The Germanic Narrative of the Eldar in J. R. R. Tolkien's Legendarium: Northern Courage, Wyrd and Redemption

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Zusammenfassung

Diese Dissertation, die aus sechs veröffentlichten oder in Kürze erscheinenden Aufsätzen besteht, untersucht das *Legendarium* von J. R. R. Tolkien anhand der Themen "Nordischer Heldenmut" und "Wyrd". Es werden Fragen aufgeworfen wie: „Was waren Tolkiens Ansichten zum germanischen Heldenethos?“ und „Wie manifestieren und dramatisieren sich diese Ansichten in seiner Fiktion?“. Es wurde festgestellt, dass Tolkien die mittelalterliche Erzähltechnik des Exempla verwendete, um eine moralische und ideologische kulturelle Autorität in seiner sekundären Weltgeschichte der Elben zu veranschaulichen. Weiterhin wird in dieser Arbeit aufgezeigt, dass die moralischen und ideologischen Ansichten, die von den Erzählern der Sekundärwelt geäußert werden, Tolkiens eigener persönlicher Korrespondenz und seiner akademischen Kritik entsprechen, welche wiederum seine Ansichten über die Laster und Tugenden des nordischen Heldenmutes zum Ausdruck bringen. Fëanor fungiert als *ad malum exemplum* zunächst aufgrund seines freien Willens und anschließend durch seine Handlungen und Taten. Wyrd wird im Alfredianischen Sinne angerufen und verfolgt die Elben im Rahmen eines germanischen Heldenepos bis es von Tolkiens *ad bonum exemplum* - Galadriel - gebrochen wird. An diesem Punkt endet die illustrative germanische Erzählung der Elben und ebnet den Weg für die Einführung eines neuen Heldenethos, das Tolkiens Ideal seines Heldenethos besser widerspiegelt. Diese neue Heldenmoral wird von Tolkiens Charakter Aragorn verkörpert, dem Erneuerungskönig von Gondor, und bringt eine neue Hoffnung für das Zeitalter der Menschen zum Ausdruck.

Abstract

This dissertation, which consists of six published or soon to be published essays, examines the legendarium of J. R. R. Tolkien on the topics "Northern courage" and "Wyrd". Questions are raised such as: "What were Tolkien's views on the Germanic heroic ethos?" And "How do these views manifest and dramatize in his fiction?" Tolkien was found to use the medieval narrative technique of the *exemplum* to illustrate moral and ideological cultural authority in his secondary world history of the Elves. This work also shows that the moral and ideological views expressed by the narrators of the secondary world correspond to Tolkien's own personal correspondence and academic criticism, which in turn express his views on the vices and virtues of Nordic heroism. Fëanor acts *ad malum exemplum*, first because of his free will and then through his actions and deeds. Wyrd is called in the Alfredian sense and pursues the Elves in a Germanic heroic epic until it is broken by Galadriel — *ad bonum exemplum*. At this point the illustrative Germanic narrative of the Elves ends and paves the way for the introduction of a new heroic ethic that better reflects Tolkien's ideal of his heroic ethic. This new heroism, embodied by Tolkien's character Aragorn, the renewal king of Gondor, expresses a new hope for the Age of Men.

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Forward

This dissertation-by-publication consist of six thematically-linked but independent peer-reviewed essays which are either published or forthcoming. Because the essays were, or will be, published independently, they often cover some of the same material to support argumentation. The essays, as they are presented in this dissertation, have been edited to eliminate redundancy, but the argument remains unchanged and unaffected. The essays in their original form were published or will be published at the time of this submission, in the following publications:

“Original Sin in Heorot and Valinor.” In *Tolkien Studies: An Annual Scholarly Review* 11: 109 – 129. 2014.

"The Dance of Authority in Arda: Wyrd, Fate and Providence in the Elder Days of Middle-earth." Power and Authority in Tolkien’s Work, 16. DTG Tolkien Konferenz, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, 11 October 2019. Forthcoming in *Hither Shore* Proceedings, 2021.

"The ‘*Wyrdwrīteras*’ of Elvish History: Northern Courage, Historical Bias, and Literary Artifact as Illustrative Narrative." *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoetic Literature* 38 (2 (#136)): 25-44. 2020. Available at: https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol38/iss2/2

"The Noldorization of the Edain: The Roman-Germani Paradigm for Tolkien’s Noldor and Edain in Tolkien’s Migration Era." In *Tolkien and the Classical World*, edited by Hamish Williams, In Cormarë Series 43, 305-327. Zurich: Walking Tree Publishers. 2020.

"Galadriel and Wyrd: Interlace, Exempla and the Passing of Northern Courage in the History of the Eldar." In *Journal of Tolkien Research*: Vol. 10, Issue 2, Article 5. 2020. Available at: https://scholar.valpo.edu/journaloftolkienresearch/vol10/iss2/5

"Elessar Telcontar Magnus, Rex Pater Gondor, Restitutor Imperii." In *Journal of Tolkien Research*: Vol. 9, Issue 2 , Article 1. 2020. Available at: https://scholar.valpo.edu/journaloftolkienresearch/vol9/iss2/1

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Introduction

The 'Germanic': Our World – Tolkien's World

The task of this introduction is to establish a thematic framework in which to view the following six essays. The argument of this dissertation is simply that the Elves of Middle-earth function as Germanic heroes within an illustrative, Germanic heroic narrative that echoes the medieval tradition of the exemplum. Our understanding of the Elvish history inside this framework of Germanic heroic narrative furthers our understanding of Tolkien's theory of Northern courage through his fiction, academic views, and personal correspondence.

This is, admittedly, a rather bold claim and requires an equally robust explanation. The main problem of the statement is what exactly do we mean by 'Germanic'? The term is problematic, to say the least, especially in the fields of historiography and ethnology and to some extent in literature. Because these essays venture into historiography and ethnology at times, it is important to discuss how 'Germanic' is currently used in these fields as well. Therefore, the discussion firstly begins with the use of the term 'Germanic' in its historical, ethnological, and literary use, and how it is used in this work. Secondly, the discussion endeavors to answer the question how did Tolkien himself interpret the 'Germanic' in heroic literature?

Tolkien rarely, if ever, used the term 'Germanic' (perhaps for the reasons discussed below), instead he referred to the theory of Northern courage. On 25 November 1936, J.R.R Tolkien read his essay, 'Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics' at the Sir Israel Gollancz Memorial Lecture of the British Academy. It was an essay that changed *Beowulf* studies significantly. In this essay, while arguing for the acceptance of Grendel and the dragon as poetic entities in their own right, Tolkien spoke about his 'theory of Northern courage'. He read:

> We do not deny the worth of the hero by accepting Grendel and the dragon. Let us by all means esteem the old heroes: men caught in the chains of circumstance or of their

> own character, torn between duties equally sacred, dying with their backs to the wall. But Beowulf, I fancy, plays a larger part than is recognized in helping us esteem them. Heroic lays may have dealt in their own way – we have little enough to judge by – a way more brief and vigorous, perhaps, though perhaps also more harsh and noisy (and less thoughtful), with the actions of heroes caught in circumstances that conformed more or less to the varied but fundamentally simple recipe for an heroic situation. *(BMC*, 17-18)

Tolkien's assertion is that while the heroes are important, so are their circumstances that frame the situation in which the heroes act. Furthermore, it seems Tolkien also views the circumstances as conforming to a formula of motifs and themes. The motifs and themes are diverse (or "varied") to be sure, but they are basically fundamental to the Germanic heroic lay. *Beowulf's* poetic virtue, Tolkien suggests, lies in its theme "and the spirit this has infused into the whole" (ibid., 14). For Tolkien, the theme imbues the tone and 'mood' of the work. The historical events referenced in Germanic poetry do not necessarily interest Tolkien. Rather, it is the mood of the work and its author that interest Tolkien: "… it is the mood of the author, the essential cast of his imaginative apprehension of the world, that is my concern, not history for its own sake; I am interested in that time of fusion only as it may help us understand the poem" (ibid., 20).

Thirdly, the discussion seeks to clarify this "tone and mood" approach that Tolkien takes towards his fictional history of the Eldar and Edain and their Germanic motifs and themes. Tone and mood; the dark, despairing melancholy and stout refusal to give up in the face of certain defeat is the common, unifying thematic thread running throughout the narratives of the Eldar and the Edain of the First Age.

1. Historical and Ethnographical 'Germanic'

The term 'Germanic' and its controversial historic use demand a few words of clarification. Least problematic, meaning no controversy at all, is in the field of historical linguistics, where 'Germanic' simply refers to "a subfamily (subgroup) of Indo-European" (Campbell 2007, sv. "Germanic," 69). In historiography and ethnology, however, the term is very problematic.

Historian Patrick Armory (1997, xv) identifies the controversy from a historiographer's viewpoint:

> Germanic: properly used, this refers to a language family, not a culture, ethnic group or race. No evidence from the [Migration] period indicates that speakers of different Germanic dialects or languages were aware that language ties gave them anything else in common: there was no "pan-Germanic" identity.

Amory separates the linguistic from the historical and anthropological. He, and other contemporary historians, reject the view of a monolithic 'Germanic' identity and any idea of cultural and political unity, or 'national' identities, among speakers of the Germanic language group. On the other hand, there are dissenting views such as those of the historian Andreas Vonderach who suggests that the *Germani* were indeed a homogenous "Volk:"

> When we speak of a people or a tribe in the sense of an ethnic unity, we mean a community of people who usually share a common ancestry, a common territory, a common language, a common culture and are connected by a sense of belonging.[1] (Vonderach 2017, 55, translation mine)

While Vonderach contributes texts and facts to the discussion, this view is not the consensus.

In the nineteenth century, the view of national identities were, as historian Peter Heather (2009, 13) asserts, "ancient, unchanging 'facts', and their antiquity gave them a legitimacy which overrode the claim of any other form of political organization…the assumption that ancient and modern speakers of related languages somehow share a common and continuous political identity has proved "unsustainable"." The use of the term 'Germanic' for contemporary historiographers who specialize in the periods of Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages is generally rejected. Or it is used skeptically for lack of a better term with some scholars preferring 'barbarian' and '*Barbaricum*' although these terms also carry connotations of their own. Historian Guy Halsall (2014, 24) uses 'Germanic'only with inverted commas when not referring to the language group and German medievalist Victor

[1] „Wenn wir von einem Volk oder einem Stamm im Sinne von einer ethnischen Einheit sprechen, dann meinen wir eine Gemeinschaft von Menschen, die in der Regel durch eine gemeinsam Abstammung, ein gemeinsames Territorium, eine gemeinsame Sprache, eine gemeinsame Kultur und ein Bewußtsein ihrer Zusammengehörigkeit mit einander verbunden sind."

Millet warns us not to return to a postulate of a Germanic cultural tradition, although while he admits that his work *Germanische Heldendictung* in fact insinuates such a cultural tradition. Rather, his title merely means that if it

> speaks of a 'Germanic hero poetry' (the expression is deliberately avoided in the text), it simply means that these heroic traditions have been handed down in Germanic literature. So the reason is purely linguistic, not cultural. Although the languages are related, the peoples who used them were very different, and even more so were the historical-cultural contexts in which the narrative was generated. The heroic sagas do not form a mythical substrate inherited from dark times, rather they were created in a certain place and then spread in different regions because they were considered good stories and because the communication between these areas worked well thanks to the relative linguistic proximity.[2] (Millet 2008, 9, translation mine)

Synchronically, peoples and their cultures were very diverse and therefore Millet uses the 'Germanic' exclusively in a linguistic sense. Diachronically, culture (Germanic or otherwise) does not remain static. What may have been observed by Tacitus most certainly had changed by the time Snorri Sturluson wrote down the Eddas. There is no ancient, misty, pagan legendary past to search for, these are merely good stories in a common language group spoken among diverse peoples.

The problem, then, is lumping all Germanic-speaking peoples into one monolithic entity: at times synchronically and at other times diachronically and sometimes even both. Historian Andrew Gillett (2002, 2) establishes the cause of the problem when he states that the "usual conventions of textual and historical analysis are bypassed in order to privilege Germanic philology; … the barbarians of Late Antiquity are linked with Scandinavian mythology of almost a millennium later; and the whole interpretation is directly indebted to Germanist scholarship of a century ago." Halsall (2014, 22-23) also laments

> To lump all Germanic-speaking tribes together is to repeat the assumptions of Roman ethnographers or the politically contingent Germanist interpretations of the nineteenth

[2] „Ist im Titel von einer ›germanischen Heldendichtung‹ die Rede (im Text wird der Ausdruck bewusst vermeiden), so ist damit lediglich gemeint, dass diese heroischen Traditionen in den germanisch-sprachigen Literaturen überliefert sind. Der Grund ist also rein sprachlich, nicht kulturell. Zwar sind die Sprachen miteinander verwandt, doch die Völker, die sie benutzten, waren sehr unterschiedlich, und noch mehr waren es die historisch-kulturellen Kontexte, in denen die Erzählstoffe literarisiert wurden. Die Heldensagen bilden kein aus dunkeln Vorzeiten ererbtes mythisches Substrat, vielmehr wurden sie an einem bestimmten Ort geschaffen und verbreiteten sich dann in verschiedenen Regionen, weil man sie für gute Geschichten hielt und weil die Kommunikation zwischen diesen Gebieten dank der relativen sprachlichen Nähe gut funktionierte."

> and early twentieth centuries… That the peoples from the Frisians in the west to the Goths in the east spoke Germanic languages does not create a fundamental unity amongst them any more than the fact that people from Portugal to Romania speak Romance languages permits us to treat them interchangeably… It is implicit in such interpretations that all 'Germanic' peoples somehow share a common mentality. In their minds is a common stock of cultural traits which all 'Germanic' people can draw upon as and when they see fit.

Halsall reinforces Millets view from the standpoint of historiography. Again, diverse cultures from the Frisians to the Goths cannot be considered a monolithic Germanic entity even as certain themes and motifs show up in various heroic epics at various times in medieval history.

Such a monolithic view has been the case in the recent past. The result has been a view of European history in which invading 'Germanic' tribes, wreaking havoc upon the Empire, caused its demise. Or fleets of Saxons plundering Britain while noble Romano-British valiantly resist overwhelming hordes. Heather (2009, 12) calls this view the *old grand narrative of European history* which ensured "that migration and identity are inextricably linked, at least when it comes to the first millennium AD." Heather identifies two main causes for this narrative

> First, the billiard ball model of migration that powered this narrative assumed that human beings always came in compact groupings of men, women and children who were essentially closed to outsiders and reproduced themselves by endogamy…
>
> Second, in what is essentially the same view of group identity played out over the long term, it was presumed that there was a direct and tangible continuity between immigrant groups of the first millennium and similarly named modern nations of Europe… (ibid., 12-13)

The view of the 'Germanic' group identity is inextricably linked to Millet's cultural-historical contexts above and just as diverse as he suggests. That is not to say that there are not any 'common denominators' among the various groups at various times, but those 'common denominators' show up in this discussion as themes and motifs. And while there may be a common theme of revenge killing and blood feud, for example, the cultural motivations for and the cultural acceptance of the feud can be widely diverse synchronically and change

diachronically across centuries. Claims of any sort of continuity, as Heather rightly suggests, are suspect. There just isn't any contemporary evidence to justify the view that the 'Germanic' was a static, monolithic cultural entity.

Yet we are still left with the 'Germanic' problem of the areas where the three disciplines (linguistics, historiography and ethnology) overlap: the narratives and stories which the language expresses. In the Migration era (the era from which Tolkien drew much of his heroic material and inspiration), this means the poetry of heroic epics and lays which came after tumultuous and often violent events. Heroic poetry, being composed of words of a specific language, is inherently linguistic as a means to express stories and ideas. We may even say that the poetry expressed in the Germanic languages is linguistically *de facto* 'Germanic'. However, poetry expresses much, much more than mere words in alliterative meter. The heroic poetry we are concerned with also expresses historical, cultural, political and military aspects of diverse societies and in particular the ethos and pathos of a warrior culture.

2. Literary 'Germanic'

The same sort of problem appears in the Germanic heroic literature of, in H. Munro Chadwick's (1967, 29) definition, the Heroic Age[3]. While the definition is one which is used here, the problem is apparent in "… the common poetry and traditions of the various Teutonic peoples." This definition, in this dissertation, caveats 'common themes and motifs' with 'but differing and evolving motivations for those themes and cultural attitudes.'

[3] "… it will be convenient to speak of the period which we have been discussing simply as the Heroic Age. The term 'heroic poetry,' as a translation of Heldendichtung or Heltedigtning, may of course be applied in a sense to such works as Hákonarmál or the poem on the battle of Maldon, just as well to Beowulf or the Hildebrandslied. But no ambiguity will arise if we limit the term 'heroic' here to what may be called the 'Teutonic' Heroic Age (das germanische Heldenalter), i.e. to the period embraced by the common poetry and traditions of the various Teutonic peoples." H. Munro Chadwick, *The Heroic Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 29.

The Heroic Age is marked by the "barbarian invasions of the Roman Empire, which began when the Goths first swarmed the frontier, and ended with Alboin's falling upon an Italy worn by famine, pestilence and the sword of Visigoth, Hun, Vandal, and Ostragoth" (Chambers 2010, 9-10). In this heroic age, the 'Germanic' hero emerged and crucial to this hero was his ethos that focused on such themes as the right of the fittest, martial proficiency, victory over opponents and loyalty to one's lord (Nusser 2012, 117). However, the heroic poetry portraying these events and personages was based less on preserving collective memory of these historical events themselves but rather on models of behavior for the noble and warrior classes who listened to them (Millet 2008, 11). The Germanists Hermann Schneider and Wolfgang Mohr (1961, 5) suggest that where a poetic form is lacking, one should be modest and regard the subject matter as legend. As such, they state, one may discern enough through its motives, scenes and storytelling to view the narrative as one that portrays how the heroes saw their life-world and what ethos animated them.[4]

What separated mere Germanic legend from Germanic heroic poetry, however, is not just the loose chronological and historical situation but also the thematic conflict-situations. Klaus von See (1971, 11) is worth quoting in full here, as his differentiation also has implications for why the Germanic narratives spread over all of northern European *barbaricum*.

> What distinguishes the 'heroic legend' from the 'legend' in general, however, is not only this chronological moment, so to speak, but also the nature and design of the material: the heroic legend has little interest in problem-free, merely fabulous adventures and ghost appearances, which are often at the center of a 'legend'. Rather, it is mostly about human conflict situations, e.g. the conflict between loyalty and revenge (*Ingeldsage*, *Finnsburgsage*), the conflict between the commandment and love of sons (*Hildebrandslied*), the political compulsion to fratricide (*Hunnenschlachtlied*), the betrayal of his own king (*Iringsage*). Whether the Germanic hero was therefore perceived as a hero, because he acted in this situation exemplary, because he was considered an educational ideal, whether heroic legend so – as Otto

[4] Wo die dichterische Form fehlt, tut man gut, sich zu bescheiden und den Gegenstand als Sage zu betrachten, Auch als solche gibt durch ihre Motive, Szenen, Erzählverlauf genug her, um zu erkennen, weswegen sie erzählenswert schien, wie sie die Helden und ihre Lebenswelt sah und welches Ethos sie beseelte; ein Musterbeispiel dafür, daß Dichtung sich nicht nur vom einmaligen Dichterwort her erschließt."

> Höfler means – may be defined to the effect that it is "hero worship" throughout, or if the heroes' attraction lay in the fact that they acted in the same way as they were not allowed to do in real life, and that is a question that will have to be discussed. It is certain, however, that this interest of the heroic legend in human action and decision, for which the historical facts ultimately became a more or less accidental substratum of action, explains the far-reaching spread of the heroic legend throughout Germania.[5] (translation mine)

The themes of human conflict-situations are the 'common denominator' that shows up in texts spread throughout the very diverse 'Germanic" world over the centuries from the Migration era to Snorri and the Icelandic Family Sagas. That doesn't mean that these peoples were culturally the same, just that their oral and subsequent written literature shared certain themes that also happen to constitute Tolkien's theory of Northern courage.

The historical background is simply the foundation in which these heroes – kings, warriors, in one case a smith – find themselves and their situations (Schneider 1961, 2). For historian Herwig Wolfram (1997, 21), the "interplay of kings and the power of fate allows creation of the heroic saga. The saga derives its theme from the heroic pathos of a threatened and dying kingdom." The traditions, set in this Germanic heroic past of an older world, at once "become more ancient and remote, and in a sense darker" (*BMC*, 21). Victor Millet (2008, 5-6) further suggests that

> The heroic traditions pretend to play in an earlier time, in the time of the heroes, or, to use the term coined by H. Munro Chadwick, in a heroic age. Many references to the heroic narrative type, such as the *Marner's Song*, show that all those stories that purport to be more or less explicit in this imaginary time were considered heroic. Over time, new myths were very likely to be incorporated into the circle, which, in terms of

[5] Das, was die ‚Heldensage' von der ‚Sage' allgemein abhebt, ist aber nicht nur dieses sozusagen chronologische Moment, sondern ebenso die Art und Gestaltung des Stoffes: die Heldensage hat geringes Interesse an problemlosen, bloß fabulösen Abenteuern und Geisterauftritten, die oft im Mittelpunkt einer ‚Sage' stehen. Sie handelt vielmehr meist von menschlichen Konfliktsituationen, z.B. dem Konflikt Vertragstreue und Rachewillen (Ingeldsage, Finnsburgsage), dem Konflikt zwischen Ehrgebot und Sohnesliebe (Hildebrandslied), dem politischen Zwang zum Brudermord (Hunnenschlachtlied), dem Verrat am eigenen König (Iringsage). Ob der germanische Held deshalb als Held empfunden wurde, weil er in diesen Situation vorbildhaft handelte, weil er als erzieherisches Ideal galt, ob Heldensage also – wie Otto Höfler meint – dahingehend definiert werden darf, daß sie durchweg „Heldenverehrung" sei, oder ob die Anziehungskraft der Helden darin lag, daß in ihr gehandelt wurde, wie im wirklichen Leben nicht gehandelt werden durfte und konnte, das ist eine Frage, die noch zu besprechen sein wird. Sicher ist aber wohl, daß dieses Interesse der Heldensage an menschlicher Tat und Entscheidung, für das die historischen Fakten letzten Endes doch zu einem mehr oder weniger zufälligen Substrat der Handlung wurden, die weite Verbreitung der Heldensage über die ganze Germania hin erklärt.

> subject matter or motif, were loosely based on existing stories. These narratives thus form the material of heroic traditions.[6] (translation mine)

The themes of the Germanic heroic tradition include motifs such as the two-fold problem of honour between king and retainer and the problems that jeopardize that honour: for example, vengeance (Schneider 1961, 12). Traditional heroic poetry and its themes form a specifically aristocratic subject matter in which the individual stories tell of heroes who belong to an upper class of kings and princes (Millet 2008, 10). Moreover, the Germanic themes may not necessarily center on the hero him or herself, but rather on an event or a situation of conflict – a memorable and unusual situation (von See 1971, 71), and more often than not, a situation that requires a choice between two hateful outcomes (Phillpotts 1991, 5).

Further complicating matters of the literary Germanic in the early (and high) Middle Ages is that any hypotheses of early 'Germanic' must be based on reconstructions. Winfred Lehmann (1992, 78) notes that "[A]part from Germanic place and personal names, we have no data until the fourth century; our attempts to determine the early history of Germanic must therefore be based entirely on reconstruction." However, such reconstructions are often fraught with fallacy and traps. John Lindow spoke to the problem of these fallacies and traps at the 1973 Second International Saga Conference in Reykjavík, where he gave his paper 'The Sagas as Ethnographic Documents':

> Comparative philology and the discovery of linguistic prehistory introduced the concept of a retrievable Germanic past. And the [Icelandic] sagas were taken, somehow, as the literature of the Germanic world. The historical fallacy thus lived on, but in somewhat different guise. According to the prevailing view, the sagas told of the saga age but indirectly – or even directly! – illuminated the mores and social customs of the Germanic peoples during the common Germanic period. They could thus be regarded as historical documents for the saga age and ethnographic documents for the common Germanic period. (Lindow 1973, 6)

[6] „Die heroischen Traditionen geben also vor, in einer Vorzeit zu spielen, in der Zeit der Helden, oder, um es mit dem von H. Munro Chadwick geprägten Begriff zu sagen, in einem *heroic age*. Viele Anspielungen auf den heroischen Erzähltypus, wie das Lied des Marners, zeigen, dass alle jene Geschichten, die mehr oder weniger deutlich in dieser imaginären Zeit zu speilen vorgeben, als heroisch galten. Sehr wahrscheinlich gliederten sich diesem Kreis im Verlauf der Zeit neue Sagen ein, die thematisch oder motivisch locker an bestehende Geschichten anschlossen. Diese Erzählungen bilden also den Stoffkreis der heroischen Traditionen."

Again, as with the historical and ethnographical fields of study, Germanic literature has for the most part fallen subject to the *germanische Alterstumskunde* of the nineteenth century, which viewed the 'Germanic' as a monolithic, unchanging structure. Lindow makes the same argument as the above cited historians and he suggests that this same problem is present in philology as well.

Where Germanists like Schneider and Mohr (1961, 12) claim that "the millennium-long tradition of the Germanic heroic sagas and their strong charisma throughout Europe has been substantially supported by their strong poetic imprints"[7] does not mean that we should assume those poetic imprints were without change. Lindow (1973, 18) notes that the concept of a stagnant Germanic warrior ethos "…would strain the credibility of even the laxest of historians or ethnographers to accept that the concept of honor existed virtually unchanged throughout those many years [from Tacitus to the Icelandic sagas], especially when we know that so much else changed." This also does not mean that in Germanic literature there is not a certain continuity of themes. Certain concepts remain inherent in the language even as it evolves, which structures thought and how one views the world (Cambell 2003, 99).[8] For example, the term for honor (Gmc. **aizō*) appears in all of the Germanic languages and remained significant for the lord – retainer relationship, which is a specific, aristocratic literary "*Stoffkreis*" (Millet 2008, 10).

Nonetheless the emphasis of honor changed from one of battle-field martial glory to one of social utility in regulating, for instance, blood feuds:

> The relationship between the two kinds of honor [individual and comitatus] and their interactions with the comitatus parallels the chronological development of the institutions [of honor] we discussed. We have suggested that the honor of the martial

[7]"die ein Jahrtausend währende Tradition der germanischen Heldensage und ihre kräftige Ausstrahlung über ganz Europa ist von ihren festen poetischen Prägungen wesentlich mitgetragen worden."

[8] "… [T]he Whorf (or Sapir-Whorf) hypothesis, which holds that a speaker's perception of the world is organized or constrained by the linguistic categories his or her language offers, that language structure determines thought, how one experiences and hence how one views the world. This became a lasting theme in linguistics, anthropology, psychology, and philosophy, though many are unaware of its pedigree from German Romanticism."

> glory is older than that of social utility; the older kind of honor adhered to the older kind of comitatus, the *druhtiz. The hirð, on the other hand, appropriated the newer kind of honor, the honor of social utility. (Lindow 1976, 143)[9]

Note that this is a change in the motivation for the blood feud, as Lindow here accentuates a significant change in the concept of honor. Nonetheless, the themes remain in the foreground, albeit with evolving motivations, in Germanic literature. The decisive criterion for these Germanic poems, suggests A.T. Hatto (1980, 165), is ethos (or in Tolkien's terms, Northern courage): "[T]he ethos of the truly 'heroic' epic poems of medieval Germany was an inheritance from the Heroic Age (Age of Migrations) through both poetry and the feudal ethos, which had absorbed and transformed the earlier ethos" (ibid., 166). The ethos, in concurrence with Lindow, evolves throughout the corpus of Germanic literature.

3. Heathen and Pagan Germanic

The term 'Germanic' is often used as a synonym for 'heathen' or 'pagan'[10] and this dissertation avoids this use of the term, except when noted. Most of the historic 'Germanic' peoples where already Christianized when the subject matter of the lays and epics occurred. The Burgundians were already Christian when the *Hunnenschlacht* occurred and decimated their tribe; the Goths were long Christianized in Arian Christianity before Theodoric the Great took Italy. Likewise, the Langobards in the time of Alboin (von See 1971, 151) and the Danes in *Beowulf* experience a brief *return* to paganism as a plot point, indicating and contrasting their previous Christian status. Klaus von See (ibid.) suggests that only the Scandinavians

[9] Cf. John Lindow, *Comitatus, Individual and Honor: Studies in North Germanic Institutional Vocabulary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

[10] „Es ist ein altes Vorurteil, die germanische Heldensage sei durch und durch heidnisch und vom Christentum verunglimpft und unterdrückt worden." Klaus von See, *Germanische Heldensage: Stoffe, Probleme, Methoden* (Frankfurt: Athenäum Verlag, 1971), 148.

turned the heroes into pagans and it is first and foremost the Old Norse tradition that gave the impression of a thoroughly pagan heroic tradition.[11]

In the Old Saxon *Hêliand*, the structure of Christ' relationship with his twelve Apostles is that of a Germanic lord and his comitatus: "[T]hat Christ is portrayed as a chieftain in the *Heliand*, and his disciples as retainers, has never been a matter of debate … [B]oth Germanizing and Christianizing are detectable" (Haferland 2010, 214). Likewise, the cup in Gethsemane is symbolic of judgement and punishment and Jesus takes the cup and toasts God and "promises as a faithful thane to fulfill His will, as did the Good Soldier promise to die with and for his drohtin" (Cathey 2002, 227). Not even the 'mildness' of Christ really contradicts the image of the Germanic chieftain as G. Ronald Murphy (1995, 86-87) notes

> While it may not be appealing to think of a paid north Germanic warrior as mild (i.e., kind and generous), nevertheless it is a common and respected term for the lord of those warriors to be perceived as powerful but mild. Conforming with and appealing to that heroic tradition, the author has justified what is otherwise a somewhat embarrassing statement in warrior tradition. Once again the author skillfully places an obligation on the lords of the clans and tribes to act with kindness, if they expect their Lord to be kind and generous to them. The Heliand author is forming a new Germanic-Christian synthesis of the ideal man: a composite of personal strength and interior gentleness, a "heroic chest with a kind heart inside."

The Germanic as a reconstructed, pre-Christian religion - the search for a pagan pan-Germanic culture, is untenable. As an antithesis to Christianity it cannot be supported with any available evidence and appears to be a false dichotomy. Our literary evidence points to rather a particular form of northern European Christianity incorporating the framework of lord-retainer relations. Once more Klaus von See (1999, 191) illustrates for us the Germanic-Christian dynamic which is

> not only and primarily the expression of a defiant adherence to native tradition or even a relic of old relations between religion and heroic legend, but the precise expression of ecclesiastical-theological thinking: one put the events of the pagan past into a "typological" reference to the Christian salvific event, interpreted it as a promise, as

[11] „Erst die Skandinavier haben die Sagenhelden durchweg zu Heiden gemacht, und es ist wohl vor allem die altnordische Überlieferung, die den Eindruck hat entstehen lassen, die Heldensage sei durch und durch heidnisch."

praefiguratio, as a forward-looking "pre-image" of future acts of salvation.[12] (translation mine)

Evidence points toward a “fusion” of new and old and not simply a Christian-pagan dichotomy and we will see, as the discussion progresses, that Tolkien seemed to take this approach as well.

4. Literary-ethnographic Germanic

Lastly, in our discussion of the Germanic is the literary ethnographic identity of the heroes and their situations in the corpus. The poems do not center around anything in the nature of national interest or national sentiment except for that the heroes belong almost entirely to the Germanic world (Chadwick 1967, 34). This is not to say that the literature is ‘pan-Germanic’ but only that there is a lack of centering on whether the heroes belong to any particular clan, tribe or confederation (unless it is particularly relevant to their royal lineage). While Chadwick states that the tone of the heroic poems may in fact be international, he caveats the point that the characters and scenes are “drawn exclusively from the Teutonic world” (ibid., 40). Historical events of particular peoples may be the source material for the setting of a poem or lay, but they soon develop into strictly poetic narratives themselves and therefore “[E]thnic groups become individualized through their leaders and heroes; these ally themselves or clash with one another in a heroic time-continuum that often defies historical chronology; and they do so for private, mostly family reasons” (Hatto 1980, 167).

Ethnic identity, that is how the heroes identify themselves, is multi-layered. However, it is not so much a national identity (although royal lineages do appear as identifying factors) but rather the situation[13] the hero finds himself or herself in and the performance of the hero

[12] „Jedenfalls ist es nicht nur und in erster Linie der Ausdruck einer trotzigen Anhänglichkeit an heimische Überlieferung oder gar ein Relikt alter Beziehungen zwischen Religion und Heldensage, sondern der präzise Ausdruck kirchlich-theologischen Denkens: Man setzte die Ereignisse der heidnischen Vorzeit in einen "typologischen" Bezug zum christlichen Heilsgeschehen, interpretierte sie als Verheißung, als *praefiguratio*, als vorausdeutendes "Vor-Bild" künftiger Heilstaten.“

[13] „[The situational] approach, which has been termed situational ethnicity, merges both cognitive and structural aspects of ethnicity as its principle focus is on the actor’s ascriptions of ethnic identity to organize the meaning

within the social structure of the Germanic heroic ethos. Klaus von See, cited in section II above, suggests that "the Germanic themes may not necessarily center on the hero him or herself, but rather on an event or a situation of conflict." If so, then it follows that the thematic conflict-situation of Germanic heroic poetry is as much involved in defining the Germanic warrior ethos as the ascription of the hero. The situation determines how the hero will behave, if he or she will perform[14] "heroically" and therefore considered to be, or ascribed (by others) the status of a hero.

For example, we may consider the *Hildebrandslied* to illuminate the point. Hildebrand is in a conflict-situation as he faces his son on the battlefield in personal combat. Hadubrand exploits a cultural stereotype of the 'Hun' as an insult to his father, calling him old, wily or crafty, who will put a spear into him at his first chance. Note that there are no 'racial' attributes in this stereotype that we find in Greco-Roman ethnographic works or nineteenth-century histories[15], rather the derogatory attributes are performative in nature. Hadubrand ascribes identifying features (cunning, dishonorable) upon the person who happens to be his father. Hildebrand, on the other side, acts within a motif of personal martial honor conflicting with loyalty-to-kin. Hildebrand chooses to perform within the warrior ethos as a brave

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of his social relationships within given social situations. The cognitive dimension of situational ethnicity refers to the actor's perceptions and understandings of cultural symbols and signs and the relevance he attributes to these elements as a factor on his behavioral options in the situations he finds himself. On the other hand, the structural dimension has reference to the role constraints enjoined upon actors within social situations as a consequence of the overall structure of ethnic group relations. Thus a situational approach to ethnicity illuminates the fact that variability is the essence of ethnicity in its significance for the structuring of social relations in diverse situational contexts." Jonathan Y. Okamura, "Situational ethnicity" in *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 4 (4) (1981), 452-46.

[14]„The cultural contents of ethnic dichotomies would seem analytically to be of two orders: (i) overt signals or signs – the diacritical features that people look for and exhibit to show identity, often such features as dress, language, house-form, or general style of life, and (ii) basic value orientations: the standards of morality and excellence by which performance is judged. Since belonging to an ethnic category implies being a certain kind of person, having that basic identity, it also implies a claim to be judged, and to judge oneself, by those standards that are relevant to identity." Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Long Grove: Wavela Press, Reprint 1998), 14.

[15]For example: „Asiatic savages … [L]ittle black restless eyes gleamed beneath their low foreheads and matted hair; no beard or whisker adorned their uncouth yellow faces; the Turanian type in its ugliest form was displayed by these Mongolian sons of the wilderness." Thomas Hodgkin, *Theodoric the Goth: King of the Ostrogoths, Regent of the Visigoths & Viceroy of the Eastern Roman Empire, in the 4th Century A.D.* (Milton Keynes: Leonaur, 2011), 18. Originally published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1897.

warrior: he slays his son. It is the motif of the choice between two hateful outcomes: if he spares his son then his personal honor is damaged as a coward on the battlefield - if he slays his son, he has committed the sin of kin-slaying. The situation provides the opportunity for the warriors to perform within their respective roles. And the ultimate expression within the Germanic ethos is not necessarily the deeds of the hero during his or her life, but rather how he or she chooses to meet their fate and die as "his heroism displays itself with decidedly greater clarity in demise than victory" (Haferland 2010, 208).

The heroic lays and epics of the northern European Germanic-speaking peoples combine aspects from overlapping disciplines: linguistics, historiography, ethnology and literature. In all but one of these disciplines, linguistics, the use of the term 'Germanic' has usually been problematic and controversial. The poetry is neither national nor pan-Germanic in nature, but varies according to region and language. Nonetheless, the themes of the subject matter, made up of various motifs in which the heroes act according to their (conflict) situation and which may differ slightly in details and motivations, provides a loose unity that we may call the Germanic warrior ethos as these same themes appear in a wide and diverse spectrum of what we call heroic poetry.

With these problems and controversies in mind, the use of the term 'Germanic' in this dissertation follows Joseph Trahern, Jr. (2010, 161), who suggests that we "can view the literature, in short, as a body of writing which has no known antecedents in a pagan Germanic past but which occasionally addresses, as part of the subject matter of both its fiction and its philosophical, historic and homiletic prose, pagan times and beliefs." Or as Tolkien (*BMC*, 39) wrote: the drawing of distinctions and representing the "moods and attitudes of characters conceived dramatically as living in a noble but heathen past." The use of the term 'Germanic', unless explicitly otherwise stated, refers to the common motifs and themes of heroic literature and the tone, moods, and attitudes they generate.

5. Tolkien's 'Germanic' Narrative of the Eldar

Defining the 'Germanic' in historical and cultural context is problematic. We have seen that society and culture change through time. However, Tolkien's secondary-world of Arda is not plagued by these problems. The Eldar are, in fact, a static monolithic entity.[16] Their culture does not change. There are specific and ontological reasons for this that do not apply to our primary-world. Primarily, the Elvish state of being is one of immortality. This means that there is no gradual generational change of society, traditions, and customs: Galadriel was one of the original Noldor who rebelled, Elrond was born out of a Great Tale of the First Age. The Elves not only remember, but have witnessed first-hand their history. This allows their culture to remain static, including their 'Germanic' Northern courage. The static warrior ethos provides the conditions to consistently narrate its effects and maintain the aesthetic atmosphere of fatalistic northern literature through unchanging and unifying themes and motifs.

In Tolkien, the 'Germanic' concept is more defined by the "mood and tenor" of heroic courage found in "northern literature." That is, Tolkien's theory of Northern courage "whose central thesis is that even ultimate defeat does not turn right into wrong" (Shippey 2005, 136). In light of this theory of courage, – the framework of these six articles suggests that J. R. R. Tolkien's history of the Eldar is an exemplary, illustrative narrative that clarifies Tolkien's personal and academic views of what he called the theory of Northern courage.

As an Anglo-Saxonist who studied heroic epic, Tolkien felt that the spirit of the north was the greatest contribution of northern literature to mankind. He wrote to his son Michael "… that noble northern spirit, a supreme contribution to Europe, which I have ever loved, and tried to present in its true light" (*Letters*, 56). Tom Shippey comments that Tolkien "… wanted in a way to reintroduce to the world 'the theory of courage': not just courage, N. B.,

[16] One may argue that there are cultural differences between the three branches of Elves, but those differences do not change the fact that they are static, cultural entities.

nor images of courage, but the 'theory of courage', which he had said in his *Beowulf* lecture of 1936 was the 'great contribution' to humanity of the old literature of the North…" (Shippey 2002, 149).

Nevertheless, Tolkien had mixed views on this theory of courage. On the one hand, Tolkien was vocal about what he considered the vices of Northern courage, particularly excessive pride and glory for its own sake (Chapter I, pp. 2-3). In his exemplary poem, 'The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth Beorhthelm's Son' and its accompanying essay (*TL*, 121-150), Tolkien criticizes Beorhtnoth for seeking honour, which was "[H]onor sought at risk of his own men" (ibid., 147) and that Beorhtnoth was "most desirous of glory" and displayed the "Heroism of pride and willfulness" (ibid.). It was a heroism that exalted the wish "for glory or glorious death" (ibid., 150). While the consensus at the time that Tolkien was writing his *Legendarium* was that, as E.V. Gordon (1963, 24, 30) stated, the *Battle of Maldon* was the "only purely heroic poem extant in Old English" and that it was "primarily not a poem about battle but a poem of heroism." Tolkien disagreed with its glorification. In response Tolkien wrote his 'Homecoming', and Shippey (2002, 294-95) rightly characterizes the poem as being " not a celebration of the heroic spirit but a deep critique of it and the rash and irresponsible attitudes it created." Of these rash and irresponsible attitudes was *ofermōd* in the sense of 'overmastering pride' and *lofgeornost* 'most desirous for glory' (*TL*, 147), as well as, according to Tom Shippey (2007, 274), its inherent cruelty.

On the other hand, Tolkien was also vocal about what he considered the virtues of Northern courage. He referred to the time of the heroic spirit as a "time of fusion." Tolkien's "time of fusion" is also what this dissertation asserts is critical for us to understand in the context of Tolkien's fiction because "[O]ne of the most potent elements in that fusion is the Northern courage: the theory of courage, which is the greatest contribution of early Northern literature" (ibid.). In other words, the Germanic warrior ethos is, for Tolkien, the crucial element drawn from Germanic heroic poetry (in addition, of course, to the monsters). The

virtues of this code, for Tolkien, was "an ancient and honoured expression of heroic will" (*TL*, 124): an indomitable will in the face of defeat, where the heroes, "men of old, hæleð under heofenum, remained and still fought on" which created "[T]he shadow of its despair, if only as a mood, as an intense emotion of regret … The worth of defeated valour in this world is deeply felt" (ibid., 22-23). This is the recurring theme of the "sad light of fatalism" (Stanley 2000, 94) of "the long defeat" (*FR*, II, vii, 372; *Letters*, 255) and the "despair of the event, combined with faith in the value of doomed resistance" (*BMC*, 23). Tolkien felt the words spoken at Beorhtnoth's last stand in *The Battle of Maldon* summed up the heroic code (*TL*, 124):

> *'Heart shall be bolder, harder be purpose,*
> *more proud the spirit as our power lessens!'* (Tolkien's translation)

This is not a contradiction on Tolkien's part. He did see the heroism in *The Battle of Maldon* as summing up the heroic code: only not on the part of Beorhtnoth, who sacrificed his men for the sake of personal glory. Rather, the exemplary heroism was demonstrated by his *comitatus*, in whose situation the heroism was "superb" (*TL*, 147).

Tolkien refers to these two sides of Northern courage, as he saw them, metaphorically as an "alloy":

> For this 'northern heroic spirit is never quite pure; it is of gold and an alloy. Unalloyed it would direct a man to endure even death unflinching, when necessary: that is when death may help the achievement of some object of will, or when life can only be purchased by denial of what one stands for. But since such conduct is held admirable, the alloy of personal good name was never wholly absent… Yet this element of pride, in the form of the desire for honour and glory, in life and after death, tends to grow, to become a chief motive, driving a man beyond the bleak heroic necessity to excess – to chivalry. (*TL*, 144)

These two sides, or the two components that make up the alloy, of the Germanic warrior ethos become evident in the narrative discourse of the history of the Eldar. Tolkien shows us both the virtues and the vices through a *Musterbeispiel* of the House of Fëanor and the House of Fingolfin where Fëanor is a sort of *Erzeihungscharakte*r who embodies and shows us the vices of Northern courage and the Fingolfians embody its virtues. Shippey writes that "… a

major goal of *The Lord of the Rings* was to dramatize that 'theory of courage' …" (Shippey 2005, 177). This same goal is evident in the *Silmarillion* and the Great Tales through the Fingolfian virtues and Fëanorian vices and perhaps to even a greater extent than *The Lord of the Rings*. The dramatization of Northern courage, the Germanic narrative, is furthermore set within the framework of an intradiegetic historical narrative which is told by secondary world narrators to a secondary world audience with their own inherently biased points of view.

Indeed, the narrative of the Eldar is a history as well as a story. Christopher Tolkien in his forword to *The War of the Jewels*, wrote

> But we come now to the epoch of the Elder Days, when the scene shifts to Middle-earth and the mythical element recedes: the High-elves return across the Great Sea to make war upon Morgoth, Dwarves and Men come over the mountains into Beleriand, and bound up with this history of the movement of peoples, of the policies of kingdoms, of momentous battles and ruinous defeats, are the heroic tales of Beren One-hand and Túrin Turambar. (*Jewels*, viii)

And this is the point at which we begin our examination of the Germanic narrative structure. This is a history of a fictional world yet the level of detail, the inter-textuality, the depth, and verisimilitude lend such an aura of authenticity that it may be examined as one would examine our own history. History and Northern courage are intertwined within the narrative. Tolkien, corresponding to Amy Ronald in 1956 (while speaking in the context of Frodo as a hero and his Catholicism) wrote a more general statement which may apply here. He wrote "… I do not expect 'history' to be anything but a 'long defeat'…" (*Letters*, 255) which is precisely the arc of the Eldar's narrative. It takes Northern courage to face the 'long defeat' – to face history.

Jan de Vries (1963, 252) notes that the theme of defeat is a significant one and he illustrates the choice of this theme with the examples of two poems meant to urge armies on to victory: the *Song of Roland* (which we consider in Chapter VI) and *Bjarkamál*. "A strange choice one would think," de Vries writes, "yet on closer inspection the choice is understandable. The pathos of courage, contempt of death, and self-sacrifice is nowhere

praised more gloriously than precisely these two poems about defeat" (ibid.). Tolkien's history of the Eldar is one such narrative of defeat, praised gloriously within the framework of Northern courage.

What this is showing us is the exemplary nature of Tolkien's history of the Elves. While it is well known that Tolkien was not fond of allegory, he did believe that there was no better teaching mechanism than a "good fairy-story" (*Gawain*, 73). Tolkien does this through the medieval technique of the *exemplum*, an illustrative narrative that Tony Davenport (2004, 11) defined as

> The exposition of a theme by means of a tale is the medieval idea of narrative associated with the tradition of exemplum, an illustrative example in the form of a short story used to confirm a moral point. It is the idea of narrative which accounts for a large proportion of medieval tales.

We are pointing out, of course, the *exemplum tradition* in Tolkien's narrative and not any particular "*exemplum*" for the very reason that most medieval *exempla* were very short with one of the longest, *The Tale of Constance*, exceeding only 1000 lines (ibid. 64). Furthermore, *exempla* are most often thought of as emblematic in the later medieval period (1300-1400). Nonetheless, there are other instances of early *exempla* in Old English literature, other than the translation of Boethius' *De consolatione philosophiae* attributed to King Alfred. For example, Bede's (*Historia*, II, xiii, 287) account of the conversion of King Edwin and his *comitatus* where the pagan priest Coifi desecrates his own altars after hearing the story of the sparrow in the hall

> "Marry," replied he, "I will. For who now to the good example of all men can better than I myself, by the wisdom given me by the true God, destroy those things which I have myself worshipped by foolishness?"[17]

Whereas Tolkien's *Legendarium* is of course, very long, we may still think of the history of the Elves – *The Silmarillion* and the 'Great Tales' – as a sort of *Gesta Romanorum*. A compilation of assembled stories in which, to paraphrase Davenport, the stories purport to be

[17] "Ego. Quis enim ea quae per stultitiam colui, nune ad exemplum omnium aptius quam ipse per sapientiam mihi a Deo vero donatam destruam?"

tales of the classical and distant past, with the deeds of the Eldar moralized (ibid., 59). We may even go so far as to think of Tolkien's *Legendarium* as *Gesta Noldoraria*.

The function of illustrative narrative is to teach various morals through its themes of particular norms and values of a given society. Larry Scanlon (Scanlon 1994, 34) offers a second and more detailed definition of *exemplum*

> In its narrative the exemplum reenacts the actual, historical embodiment of communal value in a protagonist or an event, and then, in its moral, effects the value's reemergence with the obligatory force of moral law. For the purpose of this study, I offer a new definition: an exemplum is a narrative enactment of cultural authority … [which] can either be ideological or more directly historical.

The cultural authority becomes clearer when we view the history of the Elves on an intradiegetic level. That is, a secondary world text written by secondary world chroniclers for a secondary world audience. It is at this intradiegetic level that the history is both a lament and a warning against the excesses of overmastering pride and obsessive possessiveness. The Elvish chroniclers are, parallel to Tolkien's academic writings and correspondence, teaching the vices and virtues within the theory of Northern courage, the Germanic warrior ethos (the ideology), by the examples of the protagonists in the stories (the history). Particularly that of Fëanor and his sons and followers, who act *ad malum exemplum* of Northern courage whereas other characters, such as Fingolfin and Galadriel in this work, are individually juxtaposed to Fëanor *ad bonum exemplum*. Fëanor and Galadriel are pivotal characters who provide, through their actions, a beginning and an end to the Germanic narrative of the Eldar.

Because the Germanic tradition is tragic and must end in demise, Tolkien uses what he coined as "eucatastrophe" to upend the Germanic tradition and introduce hope to the Elvish history. The narrative of the Eldar and the long defeat is told in the exemplary tradition until Galadriel successfully resists the temptation of the One Ring through a very un-Germanic means (Chapter V, p. 93). Galadriel's eucatastrophe marks an end to the heroism of Northern courage and the Germanic narrative.

This leaves a sort of absence of heroic ethos, which now structurally needs to be replaced in the narrative and in so doing, it changes the nature of the narrative. Once again, the exemplary tradition shows up in *The Lord of the Rings* with Aragorn as the protagonist who functions *ad bonum exemplum* of a new heroic ethos and represents the virtues of Northern courage that Tolkien espoused, minus the vices. It is a new ethos that moves from the 'Germanic' to something that in this context I call 'proto-chivalry' (Chapter VI, p. 99). Shippey notes that Tolkien "[I]n his creative work … needed a new image for ultimate bravery, one which would have some meaning and some hope of emulation for the modern and un- or anti-heroic world" (Shippey 2002, 151). Aragorn, his *bonum exemplum*, and his new ethos provides that very image of ultimate bravery to be emulated. As Galadriel's eucatastrophe marks an end to Germanic heroism, Aragorn replaces this ethos with one that renews Germanic virtues and fuses them with new found hope rather than despair. The result of this exemplary narrative is a heroism based on "love and obedience" rather than pride and wilfullness.

I would like to address one final note. This work is not only intended to contribute to the field of Tolkien studies with solely an audience of scholars. It is also intended to reach the audience of the casual Tolkien reader, who may be interested in the stories as they are published but who have not delved into the *History of Middle-earth* series, *Unfinished Tales*, Tolkien's letters and other external notes and material, although that approach is highly recommended. Therefore, I try to limit my argument to the stories as published in *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Silmarillion*, and the recently published 'Great Tales'. This is not always possible as many of the points made here necessarily refer to materials outside of the story-texts. Nevertheless, I have tried to position my argument within the stories as much as possible

Chapter I

Original Sin in Heorot and Valinor

J.R.R. Tolkien, in his essay 'Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics,' argued that, in the *Beowulf* scholarship of his day, the attention of *Beowulf* scholars has "been diverted from the poem as a whole, and from the function of the allusions, as shaped and placed, in the poetic economy of *Beowulf* as it is. Yet actually the appreciation of this function is largely independent of such investigations" (*BMC*, 15). From a survey of the available Tolkien scholarship, one could even say the same of Tolkien criticism. It is in a similar manner that the study of Tolkien's works mirrors the *Beowulf* scholarship of his day. Only instead of focusing on the mundane and *heroic* (as defined below) much scholarship privileges the fantastical elements in Tolkien that is at the expense of the former. Those very often overlooked heroic elements such as Fëanor's oath and the slaying of the Teleri are critical, and they structure the narrative framework in a way that allows the fantastical to operate and function so effectively in Tolkien's works.

In this essay, I argue that, first, Tolkien's concept of the hero rests on a coming-to-terms with the Germanic ethos; second, that the larger narrative structure is heroic; and third, that this structure sustains itself in cycles of cause and effect from the ethical code of Germanic heroes in Anglo-Saxon, Old High German, and Old Norse fiction. Northern courage found its expression in poetry that Harald Haferland (2010, 208) describes aptly:

> Germanic heroic poetry -- like all heroic poetry -- tells of conflict and hostility, but its hero, oddly enough, is not a victorious one. On the contrary, he often must accept his own demise and the death of those close to him, and his heroism displays itself with decidedly greater clarity in demise than in victory.

While the traits of Northern courage grew out of a pagan society, they themselves do not necessarily need to be pagan. Larry D. Benson (1967, 193) argues, "most of the elements in *Beowulf* that once supplied arguments for its essential paganism -- the function of Wyrd, the emphasis on the comitatus, the duty of revenge -- are now recognized not as pagan but as

secular [emphasis mine] values that were easily incorporated into the framework of Anglo-Saxon Christianity." They may even exist as *Christian* elements, as G. Ronald Murphy (1995, 34) notes[18],

> [T]hus it seems that the private characteristics of a personality, the very attributes that the original describes as "to be filled with the Holy Spirit," came from other forces as well as from God. The *Heliand* author seems to have found a place for Fate and time (if not for Saxnot) within Christian theology.

Tolkien's conflict actually lies within the author himself. George Clark (2000, 40) also illustrates this problem for Tolkien very well when he states that

> Tolkien knew and loved the literature that preserved the heroic ethos of the old Germanic world, but he could not accept the heroic vision of man's fate or the traditional heroes represented in those literatures. His fantasy fiction rewrites heroic literature and the hero; so do his critical studies. "Monsters" and "Homecoming" ultimately separate *Beowulf* and *Maldon* from heroic tradition and make those works critiques of heroic society, its values, and its heroes.

It is precisely this type of Germanic hero Tolkien criticizes and with whom he must come to terms.[19] He praises Northern courage, the "creed of unyielding will" and "heroic temper of ancient England and Scandinavia" as something noble (*BMC*, 20-21). Clark (2000, 39) believes "Tolkien sought a true hero motivated by a heroic ideal consistent with his own religious and moral ideals, but he could not rid himself of his desire for the glorious heroes of old", and Shippey also points out that Tolkien's fiction does indeed oscillate between the self-control of the Alboins and Beorhtwolds and cruelty of the Egils and Gunnars and that Tolkien had to come to terms with this heroic style when he set out:

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[18] In reference to the passage: *That ni scal an is liƀa gio liðes anbitan wines an is weroldi: so haƀed im wurdgiscapu, metod gimarkod endi maht godes*. [II, 127-129]

"That never in his life will he drink cider or wine in this world: this is the way Fate made him, the Measurer marked him and the power of God [as well]."

[19] This is a frequent convention in Tolkien's works. For example, when speaking about Tolkien's criticism of war, Matthew Dickerson points out that "Tolkien gives us a view of culture that really does glorify war and battle, and the life of a warrior. But through Éowyn's illness [seeking death as a solution to shame] he also shows us what such pursuits and values ultimately lead to, while through her healing he also shows us the good that results when such pursuits are renounced" Matthew Dickerson, *Following Gandalf: Epic Battles and Moral Victory in The Lord of the Rings,* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2003), 39.

> to re-introduce this heroic style into a literature and a language which had forgotten it entirely. Yet there were evident problems in making such a re-introduction:
> 1) this style - Alboin, Egil, Gunnar - is extremely cruel
> 2) all the characters concerned were heathens, though their stories were written down and copied by admiring Christians.
> Tolkien, I think, was extremely concerned about both points, though perhaps especially about the latter. (Shippey 2007, 274)

Tolkien introduces us to a character who represents raw Northern courage and uses elements of the heroic style, such as oaths and kin-slaying, to build his narrative of the First Age through the end of the Third. Fëanor is the starting point from which the oscillation, to use Shippey's term, begins. With Fëanor, Tolkien is showing us the raw negative aspects of the heroic.[20] He is the Germanic hero who blends the cruel traits of Weland the Smith and Grendel.

1. The King's Law and the King's Peace

In order to understand the role Northern courage plays in both ancient Germanic society and in Tolkien's fiction, it may be fruitful to remind ourselves of the societal structure that permitted this warrior ethos and the hero to flourish. Peter Nusser provides a succinct sketch of the Germanic societal structure:

> Die Sippe [or 'clan' which I write about in more detail below] war ein Friedensverband, in dem Treu und Glauben herrschten und Streitigkeiten gütlich beigelegt wurden. *Das ärgste Verbrechen war der Verwandtmord; er war unsühnbar und niemals zu rechtfertigen* [emphasis mine]. Die Sippe hielt auch nach außen hin und zusammen. Wenn eines ihrer Glieder von einem Angehörigen einer anderen Sippe verletzt oder beleidigt wurde, so verfeindeten sich nicht nur die beiden Sippen. Die Sippe sorgt dafür, dass die verletzte Ehre eines ihrer Mitglieder durch Rache wieder hergestellt wurde. Wurde der Gegner dabei getötet, so galt dies nicht als Verbrechen. Rache würde geübt in der Fehde, einem formlosen Krieg zwischen zwei Sippen, der dadurch beendet wurde, dass eine Sippe Wergeld bezahlte und sich dadurch schuldig bekannte oder aber besiegt wurde.[21] (Nusser, *Deutsche Literatur*, pp. 134-35)

[20] "[T]hat is what ancient Germanic heathenism was really like. That is what his and my ancestors used to do. There is nothing admirable about it at all." Tom Shippey, "Heroes and Heroism: Tolkien's Problems, Tolkien's Solutions." In *Roots and Branches: Selected Papers on Tolkien*, ed. Thomas Honegger (Zollikofen: Walking Tree Publishers, 2007), 282.

[21] The clan was a peace association, in which the principle of equity and good faith reigned and conflicts were settled amicably. *The worst crime was kin-slaying; it was inexpiable and never justified.* The clan also held together against external threats. If one of their members was hurt or offended by members of a different clan, the result was not just enmity of both of the clans. The clan ensured that the offended honor of one of their members was restored in revenge. If the opponent was killed in revenge, it wasn't considered a crime. Revenge

The warrior ethos arose within this clan framework and its duty to revenge. The Elvish kindreds are organized much like a Germanic *Sippe*, which Alexander Murray (1983, 16-19) details as a "closed or fixed kin group...composed of a number of *Hausgemeinschaften* [e.g. House of Fëanor, House of Fingolfin] tracing their descent... from a common male ancestor (*Stammvater*) [Finwë] and ...the whole circle of an individual's blood relations" which have a variety of functions among which are "vengeance and the payment and receipt of wergeld" and "be obliged to go to feud in order to avenge a death or to seek compensation." and "the role of the clan or lineage as a military unit in the army (*Heeresabteilung*)."

Within Tolkien's Elvish-kindred framework, Fëanor has a distinct function within the narrative structure of Tolkien's *Legendarium*: his heroic condition allows for the 'Germanic Original Sin' of kin-slaying. It begins with the disruption of the King's Peace and causes the Fall of the Noldor. Melkor brings Original Sin into Valinor: "Thus with lies and evil whisperings and false counsel Melkor kindled the hearts of the Noldor to strife; and of their quarrels came at length the end of the high days of Valinor and the evening of its ancient glory" (*S,* 71). The poison of Melkor's lies breaks into the open when Fëanor, finds his half-brother Fingolfin before his father and, believing lies of usurpation, draws his sword:

> … and the point of his bright sword he set against Fingolfin's breast.
> 'See, half-brother!' he said. 'This is sharper than thy tongue. Try but once more to usurp my place and the love of my father, and maybe it will rid the Noldor of one who seeks to be master of thralls.' (ibid., 72)

This is the first outbreak of feud within a kinship. In the Germanic world, D.H. Green (2000, 50-51) observes, "it is not enough to define a feud as a state of hostility between kindreds; we must extend it to the threat of hostility, but also, if the mere threat fails to prevent the outbreak of actual hostility, to a settlement on terms acceptable to both parties by means of an established procedure" and furthermore "central to feuding is the idea of vengeance, the

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was exercised in the feud, an informal war between the clans, which was ended by paying wergeld [compensation] and so admitting guilt or [a clan] was defeated. (Translation mine)

willingness of all members of a kindred to defend one of their number and to obtain redress for him." Fëanor here breaks the law of the 'King's Peace'[22] (Stanley 2000, 144):

> But Fëanor was not held guiltless, for he it was that had broken the peace of Valinor and drawn sword upon his kinsman; and Mandos said to him: 'Thou speakest of thralldom. If thralldom it be, thou canst not escape it: for Manwë is King of Arda, and not of Aman only. And this deed was unlawful, whether in Aman or not in Aman. (*S*, 72-73)

The forging and drawing of secret swords in unjustified anger and "threatening the life of his kinsman" was more than enough to break the King's Peace: "... the deeds of Fëanor could not be passed over, and the Valar were wroth; and dismayed also, perceiving that more was at work than the *wilfulness* [emphasis mine][23] of youth" (*MR*, 278-79). Note, however, that considering the immortality of Elves, Fëanor's punishment of a 12-year banishment (even if they are *Valian* years) to essentially a country estate still within paradise does not seem to be the death sentence that exile would be to a Saxon during the *Völkerwanderungzeit*. Indeed it seems to be a very mild slap on the wrist. Parallels of Fëanor's transgression, however, are found in Anglo-Saxon law, especially from Ine to Edmund, as Edmund strengthened previous laws:

> For Ine and Alfred, it was a potentially capital crime to draw a weapon in the king's hall. The same penalty now threatened those infringing the royal *mund* [protection] wheresoever, or attacking anyone in his home... To feud with pursuers of thieves was to be the enemy of the king and of his friends; to be loyal was to love what the king loved, to shun what he shunned. Empowering these principles was a strengthening of ideological current. It had become easier to mortally offend the king. He personified good order. He answered for it to God. *The peace is the king's* [emphasis mine]. (Wormald 2001, 312)

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[22] Đæt is, þæt his grið stande swa forð, swa hit fyrmest stód on his yldrena dagum, þæt þæt sy bótléas, þæt he mid his agenre hánd sylð (Nämlich, dass Sonderschutz ... von ihm [verliehen] so weiter fortbestehe, wie er bestens ... bestand in seiner Vorfahren Tagen: dass der, welchen er mit seiner eigenen Hand giebt, [wenn gebrochen, durch Geld] unabbüssbar... sei.). Felix Lieberman, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (Halle A.S.: Max Niemeyer, 1903), 228. *"Namely, that his protection of the person (guarantee of safety) is continued, as it had been in the days of his ancestors, that that be not pardonable, that he with his own hand promises."* (*translation mine*)

Concerning this passage of Anglo-Saxon law, Stanley states "There is no need of greater explicitness for the Danes who were to be governed by this code: *his grið stande* says it all. It uses the Scandinavian word for the king's peace, used nowhere in the codes of Æthelred except in this code for the Scandinavians." (cf. Stanley *AS Paganism*, 144.) It is highly probable that the law in Valinor likewise need not be explicit for the Elves and there is furthermore no mention of any law until Fëanor implicitly breaks it.

[23] For Tolkien's critique of 'wilfulness' [sic] cf. "The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth Beorhthelm's Son," in *Tree and Leaf* (London: Harper Collins, 2001), 148.

The laws of Edmund[24] describes his King's Peace thus:

> King Edmund announces (*cyð*) to all ... First then it seemed to us (*ðuhte us*) most necessary that we should most firmly keep between us our peaceableness and harmony (*gesibsumnesse 7 geðwærnesse*) throughout all my dominion. I and all of us are greatly distressed (*Me eleð swyðe 7 us eallum*) by the unlawful and manifold fights (*gefeoht*) that are between us. We therefore declared ... for the peace from thefts that we now have, and I therefore trust you (*gelyfe ic to eow*) that you are willing to support this, so much the better as the need is the greater for us all that it be kept. (ibid., 311)

In the case of Eden, the Law is certainly explicit in that it is forbidden to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, God says so. In the primary world of Anglo-Saxon England (and Carolingian France, cf. *Lex Salica*) the King's Peace is also explicitly decreed. In Valinor, however, we are not told of any such laws and there does not appear to be any *need* for divine law (not to mention common law), it seems *implicit.* As with the Eldar's laws on marriage, the King's Peace in Valinor "... is a matter in which they needed no law or instruction, but acted by nature" (*MR,* 234) – until Fëanor.

The first feud in Tolkien's narrative are the events between Fëanor and Fingolfin and the feud is not between kindreds but between kin within the same *Sippe*. Usually, a restraining factor on the violence of feud between kin was the need for unity to face an outside threat (cf. Green above). However at this point of the narrative, the Noldor are not under siege or threat and still under the protection of the Valar. This feud, itself an effect of Melkor's lies, becomes a cause that establishes the procedure for reconciliation. As the aggressor, Fëanor seems to be judged on some sort of debt to the aggrieved Fingolfin but the text does not tell us what it is other than the "matter shall be set in peace and held redressed, if others will release thee" (*S*, 73). The release not only appears to forgive Fëanor but also takes the form of the first oath we

[24] The Anglo-Saxons under Edmund are not the only Germanic people to address this issue of feuds at the time. On the continent "Charlemagne, in a text which could by then have been accessible to English law-makers, saw what Christian 'peace and unanimity' implied for vendetta; in principle at least, he prohibited feud outright. Edmund now followed suit." Patrick Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 311nn.; cf. *Capitularia Regum Francorum,* ed. Boretius and Krause. 22:62, 66-7 (= *Collectio Capitularium Ansegisi/Kapitulariensammlung des Angsegis* ed. Schmitz. i 59, 63, iii 89).

encounter in Tolkien's *Legendarium*: "Then Fëanor took his hand in silence; but Fingolfin said: 'Half-brother in blood, full brother in heart will I be. Thou shalt lead and I will follow. May no new grief divide us'" (ibid., 70). The oath is a pillar of the heroic creed of Northern courage. Fingolfin is not only sworn to respect Fëanor's position as first-born high prince but is also pledging revenge obligation. Neither Fëanor nor Fingolfin, as the *Silmarillion* tells us, knew exactly what this oath would come to mean, and yet this oath leads to an unbreakable alliance and eventual downfall; both of which constitute a traditional motif of Germanic heroic epic and *Sagastoff*.

The seeds of sin have sprouted into a weed of cause and effect, first by disrupting the king's peace,[25] followed by a chain of events that involves a rebellion and a subsequent kin-slaying which in turn results in an expulsion from 'Paradise'. That it is not Eru's explicit law that is disobeyed but a king's peace, I believe, is a crucial point. With the peace suddenly broken, we are now fully aware of a tension between kin in Valinor. Original Sin for the Elves comes about by the Elves themselves; they are unwitting agents of Melkor's already present evil. Furthermore, it is not simply a single act of sin, but rather a series of transgressions in Valinor that at first disturb the 'King's Peace' and progress further into rebellion and bloody kin-slaying.

2. The Storial Fall and Germanic Original Sin

In his letter to Milton Waldman, Tolkien wrote "There cannot be any 'story' without a fall - all stories are ultimately about the fall - at least not for human minds as we know them and have them" (*Letters*, 147). Therefore there needs to be an event (or events) to push the narrative into the heroic cycle and out of the bliss of paradise, or as Tolkien phrased it in the same letter: "So, proceding [sic], the Elves have a fall, before their 'history' can become

[25]Although Tolkien himself states that the first event to set the stage for the Fall is the death of Míriel, see *Letters*, p.286.

storial [...]" (ibid.). Eric Schweicher (1992, 67) investigates the fall of the Elves further and shows how Tolkien's *Legendarium* is constructed as a series of falls, correctly pointing out that the fall of Melkor in his rebellion during the Music of the Ainur is in fact the first fall in Tolkien[26]. The fall and evil were already present and extant before the awakening of either Elf or Man: "Melkor's rebellion marks the birth of evil in Tolkien's cosmology" and "Original Sin entered the world well before the first Man, or in this case the first Elf, ever set foot on Earth."

While Schweicher is correct that Melkor brought Original Sin into the world it still was not manifest in the Elves until Fëanor and his followers commit it. Tolkien also hints at an Elvish Original Sin using Judeo-Christian imagery and metaphor without actually calling it Original Sin: "The first fruit of their fall was in Paradise, the slaying of Elves by Elves, and this and their evil oath dogs all their later heroism, generating treacheries and undoing all victories" (*Letters*, 148).

The 'first fruit' metaphor of their Original Sin reminds us of the fruit of the tree of knowledge and 'Paradise' is plainly clear as a reference to the Judeo-Christian tradition. However the second part of the sentence reminds us of *'wyrd'* in that the oath "dogs all their later heroism..." This is a Germanic concept but does not necessarily come into conflict with Christianity as Murphy brings our attention to with the *Hêliand*. The most significant difference is the method of Original Sin. The solution, I hope to show, is that the Fall of the Elves and their particular Original Sin is manifested through the device of what the *Beowulf* scholars Edward B. Irving Jr and Craig R. Davis refer to as Germanic Original Sin. To paraphrase Davis (1996, 98), it is tribal Germanic society's feud and kin-slaying that is its

[26] Although Tolkien wrote in a draft letter what the difference was for him: "...The Fall of Man is subsequent to and a consequence (though not a necessary consequence) of the 'Fall of Angels': a rebellion of created free-will at a higher level than Man; but not nearly held (and in many versions is not held at all) that this affected the 'World' in its nature: evil was brought in from outside, by Satan. In this Myth the rebellion of created free-will precedes creation of the World (Ëa); and Ëa has in it, subcreatively introduced, evil, rebellion, discordant elements of its own nature already when the *Let it Be* was spoken. The Fall or corruption, therefore, of all things in it and all inhabitants of it, was a possibility if not inevitable." (*Letters*, 286-87)

original sin and which demands a king's law and peace to suppress it. Therefore it is fitting that Mandos' lawful response to the Kin-slaying, the Doom of the Noldor, is also Germanic in nature. For example, as preached to Edward the Confessor by Wulfstan in 1043:

> The duty of a consecrated king is that he judge no man falsely, and that he defend and protect widows and orphans and strangers, and forbid thefts, and amend illicit intercourse, and annul and totally forbid incestuous relationships, and eliminate witches and enchanters, and *expel from the land kin-slayers* [emphasis mine] and perjurers, and feed the needy with alms, and have old, wise, and sober men as his counsellors...' (Wormald 2001, 448)

We see here Mandos' judgement, sentence and actions conforming to Wulfstan's standards of kingly duty with regards to kin-slaying.[27]

3. Fëanor: Middle-earth's first Germanic hero

As with Germanic society, the theme of a hero killing his or her relatives runs throughout Germanic literature whether it is Hildebrand tragically slaying his son Hadubrand (*Hildebrandeslied*) or Guðrún murdering her two sons in revenge (Dronke 2004, 74-75) or Finn slaying Hnæf while he is a guest in his hall (*Beowulf*, lines 1070-1159) or even the slaying of Finn and Hildeburh's unnamed Danish-Friesian son. There are many such examples to choose from. We do not find much of the 'heroic'[28] in either the *Ainulindalë* or the *Valaquenta*. There is nothing heroic or even Germanic in the *Quenta Silmarillion* until we get to the character of Fëanor. Fëanor certainly exhibits Haferland's, and certainly all of

[27] Wormald references Stubbs who printed Wulfstan's homily (with the oath) which, Wormald suggests, correspond to Chronicles 'C' and 'E' 1043, cf. nn Stubbs, *Memorial of St. Dunstan*, pp. 355-7. Cf. William Stubbs, *The Constitutional History of England in its Origin and Development* (revised ed., 3 vols, Oxford, 1880), Ch. 1, nn. 56-8.

[28] For the purposes of this paper, I understand the heroic and hero as "Könige, Krieger, Recken, in einem Fall ein kunstvoller Schmied, sind die Helden . . . Das Menschenbild der Heldensage stellt den hervorragenden, kriegerischen Helden dar, der meist Repräsentant einer Gemeinschaft, eines Stammes oder Volkes ist und für sie Taten vollbringt, Aufgaben erfüllt oder Schicksale zu bestehen hat, die über das gemeine Maß hinausgehen und Bewunderung und Erschütterung erregen." Hermann Schneider and Wolfgang Mohr, "Heldendichtung," in *Zur Germanisch-Deutschen Heldensage*, ed. Kaul Hauck (Darmstadt: WBG, 1961), 1-2.

"Kings, warriors, knights, in one case the smith are heroes... the ideal of men he heroic sagas present is the distinguished warrior-hero, who mostly represents a community, clan or people and accomplishes deeds, fulfills tasks or fate that are beyond the common means and inspires admiration and trepidation" [translation mine]

Schneider and Mohr's, qualifications of the Germanic hero and a few of his particular heroic traits should be examined. It is only through Fëanor, a catalyst of narrative function, that we find ourselves propelled into the world of the heroic (i.e. *das Heroische*) within Arda. This theme of the hero slaying his relatives is expressed through Fëanor's 'sin' and the Noldor's Fall. It is Tolkien's 'storial' event that is necessary to urge the narrative further along.

Michael Drout (2004, 230) observed of Tolkien's mythical history: "while he explicitly and overtly severed the connections between real European history and Middle-earth, there remains a structural substratum of story-structure, names, and parallels that links early Anglo-Saxon and Germanic culture to Tolkien's imaginative creation." I hope to expound upon this structural substratum within the *Legendarium's* First Age – a Heroic Age.

First, Fëanor exhibits Weland-like traits. While his pride and avarice is ground already covered by Shippey, et. al., I suggest that we can also look to the *Völundarkviða* to see Fëanor's perhaps closest parallel in Völundr, who Ursula Dronke (2001, 256) notes, "is *álfa lióði,* 'prince of elves'. So, too, is Fëanor, son of King Finwë, prince of the Noldor, whose idiosyncrasies and vices parallel Völundr:

> Ironically, the great smiths of legend who so prodigally produce great treasures have also a great vice, that of avarice: an intense possessiveness, an identification of the works of their art as part of themselves. A dwarf will curse with eleven deaths the thieving users of his gold - who have taken his last ring - *mun míns fiár / mangi nióta*, 'from my wealth not one man shall profit' (*Reginsmál* 5). [...] Twice the king calls Völundr *vísi álfa,* 'ruler of elves'. (ibid., 256-57)

However, instead of gems made from eyes (Tolkien does not allow his heroes to become *too* gruesome) Fëanor creates gems with living light, and he begins to "love the Silmarils with a greedy love" and "grudging the sight of them to all save his father and his seven sons, he seldom remembered now the light within them was not his own." (*S,* 70). Where "Völundr sees with hatred the precious things he has made in the hands of his captors – severed for ever from himself [...] He will murder to avenge them [...]" (Dronke 2001, 257) so too does

Fëanor, driving him and his kin to swear the blasphemous oath and rebel against the Valar in wrath and rage to avenge his father and the rape of the Silmarils.

Fëanor also exhibits traits shared with *Beowulf's* Grendel in both imagery and function. When we are first introduced to Fëanor we are told that "his spirit burned as a flame" (S, 60), that his given name was Curufinwë "but by his mother called Fëanor, Spirit of Fire" (ibid., 63) in which Eru / God Himself set a fire (91); that he "grew swiftly as if a secret fire were kindled within him" and that he had "eyes piercingly bright" (ibid., 64) and he was "driven by the fire of his heart only" (ibid., 67). Fëanor is associated with 'spirit' and 'fire' and a 'fey' or irrational hate (Dronke writes of the smith Völundr: "He has a demon in him"). The imagery is woven throughout the narrative subtly ensuring that the reader associates these traits with the character. Nevertheless, to speak of the similarity of traits and function is not the same as speaking of good and evil. Fëanor is not evil; no more so than Ingeld, or Finn, or Gunnar, or Högni, but Fëanor belongs in the heroic world. When Davis writes of symbolically aligned imagery in *Beowulf* between Hnæf's pyre and Grendel, he could easily have been writing of Fëanor, the Kin-slaying, and the Great Burning (*S*, 97):

> Hnæf's pyre is thus connected symbolically to the flames which will eventually devour Heorot (lines 83, 781), as well as to the fires of Hell (line 185) and the unholy flicker in Grendel's eyes (lines 726b - 27): lines 1122b - 24a [...] The greedy spirit of Hnæf's pyre compacts the pyrous and cannibalistic imagery used to depict the spirits of kin-feud. Strange fire burns on Grendel's mere (lines 1365-66) and in the hall of his mother (line 1331). She is twice called a "greedy" spirit (*gifre,* line 1277; *grædig*, line 1499) and also a *wælgæst wæfre* 'spirit restless for slaughter' (line 1331). Grendel's pacing and his dam's impatience dramatize the pressure Hengest felt to avenge Hnæf with Finn's blood: *ne meahte wæfre mod / forhabban in hreþre* 'his breast could not restrain his restless spirit' (lines 1150b-51a) [...] In the troubled legendary history of the of the Danes, Hnæf's pyre becomes the fatal pre-Scylding prototype of the fire which will destroy Heorot. (Davis 1996, 124-28)

As with Valinor above, the king's peace is threatened and therefore the *Pax Danica* of Heorot: the "Camelot of Danish pseudo-history" and "symbol of inter-tribal kingship" as Davis calls it. Furthermore, it is not only in the monstrous abstract of Grendel's personification that threatens the king's peace but also the concrete premonition of

immolation (Beowulf, lines 81b-85). The hall, when it is built, is already haunted by kin-feud. *Beowulf* is useful to illustrate kin-slaying as an all consuming fire that eats the soul as "fire is conceived as a *gæst*' (*BMC*, 35; Beowulf, line 1123). This conventional personification is a favorite of the poet (cf. Isaacs 1967). Ingeld is consumed with his right of blood-feud. The spirit of kin-slaying burns with hatred just as the timbers of Heorot burn. Davis (1996, 102-103) notes that:

> the forecast of Ingeld's firing of Heorot is flatly juxtaposed to the introduction of Grendel: (lines 85-86) [...] In both these juxtapositions of Ingeld and Grendel [lines 85-86 and 2073b - 74], we are suddenly jerked from the legendary world of ancient heroes, a world of blood-feuds and burning halls, into an oneiric realm of nighttime ogres, a world of heightened moral resonance, in which haunting demons are made to personify, in starker symbolic form, the inspiration of characters like Ingeld [...] Ingeld's *laða lig* 'hostile flame (line 83), which will one day burn Heorot, burns too in Grendel's eyes as he penetrates the hall: *him of eagum stod / ligge gelicost leoht unfæger* 'from his eyes flared up, most like a flame, an unlovely gleam' (lines 726-27).

As the heroic character burns the hall and slays his (or her) kin so too does the mythical and monstrous elements reified in the figure of Grendel and his recurrent attacks on Heorot. Both seem to work with and play off each other and both are represented as some sort of fiery and passionate spirit. Grendel, the descendant of Cain and heir to the curse of God, enters the human home, or hall, of the descendants of Adam and continues the murderous sin of kin-slaying against them. Grendel functions as a Cain-figure: as a personification of Germanic Original Sin in monstrous materiality. Irving (1989, 138) also finds this pattern prevalent in *Beowulf* and points out the nature of the Germanic Original Sin:

> Such twisting of good to evil is a pattern in the poem, of course. Hrothgar later (1709b-22a) describes the evil king Heremod as having been set moving firmly in the right direction by God but as then inexplicably choosing to plunge off that high road into the joyless thickets of slaughter and exile. Cain too once lived in a human hall with family, but chose to sever the holy cords of kinship with that first death-stroke that is consistently represented in *Beowulf* as the true original sin, as it is also in the often cited passage in *Genesis A* (987-1001). There the blow that killed Abel is represented as a "twig" that produced branches and leaves that afflict all mankind with violence and torment to this day.

It is precisely this severing of the holy cords of kinship with that first death stroke that Fëanor commits in Valinor. After the kin-slaying of the Teleri and the theft of the swan-ships, Fëanor burns them on the shores of Middle-earth in "a great burning, bright and terrible" as though he were torching a great hall. With similar effect, the burning of the ships is a breaking of the oath between brothers and a betrayal of Fingolfin: "this was the first fruits of the Kinslaying and the Doom of the Noldor" (*S*, 97). The Kinslaying of Alqualondë functions as the 'twig' of *Genesis A* above. That, in turn, produced the branches and leaves of the Germanic narratives that afflict the Elves and Men of Middle-earth until the sin of the Noldor is finally redeemed in *The Lord of the Rings* (Chapter 5).

Fëanor is linked through imagery and description of character to the fiery and consuming nature of the Germanic Original Sin. Even in his death, driven by 'fey' rage and overconfidence, his fiery spirit consumes his physical body until all that is left is ashes. He is the *Urtyp,* the archetypical Germanic hero in the history of Tolkien's Middle-earth. He comes the closest to cruelty that Tolkien will allow of any of his characters who are not fallen into darkness such as Morgoth and Sauron. Even in defiant death, Fëanor functions in his heroic role:

> A hero dies young: that is his tragedy. It has been prophesied to him. And even when protected by the horny skin of Siegfried or Fer Diad, even when almost invulnerable like the Greek Achilles, even when safeguarded by impossible conditions against death, like the Welsh hero Llew Llaw Gyffes, his fate will be fulfilled inexorably. That is perhaps what is most moving in the image of the hero: his fragility in spite of his (humanly speaking) unassailable strength. During the whole of his brief life this fate is ever present. Is it to be wondered at that he defies it in the end? (de Vries 1963, 183)

Moreover, due to the Germanic nature of his Original Sin, Fëanor also functions as a Cain-figure: the first Kin-slayer for which he and his people are exiled and cursed by the Valar themselves.

4. Oaths and Falls: The Age of the Germanic Hero

We see from historical literature the importance placed upon oaths in the Germanic world. For example Hrafnkel (Hrafnkel's Saga) swears an oath to slay anyone who rides his prized stallion. One of his farmhands, Einar, whom Hrafnkel has already warned of his oath, rides the stallion in an emergency to gather Hrafnkel's stray flock of sheep. Hrafnkel says to Einar:

> 'I'd have forgiven this single offence [sic] if I'd not sworn so great an oath. You've made a frank enough confession, but my faith tells me that nothing good can happen to people who break their solemn vows.'
> Then he dismounted and killed Einar with a single blow. (Pálsson 1971, 42-43)

The importance of keeping an oath is a device that often sets up a conflict in Germanic literature, especially conflicts involving loyalty to lord and loyalty to kin. The oath binds its swearers to fate for good or for ill. Tolkien uses this plot device to doom his Elves for the rest of his entire narrative. It is at this point in his fictional history, the Fall of the Noldor, that we pivot from a paradisal bliss to a Germanic doom. It is a narrative that contains all the elements of pride and willfulness in Northern courage that Tolkien criticized (*TL*, 148).

Fëanor and Fingolfin, as Germanic heroes in a *Sippe* and because of their oath to one another, are doubly obligated to *Vaterrache* (revenge for Finwë). That first oath between them becomes significant in the immediate chain of events as it binds the two princely houses together. Yet, the second and blasphemous oath concerning the recovery of the Silmarils is not sworn by all the Noldor. It is sworn only by the Fëanorians and sets the stage for further strife between the two familial factions. An oath[29], Tolkien tells us, that should never have

[29] Note that in LotR, as the Fellowship departs from Rivendell, Elrond firmly states [...] "The others may go with him as free companions, to help him on his way. You may tarry, or come back, or turn aside onto other paths, as chance allows. The further you go, the less easy it will be to withdraw; yet *no oath or bond is laid on you to go further than you will. For you do not yet know the strength of your hearts, and you cannot foresee what each may meet upon the road.*' [emphasis mine]
... 'Yet sworn word may strengthen quaking heart,' said Gimli
'Or break it,' said Elrond [...]. (*FR*, II, iii, 294)

been uttered "[F]or so sworn, good or evil, an oath may not be broken, and it shall pursue oath-keeper and oath-breaker to the world's end" (*S*, 89).

Tolkien gives us clues at this point in Fëanor's much discussed pride. He portrays Fëanor's pride as an excessive and overmastering pride, as the *ofermōd* he is so critical of. When the Herald of Manwë comes to exile Fëanor and his sons for their unholy oath and to discourage the rest of the Noldor from rebellion and departure, we see a glimpse of Fëanor's *ofermōd*,

> Say this to Manwë Súlimo, High King of Arda: if Fëanor cannot overthrow Morgoth, at least he delays not to assail him, and sits not idle in grief. And it may be that Eru has set in me a fire greater than thou knowest. Such hurt will I do to the Foe of the Valar that even the mighty in the Ring of Doom shall wonder to hear it. Yea, in the end they shall follow me. Farewell! (*S,* 91)

The Germanic hero not only challenges the "gods" but also in essence calls them cowards for not waging war upon their diabolical foe, something that Fëanor, as a lesser being than they, is prepared to do. We also see the fire imagery again associated with an all-consuming pride and wrath and we see a hint of *lof ond dom* in that even the "mighty" will wonder to hear it. Fëanor and the Noldor are now committed to their choices. Fingolfin is also committed due to his oath: not the unholy oath taken by Fëanor and his sons, but rather Fingolfin's earlier oath of brotherly bonds ("he did not forget his words before the throne of Manwë.") (*S*, 90). The Noldor, fey in their wrath, assault and slaughter a neighboring *Stamm*, the Teleri, to whom

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The Silmarillion further discusses Elrond and oaths: "And so it came to pass *the last and cruellest of the slayings of Elf by Elf*; *and that was the third of the great wrongs achieved by the accussed oath* [...] For the sons of Fëanor that yet lived came down suddenly upon the exiles of Gondolin and the remnant of Doriath, and destroyed them. In that battle some of their people stood aside, and some few rebelled and were slain upon the other part aiding Elwing [Elrond's mother] against their own lords (for such was the sorrow and confusion in the hearts of the Eldar in those days); but Maedros and Maglor won the day [...] Great was the sorrow of Eärendil and Elwing for the ruin of the havens of Sirion, and the captivity of their sons, and they feared that they would be slain; but it was not so. For Maglor took pity upon *Elros and Elrond*, and he cherished them, and love grew between them, as little as might be thought; *but Maglors' heart was sick and weary with the burden of the dreadful oath.*" [emphasis mine] (*S*, 296-97)

Elrond obviously has reason and wisdom to suspect unexpected consequences of such heavy oaths having seen first hand, and personally endangered by, the sin of kin-slaying.

many are related in kin-relationships. The Noldor spill the first Elf-on-Elf blood -- and it was spilt on the shores of Valinor, Tolkien's Paradise or Eden.

The Noldor, and not just the Fëanorians, bring judgement, or to use Tolkien's word, doom upon themselves. A curse of fate is laid upon the rebels by the gods: the *Prophecy of the North* and the *Doom of the Noldor* Tolkien calls it. The chain or cycle of cause and effect of the Germanic elements from kin-strife to blood-oaths to kin-slaying bring us to a point where the narrative can evolve into one that is familiar in Germanic literature. "The Germanic mind habitually prophesies doom. Doom is unavoidable" (Irving 1989, 152). The ever-present prophecy of doom, the "sad light of fatalism" (Stanley 2000, 94) that shadows all the events in Tolkien's Legendarium from this point until the fall of Sauron is Germanic in nature.[30] Abstract fate or *wyrd* (or *Authority* as both Dickerson and Tolkien call it, cf. Chapter II, p. 22) begins to operate with the curse of Mandos:

> Tears unnumbered ye shall shed; and the Valar will fence Valinor against you, and shut you out, so that not even the echo of your lamentation shall pass over the mountains. On the House of Fëanor the wrath of the Valar lieth from the West unto the uttermost East, and upon all that will follow them shall be laid also. Their Oath shall drive them, and yet betray them, and ever snatch away the very treasures that they have sworn to pursue. To evil shall all things turn that begin well; and by treason of kin unto kin, and the fear of treason, shall this come to pass. The Dispossessed shall they be forever.
>
> Ye have spilled the blood of your kindred unrighteously and have stained the land of Aman. For blood ye shall render blood, and beyond Aman ye shall dwell in Death's shadow. (S, 95)

The deed of Fëanor and his vanguard allows the narrative to enter into a heroic cycle of glorious victories and even more glorious defeats revolving around oaths and their breaking[31]. Fëanor's response shows his Northern courage as prideful and wilful:

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[30] Note that this is not an argument about paganism versus Christianity, as Tolkien in his *Legendarium* is presenting us with a clearly Boethian concept of fate or *wyrd* which Stanely points out "*[W]yrd* is often equated in Christian poetry and homily with the working of God's will, especially with reference to the Doom to come" (Stanley, 2000, 87). In *The Lord of the Rings* especially, we are constantly reminded of events that happen by chance "if chance is what you call it." Dickerson notes that "[I]n the Christian worldview of Tolkien's Catholicism, for example, prophecy does not come from an impersonal source but from the Creator of the world whose plans are communicated through the prophecy" (Dickerson, 2003, 180).

[31] In the chapter *Of Beren and Lúthien* the text specifically tells us that an Elvish prince, Orodreth, would not slay two sons of Fëanor in a dispute because "the spilling of kindred blood by kin would bind the curse of Mandos more closely upon them all" (*S*, 207).

> Then many quailed; but Fëanor hardened his heart and said: 'We have sworn, and not lightly. This oath we will keep. We are threatened with many evils, and treason not least; but one thing is not said: that we shall suffer from cowardice, from cravens or the fear of cravens. Therefore I say that we will go on, and this doom I add: the deeds that we shall do shall be the matter of song until the last days of Arda.' (*S*, 95)

It is not only *ofermōd* but also defiant heroism in the face of fate that Fëanor exhibits and it is significant that he calls another doom upon them: that their deeds "shall be the matter of song until the last days of Arda." As Jan de Vries notes "[T]he hero, then, lives in order to win eternal fame" (de Vries 1963, 183). The defiant heroism is Germanic in nature, whether it is secular or pagan. However, the Germanic nature doesn't mean that it must conflict with Tolkien's personal views on Christianity, as he gives us the final word of the matter in the Boethian words of Manwë:

> So shall it be! Dear bought those songs shall be accounted, and yet shall be well-bought. For the price could be no other. Thus even as Eru spoke to us shall beauty not before conceived be brought into Ëa, and evil yet be good to have been. (*S*, 108)

I began this essay noting that the heroic elements in Tolkien's legendarium are critical for setting the Germanic narrative in motion. I hope to have shown not only their importance but also how they are initially manifested in his mythological history through the character of Fëanor. Fëanor, as the first Elvish "Germanic hero" shows us, through his actions, deeds and example, the criticism that Tolkien himself had of Northern courage. Nevertheless, the Original Sin of the Noldor is required to enable the history to become 'storial'.

Chapter II

The Dance of Authority in Arda: Wyrd and Providence in the Elder Days of Middle-earth

In the history of the Eldar, I approach the interaction of wyrd, fate and providence – three modes of Ilúvatar's Authority – metaphorically. In this discussion, these modes of Authority are likened to a sort of a dance of Ilúvatar's divine will. While the three modes of Authority lead and follow, ebb and flow, in movements across the dancefloor of Arda, the Music of the Ainur figuratively plays the themes of being. This discussion aims to show that Tolkien's *Legendarium* employs a three-fold structure of fate, providence and particularly *wyrd* to frame the 'Germanic' heroic narrative of the Eldar through an Alfredian[32] approach.

Tolkien's cosmology has been extensively researched and he has shown in his letters the Christian thought identified in his fiction: namely the thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Saint Augustine of Hippo and Boethius.[33] What this discussion aims to bring to the fore, however, is that Tolkien is an Anglo-Saxonist who wrote what, particularly in the First Age of the *Legendarium* but also through the Third, may be considered an heroic elegy that presents

[32] Because there is scholarly debate as to whether King Alfred the Great of Wessex translated Boethius' *De Consolatio Philosophiae* himself or whether it was translated by members of the clergy and merely attributed to him, the term "Alfredian" is used to designate the Old English translation, thereby attempting to avoid unnecessary controversy. Furthermore, the short title ADCP (Alfred's *De Consolatio Philosophiae*, aka the Old English *Boethius*) is used for all citations of the OE text and modern English translations henceforth; P = prose section in the Old English *Boethius* and M = meter in the Old English *Boethius*. The text used in this discussion will be Susan Irving's and Malcom R. Godden's *The Old English Boethius: With Verse Prologues and Epilogues Associated with King Alfred* (Cambridge: Havard University Press, 2012).

[33] Just to name a few, see, for example: Stratford Caldecott, *The Power of the Ring: The Spiritual Vision Behind The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings*. 2nd ed. (New York: The Crossroad, 2012).; Kathleen E Dubs, "Providence, Fate, and Chance: Boethian Philosophy in *Lord of the Rings*." In *Tolkien and the Invention of Myth: A Reader*, edited by Jane Chance (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2004), 133-142.; Thomas Honegger, "Tolkiens moralischer Kosmos." *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch* 45 (2004): 239-259.; Tom Shippey, *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002).; Rose A. Zimbardo, "Moral Vision in *The Lord of the Rings*." In *Understanding the Lord of the Rings: The Best of Tolkien Criticism*, eds. Rose A. Zimbardo and Neil D. Isaacs (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004) 68-75.

a pattern of loss and consolation (Greenfield 1972, 214). From this perch, we may pay particular attention to the specific 'fusion' in Tolkien's works of *Anglo-Saxon* Catholic thought and Anglo-Saxon heroism (ibid., 35-36). That is, as Jerold Frake's (1988, 89) succinctly called it, the "Romano-Christianized Anglo-Saxon tradition." Gerard Hynes (2012, 133) suggests further, that "[M]ore important, however, than any direct exposure to Boethius' Latin text may be Tolkien's familiarity with the Old English version traditionally attributed to King Alfred." This tradition may more accurately reflect the nature of the Eldar's illustrative narrative. As a consequence, this discussion grounds itself in the Old English translation of Boethius rather than Boethius' original Latin work, and relies heavily on Jerold Frakes' study[34] of the differences between the OE text and the Latin text and Irvine and Godden's recent *The Old English Boethius*.[35] The differences between the two versions of the *Consolatio* will be emphasized as the discussion progresses.

Firstly, however, it will be helpful to the discussion to expound upon the terms of the modes as they are used here. Fate, *wyrd* and providence are the three modes in which Ilúvatar's will is at work. This is a slightly different construction than both versions of the *Consolatio* which uses a dichotomy of either *fatum* and *fortuna* in the Latin text or *wyrd* and *foreþonc* in the Old English translation. In Tolkien's *Legendarium*, however, the functions are specific enough to warrant three categories instead of two which may account for the Elvish problem. The structure of this discussion will first introduce the three modes of authority, followed by a detailed exploration of *wyrd*, the second mode of authority within the framework of the Alfredian tradition. And lastly, the discussion turns to the third mode of authority – providence (*foreðonc*) and how it interacts, dances, with *wyrd* through the technique of interlace.

[34] *The Fate of Fortune in the Early Middle Ages: The Boethian Tradition* Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988.

[35] Cambridge: Harvard University press, 2012.

1. *Ordo* and the Modes of Authority

Tolkien, Boethius, and Alfred are all in agreement in that the nature of the universe is divinely ordered (*ordo*) (Hynes 2012, 134). But Tolkien and the Alfredian text differ from Boethius in that there is a difference in what God (Ilúvatar) ordains as what *must* happen and what *can* happen. This difference loosens "the rigid causality of Boethius' thought and addresses providence in terms more in line with Tolkien's notes"[36] (Hynes 2012, 137). This 'wiggle-room' results in a cosmically ordered but materially and temporally loosened order where *wyrd* is subservient to providence and divine prescience is no check on man's activity (Stanley 2000, 92). "*Wyrd* is subordinated to providence, just as *fatum* is" (Frakes 1988, 95-96). Both Helen Freeh and Paul Kocher support this hierarchal view that "Middle-earth is not a fated realm, though freely made choices often produce fatalistic consequence. Even so, the apparently fated outcome could have been favourable had people chosen rightly" (Freeh 2015, 62; see also Kocher 1980, 174). This stress on action in Alfred and Tolkien significantly differs from the stress on thought in Boethius:

> Boethius is concerned with our freedom to think while Alfred is concerned with our freedom to act. Alfred stresses that God 'rewards everyone justly according to his deed', which places a tremendous amount of autonomy and responsibility on human free will and human action. (Hynes 2012, 138-39)

Or, perhaps, Elvish free will and action.

While it is Freeh and Kocher's view that Arda is not a fated realm, this discussion suggests that Arda is indeed a fated realm that allows for tremendous free will and individual action. That is, Arda is a fated realm in the sense of our first mode of authority that binds the Elves to the constraints of Arda for all time. Simultaneously to the movement of the first mode of authority, the second mode makes it *seem* to those involved that Arda is a fated realm with fatalistic consequences, but this is in fact mutable depending on the choices made as

[36] Cf. J. R. R. Tolkien, "Notes and Documents: Fate and Free Will." *Tolkien Studies: An Annual Scholarly Review* 6: 183-188.

Freeh and Kocher argue. Which brings us to a closer look at our first mode of authority, *fatum*.

The first mode, the mode of 'Fate' seems to be a more distant and abstract force in the *Legendarium*, a passive dance partner who appears to be benevolent fate in general. That is, the *fatum* that Jerold Frakes (1988, 15; 17) refers to in Virgil as "synonymous with destiny as ordered by the divine will of Jupiter, the true governor of the cosmos" which is " subsuming seemingly fortuitous events under the heading of *fatum*, the cosmic order." The Elves perceive this mode as their destiny to remain in Arda until the end of days and have embedded the concept into their language. Tolkien created a linguistic root that expressed the Elvish view of this fate as

> MBAR 'settle, establish' (hence also, settle a place, settle in a place, establish one's home) also to erect (permanent buildings, dwellings, etc.); extended form *ṃbar'tă* 'permanent establishment' > *fate* of the world in general as, or as far as, established and pre-ordained from creation; and that part of the 'fate' which affected an individual person, and not open to modification by his free will. (*Fate*, 184)

This mode of authority more or less remains in the background of the narrative, merely swaying to the music, but serves an important purpose for the distinction between Men and Elves. Men do not share this 'fate', theirs is the gift of death that releases them from the circles of the world.

The fate of the Elves that the Music binds to Arda is a benevolent one which simply represents a temporal state of affairs, that is the unfolding of Ilúvatar's themes within the confines, from the beginning to the end, of Arda. This is much different from the *wyrd*, the doom that binds the Elves to a Germanic heroic narrative. As this first mode is rather passive, there is not really much more to say for our purposes other than to acknowledge its existence within the ordered cosmos of the *Legendarium.*

The second mode of authority is *wyrd*, the mode that affects the narrative of the Elder Days. *Wyrd* dances wildly and violently throughout Arda until it is satisfied and it is only occasionally led by providence when the dance needs to follow the prescribed steps.

Nonetheless, this is the mode that is mutable and open to modification by free will although at first glance it seems contradictory to state that *wyrd* is mutable. Afterall, didn't the poet of *The Wanderer* claim just the opposite? Didn't he poignantly tell us on line 5b, *Wyrd bið ful aræd*?[37] Does this not encapsulate the theory of Northern courage, where the Elves' valour "can only be proved by their fighting a losing battle, with defeat foreordained and foreknown" (Phillpotts 1991, 5)? Is this not the story of 'the long defeat'? Yes to all the questions above, however it is also illusory and veiled for both the Elves in the *Legendarium* as well as for our ancient Germanic poets. In the fusion of new and old (Introduction, p. xxiv), the Alfredian tradition shows otherwise: Wisdom states, "This mutable fate which we call *wyrd* acts according to his providence and his design, as he plans that it should be" (*ADCP*, IV, pr. vi, 6, 349).

Which brings us to the third mode of authority: providence (*foreðonc*). The early Christians believed that "The providence of God refers to His direction and care over all creation. God's sovereignty refers to the fact that God is the supreme Ruler and Lawgiver of the universe"[38]. Kathleen Dubs (2004, 135) simply adds

> [P]rovidence is the divine reason itself, the unfolding of temporal events as this is present to the vision of the divine mind; fate is the same unfolding of events as it is worked out in time, as we perceive it in the temporal world. We human beings are unable to know providence. All we can know is fate.

Tolkien, however, does not use the word *providence* (Flieger 2009, 154-55; Hynes 2012, 134-35), rather, Tolkien purposely avoided obvious parallels while retaining the essence of the idea. Here he uses the word Authority as a gloss for providence and sovereignty, as in the "Authority that Ordained the Rules" (*Letters*, 202) (see, Chapter I, p. 16). He is very clear that Ilúvatar, his godhead, is the ultimate authority in the universe:

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[37] "Fate is very inflexible" Trans. Elaine Treharne, *Old and Middle English c. 890—c. 1400: An Anthology*, ed. Elaine Treharne (Malden: Blackwell, 2006), 45. However, according to Tom Shippey " wyrd biþ ful aræd does not mean "fate is inexorable" (as it is generally translated) but "what's done is done", with which there's no arguing." (cited from Tom Shippey's peer-review of this paper)

[38] A *Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*, sv. 'Sovereignty and Providence of God'.

> But the One retains all ultimate authority, and (or so it seemed as viewed in serial time) reserves the right to intrude the finger of God into the story: that is to produce realities which could not be deduced even from a complete knowledge of the previous past for all subsequent time (a possible definition of a 'miracle')." (*Letters*, 235)

Paul Kocher (1980, 16-17) noted that these miracles of Authority, these "uncaused supernatural events … new creations out of nothing" are a "necessary and liberating element [which] freed Ilúvatar from his own world, from the chains of causation, which ran through it by means of physical, psychological, and other natural laws." Authority, then, has built in a *deux ex machina* within the confines of Arda. Miracles that dance subtly and lightly in and out of the narrative using a mode that is mutable and open to modification by free will.

2. Mode of *Wyrd*

But the second mode requires a more thorough look as the seemingly immutable *wyrd* of the Germanic tradition reveals a greater complexity, one which may indeed be mutable. This complexity is what the Alfredian tradition attempted to comes to terms, by subordinating *wyrd* to God's will and the divine plan. E. G. Stanley (Stanley 2000, 85-87) found five different aspects of *wyrd* in Anglo-Saxon literature. Stanley's third aspect is the function we are most concerned with here, in which "the meaning of the word is something like 'final event, final fate, doom, death' that is connected with the elegiac mood inherited from paganism" (ibid., 86, 95). This mode of authority is a judicial and penitentiary one, but it is not one that is arbitrary, wanton, or malicious (ibid., 98). It may seem immutable to those who are ignorant of the divine plan (pretty much everyone except God) but it actually serves a corrective function in the unfolding of divine will, an "executrix of divine justice" (ibid., 100). This corrective aspect of *wyrd* and its Germanic mood and tenor is most manifest in *The Doom of Mandos*.

The term "Germanic," however, conjures *a priori* an idea of ancient paganism in part due to nineteenth century scholarship on the subject (Introduction, p. xviii). What had been

thought of as pagan, for example the historical figures upon which the characters of heroic epic are based upon, Klaus von See (1971, 148; 151) convincingly shows as Christian.[39] Thus, as discussed in the introduction, "Germanic" is problematic when applied to any field outside of historical linguistics. By following Trahern's suggestion of viewing the literature "as a body of writing which has no known antecedents in a pagan Germanic past but which occasionally addresses, as part of the subject matter of both its fiction and its philosophical, historic and homiletic prose, pagan times and beliefs." Doing so, allows us to envision the "moods and attitudes of characters conceived dramatically as living in a noble but heathen past" (Introduction, xxii). The beliefs, moods and attitudes that concern us here are what Tolkien described as Northern courage and its sister *wyrd*.

This courage is, in Tolkien's view, the 'heroic temper' of both Scandinavia and England that shares in an "absolute resistance, perfect because without hope" (ibid., 21; Ker 1904, 57). *Wyrd*, the hero's doom, is inextricably tied – fused – to this perfect, hopeless heroic resistance. The late Edward Irving, Jr., (1989, 127; 152) writing in the context of Wiglaf's heroic temper and the desire for the dragon's treasure, states "… a hero's high destiny is a mysterious fusion of his own freely chosen act, his *willa*, and the fate ineluctably in store for him, the *gifeðe*, the given. That force field that pulls him onward toward doom and glory is stronger than greed" and further: "[T]he Germanic mind habitually prophesizes doom. Doom is unavoidable." Fëanor seems to embody Irving's view of the heroic temper when we read his reply to the Herald of Mandos who just spoke the doom. Fëanor himself,

[39] "Es ist ein altes Vorurteil, die germanische Heldensage sei durch und durch heidnisch und vom Christentum verunglimpft und unterdrückt worden … Erst dem unvoreingenommenen Betrachter wird die merkwürdige Tatsache bewußt, daß die meisten Sagenhelden bereits Christen waren, nicht nur Dietrich von Bern, Alboin und Turisind, sondern auch Gunther und Siegfried (wenn er historisch ist): um 416 traten die linksrheinischen Burgunden auf Beschluß ihrer Landsgemeinde zum katholischen Glauben über, und 430, als ein hunnisches Heer die rechtsrheinischen Burgunden bedrohte, ließen auch diese sich von einem gallischen Bischof taufen. Sechs Jahre später, 436, wurden die Burgunden unter ihrem König Gundahari, dem Gunther (Gunnar) der Heldensage, von einem hunnischen Heer, das im römischen Sold stand, überfallen und vernichtet. Daß das Nibelungenlied die Burgunden als Christen auftreten läßt, entspricht also durchaus der historischen Wirklichkeit." Klaus von See, *Germanische Heldensage: Stoffe, Probleme, Methoden* (Frankfurt: Athenäum Verlag, 1971), 148; 151.

with the defiance of the Germanic hero, further prophesizes his own doom: "and this doom I add: the deeds that we shall do shall be the matter of song until the last days of Arda" (S, 95, cf. Chapter I, 17). Irving's "force field" pulls Fëanor (and the Noldor) toward fulfilling his Oath and seeking glory (*lof ond dom*) in the form of songs sung until the end of days.

Recent scholarship, however, has questioned *Wyrd* as a 'Germanic' concept. While various scholars such as Rudolf Simek (2007, 374, s.v. Wyrd) believe that "[*wyrd*] ought not to be brought into dispute as evidence for a belief in fatalism among Germanic peoples;" others, such Gerd Wolfgang Weber, E. G. Stanley and Dorothy Whitelock question its 'Germanic' nature in part, if not wholly.[40] There are convincing arguments that the concept is not pagan at all, but rather "an influence of Roman, Christian literature on West-Germanic vocabulary" (Frakes 1988, 87). For Weber, in his influential doctoral study, *wyrd* is influenced by the late antique tradition of *Fortuna-Fatum* (Weber 1969, 47). Stanley, like Weber,[41] suggests that "[I]t is difficult, lastly, to be sure that the conception of *wyrd* in Old

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[40] Cf. E.G. Stanley, *Imagining the Anglo-Saxon Past: The Search for Anglo-Saxon Paganism and Anglo-Saxon Trial by Jury* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000); Gerd Wolfgang Weber, *Wyrd: Studien zum Schicksalsbegriff der altenglischen und altnordischen Literatur* (Bad Homburg v. d. H.: Verlag Gehlen, 1969); and Dorothy Whitelock, *The Beginnings of English Society* (London: Penguin Books, 1952).

[41] Jerold Frakes 1988. *The Fate of Fortune in the Early Middle Age: The Boethian Tradition*. Edited by Albert Zimmermann. Vol. XXIII *Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters*. Leiden: E. J. Brill. pp.87-88 Frakes adds that "Weber first rejects etymological relationship as a basis for semantic identity. A second *caveat* is also prefaced to his study, concerning the influence of Roman, Christian literature on West-Germanic vocabulary. This influence was especially strong on *wyrd*, since the late antique concepts for fate and Christian predestination had so permeated the intellectual and spiritual world of the literate Anglo-Saxons, that one might well ascribe the frequent occurrence of *wyrd* in Old English prose and poetry simply to this influence.

Thus, Weber rejects the notion that the heathen Germanic concept of *wyrd* was diluted by Christianity to the extent that it occurred only rarely in medieval texts in the 'old' deterministic meaning. Rather he sees the development of meaning beginning with the very general *Geschick* and becoming progressively more fatalistic as a direct result of the late antique tradition of *fatum/fortuna*… Perhaps such a concept existed, but we have not the slightest evidence that it did."

"Im Gegensatz zu A. Wolf nehme ich also nicht ein ‚Abblassen' der Bedeutung von ‚gewyrd' [und mithin ‚wyrd'] an, demzufolge ein alter Sinngehalt, unabdingbares fatum´ zu der Bedeutung „das, was dem einzeln […] geschieht, […] sein ‚Schicksal´(verblaßt)" abgeschwächt wäre, sondern ich sehe umgekehrt in dies Ælfric-Stelle ein Zeichen dafür, daß, ‚gewyrd` gerade in der Zeit, für die man auf Grund des christlichen Einflusses mit dem ‚Verblassen´ eines germanisch-heidnischen fatalistischen Sinngehalts rechnet (A. Wolf, L. Helbig), zum vollgültigen Ausdruck des fatalistischen Prinzips wird: Der Entwicklungsgang verlief m. E. also umgekehrt *von* der blassen Bedeutung ‚Schicksal', die Wolf ermittelte, *zu* der Bedeutung ‚Schicksalszwang', ‚-notwendigkeit'. Den Anstoß hierzu gab indessen keine Renaissance germanischer Ideen, sondern der im Verlauf des Mittelalters immer stärker werdende Einfluß der spätantiken, Fortuna-Fatum'-Tradition, sei es nun, daß sich der Fatalismus im Prädestinatianismus oder im Sternenglauben äußerte." Gerd Wolfgang Weber. 1969. *Wyrd: Studien zum Schicksalsbegriff der altenglischen und altnordischen Literatur*. Bad Homburg v. d. H.: Verlag Gehlen. p. 47.

English literature is not primarily Christian, that *wyrd* is not derived from Boethius' *Fortuna* rather than from one or all the norns" (Stanley 2000, 87-88). Indeed, the Old English translation of Boethius attributed to King Alfred glosses *wyrd* as "*fortuna*, *fatum* and even, in a qualified sense, *casus*" (Frakes 1988, 83). Boethian thought has been examined at length in Tolkien's work but here we should pause and consider specifically the fusion of old and new in the Alfredian Anglo-Saxon *Consolatio* that only seems to have alluded to the pagan past (Frank 2010, 92), or at the very least the *mood* of the pagan past.

Alfred accepts *wyrd* in his translation of Boethius as a corrective and punishing force (Frakes 1988, 98) subservient to God (or Eru Ilúvatar in our discussion). The two salient aspects of *fortuna* that find places in the Alfredian system, however, are: 1) the grantor of worldly goods, by means of whose gifts man's actions in the world are punished or corrected; 2) the gifts themselves, which causes man's various states of fortune. Alfred does not unite these functions into one entity, as does Boethius (in *fortuna*), but divides them among three individual entities: *Wisdom*, the grantor; *woruldsælða,* the goods; and *wyrd*, the state of fortune. These modifications, radical as they are, do not destroy the Boethian metaphysical system, but rather transform it into a new system which still resembles that of the *Consolatio* and reveals Alfred's concern to reconstruct the system of the *Consolatio* in his own terms as a conceptual whole (Frakes 1988, 122).

To view an Alfredian concept of *wyrd* in the *Legendarium* we may keep in mind that Tolkien expressed his wishes to write a romantic fairy-story (*Letters* 144) which included the elements of medieval literature that he knew best. However, until we reach the pivotal character of Fëanor, there is nothing particularly "Germanic" or heroic in the narrative history of the Arda. So far the narrative is one of cosmological creation and not one of man's (or Elves') titanic struggle against the force of fate. The narrative needs to become 'storial', it needs a Fall.

Of course, to say that fate and providence plays a role in Tolkien's *Legendarium* because he needed a story is unsatisfactory. Fate and providence must operate within the internal logic of his sub-created world.

In Tolkien's fiction, *doom* is a word having the older, "triple significance of judgement, decree, and destiny" (Freeh 2015, 67). Alfred uses the metaphor of a great cosmic wheel in which the closer one is to the nave the closer one is to God and the movement of God's plan does not disturb one as much. However, once one begins to fight against the divine will, one moves along the spokes to the felly where the movement of the wheel affects the individual much more acutely. Frakes (1988, 167-68) explains the metaphor as such

> The closer one is to God, the unmoving nave of the wheel, the less one is subject to movement and thus the less one is involved in *wyrd*, the felly of the wheel. Man's position is plotted along the spokes of the wheel, according to his acceptance or repudiation of the *control* of *wyrd*. Those who renounce *þis eorðlice lif* (129, 29) are the nearest to God, while those who seek earthly goods are subordinate to *wyrd* … One must bear in mind, however, that Alfred does not deny all value to *þis eorðlice lif* and the material goods which it brings. Instead, only those goods are valueless which are used without regard for the divine plan; the primary misuse stems from man's greed.

That is the basis on which we may view the conjuring of *wyrd* in *The Silmarillion.* When Fëanor refuses Yavanna's request, he moves along the spokes of the wheel, further and further from the nave to the felly as his heart hardens with defiance of the "gods," his pride and possessiveness grows. The effects cause him to commit more and more horrendous (yet very much heroic) deeds, which have the effect of solidifying his *wyrd*, his doom, until Fëanor finally reaches the felly. There, he perishes in a fiery and heroic death. The structure of the metaphorical wheel consists of both the heroic code and *wyrd*, they are both inextricably linked. Doom and glory, in the sense of *lof ond dom*, has particular resonance. F. Anne Payne (1974, 25) also connects the heroic code with *wyrd*:

> As far as human society is concerned in the poem [*Beowulf*] the patterns of obligation are determined by the heroic code which is analogous to the 'wheel of Wyrd.' As with the wheel, there is with the code a strain of the inexorable demand that its requirements be met. The code, like the wheel, binds men together, provides the standard for determining the directions of good and evil action, of aspiration and

> failure. Men and monsters are seen in relation to it. The laws of the code, like Wyrd, provide the balances for human inadequacies and failures.

The connection Payne makes illustrates the functioning of the metaphorical wheel as we discuss the Doom of the Noldor, with its own inexorable demands. As in *Beowulf* and other works of heroic literature, *wyrd* is the both corrective and balancing nature of the divine plan and the hero's response to that corrective nature is his Northern courage. The interplay of the two constitutes the mood of the work.

3. Worldly Goods and their Perversion

Finally, the last aspect of Alfred's translation that is relevant to our discussion is the focus on worldly goods, gift-giving (thereby using the goods wisely in accordance with the divine plan) and the regulating, judicial function of *wyrd*. Simply put, *wyrd's* corrective function, in Alfred's view, also applies to worldly goods. Alfred finds all worldly goods are gifts from God, the ultimate gift-giver. When we misuse these gifts, it is an affront to God. Indeed, the perversion of the good is a major theme of Tolkien's view of good and evil as it manifests within Arda – evil as *privation boni* (Honegger 2004, 252) and this view is in agreement with Alfred, Boethius and other Church Fathers.[42]

As we now turn to Fëanor and his invocation of *wyrd*, we might keep in mind that Eru Ilúvatar is the grantor of all gifts (*woruldsælða*) and *wyrd* is the state of fortune, that is the *Doom of the Noldor* that results from Fëanor's perversion of those gifts (in this case the Silmarils) by his own greed and possessiveness. The issues briefly outlined here now make themselves clearer as we return to Fëanor and the heroic narrative of the Elves.

[42] Cf. Thomas Honegger, 'Tolkiens moralischer Kosmos' in *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch* 45: 239-259. 2004.

4. Fëanor Conjures *Wyrd*

We begin in the text with our 'story', the first movement of our dance, which moves on an appropriate note of tragedy: the refusal of Yavanna's request to Fëanor for the Silmarils. As we've seen in Chapter I (p. 9) and the Introduction (xxii), Fëanor possesses Germanic and heroic characteristics and has an exemplary function *ad malum exemplum* of all that Tolkien criticized within the heroic code of Northern courage. Beginning with Fëanor's fateful decision, we witness the criticism that Tolkien expressed in his academic writing and correspondence as it is dramatized in the exemplary nature of the history of the Eldar (Chapter III, p. 41). Walter Haug draws our attention to this technique in the vernacular medieval German tradition:

> The exemplary nature of history gives poetry a specific function, namely *lêre* ('teaching'), since it lifts historical events from their actual linear sequence and sees them simply as a reflection of the changing relationship between God and his people. In the face of the absolute, history is reduced to a series of isolated incidents, a mere collection of exempla. (Haug 2006)

Fëanor, and the history of the Eldar, shows us what it means to choose to pervert Eru's gifts by excessive pride and possessiveness, and it also shows the changing nature of the relationship between the Elves and Ilúvatar as the punishment of *wyrd*, the 'long defeat', attempts to correct the original misdeed of Fëanor.

Here, the discussion backs up a bit to the Darkening of the Trees and the initial perversion and misuse of gifts, violation of proper gift-giving, and the subsequent activation of *wyrd* as a judicial balancing force (cf. Chapter III, p. 29). Verlyn Flieger (2009, 151) for instance, notes that "[T]he contradiction resides in the simultaneous presence in his [Tolkien's] invented world of two opposing principles, fate and free will, imagined as operating side by side, sometimes in conflict, sometimes independent." And she goes on further to say "[T]he trouble lies not with free will, but with fate." However, this may not necessarily be the case if we consider the role of Northern courage in the history of the Elves and their fate within Arda. In Tolkien's *Legendarium*, Fate (in the second mode of *wyrd*,

particularly Anglo-Saxon thought on *wyrd*), is inextricably woven together, 'fused' (*BMC*, 20), with the heroic imagination and the northern temperament of iron will. F. Anne Payne (1974, 34) writes of *wyrd* as

> the weight man's noblest efforts are anchored to; the heroic imagination, his highest form of perception and commitment, is all that gives him freedom in the face of the knowledge that what he strives for will, in the end, be seen as inadequate.

While the providence of Eru Ilúvatar's music is already always present in Arda, *wyrd* is conjured within Arda by this refusal to Yavanna and further firmly established by the Kin-slaying and subsequent *Doom of the Noldor* until it is broken by Galadriel's eucatastrophe on the cusp of the Fourth Age (Chapter V, p. 90). Until that point, the *Legendarium's* narrative engages in a discursive dance between *wyrd* and providence which subtly affects the Elvish-Germanic story and plot. It is a dance to the Music of the Ainur on the dance floor of Arda.

Free will and freedom of choice are the first crucial elements in our Alfredian dynamic. In the *Consolatio*, the Prisoner confirms to Wisdom

> It is as you say that God gives freedom to everyone to do whatever he wishes, good or evil, and you say that God knows everything before it happens; and you say that nothing happens unless God wishes or permits it, and you say that it must all come about as he has decided[43]. (*ADCP*, V, p 32, i, , 383)

Fëanor exercises his Ilúvatar-given freedom of choice, yet that freedom of choice is motivated by his possessiveness. Verlyn Flieger (2009, 166-67) rightly points out that this is a crucial moment in the narrative in that Fëanor refuses Yavanna request for the Silmarils: "This thing I will not do of free will" (*S*, 83) but in Flieger's view, the Elves do not have free will[44]. Flieger's doubt notwithstanding, her notation of the 'event' demands more attention

[43] Ða cwæð ic: "Hit is þæt þæt ðu sægst þæt God selle ælcum men freedom swa good to donne swa yfel swæðer he wille, and þu sægst þæt God wite ælc þing ær hit geweorðe; and þu sægst eac þæt nan þing ne geweorðe bute hit God wille oððe geðafie, and þu sægst þæt scyle eall faran swa he getiohhod hæbbe."

[44] For a full discussion of free will and the Elves, see: Verlyn Flieger, "The Music and the Task: Fate and Free Will in Middle-earth." *Tolkien Studies: An Annual Scholarly Review* 6 (2009): 151-181.; and Thomas Fornet-Ponse, ""Strange and free" — On Some Aspects of the Nature of Elves and Men." *Tolkien Studies: An Annual Scholarly Review* 7 (2010): 67-89.

> It seems *wyrd* in all senses of the word. Tolkien has again muddied the waters by suggesting that if Fëanor's response had been different, that the difference might have affected his subsequent deeds. But now (*my* [Flieger's] *emphasis*) his choice brings on the Doom of the Noldor. Free will can apparently invite fate. As noted earlier, *doom* is derived from Anglo-Saxon *dòm*. While its primary meaning is: "I. judgement, decree, ordinance, law," it has also a rare usage listed as IV. "Will, free will, choice, option" (Bosworth-Toller). Thus, Fëanor's impractical choice to deny Yavanna the Silmarils, and his consequent oath to pursue Morgoth bring on the choice of the Noldor to follow him, which leads to their Doom. Though that doom is spoken in the voice of Mandos, it is the Noldor who in effect doom themselves. (Flieger 2009, 167)

Keeping in mind Alfred's translation, Tolkien's waters do not seem muddied at all but rather highly sophisticated writing. It is in full agreement with the 'Romano-Christianized Anglo-Saxon tradition' especially as Ida Gordon (1979, 47n) phrased it "*[W]yrd* is often equated in Christian poetry and homily with the workings of God's will, especially with reference with the Doom to come…" Because of Fëanor's excessive possessiveness (Flieger 2002, 110; Shippey 2005, 273-76) is inherent in his character, he believes that the Silmarils are his by right: Fëanor "seldom remembered now that the light within them was not his own" (*S*, 70). Coincidentally, in speaking of jewels in general, Wisdom admonishes *Mōd*: "In fact, the excellence of the beauty that is in the jewels is theirs, not *yours* [meaning mankind]"[45] (*ADCP*, II, p vii, iv, 69).

In Tolkien's Alfredian order, Ilúvatar is the supreme creator and gift-giver, the One, in which the inspiration, the light, the trees, etc. were given to Arda through the mediation of Yavanna, who sub-created the light. Fëanor, simply by his character-traits, is blind to the fact that he is merely a sub-sub-creator (although highly 'gifted' one in the *crœft* of talent). Once again, Wisdom drives the point home: "You can be grateful that you have had good use of my gifts. You cannot claim at all that you lost anything of your own"[46] (ibid. II, P V, viii, , 39).

In Alfred's *Consolatio,* Frakes reminds us that, "Mankind's greed [or Fëanor's possessiveness] is so predominant that Wisdom can no longer exercise control over his own

[45] Hwæt, sio duguð þonne þæs wlites þe on þæm gimmum bið, bið heora næs eower.

[46] Þu meaht þæs habban þanc þæt þu minra gifa wel bruce. Ne miht þu no gereccan þæt þu þines auht forlure.

servants and has even been drawn to false goods himself (18, 1-3) Since the goods have a divine origin, according to Alfred, this perversion of them by human greed is an attack on the natural, divine order of the cosmos" (Frakes 1988, 105). Fëanor's refusal is an unwise use – a perversion of his gifts – both of his talent and of the material Silmarils. This, of course, has enormous consequences; consequences that drive our story. The most salient are the effects of the *wyrd* he has immediately activated and the chain of cause and effect which leads to the Doom and the Germanic narrative. What is at play here is his freedom of choice, and if chosen wrongly, the attention of Ilúvatar is brought down upon the chooser/actor in the form of *wyrd*:

> Man, in his right to choose, to dislocate the texture of things because he lacks omniscience, performs acts which require the direct attention of God. This attention Alfred calls Wyrd, the work that God does every day (128.18-20) … Since, in the same passage, Alfred makes it clear that all other events in the universe are set by natural law from the beginning of time, the work of God can be drawn forth only by those beings free to disrupt the perfect pattern of things. Wyrd is the balance that keeps the free choices of men from rending the universe astray. The universe must operate in terms of an order of its own and if men's choices threaten it deliberately evil, or merely humanly inadequate, Wyrd comes against them. (Payne 1974, 18)

The heroic nature of Fëanor makes him free to disrupt the "perfect pattern of things" and furthermore, there is no need for an obvious divine intervention here: Ilúvatar can simply rely on "the natures of Fëanor and his sons being what they are" (Kocher 1980, 26). Richard Purtill (1984, 124) notes that "Tolkien plainly means to say that Fëanor made the wrong choice, showing how it led to disaster for himself and for those who follow him, how the first evil choice led to murder and treachery and other crimes" – *ad malum exemplum*.

Wyrd is invoked for its judicial aspect to punish the violation of misuse of gifts and gift-giving by Fëanor's error of choice. This is a seemingly malevolent aspect of *wyrd,* but it is not evil. Rather, since it corrects and punishes, it is *aduersa fortuna* and deemed good at a cosmic level of the divine plan (Frakes 1988, 98). To those who are unable to conceive the divine plan, however, *wyrd* may seem wrathful. For example, what applies to *Beowulf* below also applies to Fëanor:

> Wyrd is the force that eventually destroys the lives of the violators of unknowable universal order in the world of *Beowulf*. It is the agent in the most terrible experience of the day of death. It is the opponent of man in the strange area of the most intense perception and consciousness. Though it may hold off for a while, the individual in the end makes an error in choice and releases forces whose consequences at the moment of crises he controls no longer and Wyrd is victorious. Wyrd affects only those with the strength and energy to enter that space where order is at first contingent on their choices. When they fail as they inevitably do because they are human, Wyrd's dreadful power compensates for their inadequacies. While it is completely accurate to say in epic and tragedy in general that the hero seeks his fate, it is totally erroneous to say he seeks his Wyrd. Wyrd is alien to the individual; it is the force which balances his errors, punishes him, at best tolerates him. Wyrd is always the Other. (Payne 1974, 15-16)

As Flieger has pointed out, *wyrd* comes into existence from the Elves themselves. Born in the discourse, more likely than not, between Fëanor and the Valar that disrupts Eru's unknowable order. That is, the themes that even the Valar are not fully cognizant of in the Music of the Ainur. Ilúvatar's "order" seems to be contingent on the strength and energy of Fëanor's character, creations and actions in this matter as Fëanor himself has the courage to rebuke the Herald of Manwë: "… and it may be that Eru has set in me a fire greater than thou knowest" (*S*, 91). To paraphrase Frakes, Fëanor may be referring here to a plan of *foreþonc* (of which *wyrd* is subservient), that remains as a plan in God's mind, along with *prouidencia* and thus not within the realm of *materia*. That is, however, until the plan is executed and it enters the material realm as *wyrd* yet still subservient to *foreþonc*, or God (Frakes 1988, 166).

Wyrd is then given a sort of consistency in the form of the Oath and call to everlasting darkness. It is explicitly stated after the Kinslaying, appropriately, by the Herald of Mandos and reified in the Prophecy of the North. That it may "hold off for a while" is evident in the proclamation of Mandos but it is not very long, as Tolkien tells us, before the first "fruits" are felt after the Great Burning of the ships "[T]his was the first fruits of the Kinslaying and the Doom of the Noldor" (*S*, 97). At this point and at many points thereafter in the narrative, the dance of *wyrd* certainly seems wrathful. It takes providence to lead *wyrd*, and to intervene when *wyrd's* steps appear in danger of dancing outside the divine plan.

5. The Mode of Providence and its Interlacing Dance

In his 1954 edition of *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory*, Eugène Vinaver (Vinaver 1954, viii) astutely observed that Malory's work

> was an elaborate fabric woven out of a number of themes which alternated with one another like the threads of a tapestry: a fabric whose growth and development had been achieved not by a process of indiscriminate expansion, but by means of a consistent lengthening of each thread … [W]ith great consistency, though with varying degrees of success, he endeavoured to break up the complex structure of his sources and replace their slowly unfolding canvas of recurrent themes by a series of self-contained stories.

Tolkien, in his 'heroic romance' uses the interlacing technique to remind us of its connections to much more than is outside the confines of the self-contained story. The themes of Northern courage, *wyrd,* and providence dance in and out of the story and always remind us of the world in which their movements take place. These reminders are always "merely implicit" (Vinaver 1971, 85).

This technique of interlace, or what C.S. Lewis calls 'polyphonic' (1954, 97) and Tasso called 'natural multiplicity' (Davenport 2004, 271), weaves various story threads that "tangle and untangle, cross and recross, in accordance with a carefully prearranged plan of narrative coincidences and interdependencies" (Ryding 1971, 16). In other words, it is "a device of interweaving a number of separate themes" (Vinaver 1971, 71). Vinaver (ibid., 76) cites C.S. Lewis (C.S. Lewis 1954, 98) to further explain that

> The (improbable) adventure which we are following is liable at any moment to be interrupted by some quite different (improbable) adventures, there steals upon us unawares the conviction that adventures of this sort are going on all around us, that this vast forest (we are nearly always in a forest) this is the sort of thing that goes on all the time, that it was going on before we arrived and will continue after we have left.

Interlace is evident in the story of the Eldar Days, in particular the three 'Great Tales' which interlace improbable adventures among themselves and yet, as Vinaver suggests of Malory, are self-contained tales in and of themselves.

The three ‘Great Tales’ are *Beren and Lúthien*, *The Children of Húrin*, and *The Fall of Gondolin*. A reader may pick up anyone of these stories and read a self-contained tale, even if they have not read *The Silmarillion*, or any of Tolkien’s works for that matter. Nevertheless, the Great Tales all interlace with one another. For example, the meeting of Tuor with the Finarfins Gelmir and Arminas (*FG*, 152-55) interlaces with their meeting Túrin in Nargothrond (*CH*, 171-75) as does the espying of Túrin at the pool of Ivrin: “But they knew not that Nargothrond had fallen, and this was Túrin son of Húrin, the Blacksword” (*FG*, 179). The same episode, from Túrin’s point of view, is only narrated in the first paragraph of Chapter XII (*CH*, 182) and he does not notice them. Therefore, *The Children of Húrin* does not reciprocate the interlace of this particular episode. Another example is Mablung, when he states “More do I dread this errand of the King than the hunting of the Wolf” (ibid., 203) which interlaces with the hunt for the tormented wolf Carcharas in *Beren and Lúthien*: “That great wolf had run in madness through all the woods of the North, and death and devastation went with him. Mablung alone escaped to bear the news of his coming to Thingol” (*BL*, 139). These are but a sample, but one may find much, much more throughout Tolkien’s entire *Legendarium*. Indeed, the use of interlace in this fashion gives the feeling that “this is the sort of thing that goes on all the time, that it was going on before we arrived and will continue after we have left” which achieves “some depth in the treatment of characters and situation” (Davenport 2004, 273).

We may note that, in the ‘Great Tale’ *The Fall of Gondolin*, The Lord of Waters Ulmo has his own ‘divine plan’ in motion. No doubt under the auspices of the Great Authority, but Ulmo’s plan is explicit rather than implicit and self-contained within the tale. Yet it still operates under the same conditions as Ilúvatar’s providence mode. In the last version of the ‘Great Tale’, the Noldo Gelmir tells Tuor “Farewell! And think not that our meeting was *by chance*; for the Dweller in the Deep moves many things in this land still” (FG, 155, emphasis mine)

The movements of providence's dance are usually, but certainly not always, provided by a clue referencing 'chance'. Readers of *The Lord of the Rings* will recognize Tolkien's "finger of God" and its use with technique of interlace. Richard West (2003, 86) notes that

> … the technique of interlace can mirror the ebb and flow of events; it may also show purpose or pattern behind change. Tolkien has emphasized this by a motif threaded throughout the work. Gandalf says cryptically that Bilbo was *meant* to find the ring by someone other than its maker, and that Frodo also was *meant* to have it.

This technique of interlace shows itself very early in the *Quenta Silmarillion.* For example, when "on a time it chanced that Oromë rode eastward in his hunting" and found the Firstborn awakened so that "the Valar found at last, as it were by chance, those whom they had so long awaited" (*S*, 45-46). In the narrative of the Eldar, providence begins its dance steps very early on.

By using the motif '*by chance*' Tolkien is in effect negating chance within the *ordo* of the *Legendarium*. Nothing happens 'by chance' (OE adv. *wêas*) in Arda. This, too, may be supported within the framework of the Alfredian *Consolatio*:

> The unexpected result (*unwenunga gebirede*, 140, 10-11) of an act is similar to Aristotle's rare/unusual event. That chance is not an efficient cause, but only incidental to an efficient cause, is present in Alfred's denial that anything occurs outside of God's ultimate control. And that such events are teleological is assumed in this subjection to God's beneficent order. (Frakes 1988, 119)

It is only the epistemological gap (ibid., 120) (that the Valar share but to much less a degree) that prevents Elves and Men from fully understanding the divine *ordo* of Ilúvatar. Hence Tolkien's second part of the motif '*if chance is what you call it*'. Wisdom, in the Alfredian text, denies that Aristotle's farmer who happened to find gold buried in his field was caused by any chance whatsoever, rather it was providence who led the farmer to the riches as part of the divine plan:

> Therefore it was not found by chance, but divine providence guided the one whom he wanted so that he hid the gold and again the one whom he wanted so that he found it.[47] (*ADCP* V, p 31, ii, 379)

[47] … ac sio godcunde foretiohhung lærde þone þe he wolde þæt þæt gold hydde and eft þone þe he wolde þæt hit funde.

And it is so in the *Legendarium*: chance does not exist but simply that uncanny and unexplained events are ultimately, and cryptically, attributed to this mode of Authority.

Lastly, there are providence's moves to lead and guide *wyrd* along the divine plan. Here we are speaking of 'ill chance'. For example, when Túrin demands to be led to the hillock by the Crossings of Teiglin where Finduilas the Elf-maiden was recently buried, the captain of Brethil turns to his men and says

> 'Too Late! This is a piteous chance. But see: here lies the Mormegil himself [Túrin, laying in grief upon the mound], the great captain of Nargothrond. By his sword we should have known him, as did the Orcs.' (*CH*, 195)

This is one more step of Túrin's doom or *wyrd*. It was caused by a fateful decision of Túrin and its effect will be to cause Túrin to make another fateful decision. Nonetheless, it was not chance, piteous, ill or otherwise: it was the divine plan all along. In the Alfredian framework, states Frakes (1988, 120),

> Only in the reduced sense 'unexpected or inexplicable event' (which is nonetheless governed by providence) does *casus* survive, and this only in the general Alfredian term *wyrd*: þe we þonne hatað wyrd, þonne se gesceadwisa God, þe ælces monnes ðearfe wat, hwæt wyrcð oððe geþafað þæs þe we ne wenað" (132, 20-22). *Weas gebyrian* is obliterated, and *wyrd* remains, as the often unexpected and epistemological unfathomable event, which nevertheless stems from the divine plan.

In Tolkien's *Legendarium*, like Alfred's *Consolatio*, chance is obliterated in the divine dance of Authority. If chance is what you call it.

6. Conclusion

The dance of Authority in Arda spans the entire *Legendarium* from *The Silmarillion* and the 'Great Tales' to (although not discussed here) *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. It is a series of interactions, of causes and effects, between three modes of Authority. Firstly, *fatum* as the Music of the Ainur which binds all living things, except Men, to the confines of Arda; secondly, the *Wyrd* invoked by the Germanic hero Fëanor's freedom of choice to refuse Yavanna, which is seemingly malevolent to those it affects but in truth is another aspect of

divine will. *Wyrd* acts within an Alfredian framework as an agent of judgement, punishment and correction; thirdly, providence as divine will which at crucial times will insert itself as "the finger of God."

Tolkien wrote a series of self-contained stories that, with great consistency, interwove various themes, but by no means limited simply to the theme of divine Authority and its modes discussed here. His *Legendarium* does not lend itself to either a reduction to a single theme or to a mechanical division (Vinaver 2001, 545) but rather to a wide tapestry of interweaving narrative threads. The end result, as C. S. Lewis (1954, 98) put it, is a very "lifelike consistency" in that

> all the adventures bear the stamp of the world that produced them, have the right flavor, make each other probable; in its apparent planlessness – they collide, and get mixed up with one another and drift apart, just as events in the real world; in its infinity – we can, so obviously, never get to the end of them, there are obviously more and more, round the next corner.

The stories have the right flavor of Northern courage due to Fëanor's choice and collide and drift apart at various points in the narrative. The *wyrd* of the Noldor seems like a planless malevolent fate but is actually a correction in the overall divine plan. Providence at times turns on the floor. It is all a dance to the Music of the Ainur and choreographed by Eru Ilúvatar according to the divine plan.

Chapter III

The 'Wyrdwrīteras' of Elvish History: Northern Courage, Historical Bias, and Literary Artifact as History

Wyrdwrītere[48] means 'historian' or 'chronicler' in Old English, literally a writer of *wyrd*. As we saw in the last chapter, J. R. R. Tolkien's *Legendarium*, the history of the Eldar is quite literarily *wyrd* (Chapter II, pp. 32-33) invoked by Fëanor and pronounced by the Herald of Manwë as the *Doom of Mandos*. It is quite fitting, therefore, that the writing of *wyrd* would find a place within Tolkien's *Legendarium* and indeed be essential to it.

Furthermore, historians or chroniclers are narrators: narrators of temporal facts put into the context of a story which we can understand. The narrator, or narrators, of the history of the Elves, from the *Quenta Silmarillion* to the end of the Third Age are no different. They are the *wyrdwrīteras* of Arda; the chroniclers of Elvish history. Their history is chronicled as a compilation of stories, either by one or many narrators, but the stories are united by the common theme of the theory of Northern courage – the Germanic warrior ethos, inescapable doom of the long defeat and a common elegiac tone of what was is now lost. Cristine Barkley (1995, 258) directs our attention to an omniscient narrator, a *wyrdwrītere* who writes "in broader purpose or theme. But he's still controlling to what the reader will be exposed" - or the audience in Middle-earth for that matter. The question then becomes for what purpose does the *wyrdwrītere* control what the reader will be exposed?

This discussion picks up where others have left off. It does not explore *who* wrote or chronicled the history, but rather the *how* and *why*. To examine the broader purpose or theme this discussion, for the most part, approaches the history of the Elves as a metanarrative (Genette 1988, 84-95) as written by the unnamed intradiegetic narrators - the *wyrdwrīteras*.

[48] s.v. "*wyrdwrītere*." Clark Hall, J. R. *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*. 4th ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. Reprint, 2007. 1894.

That is, it looks at the text as one that is written in Middle-earth for an audience in Middle-earth. At this narratological level, it becomes clearer that the history of the Elves is one that is both *morally* ideological and *politically* ideological as the *wyrdwrīteras* exposit the theme of Northern courage in their tales.

The narrative technique used by the Eldar may be associated with the medieval (and classical) tradition of the *exemplum* (Davenport 2004, 11) in which the examples used in this discussion – the deaths of Fëanor and Fingolfin – reenact the "actual, historical embodiment of communal value" (Scanlon 1994, 34). This enactment, whether in medieval literature or Tolkien's fiction, can be ideological or historical but its moral (*sententia*) "effects the value's reemergence with the obligatory force of moral law" and therefore the *exemplum* may be considered a narrative enactment of cultural authority (ibid. 1994). The political rhetoric and *sententiae* of the Noldorin *wyrdwrīteras* embedded in the text show how *The Silmarillion* (and by extension the Elvish history continuing into *The Lord of the Rings*) develop a sense of depth and authenticity that we find in primary world histories and the medieval *exemplum*.

The *Legendarium's* text(s) of Elvish history enact the moral rather than the moral simply glossing the narrative. In doing so it establishes a form of authority which beckons the (secondary-world) audience to heed its lessons and act accordingly (Scanlon 1994, 33). The *Silmarillion's* '*exempla*', like the primary world's classical tradition, refers to the deeds of famous rulers and heroes of Arda and provides "an illustration of the social norm to be taught, of a certain social action to be shunned" (Kemmler 1984, 62-63) from the cultural authority of the text(s) and its narrators and the code of Northern courage in both its positive and negative aspects.

1. Tolkien and the theory of Northern courage

Before we move to Tolkien's Arda, a few points should be expounded upon about Tolkien's views from the introduction. Firstly, one of the reasons to keep Tolkien the author in mind is because, as Dirk Vandebeke and Alan Turner (Vanderbeke 2012, 8) have recently noted, "[…] the author necessarily keeps one of his feet firmly in the primary world and its reference systems; in Tolkien's case this includes not only traditional myths and fairy-stories, but also the whole body of literature and philosophy […]." One of these reference systems that shows up in the *Silmarillion* text (and the entire *Legendarium*) are his academic writings. Tolkien's *The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth*, both an academic essay and a brief, fictional *exemplum*, is a fine example of his didactic use of fiction to exhibit his views of Northern courage (Chapter II, p. 29). In his essay (Introduction, p. xxv) Tolkien emphasizes this poetic line:

> *'Will shall be sterner, heart the bolder,*
> *spirit the greater as our strength lessens'*[49]

This is J.R.R. Tolkien's (*TL*, 124) translation of the famous lines 312-313 in *The Battle of Maldon*. Words that Tolkien thought were "a summing up of the heroic code." While, as noted in the introduction (p. xxiv), Tolkien's contemporary, E.V. Gordon (1963, 24) looked at the poem as "the only purely heroic poem extant in Old English," Tolkien was more suspicious of what the poem had to say. For Tolkien, these words held their clarity not because they were spoken by the hero, Earl Beorhtwold, but because they were spoken by a sworn liegeman of Beorhtwold's *comitatus*, "[…] for whom the object of his will was decided by another […]" (*TL*, 144). The lord's deciding of his retainer's will, invoking the heroic ethos of indomitable will, was only something to be done in need and duty and most certainly a vice, something to be shunned, when invoked for personal pride "[…] in the form of the

[49] *Hige sceal Þe heardra, heorte Þe cenre, / mod sceal Þe mare Þe ure maegen lytlað*

It should be noted that both characters discussed here are unequivocal in their courage and abide by the ethos expressed in these lines from *The Battle of Maldon.*

desire for honour and glory […]" (ibid.). The only "extant heroic poem in Old English" for Tolkien, then, was "not a celebration of the heroic spirit but a deep critique of it and of the rash and irresponsible attitudes it created."

A second point concerning the author's view on Northern courage brought up by Tom Shippey (2005, 81) was the nature of Germanic heroes. Weland[50], for instance is a child-murderer and rapist and "[T]o us [in the 21st century], the fact that this retaliation [Weland's vengeance] for robbery, slavery, torture and mutilation is no excuse" (Shippey 2018, 33). Heroes of the ancient Germanic world were often extremely cruel and "morally distasteful" [ibid.]. And as Shippey (2005, 81) also notes, this was an obstacle to recreating a like world in Middle-earth. There are no Gunnars or Ingelds or Welands in Middle-earth. However, the closest Tolkien *does* come to the Germanic hero, as we saw in chapter one, is in his portrayal of Fëanor and his sons. And, once again, like Beorthnoth, Fëanor dramatizes and shows us the vices of Northern courage (*ad malum exemplum*) while the Fingolfians on the other hand, show us the virtuous elements of Northern courage (*ad bonum exemplum*). That is, "[…] the heroism of obedience and love, not pride or willfulness, that is the most heroic and the most moving […]" (*TL* 148) such as the death of Finrod Felagund, who sacrificed himself (and by extension of cause and effect, his kingdom) in the dungeons of Sauron (*S* 204). Finrod did this not only because of the oath to Barahir and his kin, but also out of love for Beren.

The other side of the Northern courage coin is the *wyrd* with which we began this discussion. In Germanic heroic literature, the heroic ethos and fate are inseparable as this example in *Beowulf* illustrates:

> unfægne eorl, Wyrd oft nereð
> Þonne his ellen dēah[51]. (*Beowulf* lines 572-3)

[50] For Fëanor's connection to Weland, see Chapter I, pp. 10-11.

[51] *Often, for undaunted courage/fate spares the man it has not already marked.* (Heaney, *Beowulf* 572-3)

As chapter two showed us, *Wyrd*, 'final event, final fate, doom, death' (Stanley 2000, 86) is what happens to the hero, his courage is the manner in which he faces the circumstances of his fate. When Alfred the Great translated Boethuis' *De Consolatio Philosphiae*, he interpreted *wyrd* as God's plan translated into action in the world, as simply what happens in the world (Frakes 1988, 95; 98). Alfred's interpretation of *wyrd* also encompasses the choices an individual makes in their use of their gifts or 'goods'. A wrong choice may initiate *wyrd* as a chain of events which, eventually corrects the wrong choice.[52] That this *wyrd* manifests itself shortly afterwards as a judgement, or doom, in the *Doom of Mandos* is not evidence of a malicious or arbitrary punishment but rather as a corrective measure in order to fulfill Eru's plan. E.G. Stanley (2000, 98-99) translates the relevant passage of A. Brandl's 'Zur Vorgeschichte der *weird sisters* im "MacBeth"' in which *wyrd*

> […] does not do so [give Beowulf victory over the dragon] wantonly, nor of course maliciously, but in execution of a judicial or penitentiary office, […] It is in character with her very being to act in conformity to laws; the Germanic fatalistic view of life gains something of a foundation in natural philosophy as a result of this characteristic […] But at the same time, the *Beowulf*-poet thinks of *Wyrd* as subservient to God, who himself is wont to execute as office of the same kind […]

As Brandl suggests, this *wyrd* serves a judicial function, punishing those who step outside of God's plan. In the case of Tolkien's *Legendarium*, this judicial function sets in motion the cycle of cause and effect that we call the Elder Days.

In addition to setting in motion the Germanic narrative of Elvish history, *wyrd* functions as the same sort of judicial force in the Doom of Mandos. And while *wyrd* may be seen as a retribution from the Valar by the Elves, it is really subservient to Eru's plan – after all, if Fëanor had not chosen as he did, Ilúvatar's other children, Men, would not have awoken with the rising of the Sun and Moon and, arguably, we wouldn't have a story.

[52] "Mankind's greed is so predominant that Wisdom can no longer exercise control over his own servants and has even been drawn to false goods himself (18, 1-3). Since goods have a divine origin, according to Alfred, this perversion of them by human greed is an attack on the natural, divine order of the cosmos." (Frakes 1988, 105)

Lastly, concerning Tolkien's skillful use of *wyrd* as a guiding force of the Elvish narratives, Tom Shippey (2002, 145) notes that Tolkien knew the etymology of both wyrd[53] (from OE *weorþan* 'to become') and fate (Latin *fari* 'to speak', that is "'… that which has been spoken' sc. by the gods"). Both are rather different in that *wyrd* also "means 'what has become, what's over', so among other things, 'history' – a historian is a *wyrdwritere*, a writer down of wyrd. *Wyrd* can be an oppressive force, then, for no one can change the past; but it is perhaps not as oppressive as 'fate' or even 'fortune', which extend into the future (ibid.)." Tolkien's Elvish narrators are chronicling past events of courage and tragedy within their history: they are the *wyrdwrīteras* of Elvish history in Middle-earth.

2. The History of the Elves as a literary work and a work of secondary-world history.

With one foot in the primary world and one foot in the secondary world, we may treat the history of the Elves as a "fictional historiography", which is a literary artifact not only concerned with actual events and the "beauty of the story" (Cristofari 2012, 176) but also, I suggest, as *Volksgeschichte* or *Origo Gentis* of the Eldar with a particular point of view and agenda. Indeed, as Gergely Nagy points out, "[…] these are not simply *stories* but *history* […]" (2003, 243). As such, they have a, or many, undramatized narrator(s) within the secondary world.

Firstly, as a literary artifact of secondary world history, the text has a secondary world narrator and a secondary world audience[54]:

> […] an audience that exists in the narrator's world, that regards the characters and events as real rather than invented, and that accepts the basic facts of the story world regardless of whether they conform to those of the actual world […]. (Herman 2012, 6)

[53] Yet it also has a corrective and judicial function, E. G. Stanley identifies contexts in Old English poetry where *wyrd* is seen not only as an event but also in the sense of a doom or judgement in connection with the word *fræge*, signifying 'final fate, doom, death' as well as (*gewyrd*) 'that which is agreed upon, is decided, is settled; destiny'. We can't help but think of the Doom of Mandos in this sense of wyrd. (Imagining 86-87)

[54] Discovering *who* the secondary audience is seems to be as problematic as discovering *who* the narrator/s is/are. However, we do have at least one secondary audience in the *Legendarium* who are well described in *The Lord of the Rings*: Elves, Men and hobbits in Rivendell (*FR*, II, I, 233-38).

The secondary world audience not only accepts the facts, but in the *Legendarium's* case, many witnessed and participated in those facts. Galadriel, for one, travelled to Middle-earth with the *Flight of the Noldor*, Elrond was quite literally born out of a great tale, Beren and Lúthian are real for Aragorn – not just in the lay he sings but as his ancestors. On the intradiegetic level of the textual world, "the lore of the Elder Days contextualizes the whole story and the allusions *for the characters themselves*, for whom the *Silmarillion* tradition is accessible, quite regardless of the reader in the primary world" (Nagy 2003, 243). The lore of the Elder Days is not only quite accessible, but was literally witnessed by many of the protagonists themselves.

This chapter primarily concerns itself with the third, intradiegetic level of the text as a secondary world historical corpus of stories. The question of who the narrators are, or at least the narrators' point of view, is answered by Tolkien, himself: "[…] As the high Legends of the beginnings are supposed to look at things through Elvish minds […]" (*Letters*, 145) . The high Legends attempt to "reconcile" creation myth, providential design and the events of Elvish history (Freeh 2015, 65). Like primary world illustrative narratives, the narratives of the Elvish *wyrdwrīteras* so intertwine their rhetorical complexity and their historical specificity that it is nearly impossible to separate the two (Scanlon 1994, 7).

Nonetheless, because of the discontinuity of chronology and various styles and narrative modes, it is nearly impossible to read the Elvish history as the product of one historian (Cristofari 2012, 179).[55] Yet one may read Elvish history as a sort of *Gesta Romanum*, or perhaps a *Gesta Noldoraria*. That is, a collection of tales of the distant past, from varied and wide-spread sources, in which the deeds of heroes and kings may be moralized (Davenport 2004, 59) within a thematic context. For Kemmler (1984, 181),

[55] Dennis Wise offers a counter-argument: "I see *The Silmarillion* as a "completed and coherent entity," a single *unified* text in which all five stories are structurally linked and thematically interlocked where all the seeming inconsistency and strange silences are actually part of an intentional rhetorical strategy devised by a single, anonymous author of high moral seriousness." Wise, Dennis Wilson. 2016. "Book of the Lost Narrator: Rereading the 1977 Silmarillion as a Unified Text." Tolkien Studies: An Annual Scholarly Review XIII.

> the thematic context of illustrative narratives is determined by a set of particular norms and values. These norms and values (themes) may already be observed in a particular community – or they may be intended by the author … to be observed and adhered to in a community.

For the community of the Noldor, the norms and values fall within the framework of Tolkien's theory of Northern courage. Indeed, the theory of Northern courage is enshrouded in a unified melancholic tone of loss and decay throughout the stories (Vanderbeke 2012, 15), which harmonizes with a theme of the defiant fatalism of the 'long defeat'.

> the tone of the different narrations is far less diverse than their content. Whoever tells the tale is invariably enamored of names, be it places, persons or things, and the tone is always somber and slightly melancholic… (ibid., 14)

Regardless whether there is one or many narrators of the stories, the stories all possess a tone of elegiac pathos and simultaneously praise a theme of ethos in which "defeat is no refutation" (Shippey 2005, 177).

Nevertheless, the Elvish histories and great tales are not without either political slant or moral focus. Dennis Wilson Wise (2016, 117) observes, the Elvish minds (or mind, singular, for Wise) in chronicling or narrating the Elvish history, maintain a moral focus:

> […] moral focus throughout his story: the subtle warnings to the reader to avoid evil because evil will ultimately destroy itself; the affirmation that divine grace *will* intercede in history, though *only* after much sorrow; and that the single best way to handle one's fate is through humility, submission to the higher powers, and – if necessary – self-sacrifice. Whether these particular virtues are salutary or the final word must depend on the individual reader. But what is certainly magnificent about The Silmarillion is the skill and craft utilized by the book's writer to entreat – to guide, to seduce – the reader to that writer's particular vision of the Good.

The moral and political focus of our Elvish narrators' presents an "[…] Elvish viewpoint of the world and its history, and the kindred of the Elves it is essentially Noldorin but distinctly anti-Fëanorian" (A. Lewis 1995, 160). The anti-Fëanorian focus is not by any means an ideological power doctrine, but rather its ideological power is "constituted by its rhetorical specificity as narrative" (Scanlon 1994, 31). For example, when Fëanor refuses Yavanna as discussed above, the text tells us that "[…] yet had he said yea at the first, before the tidings came from Formenos, it may be that his deeds would have been other than they were. But

now the doom of the Noldor drew near" (*S,* 84). This is a rhetorical statement of judgement and speculation, not of historical fact: if only Fëanor had chosen differently, then doom would have been avoided. The blame is laid upon Fëanor.

The portrayals of Northern courage and its sister, *wyrd*, differ greatly when portraying the Fingolfians and Fëanorians. Our *wyrdwrīteras'* moral focus and theme of Northern courage is one that is politically charged. Tolkien's "Elvish minds" have an agenda and parallel agendas may be analysed within our own primary world histories. For example, Walter Goffart (2012) examined four authors that Tolkien should have been aware of if not read, who certainly wrote their histories with a political or ideological point of view. Goffart writes:

> The Constantinopolitan perspective of Jordenes overshadows his Gothic theme. Gregory of Tours was primarily concerned with current events rather than with the Franks, and he was intent on portraying the depravity of all men rather than a subgroup among them. Bede was Northumbrian rather than English and cared more about the Christian face of his compatriots than about their ethnic peculiarities. Paul waited so long to write about his fellow Lombards, applying his pen to other subjects, that he left their history unfinished. (ibid. 2012, 6)

In our Elvish history, like Jordenes' *Getica*, the narrator/s' Fingolfian perspective overshadows their theme of Northern courage and chronicling of events. The Fingolfian perspective, while simultaneously thematic, has "a propensity toward the evil example, toward narratives which demonstrate the efficacy of their *sententiae* by enacting violations of them" (Scanlon 1994, 81). What follows is a quick analysis which illustrates the propensity toward the evil example.

3. Fëanor's battle with Morgoth vs Fingolfin's battle

Hayden White, in his essay "Historicism, History, and the Imagination" (1985, 107-110), provides a model for the rhetorical analysis of historical writing[56]. As we have

[56] Hayden White chose a passage at random of A. J. P. Taylor's *The Course of German History: A Survey of the Development of Germany* to analyze.

established within the secondary world of the text, *The Silmarillion* may be read as a history written by Elvish chroniclers for a secondary world audience and therefore an analysis treating the text as historical writing is appropriate. For White, there are two levels of historical discourse: the *facts* and the *interpretation* of those facts that tells a story. The discourse is the combination of both facts and interpretation "… which gives to it the aspect of a specific structure of meaning that permits us to identify it as a product of one kind of historical consciousness rather than another" (ibid., 107). White, as an historian, is concerned with historical documents and the tales of the *Legendarium* are just that. It is also suggested that the tales of the *Legendarium* are illustrative narratives. Scanlon (1994, 96) identifies the same means of discourse that White identifies but in different terms

> As narratologists have convincingly argued, it is precisely the gap between *dictum* and *factum* which enables a narrative to produce meaning. By emphasizing certain aspects of the *factum* and minimizing or eliding others the *dictum* implicitly assigns the *factum* a specific significance. Without this form of reference there can be no narrative.

Facts and interpretation, *factum* and *dictum*, are rhetorically manipulated to emphasize judgements of good and bad behavior and good and evil deeds. The judgement is more often than not in the eyes of the beholder, that is, of the narrator.

The passage of Fëanor's death provides an illustrative example of Northern courage *ad malum exemplum*. Most of the information in these three paragraphs is scantily covered in the *Later Quenta* and *Quenta Silmarillion*.[57] All the variations, however, do not invalidate the argument made here. In the published *Silmarillion*, Fëanor's death is narrated as follows:

> For Fëanor, in his wrath against the Enemy, would not halt, but pressed on behind the remnant of the Orcs, thinking to come to Morgoth himself; and he laughed aloud as he wielded his sword, rejoicing that he had dared the wrath of the Valar and the evils of the road, that he might see the hour of his vengeance. Nothing did he know of Angband or the great strength of defense [sic] that Morgoth had so swiftly prepared; but even had he known it would not have deterred him, for he was fey, consumed by the flame of his own wrath. Thus it was that he drew far ahead of the van of his host; and seeing this the servants of Morgoth turned to bay, and there issued from Angband Balrogs to aid them. There upon the confines of Dor Daedeloth, the land of Morgoth, Fëanor was surrounded,

[57] C.f. Tolkien, *The Lost Road and Other Writings*, 249 and *Grey Annals*, §45-§46 (*The War of the Jewels* 17-18). See also Douglas Charles Kane, *Arda Reconstructed: The Creation of the Published Silmarillion* 133; 139).

> with few friends about him. Long he fought on, and undismayed, though he was wrapped in fire and wounded with many wounds; but at the last he was smitten to the ground by Gothmog, Lord of Balrogs, whom Ecthelion after slew in Gondolin. There he would have perished, had not his sons in that moment come up with force to his aid; and the Balrogs left him, and departed to Angband. (*S,* 120-21)

Following the rhetorical model, we want to state the factual information (*factum*) of this passage, which is:

1) Fëanor does not halt his pursuit of the routing Orcs and leaves his vanguard behind.
2) The servants of Morgoth turn to meet Fëanor and Balrogs reinforce them from Angband.
3) Fëanor was surrounded by the enemy with a "few friends."
4) He fought long, surrounded in flame, and fell.
5) His sons and the vanguard finally reach him while the Balrogs retreat back to Angband.

Secondly, it is important to state what appears to be statements of fact but are really statements of judgement or interpretations (*dictum*):

6) Fëanor "in his wrath" charged the Enemy "thinking to come upon Morgoth himself."
7) "he *laughed* aloud as he wielded his sword, *rejoicing* that he had *dared the wrath of the Valar* and the evils of the road, *that he might see* the hour of his *vengeance.*"
8) He did not know of the strength of Morgoth's defenses, but the narrator makes clear that it would not have mattered "for he was *fey*, consumed by the *flame* of *his own wrath*."
9) "Long he fought on, and *undismayed*"

The first statement of judgement interprets Fëanor as 'wrathful' thinking to reach Morgoth himself. In the ethos of Northern courage, this action is congruent with revenge, whether in revenge for the murder of his father Finwë or, like Weland/Völund's motivation of possessiveness, for revenge of the rape of the Silmarils, or both. Or perhaps, simply looking at

the ‘fact’ (1) again, would it be plausible to interpret that fact as a simple battlefield challenge for single combat with Morgoth, like, for example, Hildebrand and Hadubrand?

The second statement of judgement again stresses vengeance and emphasizes the wild, ‘fey,’ almost berserker nature of Fëanor’s charge. It implies that Fëanor was out-of-control and manic by his laughter. Yet another interpretation is also plausible within the ethos of Northern courage, especially if we can imagine an account written by a Fëanorian chronicler. Would it be plausible that Fëanor was acting out his death song, with fewer words the better – *læjandi skalk deyja*?[58] Can we speculate, from perhaps another interpreter of this event, that Fëanor knew this was the hour of his death and that he chose its manner? [59] After all, under the umbrella of Northern courage, a hero is not defined by his deeds but by his death; not by victory but by his demise (Haferland 2010, 208; Shippey 2018, 37). This hypothetical interpretation seems to be as plausible as the interpretation of the next point (8) where it is stated that Fëanor did not know Morgoth’s defenses. The question is, how do we actually know what Fëanor himself was thinking at that moment? The last point once again emphasizes Fëanor’s out-of-control, manic rage: certainly, berserker-like rage is a trait of the heroes of Germanic heroic literature although in the context of the Eldar not a very flattering one. The last point (9) seems to, almost begrudgingly, recognize a valiant, undismayed, death. Fëanor dies a hero’s death, despite all of his perceived flaws, the one virtuous aspect that cannot be denied him is his Northern courage; that he died well – a point that Lewis also notices (1995, 162).

[58] ‘laughing shall I die.’ Cf. Tom Shippey, ‘Laughing I Shall Die’ pp. 86-91. Also consider the narrative of the *Grey Annals*, the sentence “Soon he stood alone; but long he fought on, and laughed undismayed, though he was wrapped in fire and wounded with many wounds.” Even more strongly supports such a reading. (*WJ* §45, 18).

[59] Consider, also, the Old English etymology of this particular word ‘*fey*’ (Clark-Hall, s.v. *fǣge* ‘fey,’ doomed (to death), fated, destined). Stanley (Imagining 86) remarks that […] wyrd occurs not infrequently in collocation with the poetic word fæge […] In these contexts the meaning of the word is something like ‘final event, final fate, doom, death’.” That Fëanor was *fey* may imply that this was his *wyrd*, his doom and may also support an alternative point of view, if we had the hypothetical Fëanorian narrator, that Fëanor chose how he would face his death, his *wyrd*, instead of a fatal mistake spurred on by a blind berserker rage.

By contrast, during the fourth great battle *Dagor Bragollach*, Fingolfin also charged Angband and this time it is stated that he personally challenged Morgoth to single combat, calling Morgoth "craven" (*S*, 178-79). The account is much too long to cite in full, however a few key sentences will show the rhetorical differences between the deaths of the two Noldorin leaders in which Fingolfin may be considered *ad bonum exemplum*.

1) "…Fingolfin beheld (as it seemed to him) the utter ruin on the Noldor, and the defeat beyond redress of all of their houses; and filled with wrath and despair he mounted upon Rochallor his great horse and rode forth alone, and none might restrain him."
2) "… all that beheld his onset fled in amaze, thinking Oromë himself was come: for a great madness of rage was upon him, so that his eyes shone like the eyes of the Valar."
3) "… for the rocks rang with the shrill music of Fingolfin's horn, and his voice came keen and clear down into the depths of Angband; and Fingolfin named Morgoth craven, and lord of slaves."
4) "But Fingolfin gleamed beneath it as a star; for his mail was overlaid with silver, and his blue shield was set with crystals; and he drew his sword Ringil, that glittered like ice."
5) "Thrice he was crushed to his knees, and thrice arose again and bore up his broken shield and stricken helm … Yet with his last and desperate stroke Fingolfin hewed the foot with Ringil, and the blood gushed forth black and smoking and filled the pits of Grond."
6) "Thus died Fingolfin, High King of the Noldor, most proud and valiant of the Elven-kings of old."

In the first excerpt (1), we may factually determine that Fingolfin mounted his horse and charged the Enemy and none were able to stop him. Rhetorically, however, his wrath is interpreted and judged as ignited by noble sentiments: he must save his people from ruin as a good king should. The narrator seems to know exactly how the situation "seemed to him" and

that his wrath is accompanied by despair in sharp contrast to the narrator's interpretation of Fëanor's personal reason of revenge for his father, revenge of the rape of the Silmarils, or both.

In the second excerpt (2), all that we can glean factually is that Fingolfin, like Fëanor, seemed filled with rage. But the interpretation of the "great madness" is not fey as it was with Fëanor. Rather, it is likened to the great hunter Oromë and causes his eyes to "shine like those of the Valar" and thus implies a 'holy' wrath that does not wildly consume him like the flame of Fëanor's own wrath.

The third excerpt (3), describes the hero's approach to the enemy. We know that Fingolfin blows his horn loudly and he goads Morgoth in his challenge. Rhetorically, however, this is described as 'clear' and 'shrill' and ringing the surrounding rocks. Nonetheless, we cannot be sure that Fingolfin's voice reached "into the depths of Angband" and this merely emphasizes the righteousness of the High King's actions in contrast to Fëanor's wild and 'fey' charge.

The righteousness of Fingolfin is further rhetorically highlighted in excerpt four (4). The imagery of the description, 'gleamed', 'star', the colors 'silver' and 'blue', crystals and swords that glitter like ice reinforce Fingolfin as *ad bonum exemplum* of righteous Northern courage. We notice, however, that excerpt five (5) lessens the rhetorical focus and emphasizes a more factual account of the duel without much rhetorical embellishment. Most of the adjectives describe actions readily observable by spectators: three times beaten down and three times returning to the fight, broken shields and blood gushing forth. The obvious, dramatical element of the excerpt is that the last stroke is 'desperate' as it suggests the King's state-of-mind at the moment of death. Lastly, number six (6) is purely rhetorical to the point

of being almost formulaic[60] like an excerpt of a posthumous panegyric to the "most proud and valiant of the Elven-kings of old" – *ad bonum exemplum*.

Alex Lewis (1995, 163) has also analyzed this same passage of Fingolfin's death and his conclusion, which deserves to be cited in full, supports the above analysis while emphasizing that the interpretive rhetorical narration adds to the historicity and depth of the Elvish *wyrdwrīteras*:

> Compare now, if you will the description of Fingolfin's battle with Morgoth (T. 1979b, pp. 184-5): We are given sixty-eight glorious lines of vivid description – yet no one else was there to witness the duel! This is all hearsay and legendary. Yet the detail is incredible: Ringil the sword of the High King glittered like ice and Fingolfin inflicted seven wounds on the foe. Morgoth bore down Fingolfin three times to the ground and the High King hewed at Morgoth's foot before he died. But this ties well with Elrond's family connection to Fingolfin, and so the bias reinforces the "historicity" of the work.

The two accounts show a discursive structure made up of facts and the interpretation of those facts (*factum* and *dictum*), however, the interpretive and rhetorical level foregrounds negative aspects of Northern courage in Fëanor's passage (he was fey with wrath) and backgrounds, or minimizes Fëanor's valour to one line[61]. On the other hand, while Fingolfin also charges the foe in "wrath" but his wrath is minimized while his glorious deeds are foregrounded. Both accounts are biased in favor of the Fingolfians, who wrote the history. The events do not "speak for themselves" or "tell their own story," the "narrativizing discourse serves the purpose of moralizing judgements" (White 1990, 3; 24). The narratives are certainly ideological in their representation of events through the figurative language they use and they

[60] We may recall that a similar formulaic statement is spoken by Gandalf to opposite effect (RK, V, vii, 854-55, emphasis mine): '*So passes Denethor, son of Ecthelion*,' … 'And so pass also the days of Gondor that you have known; for good or evil they are ended. Ill deeds have been done here; but let now all enmity that lies between you be put away, for it was contrived by the Enemy and works his will…'

[61] Lewis also notices the discrepancy in Fëanor's death "[…] Fëanor's demise is given a caveat: he is extremely courageous: "Nothing did he know of Angband or the great strength of defense that Morgoth had swiftly prepared; but even had he known it would not have deterred him…", but it adds "for he was fey, consumed by the flame of his own wrath" (T., 1979b, p. 126). This subtlety devalues Fëanor's courage by insinuating that it was a fit of battle fever or berserker action. Fëanor fought with many Balrogs (unlike Ecthelion who fought only one) but this battle is dismissed in six lines (ibid.). How skillfully the method of bias is woven into the story-line to make it seem closer to real history than to contrived events." (A. Lewis 1995, 162)

portray certain characters as just and good, on whose side the audiences would ally themselves (A. Lewis 1995, 158). In essence, the negative traits of Northern courage are placed on the Fëanorians although they also display virtues of Northern courage while at the same time the virtues of Northern courage are rhetorically emphasized when the account centers on the Fingolfians. White (1985a, 129) accounted for these shifts in perspective:

> The issue of ideology points to the fact that there is no value-neutral mode of emplotment, explanation, or even description of any field of events, whether imaginary or real, and suggests that the very use of language itself implies or entails a specific posture before the world which is ethical, ideological, or more generally political: not only in interpretation, but also all language is politically contaminated.

There are other examples of the one-sided Fingolfian nature of the narrative. Consider Maedhros' and Maglor's dialogue (*S*, 304) in which the only way the narrator may know what was said is by his own embellishment and emplotment. The conversation between Maedros and Maglor concerns whether they should abandon their Oath or attempt to fulfill it no matter how mad the attempt may be. Maglor ends the conversation by stating, "If none can release us, then indeed the Everlasting Darkness shall be our lot, whether we keep our oath or break it; but less evil shall we do in the breaking." The choice is between two evils chained to an oath, a choice found often in the Northern courage of Germanic heroic literature, because

> The quality of man is not known until he is sore beset, either by defeat in battle or by being placed in a situation in which he must do violence to his sense of right. Fate can put men and women into positions whence it seems impossible for them to emerge with honour. They are judged by their choice, still more, perhaps, by the steadfastness with which they carry out their chosen aim, never looking back … But the point is that there is a choice. It may be no more than a choice between yielding and resisting to the uttermost what is bound to happen: it may be a choice between two courses each of which is hateful. (Phillpotts 1991, 5)

The decisions are always are "hard decisions and bitter prices" (Shippey 2018, 81). Yet the question remains, who is there to witness their hard decision, who witnessed this exemplary motif of Northern courage? The answer is no one. This is an embellishment of a gap between events made by the narrator. Christofari (2012, 187) finds these embellishment of gaps within

the Elvish history as a symbiotic growth of history and legend which fuse into myth, in which the

> […] narratives originating in reality, but stylized and embellished (though this does not have to mean transformed) until they become meaningful in themselves. In this context, the question of authorship becomes extremely uncertain, to the point that the traditional role of author as go-between in the relationship between history and narratives of history seems inexistent. History is embedded in its narrative, and vice-versa […]

This embellishment (*dictum*), distinctly pro-Fingolfian which Tolkien creates, lends a "partisan nature to Noldorin politics" to the Elvish history and thereby enriches its depth (A. Lewis 1995, 161). The partisan bias, that is its ideological status, consists of two distinct but converging aspects. The first is its rhetorical specificity as we have seen in the deaths of the two Noldorin leaders and the second is the relation of the historical Elvish texts and the power dynamics of the Fingolfians who produced them. Scanlon (1994, 84) finds these two aspects as two sides of the same coin:

> [T]hese two aspects converge because they represent the two sides of a text's ideological status. To the extent a text is ideologically enabling, it participates in power relations. Yet it can participate in such relations only textually, that is, by virtue of its discrete rhetorical strategies.

The functioning of the ideological status, comprising of the two aspects, produces moral and cultural authority. It is not a static authority but rather active and dynamic. That is, the *exempla* of the two Noldorin royal houses are embedded in the histories of the Noldor: one a good example of heroic ethos the other an example to be shunned. Retelling these great tales throughout the ages not only confirms the moral authority of the Fingolfians, but reproduces it (ibid. 5) in the telling and further reinforces their moral and cultural authority. At the end of the Third Age, as narrated in *The Lord of the Rings*, there is no doubt of Fingolfian Elrond's authority. His story is known to many members of the secondary-world audience (who at times instruct the Hobbits of Elrond's story) and it always portrays him in the most favorable light (*dictum*). His reputation, derived from these histories, empowers him with enough

cultural and moral authority that even the most antagonistic members of the Ring Council fall silent and listen when he speaks.

4. Elrond's oath

At the beginning of this discussion, it was mentioned that the history of the Elves went beyond *The Silmarillion* and into the Third Age with *The Lord of the Rings*. This is fairly obvious but the continuity of the historical bias, or ideological status, of the *wyrdwrīteras* is interesting as it reflects the reproduction of cultural and moral authority. One example of the continuity is a dialogue between Elrond and Gimli as the Ring goes south:

> '[…] You may tarry, or come back, or turn aside into other paths, as chance allows. The further you go, the less easy it will be to withdraw; yet no oath or bond is laid on you to go further than you will. For you do not yet know the strength of your hearts, and you cannot foresee what each may meet upon the road.'
> 'Faithless is he that says farewell when the road darkens,' said Gimli.
> 'Maybe,' said Elrond, 'but let him not vow to walk in the dark, who has not seen the nightfall.'
> 'Yet sworn word may strengthen a quaking heart,' said Gimli.
> 'Or break it,' said Elrond. (FR, II, iii, 281)

Elrond is wise to not hinder the Fellowship by any potential conflict of loyalties. The wisdom of Elrond may be apparent simply because he is of the Eldar, but it is also imbued with the cultural and moral authority of the Fingolfians. As a Noldo of the First Age, Elrond is certainly aware of the power and devasting effect of oaths. Of course Gimli, although of the 'Free Peoples of Middle-earth', is an outsider to the Eldar-Mannish culture. While Gimli speaks of oaths as binding sources of strength and loyalty, Elrond speaks from the authoritative narratives that illustrate examples of tragedy due to binding oaths.

Oaths are motifs of heroic literature that often set up a conflict of loyalties and fall directly within the theme of Northern courage. Whether it is a conflict between loyalty to one's lord and the duty to die with him versus personal freedom,[62] duty to one's lord and duty

[62] Michael Swanton, ed. 'Cynewulf' in *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* (London: Phoenix, 755).

to one's kin or various other conflicts of oaths, loyalties and duty, the conflict between the oath-sworn is a staple of Germanic heroic literature. Chapter I suggested that this dialogue between Elrond and Gimli may refer back to the Oath of Fëanor (Chapter I, p. 14, n29). No doubt that Fëanor's Oath broke many hearts during the long defeat and it had even threatened Elrond's life as a boy (*S*, 297).

However, there is also another way to read Elrond's wisdom and reference to the tragic element of oaths as it applies to the Fingolfians. Recall that Elrond's uncle-in-law, Finrod Felagund, was rescued by Barahir of the House of Bëor during the *Dagor Bragollach*, the Battle of Sudden Flame. In response, Felagund "swore an oath of abiding friendship and aid in every need to Barahir, and in token of his vow he gave to Barahir his ring" (*S*, 176). A ring, it may be added, that Aragorn assumingly, as the descendent and heir of Barahir, happens to be wearing in the presence of Elrond during the dialogue above. In the *Beren and Lúthien* tale, Beren calls on Felagund who "knew that the oath he had sworn was come upon him for his death, as he had foretold to Galadriel." Furthermore, in the same passage, Felagund says to Beren,

> 'It is plain that Thingol desires your death; but it seems that this doom goes beyond his purpose, and that the Oath of Fëanor is again at work. For the Silmarils are cursed with an oath of hatred, and he that even names them in desire moves a great power from slumber; and the sons of Fëanor would lay all Elf-kingdoms in ruin rather than suffer any other than themselves to win or possess a Silmaril, for the Oath drives them […] Yet my own oath holds; and thus we are ensnared.' (*S*, 198)

Felagund is later slain by a werewolf while saving Beren in the dungeons of Tol-in-Gaurhoth, the fortress of Sauron. The passage is concurrent with Stanley's of *wyrd*-as-doom, a great slumbering power. But it also speaks of two oaths. The Oath of Fëanor, sworn to recover the Silmarils at all and any costs, as an 'oath of hatred', possession and vengeance while contrasting Felagund's oath to Barahir, and subsequently to Beren. Felagund's oath was given not in hatred or vengeance, but freely given in love and loyalty to friendship. Again, we are presented with both *ad malum exemplum* and *ad bonum exemplum* in the two prominent oaths

of the First Age. Both induced tragic events and endings, and both broke hearts as when Felagund perished, Beren "mourned beside him in despair" (ibid., 204). The illustrative narrations involving the two oaths give Fingolfian Elrond the gravitas and authority to shun any binding of oaths within the Fellowship.

A third way of reading Elrond's reaction to Gimli is pure ironic speculation. The text is silent whether Felagund's oath died with him or if there is some sort of obligation to keep it by his kin. We may wonder if it is plausible that Elrond feels some sort of moral obligation to Aragorn stemming from that oath. We know that Elrond provided sanctuary to the Chieftains of the Dúnedain, i.e. the descendants of Barahir (as well as descendants of his own brother, Elros) and the presence of Aragorn, the Ring of Barahir, and Elrond together may lead us to think so. We may also speculate that in aiding Aragorn to reclaim his throne, Elrond's own fatherly heart may be broken as Arwen chooses the fate of Men and he leaves for the Undying Lands. And that may be Elrond's *wyrd*. Nevertheless, the illustrative narrations of Northern courage (in this case the oaths) are once again contrasted between Fëanorians and Fingolfians, *ad malum exemplum* and *ad bonum exemplum* which parallel the views presented in Tolkien's academic essays and personal correspondence discussed at the beginning of this essay.

5. Conclusion

The history of the Elves, this chapter concludes, is a neatly woven tapestry of theme and tone in its unity of several stories. The goal is not different than the goal of *The Lord of the Rings* which "was to dramatize that 'theory of courage' which Tolkien had said in his British Academy lecture was the 'great contribution' to humanity of the old literature of the North" (Shippey 2005, 177). Nevertheless, Tolkien's reservations and criticisms may be seen in the illustrative narration technique used to narrate the fictional history of the Eldar.

The discourse of the dramatization forms two *exempla* throughout the narrative: the virtuous Fingolfian ethos and the impious Fëanorian ethos which are defined by the rhetorical

manipulation of *factum* and *dictum* as we see not only in classical and medieval *exempla* but in historical discourse as well. Tolkien uses partisan Fingolfian *wyrdwrīteras*, narrators or chroniclers, whose discourse "serves the purpose of moralizing judgements" (White 1990, 24) while simultaneously chronicling their own, secondary world history. The historical bias and moral authority of the Elvish *wyrdwrīteras* gives their entire history, in Alex Lewis' (1995, 164) words, "a realism far removed from mere contrivance." It's a realism in depth once realized in the heroic epics of Germanic literature.

Chapter IV

The Noldorization of the Edain:
The Roman-Germani Paradigm for Tolkien's Noldor and Edain in Tolkien's Migration Era

The Elder Days of J.R.R. Tolkien's *Legendarium* are reminiscent of our own history's Migration Era, a period approximately from CE 376 to CE 568, in which confederations of barbarians were acculturated and assimilated into the dominant hegemony of Rome. These acculturation processes were often violent and conflict-laden and subsequently recorded in Germanic heroic epics and Roman histories, which often emphasized the "deeds of brave men" (Jordanes *Get*., 315). Similar to our own Migration Era, Tolkien's Elder Days also chronicle the "deeds of brave men" and events that generate heroic epics such as The Great Tales. These Great Tales tell the stories of heroes from the tribes of Men[63] who migrated and settled in Elvish-dominated Beleriand and of their (often tragic but always heroic) relationship with the Eldar.

This relationship between the "threatened kingdoms" (Wolfram 1997, 21)[64] of the Eldar and the confederation of the Edain is indicative of the relationship between the Late Western Roman Empire and the Germanic confederations that settled within its borders. The structure of the relationship between Elves and Men is contingent upon questions of certain power relations, norms, and values; important too, is the status of the migrants as 'barbarians', who settle in a hegemonic 'superior' culture and its territory.

[63] Men are called the *Atani* ('Second-comers'). The first group of Men to migrate over the Blue Mountains form a sort of confederation and are subsequently called the *Edain*, a group which constitutes those first three kindreds to be named *Elf-friend*. These three groups of men are reminiscent of the tribes founded by the three sons of Mannus: *Ingævones*, *Herminones*, and *Istævones* (Tacitus, *Germ*. 2).

[64] Herwig Wolfram wrote that "only the interplay of kings and the power of fate allows creation of the heroic saga. The heroic saga derives its theme from the heroic pathos of a threatened or dying kingdom" (1997, 21). In Tolkien's First Age, the threatened kingdom(s) is Elvendom, the pathos is Northern courage, and the heroes are the great kings of Elves and the chieftains of Men. These are the conditions that allow for the heroic epics recorded in the *Silmarillion* and the Great Tales.

The Edain undergo a process of acculturation much like *Romanization* – or in the case of Tolkien's story, perhaps we may call it *Noldorization* (the Noldor being an elite *Stamm* of Elves who had returned to Beleriand from Aman, the Undying Lands). This Noldorization consists of vassal relationships, military support and buffer zones, the education of aristocratic youth in Noldorin royal courts, the language acquisition of Sindar (the language of the Grey Elves), and the adoption of new Elvish-influenced traditions and material culture. In effect, the Edain, like the Germanic confederations of the fourth and fifth centuries in the Roman Empire, progress through a three-stage process which transform their political units from *gentes* (the three houses) to *regnum* (ultimately, Númenor).

Most importantly, however, while this process of assimilation and accompanying power relationships liken the Noldor to the Romans on a structural level, the actual warrior ethos of these Elves resembles the Germanic Northern courage, and it is this heroic way of life that the Edain subsequently adopt. The adopted heroic culture begins to define these Men as a political-cultural unit through their own heroic deeds and ethos. Furthermore, assimilation of the political-cultural units generate and maintain material and cultural symbols; that is, Elvish artifacts such as the Ring of Barahir. These symbols are carried by the Edain aristocratic elite as core-traditions of their pedigree and authority as 'Elf-friends' within the Eldar's hegemony.

The process of Noldorization during Tolkien's 'Migration Era' of the First Age provides similar conditions as the process of Romanization and our own 'Migration Era', including conflict-situations that form the *Stoff* of the heroic epics of that time: heroic epics that greatly influenced the creativity of J.R.R. Tolkien.

1. The Ideological Framework of Noldorization

The process of both Roman and Noldorin cultural assimilation lies within a framework of ideology. Roman imperial ideology was by no means monolithic, and its process of

Romanization was one of dialectical cultural change (Millett 1990, 1). Additionally, Roman imperial ideology shifted in focus from expansion to stabilization. Starting with the reign of Hadrian (117 CE), Clifford Ando (2000, 40-41) notes that Roman ideology was one of unification.

> This ideology constructed the empire as an all-embracing collective by minimizing differences in culture and class and emphasizing the similarity of each individual's relationship with the emperor and especially the all-inclusive benefits of Roman rule. (ibid.)

Nonetheless, whether expansionist or unifying, Roman ideology formed the framework in which the empire executed the process of Romanization. Michael Kulikowski refers to this ideological framework as an *interpretatio Romana*:[65]

> This debate stems from a need to come to grips with the defects of our sources, all of which show us the barbarians through the prism of an *interpretatio romana*. That is, regardless of the origins and even self-perceptions of the authors, their writings belong to a classical, Graeco-Roman literary tradition. (2002, 72-71)

Following Kulikowski, we could possibly refer to the Noldor perspective, which informs the entire *Silmarillion* (1977), as *interpretatio Noldoraria* ; that is, the narrative of the events that we read is filtered through the ideological 'prism' of the Noldor chroniclers of Elvish history.

In the Roman context, this imperial ideology was "highly powerful" and flexibly incorporative "to emphasize the universalizing value system of Rome" (Hingley 2005, 55). For the Noldor, an ideological system is in place and serves not only their hegemony by universalizing Fingolfin values[66] but also to assimilate the Edain into its value system and

[65] The term *interpretatio Romana* appears once in Classical literature (Tac. *Germ.* 43.4) (Ando 2005, 41) and refers to "the Roman habit of replacing the name of a foreign deity with that of a Roman deity considered somehow comparable" (s.v. *interpretatio Romana*, *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (2012)). Kulikowski here expands the denotations of the term to include the interpretive views of barbarian cultures in the Graeco-Roman literary tradition.

[66] Hingley writes about "the creation of a 'Roman' culture that spread and, effectively, came to define a 'constellation' of cultures across the Mediterranean and parts of northern Europe. This new culture was first fully 'articulated' under Augustus, during the late first century AD, as Greek models were in effect re-projected in the context of the developing empire, to emphasize the universalizing value system of Rome" (Hingley 2005, 55). In the case of the Noldor and the Edain, it may not be warranted to call them a 'constellation', but the two groups somewhat merge in their values to become 'universal' among both the Eldar and Edain.

power structure. Cooperation rather than conquest is its mechanism which, like the Roman context, "was encouraged by the fact that there was a common self-interest" (ibid., 70).

As we saw in the last chapter, this ideological framework legitimizes the hegemonic order based on a system of beliefs (morals, norms, and values), and in Tolkien's legendarium it is represented within the illustrative, historical narrative of the Elves. This narrative along with its *sapientia* and *sententia* is written by secondary-world (Elvish) narrators for a secondary-world audience. It functions as an illustrative system of beliefs which "channels rather than stifles creativity" (Ando 2000, 23) and is therefore generative; that is, the illustrative narrative does not simply confirm its moral authority, but it reproduces it (Scanlon 1994, 5). Elvish moral authority emphasizes behavior (particularly heroic behavior) to be emulated and the tragic consequences of behavior to be shunned through narrating the history of the Elves and the Great Tales. Therefore, the lens through which we view the events in the history of the Elves is through the eyes of the Fingolfians and their moral authority. That is, our narrative(s) is filtered through the prism of *interpretatio Noldoraria*.

In the published narrative works, we have two accounts of Finrod Felagund's first encounter with the Atani: in *The Silmarillion*, Chapter 17, 'Of The Coming of Men into the West' (162-173), and Sador's story in *The Children of Húrin* (42-44). These accounts are, as noted, written in the secondary world by Elvish chroniclers for a secondary world audience. The Elvish chroniclers are presenting an illustrative, historical narrative of Middle-earth in the First Age, which, like all historical narratives, are "verbal fictions. The contents of which are as much *invented* as *found* and the forms of which have more in common with their counterparts in literature than they have with those in the sciences" (White 1985b, 82). Essentially, the narrator has to 'fill in the blanks' between chronicled events to place them into context.

This exemplary narrative illustrates a sort of acculturation process, or *Noldorization*, within the framework of Fingolfin ideology. It is not an aggressive conquering policy as

Rome sometimes engaged in but, rather, a voluntary, symbiotic endeavor on the parts of both the Edain and Noldor, at least according to the narrators. In the case of the first half of the first millennium, "Romanization is understood to be *at least as much a conscious activity of the inhabitants* of the conquered provinces as of the conquering Empire (itself no uniform entity). Yet *Roman*-isation it was nevertheless" (Halsall 2014, 71; my italics). Halsall further adds a few sentences later that "[t]he provincials bought into Roman culture for their own purposes but this facilitated the political unification and coherence of early Roman western Europe" (ibid.). These aspects of assimilation are also observed in the process of settlement of the Edain. While there is no "conquering" of the barbarian Edain by the culturally superior Noldor, there is an immediate and consensual establishment of a lord-and-vassal relationship. We have, essentially, a civilization versus barbarian or noble-savage relationship until, we could postulate, the *Akallabêth*.

Romanization was the Roman "emphasis moved towards the integration and Romanization of barbarian leaders, setting their actions and motives firmly within Roman ideology and politics" (MacGeorge 2002, 264). This Romanization traditionally included integration into the Roman economic system, local kings maintaining their power through Roman titles and artifacts, local elites adopting Roman administrative systems, auxiliary cohorts formed to support Roman legions, and the building of constructions with Roman-style architecture (Halsall 2014, 69-71). The Edain, similarly, form military cohorts (*CH*, 53) and integrate into the courts and retinues of the Noldor (and Turin even becomes a sort of "*magister militum*" of Nargothrond (*CH*, 163), see also Tuor in Gondolin (*S*, 288-89)),[67] whose culture and traditions align their actions and motives firmly within Fingolfin ideology and politics. This process of cultural integration resulted in, for example, the 'great deeds' that Barahir performed at the Battle of Sudden Flame.

[67] Specifically that of Felagund since the Fëanorians "paid little heed to them [sc. men]" (*S,* 165).

Usually *interpretatio Noldoraria* becomes clearer with the rhetoric the narrators use, such as statements of judgement which are disguised as fact: for example, Felagund's impressions of a "strange people" (the other) with "rude harps" (primitive craftsmanship), or his assertion that "they loved him, and took him for their lord, and were ever after loyal to the house of Finarfin" (*S*, 162-63). These statements rhetorically portray Bëor's people as the good, idyllic 'noble savages' who are loyal to and awed by the superior hegemony. The discursive narrative reveals the deeper meanings and views held by the chroniclers, which privilege a hegemonic noble-savage dichotomy in their accounts of the Edain.

2. Conflicting Ideologies of the Eldar

Within the narrative history of Tolkien's legendarium, there are two Elvish ideologies in conflict with one another. One is the ideology of the Fëanorians, and the second is the ideology of the Fingolfians. The ideology of the Fëanorians is rather clear. Their purpose is to regain the Silmarils at any and all costs.[68] The Fingolfians, on the other hand, have a quite different ideology. Finrod explains the Fingolfian ideology to the wise Edain woman Andreth: "To overthrow the Shadow, or if that may not be, to keep it from spreading once more over all Middle-earth – to defend the Children of Eru, Andreth, all the Children and not the proud Eldar only!" (*MR,* 310-11). The Finglolfian ideology is 'benevolent', if not somewhat patronizing in its moral purose. The ancient historian Francis Haverfield interpreteted this altruistic purpose as a "moral purpose of Romanization" (Hingley 2005, 33-34). Haverfield's "traditional" approach saw the Romanization process "wrought for the betterment of the world" (Haverfield 1923, 10). Furthermore, such a traditional view considers the Roman Empire as the "civilized world," and, therefore, "the safety of Rome was the safety of all civilization" (ibid., 11).

[68] See, e.g., *MR* 112 (§134).

The moral purpose of Fingolfin ideology, it would seem, is to keep the Shadow from engulfing Middle-earth "for the betterment of the world." This would also suggest that Elvendom is civilization and that the safety of Elvendom is the safety of all civilizations that make up the Children of Eru. 'Noldorization' shares both a moral and political ideology since the patronistic world-view of the Fingolfians shapes their relationship with the Edain. For the Romans, "this reflects a tradition whereby the conqueror became the patron and protector of the conquered" (Millett 1990, 3). The Fingolfians, who are not conquering the Edain, are still acting as patrons and protectors to defend the Children of Eru – all the Children and not the proud Eldar only. Their ideology sharply contrasts with Fëanorian ideology and highlights the Fëanorian shortcomings of pride and possession.

The wise among the Eldar, nevertheless, see the shortcomings among themselves and regard Men to have a higher purpose (within the Fingolfian ideology), and the choniclers provide such hints in the text (*MR*, 318-19). Tacitus wrote his *Germania* in a similar manner: "for moral purposes, to highlight Roman shortcomings" (Halsall 2014, 50; see also Woolf 2013, 137). The narrators of the Tolkien's *Legendarium* make reference to such a awareness and, like Tacitus, highlight their shortcomings, for example, in the conversation between Finrod Felagund and the Edain wise-woman Andreth, in Tolkien's *Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth*: "This then, I propound, was the errand of Men, not the followers, but the heirs and fulfillers of all: to heal the Marring of Arda, already foreshadowed before their devising; and to do more, as agents of the magnificence of Eru: to enlarge the Music and surpass the Vision of the World!" (*MR*, 318). Within this ideology of "the betterment of the world," Finrod sees the "Children of Men" as the "deliverers" (ibid., 319) of the Eldar, and in surpassing the 'lordly' Eldar, they will become 'lordly' themselves in the end.

Not all of the Eldar adopt such a perspective, however. In that same conversation, Andreth explains the power dynamic of the Noldor and Edain when she says: "We may be "Children of Eru", as ye say in your lore; but we are children to you also: to be loved a little

maybe, and yet creatures of less worth, upon whom ye may look down from the height of your power and your knowledge, with a smile, or with pity, or with a shaking of heads" (*MR*, 308). To this, Finrod admits: "Alas, you speak near the truth. At least of many of my people; but not all and certainly not of me" (ibid.). The conversation shows that the power relations and the morals that govern those relations are twofold. On the one hand, it is clear that "many" of the Eldar view themselves with a "chauvinistic superiority" (Mathisen 2011, 18),[69] whose duty it is to, sometimes, patronizingly protect the newcomers; on the other hand, we see pure and simple nobility in Men that highlights the shortcomings of the Eldar and their deeds: noble savages who will one day deliver them.

3. Edain-Noldorin Power Structures

The general Roman view of the barbarian was one in which barbarians were "slaves by nature," "irrational," and "incapable of living according to written laws. Their customs were alien, unpredictable, and dangerous in the worst of them, little more than splendid vices in the best" (Wolfram 1997, 6). It was a view in which the 'bad barbarian' was faithless and unpredictable, whereas the 'noble barbarian' was still a quaint oddity. Ammianus Marcellinus clearly categorizes the worst barbarians as the Huns and blames them all for the "various calamities inflicted by the wrath of Mars, which raged everywhere with unusual fury" (Amm. Marc., 31.2). In a Classical sense, we may consider Tolkien's Edain as noble barbarians. To paraphrase Edith Hall,[70] several Edain characters are vested with 'Elvish' virtues such as

[69] A "chauvinistic superiority" which is attributed to the Greeks by Mathisen (ibid.).

[70] "[O]ne corollary of the 'barbaric Greek' which must briefly be assessed is that of the 'noble barbarian'. Several characters of barbarian ethnicity in extant tragedy are invested with 'Hellenic' virtues such as courage and self-control, in which they equal or surpass their Greek counterparts. The integrity of the Trojan Cassandra in *Agememnon* stands in stark contrast to the corruption of the Argive characters; Polyxena in *Hecuba*, the heroine of *Andromache*, and the long-suffering captive of *Troades* all cast the Greek characters with whom they interact into unflattering light. Moreover, in several passages of Euripides the superiority of the Hellenic characters is *explicitly* called into question. No study of the barbarian in this genre can lay claim to completeness without at least an attempt to define the reasons behind the poet's inversion of the moral hierarchy" (Hall 1989, 211).

courage and self-control, in which they equal or surpass their Elvish counterparts (for example, Beren and Thingol); yet they still exhibit "splendid vices," (Wolfram1997, 6) particularly in their idyllic simplicity. James Obertino (2006, 117-18) credits Tacitus as "among the first to imply the category of the noble savage" and suggests that Tolkien draws upon Tacitus' depictions of both "admirable and debased peoples" – of both 'good' and 'bad' barbarians.

In Tolkien, Ammianus' description of the Huns' behavior would undoubtably describe his orcs; yet Ammianus' description of the Huns also applies to Tolkien's "bad barbarians." The Easterlings provide a stark contrast with the noble Edain. These would be, very early on in Tolkien's legendarium, the sons of Ulfang the Black, "Swarthy Men" who "followed [Fëanor's son] Caranthir and swore allegiance to him, and proved faithless" (*S*, 183). After the War of Wrath, they fled back to the east, where they wandered "wild and lawless" (*S*, 310).

In their physical description, Tolkien almost paraphrases Ammianus. Ammianus writes of the Huns: "they have squat bodies, strong limbs, and thick necks, and are so prodigiously ugly and bent that they might be two-legged animals…" (Amm. Marc., 31.2). Tolkien writes that "these Men were short and broad, long and strong in the arm; their skins were swart or sallow, and their hair was dark as were their eyes" (*S*, 183). Likewise, both are defined by their treachery and their cruelty. "You cannot make a truce with them, because they are quite unreliable and easily swayed by any breath of rumour which promises advantage; like unreasoning beasts they are entirely at the mercy of the maddest impulses. They are totally ignorant of the distinction between right and wrong" (Amm. Marc., 31.2). And so too are Tolkien's Easterlings under Ulfang, who were already under the secret dominion of Morgoth and had betrayed the Sons of Fëanor. While Tolkien's "bad barbarians" are not the focus of the Elvish history, the Easterlings do serve as a contrast with the Edain as noble Men, who share "small love" between them (*S*, 183).

Tolkien's characterization of the Edain as noble barbarians is particularly expressed in their behaviors. Daily life is not often expounded upon except with a certain idyllic innocence and simplicity. Tacitus finds this idyllic innocence oddly[71] complimentary in the *Germania*: "in every household the children, naked and filthy, grow up with those stout frames and limbs which we so admire" (Tac. *Germ*. 20), while also noting that "to pass an entire day and night in drinking disgraces no one" (*Germ.* 22). These behaviors of daily life emphasize primeval, idyllic Germanic virtues, and like Tacitus, Tolkien presents similar barbaric attributes. The Edain are presented as idyllic and simple (yet also noble) barbarians, or what Straubhaar (2004, 107) calls "primeval, Garden-of-Eden types."

These idyllic Germanic 'virtues' endure into the Third Age and *The Lord of the Rings.* For instance, Saruman exploits these traits and twists them into slurs through his enchanting rhetoric with an almost Roman-like air of "chauvinistic superiority." He turns idyllic virtues into vices while also using the negative barbarian stereotype of brigandage[72] in his verbal attack on Théoden[73]: "Dotard! What is the house of Eorl but a thatched barn where brigands drink in the reek, and their brats roll on the floor among the dogs?" (*TT*, III, x, 186). Such behaviors of daily life, or the observation and exploitation of these behaviors, connect the Edain and their descendants with a Germanic culture as presented by Classical ethnographers.

[71] "Sometimes he praises their freedom and nobility and sometimes he despises them for their cruelty and filth" (Obertino 2006, 118). However, Tacitus also seems to tacitly acknowledge that out of 'the filth' grows the physical strength of their bodies, which he says is admirable.

[72] "One definitive characteristic of the barbarian (at least in the wild) was his inability to live according to the law. Thus other people who refused to live by the (Roman) law, like bandits and brigands, were, regardless of their origins, assimilated with barbarians. The elision [sic] of barbarians with all other enemies of the public order, or wielders of illegitimate or illegal force, was common in Roman thinking" (Halsall 2014, 55).

[73] "These Northmen were descendants of the same race of Men who in the First Age passed into the West of Middle-earth and became allies of the Eldar in their wars with Morgoth" (*UT*, 373-74), who "appear to have been most nearly akin to the third and greatest of the peoples of the Elf-friends, ruled by the House of Hador" (402n4). [Author's note.]

4. Noldorization – Romanization: Three Phases

The three chiefdoms (or *kindreds*, as Tolkien terms them) are essentially a tribal confederation and may be classified as *gentes* formed by, as Herwig Wolfram (1997, 8) puts it, "constitutional and political processes." These processes begin with the encounter of Elves and Men, and, to paraphrase Evangelos Chrysos (2003, 13), it is reasonable to expect that the Edain's relationship with Elvendom had a tremendous impact in their formation[74] as a confederation. In the Roman context, these constitutional and political processes were, according Chrysos, the first phase of Romanization and setting the barbarian *gentes* on the path to *regnum*. This first phase incorporated the "individual or corporate recruitment of barbarians during the migration period in the Roman army" (ibid., 13-14). This, in turn, cultivated soldiers and officers in Roman social values and "solidarity with the Roman world" (ibid.). In the Elvish historical narrative, the three houses of the Edain find solidarity with the Elves and their ideology of overthrowing "the Shadow, or if that may not be, to keep it from spreading once more over all Middle-earth" (*MR*, 310-11). Furthermore, such incorporation constituted not only the political and military structures of the Edain houses but also the Elvish warrior ethos.

The influence of the Elvish warrior ethos upon the Edain may be detected in their adoption of Northern courage, which the Noldor have displayed since their flight from Valinor (Chapter I, p. 16). Wolfram (1997, 8) notes that "[…] the driving force of tribal life was the pathos of heroism. Barbarian traditions are the tales of the 'deeds of brave men' – only the warrior matters; tribe and the army are one." The Elvish narrators from the last chapter highlight this pathos of heroism in the Great Tales that center around heroes such as Túrin Turambar, Beren, and Tuor: heroes who are celebrated for their Northern courage.

[74] "If we base our analysis on the well established and accepted assumption about the *gentes* being not solidly formed and statically established racial entities but groups of people open to constant ethnogenetic change and adaptation to new realities, then it is reasonable to expect that their relationship with the Empire had a tremendous impact on their formation" (Chrysos 2003, 13).

Tacitus presented this courage as one of the defining traits of his *Germani*. It was a courage that is stimulated by their ranks, which are composed of families and clans (*Germ*., 7) in which they kept faith, to the death, with the warband leader; later, when they were employed by the Roman Empire, this meant the Emperor.[75] Any conflict of loyalty to the warband leader and cowardice leads to "infamy and reproach for life" (*Germ*., 14). This Germanic conflict-situation, for instance, underlies the story of Húrin's *comitatus*-man Sador[76] although Sador is presented as an old, lame, and kindly veteran. This is the *Stoff*[77] of the theory of Northern courage, the ethos of Germanic heroic epic.

We see that Men abide by a northern ethos of oaths, loyalty, and liege lords – the very virtues of loyalty to the chieftain described by Tacitus, among others. Bëor remains in "the service of the King of Nargothrond while his life lasted" and committed the rule of "his folk […] [to] Baran, his elder son" (*S*, 165). Húrin's statement to his wife Morwen – "When I am *summoned*, Morwen Eledhwen, I shall leave in your keeping the heir of the House of Hador" (CH, 45; my italics) – illustrates the Chieftain's obligation to the Elvish lords and subscribing to the warrior ethos of Northern courage and the *comitatus*.

The *comitatus* in Classical times was a manifestation of this creed or ethos. Speidel notes that "warbands (*Männerbünde*) with their own ways of bravery and 'willfulness',

[75] "[T]heir ethic was to keep faith with the warband leader – in this case the Roman emperor" (Speidel 2004, 197). This very duty to liege lord, the discipline and valour of 'barbarians', Tolkien keenly illustrates during the Battle of Unnumbered Tears where Húrin and Huor allow their lord Turgon to escape and form a shield wall at the stream of Rivil where they stood against all "hosts" of Angband who "swarmed" against them (*CH*, 59).

[76] Thanks to Thomas Honegger for pointing out the irony of Sador's lameness as it is due to a not-very-Germanic self-inflicted wound while cutting wood.

[77] „Unter Stoff ist nicht das Stoffliche schlechthin als Gegenpol zu dem formalen Strukturelement der Dichtung als Rohstoff liefert, sondern eine durch Handlungskomponenten verknüpfte, schon außerhalb der Dichtung vorgeprägte Fabel, ein »Plot«, der das Erlebnis, Vision, Bericht, Ereignis, Überlieferung durch Mythos und Religion oder als historische Begebenheit an den Dichter herangetragen wird und ihm einen Anreiz zu künstlerischer Gestaltung bietet" (Frenzel 2005, vii). "Under *Stoff*, the material is not simply the antipole to the formal structural element of poetry as raw material, but rather a fable linked by components of action, already pre-shaped outside of poetry, a "plot" that describes the experience, vision, report, event, and tradition through myth and religion or as a historical event brought up to the poet and offering him an incentive for artistic design" (my translation).

underpinned these warrior styles. Sanskrit *svadhā*, 'inherent power, habitual state, custom', is kindred to Greek and English *ethos*, 'character, behavior', and to Latin *sodales* 'warband'." (2004, 193). What holds the *comitatus* together is the "creed of unyielding will" (*BMC*, 21) that allows a chief's followers "to defend, to protect him, to ascribe one's own brave deeds to his renown […]" (*Germ*. 14). This creed is made explicit by swearing an oath:

> The man is received into it [i.e. the *comitatus*] by swearing an oath of allegiance to his master, placing his hands in his Lord's hands or his head on his [Lord's] knee. As a result, he is committed to unconditional obedience and firm loyalty. The Lord in turn gives him the necessary livelihood, food and weapons, and at other times also special gifts.[78] (de Vries 1964, 60; trans. mine)

The oath strongly enforces and reinforces the norms and values of the ethos' code of behavior. This ethos is not only a creed of conduct by which heroes behaved accordingly but also an "outlook of chieftains and the picked warriors of their comitatus" (ibid.). In other words, it is an ethos that constituted social and political entities.

The second phase of Romanizing the *gentes* into *regnum*, Chrysos (2003, 14) explains, "is the path migrating *gentes* took when they entered the wide orbit of the Roman world either in accordance with a peace treaty as *foederati* or subjected to Roman domination as *dediticii.*" In Tolkien's Beleriand, as conquest or aggression between Elves and Edain is nonexistent at this time, there is no need for explicit peace treaties. Rather, Elves and Men embrace each other much like long-lost brothers: "love for them [the Edain] stirred in his [Felagund's] heart," and "they loved him" (*S*, 162-63). Nevertheless, the encounter of Felagund (a Fingolfian and the Lord of Nargothrond) sparks the establishment of the (Elvish) hegemony and its (Edain) vassals. The relationship is, nonetheless, a *foederati* or *gentiles* sort of

[78]„Diese Wort setzt ein Treueverhältnis voraus. Das ist auch wohl das wichtigste Merkmal der Gefolgschaft. Der Mann wird in sie aufgenommen, indem er seinem Herrn einen Treueid schwört und dabei die Hände in die des Herrn oder sein Haupt auf dessen Knie legt. Dadurch ist er zu unbedingtem Gehorsam und fester Treue verpflichtet. Der Herr seinerseits gibt ihm den notwendigen Lebensunterhalt, Speise und Waffen, und daneben zu bestimmten Zeitpunkten auch besondere Geschenke" (de Vries 1964, 60).

relationship with what we may consider functionally as an 'empire', in which they took Felagund as their lord "and were ever after loyal to the House of Finarfin" (ibid.).

The establishment of power relations between the Eldar and Men begins almost as soon as the Edain are introduced. Our first impression of the Second-comers is that "they were tall, and strong, and comely, though rude and scantily clad; but their camp was well-ordered, and they had tents and lodges of boughs about the great fire in the midst; and there were fair women and children among them" (*WJ*, 216). The Noldorin rhetoric is not unlike Tacitus' description of the *Germani*: "fierce blue eyes, red hair, huge frames […]. They wrap themselves in a cloak which is fastened with a clasp […]" (*Germ.* 4.17). What is more interesting, however, is a political process establishing power relations, which begins immediately. Firstly, it mirrors Roman-barbarian relations, and, secondly, it falls within the ethos of Northern courage that first defined the Eldar, beginning with Fëanor (Chapter I, p. 9).

The encounter that establishes the Eldar-Atani relationship begins simply enough – Felagund picks up a crude harp as the Men sleep, and he begins to play and sing. There is a quality of enchantment to his song so that those who wake up and listen find that "wisdom was in the words of the Elven-king, and the hearts grew wiser that hearkened to him […]" (*S*, 163). The enchanting song reveals the ontological[79] wisdom of the Elves:

> Thus, it was that Men called King Felagund, whom they first met of all the Eldar, Wisdom, and after him they named his people The Wise. Indeed they believed at first that Felagund was one of the gods, of whom they had heard rumour that they dwelt far in the West; and this was (some say) the chief cause of their journey. But Felagund dwelt among them and taught them true lore: and they loved him and took him for their lord, and were ever after loyal to the house of Finrod. (*WJ*, 217).

[79] Ontological differences of being are inherent in the Elves and Men by decree of Ilúvatar, Tolkien's godhead. These differences center around mortality and immortality as well as the "higher" culture of Elvish sub-creation and wisdom. Note, however, as Men are 'Noldorized', the ontological differences begin to blur, again by divine decree. The Edain, and subsequently the Númenóreans, experience a longevity of life and a sub-creativity of their own, becoming more 'Elf-like' to a certain degree. This ontological 'uplifting' also establishes the differences and boundaries between the 'Higher Men' and 'Middle Men' when the Faithful return to Middle-earth.

Felagund's song[80] establishes his position as a vastly more wise and noble being, and the Edain ascribe this characteristic to all of the Eldar as "The Wise."

The superior wisdom of King Felagund drives Bëor's people into a consensual but vassal-like fealty. *Balan* is the leader of the Edain (they do not have kings, *yet*, which is another signifier of a primitive Germanic people), but he, upon meeting Felagund, changes his name to *Bëor*, which in fact means *vassal* (*WJ*, 217; *S*, 165). This becomes a title that the leaders bear until the time of Bregolas and Barahir (*WJ*, 217). Bëor's name-change and abnegation of rule suggest that a process of vassalization begins immediately during this first encounter.

This relationship in which Bëor's people enter with Felagund, and eventually that of all Edain with the Noldor, mirrors the relationship of *laeti* or *gentiles* with Rome, in which barbarians are granted land, status, and protection within the empire in return for military service (Maas 2012, 63). Thus, Bëor's people "came into Dorthonian and dwelt in lands ruled by the house of Finarfin" (*S*, 166), and Haleth settles in Brethil on the condition that she protects Thingol's borders and the Crossing of Teiglin. Eventually, the Elf-kings, "seeing that it was not good for Elves and Men to dwell mingled together without order, and that Men needed lords of their own kind, set regions apart where Men could live their own lives, *and appointed chieftains to hold these lands freely*" (ibid., 171; my italics). Nevertheless, the second phase of the 'Romanization' process is seen in Bëor's example of vassalization and in developing the institution of the Germanic *comitatus* among the Edain nobility:[81]

> Then many young and eager men of the Edain went away and took service with the kings and lords of the Eldar. Among these was Malach son of Marach, and he dwelt in Hithlum for fourteen years; and he learned the Elven-tongue and was given the name Aradan. (*WJ*, 219)

[80] We can assume both form and content of the song have an enchanting and superior aesthetic quality that overwhelms Bëor's people.

[81] Cf. Tacitus, *Germ.*13, 14. "Very noble birth or great services rendered by the father secure for the lads the rank of a chief; such lads attach themselves to men of mature strength and of long approved valour. It is no shame to be seen among the chief's followers. Even in his escort there are graduations of rank, dependent on the choice of the man to whom they are attached […]. The chief fights for victory; his vassals fight for the chief […]"

Here, young men of the elite take service in the courts, learning their ways and language and even taking on foreign names. This was quite a common practice among the Romans and barbarians and an effective measure of Romanization.

On the Roman model of appointing client kings ('chieftains'), Michael Kulikowski notes as follows:

> … Roman policy had always encouraged to flourish along imperial borders, kings who supplied a measure because of the stability that came with continuity of family and status, but who could also be kept weak enough to present very infrequent challenges to the empire. What such client kings actually ruled was always contingent upon what the emperor allowed them to rule at any given time – their royal authority was real, and recognized by their followers, but insecurely linked to the land in which that authority happened to be exercised. (Kulikowski 2012, 33)

These Germanic client kingdoms were "firmly part of the Roman world" (Heather 2006, 83) but were also subject to unrest and rebellion. However, in Tolkien's world, because the Noldor have no fear of rebellious Edain chieftains, there is no indication that they are kept weak as the Romans kept their client kings. The Elvish hegemony appointed Edain kings (chieftains) to rule designated lands within Elvish territory with an obligation of military support.

These Elvish lands (Dorthonian, Dor-lómin, Brethil) that are given to the Edain to settle in under the power of their own (appointed) lords are 'buffer-zones' to Anfauglith/Ard-galen and Thangorodrim. We are perhaps reminded here of Constantine's reforms and his "defense in depth" (Southern 1996, 37-38) strategy of deploying permanent mobile field armies, especially in the context of the Eldar settling Edain in buffer-zones. The Roman Empire established buffer zones along the frontier, often manned by local *limitanei* garrisons and/or *laeti* and *gentiles*, who would take the brunt of any attack over the borders (Zos. II. 34. 2). On this arrangement, Millet remarks as follows:

> [This was a] [l]oosely decentralized administration which allowed overall control by Rome while leaving the low-level administration in the hands of traditional

> aristocracies. This enabled most area brought under Roman control to be run without a significant military presence and with light burden on the conquerors. (Millett 1990, 8)

The process of transforming the Edain *gentes* into a *regnum* on the frontier, as well as their military obligation to the Elvish lords, seems to be the role in which the Eldar have placed the Edain.

Their military obligation becomes clearer in the narration, and it is likely voluntary as well as obligatory since the Edain also subscribe to the ideology of containing the Shadow. Húrin states as follows: "If it be the Elven-kings fall, then it must go evilly with the Edain; *and we dwell nearest* to the Enemy" (*CH*, 46; my italics). Several hints of this role that the Elvish kings ascribe to the Edain are also provided to us in the *Silmarillion*; for example, when Caranthir offers Haleth recompense after an orc raid "and seeing, over late, what *valour* there was in the Edain, he said to her: 'If you will remove and dwell further north, there you shall have the friendship and protection of the Eldar, and free lands of your own.'" (ibid.). Or we may consider King Thingol commanding that "Men should take no lands to dwell in *save in the north*…" (*S*, 170, 167; my italics) – conveniently between Morgoth and his Elvish kingdom. The Sindarin King Thingol, in this narrative, does not seem to hold the Edain with the same esteem as the Noldorin chroniclers. Subsequently, he forbids them from entering his kingdom because of troubling dreams (and, it may be said, they settled too close) (*S*, 167).

The third phase, according to Chrysos (2003, 16), is the adoption of the Roman legal framework for the "physical existence and the institutional consolidation of the new politics as *regna.*" Tolkien, however, did not leave us with *leges barbarorum* or very much in the area of Elvish law outside the sphere of the mortality/immortality divide.[82] Furthermore, one may argue that a true *regnum* of Men did not reach fruition until the *Akallabêth*, which details various laws in detail, particularly regarding succession. Nonetheless, we do see the start of

[82] See 'Laws and Customs among the Eldar' (*MR*, 207-253).

the processes of *regnum* by means of acculturation and adoption of social norms and values – *Noldorization*.

In the case of the Edain, the text explains that Men, like Roman *laeti*, "were the allies of the Eldar in war but marched under their own leaders"; however, they also take "service with the kings and lords of the Eldar," "the most part of them soon learned the Grey-elven tongue," and they even raised monuments dedicated in Sindar such as Haleth's barrow, "Tûr Haretha, the Lady Barrow, Haudh-en-Arwen in the Sindarin tongue" (*S*, 170-171). Tolkien, the philologist, seems to stress the importance of language as a cornerstone to Elvendom and acculturation. In the Roman world, it was likewise especially important in the Romanization process to adopt Latin as the official language. "You also needed to speak 'proper' Latin, so that Latin literary education spread too, and to show that you had bought into the values of classical civilization" (Heather 2006, 439). Tacitus clearly emphasizes this in his *Agricola* (21):

> He [Agricola] likewise provided a liberal education for the sons of chiefs, and showed such a preference for the natural powers of the Britons over the industry of the Gauls that they who lately disdained the tongue of Rome now coveted its eloquence

Furthermore, language is an important expression of acculturation that is performed as it is spoken or sung. It "is a product of culture, that is, it is cultivated" (Hatto 1989: 223).[83] This is also true of the Noldorization of the Edain. The members of House of Bëor forsake their own language in favor of the language of the Eldar.[84] Later, as the other two Kindreds came into contact with the House of Bëor, more language problems between them are solved by the

[83] It should be noted that in contrast to Hatto, Tolkien actually does equate language with physical, racial appearance: "[…] the language of Hador was apparently less changed and more uniform in style, whereas the language of Bëor contained many elements that were alien in character. This contrast in speech was probably connected with the observable physical differences between the two peoples" (*PME*, 308). This seems to be the old, traditional proposition that "a race = a culture = a language" (Barth 1998, 11).

[84] Christopher Tolkien notes that his father left a typed footnote which stated to the word "Wisdom" in the above citation, which read "In the ancient language of the Edain (from which afterwards came the Númenórean tongue); *but Bëor and his House later learned the language of the Eldar and forsook their own*." (*WJ*, 219; italics mine.)

'lingua franca' of Sindarin (*WJ*, 219). A process of linguistic and Elvish cultural assimilation turns these kindreds into "Elf-friends" (*S*, 164).

The cultural assimilation of the Edain is not only limited to language and abstract concepts. There is also the traditional and material culture of the Edain that plays no small part in the later legendarium, specifically in *The Lord of the Rings*. During the second phase of Romano-Germanic kingdom generation, Chrysos (2003, 15) writes that among Romans and barbarians, there was "an extensive nexus of kinships at all social levels, including the leading figures in the *gentes* among themselves and with members of the Roman aristocracy and even the imperial families […]" — leading figures who were expected to conform to the "demand for access to standardized forms of political discourse […] by the *regna.*" Furthermore, this demand required the following:

> [That there were] several forms of *imitatio imperii* […]. [For example,] [t]he court, the language, public ceremonies involving the king, court rituals, his titles and dress, forms of distinct munificence to the people and many other expressions of power were imitating Roman forms that were thought to safeguard and support the position of the *rex* as *dominus* over his *gens* and the Roman population in his *regnum*. (Chrysos 2003, 16)

What we see during the First Age (and certainly during the Second and Third Ages) is a creation of this kinship nexus among the "royalty" of the Eldar and Edain: Lúthien and Beren, Tuor and Idril, Elwing and Eärendil, as well as their offspring Elrond and Elros, who eventually claim leadership over the Eldar and Atani respectfully. Their political discourse is harmonized, or 'universalized', in order to further the Fingolfian ideology of withstanding the Shadow of Morgoth. Furthermore, cultural traditions such as (the Sindarin) language, courtly education, and military cohorts and formations are carried out by the Edain, Númenórean kings, and Dúnedain throughout the ages to "safeguard and support the position of the *rex* as *dominus* over his *gens* in his *regna*" (ibid.).

Symbols of the cultural traditions, material culture, are also carried by the kings of Men. If we recall the Battle of Sudden Flame, the *comitatus* of Barahir fights through hordes

of orcs to save King Finrod Felagund. Like a heroic warlord giving arm rings to his men, Felagund "swore an oath of abiding friendship and aid in every need to Barahir and all his kin, and in token of his vow he gave to Barahir his ring" (*S*, 176). The ring "was in the fashion of two serpents with emerald eyes, one devouring and the other serpent supporting a crown of golden flowers" (Foster 2003, 347), and in time it serves to identify the descendants of Barahir.[85] Beren uses the ring to plead for Felagund's aid, after which it disappears from the *Quenya Silmarillion* narrative. Like similar accoutrements and artifacts given to barbarian kings by the Romans, the Ring of Barahir symbolizes not only the *rex* but also, later, the majesty of Gondor and her pedigree: "Roman artifacts were greatly desired and their distribution a means by which kings in these areas maintained their power" (Halsall 2014, 69). Or, in our context of Elvendom and the West, its importance in "safeguarding and supporting the position of the *rex*" (Chrysos 2003, 16) becomes clear in Appendix A to *The Lord of the Rings* (*FR*, Appendix A, iii: 323) as it is an heirloom of the Northern Kingdom along with the Shards of Narsil, the star of Elendil, and the scepter of Annúminas. These "heirlooms" are material culture traditions that reinforce the authority of kings and give Aragorn the right to rule (Chapter VI).

[85] "An Elven-ring, made by the Noldor in Valinor and given by Finrod to Barahir during Dagor Bragollach as a pledge of his aid to Barahir and his kin. When Barahir was slain in Dorthonion, his hand bearing the ring, was cut off as proof of his death, but Beren recovered both hand and ring, at great peril to himself. He brought the ring the ring to Nargothrond during the Quest of the Silmarils, and Finrod fulfilled his pledge, giving his life to save Beren in the dungeons of Minus Tirith.

The ring was somehow preserved through the rest of the First Age (probably by Dior and Elwing), and apparently passed into the hands of the Faithful of Númenor in the Second. In the Third Age it was one of the heirlooms of the North-kingdom; at the fall of Arthedain Arvedui gave it to the chief of the Lossoth, from whom it was afterwards ransomed. Thereafter it was kept at Rivendell." (Foster 2003, 347). Note that in the Roman world, "[R]oman ideas of power, mediated through objects associated with the Empire," in which "[…] the barbarians employed Roman material to emphasise [sic] status, or differential access to power […]." (Halsall 2014, 58). Likewise, in Middle-earth, these material artifacts are symbols of lineage, pedigree, and rightful kingship.

5. Conclusion

Tolkien's migratory First Age provides certain conditions that are structurally reminiscent of the Migration Era of the Roman world in the fourth and fifth centuries. These conditions provide for a structurally ideological framework in which acculturation, or Noldorization, enables the confederation of the Edain to progress from a *gentes*-like state of the Edain Houses to the *regnum* of Númenor . The power dynamics of this relationship are similar in function to the dynamics between Romans and Germanic barbarian confederations of the Migration Era, in which Noldorization consists of vassal relationships, military support and buffer zones, the education of aristocratic youth in Noldorin royal courts, and the language acquisition of Sindar (the language of the Grey Elves). In addition, this relationship produces material and cultural symbols that the Edain aristocratic elite carry as core-traditions of identity, which are interlaced throughout the legendarium and add a sense of verisimilitude. The process of Noldorization and its resulting heroic conflict-situations, which form the *Stoff* of Germanic heroic epics, provide fertile ground for the Great Tales and the Fingolfin/Edain *sapientia*, whose purpose is "to defend the Children of Eru, Andreth, all the Children and not the proud Eldar only!"

Chapter V

Galadriel and *Wyrd*: Interlace, *Exempla*, and the Passing of Northern Courage in the History of the Eldar

Tungol sceal on heofenum
Beorhte scinan, swa him bebead meotud.
God sceal wið yfele, geogoð sceal wið yldo,
Lif sceal wið deaþe, leoht sceal wið þystrum,[86]
(*Maxims II*, lines 48b-51b)

Galadriel is no doubt an important character in the *Legendarium* of J. R. R. Tolkien; not only important but also pivotable. As explored in chapters one and two, Fëanor pivoted the narrative of the Eldar to one resembling the Germanic heroic epic by invoking a *wyrd*, through his free choice, against himself and the Noldor who followed him, which leads to their doom. Galadriel, as the last of the Noldorin rebels and a penitent, pivots from the fatalistic and heroic Elvish narrative to eucatastrophe through own her free will and choice. Is the "Doom of the Noldor," then, really final? Is there room for grace and redemption? The poet of the Old English *The Wanderer* poignantly tells us on line 5b, *Wyrd bið ful aræd*![87] but is it really so? If free will can invite fate, can free will also break free from it?

An answer may be suggested by examining Galadriel's test of her heart, that results in a renunciation of wrongful desire, corrects Fëanor's *wyrd* in an instantaneous moment of eucatastrophe. Galadriel's choice to refuse the One Ring gains greater significance in the context of the events of the First Age. Through spatial imagery, tonality and character action, First Age themes of free will, banishment and exile, doom and providence all interweave together to form a rich tapestry.

[86] A star shall be in the heavens / shining brightly as the Lord commanded / Good must fight with evil, youth with age / life with death, light with darkness.

[87] "Fate is very inflexible" Trans. Elaine Treharne, *Old and Middle English c. 890—c. 1400: An Anthology*, ed. Elaine Treharne (Malden: Blackwell, 2006), 45. But see Tom Shippey's statement below.

The Noldor's banishment, it should be noted, is one of dual exile; one of free choice both before the event and afterwards. An example of banishment as dual-exile – as a banishment of oppositions – may be found in the Anglo-Saxon poem 'The Seafarer' in which Stanley Greenfield observes: "we are confronted with a dual exile: enforced and desired" (Greenfield 1972, 222). In the *Legendarium*, the Noldor desire exile to retrieve the Silmarils and shortly thereafter their exile is enforced by "The Doom of Mandos." Appendix A of *The Lord of the Rings* attests that: "[A]gainst the will of the Valar Fëanor forsook the Blessed Realm and went into exile to Middle-earth, leading with him a great part of his people…" (*RK*, Appendix A, 314). Galadriel, according to her story in *The Silmarillion*, left Valinor not to recover the Silmarils (the Fëanorian motivation) but rather because "she yearned to see the wide unguarded lands and *to rule there a realm at her own will*" (*S*, 89, emphasis mine): a fine detail that gains greater significance in her choice to resist the One Ring.

For Galadriel and the remnant Noldor in the Third Age, the banishment encompasses all of Middle-earth ('… these lands of exile…'(*FR*, II, viii, 394)). In their exile, they struggle to preserve what can be preserved and act within the Fingolfian ideology of containing the Shadow and preventing it from engulfing Middle-earth. Slowly, bit by bit, they lose ground in the struggle while resisting heroically. The losing struggle is the basis for recurring theme of the "sad light of fatalism" (Stanley 2000, 94) of the long defeat that is characterized with an *ubi sunt* emotional symbolism of nostalgia and an omnipresent sense of fate and doom. It is an atmosphere just below the surface even in Galadriel's garden and it is particularly salient in the following chapter as the Elves say farewell.

1. Galadriel's Choice: Themes of High Hope and Redemption

The struggles of the First Age are made implicit through the interlacing of themes and the spatial imagery in Galadriel's garden. Maud Bodkin in her *Archetypical Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies of Imagination* and Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* both provide the basis for examination of thematic spatial imagery. For example,

Bodkin's work on the emotional symbolism of earthly surroundings shows their relationship to the idea of death. The banishment 'in these lands of exile' is one in which the Elves are "trapped in earthly, cultural surroundings" (Bjork 2002, 324). For the Elves, Middle-earth itself is presented as a place of constraint and death. Dwindling 'to a rustic folk of dell and cave, slowly to forget and to be forgotten' (*FR*, II, vii, 380) takes the form of death[88] for the once noble and mighty Noldor.

Even the strongholds of Rivendell and Lothlórien, while pockets of Elvish eternity, are haunted with the mood of death and decay: by doom and the long defeat which will eventually intrude from outside. When Galdor asks Elrond during the Council, '… But have they [Imladris, the Havens, Lórien] the strength, have we the strength to withstand the Enemy, the coming of Sauron at the last, when all else is overthrown?' Elrond replies 'I have not the strength, neither have they…' (*FR*, II, ii, 279). That Elrond admits he doesn't have the strength to hold off the coming intrusion and the doom further reflects Tolkien's mood of the "shadow of despair" and "intense emotion of regret" in which the "worth of defeated valour in this world is deeply felt." Galadriel further echoes Elrond,

> 'Do you not see now wherefore your coming is to us as the footstep of Doom? For if you fail, then we are laid bare to the Enemy. Yet if you succeed, then our power is diminished, and 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.' (*FR*, II, vii, 380)

There is an "ambiguous fate: which threatens disaster but may yield to courage and determination" (Gilbert 1992, 1) in Frodo's quest. Galadriel stresses to Frodo that his courage and determination will decide the fate of the war with Sauron. Nevertheless, for the Elves there is still the atmosphere, mood, and tenor of no escape from the doom of the long defeat — even in Imladris and Lothlórien.

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[88] Tolkien tells us that those who linger and fade "wander houseless [unbodied] in the world, unwilling to leave it and *unable to inhabit it, haunting trees or springs or hidden places* they once knew" (*MR*, 223, emphasis mine). From the perspective of the Noldor, they generally '… spoke of death as being a division of the united…' (*MR*, 319). The "Unbodied, wandering in the world, are those who at the least have *refused the door of life*…" (ibid. 224, emphasis mine). The faded Elves are spirits of the wood and ghosts in the mists haunting the cold and constraining places of Bodkin's theory. Ghosts, Galadriel implies, who are 'slowly to forget and to be forgotten'. Therefore, for the purposes of this argument, fading may be considered death.

The immediate setting of Galadriel's garden in Lothlórien emphasizes the context for the interlacing of spatial imagery and abstract themes of mood, coupled with concrete themes of past events in which the consequences of doom and banishment intersect with High Hope. In Galadriel's garden we are inundated with imagery which is in opposition to the emotional symbolism of coldness, darkness, death. It is, following Frye, Arcadian imagery of paradise and apocalyptic imagery of eternal stars. Throughout the chapter ('The Mirror of Galadriel'), is the eternal Evening Star: "The Evening Star had risen and was shining with white fire above the western woods" (ibid., 361).

The context of the Evening Star also derives from the First Age when Elrond's father, Eärendil, sailed in his ship Vingilot to Valinor with the Silmaril retrieved by Beren. His purpose was to sue for pity and assistance in the war against the Shadow from the Valar. The Valar then granted his request and set Eärendil in the heavens with the Silmaril as the Evening Star. Its purpose was to provide a symbol of "High Hope" to the denizens of Middle-earth. We are told the significance of Eärendil's Silmaril explicitly in *The Silmarillion* (1999, 300-301)

> Now when Vingilot was set to sail in the seas of heaven, it rose unlooked for, glittering and bright, and the people of Middle-earth beheld it from afar and wondered, and they took it for a sign, and called it Gil-Estel, the Star of High Hope. And when this new Star was seen at Evening, Maedros spoke to Maglor his brother, and he said: 'Surely that is a Silmaril that shines in the West?'

The Evening Star is therefore a symbol of High Hope, a light to dispel the encroaching darkness of Morgoth's Shadow and herald the War of Wrath at the end of the First Age. Likewise, it is emphasized as a sign of High Hope on the eve of the War of the Ring.

The salient imagery is striking because it is not the focus of our attention which is, firstly, the characters and, secondly, the One Ring, but neither is it fully backgrounded. The Evening Star's repetition in this scene implies a greater significance; otherwise the text may

have simply stated that the Evening Star rose in the sky and left it at that. Instead we are reminded of hope, which is,

> … as always, merely implicit; but once the two events [or themes] become simultaneously present in our minds, each acquires an added depth through the other and their interaction brings to the fore, as no other device could have done, the underlying tragic theme. (Vinaver 1971, 85)

The implicit theme of High Hope adds a depth and significance, which is woven into the current narrative and its setting. The intertextuality[89] of Tolkien's works, from where he may draw upon past events, adds another cyclic[90] layer of which this is a prime example. The juxtaposition of Eärendil's Silmaril and Sauron's Eye in Galadriel's garden provides repetitive heavenly imagery throughout the scene in the garden.[91]

There is a dialectical element in that these oppositions require an implication, or need to contain a germ of, each other. The threat of the Shadow lends significance to the light. The Silmaril of heaven is still salient in the literal and figurative background as Frodo peers into the mirror and perceives The Eye; a trace of darkness in opposition to the Evening Star. The darkness is grounded, appropriately, closer to earth and the "death and decay" atmosphere. It seems to appear from somewhere below, out of the depths of an abyss: a contrast to the Evening Star's dazzling brilliance. At this moment Frodo is frightened and overwhelmed; he feels this quest is beyond his capabilities, and he freely and humbly offers Galadriel the One Ring, 'You are wise and fearless and fair, Lady Galadriel, … I will give you the One Ring, if you ask for it. It is too great a matter for me' (*FR*, II, vii, 380-81).

While acknowledging that Galadriel from *The Silmarillion* is a post-*LotR* development, the fact does not affect this argument and one may look at this scene from a

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[89] "… intertextuality – a text's dependence on prior words, concepts, connotations, codes, conventions, unconscious practices, and texts." Vincent B. Leitch, ed. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), 21.

[90] "… no single section of the Cycle is self-contained: earlier or later adventures are recalled or announced, as the case may be, in any given part of the work. To achieve this, or authors, had recourse to a narrative device known to earlier writers, including Ovid, but never before used on so vast a scale, namely the device of interweaving a number of separate themes." Eugène Vinaver. *The Rise of Romance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971) 71.

[91] And the scene may remind the reader of the Biblical motif of evil and temptation in the garden.

Noldorin point of view. Here is a nobody from an insignificant village holding the fate of Arda literally in his hands and giving that fate freely to a rebel Noldorin princess who witnessed the Day before Days. Galadriel is, after all these ages, finally offered what the dark whispers of Melkor (now Morgoth) sparked and Fëanor (despite being her 'unfriend') kindled:

> ...but Galadriel, the only woman of the Noldor to stand that day tall and valiant among the contending princes, was eager to be gone. No oaths she swore, but the words of Fëanor concerning Middle-earth had kindled in her heart, *for she yearned to see the wide unguarded lands and to rule there a realm at her own will*." (*S*, 89, emphasis mine)

It seems, if Galadriel had possessed the Ring, this is exactly what she would have done – fulfil the Melkor-inspired dream. Tolkien (*Letters*, 332) writes "In any case Elrond or Galadriel would have proceeded in the policy now adopted by Sauron: they would have built up an empire with great and absolutely subservient generals and armies and engines of war, until they could challenge Sauron and destroy him by force." This would be a wrongful desire to rule a realm in Middle-earth against the divine plan for the Eldar to return into the West. The result would not be the overthrowing, or halting, the spread of the Shadow (MR, 311) per Fingolfian ideology (Chapter IV, p. 66), but rather simply replacing the agents of that Shadow (the Eldar for Sauron). This is the test of Galadriel's heart.

Frodo's act of offering, although seemingly born out of terror rather than generosity, is not lost on Galadriel: she suddenly and clearly laughs, '[G]ently are you revenged for my testing *your* heart' (*FR*, II, vii, 381; italics mine). The significance of Frodo's humbling gesture must deeply sway the aristocratic Noldo from the heroic First Age: after all, "[H]umility is not seen as a manly virtue in Germanic tradition, as can be seen, for example, in *Beowulf.* Seeking fame on earth is virtuous instead" (Murphy 1995, 83). Note that Frodo's act is extremely important precisely because it is *not* a Germanic act: a Germanic hero would not have doubts that he is up to the task, he would not think that the task is too big for him, nor would he be frightened of Sauron in the mirror (consider, by contrast, Aragorn's confrontation with Sauron in the palantír).

Although Frodo is the main protagonist in *The Lord of the Rings* it can't be helped but noticed that he is acting as a helper agent in the structure of Galadriel's story. That is, in the narrative of Galadriel's and the Eldar's *wyrd*. Frodo's offer reveals to Galadriel that she must also succeed with an equally almost impossible task: to willingly choose to sacrifice herself (and her people), everything she has built and preserved, and refuse the One Ring. Nonetheless, this is an odd action on Frodo's part, and may indicate a purpose behind such a spontaneous, and difficult, chance event. As suggested in Chapter II, providence, or 'Authority' in Tolkien's words (*Letters*, 235), always acts in a manner that is veiled by a reasonable explanation (i.e. Frodo is too frightened to bear the Ring). Yet it always works in situations of critical significance and with only a hint that providence is working through disguise. Tolkien has continuously emphasized this by a motif threaded throughout the work (West 2003, 86): Frodo was *meant* to have the Ring, he *just happened* to have pity at the right moment. It works by chance, 'if chance is what you call it,' as Gandalf is fond of saying.

Therefore, it is not outside the internal rules of Tolkien's sub-created Middle-earth for Frodo to also act as a helper-agent, on the behalf of providence, to help Galadriel choose wisely and reject temptation and a spiritual death. That the 'mannish-Hobbit' delivers Galadriel is not alien to Tolkien's thought either, if we remember Finrod Felagund's conversation with the Edain wise-woman Andreth

> 'I was thinking that by the Second Children we might have been *delivered from death* for ever as we spoke of death being a division of the united, I thought in my heart of a death that is not so: but the ending together of both. For that is what lies before us, so far as our reason could see: the completion of Arda and its end, and therefore also of us the children of Arda: the end when all the long lives of the Elves shall be wholly in the past.'[92] (MR, 319emphasis mine)

Finrod's vision may be a foreshadowing of what is to come, but not with a noble and high mimetic hero, rather an ordinary and humble low mimetic hero.

Frodo's spontaneous offer and the imagery of the Evening Star sets up the tension for Galadriel's test of heart. Immediately prior to the temptation Eärendil is especially salient

[92] Finrod also sees another, happier vision, but only *after* Arda is remade.

and embodied in the text from the spatial perspective of Galadriel. The Elves have a word for hope that is an expectation of something good, which is *Amdir*, literally 'looking up' (*MR*, 320). From a spatial perspective, Galadriel may look up at the *Amdir* represented by the Silmaril. The Silmaril shines from above as she spreads out her hand towards the east in a gesture of rejection and denial. The reader "can see things virtually from the perspective of the character … inside the text world, and construct a rich context by resolving deistic expressions from that viewpoint" (Stockwell 2002, 47; cf.Tsur 2003, 41-54). From the perspective of Frodo, the Silmaril blends with a Ring of Power through an "as if" construction: "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 in awe; for suddenly it seemed to him that he understood" (*FR*, II, vii, 380 italics mine). The weaving of Silmaril/Ring imagery on Galadriel's finger as she stretches her hand toward the east in rejection and denial thematically reinforces the rejection of the wrongful desire / Ring of Power construal. The Silmaril, the sign of "High Hope," is interlaced in the scene with the encroaching Shadow, doom, and the long defeat.

Yet, in this scene, Galadriel gives us a verbal cue when she says a very curious thing: '[T]he evil that was devised long ago works on in many ways, whether Sauron himself stands or falls' (*FR*, II, vii, 381). The Ring, of course, is symbiotic with Sauron. Sauron cannot exist without the Ring. If the Ring is destroyed and Sauron falls, what is the evil devised long ago that works on regardless of Sauron? The refusal is especially poignant when we consider what is intertextually backgrounded and interwoven into the scene: the One Ring is a device that would allow Galadriel to actualise Fëanor's Melkor-inspired words that at one time kindled her heart. Galadriel's curious statement may invoke that "merely implicit" reminder, consisting of rebellion, the oath and banishment as well as the Silmarils.

The moment has potentially tragic consequences and it seems to "move up to an *Augenblick* (or crucial moment) from which point the road to what might have been and the

road to what will be can simultaneously be seen" (Frye 2000, 213). Tolkien (*FR*, II, vii, 381) captures this *Augenblick* thusly:

> 'And now at last it comes. You will give me the Ring freely! In place of the Dark Lord you will set up a Queen. And I shall not be dark, but beautiful and terrible as the Morning and the Night! Fair as the Sea and the Sun and the Snow upon the Mountain! Dreadful as the Storm and Lightening! Stronger than the foundations of the earth. All shall love me and despair!'

Much is happening here within a split second. Galadriel is put to the test in that (metaphorical) moment of death and must choose with immediacy whether she becomes the ruler of all Middle-earth (*In place of the Dark Lord you will set up a Queen*), or she sacrifices everything, including the "abnegation of pride and trust in her own powers" (Fisher 2007, 228) and the loss of all 'Elvendom'. This adds another layer to the temptation and is doubly dangerous. Seen through the lens of the *Legendarium*, her sacrifice is tremendous.[93] As with other characters, the Ring deceitfully inspires visions of ultimate personal power tailored to the person it is trying to influence. If the Ring was able to tempt Sam with a vision of becoming an omnipotent gardener, it must surely sense Galadriel's ancient desire to rule a kingdom of her own, perhaps to rule Elvendom and more. Therefore, the Ring made the attempt:

> In the 'Mirror of Galadriel', I 381, it appears that Galadriel conceived of herself as capable of wielding the Ring and supplanting the Dark Lord. If so, so also were the other guardians of the Three, especially Elrond. But this is another matter. It was part of the essential deceit of the Ring to fill minds with imaginations of supreme power. But this the Great had well considered and had rejected, as is seen in Elrond's words

[93] Matthew Dickerson explains exactly what is at stake: "As we consider Galadriel's temptation, we must do so in light of what we have previously seen: that if the Ring-bearer even *attempts* the Quest, then whether he succeeds *or* fails it will mark the end of Lothlórien. Thus, his coming to Lothlórien truly is, as she said, the coming of "the footstep of Doom." What the Ring offers to Galadriel is a way out of this doom: a third alternative to having Frodo either fail or succeed. To preserve that land and those works, she would need both to keep the Ring from Sauron and also keep it from being destroyed. It is an alternative she has long pondered, and even greatly desired, as she admits to Frodo. It is a two-fold temptation. Part of her desire for power is, as with Gandalf, the desire to defeat Sauron. It is the desire to do good and to prevent evil. As Sam puts it, she would "make some folk pay for their dirty work." (*FR*, II, vii, 382) Yet unlike with Gandalf, there is the added dimension of her great desire to take the Ring simply to save her kingdom and all she has worked for from an otherwise sure demise." Matthew Dickerson, *Following Gandalf: Epic Battles and Moral Victory in The Lord of the Rings* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2003), 80.

> at the Council. Galadriel's rejection of the temptation was founded upon previous thought and resolve (*Letters*, 332).

Spatial imagery continues its work during the temptation as Galadriel lifts her arms *up*, and great *light illuminates* her while leaving all else *dark*. Her outburst is one of the emotional symbolisms associated with hell "craving sensuous form for its expression" and engaging in ambiguity and oppositions ('terrible as the Morning and the Night', 'Dreadful as the Storm and Lightening', 'stronger' than earthly 'foundations', ' love me and despair!' (cf. Bodkin 1934, 53-54)). This is immediately followed by an emotional release resulting in: 'shrunken', 'slender', 'gentle voice', 'soft and sad'. There is an intense internal struggle as Galadriel's reaction shows, but her endurance, resistance, and resolve to choose wisely in the end won out (according to Tolkien above). Of her own free will she chooses sacrifice and is humbled:

> Then she let her hand fall, and the light faded, and suddenly she laughed again, and lo! She was shrunken: a slender elf-woman, clad in simple white, whose gentle voice was soft and sad.
>
> 'I pass the test,' she said. 'I will diminish, and go into the West, and remain Galadriel.' (*FR*, II, vii, 381).

This is the moment of eucatastrophe. Her choice, clearly, is "a transition toward reintegration and life-renewal" (Bodkin 1934, 54) but it is also in direct opposition to Fëanor's choice to deny Yavanna that invoked the *wyrd* upon the Noldor in the first place. Her decision may still be motivated by the Fingolfian ideology of constraining the Shadow, but Galadriel realizes that the Eldar remaining in Middle-earth is not the *summum bonum*. It is only their departure that attains the Alfredian 'corrective action' of *wyrd*, bringing the universe (or at least the fate of the Noldor) back into alignment with the divine plan. Galadriel has spiritually won and the Eldar will all leave Middle-earth and reintegrate with their brethren on the Lonely Isle. There, their lives will be renewed rather than the slow, metaphorical death of Elvish fading in Middle-earth. It is the eucatastrophe of the Eldar.

2. Exemplum of Redemption

Recall that "Not all of the Eldalië were willing to forsake the Hither Lands" (*S*, 305-6), which may suggest that the effects, or at least a taint, of the oath lingered with them when

they refused the Valar's summons. Maedhros himself seems to believe that the oath would linger even if the Noldor submitted and returned to Aman, if they did not gain the favour of the Valar, " their oath would still remain, but its fulfilment be beyond hope…" (ibid., 304). We may regard this as an evil, as alluded to above, devised long ago that is not of Sauron's making and does not depend on his rise or fall. The Noldor who remained behind could never fully wash themselves of their particular original sin and the oath, as evidenced by their *wyrd*. In a sense, Fëanor's choice and the Doom of Mandos lingers into the Third Age. After the War of Wrath, Maedhros asks his brother Maglor

> 'But how shall our voices reach to Ilúvatar beyond the Circles of the World? And by Ilúvatar we swore in our madness, and called the Everlasting Darkness upon us, if we not keep our word. *Who shall release us?*'
>
> 'If none can release us,' said Maglor, 'then indeed the Everlasting Darkness shall be our lot, whether we keep our oath or break it; but less evil shall we do in the breaking' (ibid. emphasis mine).

This question, 'who shall release us', like the Eldar's *wyrd*, slumbers and lingers. Because she is the last of the Noldorin rebel leaders, Galadriel's choice therefore plays an additional synecdochical function relative to the release, or redemption, of the remnant Noldor.

Galadriel is a penitent. In 1971, Tolkien (*Letters*, 407) wrote to Ruth Austin that

> … actually Galadriel was a penitent: in her youth a leader in the rebellion against the Valar (the angelic guardians). At the end of the First Age she proudly refused forgiveness or permission to return. She was pardoned because of her resistance to the final and overwhelming temptation to take the Ring for herself.

Galadriel, from this particular letter at least, was not only a leader in the rebellion but also seems to exhibit a degree of *ofermōd*, one of the vices of Northern courage Tolkien criticised (*TL*, 144). Additionally, Galadriel, through her choice to resist the Ring at the end of the Elvish history, is thematically juxtaposed to Fëanor's choice to refuse Yavanna at the beginning: *ad bonum exemplum* and *ad malum exemplum*, respectively. There is a trace of the penitential tradition at work here especially if one recalls that *wyrd* also serves a penitential function.

The penitential tale, as *exemplum*, has a long history in medieval literature, where it was used to present a specific form of clerical authority to elicit the voice of the laity (Scanlon 1994, 12). The subject of the *exemplum*, the 'confessional subject'

> … confronts Christian authority in an individuated, secularized, and most importantly, eminently secularizable form. Christian authority as an ideal is simple, total, and unchanging; it resides in the ultimate *auctor*, God. But by its very nature it is also an ideal which demands to be put into practice. (ibid.)

Galadriel, the 'confessional subject' of her narrative, also confronts 'Authority' – a metaphor for Eru Ilúvatar within the *Legendarium*, in a highly individualized and secularized form. She doesn't 'confess' as one would in a confessional, Galadriel acts her confession out, 'puts it into practice'. It is dramatized in the scene in much the same way that the theory of Northern courage is dramatized in the tales of the *Legendarium* (Chapter IV, p. 58; Introduction, pp. xxv-xxvi), in the manner of an illustrative narrative, or *exemplum*.

Galadriel's task, in her role as the last of the rebellious Eldalië rulers, is to lead her people: either into salvation or into shadow. If we accept that firstly, Frodo's example of humility and *caritas* (Chance 2004, 213), perhaps through the work of providence, demonstrates to Galadriel that the way to redemption is renunciation through his offer of the Ring. And secondly, if we accept that the Silmaril serves as a thematic reminder of High Hope to Galadriel to strengthen her resolve, then through her rejection, 'confession' and absolution (diminishing and passing into the West) she is herself acting like Eärendil in the role of a redeemer or saviour for the remnant Noldor. Eric Schweicher (1992, 169) also notes that for the Noldor "[T]o achieve some sort of Redemption, the Elves need to overcome their pride and to be able to surrender the object of their pride to the Valar, namely the Silmarils." Galadriel's act of contrition and renunciation, therefore, is vital for Elvish redemption as ". . . the oath of Fëanor perhaps even Manwë could not loose, until it found its end, and the sons of Fëanor relinquished the Silmarils, upon which they had laid their ruthless claim" (*S*, 293). '*Who shall release us?*' resembles an ancient prayer that has now been answered: Galadriel does. She will not, as so many of her royal house, be defined by demise and defeat like the

Germanic hero but rather by grace and humility. Thus, the oath comes to rest with Galadriel's refusal of wrongful desire and her redemption.[94]

Galadriel is now operating outside the framework of Northern courage. She begins the scene with the endurance and resistance of Northern courage, but the pivotal actions are not of a Germanic character. Within the framework of Northern courage, the hero,

> … in a moment of crises, has to resolve the ambiguous tensions in such invariable fortune [*wyrd*]. His task is to transform the uncertainties of fate and fortune (which are never clearly distinguished from each other in the Germanic tradition) into good fortune, fame, and enduring glory for himself. For a time, at least, he is able to achieve this, but eventually he succumbs to the ill fortune that threatens in all tests of his courage. He is at last unable to impose his will on events, and becomes the prisoner of a malignant fate which allows him only a choice between two evils by dying an honourable death, and inflicting dishonour upon his enemies: but before that final catastrophe, other options are open to him. (Gilbert 1992, 1)

It follows that if Galadriel had chosen within the Northern courage framework, she would have chosen between the two evil choices of either refusing the One Ring and dooming Elvendom to the machinations of Sauron or accepting it and ensuring a (malignant) glory for herself and Elvendom. However, as Gilbert notes, there are other choices before catastrophe and Galadriel makes a choice outside of the heroic ethos that results in *eucatastrophe*. That is, she accepts the corrective and penitential function of the Eldar's *wyrd* and forsakes any stake or claim in Middle-earth (i.e. her kingdom and the preservation of Elvendom). She chooses to lead her people, as a penitent and not a Germanic hero, into the West according to the divine plan, which seems to be one of change rather than static preservation of what once was.

3. Hail and Farewell

With the tension released in the previous chapter, we now come to a closure of the Germanic narrative of the Elves in the chapter, titled appropriately, 'Farewell to Lórien'. Elvish history, the Germanic narrative that has shifted, leaves us with the intense emotion of

[94] Galadriel never had a claim to the Silmarils as she was not a Fëanorian nor had she sworn the oath. Nevertheless, at this point in Tolkien's Middle-earth narrative, all the sons of Fëanor have already perished, therefore it falls upon Galadriel, the last Noldor leader under the Doom, to relinquish. It seems significant to me that although Manwë cannot "undo" the Doom, Frodo Baggins of the Shire can – and does.

regret: "[T]hemes of a golden or heroic age in the past,… of the wheel of fortune in social affairs, of the *ubi sunt* elegy, of mediations over ruins, of nostalgia for a lost pastoral simplicity, or regret or exultation over the collapse of an empire…" (Frye 2000, 160). This is a scene of Autumn: of myth conceptually linked to tragedy and elegy (Meletinsky 2000, 82-3). It is death (in Middle-earth), a passage over the western ocean, and rebirth (in Aman). The narrative is closed by ritual, in this case with elegy, a farewell feast and gift-giving (*woruldsælða*) that emphasizes Tolkien's 'mood' of intense sadness for the imminent departure of the Elves from Middle-earth.

As the Fellowship begins to paddle away from Lórien and turns a sharp bend, a boat in the shape of a large swan appears with Galadriel and Celeborn on board. Galadriel sings, sad and sweet, the *Namárië*. The lament expresses the *ubi sunt* motif, a melancholy of kings, glories, and a world gone by (*Ai! láurië lántar lássi sūrinèn, yēni ūnōtime ve aldaron rāmar* Ah! like gold leaves fall on the wind, long years numberless as the wings of trees!) and of a lost paradise (*lumbule undulāve ilye tiër* all paths are drowned deep in shadow) (lines 1-2, 11). Particularly poignant is the eighth line sung by Galadriel '*Sī man i yulma nin enquantuva?*' ('Who now shall refill the cup for me?'). Here a ritualistic and ceremonial cup-bearer role, a tradition of Germanic halls, becomes prominent and its theme potentially reminds us of the similar lamentation in 'The Wanderer'.[95] A Germanic past, a time of horses, mead halls, treasure-givers and gleaming chalices, that "grows dark under the helm of night" with no more cupbearers to serve their lord. Tolkien (*BMC*, 23) wrote "[A]s the poet looks back into the past, surveying the history of kings and warriors in the old traditions, he sees that all glory (or as we might say 'culture' or 'civilization') ends in night." The 'Namárië' looks back at this glorious past of the Eldar with its 'intense emotion of regret' and its imagery reinforces the concept of an end of heroic Northern courage, the Germanic narrative of the Elves and its defining *wyrd*.

[95] *Where has the horse gone? Where has the man gone? Where have the treasure-givers gone?/Alas the gleaming cup! Alas the armoured warrior/ Alas the prince's glory! How the time passed away, grown dark under the helm of night, as if it never were.* (*The Wanderer* 92-96) Translation Treharne 2006, 46-47.

The ritual of gift-giving (cf. Chapter II, p.28), which can be found in a plethora of heroic epics including *Beowulf*[96] helps reinforce the Silmaril metaphor discussed above. It also, in this context, reinforces the wise use of gifts (again, in opposition to Fëanor's unwise use – his possessiveness). In the Alfredian *Consolatione*, Wisdom states

> But though it may be good and precious, one who gives it is more renown and popular than one who gathers it and plunders it from others. And also riches are more renown and pleasing when they are given than they are gathered and kept. Indeed, avarice makes coveters hateful to God and mortals, and generosity makes those who love it always more popular and renowned and honoured by both God and mortals. (*ADCP*, II, prs. 7, ii, 67)

Galadriel, of course, is renowned for her wisdom. In light of Wisdom's words, the giving of the light of Eärendil, rather than coveting and hoarding it in her mirror, emphasizes Galadriel, as *ad bonum exemplum* to Fëanor's *ad malum exemplum*. The wisdom of choosing and giving this gift becomes apparent later in the story as it also allows for providential intervention (Frodo's sudden use of Quenya in Shelob's Lair). The phial is not the Silmaril, *per se*, it is merely a reflection of its holy light. Nevertheless, the reflection of holy light captured in a glass phial, (echoes of Fëanor capturing the light of the Trees in jewels) is still holy enough to repel evil:

> … and *hope* grew in Frodo's mind, it began to burn, and kindled to a silvery flame, a minute heart of dazzling light, *as though* Eärendil had himself come down from the high sunset paths with the last Silmaril upon his brow" (*TT*, IV, ix, 329 italics mine).

The imagery of Galadriel's gift further reinforces the interlacing of the Silmaril/Evening Star theme; this time interwoven with the phial not only as a weapon but also again as a sign of High Hope.

Secondly, the gift-giving ritual interlaces yet another, perhaps final, instance of the Fëanor/Galadriel *exempla* juxtaposition. We may recall that in the *Legendarium*, Fëanor begged Galadriel "*three times* for a tress, but Galadriel would not give him *one* hair. These two kinsfolk, the greatest of the Eldar of Valinor, were unfriends forever" (*UT*, 296, emphasis mine). Yet in this scene, Gimli courteously asks for "'a *single* strand of your hair…' [T]hen

[96] For a detailed analysis of the Queen's role of cup-bearing, gift-giving and the farewell feast, see Andy Orchard, *A Critical Companion to Beowulf* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer,Orchard 2003) 219-222.

the Lady unbraided one of her long tresses, and cut off *three* golden hairs, and laid them in Gimli's hand…" While witnessing this exchange "[T]he Elves stirred and murmured with astonishment, and Celeborn gazed at the dwarf in wonder, but the Lady smiled…" (*FR*, II, viii, 392, emphasis mine). Recognizing the interlacing theme, it is no wonder that the Elves were astonished and, in a clear rebuke to Galadriel's former 'unfriend', the number of hairs is reversed, and Gimli receives three rather than one strand of hair. It is a closure, of sorts, in the Germanic gift-giving ritual of the Fëanor /Galadriel opposition, a closure of the Elvish *ad malum exemplum – ad bonum exemplum*, and a closure of the Germanic narrative and Northern courage.

4. Conclusion

Galadriel is a pivotal character firstly in *The Lord of the Rings* and secondly in the overall *Legendarium* as she (not always consistently) developed further. Like Fëanor before her, she is faced with literally a fateful decision. Galadriel's choice to refuse the One Ring gains greater significance in the context of the events of the First Age. Through spatial imagery, tonality and character action, First Age themes of free will, banishment and exile, doom and providence all interweave together to form a rich tapestry. Galadriel redeems herself and the remnant Noldor in Middle-earth in an instantaneous moment of eucatastrophe.

In her wisdom, with the help of Frodo (and perhaps providence) and the salient symbol of high hope, her choice of free will 'corrects' the *wyrd* invoked by Fëanor's similar, but unwise choice to refuse Yavanna. *Wyrd* is indeed conjured by the Noldor through Fëanor's choice, and it seems that "what is done is done, with which there is no arguing." Unless, as Galadriel has shown, "one should discover the way out of the exile of this world and into eternal life" (Haug 2006, 53). The way out of exile, of course, was another choice of free will that corrected and satisfied the Germanic *wyrd*. Galadriel, with her own redemption and consequently the redemption of the remnant Noldor, ends that Germanic narrative in the *Lord of the Rings*. On the cusp of the Fourth Age, the fatalistic Germanic ethos of Northern

courage and the Germanic narrative that began with the Noldo prince Fëanor fades into the mist with the Noldor's redemption and emancipation from exile. No one character personifies this transition more than the Elven Lady Galadriel.

Chapter VI

Elessar Telcontar Magnus, Rex Pater Gondor, Restitutor Imperii

'Verily, for in the high tongue of old I am Elessar, the Elfstone, and the Renewer […]'

As we have seen in the previous chapters, Germanic heroic epics are, in part, defined by two motifs. The first motif is *wyrd*, a concept of fate that represents what is done and the consequences of what is done, rather than what is preordained to happen.[97] The second motif is the theory of Northern courage, which is the defiant Germanic warrior-ethos that responds to (or generates) the consequences of *wyrd*. The interaction, tension, conflict, and the elaborate chain of cause-and-effect of these two motifs constitute a great deal of the '*Stoff*' of Germanic heroic epic.

We have also seen in Tolkien's *Legendarium*, that the intradiegetic Elvish historical narrative is a narrative exemplified by these two motifs. The "wheel of fortune" turns from innocence in Valinor towards the 'Long Defeat' by means of Fëanor's freedom to choose not to surrender the Silmarils to the Vala Yavanna (chapter two) and his hamartia of the Kin-slaying (chapter one). The Elvish narrative is one of downward movement which Northrop Frye describes as "… a tragic movement, the wheel of fortune falling from innocence toward hamartia, and from hamartia to catastrophe." The eventual price to be paid from Fëanor's (and consequently the Noldor's) choices is that the Elves leave Middle-earth in their Tragic Autumn (following Frye's terminology).

In contrast to Fëanor, Aragorn's choices (such as his choice and determination to pursue the renewal of Gondor) are morally correct and he uses his gifts (such as freely choosing Ilúvatar's divine gift of death to Men) according to the divine plan. This negates the

[97] Cf. Tom Shippey (Road, 172-73).

need to invoke *wyrd* as a corrective function to realign Men to Ilúvatar's divine plan. Consequently, the old warrior-ethos of Northern courage wanes with Elvish *wyrd*.

What, then, replaces this warrior-ethos bound inextricably to the Doom of the Noldor? Surely there is still heroism in Middle-earth; *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are both filled with heroism, and not just by the Elves! Answers may lie in Aragorn's exemplary nature *ad bonum exemplum* of Tolkien's ideal heroic ethos. An ethos that appropriately emerges in the ideal Renewal King at the beginning of the Age of Men. Aragorn's task is to renew the heroic ethos, because as the Elves have experienced, strictly following the ethos of Northern courage leads to 'the long defeat'.

Aragorn's great heroic deeds and ethos originate from the core tradition of Elvish Northern courage. These heroic deeds constitute a new, proto-chivalric heroic ethos and heroic identity. This happens in three ways: firstly, Aragorn's character is structured as an *exemplum* of a Renewal or Restoration King. Thomas Honegger (forthcoming, 8) writes that Aragorn-Elessar is

> one of the most 'archetypical' characters in *The Lord of the Rings*" who "becomes 'the ideal prototype' for all later rulers and the numerous parallels to kings historical, semi-historical, mythical or fictional are intended and the result of Tolkien's (successful) attempt to create an archetypical figure.

This ideal prototype of the ideal king embodies the communal values of a new heroic ethos. The new heroic ethos, in its ideal moral (or *sententia*), "effects the [communal] value's reemergence with the obligatory force of moral law" (Scanlon 1994, 34). Because Aragorn's career culminates as a Renewal King, certain themes are interwoven within his character from other traditions of *exempla* of the Renewal King figure, of which Charlemagne[98] provides an excellent example.

[98] See also, Elizabeth M. Stephen, *Hobbit to Hero: The Making of Tolkien's King* (Moreton in Marsh (Gloucestershire): ADC Publications 2012), 183-185; and Michael D. C. Drout, ed. *J. R. R. Tolkien Encyclopedia: Scholarship and Critical Assessment*. (New York: Routledge 2007), s.v. "Elessar" and "Aragorn."

Secondly, Aragorn carries ancient core traditions (*Traditionskern*) and artifacts (chapter four) reaching back to his ancestor and *Stammvater* (the tribal founder or "father") Bëor the Old, which are vital to Aragorn's legitimacy. The Ring of Barahir, although not a 'Ring of Power' is nevertheless a very powerful ring in that its power is symbolic of Aragorn's pedigree and the core traditions of the Edain. It is a symbol of the "obedience and love;" the friendship and bond of Elves and Men; a reification of the love between King Finrod Felagund and Aragorn's ancestors Barahir (*S*, 176) and his son, Beren (ibid. 198). Such traditions of pedigree, and heirlooms representing that pedigree, provide the foundation for Aragorn's legal, moral, and cultural authority. Indeed, Aragorn's narrative in *The Lord of the Rings* progressively enacts cultural authority (Scanlon 1994, 34) from his beginning in the shadows as Strider to his coronation – a cultural authority that needs legitimatization. That he carries ancient core traditions not only gives him identity and legitimacy as king but also serves to implement the authority to renew.

Thirdly, in the process of Gondor's renewal, Aragorn 'fuses' the old traditions and ethos with the new. It is a fusing of the old unyielding will of Northern courage with a new merciful, mild, and just warrior-ethos. The "sad light of fatalism" (Stanley 2000, 94) of the 'long defeat' is replaced with the hope for the renewal of a golden age. The fusion constitutes a new, proto-chivalric warrior-ethos and identity. It is an ethos that resides in, again following Frye, the Romantic era of Summer appropriate for the new Era of Men in Middle-earth's Fourth Age.

1. Exemplum

Aragorn is an agent of his own illustrative narrative and functions as an ideal king prototype. Aragorn, as an agent, provides the thematic context, which is determined by a set of particular norms and values (the ideal king) which may be observed in a particular community (ibid. 181). The base structure is the theme of Aragorn becoming king, through

the defeat of great evil, and the renewal of Gondor and Arnor for the Age of Men. The new norms and values are a fusion of heroic ethos as well as hope for the future. This new, hopeful heroic ethos lies in opposition to the previous, fatalistic 'long defeat' which, in the Elvish narrative had produced "some hypothesis of continuous degeneration from a Golden Age lost in Antiquity" (Frye 2000, 110).[99] Thus, Aragorn's illustrative role in the narrative functions as "a traditional epic/romance hero who combines Northrop Frye's romance and high mimetic modes" (Flieger 2012, 142) as a Renewal King. His mythological messianic role as redeemer is displaced by that of a human king of romance who renews a declining world. His task is to provide hope.

Aragorn's conflict with the overpowering evil represented by Sauron seems to signal the final end for the Free Peoples of Middle-earth who really have no hope. Only Gandalf holds a *shred* of hope 'There was never much hope,' he says, 'just a fool's hope…' (*RK*, V, iv, 88). Never *much* hope, of course, is not the same as no hope at all. The hope that Aragorn represents is expressed by his great deeds. Aragorn, as an exemplary agent, exemplifies norms and values that illustrate a moral because they recount the enactment of that moral, which establishes a form of authority (Scanlon 1994, 33).

The exemplary nature of Aragorn's illustrative narrative is explicitly combined with cultural authority (Scanlon 1994, 4). He already possesses aspects of authority inherent in his character; for instance his bloodline gives him the authority and the willpower to confront Sauron in the palantír. Aragorn carries symbols of his pedigree, such as the Ring of Barahir and the Shards of Narsil/Andúril, which also bestow him with authority. This authority and legitimacy is already recognized by a core of elite warriors in the Dúnedain of the North, The Grey Company. Nonetheless, Aragorn, because he quite literally appears out of legend upon the Fields of Pelennor, recognizes the fact that he needs to earn the legitimacy as king from

[99] See also Honegger 2011.

the people of Gondor – and without question. His *Traditionskern*, that is, his cultural core of tradition carried by him and his core *comitatus* of Dúnedain rangers of the North, enables him to gain his legitimacy and eventual coronation.

2. Aragorn's *Traditionskern* and Northern Courage

Aragorn springs from the ethos of Northern courage in Middle-earth. He is of the Dúnedain, who are descended from the Númenóreans, who are in turn descended from the Edain (a "*Naturvolk*" or idyllic people) of the First Age. Christopher Hans Scarf (2007, 322) notes that "in his mythological 'Story' Tolkien's heroic kings and their societies have their "deep roots" in the distant past." Those 'deep roots' are what may be termed the core of tradition: "Traditionskern, consisting of legends about ancestors and great deeds of the heroic past, carried the consciousness of these tribes for centuries" (Maas 2012, 75). The great deeds of the Edain's past epitomize their Northern courage, such as Barahir's shield wall at the Battle of *Dagor Bragollach*,[100] which clearly illustrates the Northern courage of Men.

Aragorn is descended from this Edain warrior-elite caste which carries on old traditions of the heroic ethos and an almost *foederati*-like relationship[101] with the Eldar (Chapter IV). These traditions sustain the identity of the tribe (for example the identity of the Dúnedain) by affording the community of Men an *origo gentes*.

This is an identity, modelled on the Germanic hero, that started in an ancient First Age with a chieftain-vassal / Elf-lord relationship between the Edain chieftain Bëor the Old (from whom Aragorn is descendent) and the Noldo Fingolfin (Chapter IV, pp. 73-74). The establishment of the Elf and Elf-friend power-structure functions as the "primal deed" of

[100] The first major battle against Morgoth in which Men participated.

[101] That is, a similar relationship to that which Rome had with various tribes, peoples, and confederations who allied themselves with, and fought for, Rome.

Edain origin (cf. *S*, 163-165). Herwig Wolfram (Wolfram 1997, 33) suggests that "[S]tories of origins speak of "genuine and old names," in our case the "Edain", which

> sum up their origins in three motifs: First, once upon a time there was a small people […] they set out [wandering] under divine guidance […] The first test demanded the performance of a primordial deed, be it crossing of a sea like the Baltic or North Sea or a river like the Rhine, Elbe, or Danube, be it victorious […] in a situation that seems all but hopeless, divine aid is given to a select groups of the homeless tribe. In this way the primordial deed establishes a new tribal identity, which derives its legitimacy and attraction from the nucleus of tradition, that is to say, from the group of leaders with better gods and organizational structure than exist in the world around them. Both qualities establish the superior status (*nobilitas*) of a people over its neighbors. Second, […] a change of religion and cult takes place during the primordial deed; tradition presents this process also as a singular event [...] Third, if the primordial deed was a victory against mighty enemies, those remained the model enemy par excellence […] What lived on in these sorts of stories was the memory that one's own *gens* had once been a subordinate group within a larger tribal confederation from which it had broken away by force, thus triggering or accelerating the confederation's downfall. (Wolfram 1997, 33-34)

Wolfram's paradigm also applies to the Edain, and Aragorn as a *Traditionsträger*[102] (that is, one of the elites who remembers, instills and acts out the core traditions of a *gens*). For instance, the Dúnedain (west-men) carry the "genuine and old name" of the Edain (men) within its etymology and its accompanying cultural values and traditions, such as Aragorn's ring.

Secondly, the Edain performed a "primal deed" consisting both of crossing the Blue Mountains (rather than the Rhine) and establishing themselves as "Elf-friends", which instilled hope within their hearts. In so doing, they received "divine aid" ("even if once or twice removed"[103] (Honegger 2017, 11)) in the form of art and knowledge "and their sons

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[102] „So viel dürfte deutlich geworden sein, daß in allen Fällen ein kleiner traditionstragender Kern zum Kristallisationspunkt einer Großstammbildung wurde. Das deckt sich mit den Erfahrungen der Ethnographen, die aus den verschiedensten Gegenden Beispiele dafür anführen können, wie an Zahl geringe "Traditionskompanien" gewaltige Expansionsbewegungen auslösen…" Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1961), 75.

So much must have become clear that in all cases a small tradition-bearing core became the focal point of a large scale ethnogenesis. This coincides with the experience of the ethnographers, who are able to cite examples from the most diverse regions, such as the number of small "traditional companies [aka, the *comitatus* and accompanying warband]" that are showing tremendous expansive movements (*translation mine*)

[103] Honegger is speaking of the "divine" beauty of Galadriel, but aptly sums up the "demi-god" status as once or twice removed from divinity itself that I am attempting to illustrate here.

increased in wisdom and skill, until they far surpassed all other of Mankind [*nobilitas*], who dwelt still east of the mountains and had not seen the Eldar, nor looked upon the faces that had beheld the Light of Valinor" and their "years were lengthened" (*S*, 173). They also, in their first major conflict, fight as vassals of the Elf Lords at the *Dagor Bragollach*, the Battle of Sudden Flame. Thereby they establish Morgoth and his armies as "model enemies" par excellence. There is no "change" of religion or cult but rather an enlightenment represented by the Valar and Eru Ilúvatar. It is an ontological difference that their brethren left behind do not, at this time, come to know. This core of tradition and its accompanying heroic ethos form the structural basis of the themes that support Aragorn's claim to the throne of Gondor and his cultural authority.

For the reader, Scarf (2007, 264) notes "this deliberate "looking back" is a 'structural' device that creates verisimilitude by its interlacement through the narratives of the *Legendarium*. As the people of Gondor in *The Lord of the Rings* (as well as the reader) look back they become more aware of their identity and the significance of Aragorn as king, similar to how a Christian 'looking back' at the old stories of the Old Testament gains a deeper understanding of the New (Scarf 2007, 262).

3. Dynamic versus Static Heroic Ethos

In Tolkien's *Legendarium* there is no gradual societal or cultural change nor any transition from one generation to another: the Elvish heroic ethos is a static, monolithic structure. The transition happens as the Elves wane and Men wax with a new ethos, rather than a gradual cultural change as convincingly described by Lindow (Introduction, p. xvi). The new ethos still has traces of *das Heroische* (the heroic) but it now privileges a dedication to something bigger than simply the lord and the *comitatus*; something greater than just *lof ond dom*; it privileges *hope*. It is a proto-chivalric ethos that we see galvanizing in the Men of Middle-earth by way of Aragorn's example; that is, his exemplary performance.

In a recent article, Thomas Honegger (2017, 12) examines chivalry and Tolkien's distaste for it, and notes that "[Tolkien] does his best to avoid associations with the classical chivalric period and harks back to a simpler, more primitive and above all more secular form of chivalry" (which this discussion refers to as proto-chivalry). To better understand the motifs (*Stoff*) of a Germanic heroic ethos in transition from one tradition to another, it serves us well, as an acute example, to look at the Carolingian Franks when we examine Aragorn, Gondor, and the new heroic ethos. There are two prominent reasons for this: firstly, because Tolkien referred to the Holy Roman Empire (*Letters*, 376) when he envisioned Gondor; and secondly because Old French literature offers us an insight into an actual, historical and transitive proto-chivalry. As Honegger (2017, 20) suggests,

> [T]his development parallels the one in primary world literature where we have also an evolution from the epic-heroic *chanson de geste* (e.g. the late 11th century *Le Chanson de Roland*) to courtly romance (e.g. Chrétien de Troyes *Yvain*, *Erec et Enide*, or *Lancelot*, all after 1160) as the dominant genre.

This is not to suggest that Old French literature, *Le Chanson de Roland* in particular, is the only source where a shift in heroic ethos is visible; there is an entire corpus of early medieval literature that incorporates the subject matter, themes and motifs (or *Stoff*), of an early medieval heroic ethos in transition. For example, other works such as *Das Nibelungenlied*, composed circa fifty years later than *Roland*, also transitions by use of remnant heroic elements and chivalric or proto-chivalric responses. "In terms of his own age the poet of the *Nibelungenlied* aimed at an accommodation of traditional heroic subject-matter with newly-received chivalric notions and with the new fashion of 'biographical' romances, that is, narratives of a leading character's life" (Hatto 1980, 170). Nonetheless, *Le Chanson de Roland* provides a prime example of this transition in a literary framework from the Germanic heroic ethos of Northern courage to a proto-chivalric ethos in which we may envision the transition in *The Lord of the Rings* more clearly.

For example, in *Le Chanson de Roland* (*Laisses* 83 through 87), three times Oliver pleads with Roland to blow his horn Oliphant and call Charlemagne, who is leading the main Frankish host, and three times Roland refuses because he believes to do so will dishonor him and his men: 'I'd rather die than be disgraced' (*Roland*, 86.1091). It is only after Roland loses twenty thousand men and is left with sixty, that he decides perhaps now is a good time to sound his horn (*Roland*, 132.1752). In the following *Laisse* (87.1093-1094) Roland is not condemned but rather exalted: "Roland is worthy and Oliver is wise: / Both have amazing courage…". This action is reminiscent of *ofermōd* and Earl Byrhtnoth in the 'Battle of Maldon,' who in his pride let the Vikings cross the causeway to fight. He subsequently lost because of it (*Maldon*, 89-95).

Roland, like Earl Byrhtnoth, suffers from *ofermōd*, his overmastering pride, which prevents him from blowing his horn for help when it would have been most useful. The refusal causes strife and hostility between Roland and his friend Oliver and Oliver strikes Roland with added insult and condemnation. However, when Oliver is mortally wounded, impaled from behind by a spear, he begs forgiveness from Roland:

> I struck you, please forgive me this!
> Roland replies: "I have suffered no injury,
> I forgive this here and before God."
> After he said this, they bowed to each other,
> See them now parting with such affection! (*Roland*, 149.2005-2009)

The Lord of the Rings shows us the same *Stoff* or motifs (albeit altered) and the most comparable to the verse above is the death of Boromir. In this case, Boromir is not reluctant to blow his horn, yet he falls defending Merry and Pippin, and the motif is altered:

> Aragorn knelt beside his. Boromir opened his eyes and strove to speak. At last slow words came. 'I tried to take the Ring from Frodo,' he said. 'I am sorry. I have paid.' His glanced strayed to his fallen enemies; twenty at least lay there … After a moment he spoke again.
>
> 'Farewell, Aragorn! Go to Minas Tirith and save my people! I have failed!'
>
> 'No!' said Aragorn, taking his hand and kissing his brow. 'You have conquered. Few have gained such a victory. Be at peace! Minas Tirith shall not fall!' (*TT*, III, i, 16)

Like Roland at Oliver's death, Aragorn offers forgiveness with a contradictory statement to the fallen's remorse ('I have failed' and 'You have conquered') and shows that love forgives all prior strife and hostility. It is Tolkien's heroic ideal that "is the heroism of obedience and love, not pride and wilfulness, that is most heroic" (*TL*, 148). Tolkien shows that love in this passage, and while we do not know if Aragorn bestows hope upon Boromir, at the very least he consoles him.

Aragorn's mild qualities of mercy and pity allow him to deal with his subjects according to their measure, giving them hope to contribute to the effort while still retaining their honor. He asks only those that are willing to accompany him to the Black Gate and not all can find it in their hearts to follow their king. In a Germanic ethos like Northern courage, those that quailed would be considered cowards only worthy of death. But Aragorn, seeing the gravity of the situation, forgives those who are terrified of marching further:[104]

> 'Go!' said Aragorn. 'But keep what honor you may, and do not run! And there is a task which you may attempt and so be not wholly shamed. Take your way south-west till you come to Cair Andros, and if that is still held by enemies, as I think, then re-take it, if you can; and hold it to the last in defense of Gondor and Rohan!' (*RK*, V, x, 162)

This is a transitional change in the heroic code and, as Christopher Scarf has pointed out, it is a noteworthy example of Aragorn's heroism deviating from the core tradition of Northern courage:

> Aragorn may still have exhibited something of the 'hopelessness' of the northern spirit of courage when he pursued the Hobbits. Nevertheless, Aragorn, whose name, Estel actually means Hope, now had the Christian 'Hope' of life, as he put it, "Beyond the circles of the world." (Scarf 2007, 339)

[104] Charity may not be the complete story here, either. Like Charlemagne, Aragorn is a shrewd military commander and he surely knows that some soldiers are more suited to support, logistics, and rear echelon roles than others who serve as frontline shock troops. Indeed, such soldiers may be more dangerous to their comrades if they panic in the face of the enemy. Nevertheless, his wisdom and prudence in handling the situation is not unlike, and very much in character with, Notker's anecdotes of Charlemagne and his wise, prudent decisions and actions in various situations exalting his subjects as well as humbling them.

While Aragorn carries on in the face of a hopeless situation with unyielding will, the fusion of hope with Germanic Northern courage may be the most important aspect of Aragorn's new warrior ethos. Hope is inextricably bound with recovery and renewal. Judy Ann Ford supports the concept of a Germanic hope in that

> [T]he myth of the revival of Rome in *The Lord of the Rings* is presented by Tolkien as an Anglo-Saxon hope and more broadly a northern European Germanic hope, in which the idea of a revived Roman Empire, or Western Empire, had been expanded to include not only the Romans but also themselves. (Ford 2005, 68)

With *Roland's* example, Aragorn's hopeful, new proto-chivalric ethos becomes clearer. Elements of Northern courage are still there, but we can discern a change happening. We no longer see the prevalence of overmastering pride, the burning of ships and halls, the blasphemous oaths and other vices within the framework of "the sad light of fatalism" and the "long defeat'. Instead, we see a heroism that still shows unbending will and defiance in the face of certain defeat (such as the last stand before the Black Gate), but this has been fused with a sense of hope and mercy and justice provided by the example of an ideal king wielding his legitimate cultural authority.

4. Aragorn as Renewer

The core of tradition that Aragorn carries ranges from Men's first encounter with the Noldor, through the Second Age[105], the rise of Arnor and Gondor (and the fall of the former) until the War of the Ring. It is the tradition to be renewed with the coronation of Aragorn Elessar: renew with the implication of something old fused with the new and not simply revitalizing old traditions. Aragorn's renewal may include the following areas: governance,

[105] *The Akallabêth* actually shows the first time the core-tradition shift away from the Germanic heroic ethos, which would require a separate, albeit interesting, discussion. So far as this discussion is concerned, the group of persecuted Númenóreans known as 'The Faithful' who were persecuted precisely because they would not abandon the core tradition inherited from the Edain. See *Akallabêth* (*S*, 309-338).

justice, cultural renewal and its core traditions. These qualities further express themselves in various aspects of Aragorn's role as an ideal king.

As with Charlemagne, it is imperative for Aragorn's unification and his cultural authority that a consensus exists regarding the coronation of emperor and king. In Charlemagne's case, Einhard (1969, 81) tells us "He made it clear that he would not have entered the cathedral that day at all, although it was the greatest of all festivals of the church, if he had known in advance what the Pope was planning to do.[106]" Charlemagne is performing *humilitas* and it is critical for his legitimacy. Aragorn, too, makes clear his concern over the legitimacy of his claim:

> 'Behold the Sun setting in a great fire! It is a sign of the ending fall of many things, and a change in the tides of the world. But this City and realm has rested in the charge of the Stewards for many long years, and I fear that if I enter it unbidden, then doubt and debate may arise, which should not be while this war is fought. I will not enter in, nor make any claim, until it be seen whether we or Mordor shall prevail. Men shall pitch my tents upon the field, and here I will await the welcome of the Lord of the City.' (*RK*, V, viii, 137)

Both kings display similar concerns. In return, they also receive symbols that legitimacy is, indeed, theirs. One was brought by an embassy from the patriarch of Jerusalem: relics from the Holy Sepulcher (Becher 2003, 12). The other Elrond surrenders to Aragorn (*RK*, VI, v, 251). Legitimacy in both cases is further conferred by spiritual leaders, thereby imparting a holiness or religiosity upon their reigns. Charlemagne, of course, was crowned by Pope Leo III signifying the blessings and will of God. Alessandro Barbero (2004, 93-94) tells us that

> By putting the crown on the new emperor's head, the pope de facto claimed supremacy of papal authority over imperial authority… public acts that remained on everyone's memory also had enormous political significance. The act of Leo III placing the imperial crown on the head of the kneeling king was of this kind. The implications of this gesture could not have escaped a politician of Charlemagne's intelligence …

[106] This account is, of course, not without scholarly contention. Barbero points out that "[…] it may be that Einhard, modeling himself on Suetonius, merely wished to emphasize Charles's modesty, in the same way that Claudius had not considered himself worthy of the imperial title and had to be invested by force." Yet this strengthens the myth of legendary Charlemagne's *humilitas* and further illuminates Aragorn's *humilitas*. Alessandro Barbero, *Charlemagne: Father of a Continent* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 92-93.

Compared to Aragorn's coronation:

> Then to the wonder of many Aragorn did not put the crown upon his head, but gave it back to Faramir, and said: 'By the labour and valor 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.' (*RK*, VI, v, 246)

Not only has Gandalf been the mover of all things, but as a Maia or angelic being he also fulfills a papal, even supernatural, role; "… Gandalf, as the emissary of the Valar, bestows the divine authorization of Aragon's rule" (Honegger 2015, 13). Placing the crown on Aragorn's head subjugates the realm and its king to the spiritual authority of Eru Ilúvatar. Furthermore, Aragorn is displaying *humilitas* by acknowledging all those that made his inheritance possible, which is represented in Frodo bringing him the crown. He is also displaying *humilitas* by asking Mithrandir to place the crown on his head. The coronation is loaded with the symbolism of holy legitimacy, such as was Charlemagne's.[107]

Aragorn's methods of governance and administration are also vital to the new ethos and changes in the core tradition. For instance, Gandalf tells Aragorn "The Third Age of the world is ended, and the new age is begun; and it is your task to order its beginning and to preserve what may be preserved" (*RK*, VI, v, 249). Wilson (2007, 82), citing Edward Gibbon, writes "Europe dates a new era from the restoration of the Western empire." That is the task for the king of a united West — as both Aragorn and Charlemagne are. Both kings unified a shattered world which carries a notion of the 'West'. In our own history, this notion

> went back to the later Roman Empire and accelerated dramatically with the barbarian invasions. But it is precisely for this reason that such importance has to be attached to the moment in which the ancient Roman provinces that suffered the disaster and for a few centuries underwent more or less independent histories were unified by a new political entity only formally linked to the ancient one. When we say that they were unified, we do not only mean that they obeyed the same emperor, which they only did for a few decades, but that the laws, governmental institutions, and economic rules developed in one of the provinces, Gaul, dominated by the Franks, were extended to Europe as a whole. (Barbero 2004, 114)

[107] For further discussion, see Thomas Honegger, 2018. "'We don't need another hero' — Problematic heroes and their Function in Some of Tolkien's Works." In the *Proceeding of the 'J. R. R. Tolkien: Individual, Community, Society'* 5th International Conference on Tolkien in Hungary (2015).

The ‘West’ in Middle-earth, carries a similar yet different significance than it did for Gaul, however. First and foremost because the Valar are in the ‘West’, the Elves sailed into the ‘West’, and Númenor was in the ‘West’. But also because the ‘West’ in continental Middle-earth means the domain of the Faithful and Dúnedain, the ‘Free Peoples of Middle-earth’ and other tribes. The ‘West’ is Gondor, devastated Arnor, and Rohan which resemble the remnant of an *imperium* wracked by war and in need of renewal. Gondor is the last bastion of the ‘Men of the West’ which still maintains the traditional laws and governmental institutions. Ford (2005, 60) points out that ”there are a great many indications throughout *The Lord of the Rings* that Gondor represents the Roman Empire as viewed through late-ancient, early-medieval northern European eyes” to which Honegger (2011, 51) adds “the situation towards the end of the Third Age, i.e. the time-frame for *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, is comparable to the early European Middle Ages (i.e. between AD 500 to 750) rather than later centuries.” To paraphrase Barbero above, Aragorn’s coronation consecrated the birth of a new political space.[108]

Both Aragorn and Charles, however, are not thinking in terms of territory in renewing their empires. Rather, they are thinking in terms of hegemony. For Charlemagne, he

> […] had no interest in creating a “thousand-year Reich.” His conquests had not been for the glory of the Carolingian dynasty; they had been for the glory of God. What he created in the West was an *imperium Christianum*, a civilization based on divine law … Within Charlemagne’s dominions there were numerous lands and tribes, he did not attempt the impossible task of merging their identities within a greater Francia. (Wilson 2007, 91-92)

Aragorn governs his *imperium* in a similar manner as Charlemagne, whereas Charlemagne established “an immediate authority whose task was to oversee local officials” as a “means of improving the administration of the empire” (Becher 2003, 108). Aragorn establishes Gondor’s hegemony simply through the delegation of his edicts: Rohan is left as an ally rather

[108] For further relevant discussion of Gondor and the Holy Roman Empire, see Miryam Librán-Moreno, “Byzantium, New Rome!” In *Tolkien and the Study of His Sources*, ed. Jason Fisher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 84-115.

than a client-state. The Grey Wood, for example, clearly falls under Aragorn's domain as shown by his right to issue an edict: 'Behold, the King Elessar is come! The Forest of Drúadan he gives to Ghân-buri-ghân and to his folk, to be their own forever; and hereafter let no man enter it without their leave' (*RK*, VI, vi, 254). To the Ents, he grants the valley of Orthanc (ibid., 258). The Shire, also remains under Elessar's dominion,

> 'For do not forget, Peregrin Took, that you are a knight of Gondor and I do not release you from your service. You are going now on leave, but I may recall you. And remember, dear friends of the Shire, that my realm lies also in the North, and I shall come there one day.' (ibid., 260)

And he issues another edict: "that Men are not to enter the Shire, and he makes it a Free Land under the protection of the Northern Scepter" (ibid., Appendix A, 377). Bree too, is left to its own accord as Gandalf tells Barliman in Bree: "'You will be let alone, Barliman, ' said Gandalf. 'There is room enough for realms between Isen and Greyflood, or along the shorelands south of the Brandywine, without any one living within many days' ride of Bree'" (*RK*, VI, vii, 272-73). Nevertheless, his edicts have the same effect as Charlemagne's. Becher cites the *Annals of Lorsch*: "[Charlemagne] chose archbishops, and other bishops, and abbots, and dukes, and counts of his realm who had no need to take gifts from the innocent. And he sent them throughout the empire so that churches, widows, orphans, the poor, and all the people could have justice" (Becher 2003, 108). Aragorn is likewise establishing the new order of his empire through his authority as king, emissaries, and Gondor's hegemony.

Unlike Charlemagne, however, Aragorn does not conquer. His realm came to him not only through inheritance but also through a devastating defensive war and renewal after his victory. Nevertheless, it is a renewal (and also a change rooted in that renewal) of the Kingdoms of the (Númenórean) Faithful and its tradition reaches back even further. Honegger (forthcoming, 9) notes: "[T]he destiny of Tolkien's hero is to be king and, if we interpret his re-establishment of the old unity of the double-kingdom of Arnor and Gondor as modeled upon the achievement of Charlemagne as the *renovator/restitutor imperii*, he is indeed 'all but

emperor'." And yet the restoration carries within it the traces of the Germanic tradition, the core tradition that Aragorn inherently carries within himself. "Aragorn's restored Gondor was more a Germanic ideal than a Roman one because his kingdom incorporated the other peoples of the west, appropriate to both the point of view of Anglo-Saxon myth-makers and to a medieval perspective" (Ford 2005, 66), to which one may add: it may be certainly *more* Germanic than Roman, but traces of the Roman are still there fused with the Germanic in a Romano-Christianized Anglo-Saxon tradition (Chapter II, p. 19). Likewise, Aragorn fuses traces of the old traditions with his new ideal. His ideal is the most salient but the Germanic residue is still there.

Aragorn, his kingship and his new warrior ethos of the Fourth Age also conceptualizes a new judicial foundation. No more blasphemous oaths and acts of revenge. Aragorn, like his real-world *exemplum* (but, as noted, to greater extent), instead shows mercy, pity, forgiveness and justice. He takes on a tone of mild and gentle regency. We noted above that both the historical and legendary Charlemagne spared many of his conspiring enemies. Becher (2003, 141) notes further that "During the later Middle Ages, Charlemagne was regarded not only as a saint and crusader but, especially in Germany, as the ideal lawgiver …". Aragorn, similarly, dispenses merciful judgements:

> In the days that followed his crowning the King sat on his throne in the Hall of the Kings and pronounced judgements. And embassies came from many lands and peoples, from East and the South, and from the borders of Mirkwood, and from Dunland in the west. And the King pardoned the Easterlings that had given themselves up, and sent them away free, and he made peace with the peoples of Harad; and the slaves of Mordor he released and gave them all the lands about Lake Núrnen to be their own. (*RK*, VI, v, 246-47)

Indeed, Aragorn says to Beregond: 'Beregond, by your sword blood was spilled in the Hallows, where it is forbidden. Also you left your post without leave of Lord or Captain. *For these things, of old, death was the penalty*. Now therefore I must pronounce your doom.' (ibid., emphasis mine). Tacitus (*Germ*., 12) tells us that in the old Germanic jurisprudence "[P]enalties are distinguished according to the offense. Traitors and deserters are hanged on

trees …". Aragorn, however, pardons Beregond for saving Faramir's life. Aragorn is bridging the old law of the "Germanic" and dispensing justice much like Charlemagne. Notker (1969, 154-55) tells us in regards to Charlemagne's first-born son, Pepin the Lame, and his supporters who rebelled (and would conceivably fall into the treason category) that the king exiled them to monastic life:

> All the conspirators, who suspected nothing, were dealt with as they deserved before the third hour of the day, some being sent into exile and others being punished. Pepin himself, who was a dwarf and a hunchback, was given a sound whipping and was tonsured. As punishment he was sent for some time to the monastery of Saint Gall, that being among the poorest and most austere of all places in the far-flung Empire.

With consideration of mitigating circumstances, Aragorn mercifully "exiles" Beregond from the City of Minas Tirith. Simultaneously, he promotes Beregond to captain of Faramir's honor guard in Ithilien. We may even consider this act of 'creative exile' as an honor dispensed under the auspices of upholding an ancient law. While both the historical and legendary Charlemagne did, indeed, pardon many of his (and Pope Leo III's) enemies, he is neither so lenient with pagans such as the Saxons nor with Ganelon and his family in *Le Chanson de Roland*. Aragorn, however, does not massacre pagans and Saxons, rather he pardons and frees Easterlings. Miryam Librán-Moreno (2011, 112) also notes: "[A]nother consequence that is apparent from Tolkien's sifting of historical sources is an attempt to filter away, or at least tone down, some of the most cruel or unethical aspects that are evident in the historical material."[109]

One final point related to governance is cultural renewal. Librán-Moreno (ibid., 97) observes that Aragorn brings about a "cultural renaissance … by the presence and works of the stone-wrights of Erebor and the folk of Legolas…", yet Tolkien does not spend much more time narrating the cultural renewal of Aragorn's dominions. Nevertheless, it is there, and it is an important characteristic of a Renewal King. As the renewal of Gondor and Arnor

[109] Tom Shippey, *The Road to Middle-Earth*. Revised Edition (London: Harper Collins, 2005), 232, 319.

is one of the main themes of the king's return and we may safely assume cultural renaissance is also implied. In contrast to Tolkien, both Notker and Einhard spend considerable amounts of time discussing the educational and renovation work of Charlemagne through various anecdotes. "However much energy Charlemagne may have expended in enlarging his realm and conquering foreign nations, and despite all the time which he devoted to this preoccupation, he nevertheless set in hand many projects which aimed at making his kingdom more attractive and at increasing public utility" (Einhard 1969, 71). The two biographers impress upon the reader that not only is the renovation work as important as Charlemagne's military prowess and piety, but that it is inherently woven into the fabric of Charlemagne's achievements. It is clear that for both of these monarchs "… kingship means much more than mere military power…" (Honegger forthcoming, 9). It means cultural authority.

5. Aragorn's Epiphany: The Sapling of Nimloth the Fair

Aragorn, however, has his doubts. As his uncertainty gnaws at him, he experiences an epiphany and both the narrative and poetic symbolism of Romance moves to what Frye calls the comic area. Gandalf led Aragorn outside the City by night. In Frye's terms, this is an angelic Prospero-figure leading the Renewal King from the 'mineral' world of the city into the divine world of the gods. Mount Mindolluin is full of imagery: lofty peaks and the alpine pastures of the idyllic 'vegetable' world. There the king surveys his realm as far as he can see. Doubt lingers within him of his task and his destiny for the new millennium, 'The Third Age is ended, and the new age is begun: and it is your task to order its beginning and to preserve what may be preserved' says Gandalf (*RK*, VI, v, 249). This scene is *almost* a *Fürstenspiegel*, or 'Mirror of Princes'. That is, a genre "dealing with the moral instruction of princes," which, appropriately for our discussion, "originated in the early ninth century at the Carolingian court" (Scanlon 1994, 82). While a separate genre than *exempla*, the *Fürstenspiegel* still has rhetorical similarities which illustrate a kingly *exemplum*. Aragorn, while doubtful at this

moment, portrays an example of kingly *humilitas* that allows Gandalf to instruct him further in divine matters.

'But I shall die,' continues Aragorn. 'For I am a mortal man … And who shall govern Gondor and those who look to this City as their queen, if my desire be not granted? The Tree in the Court of the Fountain is still withered and barren. When shall I see a sign that it will ever be otherwise?' (*RK*, VI, v, 249). The king still doubts, and the imagery of the king juxtaposed with "withered and barren" suggests the land-and-king-are-one mythological metaphor. Perhaps Aragorn feels that the core of tradition, all those cultural artifacts and ethos, are barren and withered as well. That the land (or rather its representation in the White Tree — another symbol of Aragorn's legitimacy) is withered is cause for Aragorn's doubt and tinge of deathly despair. But Gandalf urges Aragorn to look away from the green land of his earthly realm and look *exactly* where all *seems* barren and cold. There he sees a small, new sapling which "already it had put forth young leaves long and shapely, dark above and silver beneath, and upon its slender crown it bore one small cluster of flowers whose white petals shone like the sunlit snow" (ibid., 250). The sapling is descended from Nimloth, the White Tree of Númenor.[110] The White Tree not only represents the king and the land, but it is also apocalyptic in the original sense of a revelation. Frye suggests that

> this is the symbolic presentation of the point at which the undisplaced apocalyptic world and the cyclical world of nature come into alignment, and which we propose to call the point of epiphany. It's most common settings are the mountaintop, [etc.]. (Frye 2000, 203)

Aragorn has received his sign. His epiphany may be seen as divine as it, in the context of re-newal, recalls the Golden Age of Men when they first set eyes "upon the faces that beheld the Light of Valinor" (*S*, 173). It is a divine confirmation of Aragorn fulfilling his destiny as the Renewal King; of renewing the ancient as well as the new Golden Age within the historical

[110] "And a seedling they [the Eldar] brought of Celeborn, the White Tree that grew in the midst of Eressëa; and that was in its turn a seedling of Galathilion the Tree of Túna, the image of Telperion that Yavanna gave to the Eldar in the Blessed realm. And the tree grew and blossomed in the courts of the King in Armenelos; Nimloth it was named, and flowered in the evening, and the shadows of night it filled with fragrance." (*S*, 314)

framework of the new millennium. Furthermore, the epiphany seems to erase any lingering seed of (Morgoth's inspired) despair that poisoned Men's willingness to choose Ilúvatar's Gift of death. Following this episode, Aragorn returns to the 'green world' of Romantic Summer, to his comedic wedding … on Midsummer's Day.

Lastly, Aragorn's death *ad exemplum*, defines his character and the new heroism and at the same time reestablishes (or re-news) an ancient tradition. Harald Haferland (2010, 208) describes the demise of the Germanic hero thusly:

> Germanic heroic poetry – like all heroic poetry – tells of conflict and hostility, but its hero, oddly enough, is not a victorious one. On the contrary, he often must accept his own demise and the death of those close to him, and his heroism displays itself with decidedly greater clarity in demise than in victory.

Fëanor initiated the Germanic narrative through his freedom of choice and he performed according to its heroic ethos. Aptly, Fëanor was not victorious: he was encircled, beaten down and mutilated by Balrogs and in his death Fëanor's corpse burst into flame. He died a powerfully defiant and heroic death. Aragorn, on the other hand freely chooses his time to die and lays down to endless sleep; it is noble and full of grace, but not heroic in the Germanic sense: it is, rather, an ethical and moral victory. It is the correct choice and use of gifts according to the divine plan. Most importantly, his death is vital to renewal. Not simply essential for renewing Gondor to its former glory, or even renewing some semblance of the Númenórean sacred kings. Rather, his death holds a significance for the restoration of a golden age of Men in the Fourth Age. Although his deathbed is "strikingly devoid of the sacraments, of Extreme Unction, of the consolation of religion" (Shippey 2005, 229) it does attempt to restore the innocence of the Men of the First Age: Men, who were an idyllic *Naturvolk* in communion with the Powers in the world. Their tradition of choosing death reached all the way back to the *Stammvater*, Bëor the Old, when he "at the last had relinquished his life willingly and passed in peace…"(*S*, 173). And the Elves stood in amazement at Eru Ilúvatar's Gift to Men.

6. Conclusion

At the end of the 'Tragic Autumn' and its *ubi sunt* sentiment, a new heroic ethos arises in the absence of heroic Elvendom, its *wyrd*, and its tradition of Northern courage. It is an ethos defined by proto-chivalric virtues such as *caritas* and *humilitas* – and most importantly hope – rather than fatalistic defiance. A new ethos that imparts an emotional significance of the waxing 'Romantic Summer'. The agency of this Renewal King is instrumental in renewing the virtuous norms and values of the old traditions, while at the same time, fusing them with new traditions. This fusion allows the narrative to plausibly shift into a new direction by illustratively narrating the great deeds and ethos of Aragorn *ad bonum exemplum* and a new *dianoia*, or theme, underlying the heroic ethos. By doing so, Tolkien follows a pattern that the Old Saxon *Heliand* author also followed by forming a new Germanic-Christian synthesis of the ideal man: a composite of personal strength and interior gentleness, a "heroic chest with a kind heart inside" (Murphy 1995, 86-87): only absent are the outwardly and explicit Christian accoutrements.

This is the "career pattern" of the Renewal King that we also associate with the ideal kings in our own historical and literary works, such as Charlemagne. Illustrating the *exemplum* of renewal are the modes in which both Aragorn and Charlemagne administer and renew their realms by their cultural authority, which differ only in the details while the larger patterns remain recognizably the same. While Aragorn carries the pedigree and core traditions of his kingly destiny, his sudden appearance upon the scene in Middle-earth makes it necessary for Aragorn to rightly use them, as the traditions not only define his identity (and by extension his people and other peoples who join their group), but they also give him legitimacy and authority to accomplish renewal. Subsequently, the core-tradition is altered. Part of that core of tradition are the symbols that represent it, such as Barahir's Ring and Andúril. While another part of that core tradition are the norms and customs (the heroic code)

which govern actions and define the actor or actors by illustrative and exemplary deeds. We witness the heroic deeds of Men at the beginning of this tradition in the ancient battle of the *Dagor Bragollach* and we see it at the Battle at the Black Gate. But this time, it differs in that Aragorn's treatment of his less heroic subjects and soldiers. It explicitly shows the fusion, or transition, of Northern courage into a new proto-chivalric heroic ethos.

Aragorn's renewal of Gondor's hegemony consists of many aspects of governance, as is suitable for a king, but only four are treated here. Both Aragorn and Charlemagne show the same pattern in how their legitimacy is acknowledged; how their governance and administration enacts policies within the paradigm of the new ethos; how they dispense justice in accordance with the virtues of the new ethos; and the cultural renewal that allows for implementing cultural change (i.e. a change in the core tradition) for the new millennium. *The Lord of the Rings* is a heroic romance in which the mythological dimension is closely tied to kingship. Aragorn's epiphany confirms his legitimacy, both divinely and symbolically to himself and his realm. It prepares Gondor for a New Golden Age. It is the *Stoff* of myth.

Finally, Aragorn's death realizes a renewal in the wise and correct use of Ilúvatar's Gift to Men. Not only renewing a core traditional aspect of the ancient Númenóreans, but reaching further back to the idyllic when the first recorded incident of freely choosing the Gift of Ilúvatar was performed. Not coincidentally, it was performed by Aragorn's '*Stammvater*' Bëor the Old, who, by his exemplary act, inspired awe and wonder in the Eldar and set a model for Men to follow. It seems now that we have returned full circle as the land of the West lays snugly under the King's Peace. Aragorn Elessar dies with grace and renews the realm full of piety and goodness. We find ourselves at the end of story in a happily-ever-after state. Until, of course, there is another Fall, and the history of Middle-earth again becomes

'storial'. That story,[111] however, will never come and we may enjoy the satisfaction of the Romantic Summer happily-ever-after.

[111] Tolkien started a sequel to *Lord of the Rings* that he called *The New Shadow*. However, he soon abandoned the project considering it nothing more than "cheap thriller." See *The Peoples of Middle-earth XII*, Chapter XVI, in *The History of Middle-earth III*. London: Harper Collins 2002. pp. 410-421.

Conclusion

The Eldar of Middle-earth function as Germanic heroes within an illustrative, Germanic heroic narrative that echoes the medieval tradition of the exemplum. Our understanding of the Elvish history inside this framework of Germanic heroic narrative furthers our understanding of Tolkien's theory of Northern courage as seen in his fiction, academic publications, and personal correspondence.

The unifying theme, the framework of these six essays, is the theory of Northern courage, that is, the Germanic warrior ethos and its subtle usage as a narrative tool in Tolkien's *Legendarium*, the stories and tales set in his sub-created world of Arda. Tolkien wrote of his admiration of the Germanic heroic ethos in correspondence and academic essays such as *Beowulf: the Monsters and the Critics* as well as his criticism of certain elements, such as overmastering pride, in other essays such as *The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth Beorhthelm's Son.* Both Tolkien's admiration for the heroic ethos and his critique of its more extreme and cruel elements are evident within his fiction. What these preceding essays found, taken together, is that Tolkien used the narrative of his fictional world to show his readers the aspects of this heroic code which he judged as virtues and vices. He did this through an overarching narrative theme and through exemplary patterns of his characters's deeds (*ad bonum exemplum* and *ad malum exemplum*): characters who shift the narrative focus through pivotal actions. Furthermore, because of the uniqueness of Tolkien's secondary world, his *origo gentis* of Elves and Men, may be viewed through the lens of Reinhard Wenskus' ethnogenesis theory. This theory sees the ethnicity of a heterogeneous group as united around a core of aristocratic and elite '*Tradtitionträger*' – carriers of tradition.

The contributions to Tolkien scholarship of this dissertation includes a fresh look at the importance of the theory of Northern courage in shaping the narrative direction of his works from the introduction of Fëanor in the *Quenta Silmarillion* to the conclusion of *The*

Lord of the Rings. An illustrative narrative, told through Elvish and Mannish[112] points of view, that is functionally Germanic in nature. Contributions also include the presentation of methodologies, such as the philosophy of history, historiography, ethnology, the tradition of *exempla* and how they blend with literary and narrative theory to the understanding of the work, its author and its readers. These contributions may either support, contradict, or provide alternative views to current scholarship in the field and provide insights into other genre literature such as fantasy in general or historical novels that draw upon historical and ethnographical precedents of our own past.

Chapter one begins the first pivotal and possibly the most important character for the Germanic narrative: Fëanor. This chapter focuses on his character and the Germanic original sin of Kin-slaying so often found in heroic literature. Fëanor is the first Germanic hero in Tolkien's *Legendarium*. His overmastering pride (*ofermōd*) and willfulness, as well as fiery rashness, are salient traits in his character. Tolkien, in illustrating his criticism of the vices of Northern courage does not allow his characters to become too gruesome, he makes his point mildly. Fëanor's heroic pattern resembles that of the hero Weland / Völundr, yet he is neither a child-murderer nor a rapist. Fëanor's heroic pattern also resembles Grendel, as Grendel is the embodiment of blood-feud and Kin-slaying reified into monstrous form. But Fëanor is not evil, no more so than Ingeld, Alboin or Gunnar. He is heroic in all that Germanic heroism entails, albeit toned down for the Middle-earth narrative.

Fëanor's kin-slaying of the Teleri, his burning of the ships (rather than a hall), his blasphemous oath, his treachery and obsession with revenge for the stealing of the Silmarils and the murder of his father are all the *Stoff* of heroic epic. This is the Germanic narrative in which deeds and choices cause the doom, or *wyrd*, that continues the effects of those deeds and choices. Further reactions to the doom simply continue the cycle. The chain of cause-and-

[112] The *Lord of the Rings* is presumably written from the point of view of Hobbits, however they receive much of their information from the Eldar in Rivendell.

effect constitutes the heroic cycle throughout *The Silmarillion* and into *The Lord of the Rings*. The contribution of this chapter to Tolkien scholarship is a detailed character analyses of the first Germanic hero in Arda and how that character determines the entire narrative of the Elves.

Chapter two provides the overarching theme which runs continuously in the background, and sometimes in the foreground, of the narrative concerning the history of the Elves. The focus is on the theological use of 'Authority,' by which Tolkien means his godhead, and its Boethian (particularly Alfredian) aspects of fate. Tolkien scholarship has discussed the issue of fate and providence but usually set within the framework of a dichotomy between fate and freewill. This chapter suggests viewing the problem not as a dichotomy but rather as an interaction of three modes of 'Authority' divided into fate, providence and *wyrd*. We view the interaction figuratively as a dance of influence during which each partner advances and recedes on the dancefloor of the setting and into the foreground and background accordingly. We find that each mode has a specific role to play: fate acts as a benevolent, preordained theme of the godhead which binds the Elves to Arda; providence is the freedom the godhead allows himself to "stick his finger" into the story as *deux ex machina*; *wyrd*, the mode we are most concerned with, acts within a narrowly defined mandate as a corrective function to the choices and free will of the characters. *Wyrd* keeps the overall plan of the godhead from going astray.

Fëanor, by his inherent heroic nature, misuses 'worldly goods' in the Alfredian sense. This suggests that *wyrd* is invoked by the Elves themselves by their own choices. *Wyrd* is a necessary element of Northern courage and its introduction into Tolkien's *Legendarium* changes the narrative from a creation story to a heroic Germanic narrative. *Wyrd*, when it is explicitly stated in the Doom of Mandos (The Prophecy of the North), sets in motion a tragic and heroic chain of events revolving around the Oath of Fëanor and his sons. A narrative of

treachery and defiance of the 'gods' and the 'long defeat' – all the elements of the theory of Northern courage are set in place.

Chapter three approaches the intradiegetic narrative itself as a fictional history of the secondary world, told by secondary world narrators to a secondary world audience. The focus is not on *who* the narrators and audience are, but rather on the theme of the narrative told. Tolkien scholarship, for the most part, finds the stories of *The Silmarillion* a compilation told by different narrators while some voices argue for the unity of one narrator. What this article finds is a unity in theme of the theory of Northern courage throughout the *Legendarium*, regardless of narrator(s).

Furthermore, Tolkien's published opinions are identified within the heroic events of the narrative. Tolkien's academic views on the theory of Northern courage are embedded too subtly to proclaim the text as didactic, but they are there. The text suggests political strife between two *Sippen* ("clans": the House of Fëanor and the House of Fingolfin) belonging to the same *Stamm* – the Noldor. The narrative is told from the political point of view of the Fingolfians, which colors the representation of (fictional) historical fact in favor of the House of Fingolfin. This coloration is an echo of Tolkien's stated virtues and vices of Northern courage. Tolkien essentially dramatizes his personal criticism in the illustrative deeds of his fictitious characters.

Tolkien scholarship has noted the historical bias inherent in *The Silmarillion* and the richness it adds to the verisimilitude and depth of the text. This chapter agrees with that assessment but also contributes the suggestion that the partisan bias, within the framework of Northern courage, embeds the rashness, pride and vices of the heroic code in the Fëanorians while embedding the nobility and virtues of the heroic code in the Fingolfians.

Chapter three continues to examine the Germanic narrative of the Eldar by examining the introduction of the Edain and their relations with the Noldor. We start by associating the Elder Days of J. R. R. Tolkien's *Legendarium* with our own history's Migration Era, a period

from approximately CE 376 to approximately CE 568, in which confederations of barbarians were acculturated and assimilated into the dominant hegemony of Rome. These acculturation processes were often violent and conflict-laden and subsequently recorded in Germanic heroic epics and Roman histories, which often emphasized the "deeds of brave men" (Jord. *Get*., 315). Similar to our own Migration Era, Tolkien's Elder Days also chronicle the "deeds of brave men" and events that generate heroic epics such as The Great Tales. These Great Tales tell the stories of heroes from the tribes of Men who migrated and settled in Elvish dominated Beleriand and their (often tragic but always heroic) relationship with the Eldar. The structure of the relationship of Elves and Men is contingent on questions of certain power relations within the norms and values (ideology) of the hegemonic, superior Elvish culture.

The Edain undergo a process of acculturation much like *Romanization* – or in this case, *Noldorization*. This Noldorization consists of vassal relationships, military support and buffer zones, the education of aristocratic youth in Noldorin royal courts, and the language acquisition of Sindar, the language of the Grey Elves, and the adoption of new Elvish-influenced traditions and material culture. In effect, the Edain, like the Germanic confederations of the fourth and fifth centuries, progress through a three-stage process which transforms their political units from *gentes* (the three houses) to *regnum* (Númenor).

Most importantly, however, while this process of assimilation and the accompanying power relationships likens the Noldor to the Romans on a structural level, the actual warrior ethos of these Elves is Germanic Northern courage, and it is this heroic way of life that the Edain adopt. The adopted heroic culture begins to define these Men as a political-cultural unit through their own heroic deeds and ethos. Furthermore, assimilation of the political-cultural units generate and maintain material and cultural symbols – that is, Elvish artifacts such as the Ring of Barahir. These symbols are carried by the Edain aristocratic elite as core-traditions of their pedigree and authority as 'Elf-friends' within the Eldar's hegemony. Tolkien's elite and

noble leaders establish and carry traditions through their entire history to the end of Tolkien's Third Age.

The establishment of the traditions and the heroic ethos, the chapter finds, echo the power relations between Rome and her barbarian subjects, including a degree of assimilation, or *Romanization*. This *Noldorization* of the Edain establishes close relations and tradition which define Men throughout the narrative of the *Legendarium*. The process of Noldorization during Tolkien's 'Migration Era' of the First Age provides similar conditions as Romanization and our own 'Migration Era', including conflict-situations that form the *Stoff* of the heroic epics of that time: heroic epics that greatly influenced the creativity of J. R. R. Tolkien.

Chapter two discussed the invocation and initiation of the *wyrd* of the Elves by a choice. Chapter five now details the ending of that *wyrd* also by a choice. The two choices are juxtaposed appropriately by the two 'unfriends' Fëanor and Galadriel. The Germanic narrative, *wyrd*, and Northern courage ends in *The Lord of the Rings* with Galadriel's temptation and passing her 'test'. Galadriel, as the last of the Noldor rebels and a penitent, pivots the fatalistic and heroic Elvish narrative from the 'long defeat' to eucatastrophe through her free will and wise choice.

This Elvish narrative, thematically Germanic in nature, presents its conclusion in 'The Mirror of Galadriel' and 'Farewell to Lórien' through two medieval narrative devices. The first device is the technique of interlace, that is, the interweaving of a number of different themes. The second rests in the tradition of the *exemplum*, that is, an exposition of the aforementioned themes by means of an illustrative narrative, which is used to confirm a moral point. This discussion posits Galadriel, and the choice she makes, *ad bonum exemplum* juxtaposed to Fëanor, and his unwise choice and impious heroic actions, *ad malum exemplum*. Through spatial imagery, tonality and character action, the themes of free will, banishment and exile, doom and providence all interweave together to form a rich tapestry in which

Galadriel redeems herself and the remnant Noldor in Middle-earth in an instantaneous moment of eucatastrophe.

However, in Galadriel's story, the low mimetic hero succeeds in his almost impossible task and illustrates to Galadriel how she must choose in order to be redeemed. The task was Frodo's when he freely offered Galadriel the One Ring and one may suspect that providence had a finger in that spontaneous gesture from Frodo. Galadriel is redeemed when she refuses the Ring and accepts her fate to leave her kingdom in Middle-earth. Galadriel breaks and satisfies the corrective *wyrd* with this choice. Throughout the scene, importantly, is special imagery which reminds us of the Silmarils and the rebellion of the Noldor in which Galadriel took part so that on a certain level, the Germanic narrative of the Elves comes to a close with an appropriate elegiac tone. Her story and the history of the Elves from rebellion to redemption connects her to Fëanor as an antithesis so that the Germanic narrative has a beginning, middle and end.

If the first five chapters of this dissertation concerned themselves with the beginning, middle, and end of the Germanic narrative and Northern courage of the Elves, from Fëanor's thesis to Galadriel's antithesis, then chapter six concerns itself with the synthesis of a new heroic code embodied in the pivotal character of Aragorn. Aragorn is an archetype of the Renewal King (*ad bonum exemplum*) while at the same time he is a *Traditionsträger*, carrying the traditions of the Edain as examined in chapter three. It is a pattern in which both the literary and historical Charlemagne resides. And like Charlemagne, Aragorn embodies a new form of heroism which still has traces of Northern courage, but it is infused with a new hope, in a belief in greater things than merely *lof ond dom* (fame and fortune), reputation, and the fatalistic defiance in the face of demise, defeat and death. It is, in short, a mixture – a proto-chivalry of the sort we see in the *Song of Roland*.

Aragorn embodies the Renewal King through his defeat of the Enemy, his leadership, justice, mercy, healing and wisdom. Yet, most importantly is his legitimacy as the King of

Men within the narrative of his secondary world. He reaffirms this legitimacy with his death. And like the Germanic hero, for the purposes of the story, he is defined by that death in his choice to accept the Gift of Ilúvatar and pass, by his choice and freewill, beyond the confines of Arda.

Much scholarship has been written on Aragorn and his heroism. The contribution of this chapter to the current body of scholarship is that his heroism acts as an antidote to the theory of Northern courage. The heroic code of the Elves, although faultlessly heroic in terms of the Germanic hero, is inadequate for the Dominion of Men and death as the gift of God. Men should not defiantly resist death, but should accept it willingly and peacefully knowing that there is hope beyond the confines of the world. The new heroic ethos in such a state of affairs is an ethos of love and obedience that Tolkien suggested was the most moving of all.

The practical implications of this dissertation is a recognition of exemplary themes, motifs and formulas of early medieval heroic literature placed in the context of the modern novel. How is heroism portrayed? Obviously the child murders and rape that Weland the Smith commits is distasteful if not outright gratuitous in the twentieth and now twenty-first century. Does Tolkien make his point by avoiding those extreme heroic acts and to what end?

This dissertation has also raised questions that are not answered here. It does not answer the question of when exactly Fëanor begins the Germanic narrative, with the choice to misuse divine worldly goods or original sin, which is arguable. His choice to deprive Yavanna of the Silmarils sets the necessary conditions for the awakening of Men. If that is the case, then is *wyrd* a judicial and corrective force to bring Eru's plan back in alignment? Perhaps Eru's plan was for Fëanor's refusal all along, which is why Eru set a fire in him that even Manwë wasn't aware of, as Fëanor claimed. After all, if Fëanor had not refused the light to reignite the trees, the sun and moon would not have been created to signal the coming of Men. Yet, this is a theological question of free choice and divine interference that may be explored in the future. Secondly, Galadriel's choice touches upon the salvation history

tradition of the high Middle Ages. How extensive her character, as a penitent, conforms to this tradition was only briefly discussed in Chapter V, and as this work focused mainly on the heroic tradition, there would seem to be more opportunities to explore Galadriel's character in relation to Germanic and Anglo-Saxon salvation history and perhaps Saints Lives.

One of the more interesting observations in conducting this research project was the discovery of reemerging patterns. Firstly, the invocation of *wyrd* and its corrective function may indeed repeat itself in response to certain choices made by the Númenóreans. And secondly, the hegemonic pattern of dominance and assimilation, *Romanization*, may also repeat itself as the Dúnedain Faithful return to establish their successor kingdoms in Middle-earth.

Although the argument's focus is on the Eldar, there is a significant problem with the thesis of this dissertation and that is the apparent discontinuity of Northern courage in the *Legendarium*. The *Akallabêth* does not appear to be "Germanic" in the least. Tolkien seems to take a different track in his "mood and tenor" and presents a discontinuity that disrupts the Northern courage theme. Nonetheless, there does seem to be an undercurrent, a hidden theme, of rejecting traditions, or conflict of old and newly adopted traditions. Other than the Faithful, Númenor rejects old Germanic Edain traditions. Tolkien (*UT*, 219) tells us that "[T]he Edain brought with them to Númenor the knowledge of many crafts, and many craftsmen who had learned from the Eldar, besides preserving lore and traditions of their own." These traditions, however, wane as Númenórean decadence waxes. Furthermore, Northern courage is no longer needed as they became Men of peace at first.

Perhaps more significantly, is a single passage that indicates a wrong choice. Tolkien writes,

> [T]hey brought with them many treasures of gold and silver, and gems also; but they did not find these things in Númenor. They loved them for their beauty, and it was this love that first aroused in them cupidity, in later days when they fell under the Shadow and became proud and unjust in their dealing with lesser folk of Middle-earth. (ibid.)

Númenor, “the Land of Gift” (ibid., 213) was given by Eru Ilúvatar. A divine gift and land of plenty. This would suggest that, perhaps, the scarcity of precious metals and gems indicates that such goods were not part of the divine plan of provision. Ilúvatar provides gifts according to the divine plan, and the Númenóreans still desire other goods not provided to them. The pattern is once again, like Fëanor in chapter one, one of possessiveness and greed of worldly goods and felicities, or gifts, which is anathema to God in the Alfredian tradition. Tolkien attributes this to a growing ‘cupidity’ that evolves into an imperialistic greed when they exploit the coasts of Middle-earth. The results of this exploitation are new cultural traditions of empire (including rejecting Quenya and officially adopting only Adûnaic). Here, we may be seeing a repeating invocation of *wyrd* in its corrective and judicial function. A correction of *wyrd* that is fulfilled with ‘The Downfall’. Or, perhaps, that the final transgression was so egregious that it was beyond the power of *wyrd* to correct. The Valar relinquished their sovereignty of Arda and Eru Ilúvatar directly intervened. This is the one and only time that divine intervention explicitly manifests itself in Arda. It wasn’t Tolkien’s providential “finger of God” but rather its fist.

After the Faithful return to Middle-earth (perhaps with a clean slate?) the Germanic narrative seems to also return albeit in a lesser form with the Dúnedain. It seems to be a fusion of Northern courage and hegemonic supremacy inherited from Númenor. The first mention of something ‘Germanic’ regarding the Dúnedain is when Isildur refuses to destroy the One Ring and demands it as ‘weregild’ for Elendil’s death. Note that this mention of Germanic ‘weregild’ is made in context with Isildur’s choice. Like Feanor, Isildur executes a freedom of choice with fateful after effects. Is there a corrective ‘*wyrd*’ at play now for the Dúnedain? The second mention of weregild is that of Eorl, when he claims the horse that killed his father. With the Northmen, there are far more numerous ‘Germanic’ conflict-situations (and names). One of the last examples of the Northmen’s (now the Rohirrim) Northern courage is at Éomer’s last stand in the Pellenor Fields. We may hypothesize that the

Northmen never lost their core of Germanic tradition passed down from their Edain forefathers.

So what does this mean? Númenor forsakes their traditions while developing other imperial and hegemonic traditions. The Faithful return to Middle-earth with both the old traditions and a diluted (less evil and cruel) tradition of imperial hegemony – they still consider themselves superior Men. This is a role-reversal from the Noldor-Edain power dynamics of chapter three. However, one important difference between Romanization and Noldorization is that Noldorization was a one-way street. We don't see the Noldor becoming more Edain-like. In Romanization, it is generally agreed that the acculturation process was a two-way street in which Romans and barbarians in the late western empire became more like one another in their identities.

The two-way street acculturation process, however, is clearly happening now in Middle-earth for many of the same reasons as it did in the Roman empire and for interrelated, but different reasons particular to Middle-earth. Firstly, like Rome, the Dúnedain experience a rather heavy attrition toll in their various military conflicts. This results in a "barbarization" of the Gondorian army as Gondor recruits more and more Northmen into their ranks. Secondly, there is the establishment of kinship structures within the royal and aristocratic families of Gondor and Rhovanion. These kinship structures cause negative effects such as the Kin-strife civil war in Gondor (and further attrition). The Men of Gondor and of Rhovanion are kindred descended from the Edain of the First Age, but there are a few clues that they may also have been rivals for a time, such as the Rhovanion mercenaries fighting with Easterlings against the Gondor hegemony. The state of affairs is reminiscent of the shifting loyalties among the Germanic confederations, the Huns, and Rome in the fifth century. A further historiographical and ethnological exploration may prove fruitful to Tolkien studies.

The 'Higher' men of the Dúnedain attribute their decline, mistakenly, to the "mixing of blood" with their kin of "Lesser" Men in the assimilation process. However, this decline or

lessening is in truth the result of the slow withdrawal of Eru's gifts of longevity and wisdom. Men have misused their gifts and the Second Children of Ilúvatar have shown themselves to be too immature to use them wisely and justly according to the divine plan. In reality, we may perhaps hypothesize, is that in withdrawing the gifts of an ontological nature, the Dúnedain are returning to a more original 'Edain-like' state of being. Perhaps, for Eru, this is also a gift for Men according to their own measure, a revitalization of Men to their original state.

Furthermore, to return to the choice of Isildur mention above, the choice to keep the One Ring as an 'heirloom' of his house rather than destroy it may be another example of a wrong choice that yet again invokes a corrective *wyrd*. If that is the case, it may shine yet more light on the heroism of Frodo. It would be the second example of Frodo acting as an agent of providence to the best of his measure (to paraphrase Samwise). The first incident is in Galadriel's garden (chapter five). The second is Mount Doom. Frodo, as an agent of providence, is now correcting Isildur's *wyrd*. But he is not strong enough to do it alone (only to the best of his measure), Gollum (as an adversarial helper to the agent) is also needed. Gollum would not have been there without providential intervention and Frodo's mercy. Frodo is providence's agent to correct the *wyrd* of the Eldar and both Frodo and the helper Gollum are needed to correct the *wyrd* of the Dúnedain and a return to the divine plan.

This may explain why the "mood and tenor" are so different for Númenor and the anomaly of the *Akallabêth*, and the discontinuity of Northern courage in the *Legendarium*. Further research along this line of thought is warranted to explore these possibilities. Should further research prove fruitful, then we may, perhaps, establish a definitive and *repetitive* narrative technique used by J. R. R. Tolkien that encompasses not only the theory of Northern courage, but also the Romano-Christianized Anglo-Saxon tradition of Alfred's Boethius and the tradition of *exempla*.

Abbreviations and Tolkien Conventions

ADCP	*The Old English Boethius: With Verse Prologues and Epilogues Associated with King Alfred*. Irvine, Susan and Malcom R. Godden, ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012.
Amm. Marc.	Ammianus Marcellinus, *The Later Roman Empire (AD 354-378).* London: Penguin Books, 2004.
BGall.	Caesar. *The Conquest of Gaul*. London: Penguin Books, 1982.
BL	*Beren and Lúthien*. Christopher Tolkien, ed. London: Harper Collins, 2017.
BMC	"Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics." In *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays,* Christopher Tolkien, ed. London: Harper Collins, 2006.
CH	*The Children of Húrin*. Christopher Tolkien ed. London: Harper Collins, 2008.
EW	"English and Welsh." In *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays,* Christopher Tolkien, ed. London: Harper Collins.
FG	*The Fall of Gondolin*. Christopher Tolkien, ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018.
FR	*The Fellowship of the Ring*. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965.
Gawain	"Sir Gawain and the Green Knight." In *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays,* Christopher Tolkien, ed. London: Harper Collins, 2006.
Germ.	Tacitus. “Germania” in *Complete Works of Tacitus*. New York: Random House, 1942.

Get. Jordanes. *The Origin and Deeds of the Goths*. Wroclaw: Amazon Fulfillment, 2014.

Jewels *The War of the Jewels*. In *The History of Middle-Earth*, Christopher Tolkien, ed. London: Harper Collins, 2002.

Letters *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*. Christopher Tolkien, ed. London: Harper Collins, 2006.

Lost Road "The Lost Road and Other Writings." In *The History of Middle-Earth,* Christopher Tolkien, ed. London: Harper Collins, 2002.

MR *Morgoth's Ring*. In *The History of Middle-Earth,* Christopher Tolkien, ed. London: Harper Collins, 2002.

OCD *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Antony Spawforth Simon Hornblower, and Esther Eidinow, eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

ODEE *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*. C. T. Onions, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966.

Peoples *The Peoples of Middle-earth*. In *The History of Middle-earth*, Christopher Tolkien, ed. London: Harper Collins. 2002.

RK *The Return of the King*. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965.

S *The Silmarillion.* Christopher Tolkien, ed. London: Harper Collins, 1979.

TL *Tree and Leaf*. London: Harper Collins, 2001.

TT *The Two Towers*. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965.

UT *Unfinished Tales*. Christopher Tolkien, ed. London: Harper Collins, 1998.

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Ehrenwörtliche Erklärung

Dies ist eine Aussage, die besagt, dass mir, Richard Zigmund Gallant, alle geltenden Promotionsbestimmungen bekannt sind. Diese Dissertation ist meine eigene Arbeit mit allen unterstützenden Materialien und Zitaten, die im turabianisch-chicagoer Stil notiert sind. Korrekturlesen und redaktionelle Unterstützung leisteten mein Dissertationsberater Prof. Dr. Thomas Honegger, der externe Berater Dr. Michael Drout und Dr. Lori Dixon sowie die anonymen Gutachter der sechs Kapitel dieser Dissertation. Keine dritte Person hat von mir einen direkten oder indirekten finanziellen Vorteil im Zusammenhang mit dem Inhalt der eingereichten Dissertation erhalten. Diese Dissertation wurde weder als Prüfungsarbeit für eine wissenschaftliche Prüfung noch an einer anderen Universität eingereicht.

Weimar, 8.19.2020 Richard Zigmund Gallant