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**THE ROAD TO THE SILMARILLION:
ONE MYTH TO JOIN THEM ALL**

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**THE ROAD TO THE SILMARILLION:
ONE MYTH TO JOIN THEM ALL**

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“Archaean horizon

The first sunrise

On a pristine Gaea

Opus perfectum

Somewhere there, us sleeping.”

Tuomas Holopainen, *The Greatest Show on Earth*

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In the madness of everyday life, it is quite easy to forget to look around us and notice all those wonderful people that are, somehow, always there for us, cheering, supporting, encouraging, helping, or even reprimanding us. Therefore, I would like to dedicate these few lines to thank all these incredible beings and remind them that they are, on their own specific and special ways, very meaningful to me. First and foremost I would like to thank my Mom for being the best mother I could possibly wish for; if I have been successful so far, I owe much of this success to her! Thanks for existing! My sister, who has always seen me as capable of doing whatever it was, has also played an essential role in all this (I love you a lot). There is no way of not mentioning my dear girlfriend, Junie, for being by my side, believing and encouraging me, even when I thought I could not do it. You lit the path for me to walk on (from the ashes to the sky)! Thanks, my love! My dear friends, Katíuscia, Gustavo, Alexandre, Jéssica, Juliana, Marcela, Mario, Vinícius, Henrique, Giovani, Nathana, and Amanda: thanks for helping me carry on through fire and flames even though I constantly wanted to give up on everything (including on myself). Through the fire and the flames we will carry on! There is also a very special thanks to my dear students (who are also friends), with whom I had infinite moments of learning and joy! You have always trusted me and that made all the difference. And of course I cannot forget my wonderful adviser, Sandra Maggio, for accepting to join me

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RESUMO

Mitos sempre desempenharam um papel fundamental em nossas vidas. Eles nos auxiliam, de acordo com Joseph Campbell (2008), a compreender a realidade e a nós mesmos. Nesse sentido, a criação de mitos faz parte da natureza humana. A presente monografia visa explorar aspectos da vida do autor J. R. R. Tolkien e de sua estimada obra: *O Silmarillion*, com o objetivo de analisar elementos do mundo mitológico de Tolkien a fim de entender como o contexto da vida do autor contribui para que ele (re)crie uma tradição mitológica completa através de sua ficção. Aproximo a mitologia de Tolkien a outras mitologias, em especial a grega, a nórdica e a cristã, que foram apresentadas a ele em uma fase primária de sua vida. Abordo, para tanto, o contexto no qual Tolkien viveu, por considerar que ele é fundamental para um entendimento mais amplo dos motivos que levaram o escritor a escrever sua própria mitologia. O século XX é um tempo de grande tumulto e sofrimento, marcado por duas guerras mundiais e por todo o tipo de crises. Além disso, a tradição inglesa nativa, devido a diversas ocorrências históricas, foi amplamente suprimida, consequentemente deixando o país, como Tolkien (2000) afirma, com uma pobreza de histórias ligadas ao seu solo e idioma. Sendo assim, proponho que a criação da mitologia de Tolkien tem o propósito não apenas de combater o clima de desalento e de falta de perspectiva, pois os mitos tratam sobre questões de fé e de esperança, mas também de tentar restaurar um pouco da tradição que foi reprimida ao longo dos anos. Para desenvolver esta minha leitura, faço uso das teorias sobre o mito apresentadas por Joseph Campbell e Philip Freund, dos estudos tolkienianos propostos por Tom Shippey, Humphrey Carpenter, Richard Purtill e Ronald Kyrmse e, também, do conceito de arquétipo proposto por Carl Gustav Jung. Ao final do trabalho, espero que esta monografia consiga informar os leitores sobre a relevância de *O Silmarillion* para o desenvolvimento das demais obras do autor. Espero também que o trabalho passe a integrar o corpo de estudos que enfatizam a relevância de Tolkien para a literatura de sua época e para a de hoje.

Palavras-chave: J. R. R. Tolkien; Mito; Literatura Inglesa; Crítica Literária.

ABSTRACT

Myths have always played a fundamental role in our lives. They help us, as Joseph Campbell (2008) says, understand reality and ourselves. In this sense, myth making is part of human nature. The present monograph aims at exploring aspects of the life of the author J. R. R. Tolkien and the work of his heart: *The Silmarillion*, analyzing elements of Tolkien's mythological world in order to understand how the context the author lived in contributes for his (re)creation of a complete mythological tradition. I approximate Tolkien's mythology to other mythologies, mainly the Greek, the Norse, and the Christian, that were presented to him in an early stage of his life. As I do so, I draw on the context in which Tolkien lived since I consider that fundamental for a broader understanding of the reasons that led the author to write his own mythology. The twentieth century is a period of great turmoil and suffering, marked by two world wars and all kinds of crises. Besides that, the native English tradition, due to a variety of historical occurrences, was largely suppressed, consequently leaving the country, as Tolkien (2000) affirms, with a poverty of stories connected to its own soil and language. In this sense, I argue that Tolkien's creation of a myth has the purpose not only of fighting the sense of dismay and of lack of perspective, for myths deal with matters of faith and hope, but also of trying to revive some of the tradition that was suppressed along the years. To develop my reading I rely on the theories of the myth as understood by Joseph Campbell and Philip Freund, on Tolkienian studies proposed by Tom Shippey, Humphrey Carpenter, Richard Purtill, and Ronald Kyrmse, and on the concept of archetype as proposed by Carl Gustav Jung. At the end of this work, I hope this monograph can inform the readers about the relevance of *The Silmarillion* to the development of the other works of the author. I also hope this work starts to make part of the body of studies that emphasize Tolkien's relevance to the literature of his time and of the present days.

Keywords: J. R. R. Tolkien; Myth; English Literature; Literary Criticism.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	11
1 THE MAN AND HIS MYTH	16
1.1 THE MAN BEHIND THE MYTH	16
1.2 A LAND WITHOUT A MYTH.....	20
1.3 BUILDING CONFIDENCE: THE IMPORTANCE OF FRIENDSHIP	25
1.4 WHAT ARE MYTHS, AFTER ALL?	30
2 THE ROAD TO THE SILMARILLION	36
2.1 TOLKIEN’S THEOGONY	37
2.2 ONE MYTH TO JOIN THEM ALL	41
2.3 THE DIMENSIONS OF THE MYTH	47
CONCLUSION	54
REFERENCES	57
ANNEXES	59

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1, Page 1: The Two Tress of Valinor

Available at: www.tolkiengateway.net

Access on: 21 November, 2016

Figure 2, Page 56: The Shores of Valinor.

Available at: www.TedNasmith.com

Access on: 21 November, 2016

Figure 3, Page 59: Map of Beleriand and the Lands to the North.

Printed in: Tolkien, J. R. R. The Silmarillion. London: Harper Collins, 1999. p. 448

Figure 4, Page 60: The Sundering of The Elves.

Printed in: Tolkien, J. R. R. The Silmarillion. London: Harper Collins, 1999. p. 371

Figure 5, Page 61: The House of Finwë and the Noldorin Descent of Elrond and Elros.

Printed in: Tolkien, J. R. R. The Silmarillion. London: Harper Collins, 1999. p. 367

Figure 6, Page 61: The Descendants of Olwë and Elwë.

Printed in: Tolkien, J. R. R. The Silmarillion. London: Harper Collins, 1999. p. 368

Figure 7, Page 62: The House of Bëor and the Mortal Descent of Elrond and Elros.

Printed in: Tolkien, J. R. R. The Silmarillion. London: Harper Collins, 1999. p. 369

Figure 8, Page 62: The House of Hador of Dor-lómin.

Printed in: Tolkien, J. R. R. The Silmarillion. London: Harper Collins, 1999. p. 370

Figure 9, Page 66: O Mundo de Tolkien tem Três Dimensões.

Printed in: Kyrmse, Ronald. Explicando Tolkien. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2003. p. 25

INTRODUCTION

Strange as it may seem, it was only when I started my academic literary formation, in 2011, that I was formally introduced to the works of J.R.R. Tolkien. I use the term “strange” because I was lured by fairies and their fantastical world since I was a little child. I would spend hours daydreaming about a world filled with magic, dragons, dangerous (but worthy) adventures, mighty warriors who fought for justice and stuck to righteous ideals, and, most importantly, a world in which I could feel safe. By safety, here, I do not mean a world with no danger, but a world in which I could trust that – although there were evils – goodness would always prevail in the end. This on no account means that I had never heard of Tolkien and his mythical Middle-earth before, it means, in fact, that it was only after I entered University that I had the courage to read his works. If memory does not trick me, the first time I ever heard, or rather, read the name “Tolkien” was in my early teenage. I was at a cousin’s house and, while we chatted and listened to music, my attention was drawn to a thick book in her bookshelf: a Brazilian edition of *The Lord of the Rings*. As I was very fond of books, I asked her what it was about. She said she did not know how to explain it, that the book was not hers, and that it was difficult to read. I took the book from the shelf and started to examine it. At first sight it seemed difficult reading indeed, with strange and complicated symbols in the first pages and pages and more pages of appendixes with genealogies at the end, with calendars, different alphabets and other daunting things. I put the book back where it belonged and agreed that it was tough reading and felt that I was not ready to face it. However, the cover image with a mysterious old man clad in a grey robe, holding a wooden staff, never stopped haunting me.

Some years later, during a family gathering, a relative gave a detailed account of the deeds of a so-called “Frodo Baggins,” whose task was to destroy a haunted “Ring of Power” in a dreadful “Land of Mordor where the shadows lie”. He finished his account saying: “and the first movie ends with Frodo heading to Mordor to destroy the Ring”. It was then that I learned that the book with the enticing cover had been adapted into a movie. However, it was only a couple of years later that I finally watched the movies and found out about the

mysteries of the *Lord of the Rings*. I watched the three movies in a row, so great was my desire to get acquainted to Middle-earth.

When I entered university in 2011 I finally decided that the moment had come for me to read Tolkien, in part because I considered one could not graduate in English without having read something by each of the greatest authors of that literary tradition. I started with *The Hobbit*, then I read *The Silmarillion* and, finally, I went to *The Lord of the Rings*. *The Silmarillion* was the book that touched me the most, with its richness of details, its profundity, and the way it related to the other two. Its originality and uniqueness made me regard it as one of the best literary works I have ever read. For these reasons I decided to write my monograph about *The Silmarillion*, a book that, unfortunately, is less known to people than other masterpieces written by Tolkien.

The Silmarillion is an account of the First Age of Middle-earth, the fictional universe in which the events of Tolkien's most celebrated works take place. It works similarly as the biblical *Genesis* does for the Christians or Hesiod's *Theogony* for the Greek since it narrates how things were created and how the first events took place in the world. It is composed of the Ainulindalë (The Music of the Ainur), which tells of how the universe and all the things in it came to being, about the fall of Melkor, one of Ilúvatar's (the Creator) subordinate spirits due to its rebellion, and the decision of some of these spirits to abide in Eä, the newly born world. The second part, the Valaquenta, introduces and describes the Tolkienian pantheon, the Valar, as well as their dwelling, Valinor, situated in the west of Middle-earth, in the Undying Lands of Aman. This part also deals with the Maiar, spirits similar to the Valar but of lesser degree, and with Sauron, the Maia Melkor managed to corrupt when he fell and afterwards. The Quenta Silmarillion (The History of the Silmarils) is the third and longest of the parts. It deals with the appearance of the Elves, Ilúvatar's firstborns, in Middle-earth, the decision of some of them to abide with the Valar in Aman, of how Fëanor, the greatest of the elvish smiths, made the three Silmarils, jewels that contained the light of Telperion and Laurelin, the trees responsible for lighting Aman before the rising of the Sun and the Moon, and how Melkor managed to destroy the trees and steal the Silmarils causing war and turmoil. This part also talks about the consequences of Melkor's evil deeds, the wars between him and the elves to regain the Silmarills, and of the coming of Men, the Followers, also Children of Ilúvatar, to the story and how their deeds helped to shape the fate of the world.

The moment I decided to make *The Silmarillion* the object of my study, I felt as if I was taking the “road less traveled by” (FROST: 1947, p.117), as the amount of criticism written about *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* is greater than what is available about *The Silmarillion*. This fact may be justified due to the complexity of this work; according to Tom Shippey (2001) “*The Silmarillion* can never be anything other than hard to read”; Shippey points out that the overwhelming quantity of characters may confound the modern reader that is no longer used to this kind of structure that resembles the one of Icelandic sagas. Readers of those sagas or of similar texts such as most myths would have no problem in dealing with all those genealogies, but it can be somewhat of a challenge to the contemporary reader, who is used to the structure of the modern novel. The challenge of reading *The Silmarillion*, however, resides, in my opinion, not only on the point brought up by Shippey, but also on the rather descriptive style adopted by Tolkien. The minutia with which the author describes the geography, the language, the topography, and each little aspect of his sub-created world is essential to shape its profundity and complexity. Therefore, as C. S. Lewis wrote “we must go on and take the adventure that comes to us”. (LEWIS: 1956, p. 25.)

The objective of this monograph is to find out some of the reasons why it was necessary for Tolkien to create his own mythology. To reach this goal, the methodology I use is to search for connections among *The Silmarillion*, aspects of Tolkien’s life, and aspects of Tolkien’s other fictional works. In order to do so, I start by investigating the nature of myth making as part of human nature, for myths play a fundamental role in our inner lives. Myths can provide a sense of identity and cultural independence to a nation (FLIEGER: 2015); they help us to understand reality and ourselves (CAMPBELL: 2008). There is something of a myth-maker in all storytellers (FREUND: 2008), and I believe that, without their own myths lands can easily become acculturated, and suffer several problems such as loss of national pride, or national identity. The loss of the traditions of one people leads to cultural genocide, lack of values to hold to in periods of turmoil, and consequently lack of hope in a better future.

While analyzing aspects of Tolkien’s mythology, I will approximate it to other mythologies and creation myths, especially the Greek, the Norse, the Finnish, and the Christian since they play an important part in the author’s academic and personal life. The story of Sigurd, a legendary hero of Norse mythology, was Tolkien’s favorite story as a child. When he was a teenager, he discovered the Finnish *Kalevala*. In his school years, students would perform a Greek play at the end of every summer term. His mother, Mabel, raised him

in the Catholic faith, and the author stuck to his faith to the end of his life. Analyzing *The Silmarillion* having in mind the mythologies Tolkien has been exposed to provides us the tools to better understand the techniques he uses and the aims he has when he puts mythology to use in his works. Therefore, besides touching some aspects of Tolkien's personal life whenever that proves pertinent, I will also bring up relevant aspects of the mythological bases that permeate Tolkien's works.

The writing of *The Silmarillion* is the work that occupied most of Tolkien's life. His first attempts to write something that would later turn into the plan of his mythological universe dates from the second decade of the Twentieth Century. Tolkien worked on it for all his life. Had he not died in 1973, he would probably be still working on it now. This is the reason why I address Tolkien's mythology using Shippey's expression, as "the work of his heart" (SHIPPEY: 2001). The importance of *The Silmarillion* to Tolkien, and the length of time he dedicated to it are the elements that justify the connection between the context in which the author lived, the writing of his mythology and the motivations he had to create it. To do so, I will deal with two major keys: war and religion.

The Twentieth century was marked by what Anthony Burgess refers to as a kind of spiritual emptiness and death of religion. (BURGESS: 1974.) This evokes a social scenery with people lacking in hope, faith, projects and beliefs to hold on to. This feeling is understandable since England, Europe and the whole world had experienced so much tension, so many crises and changes in the previous century, that it became impossible to tell what was right and what was wrong in the new order of things. The First World War in 1914 and the Second World War in 1939 made matters even worse. The losses were immeasurable in many senses: rationing of food, water and other basic items became common facts, and people had to go through that with little hope of a rapid improvement in the state of the affairs. In the 81 years of his life, Tolkien went through World War I, the Interwar Period, World War II and the Cold War. He was exposed to the hardship of the period, and possibly found his way to stay strong in the sketching of the mythological pieces that he would later shape into *The Silmarillion*.

This monograph is structured in two parts. The first, named *The Man and his Myth*, centers on the period in which Tolkien lived as brings some aspects of his life, to explain how he came to create his mythology. This section defines the concept of myth and its importance to human life according to theories on myth by Joseph Campbell and Richard Purtill. J. R. R.

Tolkien contributes with the essay “*On Fairy Stories*” and with his understanding of the notion of *mythopoeia*. Section I also offers an overview of Tolkien’s mythology, in connection with the theories of the myth formerly presented.

The second chapter, *The Road to The Silmarillion*, opens a view of Tolkien’s work, presenting the author’s Cosmogony and Theogony in connection to other mythologies. I will discuss the importance of his Catholic faith and how it is transposed into his sub-created universe. In this chapter I concentrate on *The Silmarillion*’s work on its own right, regardless of the underlining influence of the mythologies that have influenced its creation. To develop my reading I make use of the concept of archetypes as proposed by Carl Gustav Jung. I finish this chapter discussing the importance of Tolkien’s myth to his other related works.

Among Tolkien’s works, *The Silmarillion* is the one with less academic works written about. Besides being a hindrance, this fact is also a challenge so that my monograph may prove useful, because it offers me the opportunity of sharing with my literary friends the richness of this remarkable work. It is true that each of Tolkien’s works can be enjoyed separately; however, it was only after reading *The Silmarillion* that I could better explore some peculiarities of his fictional universe. In this sense, I hope my work can stimulate others to enjoy, celebrate and write about this book that was the work of Tolkien’s heart. If I am successful in my attempt, I will be delighted to say that taking the road less traveled by has made all the difference.

1 THE MAN AND HIS MYTH

Writing about an author who lived in the late Nineteenth century and through most of the Twentieth century can be a difficult task since these centuries witnessed lots of changes not only in the literary field, but also in science, religion and politics. J. R. R. Tolkien, the firstborn of the English couple Mabel Suffield and Arthur Tolkien that first saw the light of day on January 3, 1891 in Bloemfontein, South Africa, had his life and works deeply influenced by the changes of his period. In this chapter I provide a contextualization of the period in which Tolkien lived and how it contributed to the creation of his mythology. In this chapter I also introduce my theoretical choices in this research – the theories of the myth and how they relate to what Tolkien was doing when he decided to write *The Silmarillion*.

1.1 The Man Behind the Myth

In order to better understand Tolkien's works one must be aware of at least three things: he was a Roman Catholic living in a Protestant country in a period in which Liberal and scientific ideals that favored progress over faith were rising while the importance of the church was declining; he was a distinguished philologist in a university where there were great animosities between the language and the literature Professors, and he was also a fantasy writer who wrote in a period marked by the lack of faith, hope, and beliefs to hold on to due to the two great World Wars and to what Burgess (1974) called "*death of religion*". For some people these things may mean nothing, but for Tolkien they meant a lot and I will explain why.

Arthur, Tolkien's father, died five years after he was born leaving Mabel with a very scant amount of money to raise her two sons. Mabel, who at first was living with her parents in Birmingham, soon realized that she had to find a place of her own so that she and her sons could live more independently even though she would have to rely a little on her father's pecuniary help. Thus it was that in the summer of 1896 she found a cheap place in the outskirts of the city and moved in with her children. There she started educating the boys the

best as she could: she introduced them to Latin, French, and the piano and also to botany and drawing. On Sundays the family would go to an Anglican church since religion started to play a more important part in their lives after the loss of Arthur. However, a day came in which Mabel started to attend a Catholic church and she was soon converted into a Roman Catholic, much to her father's distaste. From this moment on he stopped to financially support her and this deeply affected the life of her children and her own. When the time had come to Tolkien to go to school and he was admitted at King Edward's School, the fees were paid by one of the few relatives that did not turn the back to them, but even with this help, Mabel could not afford the train fare and they soon had to move to a place closer to the school. With all those misfortunes it was not surprising that Mabel's health declined; still she did not give up on her new faith and she soon started to instruct the boys in it.

One of the few gleams of sunshine the family had after the death of Arthur was the friendship with Father Francis Xavier Morgan, a priest of the Birmingham Oratory in the outskirts of Edgbaston. It was him who took care of the Tolkiens when Mabel was diagnosed with diabetes, which had no effective treatment at the time. Without her family care, Mabel perished on November 14, 1904 leaving her children to the care of Father Francis. The boys were, then, raised in the Catholic faith as it was Mabel's wish and Father Francis provided for them and made sure that they had a good life despite of their traumatic experiences. However, Mabel's memory and the circumstances of her death would never abandon Tolkien's memory. According to Carpenter, Tolkien's devotion to Catholicism is on one level

explicable solely as a spiritual matter; on another, it was bound up very closely with his love for the mother who had made him a Catholic and who had died (he believed) for her Catholicism. Indeed one can see his love for her memory as a governing motive throughout his life and writings. Her death made him a pessimist; or rather, it made him capable of violent shifts of emotion. Once he had lost her, there was no security, and his natural optimism was balanced by deep uncertainty. Perhaps as a result, he was never moderate: love, intellectual enthusiasm, distaste, anger (...) each was in his mind exclusively and in full force when he experienced it (...) He was thus a man of extreme contrasts. (CARPENTER: 2000, p.133)

Now that the role of religion in Tolkien's life was introduced (even if in a "biographical" and hushed way) it is important to call attention to the fact that Tolkien grew up in a Protestant country and that Protestantism contradicts in grand part (not to say totally) what Tolkien believed: while the Roman Catholics have always believed, according to Burgess, that "the Word of God is enshrined within the Church itself, as Christ's own

foundation; the Protestants seek the Word of God in the Bible” (BURGESS, 1974 p.39). Equally important, the Protestant Church denies the universal authority of the Pope, and some Protestant denominations reject the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Protestantism, of course, changed since its idealization in the 16th century; however, it does not mean that it became closer to what Tolkien believed; in fact, with time, it diverged even more from what Catholicism preached.

During the late 19th century and the early 20th “Old Protestantism” evolved to Modern Protestantism. This new form of Protestantism was developed in order to keep up with the modern thinking; this means that if the way the human being perceived the world had changed, the way it perceived religion should also change. And change it did. In this sense, Modern Protestantism was imbued with liberal ideals which meant that religion and science should no longer be adversaries, but rather complement one another. Thus, the notion of believing in whatever the Bible said no matter how unlikely it sounded (blind faith) should be discussed: faith should be explained by or based on scientific arguments. It is important to notice that a change as great as this meant that many of the old religious values and beliefs had to be reconsidered since science had always privileged rationality over faith.

If Tolkien had to blame someone or something for most of the changes that were occurring during the period he lived, he would probably blame science and its enthusiasts. Interestingly enough he would not be at all wrong; according to Burgess (1974) the 19th century was an age of progress: the age of the first electronics, of railway-building, of invention, of reforms and of many other things that were mostly fueled by science. It was also in the 19th century that one of the most revolutionary scientific theories was developed: Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* was published in 1859 and his *The Descent of Man* in 1871. These books were a great shock to the Christian faith since they preached that humans were not God’s creation, but had in fact evolved from “inferior” forms of life.

Even though these changes had taken place all through the 19th century, their echoes could still be clearly heard during the 20th century. With the end of Queen Victoria’s reign in 1901 and the end of the Victorian age some twenty years earlier, the Modern (literary) Age came and left the modern writers and people in the midst of the modern madness with all its revolutionary ideals and lack of faith. Burgess makes a very interesting point about the literature produced in the early 20th century; for him it is “characterized either by an attempt

to find substitutes for a religion which seems dead, or by a kind of spiritual emptiness – a sense of the hopelessness of trying to believe in anything” (BURGESS: 1974, p.207).

This sense of emptiness and disbelief reached a greater level with the coming of the two World Wars in the first half of the century. The devastating impact of these wars affected fields beyond than only the economical, industrial or political; their stains left also a black page in literature: T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, C. S. Lewis’s *The Chronicles of Narnia*, George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* and many other works of the century are imbued with the worries, fears, and issues raised by those disastrous conflicts.

During 1913, the year that preceded the First World War, Tolkien was studying at the Oxford English School, more precisely at the Honour School of English Language and Literature, and he dreamed of an academic career. The undergraduates studying there could chose to specialize either in “Language” or in “Literature”; those who decided to follow the linguistic path had to study Old and Middle English as well as philology, while the ones who wanted to take the literary path had to study literature that ranged from Chaucer to the authors of the 19th century. Tolkien, who already knew Latin, Greek, Gothic, and Anglo-Saxon (among other languages) and whose interest in languages was huge, chose the linguistic field. He had already studied Comparative Philology during the time he spent at the Exeter College in Oxford studying Classics (before changing to the English School) and was soon feeling at home in the new course as well as expanding his philological knowledge.

It was during the years he spent at the English School that he became acquainted with literary works that would be of key importance to the development of his own mythology. Among these works, as Carpenter (2000) points out, was the *Crist*, a group of Anglo-Saxon religious poems written by Cynewulf, an important Old English poet, and also the Elder Edda and the *Völsungasaga*, respectively a collection of Icelandic poems dated from the 13th century and earlier, and a legendary Icelandic saga concerning the origin and decline of an Icelandic clan dated of the same period that are regarded as very important sources for the studies of Norse mythology. In the *Crist* he learned of Earendel, the bright morning star that announced the dawn in a so called Middle-earth; in the Elder Edda he learned of the mythological *Völuspá* (Prophecy of the Seeress) that tells of the creation of the world and also of its foretold doom.

The impact of Cynewulf's lines was of such extent that, according to Carpenter, Tolkien later wrote: "I felt a curious thrill as if something had stirred in me, half wakened from sleep. There was something very remote and strange and beautiful behind, if I could grasp it, far beyond ancient English" (CARPENTER: 2000, p.72). About the Elder Edda and its importance in Tolkien's writings Carpenter wrote that it "imparts of living myth, a feeling of awe and mystery, in its representation of a pagan cosmos. It had a profound appeal to Tolkien's imagination" (CARPENTER: 2000, p.73).

Shortly after the war had stricken in 1914 Tolkien wrote a poem entitled as "The Voyage of Earendel the Evening Star" which talks about a mariner called Earendel that sails "On an endless quest through the darkling West O'er the margin of the world" (TOLKIEN: 2002, pp. 267-269) in his flying ship. The Earendel of his poem would later become one of the key characters of his mythology and also an encouraging element to its beginning. During the next two years Tolkien kept dedicating himself to his studies even though most of his colleagues and friends were enlisting as soldiers to fight in the war; he was determined to finish his degree before being called-up to the war fields. At that time, besides studying, Tolkien also kept working on one of his invented languages that he had started to develop in 1912. This language would later become "Quenya" (High-Elven), one of the languages spoken by some of his mythological characters. More details about it and how it came to being will be discussed in the following sections.

Having achieved his degree in 1915, Tolkien was now aware that the time of serving his country at war had come; thus, after some intensive training he embarked to France in July of 1916 to fight in the Battle of the Somme. It was a period of great horror and sorrow in which he lost two of his dearest friends in the battle field and would probably have met with the same fate had he not been struck by "trench fever" (a disease carried by lice) in October of the same year and been sent to a French hospital.

It was, therefore, in the madness of these times that the seeds of *The Silmarillion* started to flourish. The (possible) reasons for its development are presented in the section that follows.

1.2A Land Without a Myth

Myths can be, to a large extent, associated to nationalism. Many countries and peoples responsible for great deeds had in common, among other things, the fact that they had a mythology and/or a set of legends that they could take pride of: the Norse had the Eddas, the Greek had Homer's *Odyssey*, the Romans had Virgil's *Aeneid* and so on. Campbell (2003) argues that any society deficient in mythology risks proper moral development. In this sense it can be reasoned that myths have the power to impel the people to whom they belong to rise to challenges and believe in a better future even when they are going through tough times. This idea gets clearer if a more contemporary example, such as the Finnish case, is analyzed.

Before the early 20th century the Finnish people had lived, as Flieger says, "under foreign rule for centuries – as part of Sweden from the 13th century to 1809, and from then to 1917 as a sub-set of Russia to which large parts of Finnish territory were ceded by Sweden" (Flieger, 2015 p. XI). The Finnish independence was fueled by the work of Elias Lönnrot, a Finnish physician and folklorist that carried out a thorough research on the oral tradition of the Finnish peasants living in rural Finland and gathered and transformed his findings in an epic narrative made of fifty songs and written entirely in Finnish. He published his work in 1835 and called it *Kalevala* (Land of Heroes). The *Kalevala* was well received by the Finns since it gave them a feeling of cultural independence and national identity. This sense of renewed pride culminated in the country's independence from Russia in 1917 and awarded the *Kalevala* with the title of Finnish mythology.

Tolkien first met with Lönnrot's work during his final school years in King Edward's School (1910-1911); it was a translation made by W. H. Kirby. His amazement was such that he soon decided to look for a version in Finnish so that he could read it in the original. However, it was not only the Finnish mythology that appealed and impacted Tolkien; as it was seen he also appreciated the Norse mythology and its sagas. Besides that, it is important to notice that he was also acquainted with and enjoyed Greek, Celtic, Romance, and Germanic legends (just to mention a few) and he was constantly seeking for new material in this field in order to satisfy his appetite for myths. However, there was this burning desire that grieved him: he missed a myth for his country. Shippey (2000) states that this feeling is understandable since the native English tradition had been almost completely suppressed due to events such as the Norman Conquest and the taking-over by the learning of French and Latin. He also points out the fact that while the German, the Irish, and others were concerned about "searching for relics of their country's past in the children's tales of the nineteenth century" (SHIPPEY: 2000, p.231), the English were more concerned about the international

status that their language had been acquiring. Consequently, English fairy-tale collections from the Nineteenth century are not very popular in Europe. Aware of these facts, Tolkien decided to “reverse this decline and restore to England something like the body of lost legend which it must have once had” (SHIPPEY: 2000, p.232). Tolkien’s anguish about the lack of English legends can be noticed in one of his letters addressed to Milton Waldman (from the UK publishing company William Collins):

(...) I was from early days grieved by the poverty of my own beloved country: it had no stories of its own (bound up with its tongue and soil), not of the quality that I sought and found (as an ingredient) in legends of other lands. There was Greek, and Celtic, and Romance, Germanic, Scandinavian, and Finnish (which greatly affected me); but nothing English, save impoverished chap-book stuff. Of course there was and is all the Arthurian world, but powerful as it is, it is imperfectly naturalized, associated with the soil of Britain but not with English; and does not replace what I felt to be missing. (TOLKIEN: 2000, p.144).

This desire for a mythology that belonged to the English was, thus, one of the motivating factors that led Tolkien to write *The Silmarillion*. However, as Carpenter (2000) points out, this was not the only reason why Tolkien decided to create his own mythology; there were, according to him, another two major reasons: one, that will be discussed in this section, was his passion for inventing languages and the other, that will be given more attention in the next, was his need for expressing his feelings in poetry.

As it was already mentioned, Tolkien had from his early childhood started to learn different languages; when he was just five his mother taught him the basics of Latin and French. As he grew up his interest in languages also flourished; still a teenager, during the years he spent at King Edward’s School, he learned Greek, German, and kept studying French and Latin. When he turned 16 Robert Cary Gilson, one of his teachers at the time, seeing his aptitude for languages encouraged him to study linguistics and it was then, when he was discovering the general principles of language that he also discovered the one thing that would become one of his great passions: philology, the study of how languages or words develop.

Consequently, with the discovery of philology Tolkien also discovered Old English, Middle English, and Old Norse. Thanks to these new linguistic discoveries he became acquainted with literary works that would deeply impress him; among them are the Old English poem *Beowulf*, the chivalric Middle English romance *Sir Gaiwan and the Green Knight*, and also the legendary Old Norse tale of Sigurd and the Dragon Fafnir that he had

first met as a child in Andrew Lang's *Red Fairy Book*, a book of fairy tales that contained an adapted version of the Norse legend. It was in this period, thus, and as a result of what Carpenter (2000) defines as "Tolkien's love of words" that the author started to invent his own languages.

The first language that Tolkien invented was the Nevbosh (New Nonsense). It was the product of the collaboration of one of his cousins and him. Even though it did not possess the complexity and riches of the languages he would later develop, the Nevbosh developed further enough to allow the cousins to create some verses with it. During the years to come Tolkien would keep working on invented languages; he invented the Naffarin (influenced by the Spanish language), extra Gothic words to complement and to, as Carpenter (2000) points out, fill in the gaps in the few Gothic written fragments that survived for posterity that he found out, alphabets, and also the origins of his invented languages; as a philologist aspirant he was concerned with the origin of languages and his concern did not leave behind his own invented languages. Interesting as these new languages could be, they would never achieve the beauty, complexity and brilliancy of Quenya and Sindarin: the main languages spoken by the peoples in *The Silmarillion*.

Amidst all the languages that Tolkien knew or had an interest in, there were two that, according to Kyrmse (2003) were essential for his linguistic inventions: Finnish and Welsh. Finnish came to him through the *Kalevala*; having read a translation of the work when he was still at King Edward's School, he was determined to read it also in the original. Consequently, in his second year at the university he managed to find a Finnish grammar in the college library and started to try his hand at the original verses of the *Kalevala*. Even though he was partially successful in his attempt of reading the Finnish work in the original (he managed to read only part of it), he never learned the language well enough to do more than a few translations. However, so great was his fascination by the language that in a letter to a reviewer in 1955 he wrote:

It was like discovering a complete wine-cellar filled with bottles of an amazing wine of a kind and flavor never tasted before. It quite intoxicated me; (...) and my 'own language' – or series of invented languages – became heavily Finnicized in phonetic pattern and structure. (TOLKIEN: 2000, p.214).

It was, therefore, after his encounter with Finnish that the seeds of one his most important linguistic inventions started to bloom.

Welsh came to Tolkien earlier than Finnish, but it does not mean that it happened in a less interesting way. The account that most of Tolkien's biographers give about how he first met the Welsh language is pretty much the same: the author was about nine years old and he was living in Moseley, Birmingham. Close to his house there was a coal-yard and Tolkien used to play in the grass slopes of the place that were filled with flowers and plants. It happened that, whenever he heard the noise of the trains with their trucks filled with coal, he stopped to play in order to appreciate the view. More than the coal trucks themselves, it was the names written on their sides that delighted him the most; the trucks came from South Wales and on them Tolkien could read words like *Nantyglo*, *Tredegarr*, *Sanghenydd*, among others. These words that even though he did not know the meanings, but that seemed to sound so well happened to be Welsh as he would later discover. In 1912, thanks to one of his university professors, he started an in depth study of the language that fascinated him as a child and soon concluded that it was for him one of the most beautiful languages in what sound and appearance are concerned. As it happened with Finnish, Welsh would also serve as a huge inspiration for his invented languages.

In a letter from 1955 to his American publisher Houghton Mifflin Tolkien affirmed that his work was: “(...) *fundamentally linguistic* in inspiration (...) The invention of languages is the foundation. The ‘stories’ were made rather to provide a world for the languages than the reverse” (TOLKIEN: 2000, p.219). When Tolkien started to outline *The Silmarillion* he had already developed two of his most important invented languages to a degree that they were in need of a people to speak them. Quenya or High Elven is in Tolkien's mythology “an ancient tongue (...) the first to be recorded in writing. (...) used for ceremony, and for high matters of lore and song, by the High Elves (...)” (TOLKIEN: 2007 p.1481). Quenya's phonology is similar to Finnish's and, according to Kyrmse (2003) it is a musical language and its pronunciation is not complex to Portuguese speakers. Its grammar is complex and it resembles Latin in the sense that it has a number of cases to indicate the syntactic function of words in the sentences. Sindarin, on the other hand, is the language spoken by most of the elves in Tolkien's mythology; it is, as Tolkien mentioned in one of his letters, phonologically similar to Welsh.

When Tolkien finally got his academic degree in 1915 he was left with practically no time or chance to write; he started his intensive war training and was soon sent to France to fight. It is true that during the time he fought he received and wrote some letters, but writing letters in the middle of the war camp seems to be a much less complex job than writing

fiction. Tolkien was desperate: the war had already taken one of his greatest friends and there was little hope of him surviving himself. Shortly after he was dismissed from war due to the “trench fever” he received, in December, another letter saying that another of his dearest friends had succumbed in war. Grieving with the loss of two of his friends and abhorred with the devastating impacts of the war Tolkien knew that he could not wait any longer: it was about time he created a people for his languages. It was about time he dedicated a mythology to England. It was about time he started to write his own mythology. It was with these feelings and thoughts in mind that in early 1917 Tolkien put on paper the first excerpts of *The Silmarillion*.

1.3 Building Confidence: The importance of Friendship

It is true that if Tolkien never gave up on writing *The Silmarillion*, he owes it a lot to his passion for mythologies, for inventing languages, to his religious background, and to his desire to expressing himself through verse. On the other hand, it is also true that he would probably not have developed his mythology as much as he did had not he had the constant support, feedback, and encouragement of his friends. Friendship played an essential role in Tolkien’s (literary) life since his early years and it manifested itself mainly, but not only, through the groups the author formed during his school and university years. These groups, as it will be seen, were composed only by men who had similar tastes and interests. Among these tastes were, as expected of a group in which Tolkien was a member, literature, mythology, and old languages.

It all started in 1911 when Tolkien was still a student at King Edward’s school and was granted the title of Librarian, which meant that he would help to administer the school’s library. Since administering such an important place was a too demanding job for only one student, Tolkien did his job along with other students of similar age. In order to make the time spent there more entertaining (and less boring), the boys decided to start having tea during the expedient and chat about things they enjoyed. So they formed a group called the “Tea Club”. As the moments drinking tea and chatting together proved to be fruitful and enjoyable, the group decided that they should take it further; consequently they started to have meetings also at a tea shop called Barrow’s Stores. After a while the meetings started to be more frequent at

Barrow's Stores than in the school's library, then the name of the group was changed first to "The Barrovian Society" and later to "Tea Club, Barrovian Society", or simply "T.C.B.S" so that the group would carry the names of both places in which its seeds blossomed.

The T.C.B.S's members Rob Gilson, Geoffrey Smith, Christopher Wiseman, and, of course, Tolkien, all friends and students at King Edward's school, kept meeting for some years even after they left King Edward's, but the most remarkable of all their meetings was held in December of 1914, at Wiseman's family house. This gathering had, for Tolkien, "an important and practical result. He decided that he was a poet." (CARPENTER: 2000 p.81). Consequently, after this reunion Tolkien started to write poems.

Even though Tolkien's first attempts on verse were not very fruitful, Wiseman and Smith, from the T.C.B.S, encouraged him to keep writing by reading his verses, commenting on them, and making useful remarks. They read Tolkien's verses and always tried to come up with useful hints. So it was that after a while the author realized that instead of writing poems without a central theme as he had been doing, he should focus on a specific theme; it was then that he saw the opportunity to bring back "The Voyage of Earendel the Evening Star", the poem he had written inspired by Cynewulf's poem *Crist* and connect it to his invented languages and his desire to write a mythology.

Now that Tolkien had found a central theme to his verses he could see the connections between his linguistic and literary desires clearer: he had a character, Earendel, a seafarer that fared through realms in his ship. In one of his journeying he would find a different people who spoke a language unknown by him, this is Qenya and Sindarin, and from these ideas Tolkien would weave the rest of his mythology. Of course this was only an initial idea and things would change through Tolkien's creative process, however, the main links were there. From this central idea Tolkien started to work on the "Lay of Earendel" that would talk about Earendel's adventures. The full poem can be found at the end of this work.

To Tolkien the T.C.B.S could have ended in 1916. To him the war had killed it the same way it killed Gilson. Tolkien received news of his friend's death in July of 1916 from a letter from Smith, who, as Tolkien and Gilson, was also on war duty. In his reply to Smith's letter Tolkien wrote: "So far my chief impression is that something has gone crack (...) I don't feel a member of a little complete body now. I honestly feel that the T.C.B.S has ended (...)." (TOLKIEN: 2000, p.10). According to Carpenter (2000), Smith wrote back to Tolkien

saying that the T.C.B.S was not finished and that it would never be. It seems evident that Smith, as Tolkien, was also feeling hopeless, however, he was determined to cling to his friends until the end.

Five months later, during his “sick leave” from war, Tolkien received a letter from Wiseman, who was serving in the Navy. Smith had died during the war. It was only Wiseman and Tolkien now to carry the T.C.B.S on. Tolkien would probably have given up on it, were not for the last letter Smith had written to him shortly before his death:

(...) My chief consolation is that if I am scuppered tonight – I am off on duty in a few minutes – there will still be left a member of the great T.C.B.S to voice what I dreamed and what we all agreed upon. For the death of one of its members cannot, I am determined, dissolve the T.C.B.S. Death can make us loathsome and helpless as individuals, but it cannot put an end to the immortal four! (...) May God bless you, my dear John Ronald, and may you say the things I have tried to say long after I am not there to say them, if such be my lot. (CARPENTER: 2000, pp. 93-94).

According to Carpenter (2000), Smith’s “last words” were the decisive push for Tolkien to start writing his great project, the work of his heart, his mythology, or simply *The Silmarillion*. Wiseman, the only of Tolkien’s friends from the T.C.B.S that had survived the war wrote to him on late 1916 urging him: “you ought to start the epic” (CARPENTER: 2000, p.98). Shortly after that, on early 1917, Tolkien started to write his mythology. In the beginning it was called “The Book of Lost Tales” and the first story to be written was “The Fall of Gondolin” and even though it is one of the stories that appears towards the end of the book, it is understandable why it came to being before the others: it is in it that one of the most terrible battles of the book is fought and the destiny of Earendel, the seafarer Tolkien alluded to in his first poems and also one of the most important characters of his mythology, is traced.

From 1917 to 1918 Tolkien had plenty of time to work on his mythology once he never had to return to the battle fields since his health was constantly unstable after he had fallen ill due to the trench fever in 1916. This period away from the battle fields was fundamental to the development of *The Silmarillion*; at least two more central stories of his mythology were conceived during these years: the tale of Túrin and also the tale of Beren and Lúthien. Further details about these stories will be provided in the second part of this work.

The two years Tolkien was away from the heat of the war were not only important to the development of his mythology; they were also important to his personal life: his wife, Edith, (for Tolkien had gotten married on early 1916, prior to his going to war) got pregnant and gave birth to their firstborn, John Francis, in November of 1917. In the following year Tolkien got a job in Oxford and then moved with his family there. The war was over and a new phase of his life was about to begin. Tolkien could not have been happier.

During the following years Tolkien led what could be called a “normal and peaceful” life: he succeeded in becoming a university professor, Edith and him had two more sons (Michael and Christopher), and he kept writing his mythology. By 1923, Tolkien’s *The Silmarillion* was almost finished, however, for reasons that will be discussed later in this work he refused to put the last full stop on paper. Instead, he decided to review and rewrite it.

Tolkien’s first job as a university professor was at the University of Leeds. In the beginning, this is, from 1920 to 1924 he worked in the post of Reader in English Language, but in his final year at the university he assumed the post of Professor of English. In 1922 Tolkien was glad to see that Eric Valentine Gordon who had been his private student a couple of years before, had also assumed a position at Leeds. During the time they worked together they could strengthen their bonds and also collaborate in publications. Among their most important works together was a new edition of the Middle English poem *Sir Gaiwan and the Green Knight*. Together they also formed a “Viking Club” that consisted basically of professors and undergraduate students who were interested in Norse sagas, old languages, and drinking. Nonetheless, there was still an emptiness that haunted Tolkien from time to time, an emptiness that would only somehow start to disappear from his heart during the second half of the 1920s.

In 1925 Tolkien assumed the post of Professor of Old English at the University of Oxford. He was back to the place where the T.C.B.S had started and was grieved to realize there was no longer a T.C.B.S, at least not as it used to be. Tolkien still communicated with Christopher Wiseman, the only of his friends from the club that survived the war, but things were not as they used to be. However, during a meeting of the English Faculty at Merton College in 1926, Tolkien met Clive Staples Lewis, also a Professor at Oxford. Things were about to change, again.

Lewis on his essay on Friendship said that friendship “is born at the moment when one man says to another ‘What! You too? I thought that no one but myself...’”. (LEWIS: 1960 p.113). Friendship for Tolkien and him happened this way; shortly after they met they realized they had a good number of interests in common and could contribute a lot to one another’s personal and literary lives. So it was that one year after they met Tolkien invited him to participate of the “Coalbiters”, a reading club he founded shortly after he started teaching at Oxford, similar to the Viking Club in Leeds in which its members regularly met to read Norse sagas and debate on subjects of shared interest.

In Carpenter’s (2000) view, one of the major factors that contributed to the beginning of Tolkien and Lewis’s friendship was the fact that both were deeply interested in Norse mythology. According to him, after Lewis found out that Tolkien was a reader and enthusiast of the Elder Edda and of the *Völsungasaga* “they began to meet regularly in Lewis’s room in Magdalen, sometimes sitting far into the night while they talked of the gods and giants of Asgard or discussed the politics of the English School.”(CARPENTER: 2000, p.148).

Lewis was one of the greatest enthusiasts of Tolkien’s work; not only did he gladly read most of his manuscripts, but he also commented on them, always giving the author honest feedback. Many a time did Lewis listened to Tolkien read pieces of *The Silmarillion* and urged him to finish it. About their friendship and what Lewis meant to him Tolkien said: “The unpayable debt that that I owe to him was not ‘influence’ as it is ordinarily understood, but sheer encouragement. He was for long my only audience. Only from him did I ever get the idea that my ‘stuff’ could be more than a private hobby.” (CARPENTER: 2000, p. 152).

In the first half of the nineteen-thirties a club that, according to White (2013) had a similar structure and purpose of the T.C.B.S. came up: The Inklings. This club that was at first organized by Tangye Lean, an Oxford undergraduate student, in 1931, became later, when Lean left Oxford, centered on Lewis and his circle of friends as Carpenter (2000) states. Tolkien, that at this point was one of Lewis’s greatest friends, took part in this club. The feeling Tolkien got being a part of this group was the closest he would ever get from what he felt with his friends of the T.C.B.S., which is understandable since the Inklings worked similarly as the T.C.B.S: from time to time a group of men who were literature lovers would get together, sometimes in a pub, at others at Lewis’s room at Magdalen college, to read and discuss each other’s literary production. More than once did Tolkien read the manuscripts of

many of his works that would later be published to the members of the Inklings and, in return, he would get sincere feedback, which served him as encouragement to keep writing.

The advent of the Inklings was a turning point in Tolkien's life: he was for the first time after a long while getting the feeling of belonging to a group which he could express the literary feelings and anxieties that were at the core of his heart. Once again there was friendship, encouragement, and safety, which were crucial to the literary success that he would later achieve. Consequently, in the late nineteen-thirties Tolkien published *The Hobbit*, the first of his stories that take place in his sub-created universe, Middle-earth, and soon after its publication he started to write *The Lord of the Rings*. Besides that, as one could imagine, the author also kept working on *The Silmarillion*.

It can be argued that the way friendship manifested itself in Tolkien's life was of great importance to the development of both his literary and personal life. It was, to a large extent, due to it that he was able to go through the hardships of the period he lived, resisting the war and not giving up hope in a better future, and ending up producing many of his most important works. Perhaps, as he mentioned it was the case with C. S. Lewis, it was not influence that he owed to his friends, but in fact support and encouragement; and these made all the difference.

1.4 What Are Myths, After all?

Once a skeptical C. S. Lewis decided that it would be a nice idea to tell Tolkien that myths were "lies, even though lies breathed through silver" (CARPENTER: 2000, p.151). As an answer to this statement, Tolkien decided to write a poem entitled *Mythopoeia* in which there is a brief account of the relationship between men and myths. In it Tolkien argues that mythmaking is a way for us to reconnect to God and also to fulfill our desire for creation. It is important to highlight that when Tolkien talks about men's desire for creation, he is not referring to it as "divine creation" that, in Tolkien's belief, only God is capable of, but rather to a lesser type of creation that he refers to as sub creation. To Tolkien, men are only capable of sub creating because, somehow, God's wisdom still resides in them. Consequently, myth makers (Tolkien included) are, in this sense, not only myth makers, but also sub creators and when they decide to make myth they are not creating "lies breathed through silver" as Lewis

believed, they are, in fact, emanating the portion of divine wisdom that is inside them, and due to this divine element, these stories should not be regarded as lies.

Carpenter (2000), offers an account of a conversation between Lewis and Tolkien that elucidates Tolkien's view on myths and that, according to him, reveals the central belief that is behind *The Silmarillion*:

“We have come from God (...), and inevitably the myths woven by us, though they contain error, will also reflect a splintered fragment of the true light, the eternal truth that is with God. Indeed only by myth-making, only by becoming a ‘sub-creator’ and inventing stories, can Man aspire to the state of perfection that he knew before the Fall.”(CARPENTER: 2000, p.151).

It is important, however, to note that there are different kinds of myths, each of them with their own specific characteristics and functions. Among the many functions of myths Joseph Campbell (2008) highlights four of them: the first one has to do with reconciliation, this is, myths are supposed to help us reconnect with elements that, for me, are related to the divine, such as love and gratitude. This function should be also responsible for inspiring a sense of wonder in us. The second function is about maintaining such sense in us while helping us understand the cosmos, this is, all the existence that surrounds us. The third function is a sociological one and is related to law and order: it should assist us in living in harmony and escaping chaos by establishing and maintaining fixed rules. To Campbell, going against these rules would result in self-destruction. The last function brought by him is a psychological one: myths are entitled with the responsibility of aiding us in making the transitions through all paths of life, this means, they help us understand life and ourselves. *The Silmarillion*, I will try to demonstrate, pervades, in a greater or lesser extent, all these four functions.

Before plunging into a deeper analysis of Tolkien's myth, it is necessary to conceptualize what myths are and also to ponder over what kind of myth Tolkien intended, even if unconsciously, to write. Due to the amount of discussion that there has been about myth Richard Purtill (1984) states that its concept has broadened. He believes that myths can be seen as only stories, however, they do not necessarily need to; they can be more than that. For him, myths were originally “stories of gods or heroes that usually had a religious or moral purpose”. (PURTILL: 1984, p.1). Based on the concept and characteristics of what he calls “original myth”, Purtill distinguishes among other kinds of myths. He affirms that original myths were stories about gods that conveyed religious or moral purposes that were also

regarded as way to honor the gods and heroes while inspiring the ones who listened to them. According to him, original myths are, too, linked to ritual since they used to be acted out in a variety of ceremonies. Another aspect of these myths that Purtil calls attention to is that they can be expressed through different literary forms, such as poetry, prose or even drama.

Attempting to write original myth nowadays would probably lead to failure, though. This happens because the modern audience is not likely to give myths nowadays what Purtil (1984) refers to as intermediate belief, this is, a belief that is in between primary belief, which is given, for example, to gospel, and secondary belief, that may be given to fiction (for further details on secondary belief, see page 46 of this work). However, in the past when people started to tell myths, it was possible because at that time, Purtil (1984) affirms, people believed that the stories they told were not seen as only human invention (as fiction) or as ultimate truth (as the gospels), but a mixture of these two. This change of perspective seems, to me, to have much to do with the growing scientific ideals that favored reason over faith that consequently led the audiences of original myth to question whether they should be given any credit.

The Christian Gospels, however, still possess most of the characteristics that were attributed to original myth and this, Purtil believes, is due to the fact that

(...) in gospel we have stories of the acts of God and of those close to God (...) It has religious and moral significance for teller and audience, it can take a wide variety of literary forms, and it has a close connection with ritual. (PURTILL: 1984, p.3).

What differentiates the gospel from original myth is the fact that the gospel believers give it primary belief, what means, as Purtil (1984) states, that it “is regarded as literally and historically true in all its important elements (and even perhaps in its details). It is specifically denied that human imagination or invention plays any part in gospel (...). (PURTILL: 1984, p.3). It can be argued, then, that Tolkien was not possibly writing original myth nor, due to his condition of devoted Catholic, was he attempting to write gospel. What was he writing, then? For a long time I believed that most of Tolkien’s work were what Purtil refers to as “philosophical myths”, this is, philosophical ideas conveyed by allegories or metaphors that resemble original myth in a greater or lesser extent. In this kind of myth, Purtil states, the philosophical ideas are taken as true, however, the stories they embody are not. Tolkien was always against the idea that his stories, his mythology were just backgrounds to the conveying

of any kind of moral or philosophical ideas; he never conceived that his stories were taken as a form of “indoctrination” because this was, for him, the work of allegory, which he deeply disliked. It is also important to note that while Tolkien was writing *The Silmarillion* he did not feel like he was inventing the stories that are part of the book; in a letter to a publisher he wrote that he always “had the sense of recording what was already ‘there’, somewhere: not of ‘inventing’”. (TOLKIEN: 2000, p.143). Consequently, it can be said that he was not writing philosophical myth either.

A further comparison made by Purtill on what original myth is concerned is related to what he calls “literary myth” that, according to him is

(...) the use of mythical characters and heroes for purely literary purposes. Neither the author nor the audience of literary myth regards the story as true, and though religious or moral lessons may be conveyed, they are not conveyed in the way that is characteristic of original myth. (PURTILL: 1984, p.3).

Given the definition of literary myth one can argue that it is definitely not what Tolkien meant to write with *The Silmarillion*. However, if a writer of literary myth is able to incorporate truth that is given primary belief, this means, “truth believed independently of the myth” (PURTILL: 1984, p.7) to the mythology, it is very likely to acquire the divine quality that Tolkien preached in his *Mythopoeia*, the quality arising from the tiny portion of Godly wisdom that still resides in us. In this sense, what Tolkien did was taking elements that he gave primary belief, that he regarded as the ultimate truth and incorporating them to his own mythology, thus creating what Purtill (1984) characterizes as literary myth that gets as close as possible to original myth.

Based on the concepts and functions stated above it is now possible to trace the elements inside *The Silmarillion* that connect it to them. In this sense, the first thing that is important to elucidate is the fact that as a Roman Catholic Tolkien gave primary belief to the biblical genesis, this is, the Christian account of how the universe and all things in it came to being; interestingly enough, in Tolkien’s mythology the world was created by an almighty entity, Ilúvatar, that resembles the Christian God in a way that resembles the biblical genesis. By incorporating in his myth truth to which he gave primary belief, Tolkien was able to confer to it the qualities necessary to make it draw close to original myth. Consequently, the audience who share similar beliefs with Tolkien and read his myth will probably give it more credit than they would give to other fictional books, this means, they would give it

intermediate belief instead of secondary belief. By drawing close to original myth Tolkien was also conferring to his mythology the first mythical function proposed by Campbell (2008), the one of reconciliation.

It was already mentioned that myths play a fundamental role in our lives since their functions go beyond telling a story to entertain their listeners and Tolkien was well aware of that; he believed that myths and all kinds of art must embody and reflect elements of moral and religious truth in an implicit way. That's why he was convinced that myths were not "lies breathed through silver" as C. S. Lewis affirmed. He felt that myths had a greater role to play in our lives and that is why it can be apprehended that *The Silmarillion* pervades all mythical functions as posed by Campbell.

The Silmarillion begins with the account of how Ilúvatar, the "Father of All", created the universe in which the story takes place. Before anything else he created the Ainur, the "Holy Ones" and suggested musical themes to them. The Ainur, then, sang, at first each on their own for they could only comprehend themselves, but soon they managed to sing in unison and their song was so beautiful and powerful that it filled their dwelling until it overflowed and the song filled also the void. At first Ilúvatar only hearkened to the melody, for it was flawless, but then one of the Ainur, Melkor, the most powerful among them, started to interweave dissonant themes of his own imagining to it. Ilúvatar, then, set a new theme amid the dissonance of the previous one and the melody was momentarily in consonance again. The rebel Melkor, in his lust to create things of his own, two more times raised disharmony amidst the song. However, the almighty Ilúvatar ever set a new theme to restore the order. When for the third time disorder started to arouse among the melody, Ilúvatar rose from his throne, his face terrible to behold, he made the music cease and, then, said:

Mighty are the Ainur, and mightiest among them is Melkor; but that he may know, and all the Ainur, that I am Ilúvatar, those things that ye have sung, I will show them forth, that ye may see what ye have done. And thou, Melkor, shalt see that no theme may be played that hath not its uttermost source in me, nor can any alter the music in my despite. For he that attempteth this shall prove but mine instrument in the devising of things more wonderful, which he himself hath not imagined. (TOLKIEN: 1999, pp. 5-6).

Ilúvatar, then, asked them to behold what had become of their song and where there was only emptiness, there was now a World, for he had turned song into image. While the Ainur contemplated the divine vision, Ilúvatar said "let these things Be!" (TOLKIEN: 1999, p.9). And the World and all the things that were once song became real.

It is interesting to notice how Tolkien's notion of creation and sub creation is present in his mythology; Ilúvatar, likewise God, is the only being capable to create things on his own; all other things are only allowed to create if it is through him, this means, they are only capable of sub creation. The way the author's mythology is presented to us, inspiring in us a feeling of wonder while the account of how everything in the universe came to be, help us, somehow, understand the existence that surrounds us; just as Campbell (2008) proposes myths should.

So far, then, it can be reasoned that *The Silmarillion* works as a world for Tolkien's invented languages, a way for him to express his feelings in poetry, as the mythology he wanted to dedicated to his country, as a literary myth that draws close to original myth, as a sub creation that reflects the Godly wisdom that resides in us, and as a myth that satisfies at least two of the mythical functions proposed by Campbell. It will be seen, however, that there is even more in it than that.

2 THE ROAD TO THE SILMARILLION

The Silmarillion started to be written around 1917 and it was published only in 1977, four years after Tolkien's death. At the beginning it was called *The Book of Lost Tales*, but later Tolkien opted for the name it has today. Isolated elements of the mythology, as it was seen, started to be developed around 1914, however, greater links and consistency among the parts started to appear only in 1917. Tolkien kept working on his mythology until he died, but he never managed to publish it. I believe the major reason for that resides in the fact that due to his lust for perfection, the author never became fully satisfied with the text. I mean, whenever he was close to finish it, he decided to rewrite it, add further details to it, expand one or other section, or make any other change that would prevent him to declare it as truly finished. It is hard to say if it happened because he really felt it was not perfect enough, or if it was due to the fact that the author became attached to the mythology to such an extent that he was afraid about admitting it was finished.

The challenge about writing about Tolkien's mythology resides not only in the fact that almost everything he wrote about it was published posthumously, but also (and mainly) in the fact that the author developed it to such a depth and extent that there are over fifteen books about or that are somehow connected to it. *The Silmarillion*, which this work is about, is only a part of the vast mythology that Tolkien (sub) created; the part which Christopher Tolkien, Tolkien's youngest son, responsible for editing and publishing the author's posthumous works, believed was more coherent and of more internal consistency. Therefore, the discussions proposed in this section are about the selection of legends made by Christopher Tolkien and that was published together and can be found in *The Silmarillion*. I may, at times, allude to other Tolkienian works related to his mythology, such as *The Unfinished Tales*, *The Children of Húrin*, *The History of Middle-earth*, among others, however, this chapter is mainly concerned with the stories of *The Silmarillion*. Through it I offer an in-depth as possible overview of Tolkien's theogony and explain its function in the author's mythology, while I compare it to other theogonies and their functions. Besides that, in this chapter I also analyze key aspects of the *The Silmarillion* as I approach it to other mythologies that the author was fond of in order to elucidate how they are connected. Finally,

this is a chapter to cast light at the relevance of Tolkien's myth to his other works, to the literature of his time and of the present time.

2.1 Tolkien's Theogony

An interesting fact about Tolkien's myth is that it reflects much of what he was and many of his beliefs and interests. Curiously enough, the author was able to interweave elements in his mythology that are not normally seen coexisting. Evidence that corroborates this fact can be found in the very beginning of *The Silmarillion*: as it was already said the whole universe in Tolkien's mythology was created by Ilúvatar, the almighty "Father of all", for he is the only one capable of true creation, likewise the biblical God. He created first the Ainur, spiritual beings that dwelt with him before the unfolding of the World and that may be an allusion to the Christian angels. In addition to that, before Ilúvatar made the World and everything in the music of the Ainur real, he told them that this newly born planet was going to be the dwelling of his children: the Elves and the Men. However, if in one hand the Christian angels are not allowed to leave the spiritual plan and dwell among us on Earth, on the other hand Ilúvatar granted the Ainur permission to descend and abide amid the Elves and Men; more than that, the Ainur that decided to live on Earth were bound to it and became responsible for guarding, governing and also assuring that the planet kept in order for the arrival of the Children of Ilúvatar. The Ainur who opted to abide in this newly born planet are named Valar (sing. Vala), the Powers of the World, and the Elves and Men refer to them as Gods, and this is one of the key factors that differentiate Tolkien's myth from the Christian tradition and connects it to other mythological traditions as it will be seen.

Fourteen Ainur opted for dwelling on Earth, therefore there are fourteen Valar in Tolkien's theogony and since the Valar were capable of assuming human-like shapes, there are seven manlike Valar, referred to as the Lords of the Valar, and seven womanlike Valar, the Valier, referred to as the Queens. It is important to emphasize that Melkor, the rebel, also descended to Earth, but he is not considered a Vala, for it came to the planet not for love, but for hatred, envy, and a burning desire to subdue the Children of Ilúvatar and to become the sole sovereign on it. The way Melkor left the spiritual plan can be compared to the fall of the

biblical Lucifer and, in this sense, due to his actions, as it will be seen, it can be argued that it is an allusion to Satan.

Each Vala in Tolkien's mythological tradition has specific functions and characteristics; based on that, a comparison between them and the gods in other mythologies can be made. Since I have mentioned in the previous sections that the Norse and the Greek mythologies had a relevant impact on Tolkien's life, I will compare the tolkienian pantheon to the ones of these mythologies. However, before any comparison is made, it is important that the Valar are described in more detail.

Manwë is the King of the Valar and he is linked to the winds, clouds, and everything that is related to the air. Besides that, he is a lover of birds and they are willing to attend to his call. Varda is the "Lady of the Stars"; she is Manwë's wife and she knows all the regions of Earth. She is a Vala of indescribable beauty since it is said that the light of Ilúvatar still resides on her face. Varda draws her power from light and from all the Valar she is the one that Melkor fears the most. Ulmo is the King of the Seas and his power resides in all the deep waters on Earth. He is the closest in friendship to Manwë.

The smith and master of all crafts is Aulë; he is the ruler of all the substances of which the Earth is made. Yavanna is his wife and she is the "Giver of Fruits" since she loves all things that grow on earth. The masters of spirits are Námo and Irmo. The first is the guardian of the Houses of the Dead and summoner of the spirits of the slain. The latter is the master of visions and dreams. Námo is considered the Dooms' man of the Valar since he knows about all the things to come. Vairë, the Weaver, is responsible for weaving all things that have ever been in time. She is Námo's wife. Estë, Irmo's spouse, is the healer of hurts and weariness. Her gift is rest and she is always clad in grey. The sister of Námo and Irmo is Nienna, the Lady of Mercy; she grieves with destruction. Whoever listens to her laments learns pity, and endurance in hope.

Tulkas, the Valiant, is the greatest in strength. He is tireless and the bravest among the Valar. He is said to be faster than any being that walks on earth. Nessa, the graceful, is Tulkas's wife. She is swift as an arrow and among all animals, the deer she loves the most. She delights in dancing. The two last Valar are Oromë and Vána: Oromë, the Great Rider, is mighty and dreadful. He is the hunter of monsters and fell beasts. He is a lover of horses, hounds, and also trees. The Valaróma is his great horn, which is said to sound like thunder.

Vána, the Ever-young, is Yavanna's sister and Oromë's wife. Flowers spring wherever she passes and they bloom at her glance.

As it was mentioned above, this section aims at presenting Tolkien's theogony and approaching it to the Greek and Norse pantheons. However, it is important to highlight that I do not at any rate expect to find exact matches while comparing the gods of these mythological traditions since my point here is to demonstrate how aspects of other myths can be seen on Tolkien's own sub-creation. In this sense, an exact match, besides being improbable to find, is not desirable once it may allude to mere copying, which I argue is not what Tolkien was doing. Therefore, while approaching these theogonies I intend to analyze which aspects these gods have in common.

The chief god, Manwë, and goddess, Varda, of *The Silmarillion* share similarities, respectively, with the Greek Zeus and Hera, and the Norse Odin and Frigg. Likewise Manwë, Zeus and Odin are the kings of their pantheons and are linked to the sky: Zeus is referred to as the god of the sky and one of his symbols is an eagle, while Odin has the tides of what is happening in the world brought to him by his ravens. Varda, Hera, and Frigg can be connected since they are all queens of their pantheons. Besides that, Hera, as Varda, is referred to as the lady of the stars and is portrayed as a woman of immense beauty.

Yavanna can be connected to the Greek Demeter and the Norse Freya since they are all tied to crops and things that grown on earth. On the other hand, it is possible to link Tulkas to Ares and Tyr due to their relationship with war: these three gods are symbols of a braveness and boldness capable of inspiring courage and heroism in war. The Greek Hephaestus, the god of fire and crafts, is similar to Aulë, the master of all crafts, since both are connected to works of skill and resemble blacksmiths. Ulmo shares similar traits with the Greek god Poseidon: both gods are the mighty lords of the seas in their mythologies. The masters of spirits, Namo and Irmo, resemble the Greek Thanatos and Hypnos respectively: Hypnos is the personified spirit of sleep and it is said that his sons are the dreams; therefore, since Irmo is the master of dreams and visions, it is possible to connect them. On the other hand, Namo, as Thanatos, is linked to death. It is also possible, however, to connect Namo to the Greek Hades since both are responsible for guarding the Houses of the Dead.

It is noticeable that there are many more connections between the Greek and Tolkien's pantheon than the Norse; this may be explained by the fact that the Norse gods relate to Tolkien's in a slightly different way, this is, while it is possible to put the Greek and Tolkien's

gods in pairs due to their similar characteristics, the same is not always possible with the Norse pantheon. This happens because most of the times one Norse god has traits in common with multiple gods in *The Silmarillion*. Odin, for instance, has characteristics common to Manwë, Tulkas, and Namo. Similarly, Freya has traits that resemble Yavanna, Nessa, and Vána.

The comparisons made in this section can be better visualized in the table that follows:

Gods and Goddesses in <i>The Silmarillion</i>	Common Traits	Gods and Goddesses in the Greek and Norse Traditions
Aulë	Masters of crafts.	Hephaestus
Estë	-	No correspondence
Irmo	Master of dreams and visions/ God of sleep.	Hypnos
Manwë	Kings among the other gods. Are linked to the air.	Zeus/Odin
Namo	Gods of death/Keepers of the Houses of the Dead.	Thanatos/Hades/Odin
Nessa	Connection with the Spring/Flowers.	Freya
Nienna	-	No correspondence
Oromë	-	No correspondence
Tulkas	Connection with war. Valiant warriors.	Ares/Tyr/Odin
Ulmo	Lords of the seas.	Poseidon
Vána	Connection with music and dance.	Freya
Varda	Queens among the other gods. Connection with the stars.	Hera/Frigg
Vairë	-	No correspondence
Yavanna	Connection with crops and things that grow on earth.	Demeter/Freya

As it can be seen four of the gods in Tolkien's pantheon, Vairë, Nienna, Estë, and Oromë, have no correspondence in the Norse and Greek myths. Of these four, Vairë is the only one that may have a connection with a deity in another pantheon. In the Greek tradition the goddesses of fate were the Moirai; these three sisters, Atropos, Lakheis, and Klotho were responsible for weaving the destiny of all human beings. Although Vairë is not directly linked to fate, she is a weaver and she weaves all the things that have ever been in time, then it may be said that she has a slightly connection with fate too. However, as her connection is not as direct as the ones of the other gods, I opted for not including her in the table.

There may be a reason why Nienna, Estë, and Oromë have no correspondence in the Greek and Norse traditions; Nienna and Estë seem to be tied to matters that concerned and grieved Tolkien profoundly: war and the destruction it caused. Nienna, as the goddess of mercy, and Estë, as the healer of hurts, may be an allusion of what Tolkien considered was missing in the period he lived. While Nienna grieves with destruction and her lamentation teaches pity and hope, Estë provided rest and comfort to the burdened ones. Oromë, on the other hand, seems to be the most "English" god of Tolkien's pantheon. This means, the way he is depicted, riding his steed accompanied by his hounds hunting beasts and blowing his hunting horn to assemble his host, seems to me to be a good representation of an English lord hunting with his royal company.

Throughout this section it could be seen how the Norse, the Greek and Tolkien's Theogony work together. However, the connections between *The Silmarillion* and other mythological traditions are not tied only to this aspect; similarities between Tolkien's epic and other myths can be seen all through it as it will be seen in the next section.

2.2 A Myth to Join them All

In his book *Myths of Creation*, Philip Freund compiles and analyzes a variety of myths in order to discuss their similarities. As he does so, he finds out that most of them have in common features such as the way the world and all the things in it came to be, the entity that created it all, the way this entity manifest its power when rules are broken in the world, among other things. Such findings make the author wonder how it is possible for peoples of so different places and periods to have so similar myths. In order to explain the results of his research Freund makes use of the concept of archetype as proposed by Carl Gustav Jung. Jung

(1978) states that there are primordial images in the human mind that are common to all human beings. These images that are in the collective unconscious and appear in different cultures at different times and spaces are called archetypes and are of unknown origin. They, Freund (2008) states, are not themselves myths, but myth components and, therefore, it is not uncommon to find them in myths and other narratives of different places and periods. Among the most common archetypes proposed by Jung is the Hero, the Trickster, and the Rebel, and, as it will be seen, they are all present in *The Silmarillion*.

It is important to notice, thus, that even though these archetypes are present in a variety of myths, it does not mean that the stories in which they are in develop always in the same way. For example: the Trickster archetype appears both in the Christian and Norse mythologies, but these mythologies are different in many senses. Even the characters representing the same archetype may have many different details, that is why both the Norse Loki and the Christian Satan can be considered representations of the Trickster, but still differ from one another. Tolkien, knowledgeable of different mythological traditions, probably noticed these patterns and how they varied inside their narratives and was clever enough to decide from which myth he would draw each archetype present in *The Silmarillion*. In this sense I argue that Tolkien was doing more than just unconsciously incorporating primordial images in his mythology, he was, in fact, selecting specific representations from specific mythologies and, by interweaving these elements, creating his own tradition, a tradition that joined the best of each of his favorite myths.

Among all the mythological influences that can be seen in *The Silmarillion* the influence of the Christian myth is, in my opinion, the one that stands out. Tolkien's myth resembles the Christian tradition not only in the way it proposes how things were created, but also in other aspects of the biblical narratives such as the fall of Lucifer, the fall of man, and the story of Abel and Cain. The fall of Melkor and Lucifer is, as Shippey (2000) states, analogous since both attempted to put their own purposes before of the ones of the Creator. Besides that, when Melkor rebelled, he corrupted other holy spirits likewise Lucifer did to other angels. In both myths the falls brought innumerable consequences since the rebels' descent to Earth was marked by hatred and a desire to mar and corrupt everything in it. It can be argued, then, that Lucifer and Melkor are representative of the Trickster archetype since they are imbued with its characteristics such as malice, disobedience, dishonesty, little or no care for others' lives, among others.

With the fall of Melkor, came also the fall of the Elves. The rebellion of Fëanor and of most of the other Noldor, the second host of elves that came to the undying lands of Aman, and their subsequent banishment from that place is intrinsically related to the evil deeds of Melkor that

(...) with lies and evil whisperings and false counsel (...) kindled the hearts of the Noldor to strife; and of their quarrels came at length the end of the high days of Valinor and the evening of its ancient glory. For Fëanor (...) began openly to speak words of rebellion against the Valar, crying aloud that he would depart from Valinor back to the world without, and would deliver the Noldor from Thraldom, if they would follow him. (TOLKIEN: 1999, p. 71).

However, this was just the seed of his evil. Soon after stirring chaos and disorder among the Noldor, Melkor destroyed the Two Trees of Valinor, Telperion and Laurelin, the trees responsible for lighting the undying lands of Aman, and stole the Silmarils that contained their light. After these evil deeds Fëanor rebelled against the Valar and swore an oath “vowing to pursue with vengeance and hatred to the ends of the World Vala, Demon, Elf or Man as yet unborn, or any creature, great or small, good or evil, that time should bring forth unto the end of days, whoso should hold or take or keep a Silmaril from their possession” (TOLKIEN: 1999, p. 89). He then, gathered the Noldor and incited anger in the hearts of most of them, and together they departed from Valinor forbidden to ever come back. However, to reach the shores of Middle-earth, the Noldor had to cross the sea. To achieve this purpose Fëanor attempted to persuade the Teleri, the third host of Elves that came to Aman, to aid them by lending their ships and to go back to Middle-earth with the Noldor. The Teleri refused to aid the Noldor and tried to dissuade them. Fëanor and his host grew wrathful and slain most of Teleri and stole their ships. By the spilling of the blood of their brothers in the holy grounds of Aman, the House of Fëanor brought a terrible fate upon themselves that would be the disgrace of their entire race until the end of days, for their deeds had brought the wrath of the Valar upon them.

It can be argued, then, that the acts of Melkor in the beginning of the days had an effect similar as the ones of Lucifer since it was due to his lies that the race of man was exiled from the Garden of Eden and that served as a prelude to their dark fate. It is also important to notice that the rebellion of Fëanor and its consequences resemble the ones of the biblical Cain. It was from Cain's wrath and his fratricide that the human blood was spilt for the first time, and due to this sin a harsh divine punishment was brought to him and to his descendants. It can be said that the resemblance of Cain and Fëanor has to do not only with Tolkien's Christian faith, but also with the fact that both characters seem to represent the

archetype of the rebel since the crossing over to the dark side, the committing of crimes, and the disobedience are among its main characteristics.

Another marked influence in *The Silmarillion* is the one of the Finnish *Kalevala*. In one of his letters Tolkien mentions that the original germ of his mythology is the Finnish myth and this fact became clearer with the recent publication of Tolkien's *The Story of Kullervo* (2015). Kullervo is the tragic hero of one of the stories of *The Kalevala*. His life is marked by a series of tragedies since its very beginning when his father, Kalervo, is killed by his uncle, Untamo, and his mother is taken captive while still pregnant. Kullervo is born in captivity and has no knowledge that his mother is alive and that he has a sister. After successive attempts of killing him, Untamo sells him as a bond slave to a smith from whom he later manages to escape. Learning that part of his family still lives, he sets back home determined to seek vengeance on his uncle. However, before reaching his former home he encounters a girl with whom he has sexual intercourse and later discovers that she is his sister. In shame and disgrace the lady drowns herself while Kullervo, consumed by anger and guilt, kills himself with his sword after fulfilling his vengeance against Untamo.

Interestingly enough, in October of 1914 Tolkien wrote a letter to his wife mentioning that he was trying to turn one of the stories from the *Kalevala*, one he considered to be very great and tragic, into a short story. It happens that the story he mentions in his letter turned to be his own version of the story of Kullervo, which came to be published only very recently. Flieger states that Tolkien's *The Story of Kullervo* "belongs firmly to the pre-'Silmarillion' period. All the evidence suggests that it was written before Tolkien's service in France in 1916, and three years before the 1917-18 creative burst after his return from France that led to the earliest versions of the Great Tales." (FLIEGER: 2015, p. 141). It is important to notice, however, that Tolkien left his tale about Kullervo unfinished, perhaps due to the fact that early in 1915 he started his war training and was left with little time and chance to write; it was only in 1917, because of his sick leave from war that Tolkien managed to restart writing. However, it was not in the Kullervo tale that he worked then, but in fact in the longest and most tragic story that would later become part of *The Silmarillion*: the story of Túrin Turambar, which resembles the story of Kullervo in the *Kalevala* to a great extent.

Knowing that Tolkien regarded the *Kalevala* as the germ of his own mythology and that three years before he started writing the first stories of *The Silmarillion* he was working on his own version of the tragic story of the Finnish myth, it is not surprising that Tolkien's

tragic hero and his story resemble the one of Kullervo. The similarities between these stories are rather apparent: both Kullervo and Túrin are sundered from their families in an early stage of their lives, both have harsh and explosive personalities, both seek vengeance on an enemy that played a decisive role on their tragedies, both have unaware incestuous relationship with their sisters, both sisters drown themselves after learning they had been incestuous, and both heroes commit suicide in the same way: by casting themselves upon the point of their blades.

Túrin and Kullervo share the archetype of the tragic hero; that's why their paths and lives seem to be destined to end in tragedy and sorrow. The fall of this type of hero is intrinsically connected to the wrong choices they make through their stories and to the consequences of these choices. Once they become aware of their mistakes and their consequences, these heroes meet an unfair tragic end that causes commotion in the audience.

If in one hand the story of the tragic hero in *The Silmarillion* is inspired in the Finnish myth, the story of one of the most celebrated of Tolkien's couples has a more mixed inspiration. The tale of Beren and Lúthien, the second greater in length in Tolkien's myth, has elements of the author's personal life as well as of the Norse and, perhaps, the Welsh traditions. For Carpenter (2000), this is the central story of *The Silmarillion* and he states that it is the one Tolkien loved the most. It is not hard to understand why Carpenter reached such conclusion since this tale is intrinsically connected to how Tolkien felt about his wife, Edith: Lúthien, the elvish maiden with whom the mortal Beren falls in love, is largely inspired in her. Also, the account of how Beren and Lúthien first met is intrinsically related to a scene of Tolkien's life: one day, during a stroll in the countryside, Tolkien and Edith found a small wood into which they decided to wander and there Edith sang and danced for him. The scene in which Beren and Lúthien first meet is practically the same: as Beren wandered in distress through a wood, he found a beautiful maiden singing and dancing among hemlock. At first, as if scared, she runs away from him, but as he decides to seek and call for her, for when he saw her he fell in love, she runs no more and allows herself to be found. At the moment she looked on him, she also fell in love, and thus the tale of the lovers that cannot be together begins.

However, the importance of the tale of Beren and Lúthien resides not only in the fact that it was born from the love of Tolkien and his wife, but also because it deals with complex issues such as death and immortality, and also with central themes in the narrative, as the recovery of the Silmarils. The first barrier that the couple has to face is the disapproval of

Thingol, an Elf King, Lúthien's father. Thingol cannot conceive that her daughter, an immortal elvish princess, marries a mortal man. Nevertheless, seeing that Beren will not give up on Lúthien, Thingol proposes a deal to him: if he manages to bring him one of the Silmarils that Melkor had stolen, he can have Lúthien's hand. Interestingly enough, this kind of tale in which there is a disapproving parent that demands that the lover accomplishes a task that is nearly impossible is quite common in folktales. An example which may have served as inspiration to Tolkien is the Welsh tale of Culhwch and Olwen. In this eleventh century tale of unknown authorship, Culhwch, a hero that is friends with King Arthur and his host, is destined to marry Olwen, daughter of the fierce giant Ysbaddaden Pencawr. However, Olwen's father will only accept that she gets married if her lover succeeds in completing over forty seemingly insuperable challenges. Culhwch, just as Beren, manages to accomplish what was asked and wins the hand of his loved one.

Even though Beren, differently from Culhwch, receives only one task to accomplish, it does not mean that he is in an easier situation. Beren has to break into Angband, the Hell of Iron, Melkor's great dungeon-fortress, and steal one of the three Silmarils that are carved in Melkor's iron crown. Beren's first attempt almost ends in tragedy since Sauron, the greatest of all servants of Melkor, imprisons him and holds him captive. He is only able to escape due to Lúthien's help that, feeling that her loved one was in danger, escapes her father's vigil and rescues him. Notwithstanding, Beren is determined to try again, but this time he has Lúthien with him. Together they manage to invade Angband and steal a Silmaril. However, in the way out they are detained by Carcharoth, a fierce wolf that guards the gates of Melkor's fortress. Beren fights him and they succeed in escaping from the place, but Beren has his right hand devoured by the beast during the fight. The fight of Beren and Carcharoth resembles the Norse account of the god Tyr and the wolf Fenrir: in order to chain Fenrir and free the world of its terror, Tyr consents in allowing the wolf to bite his right hand off.

After succeeding in bringing a Silmaril to Thingol, Beren and Lúthien are finally allowed to be together. However, there is still the matter of Beren's mortality. Soon after returning to Thingol's kingdom, Beren dies before promising Lúthien he will fulfill her last wish: to wait for her in the halls of Namo. Therefore, even though he died his spirit tarried in the halls of Namo, waiting for Lúthien. When she finally came she sang a song of such beauty and sorrow that even Namo was moved by pity. Namo then, talked to Manwë, and then two choices were brought upon Lúthien: she could either leave Middle-earth to abide in Aman until the end of the days, but without Beren, or she could give up on her immortality and

return to Middle-earth with Beren so that they could live mortal lives until the end of their days. She chooses mortality and both return to Middle-earth.

Once one is aware of the elements Tolkien interwove in the tale of Beren and Lúthien, the reasons why it plays such an important role in the narrative and is the one most loved by the author as Carpenter (2000) affirms becomes clearer. In it Tolkien manages to knit together not only literary elements of distinguished importance for him, but also meaningful aspects of his own personal life. Tolkien and his wife, just as Beren and Lúthien, struggled to be together since the moment they met: they had to endure the prohibition of Tolkien's guardian, Father Francis, who, fearing that a love affair could ruin Tolkien's studies, would not allow them to be together or even contact each other. Besides that, likewise Beren and Lúthien, Tolkien and Edith had also to go through a great war before they could be together until the end of their days.

Tolkien's narrative, as it could be seen, is filled with references of different myths and traditions that were important to him as well as of elements of his personal life. The ones discussed in this section are just a few; the discussion could go on for countless pages were not for the limited length of this kind of work. Remarks of how the dwellings of the Valar resemble the Greek Olympus and the Norse Asgard, or of how the Silmarils may be an allusion to the mysterious Sampo, that is often mentioned in the Finnish mythology, could also be made, but will be left to be explored in another opportunity. However, with the few comparisons made so far, it could be noticed how Tolkien managed to intertwine elements not commonly seen together and still produce a coherent and verisimilar narrative. It is important to notice, though, that *The Silmarillion* is not simply a variety of references put together on paper; the dimensions of Tolkien's epic, as it will be seen in the next section, go beyond that.

2.3 The Dimensions of the Myth

Considering the relationship Tolkien's myth has with other mythologies and all the elements the author drew from them, one could argue that his work is simply the product of the mixing of these elements and, consequently, that it lacks in originality. However, I argue that this is not the case. First of all, it is important to remember that the elements Tolkien brought together are not normally seen coexisting; the Christian tradition, the one I argue is at the core of Tolkien's myth, for example, assumes that the whole universe was created by one

god alone and that this god is the only one in existence. This means, it is a monotheist tradition while the other ones, such as the Norse and the Greek, from which the author also brought elements, are pantheist. This fact itself, besides being challenging, shows innovation. About the reasons Tolkien may have had to put things this way, Carpenter states:

Tolkien cast his mythology in this form because he wanted it to be remote and strange, and yet at the same time *not to be a lie*. He wanted the mythological and legendary stories to express his own moral view of the universe; and as a Christian he could not place this view in a cosmos without the God that he worshipped. (CARPENTER: 2000, p. 99)

It is important to remember that it was by incorporating truth that is given primary belief to his myth that Tolkien was able to write a literary myth that gets as close as possible to original myth. Besides that, when Tolkien wrote *The Silmarillion*, he was not simply taking elements of different traditions and putting them together, he was rather drawing on their motifs and expanding them while interweaving themes of his own, thus creating a unique and innovative tradition. Shippey (2001) alludes to this fact when he mentions that Tolkien was glad “to use old motifs and make them familiar once more” (SHIPPEY: 2001, p. 255), however, it would make no sense and, perhaps, sound presumptuous if the author simply decided to rerun these myths.

If Tolkien had just put these motifs together without a greater idea in mind, his final product would probably not achieve one of the main purposes he wished it to and that Shippey (2001) remarks: “restore to England something like the body of lost legend which it must once have had.” (SHIPPEY: 2001, p. 232). To reach his objective Tolkien not only had to expand on the motifs he used, but he also had to create what Kyrmse (2003) calls a “three dimensional” myth. A three dimensional myth has to do, to a large extent, with verisimilitude and with the creation of secondary belief. As it was mentioned before in this work, secondary belief is the one that may be given to fiction and its secondary sub-created worlds. However, this belief is not, by any chance, easy to be attained, since nor always these secondary worlds possess what Tolkien (2008) refers to as “the inner consistency of reality” that is responsible for inducing this kind of belief. In his essay *On Fairy Stories* the author discusses about what it takes to create secondary belief:

Anyone inheriting the fantastic device of human language can say *the green sun*. Many can then imagine or picture it. But that is not enough – though it may already be a more potent thing than many a ‘thumbnail sketch’ or ‘transcript of life’ that receives literary praise. To make a Secondary World inside which the green sun will be credible, commanding Secondary Belief, will probably require labour and thought, and will certainly demand a special skill, a kind of elvish craft. Few attempt such difficult tasks. But when they are attempted and in any degree accomplished

then we have a rare achievement of Art: indeed narrative art, story-making in its primary and most potent mode. (TOLKIEN: 2008, pages 48-49).

Tolkien was successful in inducing secondary belief to his sub-created universe and this has to do with the depth that he was able to provide his mythology with. It is this depth, thus, that makes Kyrmse (2003) say that the Tolkienian universe has three dimensions, which are *diversity*, *profundity*, and *time*.

The diversity of Tolkien's myth is connected to its riches of details that give it credibility. This means, his universe is not just a background to the development of the stories; all the details of his sub-created world were carefully planned and are important to the narrative: the different languages, the geography and all its specificities, the beliefs and traditions of the peoples, among other things, are all connected and, as Kyrmse (2003) states, Tolkien seem to have something to say about every detail of his mythology even though he may not say everything he knows about them; an example that illustrates that is chapter fourteen (of Beleriand and its Realms) of *The Silmarillion* in which the author provides a thorough description of the geography of his sub-created world as if he himself had been there countless times. This remarkable feature has probably to do with the way Tolkien felt towards the stories in his myth, which he wrote: "They arose in my mind as 'given' things, and as they came, separately, so too the links grew. (...) I had the sense of recording what was already 'there', somewhere: not of 'inventing'." (CARPENTER: 2000, p. 100).

What gives profundity to the Tolkienian myth is exactly this ability the author has of explaining and connecting all the details in his narrative; the diversity of his world is by no means shallow, this is, whatever aspect of the author's mythology one may want to learn more about, one will be able to find detailed information about it in the narrative itself, in its appendixes, or even in other works of the author. Let's take, for example, the history of the peoples of Middle-earth: if one wants to trace back the genealogy of a specific character, such as Elrond, that appears in *The Silmarillion*, *The Hobbit* and in *The Lord of the Rings*, besides being able to learn about the history of the character through the stories, one will be able also to find out about his ancestry in the section "genealogies" of the book. If for any reason one gets curious about Sindarin and Quenya, the elvish languages of Middle-earth, and wants to analyze their specificities, all he or she has to do is to turn to the appendixes of the work to learn more about the pronunciation, the morphology and even about the phonetics of these languages. Every aspect of Tolkien's myth is well-founded and, thus, can be analyzed and studied as well as any aspect of our real world; everything in his myth is so well-knitted that it

leaves the reader with the feeling that the author had really been inside his sub-created universe and was, then, as the author himself states, only recording something that already exists.

The third dimension of *The Silmarillion*, time, has to do with the history of its universe. Middle-earth has a complex and interesting history which can be followed from the very beginning of its creation. Every mountain, river, war, drama, and other things has its history recorded if not in *The Silmarillion* itself, in other of the author's works, such as the volumes of *The History of Middle-earth*. One can see characters in *The Lord of the Rings* that takes place in the Third Era of the world, referring to events that occurred in the First Era, in which *The Silmarillion* takes place. Not only are there books inside the narrative from which the characters can discover the history of their universe, but there are also characters, such as the Elves, that date from the beginning of the times and have witnessed the changes and happenings throughout the eras. Many a time do these characters recall the past events during their adventures in Middle-earth, and a clear example of this is the conversation Frodo has with Elrond in *The Lord of the Rings*:

(...) 'You remember?' said Frodo, speaking his thought aloud in his astonishment.
(...) 'I thought that the fall of Gil-galad was a long age ago.'

'So it was indeed,' answered Elrond gravely. 'But my memory reaches back even to the Elder Days. Eärendil was my sire, who was born in Gondolin before its fall; and my mother was Elwing, daughter of Dior, son of Lúthien of Doriath. I have seen three ages in the West of the World, and many defeats, and many fruitless victories.' (TOLKIEN: 2007, p. 316)

One of the reasons why Tolkien was able to create a mythological tradition filled with old motifs without losing in originality, is, thus, that he expanded on them and gave them depth. However, this is only one of the reasons; there is also the fact that the author interwove themes of his own in these old motifs. Some of these themes, that are central in the narrative, are, as Shippey (2001) points out, death and immortality, sorrow and consolation.

In his essay *On Fairy Stories* Tolkien mentions that fairy-stories satisfies the human desire of telling tales about the "escape from death" while the "Human-stories of the elves are doubtless full of the Escape from Deathlessness." (TOLKIEN: 2008, p.68) He goes on and remarks that fairy-stories are told by men, not by fairies. Taking this into consideration it can be argued that human-stories are told by fairies, or, in Tolkien's case, by elves. There are in Tolkien's myth stories about the escape from death, such as the tale of Beren who dies and is brought back to life, or the tale of Eärendil, the half-elf, that after reaching the shores of

Aman is allowed to choose between mortality and deathlessness. However, as Shippey (2001) points out, the theme of the escape from deathlessness is present in a much larger scale since most of the elves in Tolkien's myth chose death instead of immortality when they decide to return to Middle-earth. By deciding to abide in Middle-earth and exposing themselves to Melkor's malice, instead of abiding in Aman, where they can be safe, the elves are, even though it may be an unconscious choice, opting for a mortal life for though they are said to be immortal, that means only that they do not die of natural causes, but not that they cannot be slain.

It is not hard to understand the reasons why Tolkien opted for including the theme "death" in his narrative: when he was only twelve years old he had already lost both his mother and father, and shortly before he started to write *The Silmarillion* most of his closest friends had died in the war. Thus, it is not surprising to see this theme permeating his narrative. On the other hand, his decision to include the theme immortality in his tradition seems to be a bit more difficult to grasp. About it at least two different things can be argued, being the first the one that follows: by writing the stories of two different races, one mortal and the other immortal, with the immortal one insisting in choosing mortality, the author might have been trying to allude to the fact that mortality may have its good points and even be, somehow, desirable. This is, mortality in *The Silmarillion* is referred to as a gift, while deathlessness seems to be burdensome. This idea gets clearer in the following passage of the book:

It is one with this gift of freedom that the children of Men dwell only a short space in the world alive, and are not bound to it, and depart soon wither the Elves know not. Whereas the Elves remain until the end of days, and their love of the Earth and all the world is more single and more poignant therefore, and as the years lengthen ever more sorrowful. For the elves die not till the world dies, unless they are slain or waste in grief (and to both these seeming deaths they are subject); neither does age subdue their strength, unless one grow weary of ten thousand centuries (...). But the sons of Men die indeed, and leave the world; wherefore they are called the Guests, or the Strangers. Death is their fate, the gift of Ilúvatar, which as Time wears even the Powers shall envy. (TOLKIEN: 1999, p.36)

Mortality is the divine gift Ilúvatar granted men, a gift that even the Valar may envy. The elves, on the other hand, are doomed to linger in the world witnessing all its beauty decay until the end of the times. Considering these facts it is understandable why most of the elves opt for mortality; a lengthy and sorrowful life is a burden that few are willing to carry.

Another way to interpret Tolkien's thematic choice is related to fate and free-will: when Melkor descended into Earth he proclaimed himself "the Master of the Fates of Arda",

as if his words had power to shape the fates of elves and men. However, throughout the narrative it is learned that it is not Melkor's words that operate over their fates, but in fact their own responses to them. This means, both men and elves are, somehow, the masters of their own destinies. The stories of Túrin and of Beren and Lúthien are good examples of this: when Húrin, Túrin's father, defies Melkor he sets a doom of darkness and sorrow upon all Húrin's family. Túrin grows up and spends his life trying to run away from his destiny, not listening to the words of his friend, Sador, who tells him that one who runs from his fears may realize that they will always find a way to meet him. Túrin's decision of not being the master upon his own fate seems to be what brought upon him all the tragedies of his life. On the other hand, the tale of Beren and Lúthien has a happy ending mostly because the couple face their destiny and become masters of it; the way they respond to the treats of Melkor is what shapes their fate.

Expanding on old motifs and adding to them these themes, that Shippey refers to as not having "any connection at all with any literary mode now familiar" (SHIPPEY: 2001, p. 256), Tolkien created a unique and powerful mythology that is at the foundation of his most famous works: *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Even though *The Silmarillion* was not finished when Tolkien began writing the adventures of Bilbo, in 1930, and of Frodo, in 1937, in Middle-earth, nothing could prevent him of backtracking and incorporating elements of his mythology in the making to his other works:

Tolkien did in fact have several resources when he began work in December 1937. One was the backlog of material which would in the end become the *Silmarillion*. (...) he could clearly continue to use it, as he had here and there in *The Hobbit*, to give it a sense of depth and background to his main story. (SHIPPEY: 2001, p. 56)

And this was exactly what Tolkien did; even though one does not need to read *The Silmarillion* to read and understand *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings* it is important to highlight that these latter are intrinsically connected to the first. This is, elements from *The Silmarillion* can be found all over the other two books and it is, to a large extent, due to these elements that the author was able to give his new stories a sense of depth similar to the one in his myth. As it was seen, there is mention of the events of *The Silmarillion* in the other works as well as there are characters that were firstly presented in it, such as Elrond, Galadriel, Sauron, and others. Besides that, important parts of the plot of *The Hobbit* and of *The Lord of the Rings* trace back from *The Silmarillion*: if Sauron rises again in The Third age of Middle-earth and Elrond knows that it means a deathly threat it is because he had already confronted his malice in the remote past of *The Silmarillion*; if Arwen can choose between a mortal and

an immortal life, it is due to her ancestor's, Lúthien, choice of being mortal, thus, allowing all her descendants to be able to have the same choice; if Bilbo finds the "One Ring" and Frodo has to destroy it, it is because Sauron forged it in the previous ages.

The uniqueness of Tolkien's myth has to do, then, with all these factors: it brings old motifs back, the author expands on these motifs and gives them depth, he interweaves in them themes that are deeply connected to his time as well as his religious beliefs, and his myth provides a sense of depth as well as a background to his other stories. The reading of *The Silmarillion*, therefore, not only contributes to the reading of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* as it helps the readers reach a broader and richer understanding of these works, but it also shows us the ability and skill of an author that managed to join so many things together in an original and brilliant way.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this monograph I have tried to understand the possible motivations that led Tolkien to write an entire mythological tradition in a time where this kind of narrative had an ever decreasing audience as well as the importance of his myth to his other works. As I analyzed the author's life and its context and approached them to his myth, I have hinted on the internal and external motivations that may have influenced his decisions to write a literary myth.

Tolkien wrote a three dimensional myth that is at the foundation of his most acclaimed works and, as he did so, he incorporated to it classic literary motifs as well as themes that were at the core of a century marked by war, lack of perspective and hope, and also by all kinds of crisis. By doing so, the author managed to write a unique narrative that fulfills some of his deepest literary and personal desires and that works for different purposes. Among these purposes is the one of restoring the native English tradition that had been suppressed throughout the centuries for historical reasons and also of dedicating to his beloved country a mythology that is bound to their own language and soil and that deals with issues of faith and hope. Another purpose is related to the author's desire of bringing back old motifs that were present in his favorite mythologies and of writing a tradition with a power similar to the one he felt emanating from them. In this sense, *The Silmarillion* not only joins different mythological elements, but it also serves as a way to join the people of the country to which it belongs, helping them to be resilient through the hard times. That is why I argue it is a "myth to join them all".

The Silmarillion also serves as a way for the author fulfill the human need for sub-creation, "for we make still by the law in which we're made" (TOLKIEN: 2008, p.55). Tolkien wanted to express his feelings through literature, more than that he wanted to create a universe in which he could express his moral and religious views. He wanted to use the spark of godly wisdom that he believed lived in us to create something different and yet that sounded real. There is also the linguistic element that he affirmed was at the core of his sub-created universe: Tolkien wanted to create a world in which its people spoke his invented

languages. Besides fulfilling this need for sub-creation, Tolkien's myth also fulfills the mythological functions proposed by Campbell (2008): his myth helps us to reconcile with the divine since it deals with matters of faith and love, it instills in us a sense of wonder for the author was able to write a literary myth that draws as close as possible to original myth, and it assists us in living in harmony and in understanding life and ourselves since it deals with central themes of our lives such as death, sorrow, and consolation.

The author's success has a lot to do with the inner consistency of reality that he was able to create in his narrative; his mythology was wrought and planned in such a careful way, with the joining of classic literary motifs and of themes and elements of his own creativity that it resulted in an in-depth myth that instills wonder in its readers. As Fritsch states,

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. (FRITSCH: 2009, p. 59)

The Silmarillion has such a solid base that its elements permeate other works of the author, such as *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, in which they play an important role since they not only help to set the background of these stories and provide them with a sense of depth, but they also offer the reader a broader view and a richer understanding of the author's sub-created universe.

However, there are also external elements related to Tolkien's success that are, to a large extent connected to friendship that expressed itself mainly through the literary groups, such as the T.C.B.S and the Inklings, which he was a part. The author's myth was written through turbulent times; he began to write it shortly after his participation in WWI, in which he lost most of his closest friends and that left him with a sense of hopelessness. If Tolkien found strength to carry his literary projects on, it has a lot to do to the memory of his deceased friends who asked him to "say the things they had tried to say long after they were not there to say them" (CARPENTER: 2000), this is, not to give up on literature, one of the things they loved the most, and keep writing as if it was a way to carry their memories on. There was also the help of the ones who survived the war and the ones he met after it, that urged him to keep writing, always encouraging and commenting on his manuscripts. Therefore, as the author himself stated, he owed much of his success to his friends' encouragement.

All things considered, after the few pages of this work, it seems clearer to me now the motivations the author may have had to (re)create an entire mythological tradition throughout the Twentieth century: the hardships of this period demanded innovative possibilities and creative solutions, for it was a time of great changes and strife marked by “a kind of spiritual emptiness – a sense of the hopelessness of trying to believe in anything” (BURGESS: 1974, p. 207). Therefore, when Tolkien brings back mythical elements and inserts them on his narrative, he is, somehow, trying to restore a portion of what was lost in the chaos of his time, for myths are not only bound to matters of faith and hope, but they also have the power to unite the people since they inspire a sense of national identity in us. Besides these external motivations, there were also internal ones that are connected to the author’s beliefs, needs and desires that should not be disregarded since they were fundamental to the shaping of his work.

The challenge of writing about such a complex and diverse work as *The Silmarillion* is coming to its end and the sense I got as I ventured through the brilliancy of the author’s myth was the one of pure joy, wonder, and achievement. It was an incredible journey through the work of a writer that has played an important part in both my academic and personal life, and now that the moment of finishing it draws near, I am already desirous of another adventure, for the road goes ever on. I hope this work not only proves relevant for Tolkien’s enthusiasts, but that it also stimulates others to write about *The Silmarillion* and that it proves useful to the body of studies that emphasize Tolkien’s relevance to the literature of his time and of the present days. Thank you, reader, for sticking to me to the end! Thanks for deciding to take part in this quest and for taking the road less travelled by. Sometimes it can make all the difference. It has made to me!



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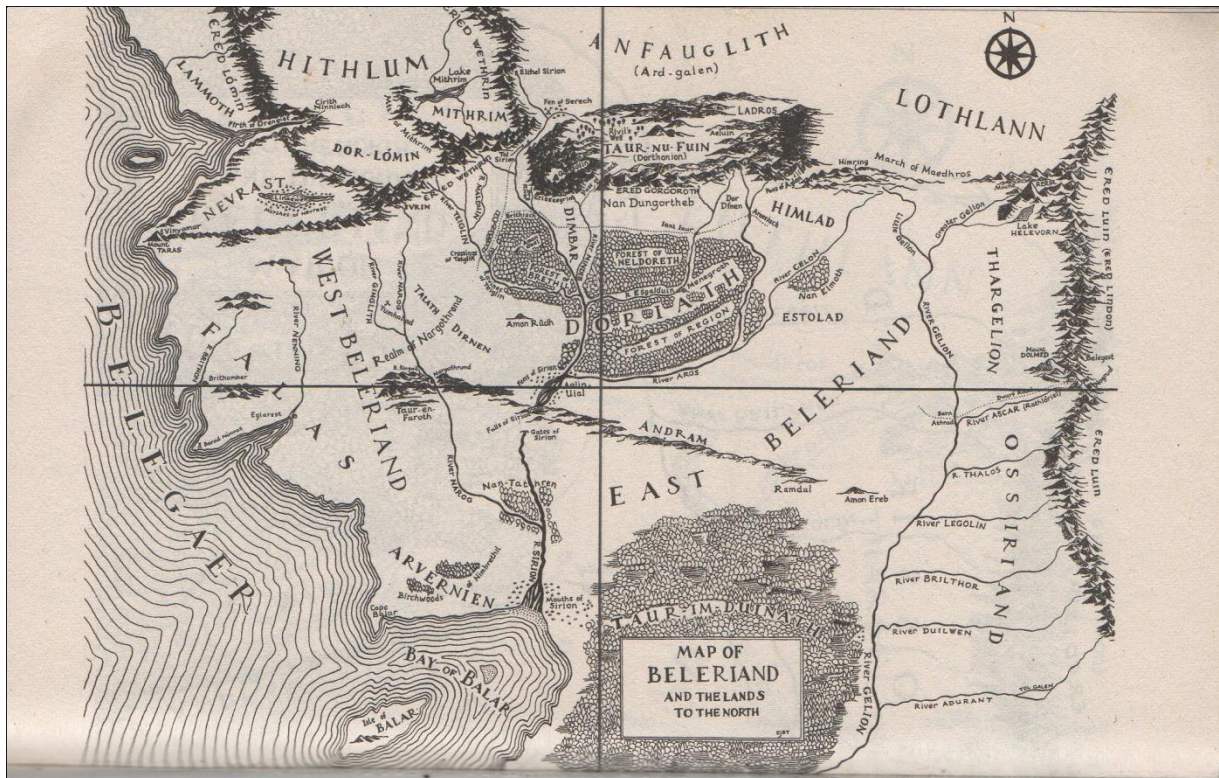
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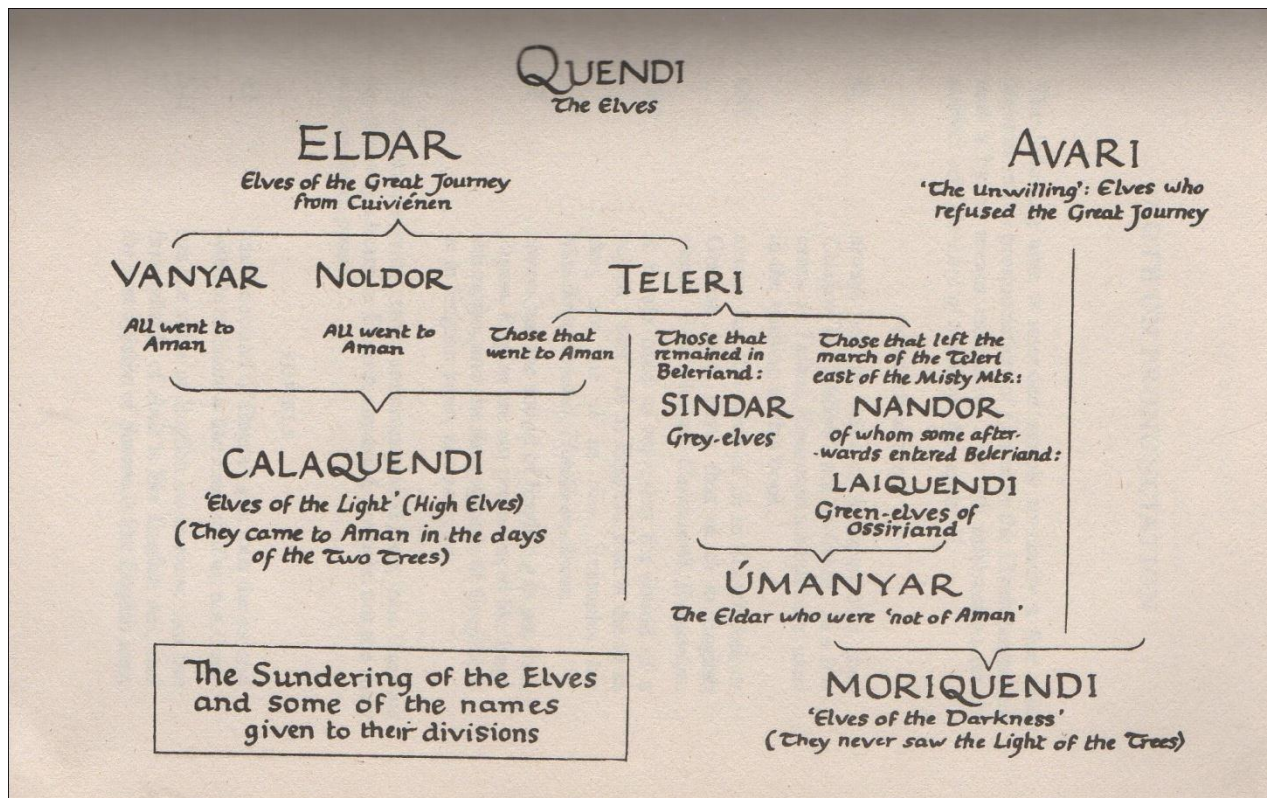
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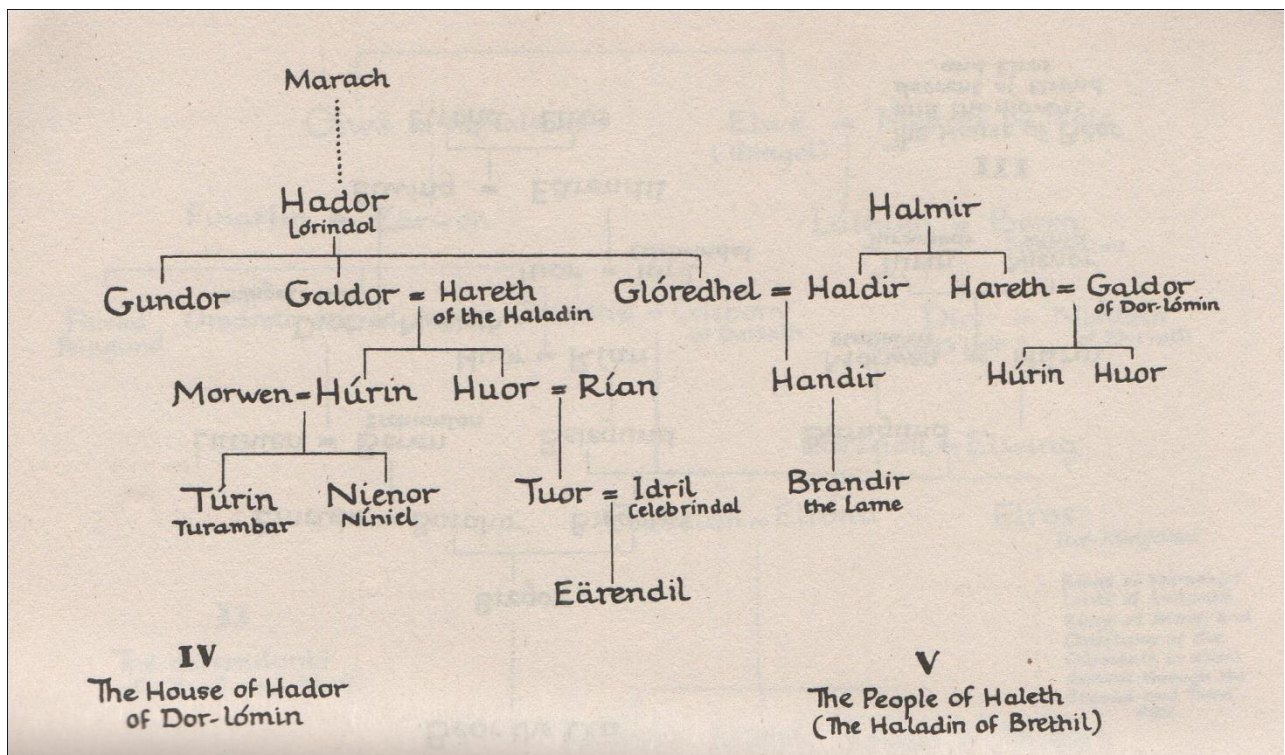
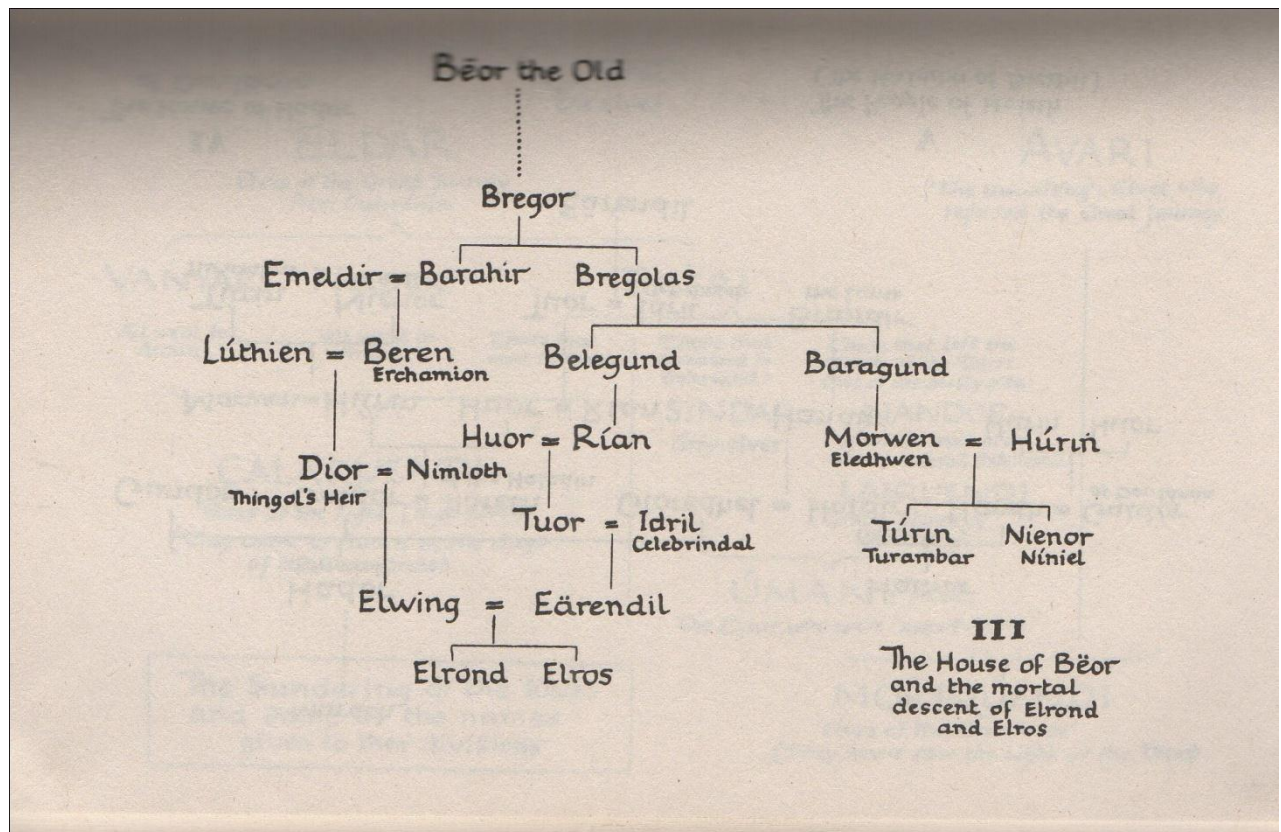
ANNEXES

Map of Middle-earth from Tolkien's The Silmarillion



The Sundering of the Elves from Tolkien's The Silmarillion





Poem ÉaláÉarendelEnglaBeorhtastfrom Tolkien's The Book of Lost Tales Part Two

Éarendel arose where the shadow flows
 At Ocean's silent brim;
 Through the mouth of night as a ray of light
 Where the shores are sheer and dim
 He launched his bark as a silver spark
 From the last and lonely sand;
 Then on sunlit breath of day's fiery death
 He sailed from Westerland.

He threaded his path o'er the aftermath
 Of the splendor of the Sun,
 And wandered far past many a star
 In his gleaming galleon.
 On the gathering tide of darkness ride
 The argosies of the sky.
 And spangle the night with their sails of light
 As the streaming star goes by.

Unheeding he dips past these twinkling ships,
 By his wayward spirit whirled
 On an endless quest through the darkling West
 O'er the margin of the world;
 And he fares in haste o'er the jeweled waste
 And the dusk from whence he came

With his heart afire with bright desire
And his face in silver flame.

The Ship of the Moon from the East comes soon
From the Haven of the Sun,
Whose white gates gleam in the coming beam
Of the mighty silver one.
Lo! with bellying clouds as his vessel's shrouds
He weighs anchor down the dark,
And on shimmering oars leaves the blazing shores
In his argent-timbered bark.

Then Éarendel fled from that Shipman dread
Beyond the dark earth's pale,
Back under the rim of the Ocean dim,
And behind the world set sail;
And he heard the mirth of the folk of earth
And the falling of their tears,
As the world dropped back in a cloudy wrack
On its journey down the years.

Then he glimmering passed to the starless vast
As an isléd lamp at the sea,
And beyond the ken of mortal men
Set his lonely errantry,
Tracking the Sun in his galleon
Through the pathless firmament,

Till his light grew old in abysses cold

And his eager flame was spent.

The Dimensions of Tolkien's World from Kyrmse's Explicando Tolkien

