VALTER HENRIQUE FRITSCH
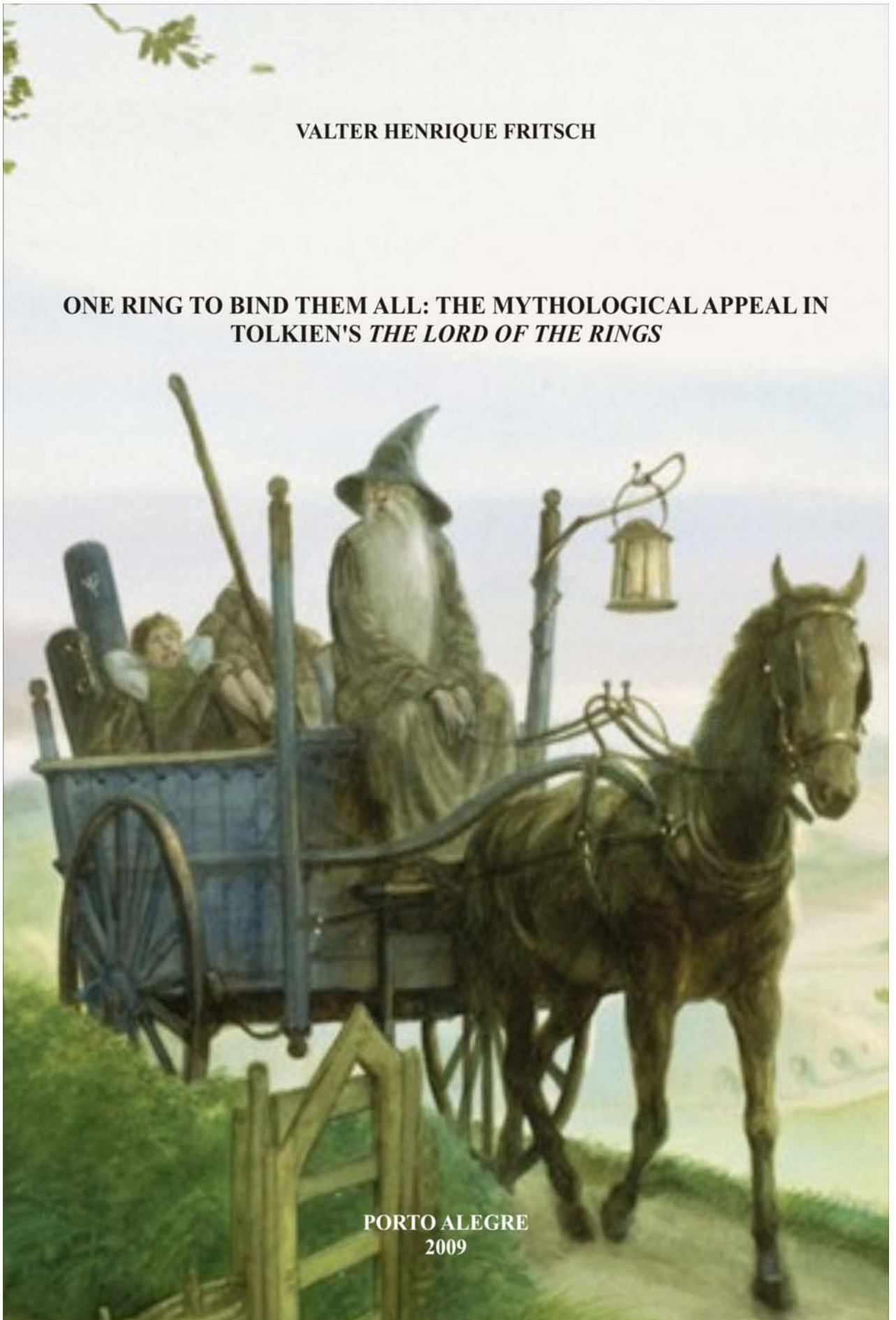
ONE RING TO BIND THEM ALL: THE MYTHOLOGICAL APPEAL IN TOLKIEN'S *THE LORD OF THE RINGS*

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO RIO GRANDE DO SUL
INSTITUTO DE LETRAS
DEPARTAMENTO DE LÍNGUAS MODERNAS
SETOR DE INGLÊS

One Ring to Bind them All: The Mythological Appeal in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*

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Autor: Valter Henrique Fritsch
Orientadora: Sandra Sirangelo Maggio

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"What can you see, on the horizon? Why do the white gulls call? Across the sea, a pale moon rises; the ships have come to carry you home. And all will turn, to silver glass. A light on the water…" Wow…It seems the journey has come to its end. Or, perhaps, it is the beginning of something new and challenging. I hope so… I dedicate this journey to my beloved adviser, Professor Sandra Maggio. She has been a friend, a mother and a companion in our personal Fellowship of the Ring. We have been through amazing quests together, in the delightful paths of Literature. I hope we can still join in many other wonderful adventures. This work is dedicated to J. R. R. Tolkien, too, who has filled my life with magical feelings and astonishing stories that have helped me understand a little more about life. I wish I can meet him in Middle - earth, when all turns to Silver Dust.

Acknowledgments

There are so many people I would like to address here. I will probably forget several important names. First I would like to thank all those people who have been by my side – from past to present. Then, I turn to three very especial persons: My mother, whose immeasurable efforts to raise me I have no words to describe, my grandmother – who has always looked at me with pride and tenderness, inspiring me to be what I am – and, finally, but not less important, my beloved boyfriend Israel, who has plunged into this crazy journey with me. Isra, I would like to say thanks for so many things, but especially for your existence, that fills my life with joy and bliss. And I cannot forget my dear friends Adri, Ana Íris, Celso, Davi, Gabriela, Jaque, Jéssica, Joana, Luciane and Vivian. To conclude, I thank my sisters Vanessa and Deise for always being there, my aunt Inês for her kindness and thoughtfulness, and my cousins Igor and Junior, for all the times we have been to magic lands in our delightful nights playing RPG. Thank you all. I love you. Special thanks to Professors José Carlos Volcato, Rita Lenira Bittencourt, and Jaqueline Bohn Donada, for their attentive and competent reading of my monograph. And the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, for all these amazing years I have spent here, learning a lot about Literature, but also about life.

Where now the horse and the rider? Where is the horn that was blowing?
Where is the helm and the hauberk, and the bright hair flowing?
Where is the hand on the harpstring, and the red fire glowing?
Where is the spring and the harvest and the tall corn growing?
They have passed like rain on the mountain, like a wind in the meadow;
The days have gone down in the West behind the hills into shadow.
Who shall gather the smoke of the dead wood burning,
Or behold the flowing years from the sea returning?

J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*

RESUMO

A Fantasia sempre encontrou formas de se manifestar na Literatura e nas demais artes. Desde as antigas narrativas mitológicas, passando pelos contos de fada, marcando sua presença no teatro e na poesia, até alcançar o mais celebrado de todos os gêneros literários – o romance; a Fantasia ocupa um lugar muito especial no que Carl Jung convencionou chamar nosso inconsciente coletivo. A presente monografia objetiva apontar alguns aspectos relevantes de um dos mais celebrados autores do gênero Fantasia – J. R. R. Tolkien. Quero discutir algumas características que fizeram de Tolkien um dos mais lidos e amados escritores de seu tempo, desde o início de sua carreira literária. Minha pesquisa repousa sobre os aspectos mitológicos de sua obra que podem ser interpretados como um ponto para captura da maioria seus leitores. O século XX testemunhou uma grande retomada da Fantasia nas artes e nos meios midiáticos, o que poderia ser encarado como uma fuga de um mundo ferido após duas Guerras Mundiais que trouxeram desolação e ausência de fé e de valores espirituais para as sociedades moderna e contemporânea. Ao invés de perceber a obra de Tolkien como um paliativo escapista, proponho que ela possa ser lida como uma poderosa metáfora de seu tempo, aludindo aos horrores de uma guerra que foi experenciada pelo próprio autor. Para atingir meus objetivos, faço uso das Teorias do Imaginário, como apresentadas por Carl Gustav Jung, Gaston Bachelard, Northrop Frye e Castor Bartolomé Ruiz. Recorro ainda aos estudos de Mitologia Comparada, representada aqui por Mircea Eliade e Joseph Campbell. Ao final desta monografia eu espero prover argumentos que expliquem o imenso sucesso literário que Tolkien alcançou junto a seus leitores.

Palavras-chave: 1 J. R. R. Tolkien; 2 *The Lord of the Rings*; 3 Estudos do Imaginário; 4 Crítica Literária

ABSTRACT

Fantasy Fiction has always found ways to manifest itself in Literature and Art. From Ancient mythological narratives, through fairy-tales, marking its presence in drama and poetry, it eventually reaches the presently most celebrated among literary genres – the novel. Fantasy Fiction occupies a very special place in what Carl Jung calls our collective unconscious. This monograph aims at revealing some relevant aspects of one of the most celebrated Fantasy authors – J. R. R. Tolkien. My aim is to analyse some the aspects of *The Lord of the Rings* that have made Tolkien such a beloved and well read writer, from the very beginning of his literary career. This analysis centres on the mythological aspects of Tolkien's work, which seem to be the 'hook' that has caught most of his readers. The twentieth century witnesses a huge claim for Fantasy in the arts and media vehicles. This can be seen as a way to escape from a fragmented world made worse by two World Wars that brought desolation and lack of faith in spiritual values to the modern and contemporary society. Rather than addressing Tolkien's fiction as an escapist device, I argue that it can be read as a strong metaphor of his own time instead, alluding to the horrors of the wars that have been experienced by the author. To reach my goals, I make use of the Theories of the Imaginary as understood by Carl Gustav Jung, Gaston Bachelard, Northrop Frye and Castor Bartolomé Ruiz. I also rely on the studies proposed by Comparative Mythology, as represented here by Mircea Eliade and Joseph Campbell. At the end of this monograph, I expect I can provide some answers that explain the huge literary success Tolkien has achieved among his readers.

Key-words: 1 J. R. R. Tolkien; 2 *The Lord of the Rings*; 3 Studies of the Imaginary; 4 Literary Criticism

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Elen si la lumenn' omentielvo[1]

J.R.R.Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*

Once upon a time, there was a little boy who was crazy about listening to stories about elves, fairies and all sorts of enchanted creatures from magic lands. This boy would annoy his parents and his grandmother and beg them to tell him any stories they could remember. It did not matter if they told him the same stories time and again; he was never tired of listening to them. As soon as he learned to read, the boy started devouring all the fabulous stories he found in the books his father would bring to him. When the boy finished a story, he had a very nice way to keep it in his mind for a longer time: he would go to the yard to role-play all the characters and scenes he could remember from the story. In his backyard, that boy started the most dangerous quests, he conjured the most powerful spells, rode magical animals as dragons, unicorns and gryphons, always with his Green Staff and his Magic Medallion – that some would take for a broomstick and an ordinary medal his brother had won in a handball match at school. That little boy used to believe so hard in his own stories that he actually thought he would go to a magic land to live his own adventures. There, he would meet leprechauns, mermaids and sprites, and together they would fight for a better world. The boy waited so long that his dream eventually came true. And here he is, writing a monograph, in fairyland, which will be read by some of the magic creatures that inhabit the place.

When I decided to perpetrate this monograph, I knew from the start that it would prove a dangerous quest. Tolkien's fictional universe is so complex, and the theoretical range of the Studies of the Imaginary[2] so vast, that the scope of the work would be difficult to be shrunk into the few pages this kind of academic exercise usually allows.

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[1] Written in Elvish, language created by Tolkien. It means "A star shines in the hour of our meeting".
[2] French theoretical approach to literary criticism mainly based on the ideas of Gaston Bachelard and Gilbert Durand.

The Lord of the Rings has been in my life for so long that it precedes my academic literary formation. As a consequence, Frodo's journey to defeat the evil power of Mordor plays a very important role in my present comprehension about myth, literature and about life.

The objective of this monograph is to present my reading of the world conceived by J. R. R. Tolkien in *The Lord of the Rings,* analyzing the effect of its mythological appeal upon the readers. I also intend to examine the literary context in which the author is inserted so as to decipher the images that compose the imagery of his work – indicating symbols and disclosing archetypes, as a way to understand the fascination the book provokes even in the present days.

Although some critics, as Germaine Greer and Joseph Pearce, have told us Tolkien's novels lead into escapism and Tolkien's readers are trying to flee from real life, hiding in the consolation of a magic land, my interpretation of the contribution of this author goes in a very different direction. Defining Tolkien's literature as escapism is to ignore the main aspects that have built the appreciation for the mythological qualities exposed in his novels. The myths and the fairy-tales have always been present in literature; Tolkien only gives explicit directions to the symbolical thought, writing about the fairy world with a depth capacity of narrating it. And his attitude opened a new continent of imaginative space for many millions of readers, and dozens of writers – although he himself says that this continent was not but a merely rediscovering.

Fantasy, as a literary genre, presents an atmosphere of unreality highlighting a branch of differences between the world of make-believe and the world of daily life. However, the main aspect of *The Lord of the Rings* to catch my attention is a sense of reality in the narrative totally different from the other fantasy novels. Tolkien deals with fantasy in a very particular way, bringing his dense geographical descriptions, deep knowledge on linguistics and the creation of magic creatures that co-habit with humankind, allied with this fake, although believable, sensation that we are reading a history book translated by a specialist.

The Lord of the Rings has been admired for several reasons, and approached in many ways: as a subtle discussion about religion, as an imaginative linguistic construct, as a recent hero myth version, or as Tolkien's attempt to create a mythology for England. I choose to treat the book a piece of literature, what it in fact is, highlighting its structures, sense of unity and the images that resound in Tolkien's novels and in myths. I believe that a good author is,

ultimately, a good story-teller. This is what has made Tolkien so beloved by generations of readers, and caused his books to be constantly debated by critics and curious people through all these years.

Although I feel very tempted to write about Tolkien's work as a philologist and the different languages used and created to be spoken by the different peoples inhabiting *The Lord of the Rings*, as a deep expression of Tolkien's knowledge about the subject, I would not dare to do that, for three reasons. The first is that this would misdirect me from the aim proposed; the second is that the scope of a monograph would not permit that I moved that way; and the third is that many proficient specialists have already explored the novel through a philological point of view. Therefore, I concentrate on the analysis of Tolkien's imagery as determinant to the continuing appeal of his fantasy, even nowadays. In order to do that I will rely on the mythological approach to literature as a theoretical support. The major contribution I gather in this area comes from the theory on Symbols and Archetypes by Carl Gustav Jung, the Phenomenology of Imaginary created by Gaston Bachelard and the Comparative Mythology defended by Joseph Campbell. In this way, I will be able to enlighten the mythological aspects of *The Lord of the Rings* that link the novel with the conception of monomyth[3], examining, in the construction of its imagery, the symbols that resound not only in this book but in many mythical narratives around the world.

In many cultures, especially in the ancient ones, mythical narratives tended to present a sense of common identity where there was a branch of rules that was interiorized by all, without the necessity of being written or registered, because those myths were this register. They used to help people to understand the world and to accept the facts of life, as illness and death. But they were not only that. Those narratives belonged to what is philosophically defined as a magical and religious time that operates independently from the paradigms of time and space, working in a circular time, coming to people through legends, orally.

According to Joseph Campbell the myth has four functions: the mystic function that represents human amazement facing life; the cosmologic function, which wonders at the ways and paths of the universe; the sociological function, that gives support to a specific social order; and the pedagogical function, that helps people to react to human experience under any

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[3] Term conceived by Joseph Campbell to define the same underlying structure in all the mythical narratives around the globe.

circumstance (Campbell, 2005 p.32). These narratives work as metaphors to spiritual life and they offer a model of behaviour to be shared by all the community.

In this mythological context, fantasy has always found ways to manifest itself. Fantasy is an important element in Mythology, in Religion and in Literature, because it responds to a basic human need. In Tolkien's context, with the decrease of the religious zeal, in a materialistic society, as well as in our contemporary time, the Fantasy Novel reaffirms its place in the world, calling to itself the main function of the mythical narrative: that is the conduction of man to a higher sphere of feelings, different from the ordinary everyday life that is around us. That is, ultimately, the reason why Literature is such a vital element both on a personal level, for the individual to feel that life is worth living, and on a communal level, so that myth can be spread and societies can still stand.

The twentieth century witnessed a huge claim for the Fantastic and for Fantasy in the arts and media vehicles. British literature played a most representative role in this mainstream in books such as George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm,* C. S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia*, William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. That century was also marked by a return to mythological themes, although the form has suffered an aesthetic rearrangement. We can see this in Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake,* and in the mythical plays written by Yeats.[4]

Tom Shippey believes those authors found in the myth the means to explain the modern world, or to propose a change in the realistic modern novel. According to him,

> Those authors of the twentieth century who had spoken most powerfully to and for their contemporaries have for some reason found it necessary to use the metaphoric mode of fantasy, to write about words and creatures we know do not exist, […] (Shippey: 2001, p.8)

The reason for those authors to turn to myth as a tool to discuss the Modern society is part of the object of research in this work. Tolkien lived from 1892 to 1973, so he lived through the two World Wars. He fought as a soldier and lost four of his best friends in World War One, and witnessed the effects of the misdirected logical political reasoning that led to authoritarian and racist regimes, into genocides, into the Second World War and into the

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[4] William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) wrote *Representative Irish Tales* (1891) and *Irish Fairy Tales* (1892). He also conceived poems and plays related to the mythical cycles of Ireland as *The Wanderings of Oisin*.

atomic menace implied in the Cold War. Rather than addressing Tolkien's fiction as an escapist device, I propose that it can be read as a strong metaphor of his own time, alluding to the horrors of the war that have been experienced by the author. I must grant, however, that Tolkien preferred the term "applicability" to the term metaphor, when the issue of connecting his work to the circumstances of their production was in question. (SHIPPEY: 2001, p.161.)

It took Tolkien seventeen years to write *The Lord of the Rings,* reworking and rearranging his story as many times as he thought necessary. When the book came to the public, in 1955, it was a huge success, and all the copies were quickly sold. The book was separated into three parts, since its first edition, what caused some people to define the book as a trilogy. *The Lord of the Rings* is not a trilogy, because the books in a trilogy can be read separately, each can support itself without the necessity of a reading order. *The Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Two Towers* and *The Return of the King* are therefore three parts of the same novel, they have only been divided as a strategy of the editors, who thought the book would not sell so well if it was published in one single piece.

This monograph is structured in two chapters. The first, named *History Becomes Legend; Legend Becomes Myth,* contextualizes Tolkien's fictional world and examines his ways to build his narrative, with emphasis on the parallelism we can find in the structure of the book, and the forms of the Epic Novel, the Fairy Tale and the Literary Myth. This chapter also discusses the theoretical choice of my research – the Studies of Imaginary and its applicability in Tolkien's novels and poetry. It is still a chapter to insert the author in his literary and social context, especially respecting his circumstances as a Catholic in a Protestant country in the beginning of the Twentieth Century.

The second chapter is titled *The Song of the Spheres,* provides an analysis of Tolkien's imaginary focusing on the construction of Middle-Earth and its characters. I will discuss the antithetical presentation of the Good and Evil dichotomy in the novel, and the role of the hero in the quest for the ring. I will also mention female imagery, and the mythological appeal of Tolkien's novel in the modern and contemporary society. In Chapter Two I suggest that *The Lord of the Rings* can be comprehended as a novel full of mythological appeals, built between the two World Wars, dealing with a war, focusing on human vulnerability and aiming at healthier ideals about peace, love, friendship, and the introduction of solar light into the shadows of a darkened world.

The moral thematic of the novel goes around the war between Light and Shadows, Good and Evil, but not only about that. We can consider this book as a product of a skilled mind that could filter the happenings of the turn of the 19th/20th centuries, and was acquainted with the literature, folklore and narrative structure of its time. The book is also the product of a mind still bound to late Victorian culture, defending beauty and nature against the war and a post-industrial world that is not concerned with the environment, allowing its machinery to destroy forests and pollute rivers.

The utility of *The Lord of the Rings* relates also to resuming the joy of reading it. It has always been a pleasure for me to talk and to write about Tolkien. I hope I can share this pleasure with my fellows. I believe that, ultimately, *The Lord of the Rings* is a book about our current days. The mythological appeal of Tolkien's fantasy seems to respond to the reader's necessity of symbolical and religious thought, giving to the present generation, even if through Peter Jackson's adaptation to the cinema[5], a felling of belonging. In a society so confused, where the sense of identity is broken, the reader is thankful to find a place like Middle-Earth. I know I am. I hope this work can be useful to my fellow students of literature, as a way to approach Tolkien's imagery and his magical world.

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[5] LORD of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring. Directed by Peter Jackson. New Line Cinema. 2001. 1 DVD (178min.), dolby digital EX, color.

1 HISTORY BECOMES LEGEND, LEGEND BECOMES MYTH

In this chapter I provide a contextualization to *The Lord of the Rings* as related to the emergence of Fantasy Fiction through the influence of J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis and other members of the English Literary group called The Inklings. The history of those times permeates Tolkien's fiction, changed into beautiful tales permeated by mythological qualities. This chapter also introduces the idea of mythological appeal, arguing about the ways in which it applies to Tolkien's novel.

1.1 The Rising of Fantasy Novel
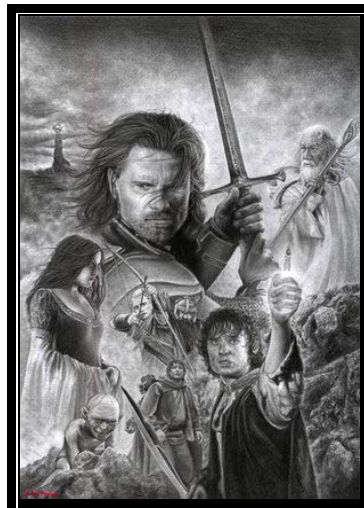
In this work I deal with a literary genre which has not been much favoured by a number of theoreticians, who prefer to concentrate on the standard canon – that great creator of the paradigms and dogmas that rules the literary object. The genre I refer to is Fantasy, whose origins can be traced back to mythological narratives, expanding through fairy-tales – first at an oral stage and then in written registers such as those made by the Grimm Brothers and by Charles Perrault – to reach the current Fantasy Novel, represented by names as Lewis Carroll, James M. Barrie, C.S. Lewis, Michael Ende, J. R. R. Tolkien or Katherine Paterson among many others.

In its roots, the word fantasy comes from the Latin word *phantasia* meaning the part of our imagination that is capable of creation. It also means, in its origin, fantastic image,

dream, daydream, utopia or *fiction* (BUNEL: 2005). The word 'fiction' here reminds us of its root – *fingere* – that is, the act of pretending, deluding, misleading somebody deliberately. Is not that idea appropriate to the notion of literature? Does not literature delude, mesmerize the reader, suspending him in a parallel world which has its own rules, and its own logic of world building? Is not literature an act of *fingere*? I think it is. However, this conception of fantasy differs from the one we find in myth.

Mythology was born in a time ordered by orality, where the main word was the magic-religious word. The tradition those oral stories dealt with relied on religion, ritual and magic and could not be set apart from ordinary life. Joseph Campbell compares these stories to parts of a broken ceramic vase, which is widespread around the world (CAPMBELL: 2003) According to him, these pieces of ceramic could preserve the main content of the stories – that are the symbols and archetypes – because as a part of the vase they contain it inside them. Campbell believes that the underlying structure of any myth is always the myth of the hero. And his purpose is to show that this myth is about every human being: each of us is the hero, struggling to accomplish his own adventure. As human beings, we join in our own journey to develop ourselves as individuals and to find our place in society. According to Campbell, by understanding the myths we get to understand our own lives,

> the mythologies of the world compels us to view the cultural history of mankind as a unit; for we find that such themes as the fire-theft, deluge, land of the dead, virgin birth, and resurrected hero have a worldwide distribution—appearing everywhere in new combinations while remaining, like the elements of a kaleidoscope, only a few and always the same. Furthermore, whereas in tales told for entertainment such mythical themes are taken lightly— in a spirit, obviously, of play—they appear also in religious contexts, where they are accepted not only as factually true but even as revelations of the verities to which the whole culture is a living witness and from which it derives both its spiritual authority and its temporal power. (Campbell: 2003 p.9)

The great advancement of Fantasy narrative in comparison to mythological narrative is that it presents itself in the written form from the start. Of course, thinking like that, we do not ignore the epic narratives from Greece as *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad*, written by Homer, or even the applicability of the cycles of Greek myths in the tragedies created by Sophocles, Aeschylus and Euripides, that are filled with mythical content. Still, they differ from Fantasy Novel because they are – as the fairy and folk-tales are – recollections of traditional and oral narratives shared by different communities from a determinate local and culture. They

represent the birth of Literature, and register the passage from the magic-religious word to the laic one.

The laicisation of the word provoked a great change: through it man could retain what used to be lost with the end of oral tradition. Common knowledge was not passed from father to son any more. With the spreading of the written form, the concepts of art and religion were separated. The recollecting of old stories dealing with ogres, fairies, elves and all sorts of enchanted creatures that live in the bestiary complex conceived by European Imagery, found out a place in the world through the works of Charles Perrault, Andersen, and the Grimm Brothers among many other folklorists. Thankfully, their huge efforts and researches provided us with a gigantic quantity of narratives known as the fairy-tales or folk-tales that were analyzed by the Russian Formalists to exhaustion. Vladimir Propp was the main researcher to look for a kind of typology to the fairy-tale and to the folk-tale, revealing the underlying structures of this kind of narrative (PROPP: 1984).

Fantasy, as one can notice, has always found out a place in the world. In all literary genres we can find allusions to wonder creatures and their enchanted worlds. Be it in William Blake's poetry, in Shakespearian plays, in Greek epics, in medieval romance, and even in the most representative literary genre of the current days – the novel.

Fantasy novels are written by a range of authors who draw their magic lands from a wide range of historical, religious and mythical sources. To the aim and scope of this research, however, we will concentrate on the foundation of a literary group called *The Inklings,* conceived by two British authors, Irish-born C. S. Lewis and one of his best friends, the South-African born Englishman J. R. R. Tolkien. The idea of this group, which got its meetings in a pub near Oxford University, in England, was to form a party of *literati* to talk about literature, philology, mythology and creative writing, since most of the members were also writers. Among the members who joined *The Inklings* during the years we have: Lord David Cecil, lecturer in English at New College; Neville Coghill, English tutor at Exeter College; James Dundas-Grant, Commander of the Oxford University Naval Division; Adam Fox, Dean of Divinity at Magdalen; Colin Hardie, Classical Tutor at Magdalen; R. E. 'Humphrey' Havard, Lewis's doctor; R. B. McCallum of Pembroke College; Father Gervase Mathew, OP of Blackfriars, C. E. Stevens, historian at Magdalen; Charles Wrenn, Lecturer in English Language; Christopher Tolkien (son of J. R. R. Tolkien) and John Wain, both students at the time.

The conversations held in this group gave birth, among several other things, to two of the most celebrated Fantasy Novels from the Modern Period of English Literature – *The Lord of the Rings,* written by Tolkien, and *The Chronicles of Narnia*, by C. S. Lewis. These two pieces of literature were created in the period between the two Great Wars, and both are marked by the wartime context that surrounded the authors. However, we must not think of *The Inklings* as anything like a mutual admiration society or men hungry for professional advancement – as Walter Hooper reminds us,

> They were, first and foremost, Christians, who had in common something that was far more important than their jobs or their other interests. Nowhere it is better put than in the definition Lewis gave of Friendship in *The Four Loves*: 'In this kind of love,' he said, 'do you love me? Means do you see the same truth? Or at least, 'Do you care about the same truth? (Hooper: 1999, p.5)

The Fantasy Fiction written in this warlike period created a kind of counter-culture literature. If we consider the aesthetic and thematic aspects privileged in European modernism, the dark existential perception that seems to lead the intellectual positions of the first half of the twentieth century is disrupted in Fantasy Fiction. The mythic approach to literature offers some rest from the predominant atheistic, even nihilistic perception of things predominating in the intellectual circles of that period. As to the relation between internal and external verisimilitude, it seems that Fantasy Fiction is more committed to the rules of medieval Romance than to the fictional structure found in texts written by great modern novelists such as Virginia Woolf or Joseph Conrad.

Because it was widely bought and in a sense worked as a balm against anxiety, Fantasy Novels were underestimated as mere escapist fiction. The huge influence they began to have on their readers, especially the young ones, was often attributed to the fact that readers found in those stories a way to flee from reality. Narnia and Middle-Earth were seen as safe places to go when the 'real' world was in trouble. It was only in the second half of the 20th Century that the metaphors involving aesthetics and religiosity became more flexible and allowed a loosening of the restrictions imposed upon imagination. It was at that period that Fantasy Fiction started to be seen through a more favourable angle. In the United States, for instance, among the *hippies*, many fellowships were created, which called themselves "people from Middle-Earth", living together in communities in the countryside. Those people argued

they were living under the laws of Tolkien's Mythology, following his precepts as caring about nature and living without machines and pollution. We can clearly see how far *The Lord of the Rings* could reach people's mind through the glimmering of Tolkien's writing.

The year of 2001 witnessed a return of the same themes through the appropriation of the novels by the cinema. Tolkien, Lewis, Barrie or even contemporary authors as J. K. Rowling with her *Harry Potter* saga had their stories adapted to the screen around the globe, fomenting a new movement towards to the mythical narratives, and as a consequence waking up the interest of legions of new readers. That was also the opening to a completely new generation of writers who joined the enterprise of narrating their own stories and creating their own magic lands. This phenomenon also triggered a new sort of critical approach to this kind of stories, which were no longer seen as escapist books, but as aesthetic constructions that should be understood as another kind of literary object, with aesthetic rules of their own.

Readers' yearning for fantasy founded a new mainstream of popular culture. Contemporary critics now regard this phenomenon as a resuming of folk motives of mythological thought. There are a new generation of critics who deal with Fantasy Fiction, represented by names such as David Leeming, Tom Shippey, Richard Purtill and Jane Chance. The facts that Fantasy novels are popular, and that they allow for magic and imagination, are no longer considered detrimental to the genre. Fantasy novels are as popular as mythical narratives and fairy-tales, and this is merely a peculiarity not a hindrance. These stories allow us to take a journey into an exciting and mysterious world – the world of fantasy. Inside them you can expect to encounter gods, heroes, monsters, exotic countries, and amazing adventures. In other words, Fantasy Novels take full advantage of the fact that they belong in the world of fiction. *Fingere*, *Phantasia:* this is the stuff Literature is still made of. And this is the business of my monograph, to ascertain that in our contemporary times – call them post-modern, hypermodern, liquid, or as you like it – fantastical and mythological themes are still incorporated into our present-day literary aesthetics.

1.2 Fairy-Tale, Epic Novel or Literary Myth

As piece of literature Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* has been defined in different ways, because of the different possibilities this book presents. Some critics, as David COLBERT (2002), have read the novel as a modern myth full of metaphors that are connected both with ancient and contemporary times. This view of the book is shared by many – scholars or common readers – who seem to experience, through the reading of this novel, the same kind of force the old myths would provoke. Others, as TOLKIEN (1983) himself, prefer to consider the novel as a fairy tale with its own particularities, that makes it possible to compare the characters and situations with old folkloric stories and legends. There are also some critics, as Tom SHIPPEY (2001), who see *The Lord of the Rings* as an Epic Novel filled with religious meanings.

In his essay *On Fairy-Tales*, Tolkien talks about his own studies and beliefs about these stories. He says that fantasy has played a vital role since ancient times and that fairy stories are related to "fantastic elements". According to him,

> (…) fairy stories deal largely, or (the better ones) mainly with the simple or fundamental things, untouched by Fantasy, but these simplicities are made all the more luminous by their setting. For the story-maker who allows himself to be "free with" Nature can be her lover and not her slave. It was in fairy-stories that I first divined the potency of the words, and the wonder of the things, such as stone, and wood, and iron; tree and grass; house and fire; bread and wine. (Tolkien, 1983, p. 147)

Joseph Campbell reaffirms such concepts when he says that Myth and Fairy- Tale, although sharing the same roots, present precise differences that can be clearly noticed. While

the hero from the fairy-tale triumphs in a microcosm bound to domestic and ordinary life, the mythic hero triumphs in a macrocosm bound to the destiny of all his/her people, or all humankind. Therefore,

> It is the business of mythology proper, and of the fairy tale, to reveal the specific dangers and techniques of the dark interior way from tragedy to comedy. Hence the incidents are fantastic and "unreal": they represent psychological, not physical, triumphs. Even when the legend is of an actual historical personage, the deeds of victory are rendered, not in lifelike, but in dreamlike figurations; for the point is not that such-and-such was done on earth; the point is that, before such-and-such could be done on earth, this other, more important, primary thing had to be brought to pass within the labyrinth that we all know and visit in our dreams. (Campbell, 2003, p. 27)

In this context, it is impossible to think about Frodo, Aragorn or even Gandalf as heroes who triumph only in a microcosm. They are engaged in a dangerous quest that keeps the destiny of all peoples and races of Middle-Earth. Consequently, for the purpose of this work, *The Lord of the Rings* will not be considered as a fairy-tale, at least not when the matter is the quest of its characters.

There are also some similarities between the Epic Novel and *The Lord of the Rings*, especially in the matters of extension, subjects and typical passages. If we think about the Council of Elrond, in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, which decides their destinies, we can find analogous epic passages, such as for instance Satan's council, in *Paradise Lost,* or Agamemnon's council, in *The Odyssey.* We can even trace parallels between the dreams of Frodo and the dreams of Odysseus, revealing the usual epic mechanisms which prepare the hero to meet dangerous situations.

Nonetheless, in spite of the mythical and archetypal constructions in Tolkien's novels, we also have the boundaries related to the treatment of myth in contemporary times. Although I believe these boundaries are flexible nowadays, we cannot broaden them inconsequently if we want to keep some of the original concept. In this sense, calling a literary work as *The Lord of the Rings* a myth is, at least, a mistake.

Even if Myth is a lithe construct in the present days, it is important to ascertain some aspects that are relevant when we are dealing with such a volatile concept. Firstly, a myth is a narrative, a discourse or a talk, a way the ancient societies found to mirror their contradictions or to express their paradoxes and doubts while trying to explain nature and its entire

workings. It could also be seen as a way these same societies could think about life and cosmos, trying to grasp the meaning of their existences in a chaotic world. These narratives are conceived in an allegorical form, never opening to people their entire meaning. There is always something left hidden in mythological narratives, something imprecise and fading that does not reveal the entire truth. This is the most common definition of myth, which has been improved a lot by many researchers from different areas of knowledge throughout the last decades. Psychologists, anthropologists, historians and literature scholars are responsible for broadening the understanding of myth by creating many approaches to the study of it. So, when someone decides to research on mythology, it is necessary to delimitate what conceptual line is going to be used to accomplish the task. There are many ways to approach a myth: Freudian psychology, the French school of Myth and Ritual, the Structuralism of Levi-Strauss, Foucault's connections between Myth and Discourse and Truth, among several others. The line to be pursued in this monograph relates to Comparative Universalistic Mythology as presented and defended by Mircea Eliade and Joseph Campbell, both followers of Jung's views on mythology and the unconscious.

Briefly, Comparative and Universalistic mythology preaches that there is one underlying structure in all the myths that is shared by all peoples around the globe. On a deeper level, the myths can be seen as narratives with diverse colours, but with the same structure always related to man's rites of passage. According to Joseph Campbell,

> The comparative study of the mythologies of the world compels us to view the cultural history of mankind as a unit; for we find that such themes as the fire-theft, deluge, land of the dead, virgin birth, and resurrected hero have a worldwide distribution—appearing everywhere in new combinations while remaining, like the entertainment such mythical themes are taken lightly— in a spirit, obviously, of play—they appear also in religious contexts, where they are accepted not only as factually true but even as revelations of the verities to which the whole culture is a living witness and from which it derives both its spiritual authority and its temporal power elements of a kaleidoscope, only a few and always the same. (Campbell, 2003, p. 3)

Although Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* shares many of the particularities and the same underlying structure, and corroborates the line defended by Colbert, it cannot be considered a myth for some reasons. First, a myth is a narrative bound to a magical religious time, when people had their knowledge passed through stories, orally. Second, a myth is a fading and intangible construction never written and totally out of our concept of time. Any ordinary reader of Tolkien knows the importance this author gives to dates, years and

calendars in his stories, always setting up events in specific periods of time. So, Tolkien's novels could be better defined, according to Pierre BRUNEL (2005), as literary myths.

Myths do not have authors because they only exist when connected to certain rituals, tradition or culture. In this sense, Sophocles, Euripides, Aeschylus and Homer do not write myths, but *literary* myths. They are myths retold or recollected by an artist at a determinate point in time, embedded with the artist's impression of the myth and of the society of their time. So, it is very difficult to define what the myth of King Arthur really represents, because we can count on many versions, by singular authors who have offered their own impressions about what the original myth might have been.

Tolkien does not retell any specific myth in *The Lord of the Rings*, although many English, German and Finish myths have inspired him. Tolkien is the author of his story, from the creation of Middle-Earth and their races, the languages spoken in it, to the events narrated as if being told by a historian who writes about the history of his own homeland. Nevertheless, it is clear – especially in the parts concerning the Hobbits and the Shire – that the author is aware of the kind of literature he is producing. As Tom Shippey affirms, Tolkien has no need to reinvent himself, or reinvent the Englishman:

> Hobbits, then, like the English middle class to which they clearly belong, may aspire to be bourgeois and boring, but it is natural to them. Tolkien indeed had nothing against middle-class Englishmen, for he was one himself: and, unlike so many of the English-speaking writers of his time, Lawrence, Forster, Woolf, Joyce, he did not feel in any way alienated, nor have any urge to reinvent himself as working-class, non-English, in internal exile, or any other glamorous pose. It is one reason why he has never found any favour with the determinedly cosmopolitan British intelligentsia. (Shippey, 2001, p.11)

Therefore, before calling *The Lord of the Rings* a literary myth, I would rather see it as a novel with mythological patterns, full of mythological appeal, that gives the readers an impression of getting in contact with genuine Myth.

1.3 The Novel's Building – Parallels and Contrasts

One of the most instigating characteristics of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is the way he chooses to tell his story and the mechanisms he uses to accomplish such an amazing task. The role of the narrator here is the role of the historian. From the start we can taste a mock sensation, as if we were reading a history treaty. In fact, Tolkien decides to assume the posture of a modern scholar who has found out an old book (*The Red Book of the Westmarch*) written in an ancient and forgotten language of which he is the only possible translator. Tolkien, as the artist responsible for the writing of the novel, is the translator of a book that is pretended to exist since gone ages. He is the researcher who is dictating, compiling, and translating all these copies of ancient documents about a land called Middle - earth.

The first part of its job – *The Hobbit* – is written by Bilbo Baggins, while *The Lord of the Rings* is written by Frodo Baggins – both of them Hobbits of the Shire. This enchanting idea gives to the story a quality of an antiquity, as if we had in our hands a piece of a very old story that registers all the happenings of a magic land lost in the past that really existed in our world. This is one of the most representative characteristics of the fantasy fiction – to create an internal and external sense of verisimilitude to convince the reader that there is a link between our factual world and the fictional one. As a consequence of this technique, this magical land is built with such precision and detail, that the events described in the novel are perceived by the reader as feasible and real. Each part of Middle Land is described – almost to the exhaustion of the reader – in a powerful and intricate manner, tessellating the language fabric of that unusual map. The geography of the place is totally associated with the morality of its peoples. Through the analysis of the appendix to the work, we confirm the impression raised during the reading that the description of the places we can follow the movements related to abstract or moral values. For instance, Good and Beauty flow from the West and, to it, they come back at the end. While the attacks of Evil generally are hidden or come from the East – where lies its foremost force.

Nevertheless what is really remarkable is the precision in the construction of the story. Each chapter, each book, is meticulously wrought, presenting the reader with an elaborate web where we can see many parallels and contrasts. It is clear that this is a sort of narrative which has laws of its own, and they serve to harmonize Middle - earth as well. Even the languages spoken by the inhabitants are deeply connected to some morality issue. If we compare language of the Elves to that of the Orcs', we can notice that the Elves have gone through many sufferings in their long existence through the ages of Middle - earth, acquiring wisdom, nobility and a poetic language, making of the sounds they utter as beautiful as they are. On the other hand the Orcs are deformed creatures born in darkness, with no intelligence, atrocious and cruel. Such characteristics are well portrayed in the unpleasant language they speak in the novel.

The Lord of the Rings is divided in six books, organized in three tomes: *The Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Two Towers* and *The Return of the King*.[6] Throughout its 1202 pages we follow the story of Frodo Baggins and his friends in a reversed quest, which does not intend to find any treasure but to destroy one they already have. Tagging along Tolkien's plot, the reader is conducted to a path of constant alternation between the sensations of danger and relief, which is one of the predominant traits of this fantasy novel. The books are organized in a way they present one chapter of danger and fear an then a next chapter of protection and consolation. We can consider this pattern if we examine a sequence of chapters such as "The Old Forest – In the House of Tom Bombadil" or "The Bridge of Khazad-dym – Lothlorien", when the reader is first thrown to evil and risk, after to be given some time to rest and recuperate. The alternations of tone are also remarkable, from the daylight colours and joy from the perspective of the people who inhabit the Shire, moving then to a progressive darkening and then plunging into the gloom and misery of a heavy telling, to return again to a lighter narrative at the end of the journey.

Another attention-grabbing technique is the foreshadowing effect. With this recourse the reader is made aware of what is to come, as in the dreams of Frodo, the speeches of Gandalf, or Galadriel's mirror in Lothlorien. Flashbacks are also used to narrate a separated

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[6] For the purposes of this work, *The Lord of the Rings* will be referred to as one single novel, divided into three volumes. As for the structural differences between the novel and the fantasy novel, I will only refer to them briefly, when necessary. Fascinating as this discussion may be, I would lose track of my established goal if I developed it too far.

fact during the novel – when Gandalf tells Frodo that he was arrested by Saruman in Isengard, when the wizard was being awaited by Frodo and his fellows in the Shire.

One of the most striking features of *The Lord of the Rings* is its parallelism, which reveals to what extent the characters and situations are related to one another. From the simple details to the most sophisticated ones, parallel scenes appear from the start. Book I tells the story of a group of four friends (hobbits from the Shire) who travel to take the ring to a land far from their homes. In Book II we have the same situation after the Council of Elrond, when after some discussion a group of fellows leave from a secure and pleasant land to face a dangerous path to take the ring to a land far from Elrond's home. In both parts Frodo accepts that a man associated to Gondor follows him in his journey to destroy the ring – in Book I the man is Aragorn and in Book II Boromir. Both chapters start with a celebration – Bilbo's birthday party in Book I and an elegant dinner in Rivendel in book II. In both books the ring is revealed and Frodo spontaneously decides to carry it. Shippey also identifies some parallels in *The Lord of the Rings*, as the first meeting between Frodo and Faramir and Aragorn and Éomer,

> In both cases an armed company comes upon strangers in disputed borderland. In both cases the leader of the company is under orders to arrest strangers and take them back, but decides not to obey the order, at the risk of his own life. Both scenes begin with a hostile demonstration, indeed a surrounding, and in both a subordinate member of the weaker party (Gimli, Sam) comes close to lose his temper in support of his own leader. In both scenes, finally, there is an initial sequence which is public, heard by all the Riders or the Rangers, and then a second one in which the leader of the group speaks more privately and in more conciliatory fashion. (Shippey, 2001, p. 100)

Nonetheless it is in the characters and their roles in the story that the parallel technique is more explicit. Denethor and Théoden, for example, both kings, are old men who have lost their beloved sons (Boromir and Théodred), and both men see the young descendents Faramir and Éomer as weak and unreliable substitutes for their antecessors. Another peculiarity about Boromir and Théodred is that both princes die almost at the same time, when the Battle of Pelenor Fields is taking place. Such effects of parallelism reveal Tolkien's precise symmetry that addresses *The Lord of the Rings* as "the complex neatness of its overall design." (SHIPPEY, 2001, p.50)

Cultural aspects of ancient culture are used to establish another kind of parallelism with mythology and history, especially in the poems and songs recited and sung by the characters along the narrative,

> From the Gate of the Kings the North Wind rides, and past the roaring falls;
> And clear and cold about the tower its loud horn calls.
> "What news from the North, O mighty wind, do you bring to me today?
> What news from Boromir the Bold? For he is long away."
> "Beneath Amor Hen I heard his cry. There many foes he fought.
> His cloven shield, his broken sword, they do the water brought.
> His head so proud, his face so fair, his limbs they lay to rest;
> And Rouros, golden Rauros-falls, bore him upon its breast."
> O Boromir! The Tower of Guard shall ever northward gaze"
> To Rauros, golden Rauros-falls, until the end of the days.
> (Tolkien, 2003 p. 436)

This elegiac tune sounds as echoes of the rhetoric Old English poems. The poetry in the book follows a pattern related to the old Anglo-Saxon elegies that used to be sung by the bards during battles or funerals. Shippey observes in Tolkien's poetry a relation to the acts of the knights who lose their lives in the battlefield,

> Nearly all the poetry that is quoted is strongly elegiac, one might note in a culture with no written records that is a major function of poetry, at once to express and to resist the sadness of oblivion. It has the same function as the spears that the Riders plant in memory of the fallen, as the mounds that they raise over them, as the flowers that grow on the mounds. Éomer says as he passes one burial- place, "when their spears have rotted and rusted, long still may their mounds stand and guard the Fords of Isen!"As they ride up to Meduseld between the royal barrows (paralleled in reality by the burial-sites of Sutton Hoo in England and Glamle Lejre in Denmark), Gandalf looks at the white flowers that cover them and says, "Evermind they are called, *simbelmynë* in this land of men, for they blossom in all the seasons of the year, and grow where dead men rest." Tolkien makes a point here uncommon in the many attempts to present the barbarian past: that the very fragility of record in such societies makes memory all the more precious, its expression both sadder and more triumphant. As often, his imaginative re-creation of the past adds to it an unusual emotional depth. (Shippey, 2000, p. 97)

The timeline of the novel is also a significant part of the narrative, and it is worked out in a way that gives us a sensation of increase in the speed. The action in Book I lasts seventeen years, from Bilbo's party to Frodo's arrival in Rivendel. The whole of Book II lasts three months, and Books III and IV respectively ten days and fifteen days. This acceleration generates a sense of hurry, as we run faster and faster to reach the climax that comes with the destruction of the ring.

Besides the similarities in pattern, we can also notice the contrasts in the novel, as the way Merry and Pippin offer their loyalty to the kings of Rohan and Gondor. In both scenes a hobbit offers a sword to an old man, but while the action of Merry is pure and sincere, motivated by his wish of defeating the evil meant to destroy his homeland, Pippin has a very different motivation. Pippin is led by the guilt he feels in relation to Boromir's death, and moved by his pride and anger after listening to the Denethor's speech in Gondor.

Another remarkable contrast scene takes place in Minas Tirith, when the characters flee from the Orcs and are suddenly taken aback by a Balrog. It is noteworthy that Gandalf then says "Now I understand" (TOLKIEN, 2003, p. 343), but we, the readers, do not grasp what is happening. Some revelation is obviously being left in suspension: we, the readers, would also "understand", if we possessed all his knowledge of mythology and of the history of his world. In the same scene Gandalf declares, "Now I've got my match" (Idem, p. 344), anticipating the coming of Balrog and forewarning the fellowship that he has found an opponent with equivalent powers.

A contrast we can observe in the same scene concerns the combat of Gandalf against Balrog. Gandalf says to Balrog that he is the guardian of the Secret Fire, the Flame of Anor and that the power of the Dark Fire, the Flame of Ûdun would not help Balrog against him. Without taking Tolkien's mythology into account, we could only notice that both represent secret powers, unknown by the reader and the other characters. These powers are also related to the traditional dichotomy between light and shadows – although both here are represented by the same element (fire). We have a combat between an angelical creature – Gandalf – and an ancient demon – Balrog – in a typical mythological fight of light against shadows. This symmetric dichotomy is a representative image of our western culture, linked to moral thematic of good against evil. The *Lord of the Rings*, inserted in the new ethics of the 20th century, may be seen as a Manichaean novel, reducing the roles in two basic sides – good and evil. However, being strongly connected to the ancient mythological narratives, *The Lord of the Rings* ended up relieving the anxiety and feeling of void that the lack of these dichotomist structures (in psychology) are used to provoke. This is, ultimately, the role of myth – to guide human's journey "to fulfil its improvements inserting solar light in the world" (CAMPBELL, 2003, p. 23). And, as Shippey affirms, The Lord of the Rings is a work of its own time,

> (…) no one The Lord of the Rings for anything but a work of the twentieth century. It shows above all the difficulties which that century has created for traditional views of good and evil, though it also tries to re-assert them. Aragorn says to Éomer, "Good and ill have not changed since yesterday; nor are they one thing among Elves and Dwarves and another among Men. It is a man's part to discern them." But one may feel as much sympathy with Éomer uncertainty, and with his question, "How shall a man judge what to do in such times?" (SHIPPEY, 2001, p. 159)

Such aspects illustrate the fact that *The Lord of the Rings* only is the sophisticated novel structure that it is because it has been written through a painful and rigorous process of creation and recreation of several narrative layers. As Shippey concludes,

> Not much has been said by critics about the structure of *The Lord of the Rings*, but it is considerably more complex and at least as carefully – integrated as the multiple narrative of Joseph Conrad, for instance, *Nostromo*. One might feel that a more experienced writer, one who wrote novels or fantasies professionally rather than passionately, would have known not to risk such finesses or trust so much to the ingenuity of his readers: but Tolkien knew no better than to try it. (Shippey, 2000, p. 107)

1.4 Tolkien's Mythological Appeal

> *Do we walk in legends or the green earth in the daylight? A man may do both, for not we but those who come after will make the legends of our time. The green earth, say you? This is a mighty matter of legend, though you tread it under the light of day.*
>
> Tolkien, *The Lord of The Rings*

In the previous considerations we have discussed the emerging of the fantasy genre, the labelling of *The Lord of the Rings* among many definitions – such as fairy tale, literary myth or epic novel – and Tolkien's techniques and mechanisms used to shape the structure of this work. The time has come now to introduce the subject I judge the most relevant in this monograph, the mythological appeal of Tolkien's novels, with *The Lord of the Rings* as the corpus of investigation.

The Lord of the Rings, a popular novel from the fifties onwards, reaches the 21st century translated into several media as a colossal success. What is the reason for that? Why have people stood in protracted lines for hours to watch each part of Peter Jackson's cinema

adaptation? Why do people care more and more about stories dealing with characters that do not belong in a world as ours? Why would people's interest in fantasy and magic lands inhabited by folkloric creatures that only exist in fictional world increase so much? For at least five years I have conducted my attention to such questions, trying to find a reasonable answer for them, and I believe I have got to some conclusions about the issue. I strongly believe the success of *The Lord of the Rings* relates to the extent of its mythological appeal, which ended up momentarily fulfilling the existential void resultant from the lack of fantasy and religiosity in our contemporary society.

This need was established progressively, along the progress of the different stages of our civilization when science and religion became separate concepts and fantasy and imagination were relegated to a secondary or inexistent position. Such elements, suppressed as they have been, still remain a vital part of this puzzling construct called Man. Spiritual values remain tightly connected with old mythological narratives. Imagination, fantasy, delusion, dreams, are all parts of the entirety of man. Suppressing them – noble as the causes for that might have been – has provoked some damage to important psychological structures in the individual, and has caused much social disturbance in our urban present-day society. To Carl Gustav JUNG (1964), this phenomenon is called *disassociation*, or *splitting*, and derives from the situation created from the moment rationality started to predominate over feeling and buildings and machines started to predominate over nature. Loneliness and anxiety came as a consequence,

> There are no longer any gods whom we can invoke to help us. The great religions of the world suffer from increasing anaemia, because the helpful numina have fled from the woods, rivers, and mountains, and from animals, and the god-men have disappeared underground into the unconscious. There we fool ourselves that they lead an ignominious existence among the relics of our past. Our present lives are dominated by the goddess Reason, who is our greatest and most tragic illusion. By the aid of reason, so we assure ourselves, we have conquered nature. (Jung, 1964, p. 91)

As a consequence of this mechanism of suppression, such layers of perception as related with the realm of myths and magic tales were confined inside our unconscious, and occasionally being revealed or expressed through a series of indirect mechanisms, such as dreams – which Jung called our particular myths. Another means of releasing such tension is reached aesthetically, when symbolic representations start presenting themselves in the work of the artists, writers among them, throughout time. Through a process that is disconnected from rationality, artists, the most sensitive men, re-introduce these sleeping symbols,

archetypes and myths, into our daily life. J. R. R. Tolkien is one of these men who notice this lack and work to reintroduce the long lost balance into our current ordinary lives.

The Lord of the Rings was conceived and written during the very difficult times involving the two World Wars. The context of Tolkien's life says much of the anxiety, gloom and fear of an ailing society whose most of its ideologies had all vanished. In this scenery, the people would gladly seek refuge in a narrative about an extraordinary land, also facing very similar problems and a sad war, but where the old values still applied. In this sense Tolkien was able, as Shakespeare or Tolstoy in their time, to filter those despondent impressions – including his own loss of four beloved friends in World War I – and change them into hope through the writing of his fantasy novel. Tolkien was well acquainted with the common feeling of void. According to Jung,

> In wartime, for instance, one finds increased interest in the works of Homer, Shakespeare, or Tolstoy, and we read with a new understanding those passages that give war its enduring (or archetypal) meaning. They evoke a response from us that is much more profound than it could be from someone who has never known the intense emotional experience of war. The battles of the plains of Troy were utterly unlike the fighting at Agincourt or Borodino, yet the great writers are able to transcend the differences of time and place and express the themes that are universal. We respond because these themes are fundamentally symbolic. (JUNG, 1964, p.99)

By repressing his mythological fraction for so long man ended up creating what Jung calls our *Shadows*. Shadows are built in our unconscious through the dissolution of hidden desires, or even through the repressing of beliefs, hopes and the withdrawal of imagination. Before thinking logically, we imagine all the things we do not know or the things we judge to know. People, for many reasons, grasp some of the feelings and daily happenings and change them into images – products of imagination. There was a tendency, now beginning to change, to label this phenomenon as alienation and instability, as if it was not worth being studied. This attitude was linked to different philosophical lines of thought which do not consider imagination as a healthy part of human knowledge.

BACHELARD's Phenomenology of the Imaginary (1938) adopts an opposite position, which grants to imagination a central role in human knowledge. It is the study of the phenomenon of image creation on the human mind, which emerges into consciousness and creativity. People are naturally creative, because before explaining the world in a rational way, we first act creatively, attributing meanings to things, and inserting ourselves in the

world. The Imaginary and the Symbolic are parts of this insertion in the world. They are determinant of our understanding of the chaos of life and they organize our representations of the world. As Philip Malrieu puts it, imagination is action:

> Entre a função de abertura ao conhecimento desempenhada pela imaginação e sua função existencial existem laços profundos. Ela engloba, com efeito, um movimento duplo. A imaginação permite que o sujeito exista, que se comporte em relação às coisas e aos outros não já em função das suas necessidades mas em função de um modelo, que não é um modelo propriamente acabado mas que é elaborado pelo próprio ato de imaginar. O imaginário é a retoma, a situação das imagens espontâneas num quadro que lhe confere uma significação. Essa retoma é um ato de unificação do eu, de relação de condutas primitivamente separadas e pode ser efetuado em vários níveis. (Malrieu, 1998, p. 237)[7]

The importance of imagination and the use that artists make of it to translate human values is one of the main interests of the Phenomenology of the Imaginary. It is strongly connected with the Theory of Symbols and Archetypes conceived by Carl Gustav Jung, the most widespread theory on the unconscious nowadays. This ramification of philosophy, psychoanalysis and ontology was adopted by many scholars worldwide, such as Mircea Eliade, Joseph Campbell, David Leeming and Northrop Frye, among others, in an attempt to investigate different social representations in art, religion or mythology. Such studies have been called Studies of the Imaginary, because they contemplate different areas of knowledge, all put together in the search of an understanding of what human imagination really is and what its function in society is.

Analyzing a literary work making use of such theories certainly is an interesting way to perceive the object as a product conceived by the tension between imagination and reason. This tension is what is conveyed to call, in jargon, the *paradoxes* of the imaginary. The paradox relies exactly in the tension provoked by the clash of material and symbolic as they are presented in our society. Reason is highly valued in our culture, while imagination is relegated to a secondary position, generally seen in adults as alienation, day-dreaming or illusion – not as a way to perceive the world or to produce knowledge. Nonetheless,

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[7] My translation of the translation into Portuguese: There are deep connections between the function of imagination as fosterer of an opening to knowledge and its existential function. Imagination performs, in effect, a double movement. Imagination allows the subject to exist, to act upon the world not only according to its needs, but in terms of a model, which is created in the very act of imagination. The imaginary is the recovery of a situation of spontaneous imagery within a framework that gives it a meaning. This recovery is an act of unification of the self, a reunion of relationships of behavior which have long been set apart, and it can be held at various levels. (MALRIEU, 1998, p. 237)

imagination and reason are inseparable, and one cannot exist without the other. The Studies of the Imaginary attribute a central position to imagination, as a means to understand human production of knowledge. Castor Bartolomé Ruiz[8] argues for such studies saying that,

> (…) estamos resgatando dos porões da exclusão aquela que foi habitualmente considerada a "louca da casa": a imaginação. Pobre louca, tão vilipendiada durante séculos de filosofia ocidental. Ela é a dimensão humana que nunca se conseguiu controlar. Por esse motivo, foram estabelecidas as mais variadas formas de domesticação sobre ela. Em último extremo, quando se chegou à convicção de que era inútil o esforço para sufocá-la, foi enclausurada no mundo da falácia, pendurando sobre ela o epíteto de perigo; a imaginação é uma alucinação. Mas ela ressurge outra vez desde todas as perspectivas possíveis na mente do cientista e da mão dos poetas, na reflexão do filósofo e na experiência dos místicos, na criação do artista e na práxis do revolucionário, no planejamento da gestão e na esperança da utopia. (Ruiz, 2003, p.52)[9]

The plot of *The Lord of the Rings* centres upon a war in which what is at stake are the values respecting the sense of unity and integrity in human and non-human characters who are fighting to free Middle - earth from the evil forces of Sauron. The abstract qualities that are highlighted n the novel, such as friendship, brotherly love and courage, seem to perfectly fit the needs of the readers in those warlike times, and somehow seem even more welcome nowadays. *The Lord of the Rings* is still a success and has proved a rich source of inspiration to many writers all along.

Tolkien's fantasy fiction follows a different path form the intimist literature of his great modern fellow writers – such as Virginia Woolf, D. H. Lawrence, E. M. Forster, Ernest Hemingway or William Faulkner, for instance. Tolkien's world is public and politic, very similar to the ancient epics. And there is room for magic in his realm. In Tolkien's fictional world light and shadow are still well set apart, and Good and Evil still have their roles to perform. It is this mythological appeal that brings comfort to the reader, reconciling feelings

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[8]Prof. Ruiz has a PHD in Philosophy at Universidade de Deusto, in Spain, and is professor at Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos in Brazil. He wrote the book *Paradoxos do Imaginário*.

[9] My translation from the original in Portuguese: Imagination, which has been long considered "the madwoman in the house", is now being rescued from the darkness of exclusion. Poor crazy thing, so reviled by centuries of Western philosophy, representing the human dimension that never managed to be kept under control. For this reason, the most varied forms of domestication were imposed upon it. As a last resort, when it became evident that it was useless trying to quell it, imagination was enclosed within the realm of fallacy, with the epitome of 'dangerous' hanging over it. Imagination means hallucination. Still it keeps reappearing, from every possible perspective, on the mind of the scientist, in the hand of the poet, in the thought of the philosopher, in the mystical experience, in the creation of the artist, in the revolutionary practice, in the management planning and in the hope of utopia. (Ruiz, 2003, p. 52.)

that seem unable to coexist – materiality and imagination, war and peace, escapism and reality, Christian values and Paganism. In this sense, Tolkien is also paradoxical, writing a book full of religious values but without mentioning religion or making any direct reference to it during the entire novel, so as to resume the heart of the missing element without having to resume the old metaphors which no longer apply.

Still, what might this intangible force that attracts readers to this thick book be? What is this mythological appeal I have been talking about through these lines? There are so many aspects to draw attention to in Tolkien's mythological appeal. The role of the hero; the symbolism of passage; the female archetype of the faces of the ancient goddess; or the clash between shadow and light, evil and good. These are all very important aspects, that belong both to ancient myths and in Tolkien works, and which we will discuss in the next section of this monograph.

2 The Music of the Spheres

Tolkien's fantasy world is based on his own mythology created and described by him in his novels. However it is his novel *The Silmarillion* that best illustrates the strong connection between myth and music in Tolkien's creation.

> There was Eru, the One, who in Arda is called Ilúvatar; and he made first the Ainur, the Holy Ones, that were the offspring of his thought, and they were with him before aught else was made. And he spoke to them, propounding to them themes of music; and they sang before him, and he was glad. But for a long while they sang only each alone, or but few together, while the rest hearkened; for each comprehended only that part of me mind of Ilúvatar from which he came, and in the understanding of their brethren they grew but slowly. Yet ever as they listened they came to deeper understanding, and increased in unison and harmony. (TOLKIEN, 2003, p.5)

In Medieval times there was a concept known as the "Music of the Spheres," which referred to an anthropomorphic view of music, as an entity capable of creation. There were many philosophers who dedicated their theories on such conception, such as Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus and Boethius. Giambatista Vicco, during the Italian Renascence, works on this concept of music as energy capable of creation when he starts his studies on the mythological and laic words. By making distinctions between them he gave the first steps towards the future anthropological studies of mythology, such as we have with Levi-Strauss, who divided myth into *mythemes*, as words are divide to phonemes and music into notes. Nonetheless, it was Joseph Campbell who established deeper connections with the concepts of music and mythology.

According to Campbell, mythology is deeply related to the concept of music. He does not mean ordinary music, he rather describes mythology as a sacred and mysterious song which we cannot listen to entirely. The function of such music is to guide human steps through the world, leading the mind to improvements that give to the subject the capacity of keeping going on his/her own journey. This music is present in the public myths we know from the mythological narratives and in the private ones we get in contact with during our dreams,

> The unconscious sends all sorts of vapours, odd beings, terrors, and deluding images up into the mind—whether in dream, broad daylight, or insanity; for the human kingdom, beneath the floor of the comparatively neat little dwelling that we call our consciousness, goes down into unsuspected Aladdin caves. There not only jewels but also dangerous jinn abide: the inconvenient or resisted psychological powers that we have not thought or dared to integrate into our lives. And they may remain unsuspected, or, on the other hand, some chance word, the smell of a landscape, the taste of a cup of tea, or the glance of an eye may touch a magic spring, and then dangerous messengers begin to appear in the brain. These are dangerous because they threaten the fabric of the security into which we have built ourselves and our family. But they are fiendishly fascinating too, for they carry keys that open the whole realm of the desired and feared adventure of the discovery of the self. Destruction of the world that we have built and in which we live, and of ourselves within it; but then a wonderful reconstruction, of the bolder, cleaner, more spacious, and fully human life—that is the lure, the promise and terror, of these disturbing night visitants from the mythological realm that we carry within. (CAMPBELL, 2003, p. 38)

Tolkien creates a mythological world in *The Lord of the Rings*, filled with archetypes that reverberate with all mythological narratives. According to Jung, these archetypes are archaic images associated with our unconscious structures, which partake in all mythological narratives around the globe, which share a same underlying structure. Campbell uses this Jungian idea to coin his concept of *monomyth*. Any myth, according to him, is always a variation of the hero myth. Campbell believes there is an underlying structure of this myth that would explain why we have kept telling the same old stories time and again. Campbell affirms that the hero myth is, in fact, about every human being – as each person should fulfil his/her journey to develop as an individual and to find a place in society. Our most difficult task, as heroes of our own quests, is to understand the nature of the universe and what role we play in it. Comparing our own journey with the ones lived by heroes from mythological narratives, or Tolkien's novels, we find the same cruel dichotomy: some heroes are successful and achieve glory, but there are heroes who are destroyed by forces that are more powerful than they.

The kind of narrative where *The Lord of the Rings* is inserted is clearly the mythological one. The book has this powerful connection with these archetypal themes that have always throbbed on the human mind. Therefore, it is undeniable that Tolkien's novel shares common elements with mythology and that these elements have the potential to be very attractive to a society that has lost the reach of its original myths.

In this chapter I want to explore some aspects of *The Lord of the Rings* that reveal its connection with mythological themes, and with archetypal patterns that underlie what Jung conveys to call our collective unconscious. From the analysis of relevant symbols –such is the One Ring – through the exploring of archetypal themes and characters' behaviours, to the inevitable quest of the hero, I will examine some characteristics that have made *The Lord of the Rings* be regarded and loved by so many readers throughout the world.

2.1 One Ring to Bind Them All

Before starting, and tagging along Frodo's journey, the reader opens *The Lord of the Rings* and finds the following verses written in one of the opening pages.

> Three Rings for the Elven-kings under the sky,
> Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,
> Nine for the Mortal Men doomed to die,
> One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne
> In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.
> One ring to rule them all. One ring to find them,
> One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them
> In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.
> (TOLKIEN, 2003, p.3)

Such verses may instigate the reader's curiosity about what is to follow. Who are the Elven-kings and the Dwarf-lords? Who is the Dark Lord and where is this Land of Mordor where the shadows lie? Later, while reading the book, the reader is informed that these verses relate to the forging of magical rings and the forging of the One Ring, capable of controlling

all others. What the reader is not informed is that these verses were not written by Tolkien. They are, in fact, the translation made by Tolkien from an old piece of Anglo-Saxon poetry, whose author's name is lost in time (STANTON, 2002). The story these verses refer to is lost, and it was not possible for Tolkien to recuperate its original plot. Tolkien uses these verses as a mechanism to reinforce the character of verisimilitude in his novel. The original story of the rings may be lost, but Tolkien's creation fits very well into the voids. This introductory poetic part opens a mythological world to the reader, inhabited by men, elves, dwarves and a Dark Lord, who is in command of a powerful ring capable of controlling all the other rings.

When Tolkien wrote *The Hobbit*, he was not aware of the role the ring would have in his next story. The ring there was an ordinary magic ring that Bilbo won in a game played against Gollun, and it possessed the power of making Bilbo invisible. Thanks to this powerful object, Bilbo is able to trick Smaug, the dragon, and to save his fellow dwarfs who were closed in the monster's cave. Nonetheless, when Tolkien starts to write *The Lord of the Rings*, the ring becomes a motif, a very important symbol and even one of the main characters of the story.

The One Ring was forged by the ancient elves who are compared to our contemporary scientists. The elves share, according to Tolkien (CARPENTER, 1981 p. 198), the same spirit that motivates the scientists – they want to research and create beautiful and powerful things; how they will be used, to what ends, is a secondary matter. This ring is capable of controlling all the others, or of being used as a powerful gun in the war which is about to start in Middle - earth. However, the ring is also alive and has a will of its own, and its own objectives. It can grant much power[10] to its user. It has also the power of giving long life to its user, but it progressively corrupts the user and changes him into an evil shadow, incapable of distinguishing right from wrong anymore. Some other relevant aspects about the ring are: it brings disagreements among friends – as Bilbo's behaviour suggests. It can turn into a desirable object, almost impossible to be ignored, that fascinates those who find from the first. Men, as a weak race, are more inclined to surrender to the attraction of the ring, and are easily destroyed by it. This is one of the greatest ironies of the ring – the one who thinks to possess it is actually being possessed by it: "you must either lose it, or yourself" (CARPENTER, 2002, p.248).

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[10] The ring takes the user's best ability and amplifies it into a high level. That is the reason Bilbo and Frodo can become invisible when using the ring. Hobbits are well versed in the art of hiding, and there is no better way of hiding than becoming invisible.

Rings of power are a widespread motif in mythological and folkloric narratives. We have good examples of this symbol in the old epics *Beowulf* and *The Song of the Nibelungs,* both of them anonymous. The ring is a very old symbol, which – due to its shape without a beginning or an end – symbolizes union, fidelity and the integrity of a community. This is precisely what the ring represents in *The Lord of the Rings*. The One Ring was created by Sauron to rule and bind all its other users – the major leaders of Middle - earth at the time of its forging. The concept of the magic power of a circle is also part of the symbolism of the ring. For this reason, they very often carry magical attributes in literature, in movies, or even in cartoons and graphic novels. Cirlot's *Dictionary of Symbols* suggests,

> Like every closed circle, the ring is a symbol of continuity and wholeness. This is why (like the bracelet) it has been used both as a symbol of marriage and of the eternally repeated time-cycle. Sometimes it occurs in animal form, as a snake or an eel biting its tail (Ouroboros); sometimes as a pure geometrical form. It is interesting to note that, in some legends, the ring is regarded as the only remaining link of a chain. Thus, it is told that when Jupiter allowed Hercules to rescue Prometheus, it was on condition that the latter should thereafter wear an iron ring, set with a piece of rock from the Caucasus, as a symbol of submission to his punishment. Another type of ring is found in the circle of flames surrounding the dancing Shiva as he performs the cosmic dance; this flame-ring can be related to the Zodiac. Like the Zodiac and the Ouroboros of the Gnostics, it has an active and a passive half (evolution, involution), and stands for the lifecycle of both rings of flames symbolizes eternal wisdom and transcendental illumination. The universe and each individual being: the circular dance of nature in eternal process of creation and destruction. At the same time, the light radiated by the ring of flames symbolizes eternal wisdom and transcendental illumination. (CIRLOT,2001, p.273)

Therefore, the ring is one of the symbols Jung suggests are imbedded in our collective unconscious, manifesting itself even in our dreams. *The Lord of the Rings* indicates that there is more than one power playing on this chess table. Nothing in the novel seems to be circumstantial, and Bilbo only finds the ring because the ring wants to be found by him. As Gandalf tells Frodo,

> There were more than one power at work, Frodo. The ring was trying to get back to its master. It had slipped from Isildur's hand and betrayed him; then when a chance came it caught the poor Déagol, and he was murdered; and after that Gollum, and it devoured him. It could make no further use of him: he was too small and mean; and as long as it stayed with him he would never leave his deep pool again. So, now, when its master was awake once more and sending out his dark thought from Mirkwood, it abandoned Gollum. Only to be picked up by the most unlikely person imaginable: Bilbo from the Shire. (TOLKIEN, 2003, p. 57)

This specific scene shows us that it is not only the power of Mordor, Sauron or the ring working through the events of the imminent war. There are powers unknown to the readers and even to the characters. This is a point stressed by those who argue that Middle - earth has its own rules, where the gods created by Tolkien (all well described in Tolkien's theogony in *The Silmarillion*), even if not physically present, set order into that world by managing the twists of the war which is taking place in the land created by Ilúvatar[11]. In the next section of this chapter I discuss the rules that control Middle - earth and how readers identify with them.

2.2 Middle-Earth – The Symbolism of the Centre

Deriving from ancient cultures – which managed to solve life's mysteries through legends and mythological narratives – there is a line that underlies human collective unconscious, formed by many archetypal images and concepts. One of these concepts is associated with the image of a central land, or central cosmos, that is the central place of earth inhabited by gods and heroes whose adventures have fed the myths. The Saxon people had a conception of the world that matched precisely with this definition of a central land. They believed there was a land called Middengard, where their gods lived and from where they controlled the world.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that Middle - earth is directly inspired in Middengard, Tolkien's land is also a metaphor for Europe, or rather, a longing for the recently lost memory of rural Europe. Even geographically the places match. Some critics, as David COLBERT

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[11] Ilúvatar is the chief god of Tolkien's mythology, as referred to in *The Silmarillion.*

(2002), say that the reason for that is that Tolkien means to create a specifically British mythology. It is tempting to agree with Colbert, when we consider that Tolkien is an expert in Old English, and deeply influenced by Saxon legends, we can make the connection with the fact that expression Middle - earth derives from the Old English *middel – erthe,* the name which Europeans used to call their land centuries ago.

However, Richard Purtill disagrees with Colbert's position,

> This conclusion is one that Tolkien would neither want nor need to dispute: in the sense that mythology is "a search for the divine through imagination", Tolkien had no need or desire to create "a mythology for England". It was myth as story, myth as form of artistic expression that interested Tolkien; this was the gift he wished to give to his country: a literary, not a philosophical or religious legacy.
> (PURTILL, 1984, p.10)

Being identified with Europe or not, most readers like to identify Middle - earth with a gone European land, even wishing to believe that it really once existed. During World War II and the Cold War, hippie communities in the United States and in Great Britain organized groups and founded local communities inspired in themes from *The Lord of the Rings*. The names of some of these communities, such as *Middle - earth*, *Sons of Arda*, or *Children of Valar* attest to the ideals of Middle - earth, as respecting nature and trying to live in harmony with the planet. This kind of situation re-affirms how strong Literature can be: as much as it is influenced by the moment it is embedded in, the work of art is also able to act upon it, reaching remarkable social effects. In hard times, such as a war period, the symbolic artistic representations can give strength to people, especially in a time when the realm of religiosity is under siege. But what are the rules to be followed in Middle - earth? How does it work?

We can start by examining Tolkien's geography. From south to north, and east to west all his geography is punctuated by moral codes, historical references, and organized according to the races that inhabit it. In ancient times, in actual Europe, if one went to the south he would arrive in great empires such as Greece and Egypt. In *The Lord of the Rings,* Gondor, the place where humans reign, is in the south of Middle - earth. To the north, in Middle - earth, like in the Old Saxon legends, there is a place of terrible cold, associated with pain and death. The western portion shelters all the old legends about unexplored oceans that could lead the brave sailors to unimaginable treasures. This beckons both to the mysterious and lost legends about Atlantis, and to the route that led the Europeans across the Atlantic to unveil the New World. The people from Númenor (the first humans in Tolkien's mythology) come from the west, as the Immortal Lands of the elves are also located there. In the east we have a

concentration of evil forces, since most peoples who attacked Europe came from this direction; or because the "fear of the other" was connected, in Tolkien's time, to the different practices of Eastern culture. Therefore, the reference to Mordor is obvious, as situated in the eastern part of Middle - earth.

Middle - earth has its own laws (established by its gods). The more acquainted with them, the more freely the reader can move within that fictional realm. Middle - earth is guided by a force that does not manifest itself in a visible way. This force is represented by characters such as the Maia[12] Gandalf, who follows the fellowship during its entire quest, advising and fighting evil, but always suggesting with his words that there is a divine destiny that even Sauron, the Dark Lord of the Rings, is not able to control. An indication of that lies in the death of Gandalf, when he fights Balrog in Moria. After dying, Gandalf is sent back by some divine force, resuming his transcendental name – Mithrandir – becoming the White, who comes destitute Saruman from his throne. It is also of Gandalf that the wisest words come from. He expresses, through his wisdom, a sense of deep knowledge about what is about to happen, as in the part Frodo wishes Bilbo had killed Gollun when he had the opportunity,

> Deserves it! I daresay he does. Many that live deserve death. And some that die deserve life. Can you give it to them? Then do not be eager to deal out death in judgment. For even the very wise cannot see all ends. I have not much hope that Gollun can be cured before he dies, but there is a chance of it. And he is bound up with the fate of the Ring. My heart tells me that he has some part to play yet, for good or ill, before the end; and when that comes, the pity of Bilbo may rule the fate of many – yours not least. (TOLKIEN, 2003, p.93)

Despite the fact that Middle - earth is created in a way that makes us feel there is more of it than we can apprehend, that magic land becomes more and more familiar as we read through the chapters. And the reader learns more about it each time he/she rereads the books. Middle - earth can be seen as the wood Umberto Eco compares to Literature. (ECO, 2006) If we have the right tools and food enough, we can explore its hidden parts for years. However, without the appropriate equipment, we will follow a straight path from beginning to end, without noticing its main aspects. I hope this monograph may prove one of those little tools.

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[12] The Maiar are semi-gods created by the Valar. They are keepers, or avatars, of these Valar (who are the gods created by the song of Ilúvitar). Five Valar are sent to Middle - earth: Gandalf, the Grey; Radagast; Saruman, the White; Melkor and Sauron. Melkor is sent by Morgoth – a corrupt Valar who intends to destroy the other Valars' creation. Morgoth is the one who leads the first war. Sauron, the Dark Lord of *The Lord of the Rings*, is one of his followers.

Talking about the symbolism of the position of Middle - earth on the map, several aspects are relevant to make readers well acquainted with this enchanted land. In mythological narratives the concept of centre is also related to keeping balance and bringing harmony to other worlds. The central land is generally a sacred place to which the gods destined abundance and beauty. The great city of Babylon considered itself, for a long time, the centre of the world, propagating the notion that even gods had chosen the city to live in. Before Copernicus proposed that the Sun was at the centre of the universe, people believed that Earth was such a centre. In the next section we will learn what the characters that inhabit the place located in the centre of the Earth are like, and which roles they perform.

2.3 Good and Evil – Fighting for a Better World

> *"I must say that anyone who passed through those years [of World War II] without understanding that man produces evil as a bee produces honey, must have been blind or wrong in the head."*
>
> William Golding, *The Hot Gates*

2.3.1 – Intrinsic Aspects

This discussion is carried in two ways. In this first section the dichotomy involving Good and Evil is analysed from inside the fictional world of *The Lord of the Rings*. In the second section I briefly consider the reception of the treatment of the issue on the part of critics, intellectuals and reading public and the implications of this reception in the shaping and development of Tolkien's critical fortune.

From an intrinsic perspective, Tolkien's fictional world is organized according to the cosmogony presented in *The Silmarillion*. There is order in that world, and that order is controlled by a complex and delicate play of forces that work according to the structure of mythical narratives, based on the opposition of a set of values conventionally referred to as the opposition of Good and Evil. I read as much as I could on the theme from the criticism

available on the novel. My favourite work on the subject and its applicability is Tom Shippey's *J. R. R. Tolkien: Author of the Century.* There is an entire chapter in that book on Good and Evil. There, Professor Shippey performs the task I intended to do myself in such a skilled way that I believe the best I can do here is to provide a brief review of his analysis.

Professor Shippey's approach aligns with medieval principles about the order of the universe as presented in Boethius' *De Musica*. One of Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius' great contributions to Early Medieval philosophy comes from the introduction, in the 6th Century, of the ideas of Pythagoras the Samian into the Christian Canon, through the Theory of the Music of the Spheres. To Pythagoras, what we believe to be silence is, in fact, the sound of the movements of the universe. We are so much tuned to it that we do not consciously listen to it. To the Pythagoreans, everything can be defined in terms of numbers. Numbers are everything. Music, for instance, is a sequence of noises that become agreeable or not because of the temporal distance and harmony produced in their production. This applies to the whole workings of the universe, which is mathematically conceived in a kind of order based in oppositions, in a play of tensions. This reasoning, incorporated into Christian thought, aligns with the idea of opposite moral forces that we define as Good and Evil, whose play and tension keep things going.

In *The Lord of the Rings* we have an allegorical presentation of this binary opposition. Basically, the plot of the novel is a war between the forces of Good and Evil. Professor Shippey starts his discussion through the analysis of the One Ring, which carries Sauron's evil power inside, exerting a strong control over its user. He resumes some traits in the plot, in which the dichotomies are presented in allegorical terms. The ring rises as a powerful weapon, deadly dangerous to all its possessors. It "will take them over, devour them, possess them, because the ring turns everything to Evil, including its wearers" (SHIPPEY, 2000, p.115). Hence, there is an agreement among the Council of Elrond that the One Ring cannot be used, that it must be destroyed. This is an important part of the fellowship's adventure, because it defines its aim – they are embarking on an anti-quest: their purpose is to gain any treasure but to reject and destroy the evil treasure they carry with them. Shippey points three decisive assertions about the ring in the novel,

> First, Gandalf says that the Ring is immensely powerful, in right or wrong hands. If Sauron regains it, then he will be invincible at least for the foreseeable future: "If he recovers it, then he will command [all elves], and all that has been wrought with them will be laid bare, and he will be stronger than ever". Second, though, Gandalf insists

that the Ring is deadly dangerous to all its possessors: it will take them over. The process may be long or short, depending on how "strong or well-meaning" the possessor may be, but neither strength nor good purpose will last – sooner or later the dark power will consume him. Furthermore this will not be just a physical take-over. There is no one who can be trusted to use it, even in right hands for good purposes: there are no right hands and all good purposes will turn bad if reached through the Ring. Elrond repeats this assertion later on "I will not take the Ring", as does Galadriel, "I will diminish and go into the West, and remain Galadriel". But finally, and this third point is one which Gandalf has to re-emphasize strongly and against opposition in "The Council of Elrond", the Ring cannot simply be left unused, put aside, throw away: it has to be destroyed, and the only place where it can be destroyed is the place of its fabrication, Orodruin, the Cracks of Doom. (SHIPPEY, 2000, p. 113)

Despite the power of the ring, the journey of the heroes to defeat the evil forces that scare Middle - earth is not related to counter weapons, organized arms, or using the enemy's weapon against himself. This is no common war, where the most powerful fighter wins. The success of the quest depends on more than swords and axes; it depends on intangible values such as love, friendship and courage.

Basically, in *The Lord of the Rings* the Good forces are weaker because they are not united. Good is weak because its peoples are free and live freely in their lands spread through Middle - earth's territory. On the other hand, Evil is concentrated in Mordor, so it seems to be stronger because its people are united, although handcuffed to Sauron and his immoral wishes of conquering Middle - earth and destroying all Good and Beauty in it. The breach to be found in Evil lies in its pride. Being so proud of its strength it goes too far and spoils its own purposes. "Oft evil will shall evil mar" (TOLKIEN, 2003, p. 623) is a popular saying in Middle - earth and it seems intimately connected to the rules that organize the land.

To Boethius' philosophy, what we generally recognize as Evil powers can be merely interpreted as the absence of Good. This view is strongly connected to the idea of a divine presence that guides and conducts the path of man on Earth, so even when one believes that something is Evil, for him or for his fellows, it is, in fact, part of a divine plan to their advantage. Such ideas have been widely discussed in philosophy, especially in Great Britain, as Shippey observes,

All readers of Boethius have observed – and his translators into English have included King Alfred, Chaucer and Queen Elizabeth, the First – whatever one may think of the truth of Boethius's opinions, no one can deny his fortitude in writing them on Death Row while waiting for execution. His view of the non-existence of Evil has great

authority, both in its own right and through its ramification by orthodox Christianity. (SHIPPEY, 2000, p.130)

So, if we accept Boethius' view, if one investigates the Evil characters in the *The Lord of the Rings*, one may find they actually have created a counter-morality based on the absence of Good. As in the scene where the Orcs find Frodo arrested by Shelob's web:

(…) may have had nothing to do the real mischief. The big fellow with the sharp sword doesn't seem to have thought him worth much anyhow – just left him lying: regular elvish trick. (Tolkien, 2003, p. 1017)

The character Gorbag, one of the Orcs, seems to have disapproval in his voice when he says that. We can notice, following the next scene, that this Orchish counter-morality reveals itself when the Orc Shragat asks:

D'you remember old Ufthak? We lost him for days. Then we found him in a corner; hanging up he was, but he was wide awaken and glaring. How we laughed! She'd forgotten him, maybe, but we didn't touch him – no good interfering with Her. (Idem, p. 1018)

It is noticeable that, despite the fact that they have showed some disapproval in the last scene, they are able to laugh when remembering an episode where they did the same to one of their fellows. Shippey points out what the problem with such view is,

The trouble with this view is that it is both highly counter-intuitive, and in many circumstances extremely dangerous. One might, for instance, conclude that the proper response to it, if you accepted it, would be to become a conscientious objector, and to refuse to resist what appears to be evil on the ground that this is just a misapprehension. Evil, after all is, according to Boethius, more harmful to the malefactor than to the victim and those who do it are more to be pitied than feared or fought. (SHIPPEY, 2001, p. 133)

Although we accept that Middle - earth is guided by divine powers that decide its destiny, Evil in Middle - earth seems to be too concrete, it causes much harm to the land and its peoples. However, we trust that there are also some positive powers that help Frodo and his fellows in their journey. Shippey says such forces are Luck and Courage. Luck is, in fact, the help of the divine forces of Middle - earth that do not want it to be destroyed. Such forces helped Bilbo take the ring first, or Frodo to arrive in Rivendel, and to pass through many dangerous situations. On the other hand, the Courage of the characters is bound to their values and their conviction that they are doing the right thing. Courage takes a very important place in the story, and it is thanks to Hobbit's courage that Sauron could be trapped. Sauron,

as an Evil leader, is proud, arrogant and very powerful. So, in his logic of world, the powers of Good must send the most valued and powerful warriors they have. Sauron is expecting Galadriel, Gandalf, Élrond, or even the king of men, descendent of Isildúr, Aragorn. Sauron could never imagine that the Good forces would trust such an important task to a couple of powerless Hobbits from the Shire. It is this arrogance that ends up defeating his vice plans.

Even so, things never remain the same after this clash: everything will change in Middle - earth after Sauron's defeat. The heroes know they are about to lose important things, and that eventually another clash will come. This belongs to the natural movements of the universe. A new age comes to Middle - earth – an age of men – with no room for Hobbits, Ents, Dwarves or Elves. Magic and fantasy will be replaced by another order, under the command and dominion of men. This is not a typical happy ending, because the price to pay has been too high, leaving a feeling of void and misguidance in the survivors.

2.3.2 – Extrinsic Aspects

The Lord of the Rings is now known as possibly the most respected sample of this literary sub-genre known as Fantasy Fiction. However, in the time the work was published this expression did not exist yet. In a time when the great authors were writing books that were experimental in form, atheistic in mood and engaged in tuning internal verisimilitude and external verisimilitude, the literary production of people like J. R. R. Tolkien or C. S. Lewis might have sounded, to say the least, alienated and bizarre.

This is the great paradox with *The Lord of the Rings*: on the one hand, it could not have been written in a worst moment for the acknowledgment of its literary qualities. On the other, it could only have been written at that precise moment in history, because of its philosophical underlying background. When Ezra POUND (1960) writes that famous passage about the artists being the antennae of the race, we are reminded that Art moves more freely than rational thought, and encompasses a greater range of experience. Thinking rationally, writing about Good *vs*. Evil during the first half of the 20th Century means receding into a line of discourse which has been discarded by a new, more sophisticated and complex order of things. As a consequence, *The Lord of the Rings* has been called a Manichean reactionary novel, easily leading to the idea that the world is a battlefield, torn between the powers of Good and Evil. This is a very Imperialistic notion, if we consider that the "good ones" are the one who support our cause and the "bad ones" are the ones who think differently. According

to Shippey, "one might say, there is no real difference between them, and it is a matter of chance which side one happens to choose." (SHIPPEY, 200, p. 134).

If we return to Ezra Pound's comment about the artist as the antenna of the race, maybe we, dwellers of the 21st century, can see further dimensions to the issue of Good and Evil as our mid-twentieth century counterparts. To me, Tolkien is not merely receding into a dismissed line of thinking; he is doing more than that. The issue here reminds me of that popular saying: "don't throw the baby away with the dirty water." In the process of setting people free from the negative ideological implications of the belief in an immanent notion of Truth, it looks as if we have severed part of our own psychic structure. This is the kind of thing Tolkien and his mates discussed in the informal meetings of the Inklings. Some of the members were atheists, but even those believed in the value of fantasy and in the healing powers of literature.

This accounts for much of the popularity of *The Lord of the Rings*, whose fictional world, so apparently detached from the actual world, is psychologically so realistic in the cathartic effect operated by the use of the metaphors it presents. The war in Middle - earth arguably makes more sense than World War II, an imminent attack from the Nazis is more frightful than reading about an attack by the Nazgûl. People haunted by genocide, gas chambers, families being set apart, these things take place in Middle - earth too – even in the docile Shire inhabited by the Hobbits. In a world of fantasy, fantasy mirrors reality in a way that is more effective than the use of external verossimilitude would be. Pippin professes "All shall fade"[13], in the song he sings to Deneathor while the warriors are dying in the battle field – including Deneathor's son Faramir. It seems this fits very well in the plot and in Tolkien's society as well. By the way, it also seems our contemporary 21st century world as well. Tolkien has never been more read than now. With a distance of some few decades it looks as if some qualities of this novel which could not be properly appreciated in its time are now more visible. So many other authors have created their own sagas after Tolkien opened the first door that this kind of literature has got its own name, Fantasy Fiction, and its own space, a space where fantasy regains its legitimate claim to belong in literature, in the novel, because psychological truth belongs in the realm of imagination as much – or more – than it belongs in the realm of actual reality. Umberto ECO (2006) calls these two instances "the actual world" and "the world of fantasy", and comments gladly on the fact that the frontiers separating them are no longer very clear.

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[13] This scene is from the movie adaptation made by Peter Jackson. Such song is present in the book, but in another part found in the first book of *The Fellowship of the Ring*.

Another thinker of our contemporary times is Zygmunt BAUMAN (2000), who points that we have been living in a world of "liquid modernity" (as opposed to the notion of "solid modernity" that predominates in Tolkien's times) where nothing is really concrete, sensible or organized, where things cannot easily be divided between "right" or "wrong", where everything that is solid vanishes in the air. Therefore, I ultimately think of Tolkien's fantasy works as a balsam, as powerful as religion and mythology. According to Shippey,

> The authors are trying to explain something at once deeply felt and rationally inexplicable, something furthermore felt to be entire novel and not adequately answered by moralities of early ages (keen medievalists those several of these authors were). There is something connected with the distinctively twentieth-century experience of industrial war and impersonal, industrialized massacre; and it is probably no coincidence that most of the authors concerned (Tolkien, Orwell, Vonnegut, but also Golding and C. S. Lewis) were combat veterans of one war or another. The life experiences of many men and women in the twentieth century have left them with an unshakable conviction of something wrong, something irreducibly evil in the nature of humanity, but without any very satisfactory explanation for it. Nor can they find such an explanation in the literature of previous eras: Everything that was to know about life was in The Brothers Karamazov, by Feodor Dostoyevsky. But that was not enough anymore. Twentieth-century Fantasy can be seen as above all a response to this gap, this inadequacy. One has to ask in what ways Tolkien's images are original, individual, and in what ways typical, recognizable. (SHIPPEY, 2000, p.120)

2.4 The Divided Hero

> *"When you go home tell them of us and say*
> *For your tomorrow we gave our today."*

William Golding, *Hot Gates*

Jungian psychoanalysis sees the quest of the hero as represented in literature as a representation of the search for male unconscious energy – *animus* – by its counter female part – *anima.* JUNG (1978) defines this search as a spontaneous production of the psyche that forces us to fight against exterior powers to develop our image of ourselves as inserted in the

world. Making use of Jungian definitions, CAMPBELL (2003) believes this quest is associated with the symbolism of passage, an integrative part of human's psychological development. Campbell proposes that mythological narratives are created to guide man's steps in the direction of improvement, and that they share a same underlying structure that is hidden from us. According to Campbell, all mythological narratives are about the same subject – the quest of the hero. From Marduk, Osiris, Buddha to Jesus Christ[14], to contemporary heroes such as Frodo, Luke Skywalker or Harry Potter, all of them are destined to follow the same well defined path, composed of three stages – Departure, Initiation and Return.

Firstly, the hero has to fight against his/her main fears to throw himself/herself[15] into an adventure. It is in this section of the story that the hero listens to the call of adventure, refuses to join it, and in the end, after being advised by someone wiser than him/her (generally an old person) the hero decides to face the quest. The second part of the hero's journey relates to the trials and victories of his initiation. At this point, the hero has to prove his value and merit when tempted by evil. However, if victorious, he is already prepared to touch the secrets of the divine. Finally, at the third and last part, the hero's journey involves his return to and reintegration within society. After his quest and trials, the hero returns as a changed person, ready to teach the lessons learnt in the adventure. Campbell associates the trials of the hero to symbolic or psychological dangers associated with the overcoming of real problems of actual life.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, the role of the hero is a complex one and it is difficult to define if we have one single hero, or a group of heroes acting in the story. If we consider Campbell's structure we would be inclined to say that if only one character should be chosen to perform that role, then Frodo is the hero. Nevertheless, I think we can also take into account all the Fellowship of the Ring, including Faramir, Éowyn and Éomer, as heroes of this intricate anti-quest, which needs all its integrants to guarantee its success. [16] From the start, Frodo demonstrates that he will not fulfil this anti-quest on his own. He needs the help

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[14] The reason why I indiscriminately mix names from mythology, religion, history and literature here is that I believe these different compartments are a minor detail when the subject of this monograph is considered: they all trigger the same mechanisms in human psyche.

[15] From now on, if only to simplify things, I will refer to the hero by using the masculine pronoun agreement. Of course the protagonist can be either a male or a female, and the quest of the hero, according to Jung, is performed by the *Anima* in search for the *Animus*.

[16] In any event, it took the whole Greek army to win the Trojan War. Achilles would not have done that alone, as Jason would not have found the Golden Fleece without the help of the Argonauts.

of his fellow hobbits at first, and then of the entire Fellowship of the Ring, composed by representatives of all the free races of Middle - earth. The hero in *The Lord of the Rings* is, in my view, a multi-faced divided hero, represented as mirrored in the faces of all of Frodo's companions bent on destroying the One Ring and defeating Sauron's plans to destroy Middle - earth.

Frodo, in this concept, represents the most sincere, honest and purest part of the hero. He throws himself in a quest he does not entirely know, and accepts to face dangers that he could not even think that existed. Frodo does such things because he represents the kindness and purity of the hero. His is the brave and pure heart that does everything to save his own people from the Shire and all the peoples from Middle - earth. His quest is motivated basically by charity and love of their companions, making many critics, such as Jane CHANCE (2003), compare his journey and his role in the novel to the role of the martyr. To Shippey,

> According to both Saxo Grammaticus (c. 1200) and Snorri Sturluson (c. 1230), there was a man called Frothi that was contemporary of Christ. During his reign there were no murders, thefts or robberies, and this Golden-Age was known as the peace of Frothi.(…) Frothi, furthermore is not only a contemporary of Christ but also an analogue, one who tries without ultimate success to put an end to the cycles of war and vengeance and heroism. He fails both personally, in being killed, and ideologically, in that his son and his people return to the bad old ways of revenge and hatred, and paganism. This composite Frothi, then, could have been to Tolkien the defining image of the "virtuous pagan", a glimpse of the sad truth behind the heroic illusion, a brief and soon-quenched light shining in the darkness of heathen ages. (Shippey, 2000, p.185)

Frodo goes into his quest to bring peace and to keep freedom and beauty in Middle - earth. He is one of the wisest Hobbits and probably the most educated, since he and Bilbo are the only two hobbits who speak Elvish in the novel. However, he does not embody all the qualities Campbell attests a hero should have, such qualities are complemented by the other integrants of the Fellowship of the Ring.

The other three Hobbits – Meriadoc, Peregrin and Samwise – play different roles in this quest. Meriadoc is the face of the courageous hero, who is ready to the battle even though his size and inability to fight do not favour him – as it is explicit when Meriadoc rides with the Riders of Rohan to the battle of Minas Tirith. Peregrin is the face of the trickster, the funny and brainless part of the hero. He is intuitive, silly, and makes terrible mistakes that put the entire caravan at risk. Samwise is Frodo's best friend, the personification of loyalty; he

does not abandon Frodo even when Frodo is blinded by Sméagol who makes Frodo believe Sam had eaten all the food left. A very moving instance of Sam's abnegation and loyalty is shown when Frodo, exhausted and dizzy, falls to the ground. Sam helps him saying,

> Come on Mr. Frodo! He cried. I can't carry it for you, but I can carry you and it as well. So up you get! Come on, Mr. Frodo, dear. Sam will give you a ride. Just tell him where to go, and he will go. (Tolkien, 2003, p. 996)

Or, still, when Sam makes the promise never to leave Frodo,

> If you don't come back Sir, then I shan't, that's certain, said Sam. "Don't you leave him! They said to me. Leave him! I said. I never mean to. I am going with him, if he climbs to the Moon; and if any of those Black Riders try to stop him, they'll have Sam Gamgee to reckon with, I said. They laughed. (Idem, p. 89)

Aragorn, the future king of men, is strongly related to the archetype of the king who is hidden or lives in a divine dimension, and who will come back bringing balance and harmony to all things on land[17]. Aragorn suggestion that he is noble, and that he is this hidden king, even when we do not know his entire story. He is the one who heals Frodo at first with his knowledge on healing plants and with the imposition of his hands. He is a Christ-like figure in the sense that he represents the healing power of the king. His sword – Andúril – like King Arthur's Excalibur, can only be used by the one who shows value, bravery and purity in his heart. Aragorn inherits the sword that belonged to his ancestor Isildur[18] (when it was called Narsil), and he is haunted by the failure of Isildur who did not throw the ring in the Cracks of Doom when he had the chance. Aragorn fears to fall into the same kind of temptation. Therefore, this is one more quality of the hero, which Aragorn carries on – the trepidation of not fulfilling his quest because of some inner weakness he may not be able to control. At the same time, Aragorn represents the nobility and strength of the king, as we can notice in the passage where he reveals himself to the Riders of Rohan, when they try to detain Legolas, Aragorn and Gimli.

> Aragorn threw back his cloak. The elven-sheath glittered as he grasped it, and the bright blade of Andúril shone like a sudden flame as he swept it out. "Elendil" he cried. "I am Aragorn, son of Arathorn, and am called Elessar, the Elfstone, Dúnadan, the heir of Isildur Elendil's son of Gondor. Here is the Sword that was broken and is

[17] King Arthur in Britain and Dom Sebastião in Portugal are other well-known representations of the myth of the Fisher King, or the archetype of the Messiah.

[18] Isildur was one of the first kings of men in Arda. He used Narsil to defeat Sauron at the first war and he was also responsible for cutting out Sauron's finger where Sauron used the One Ring.

forged again! Will you aid me? Choose Swiftly!" Gimly and Legolas looked at their companion in amazement, for they had not seen him in this mood before. He seemed to have grown in stature while Éomer had shrunk; and in his living face they caught a brief vision of the power and majesty of the kings of stone. For a moment it seemed to the eyes of Legolas that a white flame flickered on the brows of Aragorn like a shining crown. (Ibidem, p. 453)

Legolas and Gimli are representatives of the races of elves and dwarves in the fellowship. They are the magic and skilled face of the hero that displays prodigious abilities – as Legolas' extended eyesight and precision with his bow – and a huge strength – as we can notice when Gimly is in a combat with his axe. However, they are also part of the integrity of the hero within the mystic and folkloric dominions. Both are from antagonist races, but at the end of the narrative they will find out that friendship is the most useful weapon when a war is about to start.

Boromir and Faramir, sons of Denethor, are both noble princes, although Boromir represents the weaker part of the hero, the one that is linked to the easy disposition men have to fall in temptation when something powerful is being disputed. However, even so Boromir tries to steal the One Ring from Frodo; he becomes one of the bravest heroes of the quest, offering his own life to defend Peregrin and Meriadoc, when the three of them are trapped by the Orcs. Faramir is the rejected brother who has to show his value to his father. He, like Aragorn and Frodo, is abnegated and ready to give his life to save his own people and to the maintenance of liberty in Middle - earth.

Gandalf, the powerful and wise wizard, represents the mystic and magic dimension of the hero. He is an avatar of the Middle - earth Gods (Valar), himself a Maia. Gandalf knows things the others in the caravan do not know, and his speech (like in mythological narratives) seems to hide something that underlies what he says. It is as if he has the capacity of foreseeing what will happen, and this gives to him the security the hero needs to fulfil his quest. He does not doubt any moment Frodo will destroy the ring, and strongly believes that Sauron can be defeated. In his human form, Gandalf embodies three of the most relevant functions of the hero – courage, patience and self-sacrifice.

Gollum also has a role in the hero's journey, since he represents the cleavage in personality that can disturb and conduct the hero to the wrong path. Gollum is always there to show Frodo what he is about to become if he fails in his quest.

Finally, it is relevant to mention the presence of female characters that change the plot and are also part of this composite of the divided hero. We can see that the four most important female characters are associated with the archetype of the Goddess – Arwën, Galadriel, Shelob and Éowyn. Arwën is the maiden face of the Goddess. She represents purity, virginity capacity of self-sacrifice, preferring to abdicate of her immortality to live a mortal life with Aragorn. Galadriel is the mother face of the Goddess and probably the most powerful one. She possesses all the powers over life. She can control the elements, nature, beauty and also has knowledge about the past, the present and the future. However, she cannot avoid being tempted to take the ring when Frodo offers it to her.

> And now at last it comes. You will give me the Ring freely! In place of Dark Lord you will set up a Queen. And I shall not be dark, but beautiful and terrible as the Morning and the Night! Fair as the Sea and the Sun and the Snow upon the mountain! Dreadful as the Storm and the Lightening! Stronger than the foundations of the earth. All shall love me and despair. (*Ib.*, p. 382)

This episode shows to Frodo how terrible the evil power of the One Ring can be, if even Galadriel is tempted by it. Shelob, the queen of the spiders, represents the old face of the goddess – related to death and the tessellating of human's destiny. These three characters are not actually part of the divided hero, but they are connected to the hero's path. Campbell says that one of the stages of the hero's journey is the encounter with the Goddess – the sacred female – who will help him in his journey. Frodo meets the three faces of the Goddess, being stupefied by Arwën's maiden beauty, feeling protected and loved by Galadriel's welcoming and facing death when he meets Shelob.

On the other hand, Éowyn is associated with the archetype of the warrior maiden. She is not conformed to the role of women in her society, so she takes a sword and fights bravely in the battle field. She plays a very important role in the solution of the novel's plot. Allied to Meriadoc, both kill the King of the Ringwraiths. There was a legend in Middle - earth, that such king could not be killed by any living man. At the end of the novel, he is killed by a woman and a hobbit, showing that Tolkien – like Shakespeare in *Macbeth* – knows how to play tricks with language. It is important to highlight that Éowyn has a significant role in the quest – as one of the most valued warriors of the army of the light side. Éowyn puts down the argument raised by some critics Germaine Greer[19], for instance say that Tolkien was alienated

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[19] Apud SHIPPEY, 2001.

from what was happening in the world, and that his women do not play any important role in his story. Éowyn is not like Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway: she does not worry about any party she has to throw, or about buying flowers to decorate her house. She cannot even afford killing herself at the end of the day. Éowyn is busy holding a sword and fighting to defend her people, her family, and all the world of Middle - earth.

All these excellent characters help Frodo to fulfil his anti-quest of destroying the One Ring. Even so, at the end of his journey, Frodo is not able to throw the ring

> I have come, he said. But I do not choose now to do what I came to do. I will not do this deed. The Ring is mine! (*Ib*., p. 1002)

Frodo's words are "I do not choose to do"; instead of "I choose not to do". It is clear that there are stronger forces than fragile Frodo can stand. He does not choose, the choice is made for him. In this respect, I disagree with TOLKIEN (2002) when he blames Frodo for failing in his journey. I believe Frodo would fail if he were faced as one single part of the caravan – if he were the only possible hero. Frodo does too much; actually, he transcends whatever a hobbit could ever dare to do. He is one among several faces of the hero, composing with purity, bravery, love and strength to defeat and banish Evil from Middle - earth. The hardest part for Frodo ends up being his return. As Campbell attests, this is always the most painful part of the journey. When Frodo comes back to the Shire he has to banish the Evil creatures that are living there. But, at the end, he cannot find any meaning to his existence in the Shire anymore.

> How teach again, however, what has been taught correctly and incorrectly learned a thousand times, throughout the millenniums of mankind's prudent folly? That is the hero's ultimate difficult task. How render back into light-world language the speech-defying pronouncements of the dark? How represent on a two-dimensional surface a three-dimensional form, or in a three-dimensional image a multi-dimensional meaning? How translate into terms of "yes" and "no" revelations that shatter into meaninglessness every attempt to define the pairs of opposites? How communicate to people who insist on the exclusive evidence of their senses the message of the all-generating void? Many failures attest to the difficulties of this life-affirmative threshold. The first problem of the returning hero is to accept as real, after an experience of the soul-satisfying vision of fulfillment, the passing joys and sorrows, banalities and noisy obscenities of life. Why re-enter such a world? Why attempt to make plausible, or even interesting, to men and women consumed with passion, the experience of transcendental bliss"? As dreams that were momentous by night may seem simply silly in the light of day, so the poet and the prophet can discover themselves playing the idiot before a jury of sober eyes. (Campbell, 2003, p. 144)

Frodo does not see any sense in living in the Shire anymore. He has suffered so much, he has changed so intensely, that he decides to abandon what is familiar to him. Frodo had a very important part in saving Middle - earth, but not in saving himself. At the end of the story he goes to the Immortal Lands with his friends - the elves, Gandalf and his old cousin Bilbo.

Reflecting upon the hero's journey in *The Lord of the Rings*, we can see that there are relevant aspects that, according to Jung and Campbell, reach as deep as the human unconscious. This could partially explain the success the novel and the movie version have achieved. The journey of the hero is not only a story, or a mythological narrative. It is also a psychological phenomenon and represents a spiritual or philosophical access to reality. The quest of the hero is the quest for a place in the universe. In thousands of stories the hero's myth, its journey, chronicles our own quest to rediscover and show onward the undying essence of life. The hero, as every human being dreams to do, seeks and finds that which is deathless, and that is essential to reach the balance among reason and myth – the building up of an entire man.

Conclusion

During the few pages of this work I have referred to some characteristics that make of Tolkien one of the most beloved and well read writers of his time, and of our contemporary time, as well. I have discussed some aspects of *The Lord of the Rings* that are related to the mythological qualities of the novel, and to the philosophical aspects that highlight the morality that permeates Tolkien's works.

J. R. R. Tolkien has created a fantasy world that is responsible for the rising of an entire new genre in Literature – the Fantasy Novel. This new kind of novel seems to fill some of the lacks the excesses of rationality in detriment of imagination and symbolical thought have produced. With the conceiving of an entire new world, full of fantasy, magic lands and inhabited by mythological creatures and races, Tolkien was satisfying an urge – a urge for mythological narratives and fairy-tales – that seem to be needed to all human beings. When we are children, we generally find pleasure in visiting magic landscapes where our particular fantasies live in. These visits happen through the telling of stories that are not usually connected with what we have conveyed to call reality. Tolkien seems to dominate these worlds, and he brings them up from our past memories to our present lives, filling them with enchantment and delight.

There are also some questions I have asked in the beginning of this monograph, such as the ones related to the enduring appeal of Tolkien's novel in our contemporary society and its importance to the present days. Why has *The Lord of the Rings* stood the test of time so much better than the called "realistic" novels of his time? Tolkien's text has resisted because his Literature is made of the same stuff of dreams: this sublime material that permeates and trespasses myth, and that is an integrative part of this construct called man. Tolkien's novels are strongly connected to a type of narrative that is everlasting – they are narratives that carry on underlying structures that are important for the building of human's psyche and for the comprehension of the world around us. Tolkien's fictional world has only reached such colossal success because the readers have found something moving in the pages this author has written. As Shippey states,

The Lord of the Rings has established itself as a lasting classic, without the help and against the active hostility of the professionals of taste; it has furthermore largely created the expectations and established the conventions of a new flourishing genre. It and its author deserve more than the routine and reflexive dismissals (or denials) which they have received. *The Lord of the Rings* has said something important, and meant something important, to a high proportion of their millions of readers. All but the professionally incurious might well ask, what? Is it something timeless? Is it something contemporary? Is it (and it is) both at once? Shippey, 2001, p.26.)

Questions such as Shippeys's are at the heart of this monograph, and I could answer that Tolkien's fictional world has reached the present status because his works deal with questions that have haunted man since the Ancient Times. Such questions are pursued through Philosophy and met with by Literature. Another peculiarity in Tolkien's case is the commercial success of his popularity, in a time when it is believed that a literary work of good quality should not sell exceedingly. Charles Dickens, as Tolkien, also suffered in his reputation because of the extensive number of readers he had. If our contemporary readers can go to a bookshop and find an entire shelf destined to Fantasy books that happens greatly because of Tolkien, and his persistence in keeping writing about his dreams, even if he did not reach such widespread literary recognition in his own time. Tolkien opened a new imaginative continent to many other writers who have joined the Fantasy genre.

Tolkien develops his Middle - earth in a well structured chronology, guided by a history line that is not totally apprehended by its readers. His magic land is inhabited by peoples who speak their own language, and Tolkien creates exhaustively each one of them. Each fact, each happening, is linked to a historical, folkloric or divine process that is known by this writer who weaves the intricate tapestry of mythological creatures with such strong personalities that they leave the impression of being more historical than fantastical. This is, in my opinion, what has differentiated Tolkien from all his followers.

There is still one relevant aspect to highlight in Tolkien's fictional world – its capacity to fulfil the reader's expectations and to address the reader's deep psychological structures in a kind of rebirth of mythological narratives in his novels – *The Lord of the Rings* in particular. As I have suggested here, artists can be seen as sensitive vases of connection with what the medievalists called the Music of the Spheres. In his time, Tolkien is capable of filtering the warlike and hopeless European landscape, and of changing it into a symbolic construct of

literary value, which also answered to people's want of mythical structures. His work is done brilliantly, and his novels have been read by different generations through all these years. Tolkien has more to tell than his marvellous tales, permeated by astonishing quests – he reaches his reader's heart in a way that is idyllic, if we take into account the delusions of modernity that have fragmented man into zillions of pieces.

All the journeys have an end, and it seems this little one has found its end. It has been a true pleasure writing about one of my best loved authors. I am an admirer of Tolkien's novels and his ideals of a pacifist and magical world. Those who love a person, thing or place like to share their appreciation with other fellows and exchange opinions on the subject they love. This is what I have been doing here. I hope this work can prove useful for those who share the same feelings about Tolkien and his enchanting books. As I said in the beginning of this monograph, there are many people who would be grateful to find a world like Middle - earth in the midst of a confused and fragmented world as the one we live in today. I am one of them.

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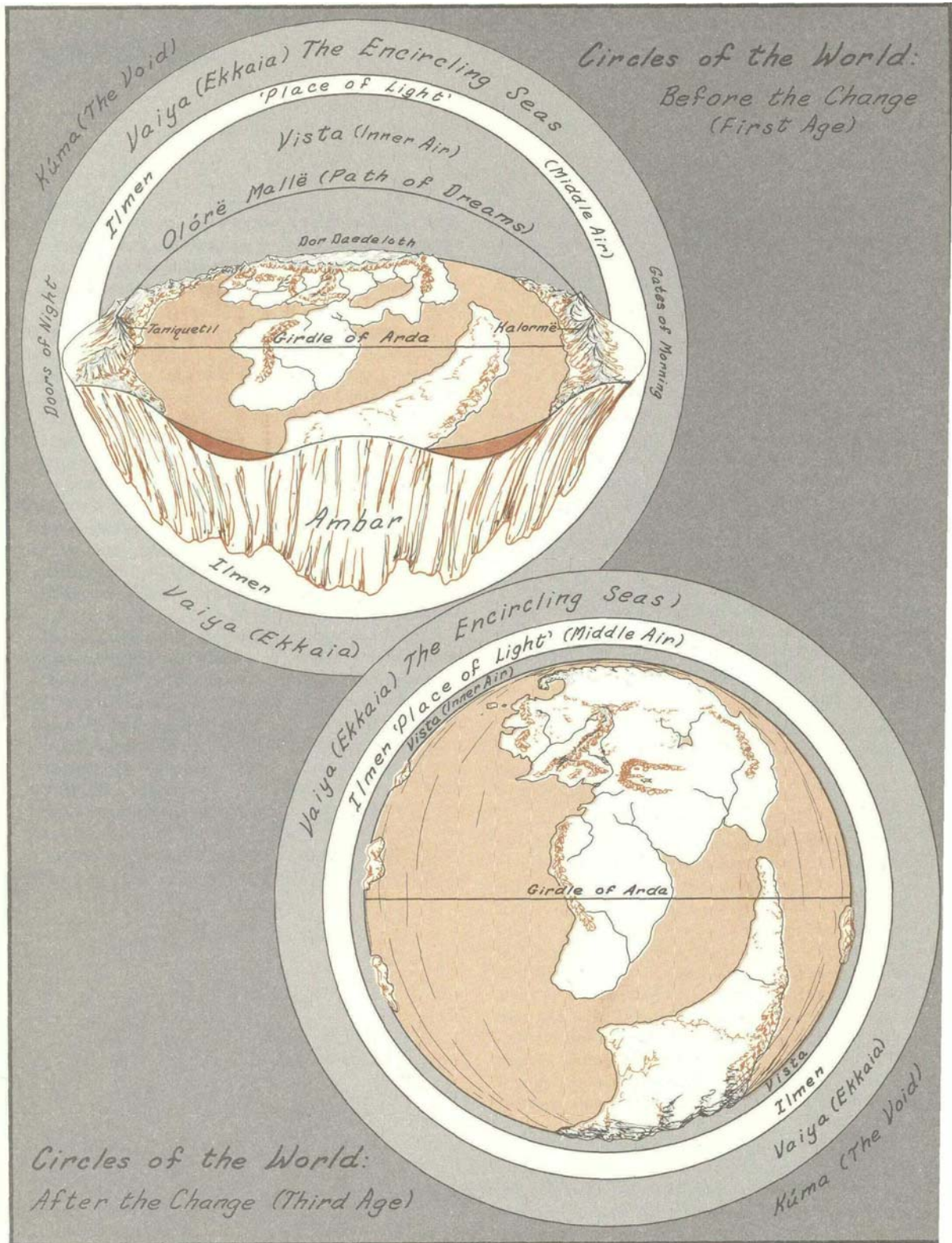
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Annexes

Maps of Middle - earth from Fonstad's <u>Atlas of Middle – Earth</u>

Maps of Middle - earth from Tolkien's <u>The Hobbit</u>

The Realms of the Noldor and the Sindar

WILDERLAND

Thror's Map