

**REPRESENTATIONS OF POWER IN *THE LORD OF THE RINGS* AND
MALORY**

by

CLAUDIA VAN DER MERWE

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the subject

ENGLISH

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: DR D N R LEVEY

NOVEMBER 2009

Table of Contents

Introduction

Chapter One- Constructing a Magical Perception from a Historical Context

Chapter Two-Wearing Two Masks

Chapter Three-The Voices Beyond the Page: Considering the Silences

Chapter Four- The Mist of Magic

Bibliography

Acknowledgements

For the inspiration for this study I would have to thank all authors, artists, musicians and other creatives who have given me all the colours in my life. For the completion of this I would like to thank all family and friends for their support, my supervisor for all the encouragement, faith and direction. And lastly for the belief that this was important enough to complete, I would like to say thank you to my husband who never wavered, even when I did.

STUDENT NUMBER: 3649-801-7

I declare that '*Representations of Power in The Lord of the Rings and Malory*' is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE

DATE



INTRODUCTION

As critics of literature it is our usual practice to consider many written works as works of art; therefore critiques such as the present one may frequently be viewed as creations, and specifically as creations of an imagination locked in a specific time frame. It is the interaction between culture, society and the internal imagination of an author that produces any piece of art and it is consequently this reaction that we are interested in as scholars. In our practice as critics we may inadvertently become creators of our own artwork, in the form of written criticisms which are a result of a reaction or interaction with a given piece of work, our society and our consciousness and the consciousness and imagination that we are confronted with and which are represented in the text we study. Therefore criticisms are to be viewed as creations as much as they should be viewed as coherent, balanced and valid arguments. Therefore the next few pages will outline the intention and motivation for my choice of, it is hoped, creating a new perspective; the premise for arguing the use and meaning of a new interpretation or understanding of two specific texts, namely of Malory and of Tolkien. It is the aim of my dissertation to consider the oppositions which exist within specific fantasy literature and the manner in which this literature plays into specific stereotypes of gender and power.

To further the explanation of the above mentioned intention the remainder of this chapter will argue the validity and relevance of a detailed study of Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur* as well as J.R.R Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* in relation to power (magical, linguistic and communal), gender and society. In order to do this successfully definitions of concepts such as magic, power and community are needed. For the purpose of this study magic is defined as the ability to participate in

activities and relationships using abilities not associated with the normal course of human existence such as the ability to see the future or possessing the power to heal. Magic is seen and dealt with as a tool or technique engaged by the authors to perpetuate a specific perception. The ideas of community, power and linguistics are used in their rudimentary form and although community and society may differ by definition in this piece they are used interchangeably as they are meant only to establish the position of the character within the whole. Power and linguistics are used in the same manner but to serve a different function as they are employed by both authors to ensure conceptions or misconceptions of characters by readers. Both these authors and their respective works illuminate a specific point of view, historically and psychologically, regarding the relationship between power and women, the representation of men and women with power and the relationship between the two. These two texts exist at differing points on the time continuum but they share the modus operandi of the realm of fantasy and magic which employs very real qualities and norms such as those including gender, power and sexuality.

Firstly one needs to define and defend the subject, and in this regard the present study focuses on major works of literature, namely *Le Morte D'Arthur* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Although a well known and popular work *The Lord of the Rings* has not always been, and is still not, a piece of literature but rather a creation for those in popular culture. The difference is slight as popular culture dictates fads and is constantly in search of approval by the masses whereas literature is the concept that texts are written as timeless pieces of art that do not need any form of approval. In terms of my personal understanding Tolkien's novel has endured not only time but also large volumes of criticism and onslaughts by the general public. In order to defend the study I shall consider and demonstrate that much literature (consider C.S Lewis's article, 'The Gods Return to Earth'), exhibits some sort of an overwhelming desire on the part of the critic to deconstruct literature so that

...through both the reading of history (*historia*) and fiction (*fabula*) a person might gain insight into his own character, into the behaviour of others, and into the hidden messages of God in nature.¹

Or as St Paul stated it 'Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.'²

¹ Lewis, C.S. 'The Gods Return to Earth.' *Time and Tide*. 1954. pg 1084.

Though one cannot say that there are no other alternatives to understanding literature and how to studying it however for my purpose deconstruction is the crux on which my convictions rest and therefore it will feature as a predominant means of understanding in this piece.

Consequently for me this exploration into Malory and Tolkien holds personal significance on a psychological plane, to explore my own understandings of these texts, as well as to possibly convey some new dimensions of exploration into the medieval texts and into the academic world. For me, then in order to see ‘through the glass’ there are numerous aspects which I wish to consider and focus on.

One of these is the method by means of which I have approached this study. I will produce arguments which are based on the concept of exposing and understanding the ‘other’ so as to highlight the contexts of specific powerful women in both texts, namely Morgan le Fay, Guinevere, Arwen, Galadriel and Éowyn. By understanding and analyzing the condition of the portrayal of men in the texts, their worlds and their perspectives, one may be able to piece together the world of powerful or seemingly disempowered women. This point was well stated by David Aers: ‘The need to pay attention to the construction and role of the “other” needs emphasis in medieval literary studies because we still find the tendency to abstract the unitary ambitions of prescriptive texts and then to project these maps to medieval culture, medieval piety, and the ‘medieval mind’³. Consequently one must consider that:

An act of discourse, in other words, signals both the existence and the absence of the “other” thought or mental state. Interpretation in turn arises from a desire to grasp or recognise this “other” thought and from the impossibility of ever doing so directly. This thought cannot be expressed or grasped as it is thought: one is always forced to reconstruct it through interpretation of some external, material expression. This is true even when

² ‘Medieval Narrative’. *Encyclopaedia of the Novel*. Schellingen, Paul (ed.); Hudson, Christopher; Rijsberman, Marjike (asst ed). Chicago, London: Fiztro Deaborn Publishers, 1998,pg 1.

³ Aers, D. ‘Class, Gender, Medieval Criticism and *Piers Plowman*’. *Class and Gender in Early English Literature- Intersections*. Edited by Britton J. Harwood and Gillian R. Overing. Bloomington and Indianapolis. Indiana University Press, 1994, pg 59.

the discourse is spoken and the speaker is physically present and is as true of texts written today as it is of texts written a thousand years ago.⁴

Therefore one cannot study one part of a society without considering the contexts and circumstances of the other parts. For example in Malory a study considering Guinevere's role in the betrayal of Arthur would not be complete unless there existed a consideration and discussion of why Arthur made the decision to marry her even though Merlin had advised against doing so. The discussion and dissection of a text allows for an individual critic to create a hypothetical context—another possible dimension to the characters' psyche—which allows for various interpretations of differing texts. While there is a sense that the consideration of the 'othering' in texts may seem rather simplistic nevertheless it is an integral part of understanding various possibilities for both these narratives.

By examining and defining the other (man), '... the differences between entities (prose and poetry, man and women, literature and theory, guilt and innocence) are shown to be based on a repression of differences within entities, ways by which an entity differs from itself'.⁵ Binary as used and determined by the above quote is the concept of one being different or separated by some fundamental qualities from another, for example one could consider that good and evil are defined by the idea that good is not evil and evil is not good. They exist on two separate extremes of any given continuum and they are defined by the fact that they are not equal but opposite to each other. The concept of exposing one by defining its opposing other is a Western, and possibly over used view, but it assists me in this exercise. Many critics have argued that this type of thinking is ruled by Western notions and leaves no option for other approaches due to their presentation and ideals of power, control and prejudice: '...to argue that scholarship is dominated by Western nations, whose cultural products represent hegemony. On the other hand, smaller, peripheral nations cannot but become less and less autonomous in their cultural production.'⁶

Returning to the beginning of the paragraph, the statement superficially appears to be an exercise in exposing and simplifying binaries or opposites. As power may be

⁴ Rider, J. 'Other Voices: Historicism and the Interpretation of Medieval Texts.' *Exemplaria I* (2), 1991, pg 294.

⁵ Rorty, R. 'Feminism, Ideology, and Deconstruction: a Pragmatist View.' *Hypatia 8 (2) (Spring)*, 1993, pg 3.

defined by the positioning of two entities against one another (in the present case male against female) the comparison of one with the other and subsequently the resulting positions and attributes that each member will exhibit, means that the opposition of the two entities as binaries becomes inevitable since they are portrayed as so vastly different. The reader is placed in the position of comparing the actions, words, knowledge and situations of various characters and in so doing is allowing the authors to create impressions of importance and power where and how they wish.

Nevertheless the exposing of the other or binaries is necessary evil in order to establish a point of origin where female characters fit into a narrative, but also to find the point from which a further, deeper understanding of female roles in the narratives may be achieved.

My justification for this choice of texts is that the portrayal of women within *Le Morte D'Arthur* and *The Lord of the Rings* highlights a specific situation in a specific time within the boundaries of an author-created reality. The created reality is also reliant on a number of variables which have undue influence on shaping the author to shape his narrative, namely that of his society, and context as well as the reader themselves, their own context and perspectives when reading the narrative. The resultant creation that we call a novel or narrative is a tripartite development, with influences from three formidable partners (author, context and reader): they are only brought together into a collective prism through the story that they will tell. Within these constructed worlds for both author and reader, societal, magical and psychological chains are formed in order to reinforce accepted and standardized norms and expectations within a historically specific period. The different positions that women adopted towards their existence, if approached through Kristeva's definition of love, suggest that real social change is possible and that this specific consideration may play a vital role in understanding the representation of women. Her statement concerning the traditional double bind in which women find themselves is very pertinent to the argument which will be posed in this study: 'If a woman identifies with the mother, she ensures her exclusion from and marginality in relation to the patriarchal order. If on the other hand, she identifies with the father...-makes herself in his image, then she ends up becoming 'him' and supporting the same

⁶ Duh, M. 'The Hegemony of Western Categorisation and the Underdevelopment of Children's Literature in 'Other' Worlds.' *Papers* 17:2, 2007, pg 7.

patriarchal order which excludes and marginalizes her as a woman.⁷ This well-known ‘double-bind’ is articulated by Malory in his characters of Guinevere and Morgan le Fay and further by Tolkien in the characters of Arwen and Éowyn. This dissertation will consider these characters as binaries of a truss, a bound-up relationship, and it will explore to what extent the double bind influences the readers’ opinion of their actions and of the narrative. In general terms, reader-response criticism argues that a reader of any text will access a text in terms of his or her own cultural experiences, understanding, gender and so forth and hence no one person’s reading of a text is necessarily correct or incorrect, or identical. One must also identify that authors have their own experiences and influences, which influence their work and the way in which it is written and formulated. Therefore the role of the reader as an interpreter for meaning is an essential part of any text, as without him/her the text does not exist, and it is ultimately the readers who create meaning relative to themselves and their own psyche⁸. Ultimately in my interpretation of this concept I would say that any reader, irrespective of similarities and comparable backgrounds comparable to others could arrive at a valid interpretation of text and would be able to formulate some form of deeper understanding irrespective of whether it is agreed with or not, if it is popular or not.

The dissertation will also consider the effect of magical representation (the positioning of characters with super-human abilities and capabilities against those who have none or who possess of magical abilities as well as the physical portrayal of magic) on the creation of narrative and language. Magic will be defined in the sense of the action, the practice of magic as well as the aura or sense of power created by a character or characters and how this influences the impression that the reader gains concerning the polarisation of characters into positions acceptable or non-acceptable to the reader. Therefore one should consider the constructed positions (for both author and reader) within the text, and the implications of such positions and their status for society: such as those that Elizabeth Cady Stanton highlights when she states, ‘The canon and civil law; church and state; priests and legislators; all political parties and religious denominations have alike taught that woman was made after man, an inferior being, subject to man. Creeds, codes, Scriptures and statutes, are all based on

⁷Chrenka, L. ‘Julia Kristeva’.pg 1.

this idea. The fashions, forms, ceremonies and customs of society, church ordinances and discipline all grow out of this idea.⁹ The conclusion that will be reached is intended to demonstrate how gender, and its representation through language and magic, manipulates an individual's perception and understanding of narrative and character in order to suit a norm dictated by a male dominated society.

Furthermore I will consider how the use of language (or the lack thereof), especially in relation to trauma for women and their ability (or inability) to articulate their emotion, influences the reader's perception of characters. The dissertation will consider the lacunae within female characters' language and the re-telling of their experiences by the male narratives and consider how: '...in particular for a woman ...telling the truth about (her) own experience as a body (Woolf, 241) such a project is perhaps doomed to fail. Writing, as post modern theory insists, is always removed from lived reality, but the medieval woman's writing is doubly distanced by virtue of her marginal relationship to discourse.'¹⁰ Even though this comment bears a direct relation to medieval women writing about their lives it also carries an indirect link to these women being written about. For how, if medieval women cannot articulate their own experiences with their own words owing to living in a male-driven and directed society, can that same society hope to fairly and honestly portray them in narrative? The societal influences will also be accounted for and philosophical notions of medieval society whose definition '...of humanism in general meant that the few; rather than the many, were privileged, and this in turn resulted in a hierarchy closed to those who were not male, not educated, and not in the higher levels of society.'¹¹, will be discussed. The positions, as well as the influences that contribute toward my understanding of female characters that emerge from Malory's writing for the reader will be examined by analysing the society from which they were created. However one cannot deny that the binary opposite of the statement—that the medieval age repressed and suppressed women—does exist, that even in a society that more often than not favours male opinion and reasoning's, there are a minority of women who do benefit from it. Even if this benefit only exists within a chivalric understanding of

⁸ McKnight, E. 'Reader-Response Theory and Science Fiction.' pg 1-5.

⁹ Chrenka, L 'Shattering Language' pg 1.

¹⁰ Harding, W. 'Medieval Women's Unwritten Discourse on Motherhood: A Reading of Two Fifteenth-Century Texts.' *Women's Studies*. 1992, pg 199.

Malory's *Le Morte D' Arthur* one needs to consider it, since, as Dorsey Armstrong has argued, 'the knightly understanding of women as powerless ironically renders them powerful.'¹² This type of understanding is what underpins Tolkien's representation of women and therefore his text will be used to illustrate this representation. As regards Malory this dissertation will consider the validity of Armstrong's statement in relation to both language and actions within the narrative.

Regarding the process of writing the dissertation, the theory employed will be proposed as an adaptation of Henry Poincare's mathematical theory of 'Phase Space' in conjunction with a critical consideration of narrative technique used by Malory and Tolkien, as well as offering an argument regarding why they might have chosen the techniques that they did. All these texts are inextricably linked firstly because they implore similar techniques with similar narrative structures and secondly, if mathematical theories are to be believed, later texts could be alternative narratives to older texts, with different outcomes for the same scenarios. The general premise of Poincare's theory contemplates the 'what if' scenario and ponders all possibilities of a situation. By using this theory and applying an analysis of narrative technique one can consider the possibilities of why the narrative flows in the pattern that it does '...when you are studying some physical system that can exist in a variety of different states, then it may be a good idea to consider the states that it could be in, but isn't, as well as the particular state in which it is.'¹³ Therefore one could create an adjacent possibility, or scenario, which would yield different results with the same elements and characteristics. A more modern example of this type of adaptation can be found in Science Fiction, specifically in Terry Pratchett's novels. Pratchett, amongst predecessors such as T.S. Eliot and Kristeva, employs Poincare's theory in his creation of 'L-Space' where he states that one narrative, or book, is in conversation with those narratives which have preceded it as well as those which are to follow it,

Knowledge=power=energy=matter=mass, and on that simple equation rests the whole of L-Space. It is via L-Space that all books are connected (quoting

¹¹ Gutierrez, N. 'King Arthur, Scotland, Utopia and the Italian Englishman: What does Race Have to Do with It?' *Shakespeare Studies*: 26, 1998, pg 40-41.

¹² Ackerman, F. "Always Do to Ladies, Damosels, and Gentlewoman Succour"- Women and the Chivalric Code in Malory's *Morte Darthur*. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, XXVI, 2002, pg 4.

the ones before them, and influencing the ones that come after). But there is no time in L-Space. Nor is there, strictly speaking any space. Nevertheless, L-Space is infinitely large and connects all libraries, everywhere and everywhen.¹⁴

His books constitute a good example of the developmental lifespan of the medieval novel in the modern age, the *bildungsroman*, which shows how society has adapted the tale of the quest and encounters with monsters or other beings into a new classification of narrative. The relationship between the texts through the ages as a result of contexts and the reader and their emotions that are awakened, paint a picture filled with power, imagination and magic. By examining not only this entanglement of concepts, but others as well I intend to create my own hypothesis in terms of these possibilities in relation to Malory's and Tolkien's representations of women and power (magical, linguistic, societal) and in so doing create a different perception of these characters.

¹³ Pratchett, T. Stewart, I. and Cohen, J. *The Science of the Discworld II- The Globe*. London: Edbury Press, Random House, 2003, pg 44.

¹⁴ Pratchett, T. Stewart I. and Cohen, J. *The Science of the Discworld II- The Globe*. London: Edbury Press, Random House, 2003, pg 38.



CHAPTER ONE

Constructing a Magical Perception in Terms of a Historical Context.

In order to understand how representations of women were constructed by both authors one needs to place their representations into a context: ‘... not a simple process of ...fitting Tab A into Slot B, so to speak; but rather it is the task of identifying, excavating, and often reconstructing the setting as it appears to have been from the evidence of the manuscripts themselves, studied in conjunction with the politics, theology, liturgy, art and literature of the period.’¹⁵ Hence consideration needs to be given to the history of *Le Morte D'Arthur* and *The Lord of the Rings*, their authors and their times before any deductions can be attempted. However this is in and of itself a huge task and I shall only mention those aspects that are pertinent to my argument.

Firstly an inspection of Malory, the author and secondly one of Tolkien. Although Malory, himself, is not always considered a medieval author—there are varying opinions about his classification¹⁶ and he is predominantly known as a late medieval author—his subject matter is of medieval origin and the crux or enigmas of his narrative pivot on medieval values. Mathews argues that there are three different but possible identities of Malory; the person, the author and the prisoner. Therefore his absolute placement in an era or time frame is a difficult and ambivalent task. This triple entente causes huge consternation over the relationship between this author and his text, resulting in a snowball effect of motive, history, personal experience and ambition being displayed in his work.

¹⁵ Rouse, M. A. and Rouse, R. H. Notre Dame Indiana. University of Notre Dame Press, 1991, pg 2.

¹⁶ Malory T. *Le Morte D'Arthur-Volume 1*. Edited by Janet Cowen. Penguin Books, England, 2004, pg ix.

Initially the disparity between author and subject matter, as Margaret Svogun states: ‘...is often perceived to be a certain amount of incongruity between author—repeatedly imprisoned, variously believed to have been accused of attempted murder, armed robbery, assault and rape—and subject matter: the flowering of chivalry and the “noble and joyous history” of King Arthur’¹⁷ Contemplatively the question that arises from this statement, which represents only one perspective on the author and man known as Malory is how can one individual who possibly did not behave in a chivalric manner and who showed little consideration for human life, write one of the greatest works of honour, chivalry, romance and grace? Did he then actually write this text or did somebody else? Begging the question of authentic authorship, may complicate the final picture and it is an exercise in speculation as we, the readers, cannot hope to come to a sound conclusion about authorial influence and motivation. These two elements are too closely entwined with the author’s consciousness that even our most convincing attempts at an explanation will be speculative.

There is of course the alternative, which must be made clear to be further speculation: did the individuals who wrote the chapter of history on Malory omit any details, embellish on any small minutiae and create a version of his life as they saw fit? My statement is possibly a biased one as it is reliant on only one of the explanations but it is the one that holds my interest and raises fascinating questions for this dissertation. We are reminded in modern life that history is written by the victors and not necessarily by all the parties involved. So it becomes obvious that we can not blindly trust anything that is not corroborated by the author’s personal writings or verified information, which is a difficult task considering the time lapse between Malory’s life dates and ours. The problem is further compounded by what and who we believe, in order to arrive at a viable ending and it then becomes debatable if we can actually arrive at any solid conclusion.

There are some clues that do guide us to a version of an answer such as the author’s inspiration and sources. If one considers that Malory compiled information and insight through the thirteenth century French sources representing Merlin, Guinevere, Arthur and Lancelot and created a medieval world whose single largest issue was

¹⁷Svogun, M. *Reading Romance: Literacy, Psychology and Malory’s Le Morte D’Arthur*. New York.

‘...men(and women) who are doomed because they love each other too much.’¹⁸, one might reach the following conclusion. If Malory led a life of crime, corruption and violence then his creation is a fulfilment of a dream that he could never actualize in his own reality. A reality filled with a sense of happiness and purpose. Following this line of speculation Malory’s creation has become his alternate world of existence. In this world he could be the hero, the knight and the king, the ultimate culmination of wit, bravery and affection and one where he is not labelled, pitied, expelled and marginalised from this society. This style of reasoning propels another question: if an individual allegedly commits such violent crimes how is it possible is that he can create a narrative so rich in religious and honourable acts? It is naïve to consistently believe that this narrative was a mere escapist exercise as that rationalisation is too simplistic. People are known to be multifaceted and to have the ability to reinvent themselves for multiple reasons and in multiple ways. Reinvention is what keeps individuals from the brink of breakdown or madness and often we find ourselves unable to resist the temptation to create a more adaptable more coherent version of life for ourselves. This could be the case for Malory but it also could not be and most importantly, for this dissertation and reading of Malory, readers cannot, and should not, identify author and narrator as one entity. More crucially and specifically they are not interchangeable.

Let us follow the simplistic conclusion laid out above, however unsophisticated it may seem, it leads to the next potential and speculative question. If Malory created *Le Morte D’Arthur* in what may have been one of the darkest times in his life and if it was an escape from his own turmoil, then our question as interested individuals becomes one not of possibly how Malory wrote one of the most prominent texts of all times, but rather what can we interpret and gain out of his artistic impression. Could it be that Malory was commenting on his society, or was his work commenting on his own experiences of that society? Was it more of a futuristic attempt on his part of considering what his life could have been like, an escapist adventure into his own fairytale? Was he imagining a better personal existence- if he was truly a convicted criminal-complete with Kings and Queens, love affairs and evil witches? All these

types of leading questions pilot us down a path further from the text and more towards hypothesising, and dangerously far away from where we originally began, a historical perspective.

Therefore in an attempt to return to the original question raised in this chapter, there are elements in *Le Morte D'Arthur* which are specific to a history and do carry significance when interpreting the text. It indicates and delineates a period of time filled with its own stereotypes, social rejects, convicts and social injustices and issues: these include generalisations about female members of society as either 'good' or 'evil' and the portrayal of men as heroes and defenders of chivalry or as tyrants, the elements of mythology and magic (both white and black magic) and Malory's created hierarchy. All these elements can be traced back to a point in time. Be it that of the author's own society and experience or of the context which he creates by writing. In distinction, Tolkien illustrates how characters have the ability to switch between the representations of 'good' and 'evil' through the use of vehicles such as choice, friendship and war and that do not necessarily form part of any specific human time that has an obvious context or that has an accessible entrée into human history.

If we are to be honest and examine the text as a by-product of Malory's society then we would have to acknowledge that the threads between the author and his art are tenuous at best and in the majority of instances, comment on Malory's own personal context. But, let us consider the relationship that may or may not exist between context and product, between the author or creator and his creation and then possibly, begin to see further beyond the history and the narrative into the deeper meaning. My interest in the field of history, as it is a rather large entity filled with many interesting pathways, lies not necessarily in the physical times themselves but rather in the perceptions and relationships between the genders that allowed them to advance and exist.

Firstly, the understanding in medieval society was that women in general could only be one of two things: either a saint or a sinner and therefore the '...true nature of

¹⁸ Heltermann, J. 'Thomas Malory, Sir c.1400-March 14,1471.' *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 146: Old and Middle English literature*. Edited by Jeffrey Heltermann and Jerome Mitchell. University of South Carolina and the University of Georgia. The Gale Group, 1994. pg 258.

women oscillated between pit and pedestal.¹⁹ In terms of such a position women were generally grouped into saints: which meant that they were accepted by their society and conformed to their norms. Or alternatively they were classed as sinners: nonconformists and heretics in some cases, and this often, if not always resulted in their being cast out and scorned by their communities. The symbolic impression of women moving between images related to religion and all the perceptions and mental connections that it invokes, causes me to consider that women were defined by the understanding of 'pit' and 'pedestal' at this point in chronological history. This meant that the possibility was inflated that for Malory's audience these terms would be analysed in provisos of their mental framework and this in turn rested heavily on religion. However through my 'looking glass' these images and words create many more connotations and unconscious implications than mere religion and my understanding often spills over from religion into sociology and politics as these constitute my experience. Hence the idea that now becomes predominant for me and my reading, especially relevant to my dissertation's discussion concerning Malory, conveys weightier and more complex icons, symbols and further intertwined ideas about women and their place in a given society.

One of these complex issues is illustrated in the terms of Kristeva's definition as stated in the introduction. The conclusion which follows would be that women were either accepted by the female sector of the community (for their dictated and assumed role) or marginalised by the patriarchal part of the community (for their defiance of their role). This gendered element of society links into the article by Wallace wherein the dominant discussion is centred on the fact that, narrative is considered male and lyric considered female, and the ambiguous relationship the two have with each other is necessary for their mutual existence.²⁰ The commonality subsequently existing between these two groups of the female gender is that neither was fully understood nor accepted by either males or females of their community. The notion of moving between two sectors of society is reinforced by Kristeva and relates back to the comment about 'pit' and 'pedestal'. This is an important criterion because for me the

¹⁹ Petroff, E. *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism*. New York. Oxford University Press, 1994, pg 26.

²⁰ Wallace, McKittrick, Honor. Desire and the Female Protagonist: A Critique of Feminist Narrative Theory. *Style. Volume 34, No 2, Summer*. Academic Research Library, Vanderbilt University, 2000, pg 176-187.

two are intertwined, since society and religion are inseparable aspects of human belief and consciousness, not to mention the political importance for Malory. Both concepts are not imprints of each other but rather that they are tied together by the notions of power and hierarchies and therefore cannot be considered as separated ideas.

Thus if women were not accepted, they might be rejected, but in either case neither segment of society truly facilitated the growth, nurturing and fulfilment of women in society. They were seen as vessels used for a designated purpose. It can then be stated that neither category of women could comfortably exist within such a strict structure of acceptance and rejection, of created perceptions and symbols, and often found that they were being misunderstood or considered as unknowable. It would be this brand of categorising (a categorisation by ignorance and not labelling) that would lead to the status of women being in a state of flux: subsequently opening the flood gates for concepts such as witches, demons and heretics to take centre stage.

It would be society's reaction to a specific woman, her representation and the ensuing perception which dictated her status and her acceptance in society. Petroff²¹ describes this position as, the woman's 'unknowability', which in my understanding is something which seems to either be parallel with or equivalent to unpredictability. It becomes evident that since society could not understand nor predict behaviour of certain groups of women, it led its' constituents to reach unfair and prejudicial conclusions about these women which further led to a probable fear of them and ultimately resulted in them becoming further isolated. This process of alienation and ostracism makes women in this era even more elusive to the dominant male, the lyric becomes dangerous and the narrative becomes fearful. And through this strain it is the unknowability that is possibly the only consensus that I can discover about women in this age. They were not misunderstood but rather not understood.

I therefore suggest that an accurate representation Malory portrays for his readers is when he creates dominant males who tell a powerful and magical story. Malory's text offers the traditional position that a magically powerful figure has to be a man (excluding Morgan le Fay, a '...fatal female whose beauty, we shall see, is both

sinister and tempting.²²) and must express a narrative. To this end the reader becomes acquainted with Merlin. This character fulfils the role of the male dominant, the accepted form of society and its expectations. The author dedicates the entire first section of his work to Merlin and not to the birth and childhood of the main protagonist, Arthur. There is no tracing of Arthur's childhood, his development or his personality, rather the epicentre is Merlin, his actions and his demanding will, 'Well, saide Merlyn, 'he shall have his entete and desire, and therefore' said Merlyn, 'ryde on your wey, for I will not be long behynde.'²³ Merlin is the creator of events and drama in Malory's plot which leads the reader to enjoy and anticipate his behaviour and interventions. The forceful and determined nature exhibited by Merlin's character marks him as the male character in the novel that holds the majority of the power and authority, especially over important decisions. The mental association for the reader equates power, authority and magic to Merlin and it is the response to this alliance that feeds into the understanding of 'good' and 'evil'. An interesting angle shows the reader as a representative of a child in medieval society when reading about Merlin, as he is the leader in the relationship with the reader and the accepted representation of male power and position.

Merlin's heritage and abilities are introduced and solidified in order to create a character with which the audience, possibly a courtly history more so than a modern twentieth century one, can identify with and to whom they are willing to resign some power. The outcome is that they are led and guided through the story by him and not forced to judge him. He is also created in such a way that their imagination can easily flesh him out into a three dimensional character possessing a spirit, a consciousness and a physical form: 'What were best to doo in this cause?' said the barons. 'I shal telle you,' said Merlyn, 'myne advys...' ²⁴ As well as to prefigure the abilities which manifest themselves later on in the text and cause a series of chain reactions. Famous for his magical influence and power, Merlin is the son of the Devil and this is where he attains his talent and ability to see the future and life-changing or life-challenging events. However his bloodline is never questioned nor stained by the reader and the

²¹ Petroff, E. *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism*. New York. Oxford University Press, 1994.

²² Gilbert, S. and Gubar, S. *The Madwoman in the Attic*. New Haven. Yale University Press, 1979, pg 460.

²³ Malory, T. *Complete Works*. Edited by E. Vinaver. London. Oxford University Press, 1971 pg 4.

author. Nor does it exclude him from being accepted by the majority society. The bulk of influential people in his society actually revered the wisdom and eccentricity of a character such as Merlin. The reader is never led to reach the conclusion that Merlin is evil or that his actions are demonic, even though the inherent capacity for him to act out demonically exists, especially when one considers how often in the text he manipulates other people and events. A concrete example would be in the betrayal of Igraine which leads to Arthur's conception. His inherent evil cannot be brought to the fore as he is the male power positioned on the side of 'good' action in the text—I suggest that the reader, like a race-horse, may need to wear blinkers in order to reach the last line of the text and not have some negative impressions of Merlin. The interpretation of such a malleable character requires that the reader overlook aspects and abilities that would complicate the understanding of their (the reader's) position and authority within the text. In conclusion as regards my own interpretation, we as twentieth century readers may be led by the author into believing that Merlin is a 'good' character in order to allow the rest of the text to take shape. Invariably we must follow, nay believe, the narrative as described by Wallace in order to later be led to the lyric and the new interpretation through our responses. We employ notions about choice specifically that Merlin has chosen to serve Arthur, in order to accept the 'blinkers and reach the finish line'.

In his advisory role Merlin mentors Arthur, child to man, and when he finally ascends to the throne of England it seems that Arthur is nothing more than Merlin's ambassador and puppet. His command of his own army is questionable as orders originate from Merlin and the forethought of battle and victorious strategies are generated by the wizard. Arthur has apparently been controlled by the puppeteer Merlin, who manipulates people and situations in such a way that they serve his ends and his own agenda. Merlin is never purposefully cast in the role of villain as he has another, spiritually informed motive or a motive that dominates humankind's chain of command and is not revealed at any point. He serves something that is never entirely explained to the reader but rather hinted at. He is the spiritual centre of the narrative so as to justify his alliances and his wars with the dark side, and as readers our

²⁴ Malory, T. *Complete Works*. Edited by E. Vinaver. London. Oxford University Press, 1971, pg 13.

reaction to this unexplained phenomenon feeds into the mystery that is Merlin. Thompson makes a valid point:

In mythopoetic fantasy the conflict that we witness is a part of a larger struggle between the forces of good and evil, or light and darkness as they are frequently called. This struggle takes place primarily at a supernatural level, between beings wielding awesome powers, yet its outcome hinges upon the contribution of human protagonists, despite their relative weakness. As they rise to meet their challenge posed, these apparently ordinary characters discover extraordinary resources within themselves, learning valuable lessons as a result.²⁵

Even though Merlin exists on the planes of the supernatural, has an innate ability to wield power, shift shape, in conjunction with his umbilical cord to the Devil, notwithstanding his rank in the text, he is unable to complete his assigned duty to the larger struggle in the text on his own. According to Thompson: Merlin must use the human characters at his disposal to fulfil his destiny and in my construal he cannot reach the full status of ‘magical’ if he does not use them to execute his agenda. This is similar to the relationship we share with Malory as he is the creator of the text that we must follow and support in order for it to reach its designed end. It then becomes apparent that without the human element neither text nor narrative will conclude, and the reader is an active part in this as the author who created the text that leads us around.

In order for Merlin to fulfil his role as leader and supernatural advisor Malory creates counterparts for him, characters who are fallible and believable in order to fulfil the role of the protagonists, and the use of human characters achieves this. Merlin cannot be a leader without a following and consequently Malory offers various characters this assignment. The argument could then be taken one step further by assuming that it is truly the author’s manipulation of the characters and plot that gives the reader the inclination to see how Merlin manipulates the narrative, the events and characters concerned. As I follow the narrative I am forced to see the maleness of events, language and society and to make the end that narrative must rule and it has the ultimate power.

This in conjunction with the reader's own interpretation, as discussed by the reader-response criticism, results in a very specific portrait of Merlin's character. It is a possibility, as proposed by the reader-response theory which would include a reader's own personal experiences and how they viewed themselves within society as well as their relation to reading a text which Malory could anticipate, and therefore almost be certain of a specific reaction from the reader. This may be a fair stretch of thought and argument and the more likely deduction is that the current understanding that I have formed about Merlin is actually a result of my current, twenty first century societal, belief systems and personal experiences and that Malory never intended for Merlin to be conceptualised like this. It may have been that Malory merely rewrote Merlin from the French and added some late medieval flavours to highlight some differences for his physical audience.

Malory's work is reminiscent for a reader like me in the elements of Shakespeare's Chain of Being concept which is replicated in all of Malory's writings²⁶. This type of understanding of society, that which regards God as head of state and mankind as his servant, would have been not only well-known to Malory but also practiced, as some people still practice it today, and therefore the identical hierarchy that has women located in flux between two concepts allows for a wizard to determine what happens to the human contingent of the narrative through his connection to the gods. It is an obvious contemplation that Malory would have in no way been able to have known Shakespeare but for readers of our century and those to come, it becomes a large tangle of narratives and plots that seem similar and easily comparable.

It might therefore follow that Malory probably influenced Shakespeare, and that according to the 'Phase Space' concept coined by Terry Pratchett, these texts and authors exist in a communal space which houses all possible narratives and characters, past and future. This in effect means that these texts exist in a space that shares common elements and that no texts that will be written without being influenced by texts that already exist in written format. Any interesting point for any aspiring writer may be: can they produce any new type of narrative, as they have all

²⁵ Thompson, R. H. *The Return from Avalon: A Study of the Arthurian Legend in Modern Fiction*. Westport Conn. Greenwood Press, 1985 pg 88.

been written somewhere, sometime and by someone? Is this why stories like Harry Potter are so successful in our era, as they seem reminiscent of something once forgotten for some readers?

Let us now return to the discussion of Merlin and his inseparable connection to a higher power, be that Fate, God or another power, and why this superiority must be obeyed in order to ensure the desired outcome. The male narrative is dictated by yet another male and the lyric that is to follow will find embodiment in the relationship not only with this concept of God, Merlin, but also with itself. Tolkien, not yet introduced to my reader but relevant here, also adheres to this type of hierarchy. However, he uses a Christian framework for the reader, ‘Tolkien is a Christian man himself and a look at this body of beliefs throws light on his story at this point. The rightful position of man is to be the ruling creature on this planet, to administer it in the best interests of all the local creatures, and God’s viceroy’²⁷. This overt category of structure consequently explains why Merlin prophesies to Arthur about Mordred, ‘... God is displeased with you; for ye have lain by your sister, and on her ye have gotten a child that shall destroy you and all the knights or your realm.’²⁸ So the connection between the gods, their descendants and their human counterparts for both authors is the religious framework of Christianity controlled by a male narrative and hierarchy. Accordingly for Malory when Arthur has upset the natural order and Merlin is forced to verbalise the type of repercussions that are to stem from Arthur’s escapades: ‘For she was a passing fair lady; wherefor the King cast great love unto her, and desired to lie by her.’²⁹: the reader is confronted with the effect and influence that human action has on spiritual and religious concepts, and through all of this the power of the male narrative and identity stands out.

Merlin, in the role of the supernatural, omnipotent and epitome of physical power, may not fulfil the role of protagonist as he needs human counterparts to aid his cause,

²⁶ Shakespeare, W. *Romeo and Juliet*. Edited by Digby Ricci. Pretoria. Hodder and Stoughton Educational, 1989. pg ix.

²⁷ Rodgers, D.C. ‘Everyclod and Everyhero: The Image of Man in Tolkien.’ *A Tolkien Compass*: Edited by Jared Lobdell. Open Court, 1975. pg 3.

²⁸ Malory, T. *Le Morte D’Arthur Volume 1*.Edited by Janet Cowen. London, Penguin Books, 2004, pg 47.

²⁹ Malory, T. *Le Morte D’Arthur Volume 1*.Edited by Janet Cowen. London, Penguin Books, 2004, pg 45.

and characters such as Arthur, Igraine and Morgan le Fay do this for him. This space created by Malory where Merlin needs human characters allows for the didactic and moralistic tone of the narrative, that Malory sometimes uses to portray specific character development, to become prominent. Therefore characters such as Guinevere and Arthur are placed in situations which force them to make decisions which could be classified as good or evil, morally wrong or right, and it is their decision on how to deal with the events that will influence the reader's reaction. It also means that the reader's feedback will be informed by the religious overtones in the text and in their direct environment which will also feed into the perception of key characters such as Guinevere, especially into her depiction as the 'angel'. The event of the affair between Guinevere and Lancelot is such a prominent one but as this event is predetermined by Merlin they exert little control over their actions. These developing characters become the modus of action or the vehicles which the author uses to attain certain goals within the audience's understanding of power and gender relations. So even though the human characters contribute to the struggle they do not wield power or magic, but rather fulfil a specific role in the narrative which these usually dominant, stereotypical wizards cannot. The pure physicality of the male narrative portrays the possibility of an intellectual and spiritual narrative to be present in the female narrative and Merlin needs both in order to successfully complete his mandate.

Merlin exists in an inherently twofold form: on the one side he is the son of the Devil and possesses the potential for evil and evil behaviour, and on the other his outward actions cannot necessarily be considered as such, or as necessarily good. A response to this ambiguity could be that both magic and Merlin are inherently neutral, and it is merely the context that will determine the perception that the reader will create, of either 'good' or 'bad'. It is the case that 'Merlin belongs to an earlier age when the division of good and evil was less clear cut.'³⁰ In this age, where Merlin does exert the superior magical influence, he is depicted so as to portray both possibilities of actions in the narrative: good and that of evil. Therefore the mergence of two opposites into one character begins to create huge ambiguity in the reader's response to him.

³⁰ Thompson, R. H. *The Return from Avalon: A Study of the Arthurian Legend in Modern Fiction*. Westport Conn: Greenwood Press, 1985 pg 96.

The earlier age referred to by Thompson may be a reference to a time before Christ, and one could assume that Merlin is actually a remnant of pagan belief and mythology. Within this understanding it is a fair deduction that Merlin has no obvious enemy in the text which he must battle in his own narrative, no evil opposing other which would embody the equivalent power to him. There is no antagonistic male counterpart. The result is a Janus-like personality being created in Merlin, evil and good, and to some degree he resists the gender binary, which holds men as being the forces of good in Malory's context. Through this type of understanding the reader is placed in a peculiar position when it comes to reserving judgement concerning Merlin's actual representation and in our choosing to believe Merlin to be a good force within the narrative. In contrast to this author, our second source, Tolkien shows how men have the ability to be both evil and good.

The intriguing article by Wallace exemplifies the ideas of narrative as male and lyric as female, in any given text. The crux of the article proposes that male narrative is the action seeking, determined element of the text and that the feminine lyric, lacking in representation, is searching for something larger than itself- its voice. The argument presents both sides of feminist theory and concludes by saying that without the narrative, the lyric would have no outlet for its voice. It is within the combination of the two that a new understanding, or force, arises to create a new narrative. The overtones of the article highlights the culmination of two independent views of narrative giving rise to a combined mutually beneficial theory that serves all characters and "...a new narrative force arises from the conjunction of the desiring female character and the traditional plot."³¹

To further the discussion of magic and power, the essential element of morals and choice needs to be scrutinised. One could subsequently propose that Merlin's actions lack a moral centre, a judgement which would inform an action being either good or evil and therefore he is assumed to be powerful by the audience. With this

³¹ Wallace, McKittrick, Honor. Desire and the Female Protagonist: A Critique of Feminist Narrative Theory. *Style. Volume 34, No 2, Summer.2000*, pg 185.

interpretation Merlin resists standard labelling and categorisation. Therefore if he is not immoral but rather amoral then he defeats the entire categorisation exercise and where do we place him? We as twenty first century readers need a new way to consider Merlin and we could use the parallel of Freud's map of the mind as a blueprint where Merlin could be seen as the concept of a conscience, such as is portrayed in the Walt Disney's version of *Pinocchio*. The cricket takes on the role of Pinocchio's conscience that verbalises and discusses the incongruence and areas of perplexity within the character of Pinocchio outside the realm of the mind and his physical manifestation is the form of a cricket. Merlin displays no actual conscience of his own in the narrative as he makes no actual decisions that carry a judgement value from the perspective of the audience as he needs to have other characters to do this for him. By doing so he transfers the judgement from himself to the chosen character. It seems to be the case that if certain actions propel a situation into a specific direction and that direction is desired by either the community or by the powerful individual, in this case Merlin, then the means by which that desired direction is achieved becomes irrelevant. The narrative in its male, powerful, form is being followed by readers and created by author.

Merlin's tasks and desired outcomes are often the culmination of deception and misappropriation of emotions but he is rarely judged (by past or present) readers for these. His actions are rather considered appropriate or inappropriate, dictated by the reader's personal context, based on what the outcome is. If the outcome is beneficial then one can consider it to be an appropriate action if not, then it is inappropriate. Therefore a situation such as Arthur's conception is beneficial but the conception of Mordred is not, but yet his arrival is vitally important for the completion of the narrative and for the dramatic climax. As fundamental as Mordred's arrival is for the male narrative it is just as significant for the lyric or female narrative as his beginning proves the power of female temptation and the will to exert power over the male.

The determining factor in Merlin's actions seems to be the fact that Malory allows for human choice, and choice implies power, therefore Merlin who has unlimited choice for action holds unlimited, and unrivalled power in the text for the reader. There is often the element of suspense when the reader is waiting for a character to act, since it is possible for the narrative not to support Merlin to make a decision even if

ultimately decisions are made in his favour- since he has set the stage for them. Milton's *Paradise Lost* also asks the reader to consider what happens when characters make choices in a setting that has no actual moral centre. Lucifer must decide if he wants to 'serve in heaven or reign in hell'³² but neither place is better than the other because it is his decision that will create the atmosphere of hell. Therefore the end result actually depends on whether or not the reader and society deems the actions acceptable and with the support of the author who creates atmosphere and with his decisive weaving.

Merlin's seat of power is rooted in his role of adviser to Arthur. Here he controls the royal court, the politics of England, the religion of the people and much more. His foreknowledge of enemies and wars helps Arthur not only to forecast victories and defeat enemies but also to gain wisdom and to create a powerful and formidable land. From this position the reader becomes aware that Merlin is the acting king as his actions speak of power, but lack honour and kinship to an extent because they lack moral justification. However the most powerful mechanism which Merlin activates is that of deception. Merlin serves some other form of authority, a non-human one; therefore he has to enforce its governance by any means available to him. There is another perspective which would argue that Merlin's actions are neither good nor evil because he is a stereotypical characterization of the male dominance of the medieval era. He occupies a space which allows him the possibilities of being excluded from a moralistic code. The character of Merlin exists in a space above authority, with the possible exception of the King and the above-mentioned higher power, he has no direct rivals, no opposing other and by exhibiting both the possibility for evil and for good he exists outside of the lines of authority that the characters are subject to. These characters must exist in a world of defending honour, adhering to societal structures such as Knights and the Round Table and conquering neighbouring states, Kings and evil witches for their existence.

Malory has created in Merlin, a character who has constructed a space outside of human decisions, this space then feeds into a created gender power binary, yet fundamentally he resists it and my understanding is that in his resistance he forces

³² Milton, J. *Paradise Lost*. New York: Penguin Books, 1968, pg 12.

himself into another type of categorisation for the reader. He has no moral centre therefore he can claim any position other than the ultimate position of ruler. He, a male supporting a narrative filled with manly power, is placed above other types of judicial and judgmental standards. It seems to be the case that because of his gender, or lack thereof, he presents no real threat to the male-dominated society, which considers him part of the centre, based on his gender. To the contrary a woman would be considered part of the ‘other’ and not as a part of the integrated male community. She would be relegated to the margins, therefore being forced to change her association with her own gender, resulting in her being either oversexed or unsexed.

Irrespective of whether or not Merlin creates an environment conducive to the perpetuation and creating of lies or not, and other mechanisms, he successfully manipulates and controls various lives, especially those of the women in the text. It is not whether the circumstances are favourable to destructive behaviour or not but rather that Merlin considers women the ideal tool for his deceptive behaviour. This feeds the ‘androcentric’³³ power cycle which represents women as betrayers, manipulators and liars in the text. Due to their actions being manipulated by Malory the women are placed in the category of destroyer: equivalent to the categorisation of characters such as Eve, who ruined the Garden of Eden because she ate the apple and therefore became the ‘evil’ gender in the Creation story. The strength that is represented in these instances for me is that Merlin chooses women to complete tasks that inherently need strength of character and determination not brute strength to complete. But his approach does highlight the issue of manipulation. His predetermined choices lead to sacrifice on the part of the women however, it is never to the point of total destruction, quite interestingly often leads to the mobilisation of an inner strength and ability they often did not realise they had. This may also result in an elevated status of women for the reader.

This characterisation of Malory’s women plays into the constructed image discussed earlier: women being weak and easy to manipulate. But is it solely through this very masculine narrative that the women’s effect on the sequence of events becomes more noticeable and possibly more reliable. Merlin, who exposes the supposed inherent

weakness (as Malory perceived it and which is discussed later), uses them as his pawns.

Some of the best examples of Merlin's controlling and manipulative behaviour are found in the opening pages of the text. The orchestration of Arthur's conception is one of the most deceptive instances of Merlin's behaviour. He purposefully disregards Igraine and disguises Uther as the Duke of Tintygail and she (Igraine) unknowingly allows Uther into her bed, 'So after the deth of the duke kyng Uther lay with Igrayne, more than thre houres after his deth, and begat on her that nygh(t)Arthur;...'³⁴. Uther invades her privacy, on both a spiritual and a physical level, disregarding her opinion and forcing a predestined and disempowering action onto her which could be equated to rape. He lacks the ability to rationalise his argument to Igraine, he too has become voiceless, and this disempowers him, his determination to force events overcomes this by foisting his actions on her. Contrary to this argument Malory may have had no other option but to give the burdens of the text to women because they were due to position in society, the only ones who could carry them. It also naturally reiterates the cycle of thought that states: through this type of representation sympathy for women and their positions in society grew and that it actually the author who is voicing his disdain for the role and portrayal of women of that time.

To turn back to the issue of deception, Merlin does not disgrace or dishonour Igraine neither through his action nor does he jeopardise her reputation. Consequently one could argue that this is an incident where Malory truly upholds the chivalric code. Malory wants to protect her so that she remains outwardly respectable so that which is visible to society is also accepted by it. She would be worthless should her community marginalise her or name her a witch, which would leave Arthur with a soiled background resulting in his taking the throne as an act of usurpation and not one of anointed fate.

Igraine's lack of knowledge of the disguise insures this almost honourable ignorance and in so doing insures her credibility as a woman worthy of giving birth to a King, as

³³ Ruthven, K.K. *Feminist Literary Studies: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990, pg 1.

³⁴ Malory, T. *Complete Works*. Edited by E. Vinaver. London. Oxford University Press, 1971, pg 5.

well as reinforcing her credibility, as a character, for the reader. The reader is not asked to question whether Igraine gives her consent for the conception nor for the birth of the child. Should there be any form of questioning this would remove any kind of belief in Arthur as a kingly character and as a result his actions and behaviours could not be called into question by the reader. Malory ensures that the characterisation of Igraine is an angelic one, one which is praiseworthy and satisfactory. This view however does play into the typecast of women as not only gentle, angelic healers and mothers but also as pure and virginal, being able to give birth to a King. This reinforces the concept that a woman who is worthy of giving birth to a King is naïve and powerless. She is almost considered the bearer of a gift, the vehicle of delivery, as she has no choice in the pregnancy or the child's destiny. And in this case she also has no part in the conception or of the genetic make-up of the child.

It appears to be that medieval society lacked the Freudian type of understanding that has influenced and informed the twenty first century generation and one where we “...return to Freud’s term, we ‘intervene’ in a text...”³⁵ and the belief that one is actually part, or fragmentations, of one’s parents and that children inherit some of their parents’ qualities from the relationship between parent and child³⁶. Rather it seemed to the case that medieval society may have lent towards the belief in the concept of being born a blank slate and that only what is said and done would inform the story that is written on that tabula rasa. The blank slate theory, associated with John Locke, stipulated that ‘...we are all born with nothing more than a few basic instincts wired into our brains, and the rest of our nature is determined by experience.’³⁷ This premise becomes a debatable issue when the nature of medieval society is closely scrutinised. The very premise that supports the argument for the blank slate theory undermines the hierarchy of king and aristocracy: ‘It implied, that dogmas, such as the divine right of kings, could not be treated as self-evident truths that just grew out of the structure of the brain, but had to be justified by experiences that people share,... It undermined the hereditary royalty and aristocracy, who could

³⁵ Brook, P. ‘The Idea of Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism.’ in *Discourse in Psychoanalysis and Literature*. Metbeun & Company. USA: New York, 1987, pg11.

³⁶ Feist, J and Feist, G. *Theories of Personality- Fourth Edition*. United States of America. McGraw Hill Companies, Inc, 1998, pg 36-42.

claim no innate wisdom or virtue if their minds started out as blank as everyone else's.³⁸ Malory supports the divine right of kings, even though the theory was conceived after his publication, he does support the idea of fate and the predetermined destiny of people. However he confuses us when he allows experiences to result in changes in personality and behaviour and influence the final outcome of the narrative. A character who displays this pattern is Morgan le Fay, since very little is mentioned about her until her experience of being displaced from her family and being sent to a nunnery, influences her eventual portrayal as a witch. For me as a twenty first century reader the interpretation results in my perception of Malory illustrating a slight shift from a male, dominant view to a more sympathetic and conscious view of women and their struggles in representation and position.

Igraine possessed no power over Merlin's deception nor did she oppose it-consequently she comes to represent a frail, weak and dependent type of woman, 'But whan the lady herd telle of the duke her husband, and by all record he was dede or ever kynge Uther came to her, thenne she marveilled who that myghte be that laye with her in lykenes of her lord. So she mourned pryvely and held her pees.'³⁹ Merlin wishes to make this a clean and virginal conception therefore allowing the child, Arthur, to enjoy a mythical and magical existence. However, this approach does create a silence surrounding Igraine which robs her of any means of re-telling a narrative of her own so that she cannot voice her opinion and her subjective experiences. She cannot articulate the rape as this will contaminate Arthur, as not being worthy of being a King. This ensures that the gender binary continues to exist in favour of the male-dominant narrative: it represents good women as those who do not oppose male dominance and power, even if it is violent, and suggests that women need to be frail and angelic in order to be accepted. In conclusion to the truss laid out '... between the twin distinctively female temptations of angelic submission and monstrous assertion, they, [male] place a very special emphasis on the problematic role of women in a male dominated culture.'⁴⁰ But the question creeps into my mind,

³⁷ Pinker, S. 'The Blank Slate. The Modern Denial of Human Nature.' Harvard University, 2002. pg 70.

³⁸ Pinker, St. 'The Blank Slate. The Modern Denial of Human Nature.' Harvard University, 2002. pg 70.

³⁹ Malory, T. *Complete Works*. Edited by E. Vinaver. London. Oxford University Press, 1971, pg 5.

⁴⁰ Gilbert, S and Gubar, S. *The Madwoman in the Attic*. New Haven. Yale University Press, 1979, pg 444.

could Malory actually fairly and justly represent trauma and pain from a female perspective? Am I not superimposing my own experiences onto this author who may have represented events true to society? And the answer would have to be two fold in nature: as I do believe that I have forced my own thoughts onto this issue-a real L-Space manoeuvre due to the texts that have come into my frame of reference before and after my reading of Malory. But also that I don't believe that Malory can convincingly portray an experience that he did not, in my understanding, honour. Consequently Malory's rendering of a society with magical powers exists in very specific forms, namely Merlin as the embodiment of good and Morgan le Fay as that of evil. The two opposing sides of the community are assigned antithetical powers. Therefore even though '...white magic existed, magic in general became associated more with the diabolical arts, a development concomitant with the growth of the Western Church.'⁴¹ Hence Morgan le Fay's portrayal and representation becomes more sinister because her '...ambiguity as a character and as a representation as a woman of society was threatening, as was her beauty or her power,'⁴² It may also be the result of her familial ties, she unlike Merlin is born of humans and therefore her choice at being a wielder of magic makes her more dynamic and diabolical than Merlin.

Malory manipulates our view of her, especially by portraying her as a woman who seduces men which creates a tension between the expected norm of the angel of the house, a nineteenth century idea but applicable when related to the notion of 'pit and pedestal' mentioned earlier, and the representation that women can cause men's death because of their sexual power. This leaves women wearing masks for most of their private and public lives since either they would be viewed as angels or they would be considered as sexual demons. However, to an extent, this could also be manipulated to their advantage because they could often wear the angelic mask but truly be a demon underneath. Women might find that wearing a mask could ultimately give them the power for which they yearned: 'for the medieval period, the need to be unmasked is at base an assertion of male power, power that seems to be in the hands of a female (whether she is a prostitute or a poet's beloved or a politically active saint does not

⁴¹ Morris, K. *Sorceress or Witch: The Image of Gender in Medieval Iceland and Northern Europe*. Lanham: University Press of America, 1991, pg 59.

matter as much as the question of relative power in the relationship) in a world that knows that women ought not to wield power.⁴³ This occurs because the belief exists that power in female hands cannot be used correctly. The lyric that begins to take form shows the female characters as unknown territory which is misrepresented by male narrative.

Power and masks raises an interesting question as Malory does allow Morgan to change lives and although she is perceived as a threat she is not the one who brings down an entire kingdom. That privilege Malory (not uniquely to his text though) has cleverly assigned to man. The opposite is applicable to Tolkien and he highlights the power that women have and their ability to wield it.

Returning to Merlin- a man who possesses power over the physical and the spiritual, moulding environments as he sees fit, time and space allow him to transcend the place of human character to a more dominant or mythical stature, namely that of wizard. He is the stereotypical, male, wizard representative of the binary, carrying power within that stereotype. However one cannot say that Merlin abuses his ability and power for self gain and accomplishment. His own inevitable death is known to him, just as he knows about Guinevere's infamous betrayal of Arthur, but he does not try to alter the course of events that leads up to it, its method or its means. Merlin acknowledges that there is an overarching system of belief⁴⁴. Be it God, fate or some form of authority. He acknowledges that the system needs to be adhered to, and this forceful belief written into Merlin's character ensures coherence and order in the narrative for Malory. Merlin, who conveys a god-like presence, who is able to travel through time and transfigure himself into other entities such as an old man, is not prepared to act against or disrespect, even though he possesses the knowledge and ability to do so. This belief structure not only enables his power but also informs his moral code, although not necessarily one with which we agree or with which we are familiar with, but one which he upholds at all costs. He evaluates a situation according to what he

⁴² Petroff, E. *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism*. New York. Oxford University Press, 1994, pg 26.

⁴³ Petroff, E. *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, pg 27.

⁴⁴ Malory, T. *Le Morte D'Arthur Volume 1*. Edited by Janet Cowen. London, Penguin Books, 2004,pg 117.

believes to be the greater good (good being a contentious term in Malory's text at this point as it is not necessarily linked to morality or righteousness), and then considers the outcomes. The best alternative is placed into motion. The alternative could encompass that which his belief structure dictates but of which the reader is not aware. The only indicator of an action's relevance in the text is the deduction by the reader that if Merlin causes it, then it has some repercussions for the characters in the narrative. This behaviour allows for many possible results or for one specific event but it also allows for events such as murder, theft and adultery to become justifiable solutions to situations. This type of representation is effective because Malory has in Morgan Le Fay the exact opposite of Merlin, as most of her actions are fuelled by human emotion be it jealousy, hatred, love or envy.

The representation of behaviour and power in *The Lord of the Rings* is rather different to that portrayed by Malory as the influences on the author were diverse. Tolkien's perception of himself and his religious context was as C. S. Lewis points out, one that of creating myth, 'What shows that we are reading myth, not allegory, is that there are no pointers to a specifically theological, or political, or psychological application. A myth points, for each reader, to the realm he lives in most. It is a master key; use it on what door you like.'⁴⁵ Therefore the further interpretation of this point directs us to try and understand *The Lord of the Rings* from a society absent context, and rather to use our imagination and knowledge of fantasy to create our own meaning of the text. While the overarching structure which Malory's Merlin serves is not necessarily good or evil, light or dark, positive or negative, his twentieth century counterpart—Tolkien's Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings*—seems to be a very different kind of wizard, although he shares many of Merlin's qualities. Peter Salus supports this argument by arguing, 'He (Gandalf) has shifted from being a run-of-the-mill house magician to being a direct descendant of the mythic Merlin. For Gandalf's origin in a prior age is akin to Merlin's semi-miraculous birth.'⁴⁶ He illuminates a shift in thought and imagination in literature. Tolkien also moves from the very masculine narrative into a more lyric informed text showing not only his knowledge of Malory but also the awareness that his personal response to the text has shaped his ideas for his narrative.

⁴⁵ Lewis, C. S 'The Gods Return to Earth.' *Time and Tide*. August 14. 1954, p1082.

Gandalf's actions and powers are more aligned to one specific side, namely that of good, and they exist in a world where the differences between good and evil are superficially clearer. The distinctive lines between those who fight for the freedom and Christian virtues for Middle Earth and those who aim to exploit the natural resources and power are obvious to the reader. The characters from the onset are set up either in support of Gandalf or against him. For Tolkien there exists access to a different type of language and descriptive power that was not available to Malory. A different context, developments not only in industry, education and politics but also more developed theories about people, psyches and linguistics lead to an availability of knowledge for Tolkien that Malory did not have.

Malory's Merlin is the non-explicable and never-questioned power which always directs the community and the King to the right path whereas in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf is not the only magically powerful character in the text: he must learn from the Elves and the Hobbits, as well as the evil Sauron and Saruman. He has to integrate knowledge and practice and then he still has the ability to choose and for that reason he remains more human and aligned to human consciousness. This may also be why the reader considers Gandalf more angelic and more divine than Merlin as the element of choice brings to the fore the possibility of failure. And therefore the option for redemption and forgiveness exists. It is also why the self sacrificing decisions that Gandalf makes, readers more sympathetic toward him and more willing to identify with him. Gandalf does not assume the position of the supreme magical leader but rather makes an integrated and combined effort with other powerful figures in the text. He becomes one of the many protagonists that come to the fore in *The Lord of the Rings*. He faces the antagonist, Sauron, who is a dictator: horrible, evil and dangerous. Gandalf protects the inhabitants of his world with the help of other characters like Frodo and Sam who bring with them other types of magical powers, possibly more human in nature than the power of other characters such as the Elves, but nonetheless magical. Gandalf becomes the inherently good wizard because he is opposed by a defined other: Sauron, and therefore his actions can be judged against Sauron's. Tolkien does make the reader aware of Gandalf's position before we are

⁴⁶ Salus, P. H. 'Merlin and Myth.' *The American Journal of Semiotics*. 7(4), 1990, pg 134.

introduced to Sauron. However, the inevitable comparison that the reader makes later on highlights Gandalf's support of the Fellowship and what it stands for. His association and the combination of power with other good characters such as the disguised heroic and domestic Hobbits and the intriguing elves result in the complete conviction for the reader that this wizard is good.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf's ability to wield magical strength and knowledge leads him into situations where he is characterized by suffering and burden-bearing. This erases the possibility of the kind of transcendental power that Merlin, who is often depicted as burden-less, portrays, but opens Gandalf up. This opening of Gandalf locates him in a more human and fallible position with which the reader can identify with. A reasonable deduction on the part of the reader would be that Gandalf can make mistakes which place him on the level of the reader, who will therefore create him as a character to sympathise and empathise with throughout the narrative, especially when Gandalf falls off the bridge at the hands of the Balrog. The burden that he carries leads to sacrifices on various levels: Frodo leaves Hobbiton, Sam travels further away from home than he has ever been and Bilbo has become obsessed with the Ring. Even though these sacrifices are not directly Gandalf's they are on his conscience, as is the knowledge of what the Ring could do should Sauron succeed in his attempt to control Middle Earth. When Frodo first meets him, he is physically strained by the knowledge of the Ring, ‘...but Frodo thought the old wizard looked unusually bent, almost as if he was carrying a great weight’⁴⁷ and of its future consequences even if at the onset of the narrative he does not fully understand the extent to which Sauron and Saruman will go but his words to Frodo: “.... Keep it safe and keep it secret!”⁴⁸ resonate with a definite sense of urgency even if the details of the Ring are not yet known.

He is a martyr in the text, bearing the weight of many people who are not aware of the danger the ring brings and who will inevitably suffer in the future if no action is taken. He champions the well-being of Middle Earth when he goes on the quest with Frodo, Aragorn, Legolas, Gimli and the others to combat Sauron. He is prepared to sacrifice himself for the safety and security of others: this attitude is highlighted when

⁴⁷ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg 40.

on the Bridge of Khazad-Dum, he faces the Balrog and defeats him but not without sacrificing himself,

With a terrible cry the Balrog fell forward, and its shadow plunged down and vanished. But even as it fell it swung its whip, and the thongs lashed and curled about the wizard's knees, dragging him to the brink. He staggered and fell, grasped vainly at the stone and slid into the abyss. 'Fly, you fools!' he cried, and was gone.⁴⁹

Even though Gandalf re-enters the text later on, his sacrifice is treated as the ultimate price and all the fellowship grieves for him. Through the portrayal of the grieving process and how the characters deal with it, the gravity of the situation when the loss of some kind of guidance, a friend and their sole protection becomes a reality. The reader is drawn into the belief that sacrifices for others may elevate one's personal status. And the reality of the situation is that they no longer have a safety net and they can no longer rely on knowledge that is their predecessor but rather that they must discover the strength and faith that they have in each other and their own talents to see them through this difficult time. When Gandalf does rejoin the company he re-enters as Gandalf the White, embodying his unselfish behaviour. This allows him to transcend his previous status and proceed to a higher level because the reader makes the deduction that through sacrifice there is some redemption available from a higher power and if Gandalf's purpose has not been fulfilled he will come back to complete his fate. This is similar to Malory allowing Merlin the choice and therefore giving him ultimate power. For Tolkien it is the sacrifice of Gandalf's own life and power that will enable him to receive more power and more life and ultimately greater magical abilities. It could be said that the elevation of Gandalf is in a sense the Christian ideal of conquering Death and rising above it by actions that are unselfish, almost as Christ did when he ascended into Heaven after his crucifixion. An eternal life promised to those who can put others before themselves.

Gandalf is also the prophet figure in the text as it is his knowledge and combination of talents that he borrows from his counterparts allows him insight into the events that are to develop. He relies on others like the Elves, who embrace a different type of

⁴⁸ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg 40.

magic, for their insight. He says to Legolas, “Speak, Legolas!” ... ‘Tell us what you see there before us!’,⁵⁰ and he depends on Legolas’s elvish ability for details and information which otherwise would not have been accessible to the company. Gandalf’s virtues are paralleled with those of the Elves, the most powerful being Galadriel, Arwen’s grandmother, who seems to share power with Gandalf. As William Green points out in his article ‘Where’s Mama?’⁵¹ Gandalf shares many attributes with female witches and as Jung puts it with the *anima*⁵². The anima is considered to be the feminine side of a man’s personality, and it originates from ‘early men’s experiences with women—mothers, sisters, lovers— ...’⁵³ It is a possibility that Gandalf being portrayed with many feminine features may be a fragment of Tolkien’s unconscious which is linked to the anima, and consequently he becomes the mother figure for members of the Fellowship such as Frodo, Sam and Gollum. His intense understanding and compassion for Gollum and even Saruman in some instances highlights him as more feminine. Could it then be possible that Tolkien envisaged feminine qualities draped in a male appearance, and wrote Gandalf as a glorification of female qualities, much like the embodiment of human emotions that the Greeks portrayed in their gods such as Athena and Artemis? If we entertain this idea a little further we could come to the conclusion that if Gandalf is androgynous, similarly Morgan could be and then the argument highlighted earlier about magic existing in a neutral form becomes poignant. If magic, like power exists without gender then it is the author’s choice of how these gender types and power relations are perceived by readers.

To a large degree Gandalf is a part of a whole, a magic realm that relies on separate components (the Elves, the Dwarves, the Humans, etc) for it to function successfully. He ‘...is one of five wizards sent to Middle Earth to provide help to its inhabitants, as long as they are not dependant on the power of the wizards to solve their problems. He will help anyway he can...’,⁵⁴ each component plays a constructive and essential

⁴⁹ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*, London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg 322.

⁵⁰ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*, London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg 495.

⁵¹ Green, W. H. ‘Where’s Mama? The Construction of the Feminine in *The Hobbit* and in *The Lion and the Unicorn*’ 22.2 (1998).pg 188-195.

⁵² Feist, J. and Feist, G. *Theories of Personality- Fourth Edition*. United States of America: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc, 1998, pg 69.

⁵³ Feist, J and Feist, G. *Theories of Personality- Fourth Edition*. United States of America: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc, 1998, pg 69

⁵⁴ Darkman, X000. ‘A Literary Analysis of Tolkien’. *Tolkien Archives*. pg 1.

part in the well-being and coherence of the whole. This makes it impossible for one element to act as the overarching superior power, and signifies that rather a multitude of powers act simultaneously. Gandalf acknowledges that he needs to learn about the ring from those who know more than he does, 'Known about this ring, well I still do not know,...'⁵⁵. He is a part of a universe which may be unreal or fantastical to the reader, but it is complete in and of itself: it encompasses an order of knowledge to which he needs to adhere. It seems that, existing in such an orderly world, the wizards and powerful Elves partake in scholarly activity to ensure their knowledge is correct:

Wizards, in Tolkien's text, are the hidden architects of (hu)man society. Like the Elves, they structure events, foresee possible futures, and arm themselves with knowledge of 'the Enemy' (Sauron) that only they properly understand—knowledge gained not through direct experience with Sauron and his works, but through research, reading, scribing, and other familiar techne of the academic elite.⁵⁶

This placement of Gandalf is independent of gender and societal discrepancies as women, men, elves, hobbits and all others have access to power, position and the same elevation in the readers' eyes as they all work together and not as single agents. The context in which Tolkien places Gandalf is also not suitable for only one character to act as the pure source of magic and goodness in the text because Gandalf represents only one aspect of the necessary elements, namely support, for the Fellowship to succeed. Gandalf and the Fellowship are representatives of the good forces. They are part of 'a camp of goodness': Gandalf holds the camp together. But he is not their leader, he is merely the person the other characters have in common. They are juxtaposed against the other camp of evil and threatening characters. Tolkien specifically places these characters in a mythological context:

...arguing that myths, far from being lies, were the best way of conveying truths which would otherwise be incomprehensible. We come from God, Tolkien argued, and inevitably the myths woven by us, though they contain error, reflect splintered fragments of true light, the eternal truth that is God.

Myths may be misguided but they steer however shakily towards the harbour,

⁵⁵ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*, London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg 46.

⁵⁶ Battis J. 'Gazing Upon Sauron: Hobbits, Elves, and the Queering of the Postcolonial Optic.' *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, 50.4(2004). pg 9.

whereas materialistic ‘progress’ leads only to the abyss and to the power of evil.⁵⁷

Therefore one needs to realise that although these characters exist within myth, within a constructed and orchestrated universe which may be unrealistic (not within constructed ideas of experience and environment) to readers but within it, real (identifiable experiences for the reader) events and actions, this mythological world is bona fide and serves as a refractory light for us. Gandalf’s voice within the text may have a magical element to it but it is primarily the voice of the type of individual which exists within our own society such as a guru, wise man or even a priestly type of figure, possibly even a fortune teller and the right hand of God.

Consequently if Gandalf is to exist in a segregated part of a society that likes to categorise characters in order to facilitate an easier understanding, he is placed in a category on request of the reader and by direction of the author, who need him to fulfil his role of guide and therefore group him as a strong, good, and male. Gandalf exists in the gendered, power binary that was created by modern society outside of the text. He represents the good that exists in the real world- real through the reader's own experience of life and its issues- he is one of the good's specific representatives in Middle Earth. The binary play, between good and evil along gendered lines, is situated on a mythological or supernatural plane in the text so that the entire scope of the existence of Middle Earth is drawn into question. The question being will good overcome evil so that Middle Earth and more specifically its ideals as embodied by Gandalf and company, survive? The specific voice that Gandalf articulates in the text allows others' power, not only his own to be heard and understood, within this kind of voice is concealed a kind of truth. The multiple voices firstly allow for a multitude of views on one experience, from feminine and masculine to wizardry and humanity, and secondly, it permits the reader to interact with each character from a different reference point resulting in fragments of each character forming part of the whole narrative for the reader. This means that readers can create their own truth, as they perceive it, from the narrative. The mythical realm also allows for those events which may seem unacceptable and inappropriate to become part of a normal existence for

⁵⁷ Grace, K.M. ‘Praising God in Myth: Tolkien’s Rings Triumphs over the Uncomprehending to Shed a

the reader as it would be too simplistic to read Tolkien as merely a story with no bearing on our own experiences and lives.

In the myth *The Lord of the Rings* Gandalf is the wise, honest, old magician who fights for a good cause, namely against Sauron and for a free world. As Thompson says of Arthurian legend, which is applicable to this context: the battle in this mythological world is waged on a supernatural level which encompasses all, Elves, Hobbits, Orcs, Dwarves, Men and others. The populations of Middle-Earth are drawn into camps of allies and powers which they believe will save their world. Gandalf only combats those that are a threat to the greater good; this being a Christian ideal (as Tolkien states, ‘Gandalf is an angel’⁵⁸). My interpretation of Tolkien’s view is that Gandalf fulfils a protective role. He must guide the Fellowship and not interfere with or influence any of the choices made, since free will and its role in the text are essential. He represents a refuge for Frodo and Bilbo but he cannot make their choices for them nor can he tell them how to act. He may embody an angel because Sauron may be viewed as the equivalent of the Devil in this text. Since Gandalf is the representative of the good, Christian man within the context of Middle Earth he must act accordingly. Therefore he does not possess an autocratic sense of the world but rather a democratic one. There are characters within the text are shown to enjoy freedom of choice: Galadriel, Gandalf, Frodo, Éowyn and Gollum are all examples of characters who must make choices, which hints at a democratic understanding and representation within the narrative. Frodo and the Fellowship also consult on choices in discussions with each other in contrast to Malory’s characters that seem to have little choice because events and choices are often dictated by rules and Kings, Merlin and the Court. The ability to choose highlights the characters’ desire to control outcomes and experiences and even though the reader is under the impression that the characters have been created to highlight choice and the freedom associated with it, it is also a version of control.

Tolkien’s characters’ ability to choose inevitably shifts the power base from a focus on one character to a focus on many characters and their experiences, which allows the author an attempt at an authentic representation of these experiences and their

Christian Light on Our Times.’ Report- Canada’s Independent Newsmagazine. pg 4.

repercussions. Gandalf also embodies the power that nature encompasses, not only in terms of the ability to survive but also as protector and generator of life. There is throughout the work an ‘understanding of and participation in a moral and natural order. Gandalf also clearly perceives from the start that this order must be clearly defended.’⁵⁹ He makes use of nature to escape from Saruman’s tower and joins the company as Gandalf the White in the forest: ‘and so at the last Gwaihir the Windlord found me again, and he took me up and bore me away.’⁶⁰ Tolkien’s reverence for nature and natural ways may be part of his love for the creative part of God and the ability that woman has to procreate is an integral part of that. There is also the obvious link to concepts of Mother Earth and her powers in many instances in the text and this highlights Tolkien’s Christian influence and also the effect of Industrialisation on a small boy born in an African town.

Gandalf is the archetypal wizard, such as perceived in the representation of Merlin in Malory’s text, using words and the ability to communicate with other populations to help his cause, but he is some way more human than supernatural. His confrontation with Saruman exhibits his more human side. He is forced to endure Saruman’s attack on his character and his magical abilities, as well as the temptation of wielding all the power the Ring holds: “And why not, Gandalf?” he whispered. ‘Why not? The Ruling Ring? If we could command that, then the Power would pass to us. That is in truth why I brought you here.’⁶¹ He is required to make an ethical and moral choice, illustrating that he possesses the potential for evil even though he does not decide to follow it, much like Galadriel’s confrontation of her own desire to possess the Ring. Therefore one can deduce that in Tolkien power resides in the opportunity for choice however, the opposite might be true for Malory where choice is a restricted privilege only available to Merlin and then only to a certain extent. Tolkien illustrates Saruman’s persuasive manner and the attractiveness of power by highlighting the possibility that both wizards would benefit from the power of the Ring. However, Gandalf has a choice to make: does he share the power, does he not accept the power at all or does he empower only himself? This matter of choice also brings to the fore another issue: did Tolkien truly write Gandalf as an “angel”? An angel, like Lucifer,

⁵⁸ Tagg, M. ‘The Lord of the Rings: Fact or Fantasy’. *The Tolkien Archives*, pg 4.

⁵⁹ Mathews, R. *Fantasy: The Liberation of the Imagination*. New York, Routledge, 2002, pg 65.

⁶⁰ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg 491.

would possess the capability of making a choice since he or she is beyond that entrapment. The perception of angels, and even demons, is that they are privy to information and knowledge unparalleled in normal circles of society as well as the suggestion that because of this knowledge and access to power through awareness, that they would be incapable of making decisions that put them into dubious situations. The only time that this seems to become possible is when the angel, or demon, is driven by a human quality such as ambition, greed, power etc.

Yet while Tolkien wishes us to identify with the difficulty of conceding to the power of choice in his depiction of Gandalf he also wants to make the reader aware that Gandalf will not make any other choice other than the right one. I could then argue that Gandalf has no actual choice to make, if he cannot make any other, he has no choice and it is the illusion of choice that propels the notion of good in the narrative and not necessarily the character. However the problem with this type of statement is that I would like to believe that it is more than mere belief and perception that brings the avid reader to the conclusion that Gandalf will make the choice in favour of good and that it is based on a fundamental strength of character and, for lack of a better phrase, essence that drives the final decision. He might be placed in opposition to Saruman, showing him to be on the side of light however Tolkien depicts him, by the confrontation, as being vulnerable, and in so doing elevates his character to a higher moral ground when he denies desiring the power of the Ring and refuses Saruman the answer he was hoping for.

Gandalf also invests a certain emotional quantity and quality in Bilbo and Frodo, which is absent in other characters such as Merlin. Gandalf displays a degree of emotional connection to the hobbits. They are so small and yet they take on the biggest task of all, saving Middle Earth. Gandalf allows them the benefit of the doubt and offers them all he can: ‘Gandalf comprehends experiences larger than his own and attains wisdom and goodness. He shares his learning freely with others and becomes a model for both Bilbo and Frodo, who later become scholars, poets and chroniclers themselves.’⁶² This belief in others and his acknowledgement of the validity of various experiences and knowledge allows Gandalf not only to occupy the

⁶¹ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg 253.

space of being almost human, and in this to represent an identifiable and credible character for the reader, but also to act as the guardian and protector of the inhabitants of Middle Earth. He is not merely a controller of magic. He always faces the evil encountered on the quest from a standpoint of moral greatness, and defends the order of morals and nature that is set up in the text.

He permits creatures in the text to exercise their voices and creates the space for some of them to be heard. This is where Frodo learns how to treat Gollum with kindness (born out of pity) and not contempt and possibly why the latter partly wants to trust him and ultimately become his friend. However, Gandalf's ability and duty to combat evil for the sake of good and be morally correct do not exclude him from violence. The exhibition of violence as well as the enforcement of it often has Gandalf at its' helm. He is sometimes the first, if not within the first lines of soldiers to wield his staff, illustrated not only in the instance with the Balrog but also in his willingness to participate in a physical confrontation with Saruman and the Ringwraiths. The sense is that blood must flow in order for Middle Earth to enjoy peace, almost as if the war in which the Fellowship and alliances all involve themselves represents some type of labour before the birth of the true Middle Earth can take place. Hence sweat, tears and blood must be shed before there can be a healing. This is of course parallel to giving birth and creating new life, as there is pain and trauma before there is joy and life. It is worthwhile noting that both Gandalf and Merlin wield the ability to kill and that in both worlds, shift happens through bloodshed. This inevitable wounding of the populations in the narratives brings about power shifts: in Tolkien the human race is brought to its knees with the war against Sauron in the first battle where the Ring is cut off of his finger⁶³ while in Malory, Arthur enters into many wars to gain territory and men which results in his rise as King of Camelot. In each case it is a power shift which takes place from the normal to the magical, from men to elves and from kings to the King and his adviser. But neither will succeed without the intervention and leadership of the male wizards.

Some characters in the trilogy fear Gandalf because of his powers and his ability to alter a situation. It is more markedly those who are aware of his power and ability and

⁶² Mathews, R. *Fantasy: The Liberation of the Imagination*. New York, Routledge, 2002, pg 65.

those that have been discernible as his opposition because of their choices. Sam has a well earned respect for Gandalf, relating to him on occasion as a father figure, as well as the reputation that is perpetuated in the text about Gandalf, especially with the Hobbits. This highlights not only the uncertainty that is bred by the image of knowledge and power but also the uneasiness that they feel in their own environment when he is around. The hobbits represent the domestic, homely and rooted aspects of community and Gandalf represents the wondering, freedom and instability of living almost temporarily-always as the guest. And it is the difference in their experience of Middle Earth that makes the Hobbits cautious of him. He has earned his respect in various communities by respecting others and exercising the Arthurian quality that Thompson proposes: ‘The most important lesson is to care for others, and this criterion usually determines how a character is viewed.’⁶⁴ Gandalf unlike Merlin owns many names which he has earned through respect. He possesses various names in Elvish, the Hobbits have a name for him, and the wizards acquire their own name for him as well. Gandalf serves different roles in various communities and therefore retains different names.

These wizards display some commonalities, the most obvious and fundamental being the fact that they are both men. This may seem apparent, but as a result they exist in a male-dominated realm of magic although these vary in time, placing them on the side of good, which empowers the male in their society. But even this type of general statement is difficult because my current understanding is that Merlin may be more ambiguous to me as a reader than Gandalf which forces a slightly different type of understanding, which in turn concedes a biased perception for me. This positive placement may be brought about in different way and with varying intensions as they are considered heroes, warriors and saviours of their nations. In both these texts the male figures possess more wisdom and power than the other characters, such as Merlin’s power and Gandalf’s insights into the danger represented by Sauron and Saruman, or so it appears to be since in the shadows of these authoritative and commanding males prevails a softer voice, one that finds its expression in two

⁶³ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg 239-243.

⁶⁴ Thompson, R. H. *The Return from Avalon: A Study of the Arthurian Legend in Modern Fiction*. Westport Conn: Greenwood Press, 1985, pg 137.

antithetic forms and which will be discussed in the coming chapters, as they are the true focus of this dissertation and to these I now return.



CHAPTER TWO

Wearing Two Masks

For further investigation into the battle between the heard and the silent, the powerful and the seemingly non powerful, the present author discusses how the men and women in these two texts a journey into the representation of the presumed weaker gender.

In Malory's representation of female characters, for example, Morgan le Fay is a powerful, sexual, feared, repressed sorceress, and does not neatly fit into a box either in the women's or the men's worlds. For this character her creator's dilemma would be that if she cannot fit into any prescribed label, where could she exist beyond the stigma of labels? The answer lies in her practice of magic. Morgan le Fay must be able to participate in an activity that would exclude her almost completely from normal judgement so that her actions become a possible and believable scenario for the reader. She finds herself stranded on an island where her only hope is to become redefined through her use of magic, which will allow her to be understood by the reader as something other (different to the understood and comfortable norm) and strange, which would then allow for her actions to be judged on a different level. Hence it is the magic, the incorporation of a concept which is dualistic in nature and which will alienate her from her ordained place in society to cast her into a less desirable seat amongst her peers. It is now that magic becomes Malory's tool of choice and for it to be a productive one it must be taken seriously and as Tolkien states in his essay 'On Faerie Stories', "That must [magic] in that story be taken

seriously, neither laughed at nor explained away.”⁶⁵ Therefore the character of Morgan le Fay becomes an ‘other’ in both sectors (male and female) of society due to her association with magic, a necessary and authentic tool:

If a woman identifies with the mother, she ensures her exclusion from and marginality in relation to the patriarchal order. If, on the other hand, she identifies with the father—makes herself in his image, then she ends up becoming “him” and supporting the same patriarchal order which excludes and marginalizes her as a woman.⁶⁶

From my own experience and reasoning abilities I could entertain the idea that Morgan's relationship may be an attempt at emulating the type of relationship that she may have had with her absent mother. I would propose that the power and status that she has is partly because of her obsessive connection to magic and its purpose. The obsession however, only highlights the absence of a maternal figure in her life and therefore she desperately clings to the one thing that has never abandoned her or let her down- her own ability to use magic. In my opinion she is created by the author to openly oppose both perspectives and is marginalised in both instances (by the general reader), only to be placed in a separate category by her chosen art which will force her to be understood and interpreted more as a heretic. As stated previously this could possibly be as a result of her lineage being in human origins and not supernatural, godlike ones such as that of Merlin. This type of labelling then would find manifestation in Morgan le Fay's relationship with society and how that is represented by Malory because if she is human she is subject to the same laws and regulations that every other woman may be which means she can still not escape the stigma created around women who participate in magic and its associated practices. And as stated earlier on pg 6 by Elizabeth Cady Stanton,

The canon and civil law; church and state; priests and legislators; all political parties and religious denominations have alike taught that woman was made after man, and for man, an inferior being subject to man. Creeds, codes, Scriptures and statutes, are all based on this idea. The fashions, the forms,

⁶⁵ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Monsters and the Critics and other Essays*. Great Britain: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006, pg 114

⁶⁶ Chrenka, L. “Julia Kristeva”, pg1.

ceremonies and customs of society, church ordinances and discipline all grow out of this idea.⁶⁷

The history of this kind of depiction of women stemmed from centuries previously when women, ‘as St Jerome put it, were considered “the gate of the devil, the patron of wickedness, the sting of the serpent.’⁶⁸ This for me is an interesting analogy because this imagery is linked to mythology and other iconic symbols such as the Devil and God. Therefore the contrast between women and Merlin becomes apparent as they are then also offspring of the same parental vehicle but Merlin is accepted whereas mere women are not. Does this not create a double standard? If this double standard exists, as I believe it does, then it must be portrayed in the text and Malory then has his illustration of it in Morgan. She is the gate to the underworld and the cause of all the dubious events in the text. Women therefore occupied a demanding space in society, being placed on the opposite extreme to their male counterpart: ‘... they were victims of a structure even if they learned to make the best of the situation.’⁶⁹ In essence women were controlled by a set of rules in all sectors of society without consultation, sympathy or empathy but, rather, these rules were born out of some long-standing contempt and misunderstanding of what a woman was. And by means of the thinking of the times, a logical conclusion would be that women were considered not only as second-rate citizens but also as a sort of sub-human class of individuals who seemed unable to cope with any intellectual stimulation and activity. Women were obliged to live between two poles of existence, ‘between the twin distinctively female temptations of angelic submission and monstrous assertion....’⁷⁰ And with that thread stipulating its own governing criteria the choice become one that often meant that women had to switch roles as the situation called for it and without offending or breaking the dictated codes of the society.

Therefore if a woman moves away from the accepted norm and version of the expectation of what she is and should be, she might be forced into a new representation by authors and readers: one which would not necessarily create new appreciations but, rather, would create a definite shift in her representation. As this

⁶⁷ Chrenka, L. “Julia Kristeva”, pg1.

⁶⁸ McClain, L. T. ‘Gender Anxiety in Arthurian Romance’. *Extrapolation*; Fall; 38; 3; 1997, pg 193.

⁶⁹ Karras, R. M. ‘Women’s Labors: Reproduction and Sex in Medieval Europe.’ *Journal of Women’s History*. 15(.4), Indiana University Press, Indiana, 2004, pg 154.

was the case for women who felt that they wanted to become warriors and defenders of communities. The expectation could then not be either angel or monster as neither of these would be sufficient for an understanding of her. Therefore she was obliged to become something completely different and a separate entity. A woman ‘...who undertook the role of warrior would be forced, in the words of the *Saxo Grammaticus*, to ‘unsex’ herself, to abandon her true womanly nature and act with “virile ruthlessness”’,⁷¹ One realises that by participating in a task that was considered a male occupation, a woman might become ostracised and might have been forced to change or manipulate her original identity and develop a new representation.

In order for the reader to envisage a new type of woman who will rise out of this stereotype one needs to ‘...criticize current descriptions of a given instance of the oppression of the weak as “a necessary evil” (the political equivalent of a “negligible anomaly”)[which] is to explain just why it is not in fact necessary, by explaining how a specific institutional change would eliminate it. That means by sketching an alternative future and a scenario of political action that might take us from the present to that future.’⁷²

The new presentation of woman that is to emerge in both texts (Morgan, Arwen, Galadriel etc) discovers that by exerting power people become accessible, events can be manipulated, and through language physical changes and actions occur. It is through the use of these concepts, conscious or unconscious, employed by the authors that such women create a history beyond themselves and for the readers who come to meet the texts years later.

The alternative mask, the new female representation, in Tolkien’s work takes on a different form: one where the reader is often confronted by alternate realities, especially when one considers the female characters such as Goldberry, Galadriel and Arwen. For some readers the difficulty may lie in constructing the middle ground between the created setting of the text and the attributes assigned to characters as

⁷⁰ Gilbert, S. and Gubar, S. *The Madwoman in the Attic*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979, pg 444.

⁷¹ McLaughlin, M. ‘The Woman Warrior: Gender, Warfare and Society in Medieval Europe.’ *Women’s Studies*, 17 Science Publishers Inc, Great Britain, 1990, pg 193-209.

these are constructed out of an independent and individual imagination and have fewer roots in reality than that of an author such as Malory. Therefore the connection between author and reader becomes strained and the potential clear understanding becomes muddier and muddier. There is one interesting character in Tolkien's work that does not fit the tab that I have created for her in the above definition, namely that of Rosie. She is interesting in not only presentation but also representation as my mind equates her to the domestic, nineteen-twenty ideal of a housewife and dedicated mother. She exemplifies the homely, family bound and culturally centred mother, similar to the concept of Mother Earth, and she is the sole reason that Sam manages to become a hero, save Frodo and discover a purpose for his life. The centre of power in Sam's life is therefore female, warm, powerful and all encompassing. All Tolkien's major female characters display some sort of masked power:, be it their voice, status or name. These powers may not overtly be masked or hidden, but they are dressed up in a guise-whether Elven beauty, nature or love.

Each woman contains the potential to confront the evils of her environment with her special power and somehow take control of it, either by dominating it, eradicating it or finding its' Achilles Heel. There are nevertheless critics who believe otherwise, Catherine Stimpson seems to feel that Tolkien's representation shows 'subtle contempt and hostility towards women.'⁷³ She adds that the absence of women and their power depicts a type of contempt for their gender. This could explain why most of the women are placed in dangerous situations but it cannot explain why Tolkien writes them as heroes and as equals to the men in the text, especially in the characters of Arwen and Galadriel. William Green proposes an opposing opinion to this notion in his article concerning the feminine and the hobbit he explores other explanations for the absence of women in Tolkien's work. He argues that 'men behave contemptibly around them.'⁷⁴

Green adds that the absence of women in Tolkien's work brings to the fore the speculation of almost a sense of respect towards the gender of women. This could

⁷² Rorty, R. 'Feminism, Ideology, and Deconstruction: a Pragmatist View.' *Hypatia* 8 (2) (Spring), 1993, pg 1.

⁷³ Green, W. H. 'Where's Mama? The Construction of the Feminine in *The Hobbit* and in *The Lion and the Unicorn*.' 22.2 (1998).pg2.

speculatively be interpreted as a primal fear on Tolkien's part, a fear of women and their ability to possibly distract him and therefore his characters. My view is that Tolkien's reverence, entwined with a religious and historic understanding of the representation of women in biblical and medieval texts influenced his depiction of women as being men's sanctuary from evil and from their own fallibility. For it is the women in this trilogy that save, redeem and protect the populations of Middle Earth from themselves and others.

Lady Goldberry and Galadriel are especially well masked: 'masked' here denoting that they are not overtly displaying their power. They help, give advice and determine the Fellowship's next move. Goldberry represents, in my view, the natural order of the world as she portrays beauty and wisdom in understanding natural existence and reassures Frodo and his band of their safety in the presence of Tom Bombadil. She embodies the sun, water and fertility: one could easily reconcile her image with that of Artemis, the Greek Goddess of the Wilderness. Frodo makes the remark that he feels some strange delight, '...nearer to mortal heart; marvellous and yet not strange.',⁷⁵ when he is near to Goldberry, allowing her into his soul. Therefore the mask that she wears is one of natural power, relying on her visitors to make the unconscious or conscious connection between her and the natural order. Her connection to the cosmos is also clearly illustrated when the Fellowship, consisting only of Hobbits at this point, leave the woods. They begin to feel stress and alienation outside Goldberry's protection. Similarly Galadriel provides the Company with the protection that they seek when they arrive and Aragon reminds the Company of her innate goodness: 'Speak no evil of the Lady Galadriel. You know not what you say. There is in her no evil unless a man brings it hither himself.'⁷⁶ Aragorn defends the notion that Galadriel is representative of an order that is somehow not capable of evil and that only man, being human, can bring evil to Middle Earth and her realm. A feminist interpretation of the word 'man' as used above would lead to the reader to the understanding that only men, not women, are capable of bringing evil into the world which turns the tale of the Garden of Eden and a woman's innate wickedness on its' head. However it is Aragon's reference to man as a population in Middle Earth

⁷⁴ Green, W. H. 'Where's Mama? The Construction of the Feminine in *The Hobbit* and in *The Lion and the Unicorn*.' 22.2 (1998). pg 2.

⁷⁵ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg 121.

that I believe the reader is meant to acknowledge it as the group of dwellers of Middle Earth that will bring violence and harm to the others. In their defence the reader must recognise that it is only through violence that redemption and a new beginning can occur.

Galadriel demonstrates her strength and ability when she confronts her own ambitions in the mirror, very much like Macbeth does when he meets Banquo's ghost at dinner⁷⁷. On the other hand the difference between these two characters is the reaction and the understanding that Galadriel possesses of her own weakness which Macbeth does not own because he is too close to his evil ambition and his 'shadow' as Jung⁷⁸ stated. The ultimate difference between these two reactions to the offer of power is that Galadriel knows that she has the ability, talent and attributes to become evil and she realises that her desire for power cannot originate from anywhere else other than her own selfish desires. In contrast for Macbeth it is his refusal to accept his potential for evil and desire for selfish power that facilitates all his destruction and ultimate death.

Galadriel understands that she too may falter and create a form of evil that embodies all her greed and selfishness which would be detrimental to her world- conversely she allows her own strength of character to choose the right path. For the reader she becomes the icon of redemption and honesty and even possibly faith, which is formalised in her relationship with Frodo and how the reader interprets it. She has come to wear two masks with respect to Frodo, one shows her as the Queen who reads minds, understands his feelings of isolation, desperation and hopelessness. Secondly she is the Queen he should fear, the powerful and destructive Queen who could eliminate him, but has chosen not to and in so doing has become an example and heroine for Frodo. Her wisdom lies in the action of choosing, an essential trait in Tolkien's writings, and a fundamentally different path to that which her 'shadow' may desire. Similar to Gandalf, Galadriel is shown to have a multitude of options available to her, more than the Ring could provide, yet she is characterised by her

⁷⁶ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg 349.

⁷⁷ Shakespeare, W. *Macbeth*. Act three, scene four, line 39. Cape Town. Maskew Miller Longman, 1985, pg 79.

⁷⁸ Feist, J and Feist, G. *Theories of Personality- Fourth Edition*. United States of America: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc, 1998, pg 60-94.

choice for the collective good of Middle Earth over the option of personal gain. This is also why the present reader comes to identify so much with these powerful Elves. They are representative of their own short-comings and yet they succeed against huge odds. She relies on her ability to know the morally right choice, not necessarily for her but also for the community of Middle Earth that wishes to survive the battle for the Ring and she is relieved when this comes to pass. Her test has tried her character but not her wisdom, with the latter triumphing. Tolkien himself states, ‘In the event it proved that it was Galadriel’s abnegation of pride and trust in her own powers, and her absolute refusal of any unlawful enhancement of them, that provided the ship to bear her back to her home.’⁷⁹ Tolkien, himself, accords power to Galadriel here and my understanding is that had Galadriel given in to her shadow she would not have been able to travel with her family away from Middle Earth. Her departure sets the tone and stage for the Hobbits and the men to become the heroes of the text as they will no longer have her knowledge and protection in the battle. They will need to rely on their own abilities, just as Galadriel did. By defying the temptation of the Ring she inevitably alters her station and she gains more power which allows her to develop into a formidable force that aids the Ring Bearer and the Company.

Parallel to this great Queen is the princess Arwen who represents hope, and faith in a better, alternate world in the novel. The influence of the creation of Malory’s Guinevere and other characters such as Maid Marion is felt very strongly here: the characters are all deemed to be the most beautiful, intelligent (by the societal standards dictated by each era and context) women in their race. But, Arwen lacks the human qualities or abilities such as deception, adultery and treason that Guinevere represents in Malory. She appears to embody something more holy, more spiritual and more connected than what Malory predicted for Guinevere, part of the unknowability mentioned earlier, and in this respect Malory manipulates the reader into seeing Guinevere as a sympathetic character who should not be treated ‘contemptibly’. In Malory’s text Guinevere is juxtaposed with Morgan le Fay so as to highlight the accepted norm and ‘knowability’ or rather presumptions of expected behaviour, appearance and temperament of women. Such attributes as beauty, goodness and saintliness. However her non-participation in her own wedding and matrimonial

⁷⁹ Lakowski, R. I. ‘The Fall and Repentance of Galadriel.’ *Mythlore*, Spring-Summer, 2007. pg 2.

arrangements causes the reader to wonder about the extent to which she would be able to control or consciously participate in her own experiences as a character. In the text Guinevere's involvement is not even granted one line, it is stated as fact that she married Arthur. Her plight, for the sympathetic reader, is highlighted to a greater extent when Arthur betrays her and conceives Mordred with Morgan le Fay: 'For she was a passing fair lady; wherefore the King cast great love unto her; and desired to ly by her.'⁸⁰ His blatant disrespect for their marriage vows, which foreshadows the ultimate demise of their relationship and also the highlights the lack of mercy and empathy that Guinevere is treated with, casts her as the innocent, helpless victim and to an understandable extent a violated woman. At this juncture her portrayal does not seem to truly differ from Morgan le Fay's as they both seem to be at the mercy of men and their society, in various forms.

Their represented ignorance of important events and choices seems to be the obvious common thread as both characters are married to men whom they do not know, nor choose of their own volition. The reaction of each character to this lack of knowledge varies. Morgan le Fay is represented as the non conformist and almost as transgendered since she has openly embraced the society that enslaved her to the extent of having mastered and studied its male dominant attitude and attempted to manipulate and change its ideology from the inside. Being able to practise magic not only makes her a formidable enemy but also a dangerous ally because she possesses the ability to speak the language of the dominant power (namely that of the men with magical powers in the text such as Merlin) and to seduce them into a state of mind which would threaten their power over females. She has, however, by aligning herself with the power of language and knowledge, alienated herself further from her original female community who now also consider her a threat as they do not understand her nor do they feel that she belongs in any way to their community. By combating one adversary she has created another enemy which will destroy her. Most often the

...spell-casting women are of noble birth or illustrious birth, related to either the romance's male heroes or the kings of the courts. Indeed the women in these texts are conspicuous in breeding, rank and education. Their levels of

⁸⁰ Collver, T.L. 'The Changing Role of Women in the Arthurian Legend.' pg 3.

education combined with their aristocratic genealogies make them the equal in talent and expertise of their male-hero counterpart.⁸¹

The contrast in Tolkien's work is that Arwen chooses her own destiny, by choosing to marry Aragorn and even though this seals her death she is a willing participant in the decision. Tolkien has allowed her to represent a woman who is not a victim of her circumstance, but rather an active participant and this combined with her 'breeding, rank and education' places her on a entirely different judgemental plane for the modern reader. It is also Arwen's belief in true love, honesty and faith that allows the reader an almost vicarious relationship with her as they empathise with her sacrifice, and then mourn her death at the end of the novel. To this extent Arwen has lost her 'unknowability' and 'unpredictability' to give rise to a powerful and recognisable image of an iconic figure similar to Galadriel. As sacrifice and freedom of choice characterise these two characters destinies in the text , and their reward is the true fulfilment of their journey.

Although the elements mentioned above may entitle these women to the same societal position as the men; within the two authors' narratives the respective difference will become obvious when one considers the use of languages and silences in relation to gender. There seems to be a formal relationship between language and its placement that would allow a reader to make some judgements concerning gender and power. Women were often not given the space, literally in Malory, within the narrative to speak, therefore they became caricatures of their potential true selves and examples of this will be discussed later in my dissertation. This exercise in judgment and decision making may however be a result of the women needing to be repressed so that the reader may see for themselves the other representation and therefore this could be a manipulation on the part of Malory. If one is to compare the women's silence to the presence of male voices that grants them the space to defend their actions and reason through these with the reader, therefore making them more sympathetic and likable characters, then the reader would have to compare characters from an already unequal platform. Examples of this would be Guinevere and Arthur, Merlin and Igraine and Morgan and Arthur. However if we judge Morgan le Fay from Malory's text, Stephen Knight says...: 'She is a witch of course... but she also partly represents the power of

⁸¹ Goodman, B. A. 'The Female Spell-caster in Middle English Romances: Heretical Outsider or

the royal female who plots fiercely for her own family...’ (and in this she is in essence no different from Galadriel and Arwen whose self-sacrifice ensures the safety of both family and community) However, in this romance Morgan’s power and voice are gagged. She would challenge the hierarchy, but by not being allowed to speak can only be judged by her supposed actions, not by her words.⁸²

If we only have action to influence our own judgement and the value that we place on action is informed by society and its structures, then could there be any other conclusion than one which ensures that Morgan le Fay remains the evil element in a narrative concerned with love and chivalry? This is of course in reverse in Tolkien’s representation because words, often in the form of impressions and perceptions of characters told by others in the narrative, and language, often the descriptive elements of speech, is all the reader has access to when judging powerful women as they are often illustrated as visions and elements in nature.

One could conclude that this mode of narrative allows different readers to arrive at their own individual conclusions, as ‘Individual readers interpret literature within the framework of their textual communities, each with its own cultural authorities, reading strategies, and levels and definitions of competence.’⁸³ And in this specific period most readers, of a largely illiterate population of men and women, were men, as usually it was men, more precisely those of the clergy that were educated and literate: as it was an inherent belief that women ‘...weren’t fit to do anything.’⁸⁴ This meant that should a woman read this manuscript, or any other, it is a reasonable deduction that the literature would ‘call upon the female reader or critic to identify with the male as universal subjects’ ([1994 15.]). In so doing such texts may also require women readers to deny the worth of their own perspectives and experiences.⁸⁵ One cannot therefore exclude the context firstly of the reader, and of the actual text, and in this case ‘it has never been possible to comprehend medieval

Political Insider.’ Calumet College of St. Joseph., pg 49.

⁸² Goodman, B. A. ‘The Female Spell-caster in Middle English Romances: Heretical Outsider or Political Insider.’ Calumet College of St. Joseph., pg 50.

⁸³ Bartlett, A. *Male Authors, Female Readers: Representations and Subjectivity in Middle English Devotional Literature*. Ithaca. Cornell University Press, 1995, pg 15.

⁸⁴ ‘Why only women get Hysterical’ pg 3.

⁸⁵ Hallett, J. ‘Resistant (and enabling) Reading: Petronius’ Satyricon and Latin Love Elegy.’ *The Ancient Novel and Beyond* edited by S Panayotakis, M Zimmerman, and W Keuten. pg 330.

literature in accord with the New Critical dictum excluding historical and cultural contexts.⁸⁶

With this being the case one should consider the influence that an element such as religion had on an author producing a specific work. The medieval era was one of transition for religion that were adhered by the peoples of that time, where a Christian system was replacing a Pagan one. The pagan tradition, and textual references to women of this era, had ‘...combined elements of witchcraft that the Western Church tried most to suppress: female sexuality, knowledge of reproduction and sorcery.’⁸⁷ Hence the Pagans had begun to create the image of women whose magical powers superseded those of the Church, while men were considered, evil or deemed unacceptable by their society. Therefore the portrayals of spell-casting women that emerged in the literature became more obvious and outspoken, and in retaliation to these, portrayals in Christian literature became more demonised. Images of witches, angles and demons with Pagan origins become more pronounced and the perceptions of sexuality and power were being altered so that they were more concentrated on men. The feminist stream in my consciousness would easily make the connection between the former description and a character such as Morgan le Fay but I do not think that her representation is so easily categorised as Malory’s emphasis for my reading lies not in the rituals and Pagan tradition that Morgan supports and facilitates but rather that it is her sexuality as well as a gender that influences the way in which she may participate in the Pagan rituals. It is her proposed behaviour within the framework of Paganism and magic that I identify as threatening for Malory. Her sexuality and sexual behaviour is painted as deviant behaviour. It is easily concluded then that context and expectant behaviour would dictate a specific, stereotypical reading and reaction to Morgan le Fay but it does not explain the fascination and mesmerising elements that are present within this character. Although these changing positions and social restrictions excluded women and their status from many aspects of life, they also enabled them to a degree. Women were courted and protected, leading to a sense of insecurity and powerlessness for most men, for the former were

⁸⁶ Kelly, H. A. ‘Introduction: Are the Middle Ages Theoretically Recalcitrant?’ *Exemplaria*, VII(1), Spring 1990, pg 2.

⁸⁷ Morris, K. *Sorceress or Witch: The Image of Gender in Medieval Iceland and Northern Europe*. Lanham: University Press of America, 1991, pg 69.

often the controllers of any sexual relations and advances as well as being able to manipulate situations to their advantage:

They also exert significant control in the Church, either within the system as powerful abbesses or outside the system as revered, if eccentric visionaries.

Courtly literature reflects this new female power by assigning women the higher role in the feudal system, with men acting as servants of love- the opposite of most women's actual low position within the feudal hierarchy. The Middle Ages is thus a time of glaring contrasts and contradictions about appropriate ways to view women, men and their relationship to each other.⁸⁸

In Malory's text the descriptions and assumptions are represented in their accepted form, or rather that to which twenty first century readers have become accustomed: namely that the beautiful heroine is not assertive and not productive in society but rather that beauty and desirable qualities reside together. The text suggests that if the combination of beauty and intellect exists within one character, it is used against the masculine forces and is considered as dangerous. Guinevere may be considered to represent such an understanding at times in Malory's text since there are instances where she cannot defend herself. She is represented by male as such as in the case of the poisoned apple where her defender is Lancelot. She is accused and defended by the knights. She is unable to defend herself and is also portrayed as frail, because she often faints, but this may be a technique employed by the author to allow the character to exit the text at a point where she is no longer needed for the plot. This technique on the author's part could be attributed to the belief that in medieval society 'All sources of mental excitement should be perseveringly guarded against...' as 'Women are too nervous and hysterical...'⁸⁹ In this respect then Malory would be portraying his society and its relationships accurately.

Another explanation in my interpretation is that this type of reluctance and aversion might have been common behaviour in women at the time of writing and therefore the author's representation of action may be accurate. Consequently when we examine a comparison between Guinevere and Morgaine, who often invents plans and situations to harm Guinevere and trap Arthur and is juxtaposed against the stereotypical heroine

⁸⁸ McClain, L. T. 'Gender Anxiety in Arthurian Romance'. *Extrapolation*; Fall; 38, 3, 1997, pg 194.

thereby personifying the evil witch we could conclude that because Morgaine is not defended by men and their regulations that she must become the representative and spokesperson for the evil component in the text. The notion of the dominant male and representation of the beautiful yet helpless woman is found in the representation of Guinevere and exists in the form of what Gilbert and Gubar discuss as the angel (submission) and the whore (assertion)⁹⁰. Guinevere is the angel who supports her husband and is submissive to him but displays monstrous assertion in her adulterous affair with Lancelot. She risks her station in life, her very life, literally, and of course her spiritual health. She realises that the trial will occur since she must be held responsible to King and Court for what she has done, considering that adultery is the ultimate betrayal of the King. Her spiritual health in terms of Christian doctrine would be tainted for ever. Gilbert and Gubar discuss the difficulty that women face in being positioned as either good or evil. There is no space where women can display the characteristics of both positions, part good, and part evil. I suggest that this is why Guinevere is portrayed as being angelic and Morgaine as the threatening and assertive woman. This would also explain why Guinevere is subject to law and Morgaine not, as those who support the male hierarchy must be subject to its legislation, government and societal structures. Those who are not part of the system are subject to a different set of laws excluding those of men. Tolkien propounds a similar system where women who support the Fellowship are subject and submissive to an order held together by men and if one is to believe that Tolkien supported the ideology of Christianity then women would yield to the ultimate ‘male’ namely God as the characters in Malory do.

These representations as being angel and demon make both these women inherently subversive and dangerous to a degree. The luxury of time elapsed through reading and development in understanding of narrative and interpretation affords both reader and critic alike the opportunity to read and interpret these characters in a very different context. And most obviously in a distinctly post modern way, allowing for a more psychological or theoretical consideration of each character. This may not be the type of argument that is necessarily taken seriously or accepted readily but it is useful in creating a three dimensional understanding of the characters, and living in world with a variety of shades of grey it does seem to be the norm not to see things in such black

⁸⁹ ‘Why only women get Hysterical’.pg 3.

and white, obvious techniques. In order to offer such an integrated perspective on this subversion as discussed by Gilbert and Gubar one could consider Karen Horney's Psychoanalytic Social Theory. Horney postulates that people develop neurotic needs from having been exposed to basic hostility and basic anxiety in their childhood⁹¹. In the case of Morgaine, one could argue that her basic hostility originated from her being rejected and neglected by her parents and being sent to a nunnery. She internalises this hostility and develops a type of aggressive personality. She wishes to control those who controlled her and so she must accept their knowledge and power as her own in order to be able to use it against them. She must disguise her hostility so that she may gain entrance into the dominant power's confidence and to this degree she ensures that she remains physically attractive to men and preys on their lust for her. As a result, they become her pawns and she finds great pleasure in deceiving them. As post modern readers we need to bear in mind that Guinevere could have, speculatively, developed her neurotic defence from a basic anxiety, such as her marriage to Arthur. However speculative the point may seem it is not necessarily unimaginable and for my reading, it informs the created structure from which I view the scenario. The root of the anxiety might have been the realisation that she would marry and stay married to a man with whom she had had no prior relationship with and that she would be expected to act as Queen in a court where she had no allies or confidants. Feeling isolated from her own family and living up to the expectations that Arthur places on her could have made her anxious and her internalisation of that anxiety might have resulted in a shift in her personality. However, her internalisation of her anxiety is represented as the opposite of Morgaine's. She develops a compliant personality, whereby she ensures that she does not isolate herself from her position in society and seems to conform to expectations. But, the ultimate betrayal of Arthur however, proves that she is indeed satisfying her neurotic defence. In Morgaine's case, that of the aggressive personality, she wishes to prove to herself how perfect, superior and powerful she is because she has assumed that most other people in the world are hostile and therefore she wants to appear tough and ruthless. In Guinevere's case, with her compliant personality, her neurotic need protects her against feeling helpless, from being in a position of power only by appearance but not by action. The

⁹⁰ Gilbert, S. and Gubar S. *The Madwoman in the Attic*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.

⁹¹ Feist, J and Feist, G. *Theories of Personality- Fourth Edition*. U.S.A. McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc, 1998, pg 158-161.

only situation where she possesses independent power is that of her affair with Lancelot.

Within the secrecy of this affair Guinevere experiences protection from the demands of the status of being a queen and becomes an ordinary woman who loves, cares and feels, and who can act freely, even though the action is limited and the danger of exploitation is always at hand. This rebellion is parallel to that portrayed in Tolkien's work when Arwen renounces her elvish power and family to be with a mortal man, Aragon. In both instances the author has allowed the reader a moment to identify with these powerful women who are now merely normal and without category, and have normal desires and needs. It is through the affair that Guinevere lives and defines her entire existence. This is emulated by Arwen as she defines her role in the battle for Middle Earth by her alliance and love for Aragorn. For Guinevere this alternate love becomes her ultimate reality to escape the contract with Arthur which seems to be her ultimate doom. The love she shares with Lancelot is portrayed as real and tangible, ensuing in a physical and spiritual relationship unlike the orchestrated union that she has entered into with Arthur.

Guinevere is portrayed as the heroine in Malory's text because she is more often than not the object of Morgan la Fay's perceived hatred and malevolent behaviour. This intentional relationship of hatred is in my mind what Malory wants to use to set up the opposite elements in these two characters but more than that he ensures that one character will have the sympathy of the reader and inadvertently their support and warmth. This position of defence against a witch does make the reader aware of the magical power that Morgan has over Guinevere and the vulnerable position the latter is in to defend herself. Guinevere is victimised and the notion which is thereby arguably emphasised is that by means of beauty, power is gained. That power along with this beauty is enviable and provides a reason for attack. Although beautiful, she is also portrayed as sinful and flawed. The most obvious vice, is of course her adulterous affair with Lancelot which will cast Arthur into a state of mourning: 'Arthur is mourning the fracture of the Round Table, the order that ironically meets its demise due to the very thing which it has stridently promoted as a means to legitimise itself: knightly devotion to the feminine, or what in other circumstances may be

termed “courtly love” or “fin amour”⁹² For Arthur the adultery is representative of a huge deficiency in his kingdom, because if Guinevere is to yield to Camelot’s rules and government she would not have committed adultery. This was not the case so there must be a fatal flaw in this idyllic place and this is inevitably what causes his death, his loss of faith in kingdom, idea, love and loyalty. This destructive and harmful behaviour on Guinevere’s part could also be perceived by the post modern reader as an act of assertion: Guinevere follows her own heart and opposes the dictates and norms of her society. However, the responsibility for the act does not necessarily fall totally on Guinevere. Merlin does advise Arthur that she is not intended to be his queen but Arthur chooses to ignore the warning and proceeds with his marriage to Guinevere, ‘But M[e]rylon warned the kyng covertly that Gwenyver was nat holsom for hym to take to wyff. For he warned hym that Launcelot scholde love hir...’⁹³ Then is Arthur’s destruction not his own doing? It cannot be as the destruction of Camelot is part of the predetermined fate and overarching hierarchy that Arthur supports, therefore it is a bilateral diffusion of responsibility and all parts are equal in their share of the collapse.

In the above extract Malory has illuminated Guinevere’s position as an angel of the house, dedicated to her role as wife and queen, but has also drawn attention to her subversive nature and made the reader aware of her imminent betrayal of Arthur by using the word ‘*hol som*’. It conveys the connotation of well-being and health and is often used in connection with or in describing food (in current usage). The *Middle English Dictionary* defines *hol som* as ‘...benefit to the soul, spiritually beneficial; of counsel, teaching...’⁹⁴ This would consequently imply that Arthur’s digesting or consuming of Guinevere through the social institute of marriage and of sexual relations connotes that she is unhealthy and poisonous for him. Taken one step further in interpretation this could conclude that spiritually she will not lead Arthur closer to God therefore one could argue that it is in a sense Guinevere who will keep Arthur from the Holy Grail. This is perhaps the reason why he must die, and remain merely a man, in the narrative. In strict reference to the text Guinevere does not kill Arthur:

⁹² Armstrong, D. *Gender and the Chivalric Community in Malory’s Morte d’ Arthur*, Florida, Florida University Press, pg 175.

⁹³ Malory, T. *Le Morte D’Arthur. Volume 1*. Edited by Janet Cowen. London. Penguin Books, 2004, pg 92-93.

⁹⁴ ‘Middle English Dictionary’. pg 1.

however her betrayal of him could be seen as a poisonous agent in his soul which is slowly peeling away his soul and then ultimately kills him from the inside. This is however Arthur's own choice since Malory states that Guinevere is that which 'please[s]' him, implying that he is enchanted by her appearance but not necessarily her character. Although not evil, Guinevere is not Arthur's soul mate, not as he would like her to be, and Malory brings this to the reader's attention by absolving her of responsibility for her adultery. Malory begs the question whether people be forced into love? By making Guinevere a character with which the reader identifies, her absolution from the affair in the eyes of the reader is almost guaranteed as most of the blame is displaced onto Lancelot as well as the label of sinner: "...he turned to the sinners, and that caused the mysseaventure"(557/28).Lancelot's one sin has been his adulterous relationship with Guinevere.⁹⁵ The shift for Lancelot from the greatest knight to the lowest sinner is brought about by his association with Guinevere and behaviour that is tied to sexual impurity. Furthermore the extension of Guinevere as a sexually deviant individual makes Lancelot's behaviour all the more horrendous for the reader.

The result of this relationship with the reader is that Guinevere cannot be held responsible for her actions later on as the reader will sympathise with her difficulties. Malory is therefore offering Guinevere a kind of elitist 'witness protection', which he does not afford Morgaine. Nonetheless this type of reasoning then begs the question: why would Malory protect Guinevere to such an extent? Is he highlighting her position as forced queen and lover or is she sympathised with by the reader because Morgan le Fay is demonised? For my purposes it is a combination and both and neither can be taken out of the equation. It is the relationship between power, position and magic that shape the narrative and relationships in Malory.

Therefore it is inevitable that Guinevere proceeds with the affair with Lancelot but it begs the question to what degree then can Guinevere be held responsible? She is given no realistic choice because her life was predetermined and orchestrated by the over-arching belief structure that Merlin serves and upholds. Guinevere's fate is a predetermined one to which Merlin has access. It follows that she does not know what

⁹⁵ Gore, S. E. "Thus he rode sorowyng": Travel Narratives and the Ethics of Sexual Behaviour in Le

the future holds, as it was decided by Merlin's spoken words and the system which supports him, and the latter determined that she should be with Lancelot. Furthermore Arthur's decision to ignore Merlin's warning changed Guinevere's predetermined life. Arthur, with his fashioned determination to marry Guinevere, has removed any element of choice for Guinevere in the union. And in so doing Malory has ensured that any power that Guinevere might have been able to exhibit over Arthur through the courting and choosing rituals has never been realised. The freedom to choose is removed from her character and therefore she becomes less powerful and more dependent on the dominant male, namely Arthur, for her decisions. The affair with Lancelot was consequently an inevitable event and Arthur actually causes his own heartache and the loss of his dream. Her lack of speech may be indicative of her castrated position and a clever tool on Malory's part to ensure the reader's sympathy for this queen. Malory also brings into the spotlight the concept of freewill and responsibility. The consideration is whether anyone at any point is truly free—even those characters later created by Tolkien are not truly free, just as Merlin and Guinevere are not truly free, as they must still subscribe to a higher order, namely family, the council and even the fellowship for their actions and decisions. However for me the difference is that in Tolkien's work, characters are placed in scenarios which would force them to make a choice and it is the fact that Tolkien creates the choice which will redeem them or not, and that creates the illusion, if you will, of good and evil characters and furthermore buttresses the power structure in both texts.

However 'innocent' this situation portrays Guinevere to be one cannot ignore her actions. She must accept responsibility for her actions if she is to be viewed by the reader as an authentic, believable character, who portrays the difference between what is morally acceptable and morally non-acceptable in terms of marital behaviour. The choice that she needs to make represents the culmination of reasoning and emotion without fully realising her predetermined fate. Therefore I cannot fully support Malory's projected argument that Guinevere is merely fulfilling her fate, as that would be similar to supporting the well-known debate in psychology concerning nature as a predictor of all behaviour and as explanation for the inner psychological workings of an individual. This debate argues that all humans are totally reliant on

their genetic make-up for their actions and behaviours⁹⁶ and that environmental influence is a minimal factor on an individual's actions. This reasoning eradicates any possibility of an individual being accountable for their actions and the consequences as it is never questioned. However in Malory's created world accountability is highlighted not only by Guinevere but also other female characters whose choice of adulterous behaviour as an alternate type of experience, as well as Arthur's knights and even himself. However Malory's representation of each act is different moreover in the case of Guinevere, it is the verbalisation of an accusation that corrodes her marriage to Arthur. Conclusively for Guinevere it is the language of adultery that will be used to try and convict her and not necessarily the action itself. In support of this Harris highlights the subtlety of the betrayal when he states that

What indicts them (Guinevere and Lancelot) is something more subtle: the fact of being accused...By choosing not to follow his sources and render in explicit terms Guinevere and Lancelot's treason, Malory creates the conditions for an imagined act of treason which, in this case takes on the form of Agravain's accusation against Lancelot, an accusation that relies on words, specifically the noise of ill-fame, rather than on physical evidence.⁹⁷

It is followed by the word that will inevitably bind Guinevere and Lancelot, the imagined affair on Arthur's part and Guinevere's created silence. Therefore this creation of the image for the reader of a dishonest and unfaithful queen develops the power balance once more in favour of the male occupants of the text.

From the above statement a deduction that can follow is that the actual treason then resides in Arthur's psyche, allowing Malory to create the betrayal as completely devastating. The reader possesses no access to evidence of the level, intensity or actual pain which this character may experience. Therefore it is the thought for the reader and how much of this Arthur can take which becomes the pivot of action. The relationship between the anticipation, the characters and created events, and the readers' personal reference is what makes the predetermined fall of Camelot so powerful, devastating and tearful.

⁹⁶ Westen, D. *Psychology; Mind, Brain and Culture*. John Wiley and Sons. U.S.A. 1999, pg 629.

⁹⁷ Harris, E.K. 'Evidence against Lancelot and Guinevere in Malory's *Morte Darthur*: Treason by Imagination.' *Exemplaria*. pg5.

Therefore when the betrayal causes the breakdown of Camelot Malory has succeeded in reiterating the point he makes in the beginning through Merlin's words when he states that Guinevere's character is not 'hol som' for Arthur. The link between women and devastation is made clear and the collapse of Camelot is blamed squarely on Guinevere. And the type of visible damage that she creates within Arthur's character is one of total upheaval and spiritual degradation. His kingdom will fall, his son will kill him and his dream will inevitably die. I conclude from this that the thought of the affair, the idea and what the reader can imagine, little detail and all the horrific consequences which follow, constitute the actual catalyst for Arthur's demise and therefore that the power, which takes the form of Guinevere's love, is capable of bringing down a entire regime. Malory has deliberately allowed one female character to exert total domination over a male centred kingdom through her organised, predetermined direction of whom to love. This is hugely contrasted by Tolkien, as it is the males alliance to powerful women that will save Middle Earth and create a new world. It is also their participation in the battle that brings victory for Aragon, Frodo and the Fellowship.

Another element, alongside the choice of whom to love that Malory has created is that of the sexually powerful and attractive women, those who are the temptresses and sorceresses on various levels. Flouting spiritual, physical and emotional taboos, the female characters control and torment their male counterparts. One of these characters is Morgawse, who uses her physical beauty to create power for herself. It consequently becomes apparent that Malory has created their manipulation of sexual power, showing how it forms gateways and thresholds, entrances into the world of politics and men. However their entrance is conditional on their usefulness in terms of fertility, entertainment and wit: not necessarily on Malory's ability to create a convincing text or narrative for the reader. This position subsequently inadvertently also highlights women's inherent weakness as portrayed by Malory. One stemming from a voluntary, inferior eminence. They are accorded this lower status since their only functions are limited to those of procreation, healing and nurturing towards their husbands and families. They are therefore placed in a category in which men totally disregard and underestimate them; being thus situated they can then assume the position of spy and deceiver by using their gender and sexuality as a disguise from their true personas. Malory has accorded these characters power by creating their

sexuality as something that will and cannot be challenged by their male counterparts. He has allowed their sexuality to create a power base which excludes intelligence, which makes them seem weak to some extent but, has included with that an unknowing and unpredictability which is revealed to the reader after the fact.

This lowering in proverbial status of the female characters does however enable the reader to view their underhandedness or deception in certain cases as sinister and subversive. If men underestimate women so that they are not conceived as powerful threats, the latter cannot then be part of the male narrative. Action which consequently means that female characters, and often readers, need their own created narrative situations. In other words, if not openly given a place of power and of importance then the women of the texts have been developed, by reader interpretation, in such a way that they exist in a narrative parallel to that of the men, one not as obvious and easily accessible as the men's but just as powerful. This is evident in Arthur's son, Mordred, who is an illegitimate child and who, at the end of the text, kills his father. This demonstrates that Mordred who, born to Morgan le Fay, is totally underestimated by his father and inevitably causes the King's physical downfall. Even though this incident is related to male power it is an obvious example of parallel narratives, and power structures that cannot co-exist.

This outcome illustrates Arthur's incapacity for forethought and irresponsibility in his actions. Arthur's presumption that his action was a once-off experience, rebounds with devastating repercussions: Malory sets the stage so that the reader waits in suspense for the consequences of Arthur's sins. His transgressions go unpunished in the beginning, yet later it is their sins which 'ultimately destroy them.'⁹⁸ One might however, consider that the societal and political positions that were used in writing the text place women in a space where sex and sexual games may have been the only tool available to the author for writing a believable and popular narrative.

Women possessed no power in the realm of politics or societal circles, resulting in the only apparent option being that of wielding their sexuality. And this scenario they exploited, especially with regards to and concerning children. Male forced and

⁹⁸Collver, T, L, 'The Changing Role of Women in the Arthurian Legend.' pg 5.

focused centring on family brought to the fore the power of reproduction and the influence that mothers, or maternal figures such as sisters and aunts, exerted on any young children. Consequentially women influenced the education and interests of possible kings, nobles and other influential people, thereby ensuring that female narratives could also be told vicariously⁹⁹. Bearing a well-known or powerful man's child would increase a woman's social status, and this type of manipulation is what Morgan la Fay does to various men, including Lancelot and Arthur. Her outright participation in sexual endeavours that are outside of the bounds of marriage and bearing children outside of wedlock proves her understanding of power and status. This fact leaves us wondering if Malory had intended his audience to contemplate whether or not women could remain faithful to one man or if whether his fear of women's power is what necessitated his tainting their actions with male condescension.

If we are to believe that Malory experienced fear of women, a reaction that Freud would relate back to some remnant of the oedipal stage of development, then when we study later authors such as Tolkien the same deduction could be made. It is possible that this deduction is not entirely supported by all readers and furthermore not contemplated by most readers. The alternate construal would develop a more considerate and careful observation of women and their roles possibly filled with more obvious events and less unconscious reading and interpretations.

In parallel to Malory, when one considers Tolkien's representations of women one could also argue that he also exhibited an inherent fear of women and their power which lead to his creation of women who seem either to fall in love with the same man, namely Arwen and Éowyn, or those who wield powers linked to an ancestry such as those which Galadriel and Tom Bombadil's wife possess. The love truss that Tolkien carefully creates is a replica of Malory's except that gender of the protagonist is different. The inversion of the triangle and the characters' affection, allows the reader to operate within a different frame of reference as well as causing a shift. From female centred receipt of affection and male ambitious love and power, to female ambitious love and power, and male centred recipient. Consequently these women

⁹⁹ Trueman, C. 'Medieval Women'.pg 1-4.

seem to share the same peculiar situation as Malory's. They are created by male action and plot in the text and are what Woolf represents as: 'a certainly odd monster that one made up by reading the historians first and the poets afterwards-a worm winged like an eagle; the spirit of life and beauty in a kitchen chopping up suet. But these monsters however amusing to the imagination have no existence in fact.'¹⁰⁰ For Woolf there can be a reconciliation of the two images, the historical representation of the woman and the poetic creation of the woman, and if this is the case where does it leave the reader as interpretation relies on knowledge of context and situation. Are we then to read Tolkien as mere fantasy and enjoyment and Malory as pure history and accurate record, yet if neither can be merged, are these arguments then lacking purpose?

An interesting perspective on this statement is firstly that readers remember the influence of one text in reading another and in that sense all narratives and books are interlinked and intertwined with each other and existence in isolation can therefore not exist. Every item that has ever been read therefore influences every item being read and therefore an innocent, naive, non informed reading can not occur. In this vein one could argue firstly that Malory could not exist without his predecessors and neither can Tolkien survive or be understood without his, namely Malory. The next factor which cannot be ignored is the influence of history which can never be viewed as a negligible factor in the creation of narrative and representation. Therefore on further reading of Woolf we begin to understand that women and their representation can occupy two separate images, and that these are aligned to vivid images representative of the 'angel' and the 'demon'. The wording itself is already positioning the two concepts as opposites and not concepts that could co exist within one understanding but rather that there exists the concepts that a character can not occupy one. It is an interesting juxtaposition of two well known, religious icons. One that of the beautiful, kind and healing woman, capable of nurturing, suffering self sacrifice and being obedient and in contrast to this, the position of 'demon' is exposed as the woman whose is uncontrollable, disobedient, unapproachable and over confident. In different terms the angel is the constrained, captive and the demon is the free thinking, non oppressed go-getter. Both images hold societal, individual and

¹⁰⁰ Woolf, V. *A Room of One's Own*. London. Triad Grafton Books, 1977, pg 50.

religious connotations that are centuries old therefore, the immediate understanding and association is clear however in that the subtlety of the statement could be lost. For Woolf women were easily placed into boxes by others, namely men, however for themselves the distinction was never as clear cut as that and often the boundaries between being angel or demon were blurred by responsibilities, expectations and their own, private aspirations. It was a fine balancing act where the expectation and norm of society and family had to be weighed against an individual's wants, dreams and desires for themselves. Desires such as vocation, or life partner and often the tension would only find roots once the individual was in a situation that created the want or desire for something else than what they were being confronted with in their reality. In my opinion this is what Tolkien so generously highlights when he writes issues such as choice, power and sexuality into his female characters highlighting the tension that exists for him within each one of their created psyches. Their struggles with choices between war and family, power and love: highlight the perplexing issue of the female that existed within Tolkien's own mind.

This view, if considered without its inherent, personal anxieties for women, subsequently demonstrates the mere functionality of women in relation to their male counterparts. She was only worth something if she fulfilled a function for a man. Her personalities and experience did not exist outside of the male domain and therefore any participation in activities intellectually, spiritually or physically had to be granted by men. They were next further silenced by the lack of representation, they only existed and their experience was only noted if there were male voices to narrate their lives otherwise they did not exist. Although one can not deny that the male characters would also not have existed in narrative unless Malory, a man, had created one for them, but the fundamental difference lies in the fact that they are given their own words to articulate the events which occur to them, they are not spoken for by other characters in the text. Confrontations and discussions are focused on masculine issues from betrayal, succession and war to love, loyalty and faith: good examples of this are the discussions that Arthur's knights have concerning their boundaries, Camelot's people and his wedding arrangements. As readers of Malory we are never asked by the author to examine the consequence of male action, brutal, unfair, and immoral or not, for the woman's experience and portrayal in the text. We are very rarely even asked to contemplate any kind of experience outside of that of the men. Most events

in Malory happen in relation to men, wars, battles, seduction, lies and families all pivot on the axis of a presence, or position of a man.

Marion Zimmer Bradley identifies the lacunas in the texts that were created by men and attempts to fill them with a voice but even she finds it difficult: ‘I was afraid, or I was alone and terrified, or rape would have been easier because I could have run away to die afterward, but any of those would have been only words, conveying only the smallest part of what she had felt.’¹⁰¹ Therefore one must consider that if the difficulty of representation and vocalisation exists for a female author then the difficulty for a male author to create an authentic and believable series of experiences for female characters is twice as difficult if not more. The question that follows this in my mind is whether authenticity or genuine forethought has been accorded to these characters and their experiences as everyone who encounters them situated inside the marshy trenches of a verbal war as survivors of male action, male conversation and male expectation. Can they survive, should they survive, and does this imply that if they survive that these characters change labels from victim to survivor. The latter implies resilience and tenacity, the ability to be rejuvenated and start again whereas the former implies a loss of power, greater suffering and a sympathetic reader. The perplexing part of this systematic opposing labelling is that Malory has elements of both boxes in his female characters. How do we proceed to understand the female representation and their actions in Malory?

This type of categorization of women as hopeless victims does not suffice, nor does it do justice for those of us who wish to believe better of authors other than mere puppets of their time and culture and finally as for the inquisitive analyst it cannot be so easy. One could argue that a character such as Guinevere is not totally cast in a negative light, she is not totally captive nor subject to her male counterparts as she does become the source of inspiration for Arthur and Lancelot, even if this is only on a physical level. This is not totally the single most important part of her connection to these men as she is considered, a virtuous and kind person, which she never disproves in the text. She acts as the inspiration and incentive for Lancelot’s quest for the Holy Grail and she is on more than one occasion Arthur’s inspiration. The interesting part

¹⁰¹ Zimmer Bradley, M. *The Mists of Avalon*. London: Penguin Books, 1993, pg 17.

of her representation as an inspirational force for war and retreat, as well as spiritual purity is that it gains her status and power which only she as a character can own in the mind of the reader and it is maybe through this elevation in status that makes her final betrayal of Arthur so fatal and final in the eyes of both the reader and the author.

One could argue that although Guinevere is placed in an elevated position for a short period of time, as a resultant product of her society and the reader's consciousness which will serve a purpose set by author and events. But, it does not redeem her from the position of mediocrity and functionality completely as Malory is careful not to let her inspiration lead to positive or honourable actions. If we, as twenty first century readers, are to judge characters then we will do so by their actions and final influence to the text, and even though Guinevere cannot solely bear the burden of the failure of both Lancelot and Arthur she is one of the biggest providers of guidance, inspiration and direction for male characters. We as readers classify Guinevere then as a negative influence due to the final outcome of her influence and Malory presents the failures of men in direct correlation to their female inspirations as he ensures that Lancelot fails at retrieving the Holy Grail because of Guinevere's 'inspiration'. Even though this part of the plot is inherited from Arthurian legends, not only reinforces the stereotype that beautiful women only bring a good man down and into darkness but, also that the only redeeming quality of women is their physical attractiveness, beauty and usefulness. As mentioned before she is not the primary reason that failures happened but her influence highlights the difficult position Malory has placed the reader in by showing us that we as readers have placed Guinevere in the inevitable box that Marion Zimmer-Bradley mentions and in so doing highlighting the position that Kristeva said women inhabit, a place of tension and mixed intentions.

The previous parallel between Tolkien and Malory was one of authorial fear and possible misunderstanding of female experience hence in order to fully understand each author's representation a comparison between the two texts is necessary. When one contrasts the representation of women in Tolkien's text to those in Malory's, there does seem to be a definitive movement away from Malory's rigid and distinct portrayal of powerful women. One could say that, 'If not allegory, then his works are

loaded with characters and events parallel to our world.¹⁰² In his creation of a world parallel to our own Tolkien highlights women's position as a revered position in society but also one of tension and confusion for the created psyche of certain characters.

This understanding and insight allows for an entirely new spectrum of discussion concerning female characters in Tolkien's work. Here they are embodied in beauty: spiritual, physical and intellectual greatness. They not only provide a protective, safe place, for characters such as Frodo and Sam, but also give hope to those around them on a spiritual level. While this does play into the stereotype of the women characters as 'angelic' in Woolf's terms, however the distinguishing factor is that they do not lack power, they actually exert much of the magical influence in the text. Another point to note in relation to this would be that these female characters are not sexual objects. They are not represented in an overt reproductive and sexual fashion, which is where these female characters differ from those in Malory's text, whose major attribute is their sexuality. This may be interpreted in two very different ways. Either Tolkien never considered women as an object of sexuality because he accepted their representation as being holy and morally good, or one could interpret his depiction of them as angst or in Freudian terms as a Freudian slip. Was he so afraid of women and their sexuality that his unconscious turned them into fairies, elves and more acceptable forms, other than normal women because this would have made them more controllable? My interpretation, and a non Freudian construal, would be that these female characters contain and shift the developed narrative to a different level, one which is often underrated and overlooked because it is not linked to overt sexuality. William Green considers that a woman's '...absence is a presence. Such an apparently total blackout is a mark of obsession, and obsessions inevitably manifest themselves.'¹⁰³ And one could possibly consider that Tolkien's 'obsession' with women could have led to specific characters being, and also not being, represented in his narrative. This could be justified if one considers the character of Éowyn, who represents an entire nation of people—namely the Rohirrim—when she sets out on her quest with the Fellowship of the Ring. She is an able warrior and can successfully

¹⁰² Tagg, M. 'The Lord of the Rings: Fact or Fantasy'. *The Tolkien Archives*. pg 4.

¹⁰³ Green, W. H. 'Where's Mama? The Construction of the Feminine in *The Hobbit* and in *The Lion and the Unicorn*' 22.2 (1998). pg 3

wield a sword. She also possesses an emotional connection with Aragorn and she is considered to be the leader of her people. Why would Tolkien create such a powerful icon if he feared women and their sexuality? Earlier I made the correlation between Tolkien and Malory, stating that their reactions and treatment of female characters shared elements and certain characteristics bar that one author precedes the other and therefore differences must be present. The alternative view is of course that Tolkien accorded Éowyn male characteristics, all the attributes that he would have written into a male character and merely changed the gender as an afterthought, or as a cloak to constitute a convincing set of garments. This line of reasoning is equal to what was projected pertaining to Gandalf and his feminine attributes, conversely I feel that there are differences and these need to be investigated. Most readers would consider the proposed argument as doubtful, especially when Tolkien spends much of the narrative attending to small details such as Éowyn's dress and romantic interests. By drawing the reader's attention to the minute detail of a character, Tolkien is allowing the individual reader to develop their own understanding and relationship with the character therefore shifting the power from author and reader to character and reader (as reader-response criticism might argue) and consequently the psychological reaction in the reader as regards the development of the image of the character becomes influenced by an individual understanding of what is being described or said about a character. The foundation of the power evidenced in Éowyn's character is subsequently developed from the reader's interpretation of the importance of her dress and her romantic interest. Subsequently a plausible deduction is that by highlighting the appearance of her dress Tolkien is alluding to her power, which he cannot truly represent and only manages to hint at. This is an invitation to the reader to make the connection between her attire and her importance as a powerful female character in the development of the entire narrative. It is also worthwhile to note that there is link in Tolkien's work between women and godliness.

A number of characters display this nature of power, not excluding Tom Bombadil's wife, who is the River Daughter. She is striking and intellectual, and she exhibits immense kindness towards the hobbits. She not only opens her home to them but she also offers them protection and security, while her voice offers hope in the forest,

‘Fair lady Goldberry!’ said Frodo at last, feeling his heart moved with joy that he did not understand. He stood as he had at times stood enchanted by fair

elven-voices; but that spell was different: less keen and lofty was the delight, but deeper and nearer to mortal heart; marvellous and yet not strange.¹⁰⁴

It is interesting that she, through the use of her name, controls not only, emotional currents but also physical situations, so that merely speaking her name brings some kind of reaction. Through this it becomes apparent that powerful women could afterwards occupy a place that allows them to transcend their socially expected position of caretaker and partner in the present tense of the text into the possible future and place of icons in the spiritual aspect of the text. The River Daughter, like the other powerful women in the text, is linked to nature- being the ‘River daughter’ and ‘... clad in living flowers’¹⁰⁵. This reference places her in a direct relationship with nature as it creates parallels with images of trees as being places where flowers not only grow but are also protected: some point in the cycle of nature that the flower will die and forsake the tree but the tree will always sustain the flower again in the next cycle. It then becomes clear that the men in the text are seen as the flowers that will die, and cause wars. But that the women, or the trees, will be ever present and fruitful so as to sustain the next cycle of people, ethics and virtues. The River Daughter embodies an explicit link to the natural surroundings in the text, and this depiction of the connection between women and nature is not a dangerous or frightening one because these are represented as harmonious relationships and therefore pose no threat to the company of travellers. They embody the comforting, warm and redeeming love that is often linked to nature but this does not exclude each woman’s ability to become angry or dangerous, just as nature sometimes exhibits a destructive side. The major threats in the text stem from male, dominant figures that destroy nature. The counter to this would be the characters of Aragorn and Gandalf who are also related to images of nature however, they are cast in the role of protector and defenders of the weak. The abuse, corruption and violations that stem from greed in the form of Sauron and Saruman, as argued by critics, such as industrialisation, are some of the root causes of the wars in the text, not to mention the direct relation that because man has chosen to move away from God that destruction of the planet is inevitable.

¹⁰⁴ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg 121.

¹⁰⁵ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg 121.

Therefore the natural order is sustained by the women in the text and this links them directly to the iconic and subversive image of ‘Mother Earth’, ‘Mother Nature’.

Nature can be nurturing, warm and protective but it can also be destructive, harsh and alienating. The representation in Tolkien’s work focuses on the nurturing aspect of nature which at first sight may inherently prevent female characters from being intellectually powerful because it shares characteristics with Malory’s portrayal of women. Both writers consider a woman’s beauty to be a great asset as well as her ability to nurture her young and be a homemaker. However Tolkien alters this perception by allowing women such as Arwen, Éowyn and Galadriel to be not only powerful magical figures, but also intelligent and beautiful individuals. They are firstly heads of families, stately women (matriarchs of their influential families) which entitles them to a position of reverence in the text; they also possess the ability of sight: seeing the future to an extent and then finally display an ability to fight for their beliefs.

These women all represented elements that Frodo will need in order to succeed in his task, aptitude, bravery and foresight, not to mention an steadfast trust in people and goodness, and the mere indication that they overcome huge obstacles to persevere to their destiny sets the stage for the reader to maintain hope that Frodo will be triumphant in the end. Each woman contributes to the cause of saving Middle Earth with the talents that she possesses: Galadriel gives Frodo the necessary strength to carry on, while Arwen is Aragorn’s centre (for the most part of the trilogy) and Éowyn is an actual warrior. Each one of these warrior women may wage either literal or figurative battles, and each receives their own reward and offers her own sacrifice. The text does not allow success in any endeavour without sacrifice and pain, and for the characters this is apparent on many levels and in many ways but for the women they seem to become more driven to the task at hand the higher the price they must pay or the bigger the sacrifice is that they have to offer. This symbolisation of innocence and purity sacrificed is what allows the reader not only to sympathise with the female warriors but also to perceive them as much more heroic than the male characters.

These women therefore exert a natural power and influence which can be both beneficial to and destructive of the powerful male dominance in the novel, yet it is not overt but rather one that runs completely separately to that of the male influence in the novel. The separate narratives exist in a cohesive form with one overlapping and intertwining with the other, yet both can exist independently as threads of plot.

When Frodo invokes the River Daughter's name during situations in the forest when the company of travellers feels threatened, this elevates her power to a new level. From the thought and verbal expression being moulded into action, which is made complete in the physical, tangible world as events, objects etc. This mutual relationship between being heard and being spoken moves the realm of thought into the realm of the real. The act of speech and speaking informs the situation of the real and may influence it. The fact that Frodo feels confident that her name or verbalizing his connection to her may aid the Fellowship brings her spiritual power into the actual situation that they are experiencing, where she is not present. This also mirrors the above-mentioned notion regarding the women representing a natural order. This seems to be similar to the relationship between music being played and music being heard, forming a combination of the real manifested by the spirit. The hearing of music affects the emotional states of an individual and can emerge in his or her actions. Goldberry is also associated with music because she is portrayed as singing and dancing in the forest. All these creative strands which Tolkien has linked to one female character highlights, the belief for the reader that hope can exist within one experience one persona and that the stringent belief in hope and goodness will bring it into existence within the text for the reader. The power scale is overpoweringly in favour of the female gender.

Another character, along with Goldberry, who aids the little travellers, is the Elvish princess Arwen. She is the embodiment of Frodo's spirituality and the forces of good with which he aligns himself. She awakens within Frodo a spiritual power which he already possesses but is unaware of: otherwise he could not have been chosen to carry the ring. The mere act of choosing to agree to carry the Ring is representative of the bravery and diligence that resides within Frodo but it is only in trusting the female characters which embody these traits that Frodo will come to realise that they reside in him as well. Arwen is the mouthpiece of the good forces and speaks to Frodo's

spirit. This highlights her ability to transcend any normal type of communication but also to illustrate to the reader that there will be many levels in the text that will allow for communication between characters. Through communication the transcendence occurs on the level of power and magic as well enabling Arwen to be evaluated by the reader as powerful. Arwen is depicted as being beautiful, and is given more than one name within her own culture and people.

Young she was and yet not so. The braids of her dark hair were touched by no frost; her white arms and clear face were flawless and smooth, and the light of stars was in her bright eyes, grey as cloudless night; yet queenly she looked, and thought and knowledge were in her glance, as one who has many things that the years bring. Above her brow her head was covered with a cap of silver lace netted with small gems, glittering white; but her soft grey raiment had no ornament save a girdle of leave wrought in silver.¹⁰⁶

This is in recognition of all the functions and spiritual connections which she fulfils within her society as well as outside of it, concretising her position of power and importance. She is not merely an icon for her people but for many, and she does not represent one concept but rather a multitude. She communicates with Frodo through gestures and thoughts, leaving little to the realm of speaking and speech and therefore that of the said and actualized, ‘They spoke together, and then suddenly it seemed to Frodo that Arwen turned towards him, and the light of her eyes fell on him from afar and pierced his heart.’¹⁰⁷

In stark disparity to this is the portrayal of Malory’s women who do not communicate at all unless it is spoken. Thus Tolkien has fashioned a new dimension to relationships within his trilogy as well as adding more spiritual attributes to his characters making them multi dimensional and more difficult to dissect. Galadriel’s communication is therefore not explainable at all times and contains elements of the unexplainable and mysterious. She is a spiritual being, not needing always to vocalize her views and she finds strength in that silence, which makes her a formidable enemy against the forces of evil. However this silencing also causes her to be disempowered and weak figure as it is not necessarily her own desire to be silenced. There is a caesura in relaying her narrative to the reader, which creates her as a figure who is not strong enough to resist

¹⁰⁶ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg 121.

the male narrative of silencing. It is here, in this process of silence and space that one realises just how closely Tolkien was writing to the standards and norms of the medieval period, the disparity in this text is that these spaces do not necessarily negate the female characters, they add to their spirituality, godliness and very often it depicts wisdom. He seems to evoke the same techniques used by Malory and his counterparts concerning the treatment of women as objects of desire and aesthetic beauty. The silencing of female characters is also found in Malory's text. One could argue that the medieval, male domain of 'gentilesse' is employed in the instances of created silences in Tolkien's work which are diverse to Malory's work. 'Gentilesse' allows for the male characters to interact with female characters in a created space of reverence and respect, and often relates to the chivalric code that the knights supposedly adhered to as depicted in Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale* in the *Canterbury Tales*. It is the dominance of the male narrator that does not know how to relate to the other, the magic women. Therefore women react in terms of a specific ideal and accepted norm which demands the instances of silence. Men did not know how to relate to women so hence the creation of 'gentilesse'¹⁰⁸. Governed by rules and laws to ensure correct behaviour, men gained access to communicating with women under stipulated circumstances. Tolkien shows through his depiction of this custom, men's short comings in communication with women and also the power imbalance that results.

Arwen does not use her power to dominate and control people or groups of people for her own gain. It seems that the men, and elves are subservient to her but she never dictates subservience and obedience, nor forces it. Arwen is complemented by counterparts and equals throughout the saga: an obvious connection is that which exists between Arwen and Éowyn. Their names and their aural similarity constitute the very basic connection that holds these two beings together. Éowyn is a warrior, a formidable fighter, 'Very fair was her face, and her long hair was like a river of gold. Slender and tall she was in her white robe girt with silver; but strong she seemed and stern as steel, a daughter of kings'¹⁰⁹ as is Arwen: the spiritual warrior of her people. This connection links them together firstly physically and then spiritually even to the point where they fall in love with the same man, Aragorn. Both are trained in the

¹⁰⁷ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*, London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg 504.

¹⁰⁸ Boitani, P. and Mann, J. *The Cambridge Companion to Chaucer*. UK: Cambridge University Press 2003. pg 153.

skills and arts of their people, being warriors and leaders. Both are of royal blood, meaning that each will embody the power of the people in her leadership and in the possibility of children. However, Arwen possesses eternal life, which sets her apart from Éowyn. Both women use their positions within their respective societies and male dominated realms to fight for Middle Earth. Arwen protects Frodo from the Dark Riders whilst Éowyn fights alongside Strider. In a sense Éowyn is the human, while Arwen is a spiritual being. Éowyn is the evolving Arwen, whereas Arwen is the fully actualized and developed Éowyn. These characters exist on the side of good magical power, although this binary may be viewed as simplistic mode by modern readers, it does not function so simply. Through their power they have the ability to change and influence the outcomes of Middle Earth: irrespective of whom they choose to support, it is their choice to pledge allegiance to Frodo and in so doing to support the side of Gandalf and his cause. Subsequently they allow themselves to be grouped with those who do the right thing and in so doing choose to let their behaviour reflect their choice.

Another such character is Galadriel. She being another powerful woman in the text. However she seems to exert more of the angelic, transcendental power that Gandalf wields in the narrative. She is reminiscent of the Archangel, Lucifer, who fell from heaven. She seems to share qualities inherent to both Gandalf and Lucifer: beauty, ‘...they were grave and beautiful.’¹¹⁰ and knowledge, she is aware something has happened to Gandalf before the company tells her, “...: a grey mist is about him, and the ways of his feet and of his mind are hidden from me”¹¹¹ : both hold powerful positions. She faces the same, important challenge as Lucifer, that of choice, she, ‘the Lady of Galadhrim offers another measure of the outer limits of choice, for even she is not free from the necessity of choosing.’¹¹² She has to choose between the power that the ring can bring her and her humility and nobility,’ ‘I will give you the one Ring, if you ask for it. ... ‘I do not deny that my heart has greatly desired to ask what you offer.’¹¹³ She makes the right choice so unlike Lucifer, who fell from Heaven, she triumphs over her own faults and vices to be further elevated in spirituality.

¹⁰⁹ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg 504.

¹¹⁰ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg 345.

¹¹¹ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg 346.

¹¹² Mathews, R. *Fantasy: The Liberation of the Imagination*. New York. Routledge, 2002, pg 72.

¹¹³ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997,

However she does not merely occupy the area in the text that is demarcated for those who are a positive force in the narrative, she plays a greater role, one of ambivalence. Hers inevitably is an ambivalent position as she wants the Ring and its power for her own glory, which conflicts with her inherently good nature and knowledge that she should not control the Ring. Jess Battis describes Galadriel as a character who is susceptible to human folly, ‘...Frodo reveals the Ring to her, and it tempts her—shadows her character with an ambivalence that positions her outside of the misogynist and archaic tropes commonly ascribed to Tolkien’s women.’¹¹⁴

Galadriel often removes herself from a situation and yet is always aware of what is taking place around her. Her commonality with Arwen lies in the fact that speech also represents a large part of her power: which Frodo uses to, not only save himself, but also the travellers on many occasions. Even Gandalf, with his own proven abilities, shows Galadriel respect and acknowledges her power by speaking her name as a protective measure,

...Galadriel! Galadriel!

Clear is the water of your well;

White is the star in your white hand;..’

‘Thus Gandalf softly sang, and then suddenly he changed. Casting his tattered cloak aside, he stood up and leaned no longer on his staff;...’¹¹⁵

This speaking or vocalizing of power together with the use of her name does more than relate to power in the reader’s mind; it manifests words into action allowing the spoken to become the real and the thought to become the actual. It allows the reader to understand that in this realm of existence, voicing a belief leads to actualizing it. This interrelating of characters on a spiritual level creates a narrative within a narrative, allowing for spiritual development and expression of emotions on a deeper level. Subsequently it allows the text of *The Lord of the Rings* to reach a deeper level of meaning and significance. Therefore this form of representation of women undermines the stereotypical representation found in Malory’s work and moves away from the notion that women with magical power are classified on the side of evil.

¹¹⁴ Battis, J. ‘Gazing Upon Sauron: Hobbits, Elves, and the Queering of the Postcolonial Optic.’ *Modern Fiction Studies*, 50. 4 (2004) pg 8.

¹¹⁵ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997,pg 503.

These women represent the spiritual strength of the novel right until its end. Galadriel still accompanies the party in spiritual form:

‘But whence this message came they are now in doubt. Gandalf sent it, I would guess. ‘Nay Galadriel’, said Legolas. ‘Did she not speak through Gandalf of the ride of the Grey Company from the North?’ ‘Yes, you have it,’ said Gimli. ‘The Lady of the Wood! She read many hearts and desires.’¹¹⁶

Éowyn fights for Rohan and alongside Gandalf even though she places her life in eternal danger,

‘To health?’ said Eowyn ‘It may be so. At least while there is an empty saddle of some fallen Rider that I can fill, and there are deeds to do. But to hope? I do not know.’¹¹⁷

Arwen follows her heart to its end:

But as for Arwen the Fair, Lady of Imladris and of Lorien, Evenstar of her people, she is of lineage greater than yours, and she has lived in a world already so long that to her you are but a yearling shoot...¹¹⁸

‘There at last when the mallorn-leaves were falling, but spring had not yet come,’ she laid herself to rest upon Cerin Amroth; and there is her green grave, until the world is changed, and all the days of her life are utterly forgotten by men that come after,...¹¹⁹

The women in this text offer an example of strength combined with beauty laced and harnessed with power. These women differ from their predecessors in Malory’s text in the sense that their position in the narrative allows them a different freedom. The silence created by the author allows them to exercise their power and manifest it as something greater than the narrative structure and in so doing sculpt a separate narrative within the larger one. They undermine the space to which they are allocated and break out of the conventional, medieval, depictions of women who exercise power- sexual, magical and societal. Their environment allows their power to become the backbone of the success and strength, the faith that the company and the people need in order to overcome evil as in Sauron, and in so doing reshapes the idea that powerful women are not as powerful as the male wizards. Tolkien reworks the

¹¹⁶ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg 759.

¹¹⁷ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg 851.

¹¹⁸ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg 1034.

traditional representation of wizards in texts. They speak beyond the dictated boundaries and constructed spaces and they come to surpass their male counterparts in status. They become the myths of faith and beauty:

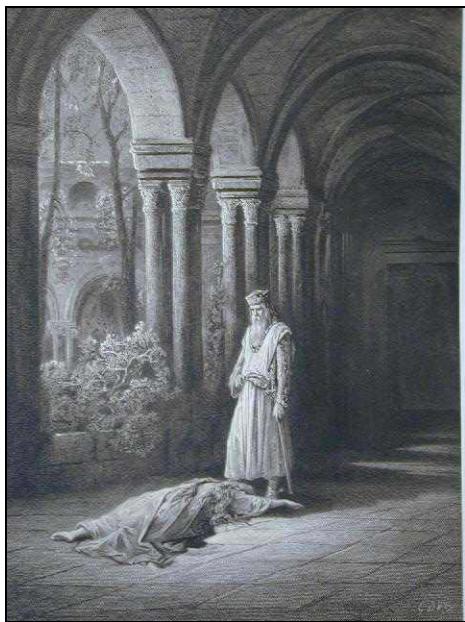
‘An Elven-maid there was of old,
A shining star by day:
Her mantle white was hemmed with gold,
Her shoes of silver-grey.

A star was bound upon her brows,
A light was on her hair
As sun upon the golden boughs
In Lorien the fair’.¹²⁰

And as in the above example, it is often in what is omitted in speech and in action that allows the reader even greater insight into the construction, as well as ultimately the interpretation, of characters and their role within the text. In order to fully understand these created lacunas a microscope should be focused on the female characters and each individual element of the silence examined.

¹¹⁹ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg 1038.

¹²⁰ Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. London. Harper Collins Publishers, 1997, pg 330.



CHAPTER THREE

The Voices beyond the Page: Considering the Silences

To develop further understanding of the women in these two texts and in order to hear their actual voice, the spoken word translated into the written word needs to be considered carefully and critically. In essence this critic wishes to study the author's intention in writing and gain from it some formal opinion that carries some analytic weight. For that reason it is not sufficient to merely look at the spaces, lacunas, gaps and silences. An inspection of the instances where there is no speech or narrative but rather to study the actual words and events. In this instance we need to consider, what the speaker says and the implications for the reader's interpretation of the text and ultimately the flow and creation of the narrative.

A single point of departure may well be that the women in Malory's text express no actual voice of their own. As mentioned earlier they are not accorded the space in the text to transcribe events and occurrences from their perspectives. They are spoken for and spoken of, which means that all we see, is their representation as understood and reflected by the male characters in the narrative. This lay positioning, this marginalisation or process of alienation of the female characters by the male characters has been orchestrated, consciously or unconsciously, by each of the

author's for his own specific needs and with his own vision. Each author serves a specific agenda that may or may not be known to them.

The feminine voices, in both texts fall out of the text, out of the realm of the narrative, therefore these women do not exist outside their relation to men. The earlier stipulation of how the male narrative exclude women in order for their, the lyric, narrative to be heard is applicable at this juncture. If there is no isolation or discrimination then there would be no conscious effort on the part of the reader, or the critic, to interpret the lyric as a separate and important entity in its own right. Hence the women and their plot only exist within the latter: if there are no representative men in a specific narrative or sequence in the text, women cease to exist as important characters and possibly even narrators of their text. However, by the same token men would also not exist, as their relationship to women is one of interdependence, and consequently the question arises: can the one have a meaningful part in the narrative without the other? I deduce that the narrative which exists in women's experience in these texts specifically is either too powerful for a male counterpart to successfully describe or that female experiences are outside of the realm of experience of the authors who therefore, lack the language to render an authentic picture of this kind of experience. Hence one could expect that the authors are unable to represent any experience authentically if they themselves have not experienced. Accordingly the implication of such an immature and inadequate deduction is that authors need to experience the stories and narratives, still this then eradicates the ability, nay the possibility, to imagine and transcribe those imagined experiences into a worthwhile and differentiated text. Ultimately my underdeveloped premise may be the element that we must accept and reject simultaneously: for me it seems the most plausible option is that we should accept the ability of authors to create and invent stories and narratives as they see fit. Sequentially to create meaning they would inherently have to discuss events and experiences that they did not necessarily live through themselves. This element of creation leads to authors being able to discuss universal, adversarial and contradictory issues convincingly.

But there must be elements that could lead us to believe in their ability to persuade us of their experiences and authenticity in writing them, that we could look at more closely. Possibly the minor details lead us not to fully accept or believe that the author

can authentically represent a discourse or narrative that is not entirely his or her own. It is possible that authors may lack the understanding and language to represent something that is ‘other’ to them, almost as difficult as it is for a slave owner to write a slave’s narrative, and they therefore cannot communicate the specific gendered narrative. This is naturally applicable to female authors as well and the difficulties with writing for them multiplies in that they could possibly only really narrate their own personal worlds with the end result being authors that are very often thrown into an ambiguous relationship with the actual act of writing as much as one with their subject matter. In a world where the gender lines are merging more rapidly together, with heterosexual and unisexual issues becoming a day to day occurrence- the task of writing becomes all the more unclear.

To return to Malory and Tolkien: the male characters do not have in their authorial creation the understanding and language to access a woman’s narrative and therefore simply do not relay it to the reader. However interpretation of the part of the reader seems to weigh heavier with these female characters as they are not fully represented in the texts. Not only can the reader’s imagination run wild in interpreting that which is not represented but also personal, individual experience becomes the filler for the gaps. This is especially applicable when considering the twenty first century reader, or any reader outside of the physical time that the text was written in. With a historical eye one could consider that these lacunas may reflect the societal stance and influence discussed earlier: that women lack control over their lives and that their experiences have no validity in the constructed, male narrative. This would mean that their contribution to the narrative would be menial and that I cannot accept. These silent characters serve a purpose, but that purpose is not necessarily overt.

Perhaps their portrayal is not frivolous or fundamentally accurate to the historical context of each narrative but rather it should be seen as a necessary frailness. An essential and indispensable perceived weakness which without, the text cannot hope to be credible and compelling for the reader. This portrayal of frailness allows for their power, in terms of magic and magical powers, to be inverted and to be represented by men. For Malory the spaces and silences may be as a result of the social and historical context that he was commenting on and writing out of whereas Tolkien may have a completely different angle. Or I may be wrong in both instances.

However I must try to construct some form of an adequate answer and if we follow the premise that Malory was writing out of and possibly about a specific historical context we could entertain the notion that the characters we based on real authentic people whose experiences were well known and part of the public's frame of reference. This would justify elements in *Le Morte D'Arthur* such as Guinevere's trial and marriage but it may not explain the presence of Morgan Le Fay and Merlin as individuals with such supernatural ability. In Gorman's article she expresses the idea that 'internal' space in Malory is 'gendered' feminine while 'public' space is 'gendered masculine' (Lynch 147)¹²¹. This may be an explanation for why public displays of affection poignant for men (their conquests and children) are more readily portrayed and deliberated, such as Lancelot's affair, because of their outward importance. This may also be why internal turmoil and despair (such as rape and betrayal), affects or at least seems to affect female characters more willingly. This statement may also be of assistance when contemplating the double gender that Merlin and Morgan possess as both have attributes belonging to the opposite gender. Therefore when supporting Gorman I would conclude that both Merlin and Morgan (a coincidence that both names start with an M) may in essence be the same 'persona' for Malory, he may have slipped genders in the narrative to serve the plot of 'good' versus 'evil'.

However, both Morgaine and Merlin could be examined according to the sacrifices that they have made. Tolkien incorporates this to a larger extent than Malory as his inclusion of the element of choice and the ability to reason to a good, Christian choice is more prominent. The fundamentals of choice and sacrifice for both authors are central for the reader's interpretation of characters: the bigger the sacrifice, the harder the choice; the more sympathy from the reader each character evokes and the more powerful the text becomes.

For Malory other characters make decisions for female characters especially when studying the examples of the arranged marriages and conceptions that occur. In contrast Tolkien allows for such women as Arwen and Galadriel to become the unsung heroes of the text. As stated earlier many of the sacrifices of female characters

¹²¹ Gore, S. E. "Thus he rode sorowyng": Travel Narratives and the Ethics of Sexual Behaviour in Le

in Tolkien allow for the heroes to emerge because they need to live up to their own fate and talents with presumed independent attributes but women need to clear the way forward. Consequently it may be that these silences are meant to enhance the status of the female as they need to remain slightly aloof in order to fulfil the role of inspired leader and spiritually refined martyr so that for the reader they remain pure and plausible.

On the contrary characters such as Guinevere, Morgan le Fay and Nyneve are considered by some readers to be at the mercy of men because they are either labelled as evil or wrong-doers in society, or as lacking intelligence since they are merely related to men in terms of their sexuality and ability to bring pleasure to their male counterparts in the text. These characters are also characterised by their ability to offer the male characters, ‘... as if reminiscent of Eve’s role in the Fall... a poisoned fruit....’¹²² They are the temptation, the choice and therefore the conclusive reason for the resultant behaviour. It seems reasonable to follow this argument that perpetuates female characters in Malory, unlike Tolkien’s powerful women, represent the offer of a choice but they do not actively craft choices as they are merely window dressing a choice or option for the male characters and readers. Malory does not allow them to exercise the ability to make a choice. Their presence hints at the possibility of choice but does not embody the factor to the same level that Tolkien does. The element of choice in Tolkien uplifts whereas in Malory the lack of choice disempowers the readers’ response to the character.

Malory’s depiction of women is one where they would offer their sexuality and their love as a choice for the male characters; an exemplary character in this instance would be Morgan Le Fay as she uses the choice of sexuality to her advantage. This opportunity for selection empowers the male characters and the narrative. Malory creates the atmosphere and stigma around choice, ultimately portraying it as poison. Since the male characters are depicted as either dying, such as Merlin and Arthur, or developing insanity or psychological grief as with Lancelot. Irrefutably the conclusion follows for the reader, with specific reference to Malory’s text that it is the love of a

powerful woman that will damage men. And more accurately it is then the written, created, male choices that will taint the female characters for the readers. These polarised positions cause tension within the reader, leading to an ambiguous relationship with the text and the female characters. The conflict within the reader and their relationship with these characters allows for the plot to consistently become more intricate and complicated.

Thus for Malory the representation of women becomes slightly confusing because on one level he elevates women and their position especially through his example of Igraine and Guinevere but he also shows how women are messengers of evil, in offering choices to the male characters and in so doing causes anxiety for the reader such as Nyneve and Morgaine. As readers we have been manipulated into a feeling of ambivalence, and insecurity, in our relationship with female characters. Ultimately we need to consider each individually created character in light of their created experience and then reserve judgement. We are posed the question whether or not they have power and are great, or that they have the inherent genetic ability to become something evil?

A characteristic that is used in both texts to distinguish supremacy and power from evil and mediocrity is magic. Readers may perpetuate the view that many women are not strong enough (with the possible exception of Tolkien's Éowyn) in both texts and therefore cannot use magic to any kind of purposeful or resolute end. There are however certain characters that defy this labelling, namely Morgaine and Galadriel. However it is the exact frailness or powerlessness inherent in the depiction of women which enables them to wander on both sides of the created, dictated lines of good and evil. The thought that an underestimate and misjudged character could become powerful adds to the element of wonderment in the texts. These characters exist as the snakes, spiders, roses or changing seasons (Éowyn's evolution throughout the novel is compared to the seasons; therefore as she develops from Winter to Spring and Summer her character evolves from warrior maiden to wife) to which they are often compared and are often overlooked as insubstantial. Miryam Libran-Moreno offers

¹²² Kay, S. 'Adultery and Killing in "Le Morte le Roi Artu"' in *Scarlet Letters: Fictions of Adultery from Antiquity to the 1990's*. Edited by Nicholas White and Naomi Segal. McMillan Press Ltd 1997, pg 5.

the division of Éowyn's character into five motifs namely: '...the beloved seen as a flower...bittersweet love...or flinty girl...or the winter of love...or spring as the season of love...',¹²³ while Green discusses the appearance of '...a greedy hobbit matriarch, an elf princess, two nature goddesses, a giant spider and a warrior maiden...',¹²⁴ All these fragments of female representations offer the reader intrigue and magic but also the power that innately, accompanies each word and often as being considered by the author as a trivial player in the text, even if that position is a disguised one. One may advance the argument that those characters, which seem unimportant, or those that are labelled as socially unaccepted in the narrative pass undetected by the reader and develop the text further than the superficial, practical narrative. Following the above premise one could argue that the male narrative invariably becomes overrun by the undertones and silences of the lyric: allowing the power to become imbalanced and eventually that the lyric will dominate the readers' attention. Only on closer inspection does one realise the extent to which the insignificant characters aid in the development of some of the most important climaxes in the narrative. The question shifts slightly from inspecting the created silences to considering created events that will highlight the inadequacies or under estimation of women which shifts the interpretation from understanding the author's words and intentions to the response the reader has to events concerning female characters.

In order to develop the above argument there needs to be the distinction, on a broad platform, to explain that there will be two groups of readers, male and female and it is worthwhile to examine the reactions of these. The male reader may deem these powerful, magical women who transgress societal norms and codes, which uphold ideologically misogynist concepts of good and evil, as dangerous and volatile.

Formulated in a different way:

By contrast, the feminine reader undermines and destabilizes patriarchal interpretation by revealing all that is left out in the process of ordering narrative. Such a reader is exemplified by the Wife of Bath, who introduces

¹²³ Libra'n-Moreno, M. 'Greek and Latin Amatory Motifs in Éowyn's Portrayal'. West Virginia University Press. *Tolkien Studies*, 4, 2007, West Virginia University Press, pg 73.

¹²⁴ Green, W. H. 'Where's Mama? The Construction of the Feminine in *The Hobbit* and in *The Lion and the Unicorn*' 22.2 (1998). pg 2.

the idea of subjectivity in interpretation, and reveals the possibility of a multiplicity of readings of the texts she 'gloses.'¹²⁵

Once again the difference in reaction to texts by different groups is identified by the factor of differentiation. To understand that women readers will search for the elements that are left out inherently points out that male readers will not look for the holes and this inadvertently leads us to believe that female readers will deconstruct the norms that support the silences and stereotypes whereas male readers will support and enhance them. The obvious difference in relation to the texts here is that the female characters in Malory, as well as Tolkien, are not readers themselves in the above-mentioned sense but rather in the sense that they are positioned in such a way that readers will consider their portrayal in the text in terms of what has been omitted and what is voiceless.

One character in Malory's text that is a strong example of this is Nyneve. She wields the magical and intellectual power which helps Arthur and Guinevere '..., for ever she ded grete goodness unto kynge Arthure and to all hys kyngthes thorow her sorcery and enchauntementes.'¹²⁶ Brought to the fore is Nyneve's nature, and abilities to help those in control of the kingdom. She offers her services in support of self preservation and in the same instance make herself irreplaceable to the royal couple. But, she also exercises and represents the sexual power of which men like Arthur and Merlin are petrified of. This sexual power becomes overt when Malory, in an act of possibly voicing his own unconscious Freudian fears, manifests in the action of Merlin's death, the ultimate evil. He allows Nyneve to trap Merlin in a cave where he dies. Merlin possesses pre-knowledge of this act, because he commands the power of foresight, and yet he chooses to submit to it and complete his destiny. In connection with silences and gaps then one could argue that Malory uses Merlin's death as the ultimate silence for Nyneve as her voice and experience is not mentioned but the event of the death of one of the most important characters of the narrative creates the response the reader will have to Nyneve. Merlin's access to knowledge could change the course of events especially when one considers that, as Laura Comoletti and Michael Drout argue, wizards enjoy access to an older and more powerful language

¹²⁵ Davidson, R 'Reading Like a Woman in Malory's *Morte Darthur*'. *Arthuriana*: Spring 16,1,2006, pg.21.

¹²⁶ Malory, T. *Complete Works*. Edited by E. Vinaver. London. Oxford University Press, 1971, pg 620.

than the vernacular which allows them to change the physical nature of reality.¹²⁷ Malory did not allow Merlin to have the opportunity to change his physical reality but rather to choose his death, and through this choice the male, powerful, wizard forces the reader to respond to Nyneve negatively, or at least more negatively than if she would have been given the opportunity to vocalise the event. His sacrifice in his choice is so big that the reader has little opportunity to feel anything other than disdain for Nyneve.

A possibility is that this power that Comoletti and Drout mention could have developed from the notion Jung conceived of a Collective Unconscious for human beings. Language could hold, within it, the type of unconscious ideas, motifs, images and so forth, which all humans share but do not all fully understand or are fully aware of. This type of knowledge is inherent through each generation and therefore icons and iconic images transcend time and space. One could postulate that wizards enjoy an entrée to this history and therefore evoke a power not only greater than themselves but one that could possibly include all of history's people and magic and therefore all their power. If this is the case then Merlin should be able to alter his destiny, an act from which he abstains; however if this language is the same one to which Nyneve and Morgan le Fay enjoy access then by logical deduction they are equal to Merlin in power and magic and therefore they should be equal in status. Peter Salus points out that man regards himself as the norm against which the 'unknowability' of the woman is measured and therefore one could read the cave event as a reaction, by author and character, to the otherness of woman—Merlin is so taken aback by Nyneve's otherness that he does not react to the situation and allows himself to die. Through this type of understanding not only does Merlin look slightly helpless and pathetic but consequently Nyneve becomes so powerful in her unknowability and strangeness that she ensures Merlin's degradation.

Salus also reiterates that the varying representations of Merlin over time have been reborn and handed down according to what each generation could gain from the myth of Merlin. Image, power, language, skills; and one could possibly argue that this

¹²⁷ Comoletti, L. B. and Drout, M.D.C. 'How They Do Things with Words: Language, Power, Gender and the Priestly Wizards of Ursula K. Le Guin's Earthsea Books.' *Children's Literature* (2001) 29. Yale University Press.pg115.

development also happens to Morgan le Fay in different, modern texts. For Salus each set of readers, male and female, young and old will each have their reaction to the texts and their interpretation of the characters will vary leading to a reinterpretation and adjustment of icons and images over various cultures and spanning years. This is partly a result of varying opinions but also of a change of context and historical influence which is assigned and which is or is not available to the different readers.

Each generation sees in her (Morgan le Fay) a useful or identifiable aspect and reinvents her in another form in order to facilitate their own understanding of the text and characters, as well as any meaning that may be derived from these. The television series, ‘Witchblade’, in the twentieth century explores how one woman gains access to her collective unconscious through a collection of weapons, whilst the latest release of ‘Heroes’ in South Africa depicts women whose genetic talents range from being indestructible to being exceptionally strong. These are all reinventions and recreations of aspects of a personality, the understanding and societal issues of elements of characters such as Morgan Le Fay and Arwen. This type of “asset management” and selective choice of fundamentals could possibly be what Tolkien intended in his creation of characters such as Arwen and Éowyn. He reinvented aspects of Morgan le Fay and Nyneve into acceptable skills dressed up in fantasy for his society. Their seductive powers and magical abilities are not presented as attributes that should be feared but rather they are portrayed as elements deserving of reverence and admiration thereby reinforcing the positive power and magic that women represent in the trilogy. For Malory, Nyneve may have been the ultimate woman, one who is so confident in her abilities that she manages to control a man’s behaviour, to his own detriment.

In conclusion one could position Nyneve as the definitive woman in Malory because her appearance and deception of Merlin is the prefiguration not only of Morgan le Fay but also the indicator of Guinevere’s betrayal of Arthur by Lancelot later on in the narrative, and the type of silencing that will envelop them.

Another character that for the reader may lead to silencing foreshadowing huge events is Morgan le Fay, striking and gifted. She is sent to a nunnery when she is taken away from her mother and brother and is forcibly brought up in isolation, ‘And the thyrde

syster, Morgan le Fay, was put to scole in a nunnery, and ther she lerned so moche that she was a grete clerke of nygromancye. And after that she was wedded...¹²⁸ This depiction of ripping away and growing up in isolation, an exemplary example of Bowlby's attachment theory in Psychology which states that children who do not have an important other to latch onto will develop abandonment and acceptance issues¹²⁹. This lack of attachment allows for Morgan's hatred and desire to learn the art of magic but it also creates a silence concerning that period of her life which informs us, as the reader, that childhood and growing up were not considered important in the development of a character. Childhood experiences had no impact on later adult behaviour and experience. According to Freudian theory, firstly, it is impossible to think that the experiences of people as children are not influential in their adult development and secondly one could consider this to be a part of Malory's unconscious, showing the lack of importance of a child's development, resulting in his formation of Morgan le Fay as an adult with psychological issues and not an adult dealing with childhood trauma, insecurity and societal pressure. Delving into the possibilities of this, I cannot erase the influence that society and history may have on the development of this character and author and therefore I cannot rule out the possibility that it may be a reflection of societal values of that time. Which ever avenue I choose to support they all allow the reader to frame in their minds the power that Morgan will have in the text because she has been taught, irrespective of interpretation, to be powerful and magical.

Morgan as a young child is expected to be a wife to an elderly King, loses her family and is to be educated amongst nuns. These adult interactions, with which the child Morgan has to negotiate, are undertaken without any parental guidance or counselling, which results in Malory transforming her into a formidable Queen. Not needing to deal with her childhood or to allow her psyche ample time to develop into an adult. This is of course in a historical context not out of the ordinary. It was the norm: however, for the twentieth first century reader it is not, which causes us to ask more questions.

¹²⁸ Malory, T. *Malory Works*. Edited by E. Vinaver. London. Oxford University Press, 1971, pg 5.

¹²⁹ Feist, J. and Feist, G. *Theories of Personality- Fourth Edition*. United States of America: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc, 1998, pg145-147.

The product of this is the depiction of Morgan le Fay as a witch and enchantress, obsessed with affection. The emphasis is placed on the actions and experiences of this individual as an adult and on how she uses them to influence other's lives and experiences. Morgan le Fay lacks the ability or space to relay her narrative. Consequently she becomes silenced. In her marriage to Uriens lies the ultimate silencing, almost equivalent to being sold as a slave to an owner with his own agenda for her future. Her powerlessness and subservience to the male, narrative, dominance allows her to engage in the domain of magic in a negative fashion. Her intense unconscious feelings of abandonment and hatred for the system have robbed her of her freedom and fuel her eagerness to learn. She sees no other option open to her and she comes to represent, for the reader, those women characters in literature who are, 'fatal females whose beauty..., is both sinister and tempting.'¹³⁰ The mere fact that these characters are associated with the notion of death by the use of the word fatal, exemplifies the position of 'evil' that they occupy for the reader and majority of those who study the texts. Her representation as evil or as a witch becomes significant for the reader partly because she no longer resides in the space occupied and accepted by society. Possibly more celebrated women such as Guinevere and the other fair maidens in the text, whose beauty and silence paint them as perhaps inconsequential characters, and because she has become fluent in the language that will entitle her to a form of power not open to the majority of women, that of magic. This will of course ensure that she can become Merlin's nemesis and fulfil her role of sorceress and as a danger to Arthur. The male dominance of the events allows her to take a hand in some of the major climaxes as an underhanded player and in so doing issues the challenge to the male characters.

Davidson points out that these women participate in the text more than they themselves articulate their position, 'Their readings are participatory, for they more than read the text they inhabit—to a degree they transform it.'¹³¹ Malory then needs to be seen as an author that constructs his female characters as transcendental and transformatory by creating them as silent entities in his text and through their silence they renovate the reader's response to the narrative including other characters. Thus

¹³⁰ Gilbert, S. and Guber, S. *The Madwoman in the Attic*. New Haven. Yale University Press, 1979, pg 460.

female characters actions allow for judgement on themselves due to their ability to actively participate in the text, not merely their words but more so through their actions and orchestrated spaces.

Nevertheless, it is the male characters in Malory's work whose voice and articulation lead to action and relationships, as Arthur does in proclaiming that Guinevere will be his wife and Merlin does when he orchestrates Arthur's conception. In both instances it is the articulation that leads to the action for these two male characters and then the consequences that follow, so for the reader it is their will through words that is the primary focus while for the female characters it would be the event that would be the focus.

At this point, for me, the separation and false impression of the women comes to the fore as the reader is manipulated into a position where more emphasis is placed on the spoken words and events of the male characters as well as the events where they take part but the female characters are the minor players in the text instead of being seen as the protagonists. Malory brings us back to his own conception of what he probably feels to be the necessary understanding of Morgan le Fay, as he focuses on her deeds and his understanding of them. One cannot say that Malory supports her in her intention to wield power willingly because he ensures that we realise she works with dark magic, magic meant to harm not to help. Because of this we become aware of her potential to be detrimental to other characters and in so doing inadvertently support Malory's categorisation of her as evil and treacherous:

Morgan Le Fay plays a very important role in the politics of Malory's work. She was a very powerful woman, and used it to manipulate the men around her. Morgan Le Fay, filled with visions of grandeur, planned to kill Arthur and take over the kingdom. She used Accolon as her weapon to destroy Arthur, while she tried to kill her husband, King Uriens.¹³²

Morgan le Fay is represented as being a powerful sorceress who is outstanding and exceptional, seductively and hazardously so, but very intelligent so that she uses her

¹³¹ Davidson, R 'Reading Like a Woman in Malory's *Morte Darthur*'. *Arthuriana , West Lafayette*: Spring,16, (1), 2006, pg.2.

¹³² Collver. T, L, 'The Changing Role of Women in the Arthurian Legend.' pg 3.

magic for evil. She is shown to be an abductor, a witch and a murderer, ‘And she com thidir for the love of kynge Arthur, for she knew how Morgan le Fay had ordained for Arthur shold have bene slayed that day...’¹³³. All these are censored events but highlighted by action, author’s representation and a very specific reader response. In a sense she cannot exist in the text as a positive force because she is situated in opposition to the dominant powerful male, namely Merlin, who reflects the stereotypical representation of the wizard. Yet they share a similar space-both alone, powerful and full of knowledge.

Peter Salus claims that Morgan has not acquired Merlin’s level of knowledge or his power because she is fuelled and corrupted by evil intentions such as lust, revenge and vanity. Therefore for Salus, the intention behind the art of magic influences the nature of it. In terms of Salus’s own definition one could conclude that Merlin, like Morgan, is not necessarily a ‘good’ wizard, since the intentions that fuel his magic exhibit no inherent, defining nature because, as observed previously, he merely upholds the structure that has put him in a station of power. His knowledge dictates his intentions and therefore his actions and we do not know that these are of a positive nature. They do, on the other hand, seem to be necessary for the text to perpetuate itself. My interpretation is that Morgan needs to exist as an opponent of Merlin to highlight his actions and experiences. She validates his existence by perpetuating and promulgating responses to his actions. She becomes the antagonist, the evil opposition to the protagonist, and therefore must behave as such; otherwise he would not be seen as the ultimate, all knowing wizard: his power would be undermined which would then urge the reader to change their response to him. She also cannot be seen as his equal because this would undermine the accepted notion and norm that women were submissive to men over and above to portray the view that if women hold powerful positions they can bring only harm to those around them.’ Morgan was powerful, yet completely evil. She used witchcraft, a claim that she was born of the devil.¹³⁴ For this statement to be validated by the reader’s perception must be without doubt and prejudice that the evil events in the text have their roots in Morgan’s character and her actions and to this end Malory has succeeded.

¹³³ Malory, T. *Complete Works*. Edited by E. Vinaver. London. Oxford University Press, 1971, pg 85.

This type of utilitarian representation of Morgan La Fay shares something in common with that of Guinevere: both women possess a sexuality and wisdom that is perceived as dangerous and is often depicted to the detriment of the men in the text. This sexuality combined with power is inevitably considered evil because of the actions that stem from them. However an interesting point to note is that the ultimate cost is not necessarily born by the initiator of evil but rather the proposed victim: ‘As in the Bible, it is the woman who originally sins, but it is the man’s sin that is punished and ultimately brings about destruction. It is not the woman’s adultery that brings about the destruction of Camelot: it is the man’s.’¹³⁵

This does not eradicate the influence and role that the female characters have in the destruction of the moral fibre of Camelot but maybe what it does is highlight that the element of choice that is so obvious for Tolkien and which has now come into play at last in Malory. Events are a result of a choice made by the male characters in the romance; thus one could argue that even though Malory wrote the female characters as evil and as anomalous in their society they were not as harmful or as toxic to the downfall of Camelot as the men. Power and magic are crucial to the demise of Camelot. Still it is not solely these specific elements that bring about the collapse it is not even the constant battle between men and women for power, recognition and status. It is the element of choice. All the events that lead up to the climax of the narrative are driven by character choices dictated by Malory. The purpose of power and magic in that case becomes an element used to represent something specific-chaos.

More recent depictions and characterizations of Morgan le Fay have not yet reconceptualised her as a heroine: as in T.H. White’s *Once and Future King* her arrival is heralded by a gore-crow.¹³⁶ She is also described by Marian’s husband in the novel as equivalent to an incongruity: ‘It is difficult to explain her.’¹³⁷ This lack of explanation of exactly what and who she is may be representative of his attraction to her, which on the superficial level he may not understand, as many men do not when they are confronted by feelings of attraction even though they are in a relationship.

¹³⁴ Collver. T, L, ‘The Changing Role of Women in the Arthurian Legend.’ pg 3.

¹³⁵ Collver. T, L, ‘The Changing Role of Women in the Arthurian Legend.’ pg 4.

¹³⁶ White, T.H. *The Once and Future King*. New York: Penguin Publishers, 1996, pg 51.

This is akin to the unknowability discussed earlier and is reproduced as it is in Malory to highlight the potential danger in this female character to the male characters. On the next level of interpretation Wart's knowledge that the attraction should not materialise into a relationship influences his understanding of her reputation and of his attraction to her. Therefore by not naming her he is allowing her to exist in his imagination in any form that he chooses, as long as it is socially accepted and agreeable, and results in his control over her. One could argue that this instance is parallel to that found in Malory's in Arthur's attraction to Guinevere and his intention to marry her. His forcible silencing of her choices is exactly what Wart does when does not allow the idea of a potential of a relationship to occur- so in both cases, years apart and both existing in L-Space, the right of choice and decision making power remains in the hands of the male characters of the texts. A significant event in this respect is to be found in the baptism Marian gives Morgan when she names her as '...an enchantress.'¹³⁸ This seems to have less of a negative connotation than anything that has been said by men in the text. By naming the creation Marian develops a mystical, powerful but pessimistic picture of a woman whom the reader has yet to meet, and asserts to her husband that she does not approve of his protection of Morgan le Fay at this point. This act of silencing and protection is offered in Tolkien and Malory's works where men find it necessary to protect women by not allowing them entrance into the text by means of words but rather through the men's imagination. In a sense one could interpret this as a type of chivalry, an attempt at protecting and shielding innocent maidens from losing honour and status, and in another sense one could read it as transcendence of physicality implying that women are too powerful to be represented by words resulting in their representation being redirected into an individual reader's imagination. Thus influencing the final character that the latter encounters. In this instance I view the possibility that power and words may need to exist within a silenced space to enhance the female characters role and space. Malory has successfully used the icon of the triangle throughout the narrative, firstly in terms of his love truss and secondly with respect to the themes of silence, power and words filtered through the streams of gender.

¹³⁷ White, T.H. *The Once and Future King*. New York. Penguin Publishers, 1996, pg 97.

¹³⁸ White, T.H. *The Once and Future King*. New York. Penguin Publishers, 1996, pg 98.

The events that Malory has allowed to occur between the transcendental powers which Merlin possesses to and the human characters; force them (Igraine and Morgaine) into positions and situations which are conducive to his purpose are those which he has organised by his words. Yet the women of the text will bear the brunt of the judgement and the reader's response to them. An interesting example is to view Igraine as one of Merlin's pawns.

On the surface it may seem that she is not only beyond Merlin's influence, but rather that she is very aware of it. Igraine's traditional deception by Merlin is apparently not as psychologically disturbing as I interpret it today. Her trauma is possibly disregarded because she is given no chance to narrate it or alternatively because she has been created to live with the outcomes of the event without negative repercussions so there is no trauma to speak of. It becomes something which is neither discussed nor evaluated in moral terms. I could also argue that she is simply overlooked and silenced and as a result her trauma is considered as inferior or unimportant by the reader. One could argue that this rape and the silencing of it will lead to some major trauma and this is possibly illustrated and embodied in the character of Morgan le Fay and her immense distrust of men and their intentions. The one character represents the trauma and the other deals with it. She could perhaps be interpreted along the same lines as Toni Morrison's character Beloved, where the actualisation of an entire culture's pain and exploitations reside in one character. It is with this one character and her drive that the illustration of one culture's pain is recorded. It is also the extent to which Beloved will go to perpetuate a cycle of pain in order to force people to confront their past behaviour and ache that are the reactions in the text. The reader may also concur that it is in owning this sense of her mother's victimisation and manipulation that Morgaine chooses to use and control magic. Her opinion or inclination could be read as rather to wield the power than be wielded by it and ultimately gains some self-satisfaction and fulfilment. For the reader the conclusion cannot be as easy, as it is never clearly stated, by any male or female character, why her choices are made and why her actions seem to involve destructive tendencies. Rather what the reader can do is to consider the results of her actions and the gaps that fail to narrate her story.

In contrast to this direct silencing of voice and experience Tolkien's women characters are very different. Their silence illustrates a different position and serves a different function, to serve a different end in the text. Female characters seem to voluntarily step back from the male focused action and allow them almost to become spoken for by the reader's interpretation of them. Susan Carter observes how both Galadriel and Morgan le Fay face gaps in the texts—she refers to them as 'The Lady of the Lacuna'—and it is these very gaps that allow them to exist in tempting, powerful and unknowable positions for the reader¹³⁹. The fundamental difference is in the nature of each of these characters' power as Morgan's abilities are born out of contempt and Galadriel's are given to her to serve and protect a population that she is responsible for. Morgan has no responsibility to a kingdom or community most of what she perpetuates seems to be in her own self interest. There are exceptions in Tolkien's work to these silenced individuals such as Éowyn but she is a representation of the future woman in Middle Earth, one that yields to no one and one who redefines the representation of what is an acceptable version of a heroine, as is Arwen.

Both of the above mentioned characters have collective qualities which separate them from Malory's illustrations of women namely responsibility and sacrifice. Nevertheless, Arwen's ultimate sacrifice may seem slightly unfair because she dies and her death may be read as unnecessary by some readers. She is not part of the human world, nor is she part of all of its pain, and evil and therefore, her choice to sacrifice herself and her mortality to ensure than humans rule Middle Earth is perceived as a altruistic sacrifice. She, an Elf, wields powers that supplant any of those that are left on Middle Earth, yet because the region's natural harmony is interrupted by the aftermath of Sauron and Saruman's evil, she has no alternative but to die and leave her love and life behind. Being an Elf Arwen is inextricably linked to nature and a natural order very similar to what post modern readers, could identify with. Michael Brisbois discusses how nature in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is linked to a morality and God. His argument highlights Sam's query as to whether the Elves made the land or the land made them. In either case this implies that the Elves and especially characters such as Galadriel and Arwen are inherently connected to nature which could possibly explain why natural forces such as water, wind etc are

¹³⁹ Carter, S. 'Galadriel and Morgan le Fey: Tolkien's Redemption of the Lady of the Lacuna.'

used to communicate, especially when one considers the portrayal of these characters in the latest film of *The Lord of the Rings*. This alignment to nature further separates these characters from their predecessors as the reader has another vein to judge Tolkien's characters and other images and attributes to assign to them.

An interesting, valuable view of the philosophical and moral notion of good being linked to nature and magic is also expressed by Helm who explains and defines the five “internal laws” of Middle Earth, with my focus falling on number three: ‘*Moral and magical law have the force of physical law*’,¹⁴⁰ This could imply that any fluctuation in moral and magical balance would cause an alteration in the physical world. This may be seen as parallel to the notion argued earlier that what is spoken and what happens has some link, for both the reader and the characters that they encounter. Brisbois highlights the instance of Éowyn, Maiden of the Rohirrim, striking down the beast in the air and of how it seems that the earth reaches out to reward her: ‘A light fell about her, and her hair shone in the sunrise.’¹⁴¹ This fluctuation is possibly why every moral decision is followed by some natural consequence to the disturbance in the natural order in Shakespeare’s Macbeth, where the hierarchy of the kingdom is only restored once the true king is reinstated. The link that Tolkien takes great care to establish from the beginning of the text between female characters and nature becomes unavoidable for the reader in instances like the one mentioned earlier but also that harmony can only exist when nature (females) and men can reach some understanding. In an attempt to restore the power to human beings Tolkien represents the Elves of *The Lord of the Rings* as lacking the ability to lead the War against Sauron and Saruman’s army. Their male leaders wish no part in a war but rather leave for distant shores, and it is only as the war becomes eminent that the elvish armies are sent to Helm’s Deep to assist with the campaign. It is interesting that the one elvish female to make a sacrifice for Middle Earth and take on responsibility for her own existence is Arwen who will lose everything to gain nothing for herself but, rather the freedom for a population and community to which she does not belong.

Mythlore, Spring-Summer, 2007, pg 1-3.

¹⁴⁰ Brisbois, M. J. ‘Tolkien’s Imaginary Nature: An Analysis of the Structure of Middle-Earth.’ *Tolkien Studies* 2.1(2005), West Virginia University Press. pg 5.

¹⁴¹ Brisbois, M. J. ‘Tolkien’s Imaginary Nature: An Analysis of the Structure of Middle-Earth.’ *Tolkien Studies* 2.1(2005), West Virginia University Press., pg10.

Tolkien wishes to highlight that it is within humankind that the power for change resides: it does not necessarily reside within magical beings. Malory's depiction of the inseparable link between magic and power was entirely opposite to Tolkien. One can only function with and for the other whereas Tolkien has moved towards the understanding that magic can exist without power and without the domination and dictatorial nature that is inherent in characters such as Merlin. Rather he shows that magic and power are not mutually beneficial or interdependent and that the potential for change and action resides in the decisions made by characters that possess neither power nor magic but rather are given the element of choice. This is possibly why Arwen's presence is felt so strongly, since her connection to Aragorn is pivotal to the success of the Fellowship and also why she possibly loses all her elvish power to marry Aragorn. Furthermore this is why Éowyn chooses to become physically involved in the War. Éowyn focuses on her people and family knowing that all that she does contains their future in the midst of it. She comes to represent a kind of Sir Gawain figure, the hero archetype as Jung would define it¹⁴², depicted in the tale of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. She ventures far from home as a representative of her people to wage a war against some unknown monster which will confront her in many forms. As with Sir Gawain it is the moral trial she must endure and she will face her demons when she is confronted with Arwen's love for Strider as well as his love for her. This is a similarity that she shares with the Hobbit, Frodo and what possibly allows her to become a heroine in the text. One could argue, as does Miryam Libryan-Moreno, that the love that Éowyn feels for Aragorn will be replaced by the sincere love that she and Faramir will inevitably share. For Aragorn, 'Éowyn is a paradox, who does not know how to speak of her. She is beautiful and deserving, and yet hard and doomed, a bitter sweet creature...',¹⁴³ This means that for Aragorn she is as unknowable as Morgan was for her counterparts and that he cannot or will not get close to her for some inherent fear.

Éowyn's development from ice maiden to flowering beauty is brought about by the warmth that Faramir offers her, and this only occurs once she has been through trauma and once her perception has been sufficiently altered for her to be receptive to

¹⁴² Feist, J and Feist, G. *Theories of Personality- Fourth Edition*. U.S.A. McGraw- Hill Companies, Inc, 1998, pg 64-92.

his advances. Yet this is not in fact the only version of her as a developing woman that is found in the novel as she is one of the few female characters, along with Arwen, who seem to undergo a development from caricature to character through ordeal in order to be able to accept true love and freedom. She does seem to be the only woman who follows this path to the traditional role of being a wife and mother. In this respect she follows an almost bildungsroman-like type of development in the text, similar to that of some of Dickens's characters, such as Pip in *Great Expectations*. Éowyn has been obliged to make mistakes and gain experience before she develops into a complete, three dimensional, multi faceted woman character-tracking the development from infant to child to adult to woman. Unlike the other powerful female characters, who are granted their elitist position by birth or station, Éowyn must make the journey from ordinary woman to leader through spilling blood (on the battle field and by giving birth) and regaining some of the power lost by mankind in the beginning of the myth.

Tolkien is using her as a vessel for change—she befriends the Hobbits and aids Aragorn in moving her people to Helm's Deep—allowing her to undermine any outcome expected on the part of the reader to be destabilized involuntarily. Even though she is elevated in the narrative, it is an interesting point that Tolkien raises when he represents her as a wife and a mother by the close of the narrative. I would deduce from this change in position that although Tolkien depicts Éowyn as being a formidable warrior and competitor in a mainly masculine society, she finds her true happiness and completeness in having become a wife and mother. Ultimately finding the power within herself through various types of sacrifice and responsibilities. The ultimate sacrifice for her is giving up the art of war for the art of family. A conclusion that can be drawn from this is that Tolkien believes that women come into their true potential, their ultimate fulfilment, when their character is developed in mature ways, and when informed choices are made with sacrifices entwined. Often self sacrifice is the ultimate hurdle.

It is at this summit that one should understand that Tolkien's work was not mere story or fantasy but rather, as noted earlier, a form of myth. As Reilly argues Tolkien's

¹⁴³ Libra'n-Moreno, M. 'Greek and Latin Amatory Motifs in Éowyn's Portrayal'. *Tolkien Studies*, 4,

narrative cannot easily be fitted into any mould, and some critics have disregarded the work as ‘juvenile trash’¹⁴⁴. However one may perceive the work as comment on what can be measured as reality in its basic form. Reality can only exist in terms of what an individual can claim they have lived or experienced therefore for the characters in *The Lord of the Rings* their reality is what is currently happening to them, their understanding of these experiences and their reactions to them. Hence one could possibly argue, in simplistic terms, that their reality becomes our reality because we read their experiences and give them a voice that otherwise would not be heard. Ultimately we yield the power that they wield over us and we forfeit our ultimate power. It is the interaction between the reader’s psyche and the possibility of alternate interpretations of a narrative that gives rise to different aspects of various characters being recognised and understood by the reader. The relationship between author and reader exists within the medium of the characters and the intrusions of the reader into the author’s portrayal allow for the creation of a reality in which the reader can create various possibilities- one of which is reading a narrative that appears to be hidden.

This would appear to be the same sort of reasoning that supports the argument regarding sound and hearing. Who hears a tree falling in the forest if there is no one there to hear it? Sound is possibly defined by the fact that someone needs to have heard it and only then it does exist. If this is the case the women of *The Lord of the Rings* merely need someone to read their voices and experiences to make them a reality. For Éowyn this reality is that she will never enter into a relationship with Aragorn beyond friendship therefore war with Sauron and his consorts will afford her an outlet for her emotions as well as those of duty, since she has sworn her alliance to the Fellowship and to protect her community. The later development of her relationship with Faramir suggests a more mature type of love, ultimately giving up the identity of a maiden warrior- since there is no need for this- as portrayed by Tolkien. Her sacrifice was to offer her innocence for the greater good and to offer without the expectation of glory or reward. After the war her sacrifice has fulfilled its goal and she has developed a fuller perception of life with the reader coming to understand her. Subsequently it is a natural progression that she will now settle into

2007, West Virginia University Press, 2007, pg 78.

¹⁴⁴ Reilly, R.J. ‘Tolkien and the Fairy Story’ in *Tolkien and the Critics :Essays on J.R.R. Tolkien’s The*

the next phase of her life and that is of a wife and mother. Thus once her destiny has been fulfilled Tolkien reverts to the conventional representation of women, with Éowyn's power diminishing as she has completed the task which her power and status were needed for. Tolkien, in my understanding, has allowed magic to be used as a tool to guide her to a specific action but her end goal and happiness still remains within the realm of being human. Therefore power becomes the tool used to elevate human qualities and make them magical. Except finally and after all power is found to be a human quality.

The alternate reality that is created by Éowyn's actions and our understanding of her shares its allegiance with Terry Pratchett's ideas of L-space. This author of science fiction in the 21st century feels that all books have some connection to having been read and having been written: 'Knowledge=power=energy=matter=mass, and on that simple equation rests the whole of L-Space. It is via L-Space that all books are connected (quoting the ones before them, and influencing the ones that come after). But there is no time in L-Space.'¹⁴⁵ For Pratchett knowledge becomes a physical form and develops characters, emotions and narratives. Underpinning this entire theory is the belief that readers, people and populations, have access to this created space as a source of reference and creativity. This is analogous to María José Alvarez- Faedo's opening statement in her article, wherein she highlights the reminiscent aspect of Tolkien's work with that of the Arthurian legend and she also supports the notion that the reader's response to a given text is what dictates and creates meaning. It is through this type of analogy that we realise: contextual and interpretative influence of other works and history for authors and their works is as important as the influence of a framework for readers in their individualistic study of any text. With this being the case there will be other books that will depict similar characters, or possibly to be more precise there will be characters modelled, sculpted and created out of other characters which we will remember when we consider Éowyn and Arwen, just as Tolkien remembered many Celtic, Greek and Medieval characters while he wrote his epic. Could this then highlight a willingness on Tolkien's part to show us comparison and similarity between his characters and those of other authors' and of previous

Lord of the Rings, edited by Neil, D. Isaacs and Rose A. Zimbardo, Notre Dame. University of Notre Dame Press, 1968, pg 4.

narratives? The answer would reside in the reader's access to other written work their understandings of these and any conclusions drawn from such exposure. The concept that all new characters are informed by, and fleshed-out caricatures from another narrative is visible in the parallel between Morgan le Fay and Éowyn. The elements of earlier characters are evident in the description, attributes and behaviours that these two characters display. For example Éowyn possesses blonde hair as did Guinevere, Helen of Troy and Goldilocks, while Morgan le Fay is reminiscent of Lady Macbeth, Artemis and Medusa. All these women are connected by their symbolic depiction of power and magic and therefore they share a number of characteristics.

Morgan and Guinevere could be understood in terms of love received and love given, acceptance and rejection by their respective communities. Morgan who wishes to become part of a family and a community, does everything in her power to try and force the issue of participation in a unit, whereas Éowyn who has been placed as protector of her community, by birth and by regal order, wishes to leave and face a war that she does not fully understand nor does she have the tools to ensure victory on her own. The interpretation of this could be that Éowyn wishes to form either a new family through her alliance to a majority male dominated group of warriors fighting for a new generation of beliefs or that she wishes to create a family unit after the destruction of the war that would be in principle the type of family that she never had and one where women are more powerful and better understood. Neither of these female characters finds her love returned by the individual that it is intended for, nor have they felt true love or let warmth too close to them, for when this happens they will fundamentally change in character and the reader's understanding of them will also change. It is in essence the replication of a betrayal on many levels; one being that men can never truly accept nor understand these two characters until either transformation happens or some other event that will change their representation in the text.

This alteration implies that their power is linked to their emotional state: only when they acknowledge the lack of emotional stability in their relationships and attempt to rectify it does their power multiply itself and in turn this creates action in the text. For

¹⁴⁵ Pratchett, T. Stewart, I. and Cohen, J. *The Science of the Discworld II- The Globe*. London.

Éowyn her power increases as she finds her soul mate in Faramir and comes to the realisation that her love is returned, whereas for Morgan the joy of love returned never occurs. The result in the text is that her offspring conceived with the object of her affection dies and her failure as a normal woman becomes obvious consequently she does not transcend the stereotype of evil witch. Therefore in all texts her portrayal and representation seems to be the same and in so doing creates the stereotype of the evil woman that Tolkien allows his characters not to enter into or to become for the reader. Tolkien elevates Éowyn when she finally accepts Faramir as her partner, his love and his station, and Tolkien has therefore allowed her to transcend the image of iron maiden and warrior princess to that of mature woman, strong, independent and loving. Morgan le Fay never achieves this development and is therefore never allowed to fully accomplish her societal accepted female status. She does however become a mother but she is never recognised as a warm, strong, loving individual since this would undermine her status as witch in the text.

Ultimately each author allows each female character the end, or conclusion which would reinforce the notion he finds acceptable. For Tolkien, women are inherently good, magical, powerful and natural. Still though, they may be violent and strong at times, they will ultimately become mothers and nurturers. For Malory, women are perceived as fragments of men, often being considered as either good or evil in relation to men. Another variation is that women possess the ability to occupy and manipulate men, often being either the devil or the devil in the latter. This lends itself to the conclusion that for Malory women are a difficult maze to negotiate, as men will never truly know what their intentions are, but for Tolkien women seem to be more reminiscent of an approachable, affectionate gender whose love and guidance can conquer all. It is ultimately the victory of love over violence, nature over machines, and the power of unity over individual tyranny: ‘Tolkien’s female characters epitomize his critique of traditional, masculine and worldly power, offering an alternative that can be summed up as the choice of love over pride, reflective of the Christ-like inversion of power rooted in Scripture, and ultimately more powerful than any domination by use of force.’¹⁴⁶

Although the above-mentioned examples emphasise differences between the two authors we need to recognise that Tolkien created his understanding of his female characters on the foundation of the women he had previously encountered in literature, especially through his studies of medieval literature. This is also why his own literature depends heavily on the reader having read his other work (*The Hobbit*), as it is the predecessor of the trilogy. Therefore Pratchett's notion of L-Space no longer seems implausible especially when one reads Colin Duriez's companion to *The Lord of the Rings*: the reader is overwhelmed by the intertextuality that is relied on when he discusses primary characters such as Aragorn. He identifies parallel characters that have been written by Tolkien before, who share the same fate, characteristics or similar love triangles, 'He was the Beren of his day, like Beren marrying an elf-maiden, Arwen, who resembled Luthien in beauty.'¹⁴⁷ For Tolkien as for Malory, history, in the sense of it being an elaborate story and the telling and re-telling of a time, plays a major part in a created society that relies on hereditary bonds to keep the texts alive.

My sense is that there is a definitive link for the authors as the characters form parts of a whole, explicitly in that each character is portrayed as possessing a fully developed psyche and other features including a family history, resulting in three dimensional, powerful and magical characters, and not two dimensional caricatures. Therefore the authors' attention to the re-telling of the numerous stories of the past creates worlds larger than the reader but worlds that are accessible and understandable and recreate old, accepted notions of the Creation story from various cultures. Malory re-tells the narrative of the love triangle, complete with a princess and a king, like many other authors such as Chaucer, the Gawain Poet and even the authors of ancient Greek and Roman literature. Consider the tale of Helen of Troy—a princess trapped between her love and her duty—who eventually follows her heart but creates a war that would end an empire. This tale parallels Malory's tale of Guinevere's love for Lancelot and of how that love destroys Camelot and Arthur. Another connection is that both of these stories are tales in a greater collection of stories that exist as a history. They exist as a component of a bigger collective history that detailed a

¹⁴⁶ Enright, N. 'Tolkien's Females and the Defining Power.' *Renaissance*, Winter, 2007, pg 1.

¹⁴⁷ Duriez, C. *Tolkien and The Lord of the Rings: A Guide to Middle Earth*. Phoenix Mill.
Sutton Publishing Limited, pg 68.

specific era in time. Guinevere's tale is only a fraction of the history of Camelot and of Arthur; the other tales in *Le Morte D'Arthur* including those about Morgan le Fay, Pelenor and Agravaine constitute the rest. Differing views are expressed concerning the issue whether Malory's work is a collection of separate stories or if it was intended as a 'hoole booke'¹⁴⁸ However for my purposes Malory's work has been considered as the latter. By invoking the reader's memory of characters and wealth of understanding both Malory and Tolkien access a kind of power and magic that cannot otherwise be tapped into. They invoke L-Space.

Tolkien takes on the immense task of rewriting the 'Creation' story as told in the Bible. He goes to great lengths to develop a world created by supernatural powers and a history permeates all his works: his creation of his own language: to be precise Elvish and its' variety of dialects, demonstrates not only his dedication to depicting a true world but also his study of some of the oldest stories ever told. Tolkien's structure in re-telling history reflects elements as he depicts the image of the upright individual who goes on a quest as a representative of his or her community, not knowing where he will be going or what he will be expected to do in order to succeed in his task. The trial of the individual in *The Lord of the Rings* lies in the necessity of making a moral judgement which affects the outcome of the novel. If one considers Frodo's journey to Mount Doom to destroy the One Ring then the parallel becomes even clearer. Master Frodo also faces temptations, as did Sir Gawain, Guinevere, Helen of Troy and Galadriel, and yet with the help of characters such as Arwen and Sam, Frodo overcomes these challenges and succeeds in destroying the single biggest threat to Middle Earth. It is in the final victory of the destruction of the Ring that forces Frodo to overcome all his fear and realises his full potential as a leader. As a powerful individual he has not reached this point without his own sacrifice of losing his sanity and the sacrifices that others, especially the female characters in the text have made. He has throughout the journey made use of other powerful characters such as Galadriel, Gandalf and Arwen without whom; he would not have reached his final destination. Only through their aid did they elevate their own status and by doing so

¹⁴⁸ Heltermann J. 'Thomas Malory, Sir c.1400-March 14, 1471.' In *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 146: Old and Middle English Literature*. Edited by Jeffrey Heltermann and Jerome Mitchell. University of South Carolina and the University of Georgia. The Gale Group, 1994, pg 2.

have helped Frodo complete his own journey from insignificant Hobbit to victorious hero- from honest and humble knight to victorious king.

For me finally the silences in both texts enable worlds to develop, wars to be won and lost, boys to become men and women to become either saints or slaves which ensure that sacrifices are made to a specific end. For Malory his world is destructed with the aids of power and magic and the end of a dream; whereas for Tolkien mankind redeems itself through abandoning power and magic to remain human and that they will hopefully rule Middle Earth with virtue, power, honesty and humanity.



CHAPTER FOUR

The Mist of Magic

Both texts, through numerous readings (by the public) and critiques have placed these authors in the genres of magic and fantasy. Tone, atmosphere, character development, power, gender, magic, ambition, hope and action are but a few elements that add to the above mentioned statement. Further elements would be the themes of magic ('good' and 'evil'), wizards, deception, places and towns that have no physical existence as well populations of individuals that do not necessarily exist for readers. The creations of orcs, elves, wizards, kings, knights, sorceresses and hobbits their wars and hanging gardens, with their own trees, apples and birds allow the reader an out of body experience so often associated with fantasy literature. With this in mind it may be that readers view these texts as not being able to shed any reflective light on society as a whole but rather that the narrative is a fragment of the author's imagination and inner psyche. Some readers may understand nothing more than the plot as being an exciting story involving intriguing characters that interact in an imaginary world where the normal stresses do not exist and not that noble ideas of honesty, faith and love are central to a predetermined plot. This type of understanding changes the status of these narratives from valuable, insightful and meaningful comments of the human condition to being little more than fanciful, entertaining, fantasy- a product of the authors' overactive imaginations.

However in my view the difficulty with such a random grouping is that the reader develops a type of distance from the novel, as if it could not actually affect him or her and contains minimal bearing or commentary on his or her life. With this distance the intimacy between author, reader, character and text is negated and the sympathising and empathising, that develops through the active task of reading, with characters is

non-existent. Conclusively readers may not react to the text in the way the authors intended. The distinction that Tolkien makes between fantasy and magic allows for the ordinary reader to become an integral part of the narrative which has been developed by the author, which means that Tolkien tries to minimise the possibly negative reaction to magic and fantasy as being a childish exercise of a hyperactive consciousness. For Tolkien,

...there is a marked difference between what he calls magic and fantasy.

Magic ‘produces, or pretends to produce, an alteration in the Primary World....[I]t is not an art but rather a technique; it’s desire is power in this world, domination of things and wills’ ...Fantasy on the other hand , ‘seeks shared enrichment, partners in making and delight, not slaves.¹⁴⁹

And from that perspective, from the joint partnership that Tolkien desires with the reader, one should consider how magic is built into a work such as *Lord of the Rings*. His statement highlights that magic may be more dictatorial and fantasy more diplomatic .Beside this one could say that Malory’s use of magic is his desire to control the reader’s reaction whereas Tolkien uses fantasy to create some kind of sensitive and delicate journey for the reader. Yet the difference may not be so clear cut. The distinction lies in the subtlety that is used by both authors. It is not my belief that there is any forceful or direct influence on the author’s part to try and convince the reader that the narratives are believable but rather it is in the nuances and subtleties that they create in their characters, their difficulties or relationships and their associated trials in the texts that make the narrative believable. And in order to have belief the reader must at some point be subject to the accuracy and plausibility of that which he or she reads and follows. This joint partnership, between author and reader, is however, not without conditions and more precisely conditions that are outside of the craft of the author.

One of these conditions in my opinion would be that the reader already has an unshakable love of collective history and intertextuality that creates such three-dimensional characters such as Aragorn, Frodo and Gandalf. It is not a necessity that the reader has an in depth understanding or reading of history (although this would

¹⁴⁹ Hiley, M. ‘Stolen Language, Cosmic Models: Myth and Mythology in Tolkien’. *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, 50.4, 2004, pg 857.

enhance their reading and understanding of the texts) but rather an appreciation for history and a thoughtful consideration of narrative and L-Space. The connection is that the authors create plots from a fame of reference larger than themselves therefore if the reader shares a similar frame of reference the reading of the text gains value and meaning, as well as magic.

The connection between L-Space and Reader Response theory for the twentieth century reader is more obvious than ever before. If L-Space dictates that all texts are allied and share some commonalities: Reader Response Theory states that each reader's interaction and interpretation of texts is determined by their experiences, it stands to reason that the current exposure that any reader has is a menagerie of references, inclusive of comics, movies, songs, literature, art and popular culture which feeds off of each other to produce any interpretation. The reader is an integral part of the power dynamics as the power moves from author to reader and back through the text and L-Space.

The unenlightened readers' primary focus is on the characters attributes and characteristics and this would make the element of physical magic more obvious. This first condition, in conjunction with the portrayal of power created by the author and the relationships that he creates and allows to transpire in the texts, which ultimately ensures that the battle lines between good and evil are drawn, and that those possessing extraordinary abilities are partnered with the less powerful in order to make the ascension to power all the more dramatic, ultimately draws the reader into a narrative that contains many wars on many fronts, the focal war being that of fair representation of gender. However all authors rely on tension: tension between gender and magic, male and female, powerful and powerless is what makes the plot of these two texts all the more moving.

Patrick Curry's article '*Enchantment in Tolkien and Middle Earth*' discusses the relationship between the reader and power arguing that the notion of enchantment has an effect on an individual, and he makes a significant point: "The clear implication is that any danger to mortals from enchantment lies principally not in the latter itself but

in the relationship one has with it.¹⁵⁰. Therefore it is the connection made between the mortal readers, characters and author and the idea of enchantment that holds the power, for both reader and character, and consequently it will vary between each.

Another element that connects the reader and magic is the one of battle-the necessary evil. Provided there are these obvious sides of good and evil the battle is the event in the narrative so as to highlight the difficulties for both texts that are very human in nature and with the purpose of bringing magic and power into play. Battle becomes the exorcism, the vomiting, and getting rid of the wickedness: the dreadful and the unwanted elements in the narrative. This is achieved through the violence, and rapidly the slate is wiped clean for the existence of a new narrative, new versions of authors and characters. The interesting thing to note is that at no point in either text is it the special magical powers that cede victory, but rather the human qualities such as honour, truth and responsibility that ensure the heroes and heroines succeed. Is it then the author's intentions to illustrate human qualities as magical, powerful, and that the intention of their texts is to show us the strength in ourselves. Perhaps then the context of each narrative is of no importance and the concepts of magic and power are just as inconsequential because the real magic lies in the aspects that make characters human. This is also possibly the element that makes all powerful, magic wielding characters in the texts more sympathetic and identifiable for the readers. The fact that on the most fundamental levels (love, hate, family, fear and faith) they are human.

To return to my first condition of history many critics have acknowledged the influence of other older works in both authors' manuscripts: Fimi's metaphorical statement of the development of Arthur, in Malory's text: 'It seems fairly plain that Arthur, once historical (but perhaps as such not of great importance), was also put into the Pot. There he was boiled for a long time, together with many other older figures and devices, of mythology and Faerie, and even some stray bones of history (such as Alfred's defence against the Danes), until he emerged as a King of Faerie(MC 126)',¹⁵¹ convinces both layman and academic that no character can purely develop from an author's imagination. This is a reiteration of L-Space wherein each story or

¹⁵⁰ Curry, P. 'Enchantment in Tolkien and Middle-Earth' in *Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings: Sources of Inspiration*. Edited by Caldecott and Thomas Honegger, Zurich, Walking Tree Books, 2008, pg 102.

narrative is a spin off of another and that leads us to believe that characters must function in the same way. If each character represents a further development from its predecessor then the accumulated power (in the reader's perception) resides in the last configuration of characters. This is entirely reliant on the reader making the connection between texts, experiences and representations. With this in mind the theory of L-Space is not just a hypothetical argument but a reality and suggests that future characters will become more powerful, more enigmatic and influential because of the access that the authors and readers have to the earlier representations and their power.

Therefore the power has come from 'beyond the grave' for these reincarnations and such characters have been transformed into more fantastical and powerful icons. The historical Arthur may only have given his name but others throughout literary history gave their bones and flesh to allow for Malory's Arthur to be born. And from this Arthur all the others have followed, their representation being similar to that of Robin Hood and his many reincarnations, or a young boy wizard named Harry. Each generation has had Arthur offered to it, yet human minds often seem to find another version to bring to life. It follows that narratives have developed a repetitive aspect to them, where their composition has become the art of the re-telling of earlier narratives in different forms, from different aspects that have become the norm. A modern example of this would be the 2008 release of the tale of *Beowulf*. This does of course beg the question-will anyone ever write or create anything truly original, or will all be a reinvention of the narratives that we are familiar with?

Having arrived at the supported conclusion that texts do not exist in isolation the concept of L-Space can be further developed. Both authors (Tolkien and Malory) are evoking the L-Space thought by reinventing ideas, characters and narratives which have preceded their own as both authors were also students of literature. The extension from what they read to what they created seems almost natural as well as necessary. Although, in their works, these authors revitalise characters or specific elements in characters such as the use of magic, vast family histories and the idea of the journey, they are skilful enough to create aspects in them which are new and fresh

¹⁵¹ Fimi, D. 'Tolkien's "Celtic Type of Legends": Merging Traditions'. *Tolkien Studies*. Volume 4,

for the reader. Thereby not allowing a re-reading of an earlier text or the assumption that their narrative is merely an attempt at rewriting the already written but allowing something new to be born and appreciated by readers. This is an important point as there are those critics, like Terence McCarthy who are of the opinion that, ‘Malory’s extremely formal, spare distant, historical presentation of characters and events leaves the readers’ literary imagination free.’¹⁵² Which when read one way could mean that there is little or no imaginative space for individual reading or the alternative that there is a large amount of potential for imagination because of the rigid classification. In either choice of interpretation the power is shifted from author to reader. In so doing they are allowing for varying interpretations and interactions with individual characters thus opening up new and multiple avenues for one single narrative. This point is reiterated by Maria José Álvarez Faedo: ‘Wolfgang Iser (1974:54), studying the reading process, affirmed that ‘the literary text activates our own faculties, enabling us to recreate the world it presents.’ He called that creative activity’ the virtual dimension of the text’ and identified it with ‘the coming together of text and imagination.’¹⁵³ In this role reversal each character gains more power over the reader and the reader more power over them as the interactions become personal in nature. Emotions such as sympathy, empathy and hatred become very intimate parts of a relationship and this shift in locus, from author to reader, from creator to critic, creates the reader as a co-author and co-interpreter of each text.

Malory allows the reader to engage with female characters so as to use conventional methods to make unconventional narratives for the reader. Morgan le Fay may be portrayed as a witch within the text however; she functions as a temptress and seductress. This activity allows her access to powerful or influential men in order to manipulate aspects of the text, which will lead to the downfall of Camelot.

Shakespeare used a similar technique when he allowed Lady Macbeth to manoeuvre Macbeth into a position of power which inevitably caused his downfall. Although on the surface the texts seem to possess little correlation with each other they both portray women in dire situations using their position in society to influence powerful

2007, West Virginia University Press, pg 61.

¹⁵²McCarthy Terence. *Old Worlds New World*. pg 23.

¹⁵³Faedo, Maria José Álvarez. Arthurian Reminiscence in Tolkien’s Trilogy: The Lord of the Rings in *Avalon Revisited: Reworkings of the Arthurian Myth*. Edited by Maria José Álvarez Faedo. Peter Lang Publishers, Switzerland, 2007, pg 205.

men into situations that cause the narrative to reach a climax, much as Morgan le Fay achieved in Malory's text. It also brings to the fore the ability of women to be in control and force events.

In contrast, possibly in reaction to Malory's portrayal, Tolkien uses female characters to weave the world of the impossible into the possible for the reader thereby altering the expected role of female characters as portrayed previously- from destroyers of Kingdoms to creators, guardians and ultimately inspiration of worlds. For characters such as Morgan le Fay, Guinevere and Nyneve who all destroyed the worlds of men, Arwen, Éowyn and Galadriel constitute the essential spine of their communities and of the men's worlds that will redeem them from their own choices. Tolkien's modern counterparts reflect a development from the archaic, simplistic representation of woman to a civilized, three-dimensional representation: he allows his readers to experience the positive influence of women in a surreal setting, possibly giving the reader the opportunity to map out the possibility of such happenings in her or his own reality. A reading of Tolkien in this light also affords one the opportunity to suggest that real social change can occur if his text is approached by way of Kristeva's definition earlier in the dissertation. Through this definition of love an alternate view of the representation of women can be reached which highlights women characters as powerful, warm identities, which can and will propagate the development of plot. It becomes an empowering experience for the reader as he or she enters the text in identifying with specific characters: dismantling and dissecting them for analysis in order to gain further understanding and insight into their experiences. Relationships may be what we as readers are primarily interested in through the act of reading, a different view into the intimate relationships of characters. This interactive experience allows readers to consider that gender, through its representation in language and magic, could possibly manipulate one's perception and understanding of narrative and character in order to suit a dictated (male) norm. In the role of self reflection I have resisted this manipulation when reading both texts and, hopefully delivered a convincing argument for other readers not to be drawn into the trap of safe and easy reading, asking no questions and posing no arguments.

Tolkien's male characters are also created in terms of well-known previously articulated characters, especially those of Gandalf and Aragorn. A connection

between the two authors themselves is certain, since Tolkien wrote long after Malory and the influence of having read *Le Morte D'Arthur*, *Beowulf* and The Gawain Poet is evident in his writings. Critics have mentioned that Malory's Merlin is a character, '...formed out of the medieval and fifteenth-century fabric into a different suit of clothes by each successive generation; he is the myth handed down and rewrought for the new age, whatever the new age might be.'¹⁵⁴ And Tolkien has used his own fabric to re-weave Merlin as Gandalf: he created a new wizard, and from his development others have forged their own interpretation of this wizard. He also brought to the fore the position of women by drawing attention to the relationship between men and the 'unknown', by allowing the reader to expose one by comparison with the other. Inadvertently he fused together the concepts of power, magic and gender in this resulting in the trusses of relationships that enter the text and the reader's interpretation. By analysing men in contrast to women and vice versa the reader begins to perceive how the effect of each characters development and life experience is illuminated and understood. The bildungsroman structure, which by definition is the novel of development (a novel or text that highlights the stage by stage progression of a character and that there seems to be some type of lesson, moral, religious, or cultural to be learnt) in which Tolkien places his characters allows the reader to follow every mistake and every victory to formulate an impression of knowledge concerning each individual character. The path is followed to promote an appreciative perspective regarding each character and to enhance knowledge within, and concerning the narrative. This knowledge that may be equated to the reader's power, as well as that of the character created, because the experience becomes part of the shared intimate knowledge between reader and character, author and independent agent. This promotes an alternative understanding of the narrative beyond the one that exists on the superficial level and that asks the reader to engage in an introspective or communal relationship with the text. With magic being the foremost tool used by both authors to highlight the difference, similarity and power shifts within gender-tied stereotypes the reader gains the ultimate power, the power of creation.

Through his scholarly activity Tolkien acquired a love and deep reverence for medieval texts: for him it was their representation of a complete saga, a complete

¹⁵⁴ Salus, P. H. 'Merlin and Myth.' *The American Journal of Semiotic*. 7(4), 1990, pg 132.

history of the situation that enticed him and influenced the elements inherited in texts such as *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Silmarillion* and *The Hobbit*: ‘It was clear to Tolkien that the Beowulf poet created, by art, an illusion of historical truth and perspective. The poet had an instinctive historical sense which he used for artistic, poetic ends.’¹⁵⁵

Therefore both these celebrated authors have created gardens of amaranths much like the hanging Gardens of Babylon, all in different colours and different senses, exuding splendour and drinking their water from ancestral wells of the imagination. Magic, power and interpretation persuade the reader to come to some kind of conclusion that is believable for them. Part myth, part truth, these gardens have been painted, looked at, captured in literature, song and exist within the human imagination just as Tolkien’s and Malory’s works exist in L-Space. The ultimate power, the ultimate magic: the world of fantasy and imagination are all ruled by the reader who possess the vital ingredient in the mix of interpretation, their personal response to any given text. The space allows them to enjoy an existence that transcends oral tradition as they become reincarnated and recreated with every new strand of re-telling narratives, displaying their power, their characters and their relationships and narratives that have become part of the readers’ understanding of their world and their own personal experiences.

¹⁵⁵ Duriez, C. *Tolkien and The Lord of the Rings: A Guide to Middle Earth*. Phoenix Mill. Sutton Publishing Limited, 2004, pg 248.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ackerman, F. ‘Always Do to Ladies, Damosels, and Gentlewoman Succour’: Women and the Chivalric Code in Malory’s *Morte D’Arthur*. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, XXVI, 2002, pg 1-12.
- Aers, D. ‘Class, Gender, Medieval Criticism and *Piers Plowman*’ in *Class and Gender in Early English Literature: Intersections*. Edited by Britton J. Harwood and Gillian R. Overing. Bloomington and Indianapolis. Indiana University Press, 1994.
- Armstrong, Dorsey. *Gender and the Chivalric Community in Malory’s Morte d’ Arthur*. Florida. University Press of Florida, 2003.
- Ashe, G. *The Discovery of King Arthur*. Gloucestershire. Sutton Publishing, 2003.
- Avalon Revisited- The Reworkings of the Arthurian Myth*. Edited by Maria J. A. Faedo, Switzerland, Peter Lang Publishers, 2007.
- Bartlett, A. *Male Authors, Female Readers: Representations and Subjectivity in Middle English Devotional Literature*. Ithaca. Cornell University Press, 1995.
- Battis, J. ‘Gazing Upon Sauron: Hobbits, Elves, and the Queering of the Postcolonial Optic.’ MFS Modern Fiction Studies, 504 (2004). Accessed on 07/06/2007 through http://0-muse.jhu.edu.oasis.unisa.ac.za/journals/modern_fiction_studies/v050/50.4battt, pg 908-926.
- Boitani, P and Mann, J. *The Cambridge Companion to Chaucer*. UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Accessed on 28/11/2007 through http://books.google.com/books?id=FIWtAeCVO5QC&pg=PA153&lpg=PA153&dq=gentillesse+wife+of+bath+cambridge+press&source=web&ots=9W28vMKn7y&sig=_Gcf50QoWrGhnQl0oeZsxdSTzP4.

Brisbois, M. J. ‘Tolkien’s Imaginary Nature: An Analysis of the Structure of Middle-Earth.’ *Tolkien Studies* 2.1(2005). Accessed on 04/04/2007 through http://O-muse.jhu.edu.oasis.unisa.ac.za/journals/tolkien_studies/v002/2.1brisbois.html, pg 197-216.

Brook, P. ‘The Idea of Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism.’ in *Discourse in Psychoanalysis and Literature*. Edited by Shlomith Rommon-Kenan. Metbeun & Company. USA: New York, 1987. Accessed through <http://books.google.co.za/books?hl=en&lr=&id=kpwOAAAAQAAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=freud+english+literature+studies&ots=mHA7v7Rw5U&sig=F28ZWkP3xM-ctjsI1ZTw6KR4RfU#v=onepage&q=&f=false>

Carter, S. ‘Galadriel and Morgan le Fey: ‘Tolkien’s Redemption of the Lady of the Lacuna.’ *Mythlore*, Spring-Summer, 2007. Accessed on 03/07/2007 through http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0OON/is_3-4-25/ai_n19171247,pg 1-3.

Chrenka, L. “Julia Kristeva’. Accessed on the 26/2/2005 through <http://www.msu.edu/user/chrenkal/980/POLITICS.HT>, pg 1-6.

Chrenka, L. ‘Shattering Language’. Accessed on the 26/2/2005 through <http://www.msu.edu/user/chrenkal/980/BIBLE.HTM>, pg 1-3.

Collver, T.L. ‘The Changing Role of Women in the Arthurian Legend.’ Accessed on 17/10/2003 through http://maddys-treasure.com/Library/ArthurStuff/Arthurian_women.htm, pg 1-16.

Comoletti, L. B. and Drout, M.D.C. ‘How They Do Things with Words: Language, Power, Gender and the Priestly Wizards of Ursula K. Le Guin’s Earthsea Books.’ *Children’s Literature* (2001) 29: Yale University Press. Accessed on 03/04/2007 through <http://0->

lion.chadwyck.co.uk.oasis.unisa.ac.za/searchFulltext.do?id=R01662251&div.pg113-141.

Curry, P. 'Enchantment in Tolkien and Middle-Earth' in *Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings: Sources of Inspiration*. Edited by Caldecott and Thomas Honegger, Zurich, Walking Tree Books, 2008, pg 99-112.

Darkman, X000. 'A Literary Analysis of Tolkien'. *Tolkien Archives*. Accessed on 16/02/2003 through <http://www.tolkien-archives.com/library/essay>

Davidson, R. 'Reading Like a Woman in Malory's Morte Darthur' in *Arthuriana*, West Lafayette: Spring 2006.16,1; pg.21.

Duh, M. 'The Hegemony of Western Categorisation and the Underdevelopment of Childrens' Literature in 'Other' Worlds.' *Papers 17:2*, 2007, pg 7.

Duriez, C. *Tolkien and The Lord of the Rings: A Guide to Middle Earth*. Phoenix Mill: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2004.

Enright, N. 'Tolkien's Females and the Defining Power.' *Renascence*, Winter, 2007. Accessed 03/07/2007on through

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3777/is_200701/ai_n19197652. pg 1-3.

Faedo, Maria José Álvarez. Arthurian Reminiscence in Tolkien's Trilogy: The Lord of the Rings in *Avalon Revisited: Reworkings of the Arthurian Myth*. Edited by Maria José Álvarez Faedo. Peter Lang Publishers, Switzerland, 2007.

Field, P.J.C. *Malory: Texts and Sources*. Great Britain, D.S Brewer, 1998.

Field, P.J.C. *The Life and Times of Sir Thomas Malory*. Great Britain, D.S. Brewer, 1993.

Fimi, D. 'Tolkien's 'Celtic Type of Legends: Merging Traditions'. *Tolkien Studies*. Volume 4, West Virginia University Press, 2007, pg 51-69.

- Feist, J and Feist, G. *Theories of Personality*. Fourth Edition. U.S.A. McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc, 1998.
- Gilbert, S. and Gubar, S. *The Madwoman in the Attic*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.
- Goodman, B. A. 'The Female Spell-caster in Middle English Romances: Heretical Outsider or Political Insider.' Calumet College of St. Joseph. Accessed on 05/02/2005 through <http://www.luc.edu/publications/medieval/vol115/15ch5.html>, 2005, pg 45-54.
- Gore, S. E. "Thus he rode sorowyng": Travel Narratives and the Ethics of Sexual Behaviour in *Le Morte d'Arthur*. *College Undergraduate Research Electronic Journal*. Year 2006, University of Pennsylvania, 2006.
<http://repository.upenn.edu/curej/3>
- Grace, K.M. 'Praising God in Myth: Tolkien's Rings Triumphs Over the Uncomprehending to Shed a Christian Light on Our Times.' *Report- Canada's Independent Newsmagazine*. Accessed on 16/02/2003 through <http://report.ca/archive/report/20020107/p34i020107f.html>. pg 4.
- Green, W. H. 'Where's Mama? The Construction of the Feminine in *The Hobbit* and in *The Lion and the Unicorn*.' 22. 2 (1998). Accessed on 07/07/2007 through http://0-muse.jhu.edu.oasis.unisa.ac.za/journals/lion_and_the_unicorn/v022/22.2green...
pg188-195.
- Gutierrez, N. 'King Arthur, Scotland, Utopia and the Italian Englishman: What does Race Have to Do with It?' *Shakespeare Studies*: 26, 1998, pg 37-48.
- Hallett, J. 'Resistant (and enabling) Reading: Petronius' *Satyricon* and Latin Love Elegy.' *The Ancient Novel and Beyond* edited by S Panayotakis, M Zimmerman, and W Keuten.

- Harding, W. ‘Medieval Women’s Unwritten Discourse on Motherhood: A Reading of Two Fifteenth-Century Texts.’ *Women’s Studies*. 1992. pg 144-165.
- Harris, E.K. ‘Evidence against Lancelot and Guinevere in Malory’s *Morte Darthur*: Treason by Imagination.’ *Exemplaria*. Accessed on 2/5/2005 through <http://web.english.ufl.edu/exemplaria/harris.html>, pg 1-16.
- Heltermann, J. ‘Thomas Malory, Sir c.1400-March 14, 1471.’ In *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 146: Old and Middle English Literature*. Edited by Jeffrey Heltermann and Jerome Mitchell. University of South Carolina and the University of Georgia: The Gale Group, 1994. 1-14.
- Hiley, M. ‘Stolen Language, Cosmic Models: Myth and Mythology in Tolkien’. *Modern Fiction Studies*, (50)4, 838-860. 2004, pg 838-860.
- Karras, R. M. ‘Women’s Labors: Reproduction and Sex in Medieval Europe.’ *Journal of Women’s History*, 15 (4), 2004, pg 153-158.
- Kay, S. ‘Adultery and Killing in “Le Morte le Roi Artu.”’ *Scarlet Letters: Fictions of Adultery from Antiquity to the 1990’s*. Edited by Nicholas White and Naomi Segal, McMillan Press Ltd 1997, pg 34-44.
- Kelly, H. A. ‘Introduction: Are the Middle Ages Theoretically Recalcitrant?’ *Exemplaria*, VII(1), Spring 1990.
- Lakowski, R. I. ‘The Fall and Repentance of Galadriel.’ *Mythlore*, Spring-Summer, 2007. Accessed on 06/07/2007 through http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0OON/is_3-4_25/ai_n19171248, pg 1-3.
- Lakowski, R. I. ‘Types of Heroism in *The Lord of the Rings*: Critical Essay’. *Mythlore*, Fall-Winter, 2002. Accessed on 06/07/2007 through http://findarticles.com/p/arithces/mi_m0OON/is_4_23/ai_99848427/pg_1.pg, 1-3.

Lewis, C.S. 'The Gods Return to Earth.' *Time and Tide*. 1954, Accessed on 25/11/2005 through <http://0-galenet.galegroup.com.oasis.unisa.ac.za/servlet/LitRC?vrsn=3&OP>, pg 1082-83.

Libra'n-Moreno, M. 'Greek and Latin Amatory Motifs in Éowyn's Portrayal'. *Tolkien Studies*, 4, 2007 pg 73-97.

Malory, T. *Complete Works*. Edited by E. Vinaver. London: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Malory, T. *Le Morte D'Arthur Volume 1*. Edited by Janet Cowen. London: Penguin Books, 2004.

Mathews, R. *J.R.R. Tolkien*. California: Griffin Printing and Lithography Company, 1978.

Mathews, R. *Fantasy: The Liberation of the Imagination*. New York, Routledge, 2002.

McCarthy Terence. *Old Worlds New World*. pg23.

McClain, L.T. 'Gender Anxiety in Arthurian Romance'. *Extrapolation*; Fall; 38, 3, 1997, pg 193-199.

McLaughlin, M. 'The Woman Warrior: Gender, Warfare and Society in Medieval Europe.' *Women's Studies*, 17, 1990, pg 193-209.

McKnight, E. 'Reader-Response Theory and Science Fiction.' Accessed on 21/11/2007 through <http://www2.ac.edu/faculty/emcknight/Reader.htm>. pg 1-5.
'Medieval Narrative'. *Encyclopedia of the Novel*. Schelling, Paul (ed.); Hudson, Christopher and Rijsberman, Marjike (asst ed). Chicago, London: Fiztro Deaborn Publishers, 1998. Accessed 21/07/2005 on through <http://0>

lion,chadwyck.co.uk.oasis.unisa.ac.za/searchFulltext.do?id=R00792050&divLev... ,

pg1-8.

‘Middle English Dictionary’. Accessed on 29/11/2007 through

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED21062>.

Milton, J. *Paradise Lost*. New York: Penguin Books, 1968.

Morris, K. *Sorceress or Witch: The Image of Gender in Medieval Iceland and Northern Europe*. Lanham: University Press of America, 1991.

Petroff, E. *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Pinker, S. ‘The Blank Slate. The Modern Denial of Human Nature.’ Harvard University, 2002. Accessed on 28/11/2007 through

www.educase.edu/ir/library/pdf/ff0616s.pdf pg 69-72.

Pratchett, T, Stewart I. and Cohen, J. *The Science of the Discworld II: The Globe*. London: Edburry Press, Random House, 2003.

Reilly, R.J. ‘Tolkien and the Fairy Story’ in *Tolkien and the Critics: Essays on J.R.R. Tolkien’s The Lord of the Rings* edited by Neil, D. Isaacs and Rose A. Zimbardo, Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968, Accessed on 25/11/2005 through <http://0-galenet.galegroup.com.oasis.unisa.ac.za/servlet/LitRC?vrsn=3&OP=contains..> pg 128-50.

Rider, J. ‘Other Voices: Historicism and the Interpretation of Medieval Text.’ *Exemplaria*, I (2), 1991, pg 293-312.

Rogers, D. C. ‘Everyclod and Everyhero: The Image of Man in Tolkien’. *A Tolkien Compass*: Edited by Jared Lobdell. Open Court, 1975. Accessed on 19/07/2005 through <http://0-galenet.galegroup.com.oasis.unisa.ac.za>, pg 69-76.

Rorty, R. 'Feminism, Ideology, and Deconstruction: a Pragmatist View.' *Hypatia*, 8 (2), (Spring), 1993, pg1-6.

Rouse, M. A. and Rouse, R. H. *Authentic Witness: Approaches to Medieval Texts and Manuscripts*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991.

Ruthven, K.K. *Feminist Literary Studies: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990. Accessed through

<http://books.google.co.za/books?hl=en&lr=&id=clOT7Hg2CfAC&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=psychology+in+english+literature+studies&ots=WXbAPJLr9-&sig=ZKQF5ndIM-QxvFnEGLbJUOdqKb8#v=onepage&q=psychology%20in%20english%20literature%20studies&f=false>

Salus, P.H. 'Merlin and Myth.' *The American Journal of Semiotics*. 7(4), 1990, pg 131-147.

Shakespeare, W. *Macbeth*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1985.

Shakespeare, W. *Romeo and Juliet*. Edited by Digby Ricci. Pretoria. Hodder and Stoughton Educational, 1989.

Svogun, M. *Reading Romance: Literacy, Psychology and Malory's Le Morte D'Arthur*. New York: Peter Lang, 2000.

Tagg, M. 'The Lord of the Rings: Fact or Fantasy', *The Tolkien Archives*. Accessed on 16/02/2003 through <http://www.tolkien-archives.com/library/essay>, pg2-6.

Trueman, C. 'Medieval Women'. Accessed on 5/12/2007 through
http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/medieval_women.htm, pg 1-4.

Thompson, R.H. *The Return from Avalon: A Study of the Arthurian Legend in Modern Fiction*. Westport Conn: Greenwood Press, 1985.

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings*. London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1997.

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Monsters and the Critics and other Essays*. Edited by Christopher Tolkien. Great Britain: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006.

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Peoples of Middle Earth*. Edited by Christopher Tolkien. Great Britain: Haper Collins Publishers, 2002.

Wallace, McKittrick, Honor. Desire and the Female Protagonist: A Critique of Feminist Narrative Theory. *Style. Volume 34, No 2, Summer*. Academic Research Library, Vanderbilt University, 2000, pg 176-187.

Westen, D. *Psychology; Mind, Brain and Culture*. U.S.A: John Wiley and Sons, 1999.

White, T.H. *The Once and Future King*. New York: Penguin Publishers, 1996.

'Why only women get Hysterical'. Accessed on 28/11/2007 through History House http://www.historyhouse.com/in_hidstory/hysteria/, pg 1-4.

Woolf, V. *A Room of One's Own*. London: Triad Grafton Books, 1977.

"Women Worldwalkers: New Dimensions of Science Fiction and Fantasy" Edited by Jane. B. Weedman, Texas, Texas Tech Press, 1985.

Zimmer Bradley, M. *The Mists of Avalon*. England: Penguin Publishers, 1993.

ILLUSTRATIONS

(All pictures found on www.google.co.za-images)

Lord of the Rings .Picture on page 2 (299 x 450 - 49k). www.art.com

Merlin and Gandalf. Pictures on page 9. Left *Merlin* (374 x 500 - 32k jpg). www.timelessmyths.com

Right *Gandalf* (540 x 369 - 51k jpg). www.john-howe.com

Guinevere. Pictures on page 26. Left (270 x 357 - 107k jpg). hem.bredband.net
Right (183 x 226 - 25k jpg). blog.seattlepi.nwsource.com

Arthur and Guinevere. Picture on page 47- (246 x 318 - 18k jpg). mythinglinks.org

Morgan le Fay. Pictures on page 61.Left (727 x 1024 - 133k jpg).

wotfblog.galaxyypress.com

Right (276 x 400 - 36k jpg). www.morgan-le-fay.com