as previously mentioned, are invaluable to the success of the destruction of the Ring and the salvation of the Shire after the destruction caused by Saruman and Gríma Wormtongue. In two comparable situations, nevertheless, before the formation of the Fellowship, the four Hobbits – Frodo, Sam, Pippin and Merry – receive aid and succour when their travels seemed darkest (overall the Hobbits are aided three times in their flight from the Black Riders, which is again a symbolic representation of the trinity, and which will be discussed further in this chapter). The first time is when the small company is trying to escape from the Black Riders while trekking through the forests of the Shire. They encounter Elves going to the Havens, who offer the company food and a safe place to sleep for the night. The bower of bliss that the Elves construct is analogous to the hall in Caras Galadhon, for

[a]t the south end of the greensward there was an opening. There the green floor ran on into the wood, and formed a wide space like a hall, roofed by the boughs of trees. Their great trunks ran like pillars down each side. In the middle there was a wood-fire blazing, and upon the tree-pillars torches with lights of gold and silver were burning steadily. (Tolkien, 2001: 80)

The use of the colours, green, gold and silver is a foreshadowing of the White Lady’s domain, which once more enforces the Elves’ good intentions. After the Elven feast, Tolkien (2001: 81) says that ‘...Pippin fell fast asleep, and was lifted up and borne away to a bower under the trees; there he was laid upon a soft bed and slept the rest of the night away.’ Tolkien’s use of the word ‘bower’ is significant because it indicates that the Hobbits will receive assistance from the Elves, and that they will be safe in the woods. But the bower also contains an element of the paradisaal, which encapsulates the concept of the Elves as one of the central forces against the Shadows of Middle-Earth (the fires in their bower and the suggested magic of the Elves keep the Black Riders at bay). The scene that Tolkien describes is one of perfection. The bower has become an extension of paradise (and the

Elves being immortal beings from the Undying Lands of Valinor appear to know intimately about paradise and perfection). Tolkien (2001: 81) writes that:

Pippin afterwards recalled little of either food or drink, for his mind was filled with the light upon the Elf-faces, and the sound of voices so various and so beautiful that he felt in a waking dream. But he remembered that there was bread, surpassing the savour of a fair white loaf to one who is starving; and fruits sweet as wildberries and richer than the tended fruits of gardens; he drained a cup that was filled with a fragrant draught, cool as a clear fountain, golden as a summer afternoon. After a while Pippin fell fast asleep, and was lifted up and borne away to a bower under the trees; there he was laid upon a soft bed and slept the rest of the night away.

The mention of the bread and the fragrant draught is appropriate as an expansion of the paradisaical element because it appears to be Tolkien's way of alluding to the Eucharist (the bread and wine as the body of Christ), or the Last Supper when the Eucharist was instituted. Tolkien is perhaps here commenting on the religious nature of salvation, the bread and draught here being a form of salvation since the company have been physically saved from the evil of the Black Riders. *The Lord of the Rings*, of course, makes mention of (or allusion to) religious practices because as Tolkien claimed the book is a 'fundamentally religious and Catholic work' (Carpenter, 2002: 142). Despite this, Tolkien's use of Eucharistic imagery would be entirely suitable since many Romance writers are influenced by the Eucharist and include references to the religious practice and sacrifice (Cooper, 2009: 179). In Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, Arthur gives the Redcrosse Knight a vial of liquor-pure encased in diamond (I.IX.xix); this liquor-pure is of course an allusion to the Eucharist since "[s]uch balsams and liquors are frequently to be met with in Romance writers," including Malory and Cervantes. Exploring the religious analogues, recent critics speculate, with varying degrees of confidence, that the "liquor-pure" (1.9.19) refers to the Eucharist' (DuRocher, 1984: 185). Similarly in *Sir Gawain and the Greene Knight*, Sir Gawain is only assured of Bertilak's honour (and hence only feels safe staying in his castle keep) because '...he proves he is on the side of God, here by the regular performance of Mass in the castle,' (Cooper, 2009: 203) which would naturally include the rites and consumption of the Eucharist.

In fact Helen Cooper (2009: 179) suggests that the use of the Eucharist (particularly with fairy folk) was a way for the Romance writers to advocate to their audience that their fairy folk were ‘...not damned, as the rebel angels, but lost the right to remain in heaven, and so descended to Middle-Earth to lead a quasi-material existence in parallel with the physical existence of the human race.’ This concept suits Tolkien’s notion of the Elves as exiles from the Undying Lands who come to Middle-Earth to live a more quasi-material existence along with Men, who are subject to death and decay. For Tolkien at least the Eucharist was an offering of love (perhaps the greatest love of all since it is the embodiment of Christ’s sacrifice). Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 43) wrote in a letter to his son Michael that: ‘Out of the darkness of my life, so much frustrated, I put before you the one great thing to love on earth: the Blessed Sacrament. There you will find Romance, glory, honour, fidelity, and the true way of all your loves on earth, and more than that: Death.’ Since Romance literature deals so heavily with love and all its manifestations it seems apposite to have mention of the Eucharist in relation to the Elves nor is it the only mention of the Eucharist in *The Lord of the Rings*. The motif will likewise be reiterated when the Fellowship arrives in Lothlórien and partakes of the Elven lembas (a Quenya word meaning life-bread), which Tolkien describes in a letter as ‘...being more potent when fasting, a derivation from the Eucharist’ (Carpenter, 2002: 213). In *The Return of the King*, the true virtue of lembas is mentioned. Tolkien (2001: 915) says that: ‘[i]t fed the will, and it gave strength to endure, and to master sinew and limb beyond the measure of mortal kind,’ which incorporates many of the purported virtues that the Eucharist offers the soul.

The second mention of the bower that is significant is when the Hobbits get lost in the Forest (a dark and dangerous place in Romance) and then are trapped and nearly eaten by Old Man Willow. They are fortunately rescued by the most-unlikely of creatures, Tom Bombadil, who afterwards leads them through the Forest and to his home, where his wife, the Lady Goldberry, provides much comfort and provisions for the thrice-frightened Hobbits. The depiction of Bombadil’s home is similar to the bowers that the Elves construct in the Shire

and Galadriel's bower in Lothlórien. The company find '...a long low room, filled with the light of lamps swinging from the beams of the roof; and on the table of dark polished wood stood many candles, tall and yellow, burning brightly,' (Tolkien, 2001: 121) which emphasises the wood, the light and the secluded space. These criteria provide the readers with a contrast to the open and unsafe woods, and put them at ease, which is one of the functions of the bower trope. Even the description of the ascent to Bombadil's home functions to create a sense of the dream-like and paradisaal, simultaneously allaying the Hobbits (and readers') fears. Tolkien (2001: 119) writes that:

They began to feel that all this country was unreal, and that they were stumbling through an ominous dream that led to no awakening. Just as they felt their feet slowing down to a standstill, they noticed that the ground was gently rising. The water began to murmur. In the darkness they caught the white glimmer of foam, where the river flowed over a short fall. Then suddenly the trees came to an end and the mists were left behind. They stepped out from the Forest, and found a wide sweep of grass welling up before them. The river, now small and swift, was leaping merrily down to meet them, glinting here and there in the light of the stars, which were already shining in the sky.

The use of comparable imagery – the crossing of the river, the greenery, the flowers and the trees – connects Bombadil's home to the bower in Lothlórien. However, the most startling comparison to Lothlórien is the Lady Goldberry herself, whose portrayal is reminiscent of the Lady Galadriel's later depiction, especially in her role as the White Lady. Tolkien (Tolkien, 2001: 121) describes Goldberry with these words:

Her long yellow hair rippled down her shoulders; her gown was green, green as young reeds, shot with silver like beads of dew; and her belt was of gold, shaped like a chain of flag-lilies set with the pale-blue eyes of forget-me-nots. About her feet in wide vessels of green and brown earthenware, white water-lilies were floating, so that she seemed to be enthroned in the midst of a pool.

The word 'enthroned' imparts a regal quality to Goldberry, whose connection to Galadriel is strengthened by her association with water and the usage of the colours green, gold, silver and white, which all appear in previous and subsequent bower scenes; Goldberry is also reported to look like '...a fair young elf-queen clad in living flowers,' (Tolkien, 2001: 121)

much akin to Galadriel. Although conceivably the starkest similarity between Galadriel and Goldberry (other than the ‘G for Galadriel’ and Goldberry, who as embodiments of the White Lady are both associated with gardens and flowers) emerges when she closes the door, and turns ‘...her back to it, with her white arms spread out across it,’ and says: ‘Let us shut out the night!’ This is similar to the moment when Galadriel lifts up ‘...her white arms, and spread out her hands towards the East in a gesture of rejection and denial,’ (Tolkien, 2001: 355) of the Shadows that lie there (almost wanting to shut out the night, which is symbolically linked to evil and chaos). Both White Ladies are therefore opposed to the Shadow (hence their equivalent imagery) and offer assistance in their unique ways to the Hobbits, whose greatest achievement will be ridding Middle-Earth of that accursed Shadow, Sauron. In the same way that Galadriel offers the Fellowship comfort and protection after the horrors in the Mines of Moria, Goldberry offers the Hobbits succour and consolation after their pursuit by the Black Riders. Her presence as a White Lady for a moment keeps the evil at bay in Frodo’s mind. For the first time since leaving the Shire, Tolkien (2001: 132) relinquishes the oppressiveness of the previous dreary settings and writes that:

That night [the Hobbits] heard no noises. But either in his dreams or out of them, he could not tell which, Frodo heard a sweet singing running in his mind: a song that seemed to come like a pale light behind a grey rain-curtain, and growing stronger to turn the veil all to glass and silver, until at last it was rolled back, and a far green country opened before him under a swift sunrise.

The overwhelming danger of their current situation is momentarily allayed, and they set out with renewed vigour and spirit. As a result of this renewal, in Romance the bower is often a sheltered place where the lady ‘...may aid her knight by means of a magic token...[or] the loving care of the lady [with which she] heals the knight of his wounds in her bower,’ (Petříková, 2006: 88) both of which are apparent in the ladies Goldberry and Galadriel. It is a safe space that evokes the bowers of many ladies of Romance. For instance Klára Petříková (2006: 8) mentions that in *Beowulf* Queen Wealhþeow retreats in the evenings when Grendel attacks to: ‘The “būr”, the dwelling of the queen which stands apart from the insecure hall, [and which] takes upon itself the function of the hall as a space of safety since

it is out of reach of Grendel's ferocious attacks.' In the first two books of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* two different ladies offer assistance to two ailing knights: Lady Caelia heals the Redcrosse Knight in her House of Holiness, while Alma attends to Guyon in her castle, the House of Temperance – of which Spenser decrees '[t]hat God hath built for his owne blessed bowre' (II, IX, xix) – and which is analogous with Caelia's own curative residence. Klára Petříková (2006: 11) suggests that there is a correlation between the būr in *Beowulf* and the bower in Romance (which could also refer to a chamber in a castle keep) since '...the Romance "bower" [is] associated with its Old English predecessor by means of its basic function of a private space whose shape as well as function changed as the society itself altered in time.' Essentially, both spaces are identified as secluded retreats, where the lady provides aid to an errant Knight, and that is the true purpose of the bower in Romance – they are havens in moments of supreme chaos. Spenser also describes his two White Ladies, Alma and Caelia, in very similar ways to Tolkien's Galadriel and Goldberry. Spenser writes that Alma:

In robe of lilly white she was arayd
Braunched with gold & pearle, most richly wrought
Her yellow golden heare
Was trimly wouen, and in tresses wrought
Ne other tyre she on her head did weare
But crowned with a garland of sweet Rosiere.
(II, IX, xix)

The portrayal of Alma is evidently akin to Tolkien's portrayal of Goldberry and Galadriel since they follow in the footsteps of the prototypical White Goddess figure. The time in the bower, however, is always short-lived (a break in the narrative indicative of Odysseus' healing on the island of Calypso in Homer's *Odyssey*, which may be the archetype for the healing bower), and before long the Hero must journey out (after whatever assistance he has received) to accomplish his quest. As Gildor the Elf, says to Frodo while feasting in the Elven bower: 'The wide world is all about you: you can fence yourselves in, but you cannot for ever fence it out' (Tolkien, 2001: 82).

The Golden-Haired Heroine: The Heroine

As previously stated, *The Lord of the Rings* has many female characters that exemplify the nobility and virtues which are associated with the Lady of Romance literature – such as Arwen and Galadriel, as well as the abundant references in the text to their counterparts from *The Silmarillion*, Lúthien and Elbereth or Varda; and yet, much like Shelob, who is the only female antagonist in the book, Éowyn is the only Heroine⁸ in the whole of Tolkien's *magnum opus*. Though some critics – particularly Jane Burns (1993), Simon Gaunt (1995) and Giselle Gos (2012), along with several others – argue that female subjectivity often eludes female characters in Romance literature, Leslie A. Donovan (Croft & Donovan, 2015: 109) suggests in *Perilous and Fair: Women in the Works and Life of J. R. R. Tolkien* that: 'Galadriel, Shelob, Éowyn, and Arwen stand out from the narrative's background as more than secondary, incidental literary figures.' Phoebe Linton (Croft & Donovan, 2015: 258), in a chapter from the same book, agrees with Donovan when she states that this argument for female subjectivity often '...encapsulates the common misconception that those who are not Ringbearers are peripheral in *The Lord of the Rings*,' an idea which she states is unfounded because *The Lord of the Rings* is a Romance that was, according to Tolkien, 'large and much-embracing,' (Carpenter, 2002: 161), and because, as previously stated and evidenced, the female characters in the text are 'key contributors' to the central quest in *The Lord of the Rings* (Croft & Donovan, 2015: 259). Helen Cooper puts forward her own distinctive interpretation of female characters' placement and subjectivity in Romance literature, when she (2009: 19) writes that: 'Women are not cast merely as sex objects in Romances, and especially not in those composed in England. They are frequently given their own thoughts and responses, expressed in soliloquies of self-analysis as they awaken

⁸ The Heroine may share qualities with the Lady (and indeed Éowyn displays attributes of both) but plays a more active role in the events of the narrative. As such, when we first meet Éowyn she displays the characteristics of a Lady, but when she rides to battle, she then actively becomes a Heroine.

to love, which endow them with the kind of subjective, interior, life that has often been claimed to be exclusively both a male and a modern phenomenon.’

However, according to both Donovan and Linton, possibly no other character displays as much female subjectivity as Éowyn, who though she tries to establish herself as a female character in relation to the men in her life – Théoden, Éomer and Aragorn – ends up confirming her own status as a Heroine independent of these male heroic figures (Croft & Donovan, 2015: 20). Linton (Croft & Donovan, 2015: 258) contends that: ‘In *The Lord of the Rings*, Éowyn represents a literary articulation of the resistance to silence which medieval female Romance figures negotiate in their attempts to achieve speech and autonomy. The privilege of voice initially is denied to Éowyn, provoking tensions between invisibility/visibility and passivity/action,’ although she ultimately overcomes this refutation of voice or subjectivity by achieving renown as a Heroine due to her vanquishing an evil that no Hero in the text, or in fact any other male equivalent, could ever overcome: the Witch-king of Angmar. Her introduction as a Heroine, therefore, is in keeping with the conventions of Romance literature: she is a woman; she is young; she is a gifted sword fighter, and as such a counterpart to the other sword-wielding Heroes; and she achieves heroic prominence by defeating a supernatural foe (Cooper, 2009: 16). While the reader’s first glimpse of Éowyn is through Aragorn’s eyes, it is noteworthy that he speaks of her in very similar terms to his initial description of Arwen, accentuating her beauty and virtues. He does not at this point drift into a dream-vision because Éowyn is not the Lady of his dreams. The reader, however, gets better acquainted with her throughout the narrative of *The Lord of the Rings*. Helen Cooper (2009: 17) comments that this convention of observing a Lady through the eyes of a male character is customary in Romance: ‘The male gaze here is literal: this is what the knights see as they look through their prison window, as mediated through the narrator’s own focus. What they see, however, goes far beyond (or falls short of) the voyeuristic.’ Thus, when Aragorn encounters Éowyn in the Golden Hall of Meduseld, his impression of her beauty is mingled with feelings about her personality. Tolkien (2001: 504) writes that:

As she passed the doors she turned and looked back. Grave and thoughtful was her glance, as she looked on the king with cool pity in her eyes. Very fair was her face, and her long hair was like a river of gold. Slender and tall she was in her white robe girt with silver; but strong she seemed and stern as steel, a daughter of kings. Thus Aragorn for the first time in the full light of day beheld Éowyn, Lady of Rohan, and thought her fair, fair and cold, like a morning of pale spring that is not yet come to womanhood.

Helen Cooper remarks that the introduction of the Heroine (or indeed any female protagonist) usually depends on comparable descriptive concerns. She (Cooper, 2009: 16) comments that frequently in Romance the introductory passage is nothing more than ‘...a bare statement of [the Heroine’s] qualifications for her role as the leading lady: virtue and beauty – and interestingly (not least by contrast with modern culture), in that order. Also interesting, however, is the fact that the phrasing actually avoids [concrete] description, by leaving everything to the imagination.’ The same can be said about the preliminary portrayal of Éowyn. Tolkien concentrates on her virtues – her pity, her strength, her noble lineage – which are in keeping with the virtues typical of a Romance Knight or Hero – ‘franchise, felaghsip, clanes, cortasie and pity’ – and then he focuses on her fairness and appearance. In order for Éowyn to seem more Lady-like and feminine, while still being capable of heroic deeds, Tolkien perhaps intentionally depicts her in a similar fashion to Galadriel (see Tolkien, 2001: 172). In both descriptions Tolkien emphasizes their tallness, their ‘long hair like a river of gold’, their regal ancestry, their fairness of face, their white dresses, and a perceived splendour or quality – ‘Hard as diamonds, soft as moonlight. Warm as sunlight, cold as frost in the stars’ – that Faramir deems ‘perilously fair,’ although Sam considers it a strength ‘...you could dash yourself to pieces on’ (Tolkien, 2001: 675). As Leslie Donovan (Croft & Donovan, 2015: 113) states when comparing Galadriel and Éowyn: ‘In addition to using the colour white and a fair appearance to establish the visual intensity of Galadriel’s physical presence as indicative of a heightened moral state, Tolkien highlights the Lady’s supremacy of form and nature by including references to shining eyes and gold in his portrayal of the Elven queen.’

Whichever justification the reader accepts, whether cold or warm or hard or soft, or conceivably a mixture of both, ‘...when first introduced to the text, Éowyn is seen as a woman whose life is constricted by the court of Rohan and by tending to her uncle Théoden the King, immobile and impotent due to the machinations of Saruman and Wormtongue’ (Croft & Donovan, 2015: 260). These circumstances, Cooper suggests, are more common memes of the Hero, whose rise to power often takes place in ‘[a] land ruled by a helpless old king’ (Frye, 1973: 189). For this reason, Éowyn’s story might be regarded as a Romance tale within a Romance tale, in which she represents two vital roles: the Lady and the Heroine or Lady Knight. Phoebe Linton (Croft & Donovan, 2015: 260) in her chapter (Croft & Donovan, 2015: 258-280), ‘Speech and Silence in *The Lord of the Rings*: Medieval Romance and the Transitions of Éowyn’, discusses Éowyn’s duality, remarking that:

Regarding her trajectory within the story, Tolkien models Éowyn on the medieval female knight, using Romance quest conventions as points of inspiration from which he transcends traditional patterns. Éowyn is “stern as steel,” a woman ready to “face peril and battle,” a vocal character who challenges the value-system represented by figures such as her uncle Théoden and Aragorn. Tolkien portrays Éowyn as an integral quest agent, a conflation of the medieval female knight and courtly woman.

The conflation, as Linton puts it, shows Éowyn’s importance in a narrative that has often been accused, rather unfairly, of not effectively addressing female subjectivity or of creating female characters that are more often than not side-lined by their male counterparts (see Candice Fredrick and Sam McBride [2001]; Doris Myers [1971]; and Catherine Stimpson [1969]). As previously mentioned, though, Tolkien’s female characters, such as Éowyn, exhibit, as Donovan and Linton mention, a genuine independence in their roles as women within their respective societies. Viewed in the confines of *The Lord of the Rings*, in which the actual impetus of the story is the destruction of the Ring, Éowyn’s tale might seem inconsequential to (or might get lost in) the larger trajectory of the text. However, examined independently, Éowyn’s narrative encompasses her individual role as a true Heroine or female Knight of Romance, in a similar manner to that of Britomart in Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*, whose character has her own unique and important role as a female Knight

(Hamilton, 2003: 432). Nevertheless, it does not mean Britomart's story will eclipse Spenser's true purpose of telling the tale of the young King Arthur and the Elf Queen, Gloriana (though it is interesting to note that, much like Tolkien's own story, the eponymous figure of Spenser's work also does not actively participate in the narrative of the text but rather plays a dominating role from behind the scenes). 'Structurally, Éowyn can be better understood by considering the text's narrative interlacing, whereby the plot's focus alternates between characters or groups of characters, relying upon hiatuses and shifts to propel the story forward' (Croft & Donovan, 2015: 258), which is how, Phoebe Linton suggests, Tolkien develops Éowyn's character and her complex storyline. At first, Éowyn is perceived to be nothing more than a Lady of the court; perhaps even one who might be adored by the Heroes of *The Lord of the Rings*, thus creating a Lady-Knight scenario akin to that established by Galadriel and Gimli. But through the successive chapters Tolkien develops her character by placing her in various Romance functions or roles relating to female characters until she becomes a worthy Heroine. She is an acting lord in the stead of her uncle, the King; she then takes up arms to achieve exceptional feats of heroism before '...all chance of doing great deeds is gone beyond recall or desire,' (Tolkien, 2001: 809) which results in her overcoming her own supernatural creature of chaos; she then becomes a wife and healer, in much the same manner that Aragorn becomes a husband and King, since '[t]he hands of the king are the hands of a healer.' In this way, as with Sam, Frodo and Gandalf, who all defeat their own particular otherworldly foes, the development of Éowyn's character is achieved incrementally, '...giving the sense that heroes or heroines [become] more than they were at the beginning of their quests. [For] [a]chieving wholeness and completion is one of the prime aims' (Croft & Donovan, 2015: 260) of all Romance.

Northrop Frye (1973: 186) in *The Anatomy of Criticism* states that '[t]he Romance is nearest of all literary forms to the wish-fulfilment dream, and for that reason it has socially a curiously paradoxical role. In every age the ruling social or intellectual class tends to project its ideals in some form of Romance, where the virtuous heroes and beautiful heroines represent the

ideals and the villains the threats to their ascendancy.’ Thus, according to Frye, the fulfilment of ideals by a Hero or Heroine is the crux of Romance literature and perhaps no other character epitomises the ideals of her society more than Éowyn, who functions in *The Lord of the Rings* not just as a Heroine, but also as a lady, cup-bearer, steward, Shieldmaiden, healer and ultimately wife. With the conflation of roles, it seems that Tolkien may have sought to accomplish many things with a solitary character. Consequently, as an individual, Éowyn exhibits many of the characteristics, and fulfils many of the roles, that have been previously well-established by other female Romance personae. However, Phoebe Linton (Croft & Donovan, 2015: 258-259) suggests that Éowyn’s multi-faceted nature is a result of the fact that her storyline is intertwined with so many of the tropes which are more often associated with the Hero, while still requiring her character to function within the constraints of a Heroine (Cooper, 2009: 17-19). The other complication with her character emerges because Éowyn, in spite of everything, is expected, by a largely modern readership, to abide by the conventions and ideals of an everyday woman, an expectation that is further complicated by the fact that she is the only human female protagonist in *The Lord of the Rings*.

When first introduced to the reader, Éowyn, who, much like Frodo and Aragorn, is mysteriously orphaned and raised by an adoptive male figure, acts as a support to her aging uncle, King Théoden, but within these confines of care-giver and helper, she is also a loving sister, and the unwitting object of the perverted adoration and lust shown by the court advisor, Gríma Wormtongue (the meaning of Gríma Wormtongue’s name is interesting since Gríma is Old English for mask while Wormtongue alludes to the tongue of a snake or dragon, both creatures of deception [Snyder, 2013: 70]). This infatuation is another possible distortion of the Knight and Lady relationship, since, although Éowyn is a Lady, Wormtongue is not considered in any conceivable way to be a knightly-figure. In fact, his lust for Éowyn is by its very definition in contravention of the ideals of courtly love, which, as discussed, are ennobling and often lead to acts of heroism (Kenlin, 1995: 349). Instead of ennobling and

refining him, Gríma's longing for Éowyn, which is unrequited, leads him to commit many deceitful deeds in an attempt to win her favour – the greatest being when he isolates her from her family connections by sending her brother, Éomer, from King Théoden's side, while simultaneously alienating the King and poisoning his mind (Tolkien, 2001: 634& 645). C.S. Lewis (1946: 165), in *The Allegory of Love*, explains that: 'Lust is more abstract than logic: [since] it seeks (hope triumphing over experience) for some purely sexual, hence purely imaginary, conjunction of an impossible maleness with an impossible femaleness,' which is the case with Gríma Wormtongue, and which is often the corrupting influence behind the antagonist's 'love' for an attractive Lady in Romance literature (1946: 167).

However, after Wormtongue's influence over Théoden is ended, due to the explicit intervention of Gandalf, Éowyn moves away from being an unnamed 'woman clad in white,' standing behind the King and enters a new incarnation as the White Lady of Rohan, which '...indicates that Éowyn is the supreme woman at court and more than an archetypal, unnamed princess or quest damsel, as is found in Malory' (Croft & Donovan, 2015: 256). She is thereafter described by the appellation the 'daughter of kings,' which is an interesting designation for it makes a thought-provoking connection between her lady-like character and her royal matrilineage. Phoebe Linton (Croft & Donovan, 2015: 265-266) says that being '...designated "a daughter of kings," Éowyn is aligned with the male line of succession in Rohan rather than with the female line, as she would be if she were named "a daughter of queens" (III.6.515); but this also shows Éowyn's status as Théoden's 'adoptive' child and that all people accept this status. Again, this could be seen to augur her later stewardship in Théoden's absence. As well as achieving a high local status, Éowyn compares favourably with the foreign king-to-be, Aragorn,' who is naturally the heir of kings. This authority as the noblest Lady at Théoden's court is especially evidenced in her role as cup-bearer to the lords during the feast that takes place to celebrate the King's renewed health. In a scene reminiscent of an agnate feast in *Beowulf*, 'Éowyn, the White Lady of Rohan, carries the wine-cup to Théoden and his guests in the hall (as Wealhþeow offers the mead-cup in

Beowulf) and offers it with the Old English blessing, *Ferthu Théoden há!* (“Health be with thee, Théoden!”). (Snyder, 2013: 142). What is truly striking, though, is how similar the two scenes are, especially when compared with Tolkien’s translation of *Beowulf*, which has unfortunately only recently become available, even though it was completed in 1926 (Tolkien, 2014: vii). In Tolkien’s *Beowulf* (Tolkien, 2014: 498-507):

Wealhtheow went forth, Hrothgar’s queen, mindful of courtesy; with gold adorned she greeted the men in the hall, and then the cup she offered, noble lady, first to the guardian of the East Dane’s realm, and wished him joy at the ale-quaffing and his lieges’ love. He, king victorious, in delight partook of feast and flowing bowl. Then the lady of the Helmings went to and fro to every part of that host, to tried men and young proffering the jewelled vessels, until in due time it chanced that she, ring-laden queen of courteous heart, to Beowulf bore the cup of mead, and hailed the Geatish knight.

While in *The Two Towers* Éowyn is described in comparable terms. Tolkien (2001: 645) writes that:

The king now rose, and at once Éowyn came forward bearing wine. “*Ferthu Théoden há!*” she said. “Receive now this cup and drink in happy hour. Health be with thee at thy going and coming!” Théoden drank from the cup, and she then proffered it to the guests. As she stood before Aragorn she paused suddenly and looked upon him, and her eyes were shining. And he looked down upon her fair face and smiled; but as he took the cup, his hand met hers, and he knew that she trembled at the touch. “Hail Aragorn son of Arathorn!” she said.

The correlations between the two scenes, although written at least twenty years apart, is clearly apparent (Tolkien, 2014: vii). Both depictions have female cup-bearers, or *ealu bora*, of regal lineage offering a cup of salutation and good health (customary in Anglo-Saxon ritualistic feasts or *symbel* [Campbell, 2014: 68]) to an elderly King, to various guests in attendance, and then finally proffering – a word conspicuously used in both versions – the cup to the central Hero of the text. In each of the texts, the central Hero, whom the cup-bearer hails with words of welcome, bears the responsibility of ridding the land of a terrible evil, and then becoming a King in his own right in the near future. In fact, Tolkien follows the structure so closely that viewing the descriptions side by side many readers might consider Tolkien’s own ceremonial banquet setting to be simply a reproduction of *Beowulf*’s well-

known feasting scene. However, the similarity between *Beowulf's* and Tolkien's scenes is a result of Tolkien's desire to create a visual and stylistic parallel between the society in Edoras and the Anglo-Saxon culture that Tolkien knew and loved so well; for it is '...in Rohan, not Gondor, that we find the truest incarnation of the Anglo-Saxons in Middle-Earth' (Snyder, 2013: 56). In fact, as Tom Shippey (2001: 92) contends, Rohan owes much of its existence to the Anglo-Saxons:

All the names given to the Riders and their horses and their weapons are pure Anglo-Saxon. The names of their kings, Théoden, Thengel, Fengel, Folcwine, etc., are all simply Anglo-Saxon words or epithets for 'king', except, significantly, the first: Eorl, the name of the ancestor of the royal line, just means 'earl', or in very Old English, 'warrior'. It dates back to a time before kings were invented.

It is for this reason that Tolkien casts Éowyn in the role of the cup-bearer: to continue a narrative structure that is heavily dependent on the culture of the Anglo-Saxons, one of whose great expressions of creativity, *Beowulf*, already contains much of that exceedingly English perspective that would eventually find its way into the Romances of King Arthur (Heng, 2003: 176). As Geraldine Heng (2003: 176) fittingly exhorts: King Arthur, for all his French influence, nonetheless remains an essentially English Knight; and if he existed at all outside the imaginations of those European Romance writers that told his tale, he probably did so in the Anglo-Saxon period of English history. As for Tolkien, who was inspired by both *Beowulf* and Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*, Leslie Donovan (Croft & Donovan, 2015: 107) believes that '...all his Middle-Earth fiction has its heritage in the literature and culture of the Middle Ages.' Éowyn's role as cup-bearer in the *symbol* scene of *The Two Towers* is, however, not the only nod to *Beowulf*. In the same chapter, Christopher Snyder (2013: 63) states that:

Théoden's hall, Meduseld, also appears in *Beowulf* as a generic description, "mead house," while Gríma Wormtongue owes something to the character of Unferð, the warrior who challenges Beowulf's reputation in Heorot. Éomer says "*Westu Théoden hal!*" (May you be healthy, Théoden!), just as Beowulf declared "*Wæs þu, Hroðgar, hál!*"

All these *Beowulfian* references forge such a powerful connection between Tolkien's original and the Anglo-Saxon poem that the majesty and authority which the Midland poet bestowed on Wealhþeow, and which was subsumed by successive Romance ladies and queens, such as Guinevere, is transferred onto the White Lady of Rohan, Éowyn, '...for her deeds have set her among the queens of great renown' (Tolkien, 2001: 849). For this reason, certain critics, such as Jennifer Neville (2005: 101) and Faye Ringel (2015: 165), claim that, not only does Tolkien scarcely make use of female characters, but that when he does use them he tends to cast them in particularly stereotypical female roles. There are, however, a few problems with this assertion. The first is that in Tolkien's *Legendarium* central female characters do at times appear nearly proportionately to central male characters: for instance, in *The Silmarillion*, there are seven male Valar and seven female Valar who assist in the formation of Arda (yet in Middle-Earth Varda, the Queen of Heaven, is far more highly regarded than the rest); while there are also examples of female characters who are far more powerful than their male counterparts: the Lady Galadriel is considerably more formidable and revered than her husband, the Lord Celeborn (Tyler, 1973: 190). The second is that the association of Éowyn with Wealhþeow cannot possibly be stereotypical since *Beowulf's* eminent Queen is the first extant example of a queen acting as a cup-bearer in Anglo-Saxon literature. Besides, Tolkien does not define Éowyn's entire character by her function as either Lady or cup-bearer (Croft & Donovan, 2015: 276). He relies on these to form connections to previous Romance Heroines, but develops her character in many other unique ways. For instance, when King Théoden marches to war, he ultimately chooses Éowyn as his steward, to rule in his stead. Although Théoden at first does not consider his niece when Háma, the doorward of the Meduseld and the Captain of Théoden's guard, suggests that one of the House of Eorl should rule in Théoden's place, he unhesitatingly consents when Háma says: "There is Éowyn, daughter of Éomund. She is fearless and high-hearted. All love her. Let her be as lord to the Eorlingas, while we are gone" (Tolkien, 2001: 653). Théoden, bequeaths the stewardship of Rohan to Éowyn with '...a sword and a fair corslet,' (Tolkien, 2001: 653) which as mentioned previously are symbols of the Hero. This

amalgamation of Hero and Heroine only further enhances Éowyn's status as an active participant in the narrative of *The Lord of the Rings*. She '...can ride and wield blade, and [does] not fear either pain or death,' and as such she is the embodiment of the brave Heroine of Romance literature. '[I]n *The Return of the King* she [even] calls herself a "Shieldmaiden" (Old Norse, *skjaldmær*) and longs for battle,' (Snyder, 2013: 142) and in this manner Snyder (2013: 142) suggests that 'Éowyn resembles the [Shieldmaiden and] Valkyrie Brynhildr whom Sigurd rescues (by cutting off her corselet) in the *Prose Edda*'. Tolkien retold the story of Brynhildr and Sigurd in his work, *The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún*, in which there is a magical ring that makes the wearer invisible and a renowned but broken sword, Grímnir, that is reforged into the blade, Gram, which heralds the return of a king (Tolkien, 2009: ix). Phoebe Linton (Croft & Donovan, 2015: 260) proposes that: 'Tolkien's women are often, but not entirely, "narrative agents charged with the authority of distinct heroic women figures from Old Norse mythology and literature called the Valkyries," which demonstrates his intent to create strong female characters.' Tolkien definitely created a strong female character with Éowyn, and by identifying her as a Shieldmaiden, he lends her heroic authority and prowess, which will eventually find their expression in her battle with the King of the Ringwraiths. The reader thus accepts without any hesitation that this slender figure as 'stern as steel' could in effect be a capable warrior. Yet Tolkien does not equate male figures and female figures: Éowyn must still function within the confines of her society because Tolkien does not shy away from the fact that Éowyn is first and foremost a woman (Chance, 2001: 263). But this acceptance of Éowyn's femininity has often been highly criticised by various critics (Patridge [1984], Ringel [2000] and Neville [2005] particularly). Richard West (Chance, 2001: 265), in his essay in *Tolkien: the Medievalist*, however, states that though '...Tolkien is far from being a feminist author, his women characters are stronger than they are often made out to be,' mostly because Tolkien considers there to be other forms of strength besides the physical strength of the overtly masculine characters. Nancy Enright (2012: 93) also suggests that this '...stereotypical and purely masculine kind of power, as represented by Boromir for instance, is shown to be weaker morally and spiritually

than its non-traditional counterparts,' such as Galadriel and Éowyn, who have other forms of strength because they are feminine characters. Tolkien's recognition that there is a difference between male and female is not, however, a slight to women in his work because it allows him to address those differences with understanding. In fact Tolkien (2001: 848-849), using the words of Gandalf to Éomer and Aragorn, explains this discordance by stating that: 'My friend, you had horses, and deeds of arms, and the free fields; but she, born in the body of a maid, had a spirit and courage at least the match of yours. Yet she was doomed to wait upon an old man, whom she loved as a father, and watch him falling into a mean dishonoured dotage; and her part seemed to her more ignoble than that of the staff he leaned on.' It is intriguing that rather than refusing to provide an opportunity for Éowyn to prove her heroic proficiencies because she is not a masculine figure, Tolkien instead constructs a scene in which the central Heroine and Hero of *The Lord of the Rings* debate the function of woman in the text, especially with regard to battle. Helen Cooper (2009: 224) states that this embracing of female issues and the inherent power of the Heroine is one of the distinct characteristics of Romance, for '[t]he Romances recognize a further important social and psychological fact in presenting their heroines as active participants in the forging of their own destinies,' especially when comparison is made between the duties of the two sexes. In *The Return of the King* Aragorn returns to Edoras shortly before taking the Paths of the Dead; he says farewell to the Lady Éowyn, who begs Aragorn to allow her to accompany him. However, Aragorn refuses saying that since she is the steward of her people her place is with them. Tolkien (2001: 767) describes the scene in such a way that gender and duty become inseparable:

"A time may come soon," said [Aragorn], "when none will return. Then there will be need of valour without renown, for none shall remember the deeds that are done in the last defence of your homes. Yet the deeds will not be less valiant because they are unpraised." She answered: "All your words are but to say: you are a woman, and your part is in the house. But when the men have died in battle and honour, you have leave to be burned in the house, for the men will need it no more. But I am of the House of Eorl and not a serving-woman. I can ride and wield blade, and I do not fear either pain or death."

Aragorn's argument is that he cannot release her from the burden that King Théoden placed on her: the stewardship of her people. He feels that she should help defend her people as best she can if none of the men return from the impending battle with Sauron. Éowyn, on the other hand, feels that since she is proficient with a blade, she should put her skills to use. But there is much more to her desire to go to war. Aragorn asks her what she fears, and she answers: "A cage," she said. 'To stay behind bars, until use and old age accept them, and all chance of doing great deeds is gone beyond recall or desire.'" Éowyn is afraid that as a woman she will be expected to remain behind in the home while her husband (since marriage is her cage) goes out and accomplishes the 'great deeds' that she is clearly longing to achieve (and is capable of achieving as a Shieldmaiden). Christopher Snyder (2013: 158) explains that: '[i]n the lengthy dialogue – one of the longest in the entire novel – Tolkien gives Éowyn the last word. Many readers would say that she has the greater argument. For Tolkien plucks a shieldmaiden from Norse myth and places her in a situation where she can speak the grievances of a modern woman without it seeming anachronistic or inappropriate.' Interestingly, Humphrey Carpenter (2002: 169) reveals that Tolkien might indeed have had a more modern notion in mind when he created Éowyn's consternation at being unable to utilize her heroic gifts, principally since he was '...capable of sympathizing with the plight of a clever woman who had been trapped by marriage into leading an intellectually empty life,' which might be considered a form of a cage.

However, despite Aragorn and Théoden's objections, Éowyn disguises herself as a slender Rohirrim warrior, Dernhelm, in order to go to battle; although, as Leslie Donovan (Chance, 2001: 123) suggests, since '...her training verifies that in her culture it is acceptable that women engage in battle...it is most likely that she disguises herself in order to hide her personal identity from Théoden.' She does this so that the King will not prevent her riding to '[f]ell deeds...fire and slaughter,' where 'spear shall be shaken [and] shield be splintered' (Tolkien, 2001: 820). This desire, though, for the Heroine to remain incognito in order to accomplish some heroic feat in secrecy is a recurring motif in Romance literature (Cooper,

2009: 256-258). Britomart, Spenser's own female knight and one of the influences on Éowyn's character, also dresses up as a man in order to go off to battle. Helen Cooper (2009: 257) suggests that 'Spenser allows Britomart to cross-dress to give an emblematic representation of the active virtue of Romance love,' which is representative of the reasons that Éowyn wants to march off to war: she loves her kin and her people, and longs to defend that which she loves. As Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 244) explained in a letter to a reader of *The Lord of the Rings*: Éowyn: '[t]hough not a 'dry nurse' in temper...was also not really a soldier or 'amazon', but like many brave women was capable of great military gallantry at a crisis,' which emphasises her yearning to protect her homeland in that moment. Nor is she the only female knight to go to war to protect that which she loves. There are two other examples in Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*: the unnamed lesser Lady of the Lake (hence not the one that bestows Excalibur on King Arthur) to whom the King says 'Damesel, for what cause ar ye gurte with that swerde? Hit besemyth you nought,' (Malory, 1984: 40) for the armour detracts from her beauty, similarly dresses up as a warrior to partake in battle while Lady Alys defends her paramour, Alisaunder, with a sword in order to save his life (Malory, 1984: 344), which is reminiscent of Éowyn's protection of Théoden when the Witch-king of Angmar attacks him. As Théoden lies dying, having been wounded by the Witch-king, Dernhelm steps forward to protect the King from the Nazgûl's beast.

Then out of the blackness in his mind [Merry] thought that he heard Dernhelm speaking; yet now the voice seemed strange, recalling some other voice that he had known. "Begone foul *dwimmerlaik*, lord of carrion! Leave the dead in peace!" A cold voice answered: "Come not between the Nazgûl and his prey! Or he will not slay thee in thy turn. He will bear thee away to the houses of lamentation, beyond all darkness, where thy flesh shall be devoured, and thy shrivelled mind be left naked to the Lidless Eye." A sword rang as it was drawn. "Do what you will; but I will hinder it, if I may." "Hinder me? Thou fool. No living man may hinder me!" Then Merry heard of all sounds in that hour the strangest. It seemed that Dernhelm laughed, and the clear voice was like the ring of steel. "But no living man am I! You look upon a woman. Éowyn I am, Éomund's daughter. You stand between me and my lord and kin. Begone, if you be not deathless! For living or dark undead, I will smite you if you touch him" (Tolkien, 2001: 823)

The scene that Tolkien portrays clearly demonstrates Éowyn's extraordinary courage: for in the face of that terrible evil, '[s]till she [does] not blench: maiden of the Rohirrim, child of kings, slender but as a steel-blade, fair but terrible.' Instead she laughs (Tolkien, 2001: 824). For this reason she receives her own heroic honorific, becoming Éowyn, Éomund's daughter, in the same way that Aragorn is addressed heroically as Aragorn, Arathorn's son. But Tolkien is careful to emphasise the fact that Éowyn's heroic abilities are brought to the fore because of the love that she feels for Théoden. And that is the main difference between a Hero and a Heroine: Heroes fight for duty and the sense of adventure, while Heroines fight for love and in order to protect those they love, which might be due to their inherent maternal instincts (Cooper, 2009: 234). Tolkien uses this 'love' to his advantage because no other knight on the battlefield, whether from Gondor or Rohan, could possibly have challenged the Witch-king and survived, never mind stood a chance of vanquishing such a foe. But Tolkien makes it clear that Éowyn does, not in spite of being a woman, but because of the very fact that she is a woman. For, much like the Heroes of *The Lord of the Rings*, her fate is intertwined with the elements of prophecy (Beer, 1970: 79) and the interception of providence (Cooper, 2009:334). In that moment when Éowyn stands against the Nazgûl Lord she is almost overwhelmed – her shield and arm are broken and the Nazgûl's mace is swinging inexorably towards her – but at the last second Merry intervenes to change the course of the events. 'It is then Merry's turn to save his lord and his disguised patron. Stabbing the Witch-king in the knee, Merry distracts him just enough for Éowyn to collect herself and drive her own sword into the face of the Ringwraith lord, fulfilling the prophecy that he would be killed by no living *man*,' (Snyder, 2013: 161) the tale of which appears in Appendix A of *The Lord of the Rings*. After the Witch-king is driven out of Angmar by Glorfindel and his Elvenfolk, Eärnur, the last King of Gondor, wants to pursue the Witch-king, but Glorfindel stops him with a prophetic warning: 'Do not pursue him! He will not return to these lands. Far off yet is his doom, and not by the hand of man shall he fall' (Tolkien, 2001: 1198). It is these words to which Gandalf refers when he says: 'And if words spoken of old be true, not by the hand of man shall he fall, and hidden from the Wise is the doom that

awaits him.’ Fortunately for the fate of Middle-Earth Éowyn is no man and thus is able to vanquish such a formidable supernatural enemy. Tolkien (2001: 878) describes the Witch-king’s demise with these words:

“Éowyn! Éowyn!” cried Merry. Then tottering, struggling up, with her last strength she drove her sword between crown and mantle, as the great shoulders bowed before her. The sword broke sparkling into many shards. The crown rolled away with a clang. Éowyn fell forward upon her fallen foe. But lo! the mantle and hauberk were empty. Shapeless they lay now on the ground, torn and tumbled; and a cry went up into the shuddering air, and faded to a shrill wailing, passing with the wind, a voice bodiless and thin that died, and was swallowed up, and was never heard again in that age of this world.

But Éowyn does not manage to escape the battle with the Witch-king unscathed. At first the men of Rohan believe that she is dead, until Prince Imrahil points out that: ‘She is hurt, to the death maybe, but I deem that she yet lives’ (Tolkien, 2001: 827). In the Houses of Healing, the attendants discover she is stricken with the Black Shadow, a death-like slumber that they are unable to heal. Aragorn alone, having the hands of healer, is able to ‘...recall [Éowyn] from the dark valley’ (Tolkien, 2001: 849) in which she finds herself. In this scene overflowing with the allegorical significance of a traveller walking through the valley of death, Éowyn is called back from the brink of death by the central Hero of the text, but she is not out of harm’s way yet. Northrop Frye (1973: 171) writes that ‘[s]imilar points of ritual death may be marked in almost any story that imprisons the hero or gives the heroine a nearly mortal illness before an eventually happy ending,’ which ties in with the symbolic death of the Hero that is so familiar in Romance literature and often involves the Heroine’s acceptance or rejection of her inner desires before she can be fully mended (Cooper, 2009: 213). However, just as it seems that Éowyn may never be fully healed, ‘...she meets her fellow convalescent, Faramir, whose gentleness and wisdom bring about a slow change in Éowyn. As Faramir looks upon her with affection, “it seemed to him that something in her softened.”’ (Snyder, 2013: 164). Tolkien describes their meeting with the compassionate sentiment befitting the start of such a romantic courtship: ‘He looked at her, and being a man whom pity deeply stirred, it seemed to him that her loveliness amid her grief would pierce his

heart. And she looked at him and saw the grave tenderness in his eyes, and yet knew, for she was bred among men of war, that here was one whom no Rider of the Mark would outmatch in battle.' Faramir is associated here with the knightly virtue of 'pity,' which is Tolkien's greatest criterion for a Hero. Éowyn is drawn to the combination of two almost opposing elements – tenderness and bravery – that she perceives in Faramir. Similarly, '[w]hen Britomart, with keen, observant eye, beheld the beautiful face of Artegall, tempered with sternness, strength, and majesty...her wrathful courage began to falter, and her haughty spirit to grow tame, so that she softly withdrew her uplifted hand' (McLeod, 2008: 172). Spenser's female knight, who dresses in armour in order to achieve those heroic pursuits otherwise denied to her, also surrenders her knightly quests when she meets the man she is destined to love (Roche, 1987: 233). Christopher Snyder (2013: 164) suggests that at this point in time Faramir and Éowyn enter into a courtly Romance: he writes that '[w]hile Tolkien himself later wrote that Éowyn['s]...relationship with Faramir was valid even though it progressed quickly and did not go through the stages of courtly love, he casts their roles too well. Faramir has Lancelot's courtesy and prowess if not his fanaticism, but also a philosopher's love of wisdom and beauty.' If this scenario is plausible then it means that since Faramir, much like Artegall, is the Knight then Éowyn, much like Britomart, will have to lay down her sword and armour and resume her role as the Lady. Moreover, Faramir, who, though thought by his father, Denethor, to be less heroic than his brother, Boromir, displays a different form of heroic character (perhaps a greater heroic character) than his brother because he is the only human who refuses the Ring though it is within his grasp, saying 'I would not take this thing, if it lay by the highway' (Tolkien, 2001: 656). As a Hero he therefore exhibits that same love of heroic deeds that is so evident in Éowyn, but like her he goes to war to defend that which he loves and not because he loves to wage war. In *The Two Towers*, Faramir tells Frodo that: 'War must be, while we defend our lives against a destroyer who would devour all; but I do not love the bright sword for its sharpness, nor the arrow for its swiftness, nor the warrior for his glory. I love only that which they defend' (Tolkien, 2001: 657). These words contain the sentiment that Éowyn herself feels; and

perhaps that is why she learns to love the Lord Faramir. Tolkien (2001: 943) describes this acceptance of love (or desires as Cooper puts it) as a change of heart, saying: ‘The heart of Éowyn changed, or else at last she understood it. And suddenly her winter passed, and the sun shone on her.’ She tells Faramir: ‘[B]ehold the Shadow has departed! I will be a shieldmaiden no longer, nor vie with the great Riders, nor take joy only in the songs of slaying. I will be a healer, and love all things that grow and are not barren’ (Tolkien, 2001: 943). This change of heart restores The Lady Éowyn and she is now entirely healed. She therefore moves through to the completion of her cycle: from Lady, to cup-bearer, to shieldmaiden, and finally to healer and wife. However, as Cooper has mentioned, this role of healer is not a new role, but rather an acceptance of her true nature: for she was already a Lady and healer when she was taking care of the ailing King Théoden. And so, much like Galadriel and most other Heroines, Éowyn no longer desires to be a queen, but instead she will ‘...go into the West and remain,’ the White Lady of Rohan. The end to Éowyn’s journey is a happy one; it is the eucatastrophic turning of fate that is so indicative of Romance stories and one that Tolkien felt was ‘...the only “consolation” for the sorrow of this world’ (Tolkien, 1964: 57). He (Tolkien, 2001: 943-944) writes that: ‘Then Faramir laughed merrily. ‘Yet I will wed with the White Lady of Rohan, if it be her will. And if she will, then let us cross the River and in happier days let us dwell in fair Ithilien and there make a garden. All things will grow with joy there, if the White Lady comes.’ Here again similarities between Éowyn and Galadriel appear: both are women, slender and hard as steel, who ultimately surrender their ambition to become the White Ladies of the Woods – the White Lady of Lothlórien and the White Lady of Ithilien respectively – who above everything else ‘love all things that grow and are not barren.’ And that is the true power not only of the Narya, the Ring of Adamant, but also of women, who are the nurturers of Middle-Earth (Tyler, 1973: 178; Croft & Donovan, 2015: 113). Humphrey Carpenter (2002: 131) reminds us that ‘The chief power (of all the Rings alike) was the prevention or slowing of decay, the preservation of what is desired or loved, or its semblance – this is more or less an Elvish motive,’ which represents the virtues of the healer and the nurturer. The Elf, Haldir, perhaps conscious of this necessity for

nurturing, says: 'The world is indeed full of peril, and in it there are many dark places; but still there is much that is fair, and though in all lands love is now mingled with grief, it grows perhaps the greater' (Tolkien, 2001: 339), especially if there are healers such as Galadriel and Éowyn to tend to it.

The White Lady of the Woods: The White Goddess

In mentioning the White Lady of Lothlórien, it is interesting to note that the Lady Galadriel's function in *The Lord of the Rings* also includes another universally important role: she acts as the White Goddess or White Lady figure, who bestows boons of grace on the Heroes that find their way into her realm. This accommodating and supportive figure is fairly common in Romance literature, especially in quest Romances (Cooper, 2009: 173-174). The White Goddess, as an archetype, however, should not be confused with the text of the same name by Robert Graves, or with the device of the same name which he suggests exists abundantly in European poetry (O'Neill, 1979: 110). Joseph Campbell (1975: 110-11) instead calls the White Goddess or White Lady, 'The paragon of all paragons of beauty, the reply to all desire, the bliss-bestowing goal of every hero's earthly and unearthly quest,' and as such she guides the Hero towards his own desire and the fulfilment of his quest. Timothy O'Neill, similarly in his work, *The Individuated Hobbit: Jung, Tolkien and the Archetypes of Middle-Earth*, emphasises that Galadriel as a White Goddess figure is rather an extension of Tolkien's more supreme White Goddess, Varda, one of the Valar, who gazes out continuously from her high-seat in Valinor to watch over Middle-Earth. Galadriel is thus a saviour to the members of the Fellowship of the Ring just as Varda is to the Elves and Men that pray for her assistance. O'Neill (1979: 110-111) writes that:

Tolkien certainly visualizes [Varda] as an intermediary, in the sense of the Deified Mary's role in the Roman Church. It is she of whom the Elves beg grace: "She was often thought of, or depicted as, standing on a great height looking towards Middle-Earth, with eyes that penetrated the shadows, and listening to the cries for aid of the Elves (and Men) in peril or grief. Frodo and Sam both invoke her in moments of extreme peril. The Elves sing hymns to her. (This and other references to religion in *The Lord of the Rings* are often overlooked." But there have always been religious expressions of the female side of God's (and Man's) nature, as Tolkien was aware. Varda may fulfil this potential at a deeper level, a White Goddess from the dawn of human thought, just a *lembas* may refer to a concept of transformation of far remoter antiquity than the Eucharist.

But although Galadriel may answer prayers (though perhaps not in the Christian sense of the word) and may possess many otherworldly powers, she is not actually a Goddess.

Instead *The Silmarillion* tells (Tolkien, 1983: 207) that she belongs to the race of the Noldor, who as exiles from the West were ‘...eager to return to Middle-Earth [and with them] the fairest woman of all the Noldor, the golden-haired Galadriel, who wished to rule a realm of her own’ (Snyder, 2013: 72). In Middle-Earth, therefore, though at first simply a ruler, soon she becomes seen as an emissary of Varda, whom Galadriel, as an Eldar, worshipped while living in Valinor. Varda can therefore be considered the heavenly White Goddess, *A Elbereth Gilthoniel* (Varda, the Star-kindler) (O’Neill, 1979: 111) while Galadriel develops into the earthly representative of the White Goddess. In so doing, she obviously comes to exhibit many of the tropes or memes that concern the White Lady, or as Cooper calls such representations, the Fairy Queen. This is perhaps due to the influence of Edmund Spenser’s work, *The Faerie Queene*, which naturally incorporated many of the memes associated with the ‘sovereign of that otherworldly place’ (Cooper, 2009: 173-218).

Whether she is called the White Goddess, White Lady, or Fairy Queen, is not ultimately important. What is important is that there are certain similarities between all the incarnations of this figure in Romance literature, of which there are many: Gloriana and Tanaquill from *The Faerie Queene*; the Lady of the Lake, Morgan Le Fay and the Lady Nénive from either *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* or Malory’s *Le Morte Darthur*; Melusine from the French Romance of the same name; and of course Titania, Shakespeare’s Queen of the Faeries from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Cooper, 2009: 173-180). No matter which Romance they come from, they all share a common thread of qualities that unite them. As Cooper (2009: 173-218) suggests in her overview, the White Lady (the term that will henceforth be used when referring to Galadriel) is expected to fulfil at least a majority of the following criteria: she must be ‘...a being [and ruler] from another world – from *the* other world, the world of fairy – whose difference from ordinary humanity, or even heroic humanity frees [her] from the pains and limitations of mortality’ (Cooper, 2009: 173). Since the White Lady is free from the constraints of mortality and the limitations of the mortal world, the same exceptions apply to her realm. Often the land is a place of magic, where time seems to be just as free from the

constraints of the mortal world as the White Lady is. Tom Shippey (2001: 90) explains that in Elfland, best known perhaps from the ballads of ‘Thomas the Rhymer’: ‘Mortals are [often] deceived when they enter elvish time, and can interpret it as either fast or slow.’ Since the land adheres to its own regulations, the way to the White Lady is one of crossing over to another place, and as such it regularly involves bridges and rivers, such as the scene in Malory’s *Le Morte Darthur* in which Arthur gains his sword, Excalibur, from the Lady of the Lake. Eugène Vinaver (1957: 523) describes how:

Merlin leads Arthur to the edge of a lake; from beneath the waters rises an arm in a sleeve of rich silk holding a sword. A mysterious lady then appears “par déviers la mer”, and using an invisible bridge to reach the centre of the lake she takes the sword and gives it to Arthur. It is this sword which will henceforth bear the name Escalibor.

The White Lady is frequently reported either as having or bestowing the gift of prophecy (amongst other gifts, such as wealth or treasure, which may be linked to her prophecies). She is also often associated with the elements of light, the colours white, green and gold, the forest and her own private bower, growth and flowers, and of course all forms of water, even in a few instances going so far as to live in it. But conceivably the most striking meme that governs the White Lady is that she is considered the epitome of purity, even though she is able to ‘...break the rules of nature and time and physical space...[as well as] being independent of moral conventions’ (Cooper, 2009: 173).

The Lady Galadriel, not surprisingly, does in large part adhere to these traits. She is an immortal Elven Queen who rules the land of Lothlórien. She is described as being ‘...clad wholly in white,’ with hair of deep gold, and Tolkien (2001: 345) takes care to emphasise that ‘...no sign of age was upon them, unless it were in the depths of their eyes; for these were keen as lances in the starlight, and yet profound, the wells of deep memory.’ This description highlights Galadriel’s purity: for white and gold as colours are representative of two of the purest substances known to man: gold, the purest of metals, and diamond, the most sought-after gemstone. Several characters, including Gandalf, Legolas, Sam, Frodo, Gimli and

Aragorn, characterise Galadriel as being pure and untainted; this purity even extends to her realm, of which Gandalf says that '[u]nmarred, unstained is leaf and land' (Tolkien, 2001: 503). When Boromir warns the Fellowship that he does '...not feel too sure of this Elvish Lady and her purposes,' Aragorn warns him sternly to: 'Speak no evil of the Lady Galadriel! You know not what you say. There is in her and in this land no evil, unless a man bring it hither himself. Then let him beware!' Aragorn again mentions that Lothlórien is '...fair and perilous; but only evil need fear it, or those who bring some evil with them,' which foreshadows Boromir's apparent unease, especially since he is bringing his doom (his desire for the Ring) with him to Galadriel's land. Her domain is a forest that none can enter unless they have her permission to do so, where '...upon the grass *elanor* and *niphredil* [grow all year round] in fair Lothlórien' (Tolkien, 2001: 342). The description of the halls of Lothlórien, which are a secluded bower in '...the bole of the tree and canopied by a living bough...', contains imagery of light, and the colours green, gold and silver are all mentioned: Tolkien (2001: 345) writes that 'The chamber was filled with a soft light; its walls were green and silver and its roof of gold.'

The way to Lothlórien also involves crossing over barriers, or as Shippey (2001: 199) states, '...the rivers which the Fellowship are crossing are leading them further and further out of the mortal world. Once they cross the Nimrodel, they are in something like the Earthly Paradise [Eden], the place where even the *Pearl*-dreamer forgot the grief for his dead daughter.' But there is more to Tolkien's Lothlórien than simply being an Elfland. Shippey (2001: 198-199) touches on the fact that that the rivers have magical properties, but he does not take it much further than to say that the Nimrodel, whose falling waters Legolas suggests 'may bring [them] sleep and forgetfulness from grief,' (Tolkien, 2001: 330), washes away the stains of Moria and the grief of Gandalf's 'falling into shadow' (Tolkien, 2001: 346). However, Lothlórien might be viewed as a reproduction of the Graeco-Roman land of the dead, especially since just as Lothlórien exists 'in a land that lies like a spearhead between' two rivers or 'in the Angle between the waters,' (Tolkien, 2001: 338) the Underworld in *The*

Odyssey is situated at the meeting point of (or between) the rivers Styx, Kokytos (Cocytus) and Pyriphlegethon (Phlegethon) (Mackie, 1999: 485); while Fairy Land is paradoxically located in the ‘...liminal settings between woods or water’ (Cooper, 2009: 181). If that is the case then the rivers or barriers would correspond to the rivers of the Underworld, which all had remarkable properties. The first two – the rivers Lethe and Styx – are, however, the most important because they are the two central ones that feature in Homer’s *The Odyssey* (which Geraldine Heng contests is the first Romance) or the Myth of Orpheus, the narrative of which was reworked into the Romance, *Sir Orfeo* (Mackie, 1999: 485). The River Lethe is the river of forgetfulness and as such the Fellowship feels the ‘...stain of travel and all weariness [is] washed from [their] limbs,’ (Tolkien, 2001: 330) and ‘...seem likewise to forget about Gandalf till Celeborn asks them directly’ (Shippey, 2001: 199). The River Styx is the river of mortality, and as such none but the dead, who are guided by Charon the Ferryman, are allowed to cross it (Mackie, 1999: 490). Consequently, Haldir, the guide that leads the Fellowship across the Silverlode into Lothlórien, may be Tolkien’s version of Charon (or Virgil from Dante’s *Inferno*); and this may also be the reason that Gollum, who is not given leave to enter Galadriel’s domain, cannot get past the Silverlode. The correlation between Lothlórien and the Underworld might exist in part due to Tolkien’s work on *Sir Orfeo*, which as previously mentioned, is a retelling of the Orpheus Myth, except with the customary fortuitous (and eucatastrophic) ending that is so indicative of Romance (Wicher, 1993: 255). In *Sir Orfeo*, Heurodis is kidnapped by the King of the Otherworld and dragged down into his labyrinthine kingdom, which is analogous with the Underworld (Wicher, 1993: 255), particularly since Cooper (2009: 180) suggests that ‘Elfland is not it seems unlike Hell and Heaven.’ *Sir Orfeo* eventually rescues his wife from the Otherworld, but the ‘Lady Heurodis appears now as a fully-fledged member of the society of fairies belonging to an apparently self-sufficient company of fairy women, or even fairy queens’ (Wichers, 1993: 260), which ties in with the notion of the fusion of the Lady and Fairy Queen roles. The Underworld, C.J Mackie (1999: 486-487) states, is therefore akin to the Otherworld (and by extension Lothlórien) because it is also a liminal setting into which mortal Heroes cross to gain vital

information from the rulers of the Underworld, and boons of grace from the Lady of the Underworld, the Goddess Persephone, who in the tales concerning her, much like her mother Demeter, 'love[s] all things that grow and are not barren' (Tolkien, 2001: 943). Since Galadriel is a White Lady figure, much like Persephone and all the White Lady figures before her, it is fitting that her realm should be secluded from the mortal world – a place to which the traveller must ascend (or descend) in order to gain access. Tolkien (2001: 344) says that on the journey to Galadriel:

There was a road paved with white stone running on the outer brink of the fosse. Along this they went westward, with the city ever climbing up like a green cloud upon their left; and as the night deepened more lights sprang forth, until all the hill seemed afire with stars. They came at last to a white bridge, and crossing found the great gates of the city: they faced south-west, set between the ends of the encircling wall that here overlapped, and they were tall and strong, and hung with many lamps.

Tolkien mentions that the great gates of Caras Galadon 'face south-west.' This might be coincidence but the Gates to the Underworld were thought to lie in the southwest of either Turkey or Greece (Mackie, 1999: 495). And Karen Fonstad (1991: 16), in *The Atlas of Middle-Earth*, mentions that: 'To the southwest of Barad-dûr lay the arid plateau of Gorgoroth and Mount Doom,' into which the Hobbits must climb, through the Sammath Naur, or the Chambers of Fire, (Tolkien, 2001: 920) in order to gain access to the heart of the fiery volcano. These two places then are linked geographically with the Underworld: Caras Galadon with the wisdom and foreknowledge for which Odysseus travelled to Hades' kingdom, while Mount Doom is the place of torment and destruction with which the Underworld is normally associated.

However, the striking detail of Tolkien's description of the way to Galadriel's realm is the abundance of white, which not only emphasises her purity, but also indicates that she, like her heavenly counterpart Varda, is as the White Lady in direct opposition to the Dark Lord. '[Sauron] is the masculine symbol, the essence of evil, and he is clothed in darkness' (O'Neill, 1979: 108) while '[Galadriel] diverts her attention and power toward Middle-

Earth...[because] she is the feminine symbol, the distillation of what is benevolent in the divinity, and she is clothed in pure white light' (O'Neill, 1979: 106). Nancy Enright (2007: 93) suggests that the incongruity between the White Lady and the Dark Lord exists because in *The Lord of the Rings*: 'The stereotypical and purely masculine kind of power, as represented by Boromir for instance, is shown to be weaker morally and spiritually than its non-traditional counterparts, thus allowing Boromir to fall, while less typically heroic characters, including all the female characters, stand.' The reader therefore knows without even reaching the end of Tolkien's masterpiece (perhaps due to past experience with other Romance texts) that Galadriel will stand while Sauron will fall. Tolkien astutely constructs the imagery surrounding Galadriel – white, starlight, water – with the intention of recurrently typifying her imagery as the direct opposite of the imagery associated with Sauron – black, darkness, fire. This disparity is starkly evidenced when Galadriel reveals the Ring of Adamant to Frodo. In the description, Tolkien (2001: 355-356) takes care to accentuate Galadriel's qualities as a White Lady while carefully portraying her defiance of Sauron and his forces:

She lifted up her white arms, and spread out her hands towards the East in a gesture of rejection and denial. Eärendil, the Evening Star, most beloved of the Elves, shone clear above. So bright was it that the figure of the Elvenlady cast a dim shadow on the ground. Its rays glanced upon a ring about her finger; it glittered like polished gold overlaid with silver light, and a white stone in it twinkled as if the Even-star had come down to rest upon her hand. Frodo gazed at the ring with awe; for suddenly it seemed to him that he understood. "Yes," she said, divining his thought, "it is not permitted to speak of it, and Elrond could not do so. But it cannot be hidden from the Ring-bearer, and one who has seen the Eye. Verily it is in the land of Lórien upon the finger of Galadriel that one of the Three remains. This is Nenyä, the Ring of Adamant, and I am its keeper."

Galadriel raises her white arms 'towards the East in a gesture of rejection and denial', revealing Nenyä, the Ring of Adamant or Water (Tyler, 1973: 176), because Mordor lies east of Lothlórien; and because Galadriel has been waging a mental war with Sauron, saying: 'I perceive the Dark Lord and know his mind, or all of his mind that concerns the Elves. And he gropes ever to see me and my thought. But still the door is closed!' (Tolkien, 2001: 355).

From her revelation, the reader can conclude that she has been using one of the three Elven rings to hold Sauron's power from Lothlórien. The Ring of Water, with its adamant jewel that shines with light of Eärendil, the Evening Star, in much the same way as the star-glass Galadriel makes for Frodo is '...a light in dark places, when all other lights go out' (Tolkien, 2001: 367), links Galadriel to a previous Arthurian White Lady, the Lady of the Lake, who bestows Excalibur on Arthur. The water, therefore, not only in a Christian sense, shows the White Lady's role in cherishing and preserving life; she is the nurturer and the giver, and as such must 'love all things that grow and are not barren.'

But Galadriel has an even deeper connection to water. She uses her Mirror, which is made of water, to know 'what was and is, and in part also what shall be' (Tolkien, 2001: 348). With it she is able to tell the Fellowship that the '...Quest stands upon the edge of a knife. Stray but a little and it will fail, to the ruin of all. Yet hope remains while all the Company is true' (Tolkien, 2001: 348), which predicts both Boromir's betrayal and Sam's stalwartness and loyalty. She is also able to provide the companions with gifts that will help them on their journey: besides the cloaks and the 'leaves of Lórien', which Merry and Pippin use to aid the remaining members of the Fellowship in tracking them and their captors, the Uruk-hai, Galadriel provides several unique gifts to the central Heroes, which are immeasurably valuable in future situations. For instance: Galadriel gives Aragorn 'a great stone of a clear green, set in a silver brooch that was wrought in the likeness of an eagle with outspread wings,' and advises him to '[i]n this hour take the name that was foretold for you, Elessar, the Elfstone of the house of Elendil!' (Tolkien, 2001: 365-366). Galadriel must have foreseen that Aragorn will one day become King, and that he will need to claim his royal birthright if he is going to be able to lead the legions of the Dead. The symbols of the brooch, the eagle figure of the Elfstone, and his sword Andúril, the Flame of the West, become the symbols of his regency, and in a certain manner, define him as a worthy King of Gondor since the eagle, fire and the West all have very positive connotations in the art of heraldry (Fox-Davies, 1929: 120; 189). She also gives the Phial of Galadriel, in which '...is caught the light of Eärendil's

star, set amid the waters of her fountain' (Tolkien, 2001: 367) to Frodo. Without this magical item Frodo and Sam would not have been able to defeat Shelob, in which case the quest would have ultimately failed. It is interesting to note that Galadriel bestows a gift of light – Aragorn's Elfstone is described as 'flash[ing] like the sun' (Tolkien, 2001: 366) while Frodo's star-glass 'flame[s] like a star that leaping from the firmament sears the dark air with intolerable light' (Tolkien, 2001: 713) – on both of the central Heroes in order to distinguish them as potential forces against the Dark Lord. Both Frodo and Aragorn, as a result, carry a part of the White Lady's power with them and that aids them even when they are far from Lothlórien: the Elfstone makes Aragorn, the king, Elessar, as much as Andúril makes him the heir of Elendil, while Frodo relies on the Phial of Galadriel to be a light when all other lights go out. Both of these gifts are then symbols of a hope that Sauron will be vanquished by the combined efforts of the two Heroes, who have been blessed by the White Lady. This symbol of hope find its greatest expression when Sam gazes out at the Black Lands and is devastated to see only death and destruction. Suddenly he looks up and Tolkien (2001: 901) writes that in the night sky:

There, peeping among the cloud-wrack above a dark tor high up in the mountains, Sam saw a white star twinkle for a while. The beauty of it smote his heart, as he looked up out of the forsaken land, and hope returned to him. For like a shaft, clear and cold, the thought pierced him that in the end the Shadow was only a small and passing thing: there was light and high beauty for ever beyond its reach.

Where the Shadows Lie: The Shadow

However, in Romance literature at least, the Shadow is not to be defeated so easily: for '[a]lways after a defeat and a respite, the Shadow takes another shape and grows again' (Tolkien, 2001: 50). In Romance there is an eternal struggle between what is fundamentally good or benefic and what is fundamentally evil or malefic because Romance deals in binaries of opposition, thus as mentioned previously, what is light is good and what is dark is evil (Cooper, 2009: 179). Carl Jung (1968: 71) writes that often '...this conflict is expressed by the contest of the archetypal Hero and the cosmic powers of evil, personified by dragons and other monsters.' For if there is to be a Hero there must be some antagonistic force or being to stand in the way of his quest, which is labelled as either the villain or the Shadow. Northrop Frye (1973: 195) believes that this seemingly simple antithetical approach of good against evil is due in large part to the Romancer's relationship to his characters. Frye (1973: 195) writes that:

The characterization of Romance follows its general dialectic structure... [therefore] [c]haracters tend to be either for or against the quest. If they assist it they are idealized as simply gallant or pure; if they obstruct it they are caricatured as simply villainous or cowardly. Hence every typical character in Romance tends to have his moral opposite confronting him, like black and white pieces in a chess game.

There are numerous examples of this chess board analogy in *The Lord of the Rings*: the Black Speech of Mordor, the Black Gate or the Black Land, the Black Riders, and the Dark Lord, all of which are balanced by the White Council, the White Tree or the White City, the White Rider, and the White Lady. The antithesis of the Hero, who is naturally epitomized by the colour white, is in Romance often represented by the archetype of the Shadow, which is unsurprisingly characterized by the colour black (Croft, 2009: 154). The Shadow, as the name suggests, is a being shrouded in darkness, and unlike the Hero, does not appear as much of an active participant within the narrative of the text; especially since it often includes everything outside the light of consciousness (Jung, 1968: 174). In *The Lord of the Rings*, the Dark Lord, Sauron, is indisputably the Shadow figure – his dwelling is even known as the

Land of Shadow – and as such, although much is reported about him and the evils that he has done and certainly wishes to do in the future, he does not actively partake in the storyline. In fact, Sauron, the eponymous Lord of the Rings, who is titled the Shadow of Mordor and is the central evil force behind the atrocities in Middle-Earth, does not set foot out of his Tower in Barad-dûr. Nevertheless his presence pervades the narrative. He moves his armies and Ringwraiths across Middle-Earth to do his bidding, perhaps considering the opposing forces and his own merely as ‘...black and white pieces in a chess game’ (Frye, 1973: 195). Within the text, Sauron (and of course by extension his realm Mordor) is described in very distinct ways as an evil force. Timothy O’Neill (1979: 108) says that Sauron ‘...is the masculine symbol, the essence of evil, and he is clothed in darkness. *His* fastness is wreathed in black, sooty cloud, his symbol in the heavens is the rising moon.’ However, perhaps the greatest example of Sauron’s connection to darkness is contained in the inscription etched into the One Ring:

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

In these few lines Tolkien emphasises Sauron’s dark qualities: he is the Dark Lord, on his dark throne, in a land where the Shadows lie, whose Ring will bring all the races of Middle-Earth under his power and bind them in (his) darkness. Gandalf further ties Sauron, his malefic purpose, the One Ring and the essence of darkness together when he says: ‘The Enemy still lacks one thing to give him strength and knowledge to beat down all resistance, break the last defences, and cover all the lands in a second darkness. He lacks the One Ring’ (Tolkien, 2001: 50). It is this malevolence and his shadowy nature that ties Sauron to a long line of villains that perpetually seem to overshadow Romance literature. Tolkien’s Dark Lord unquestionably encompasses the same evil ambitions as evidenced by other notorious

Shadows of Romance literature: the King of the Otherworld from *Sir Orfeo*, the Green Knight from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Mordred from *Le Morte Darthur*, Archimago from *The Faerie Queene*, Regin and Fafnir from Tolkien's reworking of the *Völsung saga*, *The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún*, and perhaps even Grendel and the Dragon from *Beowulf*. Although Sauron is not exactly a monster (or rather does not start out that way), unlike Fafnir, Grendel and the dragon in *Beowulf* (Tolkien, 2007: 109), he does appear in a monstrous form as a supernatural being. He is the All-Seeing Eye atop his Tower in Barad-dûr, wreathed in flame and malice and shadows; and he is often described as a voracious evil being, a consumer of all life. Gollum warns Frodo and Sam, 'Don't take the Precious to Him! He'll eat us all, if He gets it, eat all the world' (Tolkien, 2001: 653). In this way Sauron, as his saurian name suggests, is comparable to a dragon or leviathan that lays waste to the land (Frye, 1973: 198), as Smaug does in *The Hobbit*. This connection to the dragon and his consumption of all 'life' enhances the evil quality of Sauron and his dark forces, who are trying 'to cover all the lands in a second darkness' (Tolkien, 2001: 54). Similarly, much like the overthrow of Smaug, Fafnir, *Beowulf's* dragon, the Dragon of Sin or Grendel's mother, the overthrow of Sauron is comparable to the defeat of Grendel or any other monster in Romance literature. As Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 183) mentions in his letter to W.H. Auden:

The overthrow of Grendel makes a good wonder-tale, because he is too strong and dangerous for any ordinary man to defeat, but it is a victory in which all men can rejoice because he was a monster, hostile to all men and to all humane fellowship and joy.

In Romance literature though, since the Shadow is entirely the antithesis of the Hero, his characteristics must be the contrast with those of the Hero as well. Northrop Frye (1973: 187) says that the Shadow '...is associated with winter, darkness, confusion, sterility, moribund life, and old age, [while] the [H]ero [is associated] with spring, dawn, order, fertility, vigor, and youth.' Sauron is, of course, associated with darkness, and his land is described as decaying, as though trapped in a perpetual winter (a representation of what James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* [1922] might term the *wasteland*). Mordor is '...a dying land, but

it was not yet dead. And here things still grew, harsh, twisted, bitter, struggling for life' (Tolkien, 2001: 900). On the other hand, Aragorn and Frodo and the Elves, as representative of the benefic forces, are usually described as wise but youthful, while the places they inhabit are described as paradisaal fortresses of perpetual spring. Aragorn, who has already lived many lives of men (he is eighty-seven during the events in *The Lord of the Rings*) and yet looks still young enough to be in love with the ageless Elf-maiden Arwen (Tolkien, 2001: 156), is especially youthful in appearance and vigorous in his activities, such as battle (Tolkien, 2001: 345). There are also numerous mentions of Frodo and the other Hobbits as being 'young Hobbits' (Tolkien, 2001: 34; 67; 85). Similarly, the Elves are frequently depicted as youthful: Glorfindel's '...face [is] fair and young and fearless and full of joy,' Lord Elrond's face is '...ageless, neither young nor old,' and Arwen's braids of dark hair are '...touched by no frost, her white arms and clear face [are] flawless and smooth, and the light of stars [is] in her bright eyes, grey as a cloudless night' (Tolkien, 2001: 209). The locations in which these characters dwell are also portrayed as abundant, healthy and hale. The Shire is a green oasis of gardens where '[t]he flowers glowed red and golden: snap-dragons and sun-flowers, and nasturtiums [grew] trailing all over the turf walls and peeping in at the round windows' (Tolkien, 2001: 4) while Rivendell and Lothlórien are also described as places of beauty and growth (Tolkien, 2001: 169 and 278). Gandalf connects these place of life and greenery when he says that: 'Indeed there is a power in Rivendell to withstand the might of Mordor, for a while: and elsewhere other powers still dwell [such as in Lothlórien]. There is power, too, of another kind in the Shire' (Tolkien, 2001: 178). This power is due to the '...Three Rings of the Elves, wielded by secret guardians, [and these] are operative in preserving the memory of the beauty of old, maintaining enchanted enclaves of peace where Time seems to stand still and decay is restrained, a semblance of the bliss of the True West' (Carpenter, 2002: 131). These descriptions of the Heroes, Elves, and the respective places they inhabit are noticeably in direct contrast to Sauron, his dark land, Mordor, and his malevolent intentions.

However, Sauron was not always a malevolent being. Tolkien's world, in accordance with the Romance trope of a fallen society (Cooper, 2009: 45), is a fallen world (Snyder, 2013: 147), which Helen Cooper (2009: 45) calls a '...postlapsarian world [with] its unceasing testing of the individual in the combat of good and evil.' Therefore, the villain or Shadow of the text is usually a fallen being that seeks to destroy good simply because it is the antithesis of itself, much like Satan does in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (Saunders, 2004: 127). Northrop Frye (1973: 179) further suggests that the presence of monsters in Romance literature is indicative of this fallen world, for '[t]hese monsters thus apparently represent the fallen order of nature over which Satan [or other Shadow figure] has some control.' Tolkien, however, also creates these fallen characters (and perhaps none more so than Sauron) because as a Christian author writing 'a Catholic work' (Carpenter, 2002: 142) he is influenced by a religious framework that does not necessarily hold fast to the principle of Absolute Evil. Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 183) writes that:

In my story I do not deal in Absolute Evil. I do not think there is such a thing, since that is Zero. I do not think that at any rate any "rational being" is wholly evil. Satan fell. In my myth Morgoth fell before Creation of the physical world. In my story Sauron represents as near an approach to the wholly evil will as is possible.

Sauron is therefore, much like Satan in the Bible (Frye, 1973: 103), not an absolutely evil being, especially since, as Peter Kreeft (2005: 176) explains, in Tolkien's world '[n]othing is evil in the beginning, or by nature. Morgoth was one of the Ainur, Sauron was a Maia, Saruman was the head of Gandalf's order of Wizards, the Orcs were Elves, the Ringwraiths were great Men, and Gollum was a Hobbit.' Janet Croft (2009: 153) informs us that: 'Sauron was a Maia, one of the beings "of the same order as the Valar but of less degree" who were the servants and helpers of the Valar. Sauron originally served Aüle, the master of all crafts, but turned to Melkor and the Dark.' In *The Silmarillion*, the Maiar are described as being angelic in form, dressed in '...the raiment of the Holy Ones, the *fanar* or luminous veils worn by the Valar or Maiar when they appeared to Elves or Men' (O'Neill, 1979: 91). But Sauron is not satisfied serving Aüle, the Master of All Crafts, and yearns to rule in his own right (thus

echoing Satan's own motives for falling from Heaven [Lazu, , 2008: 351]). Timothy O'Neill (1979: 79) then tells how: 'Sauron was seduced to the side of Melkor, who was then called Morgoth, the Dark Enemy [with the promises of power],' which later allows Sauron to become a Dark Lord in his own right when the Valar banish Morgoth to the Void. This fall from grace (especially from being a lesser deity among the greater deities of Tolkien's pantheon) reflects Satan's fall from Heaven, which is another topos of Romance literature (Lazu, 2008: 351). As the central antagonist in Romance literature, the Shadow, or the Enemy (to use another Tolkienism for the Shadow), therefore becomes the embodiment of the Satan figure (Lazu, 2008: 351). He is not only in opposition to the central Hero, but stands in opposition to all the concepts of good within the text. Tolkien achieves this connection to Satan in *The Lord of the Rings* with his Dark Lord. Robert Lazu (2008: 351-352) thinks that the correlation between Satan and the fallen forces (led by Melkor and Sauron) exists because:

The imaginary regions conceived by the master of Faërie [Tolkien] are complex symbols of the unseen world, synthesizing the benefic or malefic features of good and evil. In a certain sense, Tolkien's spiritual vision is an apocalyptic vision in that it reveals the unseen war waged between God-Ilúvatar and a part of the rebellious angelic forces [including Sauron] led by satanic Melkor since the beginnings of creation.

For the Enemy to be akin to Satan also serves to establish the Shadow's motives. The reader does not for a moment question Sauron's *raison d'être* or what his motivation might be for undertaking such evil and atrocious deeds because the fallen nature of the Shadow figure permeates the character's being to such an extent that the concept of evil is clearly understood. Northrop Frye (1973: 151) states that readers identify quite easily that Heroes are virtuous because they are an analogy of innocence, while villains are villainous because they are creatures of a fallen and apocalyptic world. Tolkien describes the corruption of Sauron, who begins as an angelic being and ends as a Dark Lord in *The Silmarillion*, in order to evoke the fall of Satan in the book of Genesis (Lazu, 2008: 357). He (Tolkien, 1983: 258) writes that Sauron, once 'a fair being' (here, as elsewhere in Tolkien, the use of the

word fair denotes beauty and wisdom), fell and became ‘...a sorcerer of dreadful power, master of shadows and of phantoms, foul in wisdom, cruel in strength, misshaping what he touched, twisting what he ruled, lord of werewolves; his dominion was torment.’

Another way that Tolkien makes Sauron similar to Satan is that he makes Sauron a deceiver of mankind. In *The Silmarillion*, when Ar-Pharazôn becomes king of Númenór he sets out to conquer Middle-Earth. The new king defeats Sauron, but ‘[r]ather than fighting, Sauron humbles himself before Ar-Pharazôn, pledging to be his vassal. The king takes Sauron as hostage back to Númenór, and there Sauron starts to work his lies’ (Snyder, 2013: 199). Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 156) tells Robert Murray in a letter how:

Sauron steadily got Ar-Pharazôn’s mind under his own control, and in the event corrupted many of the Númenóreans, destroyed the conception of Eru, now represented as a mere figment of the Valar or Lords of the West (a fictitious sanction to which they appealed if anyone questioned their rulings), and substituted a Satanist religion with a large temple, the worship of the dispossessed eldest of the Valar (the rebellious Dark Lord of the First Age). He finally induces Ar-Pharazôn, frightened by the approach of old age, to make the greatest of all armadas, and go up with war against the Blessed Realm itself, and wrest it and its “immortality” into his own hands.

This defiance of the One God (or in Tolkien’s *Legendarium*, Ilúvatar) defines Sauron as the Enemy and thus by extension with Satan. Their corruption of man can be considered their crowning achievement: for it sets mankind in opposition to the Creator, which only leads to their destruction. Ar-Pharazôn, heeding Sauron’s falsehoods and propaganda, sets out to subjugate the Deathless Lands and Valinor, but in a passage reminiscent of the biblical flood, Ar-Pharazôn’s armada and Númenór are destroyed when Ilúvatar sends a large wave to prevent the Númenóreans from breaking the ‘Ban of the Valar’ (Tolkien, 1983: 336). Their corruption inevitably leads to the fall of man and the destruction of the order of man’s world. The fact that ‘Sauron burns the White Tree and performs human sacrifices’ (Snyder, 2013: 199) to Melkor is not only blasphemous, but unmistakably demonstrates Sauron’s capacity for evil as a corrupted being. His apparent connection to Satan is further emphasised in the narrative, not only in his fallen nature, but also in the manner in which he is addressed or

spoken of by the characters of *The Lord of the Rings*. Faramir, as a representative of Gondor and the realm of men, calls Sauron 'He whom we do not name,' (Tolkien, 2001: 899) which links Sauron and Satan as nameless evils. This unspecified form of address has an extensive history, particularly evoking the Medieval Period when it was seen as inappropriate (if not bad luck) to invoke the name of the Devil or Satan. Janet Croft (2009: 151) explains that the superstition that a name held power was '...most simply, because the name is the essence, it could summon the being or at least attract the being's attention; as the old saying goes: "Name the devil and his horns appear.'" Therefore, the avoidance of saying Sauron's name is related to the superstitious power that it may hold. The mortal men in Tolkien's world are especially susceptible to this irrational belief.' Croft (2009: 154) comments that:

The men of Gondor avoid the name at all times, and will seldom even name the land of Mordor (Tolkien, 2001: 748); one of the first things we hear from Boromir is the phrase "him that we do not name" (Tolkien, 2001: 237), and he says the name *Sauron* only in his last madness as he tries to take the Ring from Frodo. (Tolkien, 2001: 390) (Croft, 2009: 154).

This reveals the name's connection with evil, and why it is avoided by the men of Gondor. Janet Croft (2009: 152) further discusses various characters' treatment of Sauron's name in *Naming The Evil One: Onomastic Strategies in Tolkien*, especially with regard to their place on the benefic or malefic divide:

When Aragorn is examining the Orcs' armor after the attack at Parth Galen, he comments that Sauron does not allow his servants to speak or write his name, and the circumlocutions of his orcs bear this out (III.1.406). Gorbag and Shagrat most often use the metonym *Lugbúrz*, the Orc name for *Barad-dûr*, while Grishnákh generally calls him The Great Eye. But Sauron's higher-ranking subordinates, the Ringwraiths and the Mouth of Sauron, appear to be permitted to use his name. The Wizard Gandalf makes more references to Sauron than any other character does, and he uses a very wide variety of terms – The Black Shadow, The Dark Lord, The Eye of Barad-dûr, The Lord of the Rings, The Necromancer, The Ring-maker, and so on. But he uses Sauron most frequently, and The Enemy second-most. His ambitious fellow-Wizard Saruman uses a very revealing term to refer to Sauron, as reported by Gandalf: he refers to Sauron as The Power, but speaks as if this power were something that could be easily separated from Sauron and claimed by himself along with the Ring (II.2.253). The only other major character who refers to Sauron as The Power is Denethor, also as reported by Gandalf

(V.9.860), and he too is tempted by the idea that the Ring might be used to wrest Sauron's power from him.

The fact that Gandalf, Aragorn and Frodo all use Sauron's true name demonstrates their position as forces opposing Sauron and his evil. They are not unconcerned about the malevolence that the Dark Lord represents (Frodo especially seems anxious about the prospects of having to enter the Enemy's realm carrying the one thing that he is searching Middle-Earth for), but Tolkien subtly reaffirms that the three protagonists are the greatest benefic forces that stand as challengers to Sauron's malefic influence and power.

Tolkien further emphasises Sauron's malevolent nature through the employment of the themes of degeneration or corruption (Frye, 1973: 256). In Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* certain characters experience moments of degeneration or corruption that cause their characters to descend into moral turpitude, usually due to exposure to or the influence of the power of the One Ring (Snyder, 2013: 78). These moments of moral (if not altogether corporeal) descent show how the forces of Middle-Earth succumb to Sauron's (and Morgoth's) malefic and corrupting influences. This theme of descent, as Frye (1973: 97) calls it, in which certain characters either forget their identity or assume a new more sinister identity due to the corruption of their being, is very common in Romance literature. Frye (1973: 129) explains that the themes of descent deal in '...confusion of identity and the restriction of action' while the themes of ascent '...deal with the reverse: escape, remembrance or discovery of one's real identity, growing freedom and the breaking of enchantment.' The corruption of characters and beings is indicative of these themes of descent since characters forget their true natures by surrendering to more ignoble and inhuman dispositions. The most notorious of these corruptions are evidenced in *The Lord of the Rings*, namely the corruption of men to form the Ringwraiths, the corruption of a Hobbit-like creature to form Gollum, and the corruption of a wise Istari to form a power-hungry Wizard. All of these corruptions are tied to the power of the One Ring (filled as it is with Sauron's malice) and the inherent power of corruption in Middle-Earth. Tolkien addresses

this element of corruption in his letters by making specific mention of the fact that since Middle-Earth as a realm is a representation of the actual world, it functions according to similar limitations (if not within the same parameters as our own) and so the concept of corruption is inherent in all of Middle-Earth (especially as a depiction of a postlapsarian realm). Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 212) writes that:

The Fall or corruption, therefore, of all things in it and all inhabitants of it, was a possibility if not inevitable. Trees may “go bad” as in the Old Forest; Elves may turn into Orcs, and if this required the special perversive malice of Morgoth, still Elves themselves could do evil deeds. Even the “good” Valar as inhabiting the World could at least err; as the Great Valar did in their dealings with the Elves; or as the lesser of their kind (as the Istari or Wizards) could in various ways become self-seeking.

In this short passage Tolkien mentions a handful of the central corruptions in *The Lord of the Rings*. However, perhaps the greatest example of corruption in Tolkien’s work is the corruption of the Quendi Elves to form the Orcs, who are the most well-known of Tolkien’s evil creatures. Frodo Baggins mentions that ‘[t]he Shadow that bred [the Orcs] can only mock, it cannot make: not real new things of its own. I don’t think it gave life to the Orcs: it only ruined them and twisted them’ (Tolkien, 2001: 893). Tolkien (1983: 58) further explains in *The Silmarillion* how Melkor captured some of the Elves (Quendi) and:

All those of the Quendi who came into the hands of Melkor, ere Utumno was broken, were put there in prison, and by slow arts of cruelty were corrupted and enslaved; and thus did Melkor breed the hideous race of the Orcs in envy and mockery of the Elves, of whom they were afterwards the bitterest foes. For the Orcs had life and multiplied after the manner of the Children of Ilúvatar; and naught that had life of its own, nor the semblance of life, could ever Melkor make since his rebellion in the Ainulindalë before the Beginning: so say the wise. And deep in their dark hearts the Orcs loathed the Master whom they served in fear, the maker only of their misery. This it may be the vilest deed of Melkor, and the most hateful to Ilúvatar.

The torment of the Quendi that turns them into Orcs is perhaps Melkor’s greatest triumph of evil ingenuity. Sauron, on the other hand, although he continues his former master’s wickedness, and is thereby responsible for much of the ruin and corruption that subsequently occurs in Middle-Earth, does not try to corrupt the first creations of Ilúvatar, the

Elves and Ents (and by proximity in age, the Dwarves, who are crafted Aulë but brought to life by Ilúvatar [Carpenter, 2002: 212]). Instead Sauron focuses his malice on Ilúvatar's successive creations: Men, the Istari, who are Maiar sent in the form of wizened men, and Hobbits. Nor does Sauron use torture and cruelty to enslave and corrupt the beings of Middle-Earth as Morgoth did before him. His greatest and most malicious achievement is perhaps the forging of the One Ring, which corrupts through the use of Sauron's malice and lust for power, so '...that anyone who used it became mastered by it' (Carpenter, 2002: 131). With this Ring and all the lesser rings Sauron is able to ensnare and enslave the free peoples of Middle-Earth and bring them under his dominion. Gandalf warns Frodo that: 'Clearly the Ring had an unwholesome power that set to work on its keeper at once,' (Tolkien, 2001: 47) and this 'unwholesome power' is the corrupting and distorting influence that the Ring utilizes. In *The Lord of the Rings*, however, perhaps the most terrifying example of Sauron's corrupting and malevolent influence (along with the potent power of the One Ring) are the Ringwraiths, who were once mighty kings and rulers of the kingdoms of Men. They are lured by Sauron's promises of power and accept the rings of power from the Dark Lord (although he wore a fair guise in his dealings with Men [Tolkien, 1983: 348]). One by one they fall under Sauron's control. Tolkien (1983: 348) explains in *The Silmarillion* that:

Men proved easier to ensnare. Those who used the Nine Rings became mighty in their day, kings, sorcerers, and warriors of old. They obtained glory and great wealth, yet it turned to their undoing. They had, as it seemed, unending life, yet life became unendurable to them. They could walk, if they would, unseen by all eyes in this world beneath the sun, and they could see things in worlds invisible to mortal men; but too often they beheld only the phantoms and delusions of Sauron. And one by one, sooner or later, according to their native strength and to the good or evil of their wills in the beginning, they fell under the thralldom of the ring that they bore and under the domination of the One, which was Sauron's. And they became for ever invisible save to him that wore the Ruling Ring, and they entered into the realm of shadows. The Nazgûl were they, the Ringwraiths, the Enemy's most terrible servants; darkness went with them, and they cried with the voices of death.

In this regard, the Ringwraiths are Sauron the Deceiver's finest exemplar of the corruption of Men. In the same way that the Dark Lord brought about the destruction of Númenór and the

exile of the Númenóreans to Middle-Earth, he continues his corruption and devastation of their humanity. The Ringwraiths are portrayed in Tolkien's text as less than human. For instance when they first appear in the Shire, Frodo witnesses them from his hiding place on the roadside and his first impression is that '[t]he riding figure sat quite still with its head [not his head] bowed, as if listening. From inside the hood came a noise as of someone sniffing to catch an elusive scent; the head turned from side to side of the road' (Tolkien, 2001: 73). It is as if they are relying on animal senses to track the Hobbits (and perhaps, being no longer of this world or inhabitants of the race of Men, they are). Tolkien's use of bestial (or inhuman) imagery highlights the fact that the Ringwraiths' humanity is dwindling and that they are nothing more than a scintilla of shadow. Yet the bestial imagery also manages to convey the fact that they are still deadly (Tyler, 1973: 402-404), especially because '...they cannot be harmed physically, by flood or weapon' (Clarke, 2000: 190). Shippey (Clarke, 2000: 190) explains that the 'Wraiths then are not exactly "immaterial," but rather something defined by their shape (a twist, a coil, a ring) more than by their substance. In this they are like shadows,' and Tolkien uses this insubstantial quality to great effect because, although he describes the Ringwraith on the road as '...wrapped in a great black cloak and hood, so that only his boots in the high stirrups showed below,' the wraith's face and essence '...was shadowed and invisible' (Tolkien, 2001: 73). Nowhere in *The Lord of the Rings* are the Ringwraiths described in any detail; and that is part of their corruption and power for '...they became for ever invisible save to him that wore the Ruling Ring, and they entered into the realm of shadows' (Tolkien, 2001: 45). Their enslavement to their respective rings has, Tolkien tells us, extended their lives seemingly without end. But unlike Bilbo Baggins, whose life is extended due to his short possession of the Ring, and who starts to feel the effects of its possession – "I feel all thin, sort of *stretched*, if you know what I mean: like butter that has been scraped over too much bread." (Tolkien, 2001: 32) – the Ringwraiths are not capable of surrendering their rings and accepting death. The promised longevity is essentially one of the most seductive elements of Sauron's corruption, since '[t]o attempt by device or 'magic' to recover longevity is thus a supreme folly and wickedness of 'mortals'. Longevity or

counterfeit ‘immortality’ (true immortality is beyond Ea) is the chief bait of Sauron – it leads the small to a Gollum, and the great to a Ringwraith’ (Carpenter, 2002: 212). This emphasizes the Ring’s corrupting effects on the peoples of Middle-Earth. The Ringwraiths have become shadows, emissaries of the Dark Lord, with the voices of death, capable of destruction in this world, but not being part of it (Clarke, 2000: 191).

Interestingly enough, Tolkien mentions that the attempt to live eternally also ‘leads the small to a Gollum’ and that demonstrates the Ring’s corruption of a being that was, as Gandalf suggests, of Hobbit-kind (Tolkien, 2001: 51). In *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Gandalf tells Frodo (Tolkien, 2001: 51-53) about Gollum and the finding of the Ring of Power and about what Sméagol, the original name of the creature that would become Gollum, does in order to gain possession of the Ring. Gandalf discloses that Sméagol and his friend Déagol were out fishing when Déagol found the Ring and Sméagol immediately desired it. When Déagol refused to give it to him as a ‘birthday present’, however, Sméagol ‘...caught Déagol by the throat and strangled him, because the gold looked so bright and beautiful. Then he put the ring on his finger’ (Tolkien, 2001: 52). This conveys Gollum’s first momentous transgression due to his coveting of the Ring. The act of putting the Ring on his finger ties together Gollum’s avarice and the murderous deed. Tolkien perhaps uses similar sounding names to create a link between Déagol and Sméagol, both of whom essentially die that day. Gollum is the product of the Ring’s corruption, and this corruption is made unmistakably evident by Gollum’s hatred of light, especially as he is slowly slipping into the power of the Shadow. Tolkien (2001: 56) says of Gollum that ‘Light, light of Sun and Moon, he still feared and hated, and he always will,’ which brings together Gollum’s hatred of light and his corruption and debasement. The personification of the Sun and the Moon, two orbs of light that are associated with the Elves and the Valar (Carpenter, 2002: 131), is considerable because they are the antithesis of the Ring, which is a deceptive, round object of radiance that has a hollow in the centre (showing its emptiness). The golden gleam of the Ring promises longevity (much as the sun bestows life) and in effect eternity (of which the round Ring is

ultimately a symbol [Nozedar, 2010: 97]), but as Tolkien mentions it is a false promise (Carpenter, 2002: 212). The Ring does not offer Gollum a longer life. Instead he becomes an emaciated wretch, for whom every day is a torment (Tolkien, 2001: 54).

Ford Russell (1998: 191) in *Northrop Frye on Myth*, remarks that: 'It is interesting to note that the figure which Jung calls the 'Golem,' a figure whom he connects both with the Shadow and the Magician archetype, is related to the figure Frye names 'Golux', which represents the 'shrunken and wizened form of practical waking reality'. Traditionally, the Golem is a supernatural creature that is made from clay to serve one master, but keeps his own views to himself (particularly since in legend the Golem is often mute). Jung (1968: 154) describes the Golem archetype as the hidden Self in our subconscious or that part of our subconscious that we keep hidden even from ourselves. Similarly, Northrop Frye (1973: 197) in *The Anatomy of Criticism* suggests that Golux, the common characters in Romance literature, are '...Romantic intensifications of the comic tricky slave' and are consequently servants of the Hero (or assist in some or other way) during his quest. In both cases the Golem or Golux figure is not given its own identity (and often keeps things to itself) since as an archetype it is merely there to assist the Self or Hero. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien's gaunt, Hobbit-like creature, Gollum, is therefore connected to the Jungian archetype that he represents. He is a creation of the Ring, made to serve the Ring's true purposes. He is also 'a shrunken and wizened form' that hides his true nature within himself (the Gollum and Sméagol paradox) while at the same time he is made to assist the Hero with his quest (even though Gollum truly despises Frodo's quest and what it will achieve). While Frodo as the Hero of the work (at least the only one that Gollum encounters) exhibits many of the characteristics of the Persona archetype, or that part of the Self that is shown to the outside world (Jung, 1968: 89), Gollum is the 'manifestation of the hidden qualities of the Self', or Golem archetype (Jung, 1968: 156). Consequently, Frodo is only able to fully comprehend the negative qualities of his own nature and what will eventually happen to him if he surrenders to the power of the Ring when he meets Gollum. It is also for this reason that Frodo shows

empathy to Gollum, saying 'For now that I see him, I do pity him' (Tolkien, 2001: 456). Karie Crawford (2005: 56) believes that 'Frodo and Gollum were parts of the same soul, separated by birth and time but brought together by events to save the world from everlasting darkness,' which explains why at the end of the book it is Gollum who must sacrifice himself so that Frodo can be saved at last from the Ring. As a result, Gollum, as either the Golux or the Golem figure, serves Frodo for a time and even shows him a path into Mordor; but Gollum also keeps much to himself and ultimately betrays his new master in the same way that the Persona is repeatedly betrayed by the hidden Self inside our own subconscious.

Gollum's esurience for the Ring, as Tolkien writes, causes him to commit murder, and that is how he starts his possession of the Master Ring. And Tolkien is careful to contrast that with Bilbo Baggins's own possession of the Ring (for there is an intimation that Bilbo is in danger of becoming more and more like Gollum, even calling the Ring his *Precious*, which is what Gollum names it [Tolkien, 2001: 33]). Bilbo and Gollum, however, start their possession of the corrupting Ring in very different ways. Gollum acquires the Ring through an act of murder, while Bilbo finds the Ring and then escapes, leaving Gollum unharmed, even though Gollum is hunting for Bilbo to slaughter him and take back the Ring. Of course Bilbo is no angel. He ultimately tricks Gollum, but he does not resort to violence and spares Gollum's life in the process. Gandalf says that since Bilbo shows Gollum: 'Pity, and Mercy: not to strike without need. [That] he has been well rewarded, Frodo. Be sure that he took so little hurt from the evil, and escaped in the end, because he began his ownership of the Ring so. With pity.' His mercy or pity, which as mentioned before is one of the Knightly virtues, has perhaps ensured that he has remained unharmed by the Ring's malevolence after so many years of possession and use. It is also significant to note that while Gollum gains possession of the Ring on his birthday as a 'birthday present', Bilbo surrenders his possession of the Ring on his Birthday, saying that: 'After all that's what this party business was all about really: to give away lots of birthday presents' (Tolkien, 2001: 33). As such Gollum can thus be perceived to be about taking (the quintessential destructive and selfish

part of man's nature) and yet Bilbo is evidently about giving. This distinction is important when considering that Bilbo has withstood the Ring's corrupting influences, and then, without coercion or force, relinquishes ownership of the Ring (perhaps the only creature to ever surrender possession of the Ring after such a long time). But that does not mean that Bilbo would have remained forever unaltered by the Ring's power. Much like Gandalf himself, who would desire to use the Ring for good, since "...the way of the Ring to [his] heart is by pity, pity for weakness and the desire of strength to do good" (Tolkien, 2001: 60), Bilbo would eventually have been corrupted by the Ring, no matter how good his intentions. This is why Gandalf (Tolkien, 2001: 46-47) warns that:

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.

Conceivably the worst corruption in *The Lord of the Rings* is the corruption of a being that, as Gandalf suggests, should have known better (Tolkien, 2001: 253). The fall of Saruman the Wise (and the White) is one of the most tragic corruptions that the power of the Ring and Sauron achieve. Saruman the White is of the highest order of the Istari, or Wizards, and as such is deemed to be great amongst the Wise (Tolkien, 2001: 47). Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 156) explains in his letter to Robert Murray that: '[t]he Istari are translated 'Wizards' because of the connexion of 'Wizard' with wise and so with 'witting' and knowing,' which shows the intended correlation between the Wizards (or Istari) and their pursuit of wisdom. The Istari in their corporeal form are '...emissaries from the True West, and so mediately from God, sent precisely to strengthen the resistance of the 'good', when the Valar become aware that the shadow of Sauron is taking shape again' (Carpenter, 2002: 156). Saruman as their chief member is chosen as the leader of the White Council. And yet for all his supposed wisdom he is lured by the power that he thinks the possession of the One Ring will afford him. Janet

Brennan Croft (2009: 156) in *Naming the Evil One*, explains the disparity between Saruman's divine being and his intentions. She writes that:

Saruman, like Gandalf, was one of the five Istari, Maia who gave up part of their powers and were sent to Middle-Earth in the forms of Men in order to encourage resistance to Sauron (*Unfinished Tales* 388-394). His original name as a Maia is not given, but Saruman, one of his many names in Middle-Earth, means "Man of Skill". He was considered the chief of the Wizards but in the end he "fell from his high errand, and becoming proud and impatient and enamoured of power sought to have his own will by force, and to oust Sauron; but he was ensnared by that dark spirit, mightier than he." (390)

When Gandalf hears Saruman speak of 'the Power', which he hopes the Wizards will gain, declaring that the Wizards '...must have power, power to order all things as we will, for that good which only the Wise can see,' (Tolkien, 2001: 252) he knows that Saruman has fallen and betrayed them to the Enemy. For 'Saruman uses a very revealing term to refer to Sauron: he refers to Sauron as The Power, but speaks as if this power were something that could be easily separated from Sauron and claimed by himself along with the Ring (Tolkien, 2001: 253),' (Croft, 2009: 155) but Gandalf knows that it is not so simple. He warns Saruman that '[o]nly one hand at a time can wield the One,' (Tolkien, 2001: 253) and that Saruman is not and will never be the Lord of the Rings. Gandalf understands that sooner or later the Master Ring will in fact master and 'devour' Saruman (Tolkien, 2001: 47) and in so doing find its way back to its true master, Sauron. In seeking this power Saruman has in effect left the path of wisdom (Tolkien, 2001: 252) and committed the same evils as Sauron, the very being that he was sent to Middle-Earth to help destroy. Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 181) explains that: 'Power – when it dominates or seeks to dominate other wills and minds (except by the assent of their reason) – is evil,' and that since the Wizards are incarnate they are subject to the same sin, or Fall, as other beings in Middle-Earth. For the Wizards, Tolkien suggests, '[t]he chief form [of this sin] would be impatience, leading to the desire to force others to their own good ends, and so inevitably at last to mere desire to make their own wills effective by any means. To this evil Saruman succumbed.' The greatest evil then in Tolkien's view is the desire of Power to 'dominate other wills and minds', which is exactly

what Sauron intends to do with his forging of the Rings of Power. Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 183) explains that Sauron's motive for the forging of the One Ring is that 'Sauron desired to be a God-King, and was held to be this by his servants; if he had been victorious he would have demanded divine honour from all rational creatures and absolute temporal power over the whole world.' And since Saruman is essentially the same being as Sauron, a Maia (although diminished in his incarnate form and so of a lesser power [Carpenter, 2002: 156]), his fall is comparable to Sauron's own corruption. Both of the Maiar fall because of their lust for power, which as Tolkien knew corrupts absolutely (Carpenter, 2002: 131); and their longing for Ring, which is the principal symbol of corruption in *The Lord of the Rings*, only enhances their desire for the expansion of that power, for '[i]t was part of the essential deceit of the Ring to fill minds with imaginations of supreme power' (Carpenter, 2002: 246). Saruman erroneously believes that ownership of the One will grant him the means to achieve his predetermined concept of order in Middle-Earth '...a motive easily corruptible into evil, a lust for domination' (Carpenter, 2002: 131). Consequently, Saruman (Tolkien, 2001: 253) explains to Gandalf that if they join Sauron they might continue:

“...deploring maybe evils done by the way, but approving the high and ultimate purpose: Knowledge, Rule, Order; all the things that we have so far striven in vain to accomplish, hindered rather than helped by our weak or idle friends. There need not be, there would not be, any real change in our designs, only in our means.”

Initially, Saruman studied the history of the Ring of Power (for as Gandalf says: 'The lore of the Elven-rings, great and small, is his province. He has long studied it, seeking the lost secrets of their making' [Tolkien, 2001: 47]) in the hopes of achieving Sauron's downfall. But soon that which started as an academic interest slowly consumes him. For Tolkien (1980, 360) suggests that during his study of the Ring, Saruman is '...ensnared by that dark spirit, mightier than he', and instead of striving for the banishment of Sauron and the destruction of all traces of Sauron's dominion on Middle-Earth he becomes enraptured by the idea that only through wielding power can any form of order be established among the diverse (and often differing) peoples of Middle-Earth. But only Sauron still wields enough influence to

subjugate the nations of Middle-Earth and so Saruman will need to make an uneasy alliance with a former enemy to accomplish what he naïvely begins to consider the Istari's intended purpose of the establishment of 'Knowledge, Rule, Order' through any means possible. The foundation of 'Knowledge, Rule, and Order', though it would certainly aid the peoples of Middle-Earth in their battle against the forces of the Dark Lord, is not essentially the task set by the Valar for the Istari (Carpenter, 2002: 156). The Istari are actually meant to counteract Sauron's evil presence in Middle-Earth, which, as a result of the Dark Lord's fall and corrupt nature, produces the direct opposite of 'Knowledge, Rule, Order'. But Saruman is so consumed by his desire for the Ring, and by extension such is his lust for power, that he loses sight of his true purpose in Middle-Earth. As Treebeard (Tolkien, 2001: 462) says to Merry and Pippin, 'He is plotting to become a Power. He has a mind of metal and wheels; and he does not care for growing things, except as far as they serve him for the moment. And now it is clear that he is a black traitor. He has taken up with foul folk, with the Orcs,' which for Treebeard, who hates the '*burarum*' as he calls them, is a clear indication of Saruman's treachery.

However, there is more to Treebeard's assertion that Saruman 'has a mind of metal and wheels'. Tolkien fashions Saruman's degradation so that he becomes the embodiment of industry and science (Croft, 2009: 156), which are naturally at odds (if not in complete opposition) to the elements of nature, of which the Ents and Fangorn Forest are living symbols. For Treebeard and the other Ents, Saruman's degeneration or corruption takes the form of his alliance with the Orcs, who also show no love for living things (in accordance with their corrupt natures: they are the antithesis of the Elves and therefore despise that which the Elves love above all else: light and the forests [Tolkien, 2001: 455]). It is also centred on his destruction of the forest around Orthanc and the fringes of Fangorn (Tolkien, 2001: 478). For Gandalf the degeneracy and betrayal of Saruman is much more symbolic. Gandalf learns of Saruman's betrayal as much through Saruman's treacherous words as through his rejection of his previous titles and attire. At the beginning of their meeting, Saruman belittles

Radagast the Brown, a fellow (albeit lesser) Istari, calling him: 'Radagast the Brown! Radagast the Bird-tamer! Radagast the Simple! Radagast the Fool!' (Tolkien, 2001: 253). These designations of Radagast (including impugning his wisdom as an Istari) further demonstrate Saruman's contempt for what he deems his inferiors (the Brown is of course below the Grey, which is below the White [Tyler, 1973: 134]), as well as for nature (and those who cherish it) and what might be considered less significant magical talents, such as the taming of wildlife (Croft, 2009: 157). This supports Treebeard's objection that Saruman '...does not care for growing things, except as far as they serve him for the moment' (Tolkien, 2001: 462).

More significant than Saruman's mocking tone is his scornful reproach when Gandalf uses his customary title of Saruman the White. He responds: 'I am Saruman the Wise, Saruman Ring-maker, Saruman of Many Colours!,' (Tolkien, 2001: 253) and indeed '...his robes, which had seemed white, were not so, but were woven of all colours, and if he moved they shimmered and changed hue so that the eye was bewildered' (Tolkien, 2001: 253). The change of the colour of his cloak (along with his identification as a Ring-maker akin to Sauron) signifies a change in Saruman's character. The colour white is unsurprisingly a symbol of purity and hope, and as such it is emblematic of the benefic forces in Romance (Gage, 1999: 56). Northrop Frye (1973: 102) suggests that: 'When we speak of "symbolism" in ordinary life we usually think of such learned cultural archetypes as the cross or the crown, or of conventional associations, such as that of white with purity or green with jealousy,' but for Saruman (as for the other Istari) his respective colour and robes are symbolically connected to identity. After all he is supposed to be Saruman the White, thereby demonstrating both his purity and wisdom, and his status as the chief opposing force sent by the Valar to aid in the fight against Sauron. But the cloak or fanar of Saruman the Many-colours – the fanar representing 'the raiment of the Holy Ones...worn by the Valar or Maiar when they appeared to Elves or Men' (O'Neill, 1979: 91) – with its range of pigments that change with the light implies duplicity, which is in effect what the betrayal of Saruman entails

(Croft, 2009: 154). Gandalf tells Saruman that he ‘...liked white better,’ but Saruman sneers and replies ‘White! It serves as a beginning. White cloth may be dyed. The white page can be overwritten; and the white light can be broken.’ This line of thought lays bare Saruman’s arrogance; instead of being satisfied with his role as the White (the head of the order of Istari) and his ‘...white robes of the highest’ (Carpenter, 2002: 156), Saruman wants to be much more: he wants to be all the colours at once, which ‘...is no longer white’ (Tolkien, 2001: 254). Saruman is once more identified as the embodiment of industry and science and as such an enemy of the natural world (Croft, 2009: 156) when Gandalf points out that: ‘[H]e that breaks a thing to find out what it is has left the path of wisdom’ (Tolkien, 2001: 254), which alludes to the fracturing of light into its various colours. The breaking of light, which as previously mentioned is a powerful symbol for the benefic forces of the narrative, suggests the breaking of wisdom, the breaking of something natural, and also the mortal intrusion into (and perhaps perversion of) an otherworldly object, since light for Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 131) ‘...is such a primeval symbol in the nature of the Universe, that it can hardly be analysed. The Light of Valinor (derived from light before any fall) is a light undivorced from reason, that sees things...and says that they are good’ (Carpenter, 2002: 131). White light, which the Maiar are comprised of (Carpenter, 2002: 156) and which is ‘...symbolised by the chief heavenly lights, as enemies of darkness,’ (Carpenter, 2002: 347) is naturally the antithesis of the Shadow, and Saruman abandons that role (and thereby his cloak) because of his desire for power. The mention of the breaking of the light perhaps refers to Saruman’s intervention in Ilúvatar’s plans by bending and corrupting the divine Creator’s light to harness its power (the interesting thing is that white light is made up of many colours and therefore is a combination or divine union of all of them and Saruman, by breaking it into its various parts, as Gandalf and Tolkien knew, essentially lessens its power [Dedrick, 1998: 90]). Perhaps, however, the most tragic element of Saruman’s fall is that he, much like Sauron and Morgoth before him, is devoid of any form of salvation, especially since once he has ‘left the path of wisdom’, his fall from grace is absolute (unlike Gollum, for whom Tolkien still held a glimmer of hope: ‘There is little hope for [Gollum]. But not no hope.’ [Tolkien, 2001: 54]).

Tolkien (2001: xv) explains in the preface to *The Lord of the Rings* that: 'Saruman, failing to get possession of the Ring, before long would have made a Great Ring of his own with which to challenge the self-styled Ruler of Middle-Earth,' thereby replacing one Lord of the Rings with another. Instead Tolkien has Saruman's corruption lead to the once great Wizard's downfall. After the scouring of the Shire, Saruman is deposed and forced from it. Before he leaves though he relentlessly humiliates and torments Wormtongue until Gríma in a fit of rage cuts Saruman's throat. Saruman dies ignobly, and his spirit (that immortal part of him that once dwelled in Valinor) rises and seemingly looks to the West for some form of acknowledgment, but this is denied. Tolkien (2001: 996-997) writes in *The Return of the King* that:

To the dismay of those that stood by, about the body of Saruman a grey mist gathered, and rising slowly to a great height like smoke from a fire, as a pale shrouded figure it loomed over the Hill. For a moment it wavered, looking to the West; but out of the West came a cold wind, and it bent away, and with a sigh dissolved into nothing. Frodo looked down at the body with pity and horror, for as he looked it seemed that long years of death were suddenly revealed in it, and it shrank, and the shrivelled face became rags of skin upon a hideous skull.

In contrast to the three corruptions of Sauron's Ring – Gollum (a Hobbit-like creature), the Ringwraiths (Men) and Saruman (a Wizard) – Tolkien presents one ascension and resurrection. After his fall into the abyss in the Mines of Moria, Gandalf eventually defeats the Balrog, but as Gandalf reports, '[t]hen darkness took [him]; and [he] strayed out of thought and time, and [he] wandered far on roads that [he] will not tell' (Tolkien, 2001: 491). But he is sent back from death '...for a brief time, until [his] task is done' (Tolkien, 2001: 491). Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 156) explains Gandalf's resurrection in a letter by saying:

That I should say is what the Authority wished, as a set-off to Saruman. The "Wizards", as such, had failed; or if you like: the crisis had become too grave and needed an enhancement of power. So Gandalf sacrificed himself, was accepted, and enhanced, and returned.

Gandalf returns to Middle-Earth in a superior form, as Gandalf the White. Janet Croft (2009: 156) explains that: 'One of the most intriguing moments in the Gandalf/Saruman power

relationship is when Gandalf, clothed in white after his resurrection, says “Indeed I am Saruman, one might almost say, Saruman as he should have been” (III.5.484),’ which only further emphasises Saruman’s corruption and Gandalf’s ascension. Gandalf succeeds in inspiring the hearts of the Heroes in *The Lord of the Rings* and as such replaces Saruman as the head of the White Council and also as the most superior Istari or Wizard in Middle-Earth. It is also due to Gandalf’s machinations and hard work that Sauron is finally destroyed and he is duly rewarded (as is mentioned earlier by the crowning of Aragorn and the sailing from Middle-Earth with Galadriel and Elrond – the last voyage of the Three Rings). But it also falls to Gandalf to remove Saruman from power (thereby removing him as a threat). Tolkien (2001: 569) writes in *The Two Towers* that when Saruman and Gandalf eventually meet, Saruman belittles Gandalf as being nothing more than Gandalf the Grey. Gandalf, however, replies:

“Behold, I am not Gandalf the Grey, whom you betrayed. I am Gandalf the White, who has returned from death. You have no colour now, and I cast you from the order and from the Council.” He raised his hand, and spoke slowly in a clear voice. “Saruman, your staff is broken!” There was a crack, and the staff split asunder in Saruman’s hand, and the head of it fell down at Gandalf’s feet.

Thus Saruman’s power and influence in Middle-Earth are ended (although he still proves to be a menacing force in the Shire). However, Sauron’s presence in Tolkien’s world is coming to the fore. From the moment Saruman is banished, Sauron’s threat and menace intensifies. Although it must be said that at this time in the book perhaps Sauron’s most destructive deed has already been accomplished. After the annihilation of Númenór, which he was also responsible for:

Sauron appears to the Elves in the fair guise of Annatar, the Lord of Gifts. He teaches the Noldor many things; they become skilled craftsman, and create the Rings of Power under his guidance. But Sauron forges the One Ring in the fires of Mount Doom in order to watch and control the wearers of the other rings. When Sauron puts on the One Ring, the Elves became aware of his intentions and flee with the three greatest rings – Narya, Nenya and Vilya – crafted by Celebrimbor, son of Curufin. While at war with the Elves, Sauron gives out the rest of his rings – seven to the Dwarf lords, nine to the kings of

men – in order to bring under his control the rest of the children of Middle-Earth. (Snyder, 2013: 201)

The forging of the Rings of Power – ‘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’ (Tolkien, 2001: ii) – and especially the One Ring – ‘One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne’ – is Sauron’s greatest enactment of evil. It is his master plan to dominate all life on Middle-Earth, thereby binding all the free peoples to his will. Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 183) explains that Sauron’s motive for the forging the One Ring is that ‘Sauron desired to be a God-King, and was held to be this by his servants; if he had been victorious he would have demanded divine honour from all rational creatures and absolute temporal power over the whole world.’ Janet Croft (2009: 151) writes that: ‘Sauron’s greatest act of naming is an essential part of the forging of the One Ring; it is when he recites the lines in the Black Speech naming the ring he had just made as the “One Ring to rule them all,” the One Ring to bind all the other rings to the Darkness, that the Elves “knew that they had been betrayed.” (Tolkien, 2001: 248),’ and which alerts the Elves to the fact that Annatar is actually Sauron in a fair guise. Sauron believes that the forging of the One Ring will give him the power to dominate all life in Middle-Earth, but it is also surprisingly his undoing. Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 131) explains in a letter that when Sauron forges the One Ring he creates the very object of his own destruction. By the time of the Last Alliance between Elves and Men in the Second Age:

Sauron rules a growing empire from the great dark tower of Barad-dûr in Mordor, near to the Mountain of Fire, wielding the One Ring. But to achieve this he had been obliged to let a great part of his own inherent power (a frequent and very significant motive in myth and fairy-story) pass into the One Ring. While he wore it, his power on earth was actually enhanced. But even if he did not wear it, that power existed and was in ‘rapport’ with himself: he was not ‘diminished’. Unless some other seized it and became possessed of it. If that happened, the new possessor could (if sufficiently strong and heroic by nature) challenge Sauron, become master of all that he had learned or done since the making of the One Ring, and so overthrow him and usurp his place. This was the essential weakness he had introduced into his situation in his effort (largely unsuccessful) to enslave the Elves, and in his desire to establish a control over the minds and wills of his servants. There was another weakness: if the One Ring was actually unmade, annihilated, then its power would be dissolved, Sauron’s own being would be diminished to vanishing point, and he would be reduced to a shadow, a mere

memory of malicious will. But that he never contemplated nor feared. The Ring was unbreakable by any smithcraft less than his own. It was indissoluble in any fire, save the undying subterranean fire where it was made – and that was unapproachable, in Mordor. Also so great was the Ring's power of lust, that anyone who used it became mastered by it; it was beyond the strength of any will (even his own) to injure it, cast it away, or neglect it. So he thought. It was in any case on his finger.

Sauron forges the Master Ring in the hope that it will allow him to rule (or become the Master) of Middle-Earth. But because he imparts so much of his own spirit to the Ring (perhaps the prototype for J.K. Rowling's Horcruxes), he creates a device that once destroyed, ultimately leads to his own destruction. Sauron is the Lord of the Rings, but he is also in an ironic twist at the mercy of the Ring. For as Gandalf (Tolkien, 2001: 998) tells the Lords at Minas Tirith after the great Battle in *The Return of the King*:

If [the Ring] is destroyed, then he will fall; and his fall will be so low that none can foresee his arising ever again. For he will lose the best part of the strength that was native to him in his beginning, and all that was made or begun with that power will crumble, and he will be maimed for ever, becoming a mere spirit of malice that gnaws itself in the shadows, but cannot again grow or take shape.

The establishment of Sauron as the Lord of Rings therefore serves a greater role than simply to position him as the antithesis of the Hero or the antagonist of *The Lord of the Rings*. It is Tolkien's opportunity to create his own Dark Lord, which is by its very inception the corruption of the conventional Lord or King that features so centrally in Romance literature. Sauron's depiction as Annatar, the Lord of Gifts, relies heavily on the association with the illustrious Lords that Tolkien encountered in his studies and his excursions into the worlds of literature that he loved so well. The titles for Sauron, such as the Lord of Gifts and the Lord of the Rings, owe much of their existence to the Lords of *Beowulf* and other Romance works (Snyder, 2013: 134). King Hrothgar especially is addressed as both a ring-giver and lord of gifts (or bestower of gifts) in *Beowulf*. Both terms are kennings for (or words signifying) a King or Lord (Simpson, 2006: 5). In *Beowulf* Tolkien (2014: 64-65) indicates that Hrothgar, after promising to reward Beowulf for ridding Heorot of the monster Grendel, '[h]is vows he belied not: the rings he dealt and treasure at the feast.' With this in mind, Tolkien's

distortion of the lord bestowing gifts (or rings) on his subjects to reward them for their dutiful service and loyalty becomes even more revealing. Sauron (who for all intents and purposes is the monster in *The Lord of the Rings*) deceives kings into accepting his 'gift' of a ring, but instead of it being a signifier of their loyalty it soon binds them to Sauron's will. This is the antithesis of the true spirit of the lord-and-liege relationship mentioned earlier, on which so much knightly and Romance literature is based. This corruption, however, does adhere to the norms of Romance. Frye (1973: 189) writes that:

The central form of quest-Romance is the dragon-killing theme exemplified in the stories of St. George and Perseus. A land ruled by a helpless old king is laid waste by a sea monster, to whom one young person after another is offered to be devoured, until the lot falls on the king's daughter: at that point the hero arrives, kills the dragon, marries the daughter, and succeeds to the kingdom. The ritual analogies of the myth suggest that the monster is the sterility of the land itself, and that the sterility of the land is present in the age and impotence of the king, who is sometimes suffering from an incurable malady or wound.

At an initial reading, the above description might seem to have very little to do with Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. However, upon reflection, the reader becomes aware that perhaps there is more correlation to Tolkien's text than at first presumed. The land 'ruled' by a helpless old 'king' is Gondor under the stewardship of Denethor, who is plagued by Sauron and his forces (the monster) until Aragorn (the Hero) arrives and slays the monster and 'succeeds to the kingdom'. But perhaps another reading can be suggested. If Sauron were the old king (and the monster) as his position in the lord-corruption cycle determines him to be, and his incurable malady or wound is the fact that he is bodiless and cursed to an existence as a great lidless eye wreathed in flame due to the loss of the One Ring, then he is the source of the sterility and decay in his kingdom. The decay of Mordor, and the barrenness of the land, is due to Sauron's 'age and impotence,' especially since the land is often a reflection of the lord, and Sauron as '[t]he Shadow...can only mock, it cannot make: not real new things of its own' (Tolkien, 2001: 830). Sauron as the corruption of the lord-figure is responsible for a great deal of evil in the world, as much as Aragorn as a righteous and proper lord is responsible for setting right the evils that are afflicting Middle-Earth.

Tolkien's inversions, such as Sauron and Shelob as corruptions of the Lord and Lady of Romance, garner specific attention because they underscore the purpose of the proper Lord and Lady, or the Hero and Heroine. These corruptions, as much as Archimago being a distortion of the Master figure epitomized by Merlin, emphasize the fact that: '[t]he characterization of Romance follows its general dialectic structure...[so that] every typical character in Romance tends to have his moral opposite confronting him, like black and white pieces in a chess game' (Frye, 1973: 195). The Dark Lord, adopting titles in mimicry of the true king and standing on the black tiles of the chess board, is therefore the opposite of the Hero, who is destined to become the true king and as such inhabits the white tiles along with the other benefic forces.

The location in Romance literature that is associated with the Shadow, and whose function is similar to that of the forest, is the shadowlands, where evil lurks, and where Heroes are required to travel in order to prove their merit. Helen Cooper (2009: 78) explains that: '[t]he landscapes of [Romance] take the form of a series of locations that carry some weight of meaning, and those meanings are most likely to do with the particular form that the quest takes, the individual trials that the knight must undergo and the state of mind he is in.' The Hero journeys into the shadowlands (in *The Lord of the Rings* this is identified as 'the Land of Mordor, where the Shadows lie' [Tolkien, 2001: ii]) for a very specific reason: not purely out of some misguided desire, but because his quest inexorably draws him towards this wasteland, and the setting and scenery only enhance the eventual evil that the Hero will discover there. Since as Frye (1973: 189) suggests '[t]he ritual analogies of the myth suggest that the monster is the sterility of the land itself,' which naturally explains the reason that shadowlands exist, the shadowland scenery incorporates images of destruction, chaos and waste. Shadowlands are as a result outward manifestations of the evil that resides in them. The malevolent beings that reside there defile the once fertile lands in the same way that they violate the tenets of a society by transgressing the accepted norms and perpetrating terrible atrocities (hence these places are known as borderlands since they

exist outside of the confines of regular society). For this reason it takes a particular kind of Hero to vanquish these creatures of chaos, thereby rectifying or remedying (especially since the concept of poison and evil are so intricately intertwined) the contraventions of an ordered society, of which the Hero is an unmistakable representative (Saunders, 2004: 2-3). But to facilitate this transition, the Hero must carry out an act of destruction (in this case the destroying of the evil contaminating the land) so that order can be restored and the true purpose of the Romance be realised (Cooper, 2009: 80). 'That the goal of a quest should include destruction is not in itself either puzzling or unfamiliar. There is a sense that every knight who kills a dragon has destruction as his aim, though it is usually a means to an end,' (Cooper, 2009: 80) and this destruction more often than not occurs in the shadowlands, where the bounds of society are blurred, so that destruction is in actuality a form of salvation, and that because of this it seems that in certain Romances (much like *The Lord of the Rings*) '...the quest has no aim other than destruction, that the compulsion towards its completion is also a compulsion towards annihilation' (Cooper, 2009: 80).

In order to encapsulate that sense of iniquity and evil in the landscape (and in so doing increase the reader's awareness that this is a dangerous and unsettling place) the surroundings of the shadowlands are described in a very precise manner using (or reusing) comparable imagery or details. The use of cliffs (which actually hem the Heroes and the readers in), ruins, mist, fens, foul weather and storms, overgrown or wild (and yet decaying or dying) woods or undergrowth, tainted water, images of death or carrion, and the absence of the expected wildlife, all contribute to an eerie wasteland that features over and over again in Romance texts (Saunders, 2004: 67 & 493). For instance in *Beowulf*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Sir Orfeo* and *The Faerie Queene*, the shadowlands to which the respective Heroes journey are all similar even though they were written in different centuries by different writers (ranging from Old to Modern English); and yet their features make them easily recognisable as shadowlands. Karl Kroeber (1988: 11) writes that in *Beowulf*: 'Appropriately enough, Grendel inhabits a mist-shrouded borderland, and his appearance is

not distinctly visualized, although his habitat is hauntingly evoked,' which only demonstrates the importance of the shadowland to the *Beowulf*-poet and subsequent Romance writers. Grendel is not described in any further detail than a customary glance, but his lair is emphasized in intricate detail because of the evil that it is associated with, and still houses (Grendel's mother still lurks in the depths of Grendel's abode). Tolkien (2014: 1133-1148) translates the lines of *Beowulf* as:

In a hidden land they dwell upon highlands wolf-haunted, and windy cliffs, and the perilous passes of the fens, where the mountain-stream goes down beneath the shadows of the cliffs, a river beneath the earth. It is not far hence in measurement of miles that that mere lies, over which there hang rimy thickets, and a wood clinging by its roots overshadows the water. There may each night be seen a wonder grim, fire upon the flood. There lives not of the children of men one so wise that he should know the depth of it. Even though harried by the hounds the ranger of the heath, the hart strong in his horns, may seek that wood being hunted from afar, sooner will he yield his life and breath upon the shore, than he will enter to hide his head therein: no pleasant place is that! Thence doth the tumult of the waves arise darkly to the clouds, when wind arouses tempests foul, until the airs are murky and the heavens weep.

The concatenation of the storms, the wolf-haunted and windy cliffs, the measureless depths of the mere, the eerie lights, the rimy thickets and wood, and the dying hart (a woodland creature that is symbolically connected in *Beowulf* to Hrothgar and his people since Heorot means 'Hall of the Hart' [Tolkien, 2014: 157]) creates an atmosphere of doom. This cataclysmic scenic quality is what the poet is striving for as it makes the readers understand that Beowulf is entering a perilous place from which he may never return. In fact, it seems to Hrothgar and the rest of the Danes (and even to Beowulf himself) the likelihood of Beowulf's survival is slim, which is why it does not appear out of place for Beowulf to tell Hrothgar what to do with his rewards and gifts if he '...should at thy need lay down [his] life...' (Tolkien, 2014: 1234). But Beowulf does not perish in battle with Grendel's mother, although at first he is hard-pressed to gain any advantage over the '...ogress, fierce destroyer in the form of a woman,' (Tolkien, 2014: 1045-1046). Similarly, in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the Gawain-poet (Jones, 1972: lines 2077-2084) portrays Sir Gawain's descent to find the Green Knight in a strikingly comparable manner:

Pay bozen bi bonkkez/þer bogez ar bare,
Pay clomben bi clyffez þer clengez þe colde.
þe heuen watz vphalt, bot vgly þer-vnder;
Mist mused on þe mor, malt on þe mountez,
Vch hille hade a hatte, a myst-hakel huge.
Brokez byled and breke bi bonkkez aboute,
Schyre schaterande on schorez,
þer pay doun schowued.

The inclusion of the bare boughs, the cliffs, the cold and mist on the moor, the stream that foams and bubbles from its bank, and the dangerous and rugged way through the woods, all contribute to create a sense of foreboding, which is appropriate since Sir Gawain is going to find the Green Knight and receive his preordained stroke with the giant's huge axe. Gawain is uncertain that he will return from his quest because he perhaps fittingly '...believes that the end of his own quest will be his death at the hands of the Green Knight, and the final landscape through which he passes – icebound, misty, closed in by crags, to a Green Chapel where the devil himself might worship (2187-8) – looks as if it is leading him to the destruction he expects' (Cooper, 2009: 80). The Green Knight is, however, not Sir Gawain's downfall; he survives the giant by eventually adhering to his chivalric ideals and telling the truth when confronted. Correspondingly, in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, the Redcrosse Knight must withstand comparable ordeals and venture into the shadowlands of the Cave of Despair, an allegorical representation of chaos akin to Grendel's lair, with the intent to overthrow a creature of chaos and thereby restore order to the realm. Spenser (I, 9, xxxiii) writes that:

Ere long they come, where that same wicked wight
His dwelling has, low in an hollow cave,
Farre underneath a craggie clift ypight,
Darke, dolefull, drearie, like the greedie grave,
that still for carrion carcases doth crave.

This once more incorporates a fusion of menacing visuals such as cliffs, a cave, darkness and images of death; but Spenser (Book I, Canto IX, Stanza: xxxiv), perhaps drawing from

the gruesome depictions in the fourteenth century Romance text, Dante's *Inferno*, does not simply describe barren trees, but writes that:

And all about old stockes and stubs of trees,
Whereon nor fruit nor leafe was ever seene,
Did hang upon the ragged rocky knees;
On which had many wretches hanged beene,
Whose carcasses were scattered on the greene,
And throwne about the cliffs.

It seems unlikely that the Redcrosse Knight would survive such a torment (and without Una's intervention he would not have) but he resists Despair's evil and walks from the Cave. Spenser thus continues in the footsteps of previous Romance writers by reusing many of the scenic features in order to create a shadowland that encompasses all the peril that a Hero rides to meet, and all the vulnerability a reader feels in watching him journey forth.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien assimilates many of the preceding characteristics or features to construct a shadowland that surpasses any of the other wastelands of Romance literature. Tolkien's Mordor is the quintessential shadowland. As Helen Cooper (2009: 81) writes:

J.R.R. Tolkien makes destruction the aim and object of the quest in *The Lord of the Rings*: it is because the One Ring is the focus of such an intensity of desire that it must be disposed of. Frodo, like every questing knight, takes on the quest voluntarily, but also with a deep reluctance, a resistance to desire that is his main qualification for success. He does not want to be the ring-bearer. The final landscape that [Frodo] has to cross before he reaches Mount Doom (so allegorical a name as to require a less heavy-handed alternative) is a waste of desolation that overgoes any medieval Waste Land, a fusion of setting and quest that is both ethical, in its representation of evil, and psychological, in its reflection of the draining away of Frodo's vital energies. Tolkien learned his memes from his wide knowledge of medieval texts, and he learned too how to exploit them.

Tolkien's application of the memes and tropes of the shadowland illustrate the necessity for Frodo's journey, but also the intense peril of his situation. Tolkien (2001: 654) describes that: 'On either side and in front wide fens and mires now lay, stretching away southward and eastward into the dim half-light. Mists curled and smoked from dark and noisome pools. The

reek of them hung stifling in the still air,' and then he tells us that: 'Far away, now almost due south, the mountain-walls of Mordor loomed, like a black bar of rugged clouds floating above a dangerous fog-bound sea,' which evidently displays the integration of many of the previous shadowland details into Tolkien's descriptions. Tolkien (2001: 654) continues to build on the initial depiction by adding that: '[Gollum] led [Frodo and Sam] through thickets and wastes of brambles; sometimes round the lip of a deep cleft or dark pit, sometimes down into black bush-shrouded hollows and out again; but if ever they went a little downward, always the further slope was longer and steeper,' which further emphasizes the cliffs that enclose and surround the Hobbits and the blackness and barrenness of the landscape. Sam and Frodo even notice the corpses beneath the water in the meres, which contribute to the title of the Dead Marshes, and which shine, '...some like dimly shining smoke, some like misty flames flickering slowly above unseen candles,' (Tolkien, 2001: 658) much like the 'fire upon the flood' that can be seen above Grendel's watery abode in *Beowulf*. When Sam trips he lands in one of the meres and '[f]or a moment the water below him looked like some window, glazed with grimy glass, through which he was peering. Wrenching his hands out of the bog, he sprang back with a cry. 'There are dead things, dead faces in the water,' he said with horror. 'Dead faces!'" (Tolkien, 2001: 659). These corpses in the water are reminiscent of Spenser's Cave of Despair or the dead corpses in Grendel's lair, and impart a sense of the macabre that intensifies Mordor's association with death and the plight of the Hobbits, who must enter this forbidden place. In these and other depictions of Mordor, the reader can clearly identify the shadowland features that are so apparent in earlier Romance literature. Tolkien forges the cliffs and peaks of Mordor, the darkness and the storms (usually coming from Sauron's fortress in Barad-dûr), the aridity and sterility of the land, the mist on the fens and mires, the dead in the marshes, the eerie lights that float above the meres to create one of the most memorable and terrifying shadowlands in Romance. He even adds the shriek of the Ringwraiths, which evokes the scene from the Cave of Despair (Book I, Canto IX, Stanza: xxxiv) in which '...all about [the Cave] wandring ghostes did waile and howle,' in order to further emphasise the eeriness and deadliness of Sauron's lands. One other

connection that Tolkien's shadowland shares with the other shadowlands and Heroes of the aforementioned Romances is that his Hero, Frodo Baggins, also believes that his quest to Mordor will result in his ultimate doom. Moments before claiming responsibility for the destruction of the Ring in Rivendell and thereby accepting his quest to Mordor Frodo feels that '[a] great dread fell on him, as if he was awaiting the pronouncement of some doom that he had long foreseen and vainly hoped might after all never be spoken,' (Tolkien, 2001: 263) which demonstrates the hopelessness of Frodo's situation. He tells Sam at the end of *The Fellowship of the Ring* that: 'It would be the death of you to come with me, Sam,' (Tolkien, 2001: 397) because Frodo, like Gawain, Beowulf and the Redcrosse Knight, knows the danger that awaits him. The hopelessness of the situation the two Hobbits find themselves in is greatly enhanced by the scenery and setting of the shadowland, where death and destruction await. Frodo encapsulates the bleakness of his task when he expresses these words to Sam:

"I don't know how long we shall take to – to finish," said Frodo. "We were miserably delayed in the hills. But Samwise Gamgee, my dear Hobbit – indeed, Sam my dearest Hobbit, friend of friends – I do not think we need give thought to what comes after that. To do the job as you put it – what hope is there that we ever shall? And if we do, who knows what will come of that? If the One goes into the Fire, and we are at hand? I ask you, Sam, are we ever likely to need bread again? I think not. If we can nurse our limbs to bring us to Mount Doom, that is all we can do. More than I can, I begin to feel."

Upon reflection then it seems absurd that a Hobbit – a member of folk that in size appear '...nothing more than children...' (Tolkien, 2001: 424) – must venture into the heart of Sauron's realm in order to destroy the one thing that Sauron needs '...to give him strength and knowledge to beat down all resistance, break the last defences, and cover all the lands in a second darkness' (Tolkien, 2001: 50), but that is simply because Tolkien is so effective at creating his shadowland that the task that Frodo faces appears even more impossible merely because the landscape is so forbidding and treacherous. This perilousness of the shadowland lends a greater sense of evil to Sauron and his dominion, especially since '[t]he ritual analogies of the myth suggest that the monster is the sterility of the land itself' (Frye,

1973: 189). Sauron is the reason that Mordor and Barad-dûr appear ‘...as grim black towers [frowning] across a dismal waste,’ and that the land rises ‘...in long shallow slopes, barren and pitiless, towards the desert that lay at Sauron’s gate’ (Tolkien, 2001: 634). This barrenness, however, does not only affect the land; it soon begins to manifest in a physical manner as well. Northrop Frye (Frye, 1973: 97) discusses the modes of descent, which he argues are so intrinsic to Romance literature, in his *Secular Scripture*. The symptoms of this descent into what Frye terms a ‘Nightworld’ (and perhaps Mordor can be considered as a representation of this Nightworld) are moments of forgetfulness, loss of identity and a dreamlike state (Frye, 1973: 103). In Mordor then, the shadowland, Frodo begins to experience all of these symptoms, especially the forgetfulness and the dreamlike fugues that are caused by the Ring. Tolkien describes various instances of Frodo being in a dreamlike state, saying of Frodo that: ‘...either in his dreams or out of them, he could not tell which,’ (Tolkien, 2001: 565) and again ‘...as if returning out of a dream,’ (Tolkien, 2001: 568) or having Frodo say something ‘...in a dreamlike voice,’ (Tolkien, 2001: 568) or how Frodo and Sam wake up ‘...rubbing their eyes, like children wakened from an evil dream to find the familiar night still over the world’ (Tolkien, 2001: 573). This dreamlike state shows Frodo has lost touch with reality, and Tolkien emphasizes that this fact by having Frodo unable to tell dream from waking, which is appropriate within Frye’s definition of the mode of descent into a Nightworld as being akin to the ‘...confusion of identity and the restriction of action’ (Frye, 1973: 129). Frodo also exhibits signs of forgetfulness. In *The Return of the King*, on the foothills of Mount Doom, when Sam asks him: ‘Do you remember that bit of rabbit, Mr. Frodo?’ Frodo responds:

“No, I am afraid not, Sam. At least, I know that such things happened, but I cannot see them. No taste of food, no feel of water, no sound of wind, no memory of tree or grass or flower, no image of moon or star are left to me. I am naked in the dark, Sam, and there is no veil between me and the wheel of fire. I begin to see it even with my waking eyes, and all else fades” (Tolkien, 2001: 916).

The Nightworld aspect of Mordor, being the land of shadows, affects Frodo by slowly removing his identity, which fulfils Frye's descent motif since '...it is identity which makes individuality [and thereby heroic deeds] possible' (Frye, 1973: 32). He even begins to forget about the Shire (his home, which he came on the quest to protect), saying: 'But this blind dark seems to be getting into my heart. I tried to remember the Brandywine, and Woody End, and The Water running through the mill at Hobbiton. But I can't see them now' (Tolkien, 2001: 897). This is the terrifying affect that the shadowlands (and the Nightworld) have on the Hero (which is only worsened by the Ring that slowly causes mortals to fade [Tolkien, 2001: 47]). And it is only after the Ring is destroyed that Frodo finds his identity again. Sam observes that after the destruction of the Ring: 'There was Frodo, pale and worn, and yet himself again; and in his eyes there was peace now, neither strain of will, nor madness, nor any fear. His burden was taken away. There was the dear master of the sweet days in the Shire.' This, however, only happens when Frodo accomplishes his quest and Mordor is destroyed (or at least when the malignant forces that corrupt it are). Frodo thus only resumes his earlier identity at the end of *The Lord of the Rings*; but he is also not the same Hobbit that left the Shire. His burden of bearing the Ring, and subsequently his time spent in the shadowlands, has fashioned him into something far greater: he is a Ring-bearer and Hero. In *The Lord of the Rings*, the narrator (Tolkien, 2001: 630) laments Frodo's plight, saying that: 'And here he was, a little Halfling from the Shire, a simple Hobbit of the quiet countryside, expected to find a way where the great ones could not go, or dared not go. It was an evil fate,' but an obligatory one. The shadowland is the place that itinerant Heroes journey to in order to prove themselves capable of the heroic deeds that are the life-blood of Romance texts. Beowulf, Gawain and Frodo all achieve perhaps their greatest triumphs in the bleakest of scenery, and thereby earn their designations as Romance Heroes. As Frodo himself says: 'I don't like anything here at all. Step or stone, breath or bone. Earth, air and water all seem accursed. But so our path is laid,' (Tolkien, 2001: 696) and yet Frodo must go down that path to destroy the Ring. For without Frodo, who is perhaps the only being in Middle-Earth that can withstand the Ring's influence as long as he does, the quest to

Mordor, 'where the Shadows lie' (Tolkien, 2001: ii), would never have been achieved, and the Dark Lord Sauron would never have been overthrown.

The Lady In Shadow: The Villainess

Another character that stands on the black tiles as an antithetical force against the Heroes and their endeavours is Shelob the Great. She is the utter opposite of the Lady Galadriel, who is the Lady of Light, and as such associated with stars, illumination and water. This adversarial approach of having one side the complete antithesis of the other is quite customary in Romance literature, especially since it is a genre that frequently deals with the dualism of disparate forces, which are ultimately embodied in the Hero and the Shadow (Villain) or 'good versus evil' (Frye, 1973: 195). In the same way that Galadriel is a representation of the distinguished Ladies of courtly love, such as Guinevere from *Le Morte Darthur*, as well as the prominent peace-weavers, such as Wealhþeow from *Beowulf*, Shelob, who is '...an evil thing in spider-form...' (Tolkien, 2001: 707) that Frodo and Sam encounter upon entering Mordor becomes an exemplification of the female antagonist or the abject, a term introduced by Julia Kristeva (1982: 3). Often the abject (or a being that lives outside the norms of society or is shunned by society for some aberration or other) falls into the category of either the female antiheroes or sorceresses, such as Duessa from *The Faerie Queene*, or the creature of chaos, such as Grendel's mother from *Beowulf* (Overing, 1990: 32). As such the motivation for Shelob appearing in the form of a spider may also have a connection to her being the complete antithesis of the peace-weaver as epitomised by Queen Wealhþeow. Instead of weaving webs of peace, Shelob weaves webs of darkness and discord, bringing (or even birthing) chaos into Middle-Earth.

Shelob's name, as Tolkien revealed in a letter to his son Christopher (Carpenter, 2002: 70), comes from the amalgamation of two words: 'She,' showing her sexual category, and 'lob,' which is an Old English word for spider; although *The Lord of the Rings* does not explicitly refer to her actually being a spider. Instead, she is called '...an evil thing in spider-form...' (Tolkien, 2001: 707), and even when Sam sees her she is described as (or compared to) a spider: '[m]ost like a spider she was, but huger than the great hunting beasts, and more

terrible than they because of the evil purpose in her remorseless eyes' (Tolkien, 2001: 709). In spite of the irresolute impression provided by Tolkien of Shelob's true appearance or being, it is understandable that Tolkien should have chosen a spider as his creature of chaos: spiders are almost universally feared and avoided. Tolkien may also have had a deep-rooted motivation for selecting Shelob's arachnid form; in his book, *J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography*, Humphrey Carpenter (2002: 27) recounts that '...when Ronald [J.R.R.Tolkien] was beginning to walk, he stumbled on a tarantula. It bit him, and he ran in terror across the garden until the nurse snatched him up and sucked out the poison.' Although Tolkien always claimed that this incident left him with no exceptional fear of spiders, Carpenter (2002: 27) notes that 'Nevertheless, in his stories [Tolkien] wrote more than once of monstrous spiders with venomous bites.'

The 'She' in Shelob's name may also have a more significant meaning. Carpenter (2002: 48) recounts in his biography that Tolkien, while still a young boy, read the book *She* by H. Rider Haggard, in which the titular female character and antagonist, Ayesha – the *She* or *She-who-must-be-obeyed* – reigns as sorceress and queen of the Amahagger. Despite the fact that Ayesha is human and Shelob a spider-like creature, there are noticeable similarities between the two, even though Ayesha is more often connected by various scholars to Galadriel and Lúthien (Fisher, 2011: 146&152). Both Ayesha and Shelob have lived for over two millennia, and yet their earlier existences are unknown to the reader (and perhaps even to the writer); both are quantifiably immortal (meaning they can be slain but otherwise would live interminably); both have caused the death of their respective mates; both do not allow unpermitted strangers within their borders to remain alive; both encounter or take part in cannibalism (Shelob even consumes her young); both appear to reanimate the dead (Shelob's venom makes her intended victims appear dead, but they soon come back to life once encased in web); and both of them, through their own devices, bring about their own demise (Shelob impales herself on Sting, the spider's bane, while She is consumed by the Spirit of Life, which originally gave her immortality, upon entering it for a second time)

(Fisher, 2011: 145-162). Shelob is even called 'She' several times in the text, such as: 'And She that walked in the darkness,' (Tolkien, 2001: 705) or when Gollum, her servant, speaks of her, saying '...when we've got it safe, then She'll know it, O yes, then we'll pay Her back' (Tolkien, 2001: 709). If Tolkien intended the reader to make this association (even if only subconsciously), this would lend a great deal of credibility to the concept of Shelob being more than a mere creature of chaos, a monster born of the primordial remnants of the chaos that existed after creation (Shelob's mother Ungoliant of course is the original spider-like creature in *The Silmarillion* that is formed from the darkness [Tyler, 1973: 267]). Shelob is also a distortion of the fundamental femininity that is typically representative of Romance's female characters (Beer, 1970: 68) as much as She-who-must-be-obeyed is paradigmatic of the distortion of the conventional hierarchy of society and the laws of nature. As such Shelob functions as the corruption of the customary Lady figure, epitomized by Galadriel and Lúthien, and mentioned in connection with Shelob in the narrator's introduction to the giant spider-like creature. In fact, the narrator, who is proposed to be none other than Frodo Baggins, intrudes quite significantly into the narrative to describe Shelob the Great and her history, which, as can be expected, is quite dark and menacing. No other character, not even major characters who control the ebb and flow of the narrative, receives nearly as much attention. This preferential treatment is perhaps due in part to the fact that Frodo is the only being to have survived Shelob's sting and also to Tolkien's desire to create an immense and malevolent creature that would prove a worthy foe for Frodo, Drogo's son, and Samwise, Hamfast's son. The true purpose of a creature of chaos (in much the same way as the Shadow) is, after all, to be a significant enough adversary for the Hero so that he may rightfully lay claim to the title of Hero once the monster is vanquished. As Tolkien (2007: 14) wrote in *Beowulf: Monsters and the Critics*: 'We do not deny the worth of the Hero by accepting Grendel and the dragon.' Tolkien (2001: 707) writes in *The Two Towers* that:

There agelong she had dwelt, an evil thing in spider-form, even such as once of old had lived in the Land of the Elves in the West that is now under the Sea, such as Beren fought in the Mountains of Terror in Doriath, and so came to Lúthien upon the green sward amid the hemlocks in the moonlight

long ago. How Shelob came there, flying from ruin, no tale tells, for out of the Dark Years few tales have come. But still she was there, who was there before Sauron, and before the first stone of Barad-dûr; and she served none but herself, drinking the blood of Elves and Men, bloated and grown fat with endless brooding on her feasts, weaving webs of shadow; for all living things were her food, and her vomit darkness. Far and wide her lesser broods, bastards of the miserable mates, her own offspring, that she slew, spread from glen to glen, from the Ephel Duath to the eastern hills, to Dol Guldur and the fastnesses of Mirkwood. But none could rival her, Shelob the Great, last child of Ungoliant to trouble the unhappy world.

In this description of Shelob, Tolkien poignantly accentuates Shelob's otherness or abjectness, her propensity for intemperance, as well as her association with shadows and darkness. As a result he creates a creature of chaos and destruction that is reminiscent of another well-known monster which features as the central female antagonist in one of Tolkien's greatest literary influences: *Beowulf*. 'Grendel's mother, ogress, fierce destroyer in the form of a woman,' (Tolkien, 2014: 1045-1046) features prominently in *Beowulf* as the avenging creature of chaos who comes to Heorot, the feasting Hall of King Hrothgar, to wreak vengeance on the Danes for their slaughter of Grendel, her inhuman son (Tolkien, 2014: 1775-1782). And since Grendel's mother is perhaps the first extant example of the female antagonist, or chaos creature, in English literature it seems plausible that all successive representations of female monsters will in some or other way conform to her as grotesque prototype.

Therefore it seems natural that there should be multiple correlations between Shelob and Grendel's mother. For instance, both of them are described as creatures of darkness. Shelob is linguistically linked over and over with shadows, night and darkness, such as in '...other potencies there are in Middle-Earth, powers of night, and they are old and strong,' '...weaving webs of shadow...', '...vomit darkness...', along with the feelings of '...darkness and blackness of despair...' which she brings about within Frodo and Sam (Tolkien, 2001: 705-707). Tolkien (2001: 456) even describes Shelob's lair in terms of darkness:

Drawing a deep breath they passed inside. In a few steps they were in utter and impenetrable dark. Not since the lightless passages of Moria had Frodo

or Sam known such darkness, and if possible here it was deeper and denser. There, there were airs moving, and echoes, and a sense of space. Here the air was still, stagnant, heavy, and sound fell dead. They walked as it were in a black vapour wrought of veritable darkness itself that, as it was breathed, brought blindness not only to the eyes but to the mind, so that even the memory of colours and of forms and of any light faded out of thought. Night always had been, and always would be, and night was all.

Grendel's mother correspondingly waits '...until another night came upon this world...' (Tolkien, 2014: 1775) to attack Heorot (much as her son has previously done) and, subsequently, when Beowulf enters her subterranean lair – '...some abysmal hall...' (Tolkien, 2014: 1265) – it is veiled in darkness. Shelob similarly inhabits a collection of tunnels carved deep into the earth that is situated '...under the shadow, and there in the midst of it...the opening of a cave' (Tolkien, 2001: 705). Both of them hoard objects in their dwellings: Grendel's mother lives surrounded by many treasures or *ealde lafe* (heirlooms), including an *ealdsweord eotenisc* that leads to her undoing; while Shelob's cave conversely appears as though '...filth unnameable were piled and hoarded in the dark within,' for Shelob is a creature that is formed of, and therefore spews forth, darkness. This hoarding connects them to the dragons or wyrms of Romance literature, amassing that which is most precious to them (much as Smaug accumulates treasure in *The Hobbit*) and highlights the vices inherent in antagonists (Tolkien, 2007: 18). Tolkien and the anonymous Anglo-Saxon poet of *Beowulf* likewise mutually emphasise the femaleness of their respective monsters, which actually underscores the perversion of the nurturing instinct traditionally associated with the female gender, thereby making their monstrosity even more frightening: Shelob is repetitively called 'She' and her sexual proficiency or fertility is compellingly emphasised; while Grendel's mother is identified as a 'fierce destroyer in the form of a woman,' (1045) with the 'shape as of a woman,' (1128) and an 'inhuman troll-wife,' (1781) along with many other epithets, such as 'She-wolf' (1270) or 'Sea-witch' (1271). However, perhaps the most important way that the authors accentuate Shelob and Grendel's mother's femaleness is that they are both the mothers of monstrous progeny: as mentioned above Shelob's 'lesser broods' have infested Middle-Earth, while Grendel's mother, who is titled '*ides, aglæcwif*

(‘woman, monster-wife’ 1260-61) in the text – the unnerving asyndeton alerting us to her dual nature as both mother and monster (Tolkien, 2014: 12) – bears Grendel who terrorises the Danes until Beowulf slays him. Perhaps, however, the decisive similarity that Grendel’s mother and Shelob share is that they are both wounded by a Hero wielding a sword that has been found in a troll or ogre hoard: Beowulf finds a *ealdsweord* in Grendel’s mother’s cave and decapitates Grendel and his mother with it; and Shelob is twice defeated, once by Frodo, Drogo’s son, and finally by Sam, Hamfast’s son, while the two of them are wielding Sting, which was found by Bilbo Baggins in the troll cache in *The Hobbit*.

Tolkien (2001: 711) describes the instance: ‘[Sam] sprang forward with a yell, and seized his master’s sword in his left hand. Then he charged. No onslaught more fierce was ever seen in the savage world of beasts; where some desperate small creature armed with little teeth alone, will spring upon a tower of horn and hide that stands above its fallen mate.’ In that defining moment, Sam becomes a Hero worthy of praise (in fact no other character, besides Gandalf, who is a Wizard, strikes down a foe as evil or as menacing as Shelob). This uncharacteristic occasion of heroism in the face of overwhelming odds is in keeping with the eucatastrophic nature not only of Romance, but also of Tolkien’s views on the progression of a good tale (Tolkien, 1964: 68). Romance Heroes, as previously mentioned, are unlike the Heroes of Epic literature, who are mostly, as Northrop Frye (1973: 35) states in *The Anatomy of Criticism*, ‘...deified heroes and kings of divine descent, where the same adjective "godlike" can be applied either to Zeus or to Achilles.’ Instead Frye suggests that ‘...the typical hero of Romance, whose actions are marvellous but who is himself identified as a human being,’ (Frye, 1973: 33) is more at the mercy of outside determining factors than any other form of Hero. This outside force ‘...may be called God, gods, fate, accident, fortune, necessity, circumstance, or any combination of these...’ (Frye, 1973: 207). ‘He has authority, passions, and powers of expression far greater than ours, but what he does is subject both to social criticism and to the order of nature,’ which is why it is so remarkable that a Hobbit, who is much smaller and weaker than a man, may prove to be such an

unexpected and extraordinary hero. This reliance on some force resulting in a positive upwards cycle of events was an expression of Tolkien's certainty that a good turn, the Greek of which is eucatastrophe, particularly as it is unforeseen, is the consolation and reward of stories such as those that are contained in Romance (Tolkien, 1964: 69). Samwise Gamgee, son of Hamfast, being no stronger or wiser than any other character in *The Lord of the Rings* is able to overcome a creature of chaos not as a consequence of his strength or his wisdom, which would be expected of an Epic Hero such as Achilles or Gilgamesh, but because he accepts the responsibility for setting right some wrong that has been accomplished; and that is the virtue of the Romance Hero. As Frye (1973: 206) states, there are two elements that combine to make a Romance Hero: '...the crucial struggle, usually some kind of battle in which either the hero or his foe, or both, must die; and the exaltation of the hero.' Tolkien (2007: 128) suggests that this unanticipated bravery or boldness, which is often the determining factor in the Hero-Creature confrontation in Romance literature (Beer, 1970: 36), is '...a presage of the kind of hero we have to deal with; and not during the later period of recognized ability and prowess, but in that first moment, which often comes in great lives, when men look up in surprise and see that a hero has unawares leaped forth' (Tolkien, 2007: 128). That is why Tolkien expresses this seemingly odd view on monsters: 'I would suggest, then, that the monsters are not an inexplicable blunder of taste; they are essential, fundamentally allied to the underlying ideas of the poem, which give it its lofty tone and high seriousness' (Tolkien, 2007: 115). The monsters are essential because they assist in revealing the heroism of the Romance Hero, and that is one of the underlying ideas of any work of literature. Sam, who up until this point has exhibited neither ability or prowess, holds 'for one more blow,' even though Tolkien (2001: 711) makes it abundantly clear that '...those hideous folds could not be pierced by any strength of men, not though Elf or Dwarf should forge the steel or the hand of Beren or of Turin wield it,' and is therefore rewarded. 'Shelob, with the driving force of her own cruel will, with strength greater than any warrior's hand, thrust herself upon a bitter spike,' thereby achieving what no mortal or immortal could. Fate, it seems, does indeed favour the bold; at least in Tolkien's literary world, and now having

vanquished Shelob, Frodo and Sam can be exalted as true Heroes (Frye, 1973: 207). After all, as Tolkien (2007: 128) suggests, the true purpose of the Hero is to overcome whatever obstacles stand in his path, especially since: 'The placing of the dragon is inevitable: [and as such] a man can but die upon his death-day,' and not a moment before.

Shelob's battles, first with Frodo and then with Sam, introduce two important elements tied with prophecy and foresight. The first is the revelation of the intended purpose of the mysterious star-glass that the Lady Galadriel bestows on Frodo before his departure from Lothlórien, which fulfils a prophetic intention of sorts (Galadriel must have foreseen that Frodo and Sam would encounter Shelob in the darkness). The second is the blinding of Shelob, which is a foreshadowing of events to come later in the narrative. When Galadriel gives Frodo the star-glass she says these words to him:

"In this phial, is caught the light of Eärendil's star, set amid the waters of my fountain. It will shine still brighter when night is about you. May it be a light to you in dark places, when all other lights go out" (Tolkien, 2001: 181).

To the reader this gift may seem inexplicable, but the reader accepts, even if only at the back of his or her mind, that there may be a purpose to the present that Tolkien will reveal when he is ready to do so. What the reader perhaps does not realise is that Tolkien's intention is an extension of the mode of prophecy and foresight that usually surrounds the Romance Hero (Beer, 1970: 79). Northrop Frye (1973: 139) mentions in *The Anatomy of Criticism* that: '[t]he introduction of an omen or portent, or the device of making a whole story the fulfilment of a prophecy given at the beginning,' is representative of, as Gillian Beer (1970: 79) makes clear, Romance works' reliance on the elements of prophecy and foresight. Therefore, '[s]uch a device suggests, in its existential projection, a conception of ineluctable fate or hidden omnipotent will' (Frye, 1973: 139). Bruckner (2010: 129) suggests that: 'From the characters' point of view, the sequence of events cannot jump the natural order of unfolding time, though the special insight offered by predictions might give them some advantage in anticipating what lies ahead, some knowledge to avoid the disasters

announced.’ This is the case with Galadriel’s star-glass since Frodo and Sam later realise the gift’s true purpose. Galadriel, possessing certain mystifying gifts that are never fully explained to the reader, can see in the waters of her fountain ‘...things that were, things that are, and things that yet may be...’ (Tolkien, 2001: 176), and in this way may have seen that Frodo will need to enter Mordor through Cirith Ungol, where Shelob has her lair, and that he will need to overcome the beast in order to achieve his quest. This is, however, the first instance where Galadriel’s gifts are used in a way that suggests that she may have had foreknowledge of what lay ahead. The other of course is when the box of hallowed earth is used to revitalise the Shire at the end of *The Lord of the Rings*. To stress the connection between Galadriel’s gift and the power it possesses, Tolkien diligently re-conveys the scene of the bestowing of the gift and Galadriel’s words at a time when Frodo is nearly overwhelmed by the darkness around him. When Frodo starts to surrender to despair and hopelessness, which is a power that Shelob evidently exudes, Tolkien (2001: 705) says:

Then as he stood, darkness about him and a blackness of despair and anger in his heart, it seemed to him that he saw a light: a light in his mind, almost unbearably bright at first, as a sun-ray to the eyes of one long hidden in a windowless pit. Then the light became colour: green, gold, silver, white. Far off, as in a little picture drawn by elven-fingers he saw the Lady Galadriel standing on the grass in Lórien, and gifts were in her hands. *And you, Ring-bearer*, he heard her say, remote but clear, *for you I have prepared this*.

The mention of the colours that are so strongly associated with Lothlórien and with the Lady Galadriel – ‘[Frodo] saw no colour but those he knew, gold and white and blue and green, but they were fresh and poignant, as if he had at that moment first perceived them and made for them names new and wonderful’ (Tolkien, 2001: 166) – creates a visual connection with the Elf Queen, and allows the reader to recall the serenity that exists in the woods of Lórien, even in the face of such a chaos-bringer as Shelob the Great. The mention of Galadriel is correspondingly concomitant with the Knight’s worship of the Lady, demonstrating how ‘the love of a beautiful lady motivates [the Hero] and increases his strength’ (Burns, 1993: 4). It is therefore unsurprising, although emotive, that as a result of the inferred virtues of the Knight and the Lady relationship, Frodo embraces the heroic nature that seems so out of place for a

Hobbit of the Shire (Kenlin, 1995: 349); he even shouts 'Galadriel!' as he raises the star-glass and his sword, Sting, and advances to meet Shelob. In this moment, Tolkien employs the naïve Hero model which he mentions in *Beowulf: Monster and Critics* (Tolkien, 2007: 128): suggesting that a Hero will often appear in a Romance (and in many other forms of heroic literature) '...not during the later period of recognized ability and prowess, but in that first moment, which often comes in great lives, when...[he] unawares leap[s] forth.' Tolkien (2001: 207) writes that upon shouting Galadriel's name and raising her shimmering star-glass 'Frodo's heart flamed within him, and without thinking what he did, whether it was folly or despair or courage, he took the Phial in his left hand, and with his right hand drew his sword.' Tolkien conceivably had the words from *The Fellowship of the Ring* in mind when creating the circumstances that would allow Frodo and Sam to become Heroes: Gildor Inglorion, the Elf, says to Frodo that: 'Courage is found in unlikely places' (Tolkien, 2001: 55) which relates to the unexpected Hero of Romance and Tolkien's literary world.

Similarly, Sam experiences the same heroic empowerment when he takes up Sting and Galadriel's star-glass to defend Frodo from Shelob. Faintly, upon wounding Shelob gravely with Sting, Sam says the name 'Galadriel!' before hearing '...[Elven] voices far off but clear,' (Tolkien, 2001: 208) which is significant because, while in Lothlórien, unlike Frodo who relied on his sight to literally colour his experience of the woodland and the Elves, including the Lady Galadriel, Sam comments on the Elven voices (Tolkien, 2001: 169). And so this reference to the Elven voices '...as they walked under the stars in the beloved shadows of the Shire, and the music of the Elves as it came through his sleep in the Hall of Fire in the house of Elrond,' re-establishes that magical quality that Lothlórien and the Lady Galadriel possess. After all it is Sam that has been most eager to see Elven magic (Tolkien, 2001: 172) and as such it is Sam who first gazes into the Mirror of Galadriel and sees a glimpse of the harrowing of the Shire, which will still come to pass (and which the reader only witnesses in full at the end of the book when the Hobbits eventually return home). Nevertheless, although Sam exclaims, after viewing what the future might hold, that: 'I don't want to see no

more magic,' he appears to become a type of conduit for whatever magic is contained in the star-glass, which seems to respond to the mention of Galadriel's name. As he goes to meet Shelob once, '...seeing his death in her eyes...' (Tolkien, 2001: 210) and armed with the sword and phial (which here becomes a symbolic shield against Shelob's darkness), Sam, much like Frodo before him, utters a stanza of an Elven hymn – *A Elbereth Gilthoniel* – that is dedicated to the Valar, Varda Elentári, wife of Manwë and Queen of Heaven, who created the stars and in whose face radiates the light of Ilúvatar, the Creator; Varda was also Morgoth the Fallen's greatest enemy among the Vala for she brought forth light into Arda and the Dark Lord was resentful of her creation (Tyler, 1973: 278). Tolkien (2001: 709) describes the moment Sam utters the hymn, which is sacred to the Elves and which is repeated by a variety of characters, including the Lady Galadriel as the Fellowship is leaving Lórien, as unleashing a torrent of magic: 'And then his tongue was loosed and his voice cried in a language which he did not know: A Elbereth Gilthoniel.' The section of the hymn that Sam cries out is actually an entreaty for Varda's assistance (Tolkien, 2002: 278): the translation of which Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 278) rendered in his letters as: 'O Elbereth Starkindler, from heaven gazing afar, to thee I cry now beneath the shadow of death! O look towards me, Everwhite!' With the mention of Elbereth Gilthoniel, the Sindarin designation for Varda, and the Lady Galadriel, who may be seen as Varda's incarnation on Middle-Earth (Tolkien, 1983: 309), the Phial of Galadriel flares with light and Sam's appeal for aid is answered (Tolkien [Carpenter, 2002: 278] even proposes in a letter that Varda herself intervenes). Tolkien (2001: 211) writes that:

As if his indomitable spirit had set its potency in motion, the glass blazed suddenly like a white torch in his hand. It flamed like a star that leaping from the firmament sears the dark air with intolerable light. No such terror out of heaven had ever burned in Shelob's face before. The beams of it entered into her wounded head and scored it with unbearable pain, and the dreadful infection of light spread from eye to eye.

Shelob retreats from the light back into her lair and Sam and Frodo are saved. The magic soon withdraws '[a]nd with that [Sam] staggered to his feet and was Samwise the Hobbit,

Hamfast's son, again' (Tolkien, 2001: 710). Sam has, therefore, conquered a creature of chaos with only the support of Sting and Galadriel's star-glass, yet Tolkien admits in the text that no mortal man, or immortal Elf or Dwarf, could have been expected to do this. Helen Cooper (2009: 334) argues that the Hero's reliance on, and subsequent salvation by, an external factor or the '...supernatural interventions in the natural workings of the created world,' which the star-glass most certainly is, is emblematic of Romance literature's affinity for '...a sudden and miraculous grace: never to be counted on to recur,' (Tolkien, 1964: 68). However, not all readers can accept with '...the wholehearted involvement that [R]omance requires of us,' (Beer, 1970: 8) that the Heroes of Romance are often dependent on seemingly coincidental or random acts in order to accomplish their heroic triumphs; and even that a Hobbit might be capable of such heroic deeds in the face of a force as terrifying as Shelob the Great. Rayner Unwin, the publisher for *The Lord of the Rings*, upon reading the manuscript, unfortunately, made exactly such a claim: he felt that the Hobbits would not be able to overcome an evil such as Shelob, no matter how much external or magical assistance they received. Tolkien unequivocally disagreed. In a letter to his son, Christopher, Tolkien mentions Unwin's apprehension that Shelob was 'too horrible' a malevolence to place in the Hobbits' path (although he felt the Phial of Galadriel and the intercession of the mythical being, Varda, who exists elsewhere in Tolkien's Legendarium, to be a wonderful invention). Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 109) writes:

Evidently I have managed to make the horror really horrible, and that is a great comfort; for every Romance that takes things seriously must have a warp of fear and horror, if however remotely or representatively it is to resemble reality, and not be the merest escapism. But I have failed if it does not seem possible that mere mundane Hobbits could cope with such things. I think that there is no horror conceivable that such creatures cannot surmount, by grace (here appearing in mythological forms) combined with a refusal of their nature and reason at the last pinch to compromise or submit.

The other element of foresight or prophecy that acts as a harbinger of things to come (perchance a literary version of Galadriel's Mirror) materialises more or less surreptitiously during the battle between Sam and Shelob. After Sam initially attacks and wounds the

spider-like creature, Tolkien (2001: 711) writes, in an entirely separate sentence, that: 'One great eye went dark,' which, although referring to the fact that Sam has stabbed Shelob in one of her large eyes, possesses perhaps greater significance with regard to the narrative. The Great Eye, the Lidless Eye or simply, the Eye, are of course all designations for Sauron, the Dark Lord, Master of the One Ring; and this sentence acts as a form of foreshadowing of what will come to pass if Frodo and Sam fulfil their quest and destroy the Master Ring. The Great Eye is, therefore, symbolically connected to the Great Ring, as it is called in *The Fellowship of the Ring* (Tolkien, 2001: 49), since both of them are '[t]he infinite symbol of a circular band [which] conveys the ideas of constancy and eternity,' (Scholey, 2009: 17) and because '[Sauron] 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' (Tolkien, 2001: 50). In view of this fact, and that Sauron's power and life-force are thus tied to the Ring, each part remains eternal while the other part exists: in this way they are akin to two celestial objects exercising centripetal force, each drawn irrevocably to the other (Carpenter, 2002: 50; Tolkien, 2001: 50 & 53). As a result, the mention of 'one great eye going dark' creates a correlation between the quest's intention (the destruction of the Ring) and the quest's resolution (the destruction of Sauron). According to Matilda Bruckner (2010: 128), this '...network of announcements, foreshadowings, and predictions [that] anticipate in general and in detail the chronological sequence of disastrous actions to come,' is indicative of the Romance genre, and relates quite closely to the concepts of prophecy. The reference to the eye is conceivably just such an example of Tolkien alluding to the events that will unfold once Frodo and Sam reach Mount Doom.

The association of Shelob and Sauron, especially in relation to the mention of their 'relationship' in Shelob's introduction, affirms another aspect of Shelob's presence in *The Lord of the Rings*: as a corruption of the Lady figure, which is so ubiquitous in Romance literature. Tolkien (2001: 207) remarks that: 'And as for Sauron: he knew where she lurked,' which naturally pleases the Dark Lord, for Shelob is '...a more sure watch upon that ancient

path into his land than any other that his skill could have devised.’ As a result of this serendipitous service that Shelob offers him, Sauron sends her prisoners that he has no better uses for: ‘he would have them driven to her hole, and report brought back to him of the play she made’ (Tolkien (2001: 707). This is a distortion of the gift-giving motif that, as previously mentioned, is typical of the Knight’s adoration of the Lady. Other characters further enhance Shelob’s aspect as the Lady in darkness. Gollum, whom, Tolkien suggests, met Shelob by accident trying to find his way into Mordor, inexplicably escaped her webs, ‘...and in past days he had bowed and worshipped her...’ (Tolkien, 2001: 708). He is also reported to have brought her ‘gifts’ from time to time in order to feed ‘her lust’; hence this is the reason he leads the Hobbits to her lair, in the hope that she will devour them and then he can reclaim the Ring ‘...when She throws away the bones and the empty garments...’ (Tolkien, 2001: 708). Gorbag, an Orc at the Tower of Cirith Ungol, which translates as the Tower of Shelob’s Lair and which further signifies her importance in the story, also shows great reverence for Shelob, whom he calls ‘Her Ladyship’. When the Orcs from the Tower of Cirith Ungol find Frodo lying prostrate on the ground, covered in webs, one of the Orcs, much like Sam, assumes that Frodo is dead. Gorbag, who has some intimate knowledge of Shelob and her habits (perhaps he is one of the Orcs who takes Sauron’s ‘gifts’ to her), answers (Tolkien, 2001: 711): ‘Carrion! Is that all you know of Her Ladyship? When she binds with cords, she’s after meat. She doesn’t eat dead meat, nor suck cold blood. This fellow isn’t dead!’ The reader, and of course Samwise Gamgee, realise the error that has been made, and therefore happily accept the fortuitous hope that comes with that realisation. But the concept of Shelob having devotees, even ones as vile as Orcs or even Gollum, that bring her ‘gifts’ occasionally, intensifies the perversion of the courtly love scenario, which is re-enacted by Gimli and the Lady Galadriel, who is the antithesis of Shelob. Tolkien’s spider-like creature of chaos is in fact the complete opposite of the White Lady of the Woods: Galadriel cherishes Lord Celeborn, while Shelob devours her unfortunate mates; Galadriel is associated with the sun-drenched forest, light and water – all things needed for growth, which is the power of Nenya, the Ring of Adamant – while Shelob is associated with cold

stone, death and darkness, which she spews forth in the same way that Galadriel radiates light; Galadriel's adoration by Gimli ennobles him as a character and permits him to become heroic, while the servants of Shelob remain unchanged creatures of darkness; Galadriel's adherents love her with all their hearts, while those that offer Shelob gifts do not love her – instead Tolkien writes that Gollum will 'pay her back' when he gets the Ring. In this way, Tolkien not only distorts the natural Lady figure of Romance, but he also corrupts the associated motifs that accompany the worship of the Lady. Just as Shelob is not a Lady: Sauron is not a Knight, Gorbag and Gollum are not worshippers of a benevolent mistress, and Cirith Ungol is not a courtly scene where the chivalrous rites and rituals that are intrinsic to a Knight and Lady of Romance might be played out. Tolkien as a result inverts the expected tropes and memes of the Romance Lady, especially since Shelob is by her very nature an inversion of the protagonistic female figure inherent in Romance. In this way Tolkien creates a scenario where Shelob is a corruption of the courtly Romance Lady-figure (hence the correlation between the two as a distortion of the Knight-Lady relationship, where Shelob acts as the spurning Lady-figure – for 'Little she knew of or cared for towers, or rings, or anything devised by mind or hand' (Tolkien, 2001: 709) – while the affection that would naturally be apparent in the expected Romance relationship is also distorted into mere acceptance) and Sauron and Gollum are corrupt creatures 'feigning' to be Knights.

‘The Road Goes Ever On And On, Down From The Door Where It Began’ (Tolkien, 2001: 35): The Conclusion

In *The Two Towers* (Tolkien, 2001: 696-697), Sam, while gazing at the bleakness of the countryside around him, wonders what sort of tale Frodo and he have found themselves in, and whether it will have a happy ending. Frodo says that he thinks that the characters in any tale never truly know what sort of tale they are in (which is perhaps best considering the terrible events that tend to unfold in certain stories). Sam agrees, remembering that:

“Beren now, he never thought he was going to get that Silmaril from the Iron Crown in Thangorodrim, and yet he did, and that was a worse place and a blacker danger than ours. But that’s a long tale, of course, and goes on past the happiness and into grief and beyond it – and the Silmaril went on and came to Eärendil. And why, sir, I never thought of that before! We’ve got – you’ve got some of the light of it in that star-glass that the Lady gave you! Why, to think of it, we’re in the same tale still! It’s going on. Don’t the great tales never end?”

To which Frodo answers: ‘No, they never end as tales. But the people in them come, and go when their part’s ended. Our part will end later – or sooner’ (Tolkien, 2001: 697). The same can be said for Romance literature, the writers of which use many tropes and narrative devices inherent in the genre in order to construct the Romances of their times. As such the notion that tales repeat themselves and that Frodo and Sam are ‘in the same tale still’ only enhances *The Lord of the Rings’s* prestigious place in the annals of Romance literature, the overarching genre to which Tolkien’s book belongs. But it does seem odd that a literature that rose to narrative success and witnessed the height of its popularity in the twelfth century should still endure (if not thrive) in modern times. Geraldine Heng, author of *Empire Of Magic: Medieval Romance And The Politics Of Cultural Fantasy*, raises an interesting point when she (2003: 3) queries whether:

Casting forward in time, past the Middle Ages and the revivals of medieval, and medieval-like, Romances in the Renaissance, Enlightenment, Romantic, Victorian, and modern eras, can we say that certain kinds of narrative modes continue which we still think of as Romance – specialized now into consumer categories like love stories, science fiction, westerns, fantasy, tales of travel, adventure, and exploration, new age fables – “magical narratives” that make

their way, in the new millennium, through a range of digital and electronic media, and a mutating spectrum of print cultures, where Romances once travelled on handscripted vellum?

The answer that Geraldine Heng (2003: 4) arrives at is that Romance has endured in a variety of forms over successive centuries, but that none of them has been as popular as the form of Romance and fantasy literature that was initiated in the twentieth century by Tolkien with the publication of *The Lord of the Rings*. C.S. Lewis (Mathews, 1978: 15) mentions this apparent resurgence of Romance literature in his introduction to Tolkien's magnum opus, saying that with *The Lord of the Rings*: '...the history of Romance itself – a history which stretches back to the Odyssey and beyond – makes not a return but an advance or revolution: the conquest of new territory.' While Tom Shippey (2001: xviii) proposes that: 'An acceptably philological way of putting it might be to say that Tolkien was the Chrétien de Troyes of the twentieth century,' especially since in the twelfth century Chrétien de Troyes, much like Tolkien in the twentieth century, '...did not invent the Arthurian Romance, which must have existed in some form before his time, but showed what could be done with it' (Shippey, 2001: xviii). Instead, Shippey suggests that Tolkien found a way '...to open up a new continent of imaginative space for many millions of readers, and hundreds of writers – though he himself would have said that it was an old continent which he was merely rediscovering.' This dissertation has focused mainly on the Romance tropes associated with Tolkien's setting and characters, but there are many other Romance tropes of which Tolkien made use. Further discussion and research into this topic would be equally beneficial to Tolkien and Romance studies.

However, Tolkien's renewal of Romance literature is only achievable because of his dedication to the genre and to the ideals (whether tropes or plotlines) inherent to that genre. As such Tolkien's implementation of various Romance tropes and motifs has become the cornerstone of a revival of literature whose roots could go as far back as Homer's *The Odyssey* (Heng, 2003: 1) and whose future seems certain in the twenty-first century

(Cooper, 2009: 34). Tolkien's adherence to the Romance ideal, although at the heart of his text, is particularly palpable in his characters and the scenery that surrounds them. His utilisation of archetypal characters such as Heroes, a Heroine, a Master, a White Lady (along with the polar opposite, the Dark Lady) and the Shadow all contribute to a cast of Romance characters that inhabit an impressively vast Secondary World in which all the action transpires. There are also several moments of transcendence that take place in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*: in the ennobling love of a noble Knight for a beautiful Lady; in the pursuit of a common cause that unifies the Fellowship of the Ring; in the bonds of friendship that exist between two Hobbits alone in the nightmare landscape of Mordor; in the unexpected aid of faithful companions or the miraculous gifts of grace from an Elven Queen which shine a light even in the darkest of places when all other lights have been extinguished; or in the solitary actions of a Wizard sent with the task of uniting the free peoples of Middle-Earth against a seemingly insurmountable foe.

What these moments have in common is that they all originate from a single human emotion: love (whether the Platonic love between friends or the intense desire between lovers). Tolkien (Carpenter, 2002: 246) even states as much when he writes that the whole impetus of *The Lord of the Rings* is due to love, for 'Frodo undertook his quest out of love – to save the world he knew from disaster at his own expense, if he could; and also in complete humility, acknowledging that he was wholly inadequate to the task.' Nor is that entirely unexpected considering that *The Lord of the Rings* makes use of so many of the traits and tropes borrowed from Romance literature (a form of literature that has long been associated with love in all its forms) (Cooper, 2009: 80).

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