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Intertextual Medievalism in Fantasy Literature: J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and G.R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*

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In loving memory of my grandfather

Dedication

To my precious parents and my beloved brother Merwan who have offered nothing but love and encouragements during these challenging years

Acknowledgements

Abstract

The fantasy genre as an all-entangled form of literature has more than often been inspired by and set upon medieval contexts. Contemporary fantasy writers have in many ways intertextualised a myriad of medieval literary works drawing hence a midway ground in which the fantasy genre and the medieval period reality blend, creating a unique and appealing universe subject to further influences. Thus, this research is intended to scrutinise the intertextual utterances and influences that writers namely J.R.R. Tolkien and G.R.R Martin draw from the Middle Ages contexts and medieval literature. For this aim, the research is inclined to provide a background on contemporary fantasy, its evolution and medievalist contexts. It delimits the significance of the concept of discourse in the novel; particularly intertextuality and dialogism that are of a crucial aid to the overall aim of the research. Then it is inclined to analyse medieval intertextuality by comparing and reviewing different themes and exploring to what end twentieth and twenty-first century authors write fantasies in medievalesque settings. In addition, it attempts at examining intertextual similarities through a study of archetypal patterns in terms of the Monomyth or the Hero's Journey and female representation. For the attempt to complete this research, the two ground-breaking epic fantasies *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire* series have been taken as primary sources due to their popular influence worldwide and their richness in term of medieval aspects. Ultimately through this academic pursuit, Tolkien and Martin are demonstrated to draw inspiration and intertextualise prevalent works in medieval literature and embody a contemporary progressive perspective in terms of gender roles and heroic identity.

Key terms: Discourse, Medievalism, Fantasy Literature, Intertextuality, Hero's Journey, Female Representation

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List of Acronyms

LOTR: *Lord of the Rings*

ASONIAF: *A Song of Ice and Fire*

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Literature is a complex reflection of humanity; in this sense, all literary works across time share a common ancestry. As an infinitely adaptable medium of human expression, it has always been a mash-up of diverse theories, discourses, and genres as well as a patchwork of different influences and allusions.

In this light, Bakhtin believed in the dialogicity of art and particularly literature. He observed that as world cultures developed various works and epochs continually echoed, complemented, and revealed one another. This belief has led to the theory of influence and intertextuality, which conjured up a revolution in the core idea of the originality of literature. An idea that any text is a newly-minted assemblage of previous segments, rhythmic patterns, speech systems, bits of code that enter a given text and are dispersed throughout it. In this line of thought, and in an epoch of postmodernism where literature has come a long way and has been subject to countless influences, the greater part of literary creations have become appropriations at best.

Fantasy, literature by way of illustration, has introduced readers to mythical worlds that largely set their solid foundation in and send nodal images to medieval and mythical tales. It has been deemed as a unique genre within the textual space as it is distinguished by irrationality and a lack of a clear connection to reality. Nevertheless, imaginary worlds can include any degree of fantastical characteristics swinging between two spectrums; fantasy texts might either be completely divergent in all aspects from the authentic world or on the other hand, can be represented as fictitious real world with rare instances of the supernatural. In this case, the comfortable embrace of fantasy may gradually entice readers and appeal to the human need for something more than the factual reality of the familiar. The crafted secondary worlds of fantasy can open horizons saturated with possibilities, and writers may express complex concepts in a symbolic way that would be challenging to do otherwise. In this sense, fantasy literature might be founded on an intertextual nature. As a way to reframe the fundamental questions about the status and function of the secondary worlds, authors must create a system of odd markings, codes, or symbols.

General Introduction

The European medieval era was a vast and complex age in which empires rose and fell. Then again, it has become subject to several awakenings that rendered it increasingly important, and compelled it to assume a key position in studies. It has thus attracted the attention of researchers and, most recently, the general public. It has become even used as a basis for disputing modern paradigms.

According to Umberto Eco, the medieval served as an archetype for the golden age, when it was occasionally reinvented and rebuilt from the ground up, and the current era, which uses the medieval as a justification for contemporary and postmodern discussion. The Romantic writers of the early nineteenth century are mostly credited with finding the Middle Ages again and inventing "Medievalism," or a fantastical reimagining of them (Davis, 1974).When one discusses the representation of the Middle Ages in contemporary cultural productions, since the second half of the twentieth century and especially since the turn of the twenty-first century, it is above all fantasy that stands out.

Since the birth of the fantasy genre, it has been infatuated with the medieval times, starting with William Morris and his works that displayed a unique fascination with this fore passed era. However, although the Middle Ages was a complex period, neo-medieval fantasy literature is frequently deemed either as oversimplifying or exaggerating in its reflection.

In an attempt to conduct an analysis of the impact medieval texts have exerted on modern, then contemporary fantasy, two significant fantasy works have been selected as cases of study for this endeavour. The first one is the seminal work of fantasy fiction; *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955)(LOTR) by the revolutionary writer J.R.R. Tolkien, whose series is often acknowledged as the most prominent fantasy accomplishment ever produced. The Trilogy along with Tolkien's other literary and scholarly achievements, made him the most significant modern fantasy author. His writing established the tone and themes of a lot of the fantasy literature that would come after, creating a creative space for the growth of the genre itself.

Decades after its publication, its truthful translation into the big screen by Peter Jackson has renewed the interest in the works and has attracted a new generation of readers and a flow of writers who crafted works with events and characters reminiscent to the ones in LOTR. In this sense, the literary trilogy has never lost its splendor. Tolkien's life and experiences served as a rich source for LOTR, which has a wide range of materials producing "a remarkable nexus of actual literary, linguistic and cultural association" (Ryan, 1985, p.22). Ensuingly after the literary storm caused by the previous literary series, another fantasy work, and the second case study, is the more contemporary American version of the first *A Song of Ice and Fire*(1996-),which is a dark high fantasy book series by the so-called "American Tolkien" George R.R. Martin that displays the medieval politics in the fictional and supernatural secondary world. The already successful novels received worldwide acclaim after their adaptation into the massively popular television show *Game of Thrones*.

The Lord of the Rings and *A Song of Ice and Fire* are built upon a multitude of references and allusions to medieval literature and history and even though there has been an intense interest in the fashion of how fantasy works operate as a way to reflect medieval ideas and works; nevertheless, there has been little study undertaken to compare the two genres through the lenses of dialogic discourse and intertextuality.

Another notion that defends the argument of the unoriginality of literature and highlight texts' interaction is the use of archetypes, commonly known as relatable narrative patterns that are readily recognizable and frequently recur in all literary eras. They are ageless, and thus remain relevant regardless of the period. One of the defining attributes of the archetypal writings is the plot archetypes that put to the forefront the notion of the hero's journey proposed by Joseph Campbell.

On another strand of thought, the Middle Ages were far from a period that enhanced equality between the sexes by no means a leap of the imagination, however, in some instances, early medieval sources provide readers with a more nuanced picture of female authority and gender identity than it may at first appear. That inferiority is echoed in imaginary worlds, whether as a way to adhere to reality or thrive to create a

parallel medieval universe that strengthens their standpoint. Basing on the thread of thought expressed previously, the research questions that come to the surface within this scholarly endeavor are the following:

1-For what purpose do twentieth and twenty-first century fantasy writers incorporate medieval aspects in their works?

2- How do fantasy works reflect medieval authenticity?

3- How is intertextuality used in *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire* in order to reflect medieval literature?

4- How are these epic fantasies approaching aspects of gender and identity?

In an attempt to give appropriate answers to the aforementioned research questions, this thesis is divided into three chapters that draft a comparative analysis of the medieval and fantasy literature. The first chapter is theoretical in every respect, with the purpose to lay the background of the main notions and theories setting ground for the analysis in the following chapters. It commences with exploring the medieval era with its historical context and monumental events that stretched over millennia and played a paramount role in shaping medieval literature. It then engages to define the fantasy genre since it genesis from mythological tales and traces its development within the western canonical space, exploring the paradigmatic features that are periodic in all forms of fantasy narratives. It shifts the focus to neomedievalism as a junction between fantasy and medievalism by centering on theories proposed by Umberto Eco. It delimits the significance of the discourse theories of the text starting from dialogism to its aftereffects theories like intertextuality – the backbone of this research– in addition to historiographic metafiction.

The second chapter is analytical, but initially aimed at laying the background for the fictional realms studied within the selected novels. This is conducted through an exploration of the synopsis of the novels, discussing Tolkien's role as a medieval critic, a mythological tale craftsman and the influence he has conjured up upon fellow fantasy writers particularly his avid admirer George Martin. The section attempts at

engaging in a historical and cultural examination of both fantasy worlds, detailing the mechanism used in molding the secondary worlds of the selected series from the geographical mapping of the hierarchal systems, the traditions and cultures and their reflection of the authentic way of medieval times. It then initiates in the fundamental analysis of this endeavour and studies the dialogic and intertextual discourse in both fantasy series including their volumes, as the gist of this modest endeavor is to pinpoint the similarities and intertextual references contemporary fantasy works have owed to previous fantastical writing and thus the medieval heritage.

The third and concluding chapter in this respect studies the representation of medieval literature elements in fantasy works through mythical criticism and a study of the archetypal patterns of the quest or narrative journey which is central plotline to fantasy fiction from medieval times to contemporaneity. It scrutinises the hero as the main character and driving force of the quest formula and explores the archetypal representation of women in the fantasy genre.

In essence, this thesis investigates the profound medieval influence by delving into the discourse surrounding these influences, examining how medieval narratives have shaped and formed the works of these modern-day fantasy writers by critically analysing the thematic parallels, character archetypes and world building techniques, studying the intricate web of connections between the genres through the lens of intertextuality as a way to comprehend the relevance of these timeless narratives.

Chapter One:

Theoretical Background

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"Truth becomes fiction when the fiction's true; Real becomes not-real when the unreal's real"

Cao Xueqin, Story of the Stone

1.1. Introduction

The twenty-first-century literary audience has been undoubtedly absorbed by the Middle Ages, curiosity-wise or an unconscious leaning towards a much simpler time or a kind of enlightenment for a better understanding of contemporary politics. This allure is clearly witnessed with the ascent of fantasy literature that has to a great extent, brought a tradition of relying heavily on the Middle Ages in terms of characters, settings, themes and symbols, and this has been witnessed since William Morris' works in addition to the immense contribution of J.R.R Tolkien with *The Lord of The Rings*, *The Hobbit* and *Simillarion* to this genre which led to prominent and recent fantasy franchise such as *A Song of Ice and Fire* written by George R.R. Martin.

On this account, this study examines the twentieth and twenty-first fantasy narratives intending to decipher the use of the Middle Ages and the way medievalism mirrors the contemporary beliefs about the Middle Age and medieval literature. For this purpose, it relies on the use of textual theories, famously Bakhtin's notion of interrelatedness, referred to as Dialogism and its aftereffects theories such as Intertextuality and Historiographic Metafiction. These theories are used as tools of comparison between the medieval manuscripts and the contemporary fantasy works in order to seek out their points of interrelatedness and establish connections and relationships among literary texts.

The first chapter is intended as a literature review that concentrates on covering the background of the main aspects discussed for fantasy fiction novels explored in this thesis. It is of utmost significance to identify the adequate meaning of the "fantasy novel" and what precisely makes a narrative fantastic. On a further note, it aims at clarifying the term 'medievalism' with an insightful trace of the monumental works in

the medieval era and introduces the concepts of neomedievalism. Succinctly, it is concerned with the examination of feminism and the woman status in the Middle Ages, resulting in their portrayal in contemporary fantasy. In addition, a psychological study of the character's identity by shedding light on the archetypical hero and his quest, as a way to address psychological pursuits and reflect the authors' views about the Middle Ages and contemporary society.

1.2.   Medieval Literature

Medieval literature denotes the body of literature produced after the fall of the Roman Empire until the emergence of the Renaissance period. It serves as a window into the past, providing source material and inspiration for later writers and thus a foundation for medievalism. In this respect, medievalism represents both an academic field of study and a sentimental inclination to rewrite, reproduce, or a nod toward the Middle Ages, occasionally with great care and precision, but often by using conventional imagery and motifs that evoke the Middle Ages (Toswell, 2009, p. 69). According to Clare Simmons, the term medievalism was first coined by John Ruskin in 1853, alluding to the Victorian Era's interest and ardour towards the Middle Ages since he recognised a type of societal model in the social interactions and labour ethics of the Middle Ages that may serve as a solution for the litany of injustices pushed by the Industrial Revolution (Simmons, 2001, p.1).

It is, in essence, the collection of works aiming at scrutinising the influence and significance of the 'medieval' in the society and culture of later periods; as Tison Pugh and Angela Weisl attempt at denoting the simplest sense regarding medievalism, they conclude that it refers to art, literature, research, avocations, and other kinds of entertainment and culture that use the Middle Ages as a source of inspiration or subject matter, and in doing so, remarks on the artist's modern social context, either overtly or implicitly, through comparison or contrast (2013, p. 2). Therefore, medievalism encompasses a dizzying spectrum of cultural activities, discourses, and tangible

artefacts, all of which are historically, geographically, and culturally diverse (D'Arcens, 2016, p. 2).

Strugnell denotes that "western European history, particularly its medieval phase, is one of the sources of heroic fantasy" (Strugnell, 1992, p. 175) asserting that western fantasy literature has sprung out of the medievalesque fairy tales, folkloric legends and mythological narratives without denying the sheer influence *The Lord of The Rings* trilogy exerted over the modern and contemporary fantasy genre.

Medieval studies have been a rising field in the last decades, concentrating primordially on the investigation of the Middle Ages, the influence of the era on society and culture, the post-medieval literary constructions and the contemporary manifestations of the Middle Ages in recent literature. Nevertheless, the attempt to frame the Middle Ages into a particular timeline can be quite tricky, for the era has lasted for ages being the most prolonged era in European history, running from late antiquity and the fall of the Roman Empire in the fourth century to English renaissance in the late fifteen century. The period being sandwiched between the two Greek-Roman and Modern Periods has led historians to refer to it as The Middle Ages. The period is thus considered as humankind's infancy that parted ancient times to modern ones (Wallace, 2008).

After an accumulation of plague and famine, there was not much time for literature and philosophy. Furthermore, the emergence of some thinkers such as William of Occam was regarded as a turning point for the dogmas of the dark ages, paving the way to the explosion of the scientific revolution of the Renaissance and the modern epoch (Boeree, 2000, para 1).Elaborately, the period took a giant step in the literary world, shifting from oral traditions to written manuscripts and witnessing the birth of the most significant markers of English Literature.

1.2.1. Historical Background

Medieval literature stretched over a thousand years from the collapse of Rome c 410 CE, and its end coincided with the high moon of the renaissance age in the fifteenth

century. This thousand-year-long period is distinct by permutation, conquests, crusades and cultural novelty. Equally referred to as the dark ages, the European medieval period was an era of political and social unrest that witnessed mostly dreadful momentum with infectious diseases spreading in the realm every now and then. On the other hand, some researchers believe that it is the movement of the enlightenment that attached this negative etiquette to the Middle Ages and branded it as the dark ages while upholding positive connotation of progress and achievement for itself. Regardless, this epoch's seismic changes dramatically influenced literature and left future generations with valuable and fascinating textual legacies (Treharne, 2015, p. 1).

After long political and territorial struggles over dominion in the medieval period, the Scandinavian conquest and the Norman Conquest in October 1066 were two of the high watermarks of this epoch, bringing undeniable change in the government and a significant mark on all the facets of European culture and society. In this sense, it paved the way to the establishment of universities, importantly Oxford and Cambridge, a seismic rise in literacy and bureaucracy and scholarly exchange. Hence, by the end of the medieval era, notable authors had roamed Europe with their textual masterworks naming Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio whose pens are credited with the development of secularised literature (Treharne, 2015, p. 4).

The European medieval ages, as mentioned above, witnessed obscure periods. As the dark age literally suggested a dimness and break in high culture and innovations. The term was initially coined by the Italian scholar of the fourteenth century Francesco Petrarca or better known as "Petrarch", who put this label upon the period in which he lived. He was daunted at the lack of good literature at that time for he believed that the medieval society has been moving backwards from those achievements thus describing Europe after the fall of Rome as an age of "slumber of forgetfulness" anticipating that the Middle Ages would come to a close and forthcoming generations are bound to return to "the pure radiance of the past" (cited in Panofsky, 1960,p.10).

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The Roman Catholic Church was the most peerless philosophical authority of the Middle Ages, which exercised a great dominion over life and literature. Therefore, literature of the medieval eon was predominately driven by religious themes and narratives as medieval audiences' understanding was vigorously tied with the church and literature was produced purposely to teach religious dogmas and bolster the faith of worshippers. According to Shirley-Price, the Middle Ages were:

> An age of faith. Almighty God was acknowledged as the Source of all life; the world was God's world, and Christians were God's people. The workings of God were recognized in everyday life, and any unusual or striking events, whether storms and comets, victories and recoveries of health were regarded as signs of his direct intervention in human affairs (Shirley-Price, 1978, p. 29).

Another reason religious writings were dominant during the period was the literary traditions left by the German tribes exclusively for the highest and most influential people on the hierarchy. As, in the Middle Age, literacy was mainly confined to the most powerful men of society, such as servants of the church. In this regard, it would be inevitable that most of Old English literature and the related works dealt with religious themes. In addition, it is natural to see that most of those works were from Latin sources (Algeo, 2010).

The pestilence and its aftereffects that had an immense impact on society had weakened people's faith in the Roman Catholic Church, over and above attenuated this latter's control over the western part of Europe in various and diverse fields of economy, religion and particularly literature. It is significant to note that the view projected by authors at any period in time in their works discloses the prominent values of their society as they are sketched through their literary works. In effect, those crafted stories firmly expose the most sacred facets of their culture, in particular views concerning political tensions, social classes, and even religious doctrines.

1.2.2. Medieval Writings

Medieval Literature emerged to mirror everyday events weaving them with a flavor of the mysterious and the fantastic with the addition of the tenets of the Christian faith. The lion's share of English literary writings was in great measure aroused by religion and predominately the Bible. Nevertheless, the second half of the fourteenth century can witness a shift toward non-religious works with a fantastical recipe, such as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Le Morte d'Arthur* by Thomas Malory and *Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer (Behtash et al., 2017, p.146).

Fantasy was undoubtedly regarded as a blueprint in the mainstream of medieval literature, as the ensemble of the medieval narratives of the western medieval age sketched fictional worlds wherein extraordinary events dominated. This notably initiated with the old English literary treasure *Beowulf* (ca725).

Beowulf is considered to be the most significant monument of medieval English literature, the first complete narrative, and the longest preserved old English poem in its complete form. Petru Golban (2007) asserts that "the epic is the product of the tribal system, emerging in ancient period from scattered episodes of different anonymous poets, which came to be molded into one sequence of a single work" (p.40). The issue of authorship has been ceaselessly disputed, but one can argue that the work, like any other medieval epic, is a result of a long tradition of oral poetry sung and re-sung through generations who inserted motifs of their own, enabling it to grow and evolve. In this regard, Howell D. Chickering maintains that the poem "is not a product of a single mind" (1977, p. 251). In a broader sense, *Beowulf* has been studied under heroic lenses as David Wright states: "the poem of Beowulf presents a clear picture of heroic age and society" (1957, p.19), showcasing the life and a perspective on pagan age through the character of Beowulf, a Scandinavian warrior and his quest to overcome struggles against monsters.

Other fundamental works that have offered paramount tropes for fantasy novels are The Arthurian legends, a collection of medieval romances that have been retold. Coming of Celtic origin, they are commonly referred to as the "Matter of Britain" by

Jean Bodel (d. 1202). It is one of the most salient parts of the British national heritage, as it has persisted as an obsession, prominent in various mediums, prose, poetry, drama and visual arts until this day. A set of records frequently glorifies the patriarchal partition of society by focusing on the male characters of the legend and, in particular, the mythical character King Arthur and his knights, who are presented as the personification of chivalry and the epitome of affinity. These tales that are generally structured around the theme of quests, they explore chivalric ideals and by far are the most renowned works that represent a quarter of all remaining middle English romance records (Maddern, 2010, p.79). Geoffrey of Monmouth and Chrétien de Troyes are credited as the founders of the enduring Arthurian tradition. As it was in the twelfth century that Arthur rose as a powerful figure with a chronicled life, and the earliest accounts mentioning the reign of Arthur had been in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *The History of the Kings of Britain(1138)*(*Historia Regum Britanniae)* (Maddern, 2010, p.82). Barber (1986) describes the work as "the greatest single contribution to Arthurian romance" since it put to the forefront the complete historical facet of the story of Arthur and was subsequently more acknowledged and subject to recreation by later authors more than any other section of the legend (p.46). An instance was *Roman de Brut (1155)*, a version of Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia, in which the Norman poet Wace altered the story for his own purposes. In this rendition, the focus is on Arthur as a warrior and the initial insertion of the esteemed stories of the magical sword Excalibur and the Knights of the Round Table (1986, p.47).

Another well-known Arthurian saga is that of Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur,* written in 1485 in which Malory blended the English chronicle tradition with French romances; it has been reminisced as the tale which introduced the character of Lancelot du Lac and crafted the tragic love story between Lancelot and Guinevere, the wife of King Arthur.

During the same aforementioned period, one of the earliest quest fantasies that arose within the Arthurian legends, penned by French poet Chrétien de Troyes, was the legend of the search for the Holy Grail, a narrative that has not lost its prominence or allure until today, initially appeared as a sacred object in *Perceval*or *Le Conte du*

Graal, it has been further explained in the poem of "Joseph d'Arimathie," deciphering its Christian significance as related to the last supper and the death of Christ. The original narrative displayed that Perceval was the knight bound to trace the grail in Troyes's and de Boron's prose; however, Sir Galahad, introduced in the *Queste del Saint Graal* later in the mid-thirteenth century, has become the most renowned knight of King Arthur's court to pursue the quest. While conventionally acknowledged as a mythic symbol, many adopt the belief that the grail is not a mere creation of medieval literature, counting on the narratives that allege that Joseph of Arimathea brought the Grail to Glastonbury in England and buried it under the red waters that represent Christ's blood; others suppose the holy grail has been captured by Knights Templar from Temple Mount during the Crusades and excreted away (Synan, 2013). The grail story has been reprised by a number of twenty-first-century authors working on Arthurian leitmotif, inevitably bearing religious, mystical and supernatural characteristics. This is exhibited in modern and contemporary fantasy where one can find parallels of a laborious quest to acquire a physical object that holds immense power which in fact mirrors a personal quest for characters to reach salvation.

This chaotic and arguably impotent literary period of the Middle Ages has given birth to the so-called "father of English poetry" Geoffrey Chaucer, and his literary gem *The Canterbury Tales* written in 1387. It is considered as one of the most famous epic poems in literature in verse and prose that reflected a symbolic image of the fourteenth century with all its conflicts. The tales are a mixture of distinct stories narrated by travellers from various aspects of English society, with heterogeneous literary genres of courtly romances, fabliaux, saint's biographies, allegorical tales, beast fables, and medieval sermons that established solid grounds for contemporary inspiration within the fantasy genre in particular.

Intertwined threads of intertextual similitude in epics like *Beowulf*, and productions based on the legends of King Arthur demonstrate the affinities between medieval, modern and contemporary literary styles. As fantasy writers used Arthurian material in the latter part of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, they developed textual approaches and strategies that are closely linked to medieval

literature, recycling them in an effort to assure the advancement of contemporary narratives. This historical parallelism is considerably put forward in *A Song of Ice and Fire* by George R.R. Martin and *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R Tolkien, even though the former is argued to describe the era of the Middle Ages in a more realistic, darker lens, contrarily to the latter who tends to mystify the dark ages within his narratives.

1.3. The Fantasy Genre

In literature, no genre is pure; rather, it is in most cases a blend of other different characteristics and features, these features are what enable critics to classify said particular literary work under the literary genre that it fits best in. Since its initiation, the novel has significantly aged while simultaneously preserving its abiding form. On this account, the fantasy genre has always been differentiated by its quintessential component that has been ubiquitous since the publication of the fantasy genre's bible, *The Lord of the Rings.* Nevertheless, identifying its quintessential elements has proven to be far more effortless than encompassing a universally accepted definition of this out-of-norm genre of fantasy or fantastic fiction.

Fantasy literature has proven to be quite complex to be pinned down as any other genre of literature due to the fragile placement within the literary hierarchy as researchers seem to overlook it as a genre due to its deviation from the well-set western literary canon. Nevertheless, Tolkien stands in the defiance, demonstrating that fantasy is equivalent to other literary genres in terms of seriousness. He refused its dismissal as 'merely' a fiction for children but rather regarded it as an older and higher form of imagination, capable of integrating serious moral thoughts and delivering "important things about reality – about who they were and what the world was like," and it was only recently that they have become "marginalized" (Duriez, 2007,p. 21).

There have been multiple attempts in the past to define it in terms of supernatural writings. Nevertheless, the relative agreement among fantasy critics seems that fantasy is the conception of what lies beyond the bounds of possibility (cited in James& Mendelson, 2012,p. I). Tracing its origin to the Latin word 'Phantasia', meaning

'imagination, appearance' conveying something imaginary thus, fantasy is making the imaginary visible ("Fantasy", 1989). According to Tymn et al., "Fantasy, as a literary genre, is composed of works in which non-rational phenomena play a significant part" (1979, p.3) and thus, fantasy in its broadest meaning, according to the *Glossary of Literary Terms*, is a form of literature, strictly related to mythology and folklore, typically set in a nonexistent world presenting supernatural beings and inserting classical, biblical, and medieval sources (Abrams, 1999, p. 279).

This underestimated genre attempts to blend the probable and improbable together as Neal Baker argues, fantasy stories have translucent facades. In other words, they are, in essence, stories about stories, self-conscious of their own status and acknowledged by their audience (Neal Baker, 1998, p. 129). Clute's definition in *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* confirms that a fantasy text is:

> A self-coherent narrative. When set in this world, it tells a story which is impossible in the world as we perceive it; when set in an otherworld, that otherworld will be impossible, though stories set there may be possible in its terms (Clute & Grant, 1997, p. 338).

In the light of demonstrating the changing nature of this genre from its inception, Colin Manlove lays out his own definition of modern fantasy, which some consider the widely used definition in critical studies. According to him, it is a work of fiction that evokes awe and contains a significant and irreducible element of supernatural or impossible worlds, creatures, or items with which the reader or characters in the novel become acquainted in some way (Manlove, 1975, p.1). In an attempt to differentiate the fantasy narrative from ghost and horror stories, he further notes that "fantasy frequently involves a very strong sense of landscape... [and] it will often use its native land's mythology, as in the frequent use of Arthurian materials in English fantasy" (Manlove, 1999, p. 1). Therefore, the existence of abstruse and sorcerous peculiarity is the chief criterion discerning fantasy from any other literary genre as it attempts to narrate imaginary voyages and chivalric tales including other-dimensional creatures as dragons, wizards and witches inhabiting out of the ordinary settings or made-up

version of the natural world as an imagined alternate historical period. Fantasy is particularly interested in the medieval era; in this light, by exploring the fantasy genre, one believes that fantasy is the ultimate progeny of ancient mythical tales, as myths of antiquity were the sole means to explain the mysteries of the world as a kind of relief and consolation from horrific circumstances experienced by the Middle Ages.

In a thorough glimpse of the numerous categories of fantasy literature, one can witness that it is often perceived as an 'escapist' style of text that offers a favoured world in which the audience can dive in as an attempt to equivocate the realities of life. According to P.J. Webster, in his article "Tolkien and Escapist Fantasy Literature" (1995), there exist three descriptions of fantasy "escapist", "creative", and "derivative". As a way to differentiate escapist literature from the others, he notes that they are narratives that deliver an alternate world that enables the readers to engage themselves as a way to flee real life. Webster warns about such stories arguing that "intrinsically all escapism is detrimental because by its very nature it seeks to avoid reality, it is determined to distract the mind from the reality of life" (1995, p.12).

Furthermore, often evoked to define fantasy is the criterion of rationality as the typical fantasy adopts the presence of non-rational phenomena and is a pivotal norm that distinguishes fantasy from any other type of fantasy. Tymn et al. suggest that: "works in which events occur, or places or creatures exist, that could not occur or exist according to rational standards" is the quintessential criteria of fantasy fiction(1979, p.3)and even go a step further to claim that "the presence of nonrational phenomena ... is the principal criterion for distinguishing fantasy from history or from other types of literature"(p.4).

In the pre-Tolkien era, fantasy fiction held its settings in the real world, adding from here and there some elements of magic mixed up with mythological tales and folkloric narratives; however, Tolkien, the pioneer of modern fantasy, re-established the genre by creating entirely imaginary lands. Richard West in "Where Fantasy Fits" describes it as: "the work departs from our consensus of what constitutes the Primary

World. But that consensus is a fuzzy set rather than strictly fixed; it varies from time to time and place to place" (West, 2014, p. 7).

1.3.1. Early Fantasy

In the midst of exploring this genre, it is accurate to trace the roots of fantasy through the decades. Though this sort of narratives had existed since millennia in the early Bronze Age with folklore stories that contained counter spells and enchantments, by the eighteenth century, fantasy sprung out of the column of oral traditions, folkloric tales and mythical poems and has submerged as a tardive genre in the literary field (Dozois, 1997,p. 5).

More elaborately, fantasy as a literary genre has witnessed its share of criticism and condemnation as an underestimated body of narratives, yet fantasy scholars aspire to interpret and advocate its singular significance in the academic sphere. As a primary fact, scholars agree upon fantasy being the most ancient genre as its genesis can be tracked down to ancient epics, poems and mythological tales. These works were essentially explaining the wondering workings of nature, from the well-known story of Prometheus who as from pity for mortals on earth endowed them with the power of fire then was punished by Zeus for his actions, to the mythical tale of Apollo gifting daylight through his chariot of fire across the sky (Lloyd-Jones, 2003).All these supernatural peculiarities of mythology have been inherited by fantasy literature and transmitted their significance throughout literary existence.

It has been established that legends and epics are arguably the apparent progressions of mythology. This is further explained by Stableford, as he claims that it is Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey,* and with particularity, the second part of the *Odyssey,* which is deemed to be the first "self-conscious fantasy in the Western literary tradition, for marvels are central to its design" (cited in Barron, 1990, p. 4). It became a ritual in fantasy to portray the epic form of the main hero struggling against supernatural odds. In addition to its rich mythological roots, fantasy literature found a home in later years in biblical and Arthurian legends and European fairytales that

glorified tales of chivalry and knighthood. However, this artistic burst of fantasy fiction was hindered when the Spanish writer Miguel De Cervantes and his monumental work *Don Quixote* arrived on the scene during the Renaissance. Lyon De Camp argues that his arrival brought "an ignominious end" to tales of medieval romances. Following the immense success of his satirical knightly tales that bore a certain likeness to reality, few authors dared to dwell on chivalric stories, thus marking a cessation in the medieval form (De Camp, 1976, p. 10).

Within the second half of the seventeenth century, a prevailing dimness has been witnessed in imaginative fiction altogether, as the intrigue towards the supernatural had declined by dint of the rising enlightenment and deviation towards rational beliefs put an end to the supernatural ideals that governed earlier times (De Camp, 1976, p. 10). Therefore, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were epochs that marked the rise of the novel and submergence of realistic fiction and left a void by the retreat of imaginative fiction. As argued by critic Mark Hillegas, the eighteenth-century novel did, in fact, weaken the previously dominating literary tradition of epic/romance; however, it is the outbreak of nineteenth-century realism that nearly killed it (1969, p.xi).

After its decay in the nineteenth century, a rebirth of fantasy took place in Europe by virtue of the rise of the Gothic novel, the advent of fairy tale narratives and the oriental tale (De Camp, 1976, p.10). In this light, stories of the eastern world, such as the *Arabian Nights*, tended to evoke imagination, invigorating the mind through exotic locales and alluring individuals. In addition to the conventional peasants' narrations and renowned German-inspired fairy tale publications by "The Grimm Brothers", these writings have rekindled Europe's yearning for the imaginary and the whimsical.

Henceforward, by the turn of the 1800s, heroic fantasy or, as recently referred to, high fantasy, has been revived from the cinders of the Middle Ages by distinct authors. This period is considered by critics as the birth of modern fantasy with the imaginative novels of prolific William Morris (De Camp,1976, p.40), who is credited as the first author of the "secondary world" set in a non-allegorical imaginary world with

supernatural elements, making his prose romances as the antecedent of the modern fantasy genre; particularly works as *The Well at the World's End*(1896)*, The Water of the Wondrous Isles* (1897)and *The Wood Beyond the World* (1894) in which he attempted to captivate the quintessence of medievalism. These appealing, pseudo-archaic languages, medieval fantasy worlds' settings and storylines in the tradition of medieval romances began to come to the surface, influencing upcoming authors like J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis and other classic fantasy authors (Gerster*,* 2014).

In the same line of thought, a chain of authors traced Morris' footsteps in reviving the trend of reinventing ancient literary forms that the European audience seemed keen to consume; among them is Robert E. Howard, the crafter of the illustrious, sword-wielding warrior Conan the barbarian which was displayed as a collection of short stories in 1932 in the popular fantasy magazine *Weird Tales*. With this, Howard secured a place as a distinguished American fantasy writer at the turn of the twentieth century. In the same vein, De Camp refers to him as the "most widely-read and influential author of heroic fantasy" (1976, p.135) alongside Tolkien.

By the mid-1940s, and following the end of *Weird Tales*, the fantasy genre diminished once again and started to appear as it "had become a casualty of the Machine Age" (De Camp, 1976, p. 30). However, Tolkien re-opened the gates for fantasy in both Europe and the United States, which was witnessing a drought in American fantasy authors, as they were resisting to accept fantasy with the same enthusiasm as those in Europe for they lacked a rich historical, literary, and mythic past to draw upon, unlike British fantasists. Nevertheless, following the success of the latter, American authors started relying on American distances, on empty places on the map for their fantastic milieu (Zange, 1989, p. 96). Subsequently, they initiated producing narratives that competed with European works. In the recent era, American authors have dominated the fantasy scene.

1.3.2. Features of Fantasy

Myriad forms of literature possess shared antecedents that constitute much of their framework; Fantasy literature is no exception as a unique genre; its tales have managed to adopt many of the same ideals, which renders those stories so analogous without succumbing to mere imitation. In this regard, one can notice that the several features that make up the nucleus of fantasy may remain the same, nourished from narratives locked in the past, these new fantasy stories are sprouted from those old seeds. Thus, retaining common characteristics in a way that diverts from direct mimicking is the essence of fantasy literature which entails a set of distinct criteria.

The Quest

Aside from advertising and advocating the prevalence of the fantasy genre, scholars have struggled to pin down the universally acknowledged features of fantasy literature. If the study of fantasy can decipher one quintessential feature, it would be the aspect of 'Quest', a characteristic singled out for the protagonist to achieve. The quest is often a journey faced with dangerous odds that the hero must undertake and thus become his journey of growth as explained by Senior. It is a sequence of adventures that the hero and his companions engage in. It starts with the most simple conflicts and perils and escalates to the most hazardous and dangerous encounters. The quest voyage usually spans across various savage and furious landscapes that play a pivotal role in the story; in a sense, the landscapes "functions as a character, here endowed with animate traits as the fantasy world itself seeks to heal the rift that threatens its destruction" (Senior, 2012, p.190-199).

The quest fantasy is conceivably one of the most famed sub-genres of fantasy, demonstrating young and aspiring heroes burdened with a sacred mission around which the story takes place. This subgenre has been prominent thanks to legendary works such as *The Lord of the Rings* and *Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-1956).

Chapter One: Theoretical Background

The Hero

Assumably the jewel in the crown, the hero is the chief constituent of contemporary fantasy and the one that drives the quest, mainly presented as an archetype figure. In Northrop Frye's words, the archetypical hero is presented as an "associative cluster and complex variable" (2000, p. 102) of human cognitions that the heroes share and are closely related to the human psyche (Campbell, 2004, p.354). The concept of the hero can be traced to ancient literature and has always been thought to value the heart of various narratives in particularly all genres; therefore, there has been a myriad of debates regarding the solid definition of the fantasy hero. Had it been put in simple terms, the hero is the protagonist of the story engaged in an alien environment and is the sole responsible for completing the quest; such as Joseph Campbell explains, heroes ought to be removed from their familiar environment as they show a reluctance in leaving their home, their friends, and their life to journey on a quest. In the end, heroes accept their destiny (Campbell 2004). Therefore, the hero is often primarily characterised by reluctance and unwillingness to pursue the journey to remain in the comfort of the ordinary world (cited in Voytilla, 1999).

In his lifelong research, Campbell reports the inquiries he gathered from the medieval legends and mythological tales of distinct cultures to deduce that the hero's voyage is by all means an all-embracing metaphor for the profound inner journey of transformation that heroes in every story seem to share, a path that leads them through great movements of separation, descent, ordeal, and return (Campbell, 2004). The hero then alters as he moves forward within the time and place of the story, adjusting to accommodate the social norms.

The Hero's Fellowship

For the holy purpose of quest fulfillment, and in spite of the favorable heroic characteristics attributed to the protagonist, the hero by no means undertakes the journey solely by himself but rather is conventionally accompanied by a fellowship. A group of trusted allies that overcome the perils alongside the protagonist. In other words, it is one of the most common characters in fantasy narratives as their:

> Undying loyalty plays an integral part in the completion of our hero's mission... often feel like real people from the real world, even if they exist in a fantasy world of mages, sorcerers, and magical powers. When the main character falls on hard times, the sidekick is there to remind them of their humanity, goals, and the stakes of their mission (Masterclass, 2021, para 5).

Prevalent examples of such characters are Sam in *The Lord of The Rings* and, Sam in *A Song of Ice and Fire*, and Ron Wesley in *Harry Potter*.

Evil vs. Good

Lin Carter defines 'sword and sorcery' as tales, primarily action stories with heroes who exhibit exceptional heroism and villains who exhibit exceptional villainy (cited in Strugnell,1992, p.172). Ergo, in the wake of the quintessential establishment of the quest leitmotif in the path of the hero, the question of morality has incessantly been a recurring theme in fantasy literature. Though distinctly portrayed; as it may appear alienated in some narratives, it might not be so apparent in others. Commenting on the literary representations of the dichotomy of good and evil, Marco Ring (2017) states that the binary opposition vitalizes literature, as it empowers authors to explore different dualities and groups regarding culture, personal differences and the balance between good and evil (p.12).

It is essential to shed light on the idea that the notions of good and evil are heavily premised on the Judaeo-Christian dogmas that served as the basis for morality in literature. In the same line of thought, good is customarily aligned to God, wise selfless and merciful; on the other hand, evil is often related to Satan as a deceiver, hateful, destructive and fraudulent (cited in Noletto 2018, p .21). This influenced the clearly defined system of good vs. evil in the fantasy genre appearing a group of righteous characters searching for morality and uprightness in a country of commotion. The mechanism of good and evil coincides with the hierarchal structures of power in a fantasy world, selling the idea that "the controlling class typically has one individual in particular that acts as the face of the corrupt faction" (Carmody, n.d.).

Chapter One: Theoretical Background

Supernatural Forces

Drawing on the aforementioned strands of thought that archetypical characters and quests are driving tenets of fantasy literature, it is, in fact, the magical elements and supernatural aids which are autological and the first step in a quest where the hero is endowed with magic needed in the way. Therefore, a magic system is one of the cornerstone criteria. Contemporary fantasy's depiction of supernatural traits like magic is a way to offer defamiliarisation; as Robert Branham argues, "Fantasy snatches the objects of our primary existence away from their worldly context, forcing us to confront and appreciate them anew" (1983, p. 77). Magic can be "the central force' of the diegetic world in the case of secondary world fantasies, and 'the central force' of the fantastic domain in the case of primary world fantasies that have magic intruding into the primary world reality" (Jedrzejczyk- Drenda, 2017, p.25). In this regard, magic is a constant feature in fantasy realms, it may be hard to reach or not existent at all depending on the nature of the narrative, but it identifies the fantasy world as its true nature, an imagined place where fantastical elements coexist, a trait that prevails in primary and secondary fantasy worlds (2017, p .50).

Consolation

Towards the closure of the story, the restoring of the status quo involves the hero's triumph and fulfillment of his sacred goals where the story goes back to a state of familiarity; in accordance with this idea, Campbell emphasises the importance of this aspect in the fantasy work. For him, once the Hero-Quest has been fulfilled by dint of infiltration to the source, or by virtue of the aid of some sort of personification of male or female, human or animal characters, the venture is bound to return with his life-transmuting award. This cycle of the Monomyth compels the hero to start his new journey with the task of "bringing the runes of wisdom, the Golden Fleece, or his sleeping princess back into the kingdom of humanity" (Campbell, 2004, p. 179). In the end, consolation provides a satisfying closure to the story leaving readers with a sense of fulfillment and hope.

1.3.3. Contemporary Fantasy

J.R.R Tolkien's *The Hobbit* (1937) and its sequel, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (1954-1955), have been long regarded as seminal texts of literary fantasy and credited as having exclusively set the ground for the genre and fuelled a distinguished fascination that lasted until the present day. After the period of the 1920s and 1930s, when classic fantasy witnessed a mature phase with writers like E.R. Eddison and Dunsany, a new variety, several branches in the fantasy tradition blossomed as they were developing in different directions. These fantasies would come to be called historical fantasy, high or epic fantasy, sword and sorcery, and various other subdivisions.

The contemporary fantasy worlds pinned by writers vary vaguely in their representation; worlds are completely distinguished and alien to a world fairly accurate and representative of the actual world; the former is denoted as high fantasy, literature that encompasses secondary worlds that simply "manifest a consistent order that is explainable in terms of the supernatural ... or in terms of the less definable (but still recognizable) magical powers of faërie" (Tymn et al, 1979, p.6). The second is referred to as low fantasy or the fantastical. In this light, Tzvetan Todorov (1975) suggests the best definition, deciphering the low fantasy world as "a world which is indeed our world, the one we know ... there occurs an event which cannot be explained by the laws of this same familiar world" (p. 25).

In the midst of these entangled very different subgenres, each with its particular supernatural perspective, fantasy can never be considered without mentioning its counterpart, sometimes referred to as its most distinguished subgenre, "science fiction". In fact, fantasy and science fiction are two sides of the same coin in imaginative literature, both styles share much in common and are very often confounded or overlapped. In a way, it is a fiction in which any marvelous act has to be elucidated by the framework of the contemporary scientific theories. In the words of Sam Moskowitz (1974):

Science fiction is a branch of fantasy identifiable by the act that it eases the willing suspension of disbelief of its reader by utilizing atmosphere of scientific credibility for its imaginative speculations in physical science, space, time, social science, and philosophy (p. 11).

Therefore, like all fantasy subgenres, science fiction is a speculative literary trend that encloses a myriad of tenets that are alien to the readership; however, rather than the mystical, it centres on scientific aspects.

As far in time as Homer and his works, authors have been recording and adorning the past in fictional accounts or, in a precise way, historical fantasies by virtue of using human gods, magic and sorcery with narratives that mix components of magic with factual records. In this account, it is noteworthy to mention that historical fantasy, as opposed to previous subgenres, exists as an extension of historical fiction with a fantastic recipe where accurate historical particulars are embellished with magic and sword-wielding heroes as: "These novels reintroduce the element of surprise to the enjoyment of history; aided by dragons or alchemical weapons" (Burcher et al., 2009, p. 228). It takes place in the pre-historic past like Jean M. Auel with her *Earth Children* series that explores pre-historic Europe. In accordance with Alkon's words, historical fantasies are "narratives exploring the consequences of an imagined divergence from specific historical events" (1994, p.68).

Though the genre had been labeled as being written exclusively for children, it appeals to a larger age range than other genres (Herald, 1999, p. 4). This debate has long been established about High Fantasy, which on a primordial level is set heavily and consumes the conventions of medieval literature, deriving its material from ancient folklore and romance as "Modern fantasy operates, like medieval literature, to confirm certain moral exigencies and priorities and to satisfy our desire for wish fulfilment and order" (cited in Senior, 1994, p. 33). It is worth mentioning that High Fantasy is assuredly the most popular fantasy subdivision that beholds a certain reminiscence of the classical epic form, and is, by consequence, the most highly

esteemed type of fantasy story, oftentimes using the terms epic or heroic interchangeably with high fantasy.

It is important to note that there is another subgenre that falls under the same umbrella of the medieval-like fantasy; however, it is clearly at variance with the previously mentioned. Swords and Sorcery, a phrase coined by Fritz Leiber describing a subgenre created by Robert E. Howard with the Conan the Barbarian stories that are unlike high fantasy, a typically short and straightforward narrative with a less self-consciously literary approach to fantasy, based on juxtapositions of the fundamentals of sophisticated civilization with primal, barbarian culture, and structured in series format to build continuous, recurring interaction with a large, popular audience (Mathews, 2002, p.18). He further notes that the violence of sword and sorcery fantasy that allures to the reader is like the nature of the hero (p.124).

On the opposite side of High Fantasy is situated another subgenre, fairly kindred but with evident discrepancies; Low Fantasy oftentimes is set in a primary world or a fictional rendition of the real one. In this subgenre's storylines and in contrast to High Fantasy, magic is not a focal point as it is scarcely included and sometimes none at all (Long, 2011, p. 10). Compared to the wonders and unrestricted imagination of Epic and High Fantasy, low fantasy tales and stories hold a bleak, historical and gritty tone with a major focus on politics and wars typically featuring nobles and royals, whose sole mission is focused on preserving the stability and power of their kingdom with elements of economic warfare, espionage, and religious strife (p.10).Long offers instances of this sort of narratives like *The Deepest Sea* by Charles Barnitz (1996), Gene Wolfe's *Book of The New Sun* and most importantly George R.R Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Though this latter has been frequently described as a Grimdark Fantasy as his depiction of the Middle Ages is quite "violent, dark, brutal, and relentlessly masculine" (Carroll, 2018, para 5) in his blunt attempt to contrast the optimistic view of the past with one that is marred by dirt.

All the wonders a human mind can conjure can serve as a perfect fit for fantasy literature, above all things magic and mysteriousness. In this line, it important to

decipher the way authors set up the potential of the fantasy genre; fantasy simply put is an experience enhanced by the reader, while audience often concentrate on the characteristics that accompany fantasy and come to unsee the real essence of fantasy narratives as Mathews shedding light on Carter's articulation of fantasy as a pure distinct genre offers a defining characteristic of fantasy as a "pure distinct genre: it depicts adventures in a coherent and real fantasy world" (Cited in Mathews, 2002, p. 21).This definition pinpoints the importance of each genre and literary work exhibiting its own literary world; what Irwin describes as "the persuasive establishment and development of impossibility, an arbitrary construct of the mind with all under the control of logic and rhetoric" (1976, p. 9). In this sense, a quintessential fantasy has its own established universe and the deficiency to construct this well perceived universe leads to its failure in spite of its artistic goal or form (Waggoner, 1978, p. 10).

In brief, and according to W.R Irwin, he argues that a narrative is considered fantasy if it depicts the convincing formation and development of impossibility, an arbitrary construct of the mind with everything under the direction of logic and rhetoric, regardless of the material, lavish or seemingly normal (cited in Attebery, 1980, p.1). From the early folk tales to Tolkien's legendarium to Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*, one can trace an evolution from Tolkien's straightforwardness to Martin's dark and nuanced perspective to fantasy without an apparent change in the constructing paradigms of fantasy literature.

1.4. Neo-Medievalism

The Middle Ages, though a bygone era, has never been out of use. In its dimness, ranging restless concerns and constant dwelling in its sphere have risen as a movement that solicits a retracing of the steps of this ancient civilization. In the light of this account, the Middle Ages has experienced a tremendous resurrection as it has grasped scholars' attention as "we are at present witnessing, both in Europe and America, a period of renewed interest in the Middle Ages, with a curious oscillation between fantastic neomedievalism and responsible philological examination" (Eco, 1986, p.

119).As this quote illustrates, Umberto Eco claims in his essay "Dreaming of the Middle Ages" that neomedievalism plays the role of a junction between popular fantasy and medieval history including its literary offspring, thus describing the eagerness of postmodern study focused on the Middle Age. As such, this novel medieval tide spread like wildfire in both artistic and academic spheres during the latter part of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century.

In light of this account, contemporary popular culture is enamoured with the medieval epoch aiming at drawing aspects from the pseudo-medieval setting with the purpose of enriching contemporary historical fiction, as Claire Helie (2018) argues:

> Neomedievalism is unapologetically inauthentic in its anti-historical stance: the Middle Ages is considered as a pool of tropes and devices contemporary authors can draw from to create a medieval world that, at times, seem more medieval than the Middle Ages itself". In other words: "neomedievalism can be defined as medievalism revisited by postmodernism, simulacrum and hyperreality" (Para 4).

Before diving deep into neomedievalism, it is inevasible to provide a succinct glimpse into medievalism as its source. As previously hinted at, scholars made a fervent plea that the concept of medievalism initially saw the light in the Victorian period as a reaction to the changes resulting from the industrial revolution. In this sense, Charles Delheim (1992) explains that this hunt for suitable symbols from the Middle Ages was part of a greater desire for cultural direction. Victorians discovered landmarks that helped them navigate an open-ended, unprecedented universe during the Middle Ages: primarily, by offering maps of continuity and change; and subsequently, juxtaposing the "unfamiliar something" of modernity with familiar medieval symbols and myths (p. 53).

In the same line of thought, Jennifer Palmgren and Loretta M. Holloway second this idea by claiming that the universality of the medieval period in the Victorian culture has rendered the perception of the Middle Ages more paramount than the tangible, historical Middle Ages, as many have gathered these judgments of the

Middle Ages from popular culture and literature in lieu of historical testimonies (cited in Carroll, 2014, p. 4).

It is common in the literary theory tradition that medievalism and neomedievalism are used interchangeably. Nevertheless, in a distinct line of thought, many critics have established a difference and adopt the view that neomedievalism is a subgenre of medievalism trying to grasp a profound understanding of the Middle Ages in a different way and deem neomedievalism useful in order to indicate postmodern reflections and constructions of the medieval ages.

While medievalism is the interpretation of the literary and cultural working of the Middle Ages, neomedievalism is the interpretation of the same Middle Ages, but through a medievalist lens as Amy Kaufman argues that the neomedieval notion of the Middle Ages is not apprehended through immediate contact with the medieval era, but through a medievalist medium; thereby, neomedievalism is a vision of someone else's medievalism rather than a firsthand vision of the Middle Ages, it is in a sense "medievalism doubled up upon itself" (2010, p. 4)

Despite the huge fascination of the Victorian era to take up the Middle Ages at scrutiny for study, the seriousness of its study began in the 1970s simultaneously with Umberto Eco and Leslie J Workmen, who gave a new perspective to neomedievalism. In his essay "Dreaming of the Middle Ages"(1986), Eco endeavours to decipher the real essence of the Middle Ages and marches a step further to subdivide it into various medieval ages he called 'Ten Little Middle Ages' each with its own demeanour and serving a different purpose. He commences with the "pretext", meaning the Middle Age is used as a source of "mythological setting in which they place characters", making contrast with historical fiction that is written for the sole purpose of gaining further understanding of the Middle Ages. On a further note, Eco names the second Middle Ages as "Barbaric" due to its attempt to oversimplify the period representing it as a barbaric era and painting the people as ignorant creatures, with a focus on the uncivilized, aggressive, dark, and ill characteristics of the Middle Ages, he describes it as "'shaggy Medievalism' adding that the shaggier its heroes, the more profoundly

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ideological its superficial naïveté" (p.129).'Ironical Revisitation' on the other hand, makes a humorous comparison between modern and medieval structures, 'Traditions' is the utilisation of myths or tales from the Middle Ages that were so inaccurate that they were believed to be true by modern audiences, the fifth one is 'Romanticism' (beautified rendition of the Middle Ages with stories involving kings, queens, princesses, and castles), 'Decadentism' a glorified version of the Middle Ages, primarily hovering around nobility, 'Philological Reconstructions'a straightforward displays of medieval social structures and technology, 'National Identities'in which the medieval model is viewed as a political utopia, a glorification of the greatness of the past, and a reaction against the ills of national slavery and foreign dominance and lastly 'Philosophia perennis' that claims the notion that a philosophy has persisted from the Middle Ages to the present (Eco, 1986, p.130). However, writers of medievalist literature have rarely committed to just one of Eco's Middle Ages as they often intersect and overlap. Umberto Eco's essay was a landmark in the academic discussion of medievalist theory and took the field by storm with renewed interest in the Middle Ages that led scholars to either accord with or dispute his assumptions and his renowned novel *The Name of the Rose* (1980) stands as a prime example of neo-medieval literature with its skilful blend of the Middle Ages and modern elements.

Neomedievalism, in a manner, seeks to immerse the reader into a palpable medieval setting via contemporary execution. Brent and Kevin Moberly argue in this matter that neomedievalist works, in a sense, do not basically look to portray, duplicate or otherwise recoup the medieval, but instead utilize modern methods and innovations to reenact the medieval. That is, to duplicate a form of the medieval that is more medieval than the medieval, an adaptation of the medieval that can be "seen and touched, bought and sold, and thus owned" (Moberly& Moberly 2010, p. 15).

Thus, neomedievalism builds a parallel Middle Ages that contemporary audience could venture through. In other words, neomedievalism can be regarded as a second wave that seeks to portray contemporary concerns in a medievalist setting. Yet, it raises the problem of authenticity as to determine whether the inaccuracies are a result of the author's poor understanding of the Middle Ages or the lacuna of the

neomedieval, postmodern approach to the Middle Ages. In the same vein, Pugh and Weisl (2013), echoing Kaufman, assert that despite the fact that many medieval motifs are themselves fantasies of the time, it can be challenging to distinguish between a dream of the Middle Ages and another person's idealised reflection of medievalism. For instance, one may wonder whether courtly love and chivalry were historical facts or idealized visions of the Middle Ages held by its inhabitants. What becomes apparent is the fact many medievalisms rely more heavily on medieval ideas about fiction than they do from mediaeval history, making them simply dreams stacked upon fantasies (2013, p.3)

On the other hand, Amy S. Kaufman, in her article "Medieval Unmoored" (2010), argues that neomedievalism is a form of medievalism that, in order to exist at all, necessitates certain philosophical and technical modifications. However, while medievalism can exist entirely independently at any moment in time, neomedievalism is historically dependent on both medievalism and the postmodern state, despite appearing to be ahistorical (p.2).

1.4.1. Neomedievalism in Fantasy

Owing that epic fantasies written in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries are particularly keen on representing medieval allusions, neomedievalism is hence favourable in the analysis of fantasy literature with a concern to explain fantasy's frequent "ahistoricism" without labelling the genre as "error-ridden", passive literature. It is safe to say that contemporary high or epic fantasy may be deemed as neo-medieval considering contemporary fantasy authors' inclination to build their pseudo-medieval narratives' setting on Tolkien's Middle Earth (as it is the first instance of medieval fantasy work) (Carroll, 2014, p.12).

Since the inception of the fantasy genre that has been perceived in the recent epoch, there has been an apparent and unbreakable bond with the medieval; this link has been primarily an inevitable result of fantasy being extraction of medieval romances and epic, heroic narratives. These notable inspirations have been credited to

William Morris and Lord Dunsany. Diana Waggoner claims that the medieval fantasy craze had been initiated with Morris' exploitation of Icelandic sagas and inclination to establish his fantasy writings in the "Dark Ages" years or high period of the Middle Ages by utilising "the image of [the Middle Ages] that the Romantics had established in the public imagination, the mythology of chivalry"(1987, p. 37).

The discussions concerning the prevalence of medieval ideals in fantasy started almost promptly as the fantastical writing form made resurgence in literature after the advent of realism. Nevertheless, the challenge with neomedievalism is to determine whether the Middle Ages portrayed in contemporary fantasy are universally perceived as "inaccurate" is a naive misunderstanding of the authentic Middle Ages from fantasies' authors or rather a conscious contemporary neo-medieval approach to the Middle Ages. In this regard, Addison avows that fantasy writings have been flawed and have taken a step backwards because of their connection to the alleged "superstitions" of the Middle Ages. This attitude is particularly representative of the way society feels about both non-realistic literature and the Middle Ages (Addison, 1965).

In an attempt at echoing and interpreting Eco's ideas of the mishandling of the medieval aspect in fantasy literature, saying that the return to the Middle Ages is an attempt to restore one's roots and, with the intention of restoring the real roots, it is important to seek for a 'reliable Middle Ages,' rather than romance and fantasy, even though he argues that this wish is misunderstood and moved by a vague impulse. Therefore, we indulge in a sort of "escapism à la Tolkien" (Eco, 1975, p. 65). Waggoner argues that the ahistorical nature of the current medievalism is a consequence of Morris' defining characteristics of heroic and adventure fantasy (1978, p. 37). Rebecca Barnhouse (2000) blames fantasy writers for the erroneous representation of the Middle Ages, asserting that they allow historical truths to take a back seat to their moral principles. In doing so, they frequently uphold antiquated myths, enabling current viewpoints on things like literacy and tolerance for variety to permeate their depiction of the Middle Ages (p. ix).

It is universally acknowledged that fantasy and medievalism are both concerned with exploring the worries, concerns, and aspirations of society as well as influencing past perceptions and how they affect the present. Therefore, this undertaking aims to fill a vacuum in the contemporary studies on fantasy literature and its varied medievalisms by examining neo-medievalist fantasy in detail by virtue of literary discourse mechanisms.

1.5. Literary Discourse

A recurring interest in the past, especially the medieval era, is one of the chief characteristics of postmodern and contemporary fiction. Thus, for a variety of reasons, the revival of texts from the past is generating a lot of curiosity and excitement in the literary sphere. In this sense, literature has given the reader a chance to contribute to the meaning-making process and to understand the conversation between earlier and novel writings. For this purpose, numerous literary discourses have been employed in the genre of the novel, namely dialogism, intertextuality and historiographic metafiction which openly give nodal allusions to well-known bygone records and their corresponding periods.

1.5.1. Dialogism

Literary style is a central key to the better decipherment of a novel, insights into the constitution and distribution of literary stylistic elements put to the forefront a mighty tool for the analysis of the novel's genre, meaning and structure. It aids readers in comprehending the way authors innovate and react through their historical and social contexts (Allison et al., 2013, p.5).

Contemporary literature has borne witness to an upsurge in textual literary theories that played a salient role in interdisciplinary fields. Dialogism is a backbone instance of these aforementioned textual notions. In its simplest definition; dialogism is a discourse that straightforwardly recognises being shaped by relation to other instances from both the past and the future; it relies on the idea that texts are not

merely a self-contained organism; instead, a scene for dialogic interaction of diverse voices or modes of discourse (Waghmare, 2011, p. 1).As opposed to the structuralist belief fostered by Ferdinand De Saussure that treats literary texts as stable systems and 'bloodless formulae' (Scholes,1974, p.170).Post-structuralism rose typically to defy the assumption that systems are 'self-sufficient structures' (Mandal, 2021, p.7).

Bakhtin, the undeniable guru of dialogism credited with taking this theory from being a mere hypothesis to a ground-breaking global topic in textual inquiry, regards all dialogic literary works that infuse narratives and themes with such depth and dimensions with great distinction. His studies denote that "two spatiotemporally separated utterances can be dialogically related if there is any kind of semantic convergence between them, such as a partially shared time, point of view, etc." (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 124).

Bakhtin particularly singled out the Russian Feodor Dostoevsky as a dialogic author. Bakhtin himself presents the best explanation for his endeavours noting that:

> The work and the world represented in it enter the real world and enrich it, and the real world enters the work and its world as part of the process of its creation, as well as part of its subsequent life, in a continual renewing of the work through the creative perception of listeners and readers (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 254).

Therefore, the notion itself promotes the correspondence of experiences based on dialogue, whether between individuals, religions, spiritual practices, sexes, nationalities, or ideologies (Lysik, 2017, p.2). Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson in their attempt to grease the wheels for its discernment, they articulate dialogism as "the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia" (cited in Bakhtin, 198, p.426). In a sense, every utterance "is understood, as a part of a greater whole—there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others"(Morris, 1997,p.426).

The core of his study was to explore the fundamental ways in which single-voiced and multi-voiced discourses carve writing. According to Bakhtin, the polyphonic discourse is a paramount characteristic in the genre of the novel as he argues that the novel is "the sole genre that continues to develop that is yet uncompleted…studying the novel…is like studying languages that are not only alive, but still young" (cited in Mouro, 2014, p.19). The novel is the sole genre that engages the reader in dialogical dimensions, as the novel does not merely embody words and utterances but an aggregate of discourses, consciousnesses and their counter-responses. In a certain way, the novel has the potential to comprise the plurality of voices in it through its intrinsic collective voicedness (Nodeh, 2013, p.1). As such, there is a constant presence of a plurality of voices in an open position to contradict the author. Bakhtin endorses this idea by asserting that the meaning in Dostoyevsky's dialogic novel:

> It is constructed not as the whole of a single consciousness, absorbing other consciousnesses as objects into itself, but as a whole formed by the interaction of several consciousnesses, none of which entirely becomes an object for the other; this interaction provides no support for the viewer who would objectify an entire event according to some ordinary monologic category (thematically, lyrically or cognitively) - and this consequently makes the viewer also a participant (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 18).

In contrast to the above-written strand, in his work *The Problems of Dostoevsky* (1984)*,* Bakhtin deciphered 'monoligism' as a counterpart discourse to dialogism, enunciating it as a shutting down of the dialogue alteric potential and declining its relational constitution. In other words, he asserts that the novel becomes dominated by a sort of hegemony or idea of a single consciousness by underlining that "a monologically understood world is an objectified world, a world corresponding to a single and unified authorial consciousness" (cited in Hays, 2008, p.70). Monoligism implies single-voiced discourse or as conjointly referred to as "homophony". In contrast, and according to Bakhtin, what unfolds in dialogic novels is not a plethora of characters and destinies in a single objective universe, enlightened by a single

authorial consciousness, but rather a plurality of consciousnesses, each with their own world and equal rights, which join but are not integrated into the event's overall unity (1984, p. 6).

Bakhtin debates that the enlightenment ideals and European rational thought have had a prominent influence on the monologic principle; ergo leading the failure of any kind of dialogue and liberty of thought and dialogism is the appropriate solution to the issue and cites the Socratic dialogues as an example of such literature. For in his view, dialogical genres have been present in classical Greek, Latin literature and the Middle Ages as well; it reached an apex in carnivalesque Renaissance literature, and then was in a dormant period until reactivated and redeveloped by Dostoevsky and by writers like Günter Grass, Mark Twain, and others (Morson & Emerson, 1990, 460-65).

In a literal fashion, dialogue indicates two people and when more than two voices are entangled in a novel it becomes polyphonic. In this view, the term 'polyphony' can be called out as a concept that "requires three or more persons or voices and is therefore a wider concept than dialogue" (Vagaan, 2007, p. 91). Bakhtin envisaged dialogue as a phenomenon that is greater than a narrative system utilised in the communication process but rather an interplay of voices oriented to new apprehensions, connections and perceptions. In the *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin noted, "all else is the means, dialogue is the end. A single voice ends nothing and resolves nothing. Two voices is the minimum for life, the minimum for existence"(Bakhtin, 1984, p. 252).

Additionally, Bakhtin describes 'polyphony' in novels as a way in which the single-voicedness conducting the discourse from a superior standpoint is replaced by clashing voices and ideologies with less authority and more different viewpoints of the characters, social status and readers; this is what critic Roland Barthes refers to as 'the death of the author and the birth of the reader'; that is, dispatching the author from work opens the way for multiple voices to interact – "another figure sewn into the rug; his signature is no longer privileged and paternal, the locus of genuine truth, but rather,

lucid. He becomes, as it were, 'paper author'" (Barthes, 1977, p. 166).Thus, the author does no longer attempt to adjust characters into frameworks but indeed lets them speak for themselves.

In the sense of the uniqueness of the novelistic genre, David Lodge pinpoints that the polyphonic novel is indeed "a novel in which a variety of conflicting ideological positions are given a voice and set in play both between and within individual speaking subjects, without being placed and judged by an authoritative authorial voice" (Lodge, 1990, p.86). Thus, the very essence of fiction empowers the author to insert distinct ideological perspectives and viewpoints into the narrative. Bakhtin asserts that a polyphonic novel is a dialogic novel to the core, thereby validating the indubitable paramount tie between the polyphonic and the dialogic novel (Bakhtin, 1973, p. 40).

In conclusion, polyphony is the epitome of situations, artefacts and books in which distinct voices and consciousnesses mingle and clash together. Similarly, Tolkien and Martin have crafted stories with different fantasy worlds in which a variety of characters and mythical creatures come together to express themselves without constraints bringing consequently different voices and social backgrounds, guaranteeing the multiple dimensions that exist in fantasy literature. It is salient to note that Bakhtin's theory of dialogism stands as a significant point of reference that inserted the seeds for further critical theories that hover around and embrace the interconnection of different texts; one instance is the notion of intertextuality.

1.5.2. Intertextuality

 Since the genesis of literary texts, scholars have dwelt on the notion of authenticity and genuineness. Modern textual theories and interpretation of works had a keen interest in emphasising authorial uniqueness, creativity and originality of ideas. However, in postmodern and contemporary theories, the spotlight shifted to consider writing as endless recycling of previous artefacts.

Chapter One: Theoretical Background

As goes the well-known saying, "nothing is created in a vacuum", throughout the years, theorists have attempted to make sense of the phenomenon of influence and the fashion in which all works, even the most appreciated of all, have been in one way or another the after-effects of influence and relatedness. This enabled the sixties' theorists to successfully gather the phenomena of textual influence all under one umbrella called 'intertextuality'.

In its broadest definition, intertextuality is a poststructuralist, deconstructionist, and postmodernist theory that transformed the conventional perspective about texts by identifying them as intertexts due to their interrelationships and their absorption of other texts (Zengin, 2016, p.300). It puts to the forefront association between a literary text and the vast cultural network highlighting the postmodern theories suggesting that texts lack any sort of independent meaning: "the act of reading […] plunges us into a network of textual relations. To interpret a text, to discover its meaning, or meanings, is to trace those relations. Reading thus becomes a process of moving between texts" (Allen, 2000, p.1). In Kristeva's words, "writing reads writing, reads itself and constructs itself through a process of destructive genesis" (cited in King, 2000, p. 33).

Intertextuality as a notion has been around the literary theory for quite some time; although the term is postmodern, it hints back to antiquity, as the phenomenon can be traced back down a road as old as the first recorded text itself. It is branched out of the notion of imitation and the theory of ideas suggested by Plato in which he highlights "texts as subliminal purveyors of ideology that can influence and alter the subject" (cited in Alfaro, 1996, p. 269). In his works, it is evoked that 'the poet' constantly reproduces a former act of creation. It is worth pinpointing that it has been discussed thoroughly as well in Aristotle's endeavours as the theory of mimesis, which exhibits that all that is created is an imitation of nature and an inevitable part of the universe and one of the early instances of it is the "New Testament" and its intertextual relation with the "Old Testament" (Huizenga, 2015, p. 17-35). However, it was in the sixties that the term was used for the first time by Bulgarian theorist Julia Kristeva in her review *Tel Quel* (Mouro, 2014, p. 22). From that point on, intertextuality has been carried around and defined vigorously, used and misused in contemporary literary

criticism; and in these past decades, it has been interpreted differently from various literary theorists (Allen, 2000, p.1).

The central figure of this concept is Kristeva; when on the verge of formulating the definition of intertextuality, she pinpoints that the text is, in its essence, "a mosaic of references to other texts, genres and discourses. Every text or set of signs presupposes a network of relationships to other signs like strings that have lost their exact references" (Kristeva, 1980, p. 66). The above definition highlights, therefore, the fact that there is no text that can exist as a self-sufficient entity; each utterance carries a double voice since creating a new text is not a closed system owing that the author of the new text has existed as a reader for what has been written before, enhancing the possibilities of similarities and quotation in the newly produced artefact. Thus every text is in relation to another text, and every utterance has a double voice.

The theory witnessed many theorists swinging from right to left as a pendulum. All founded primarily from a fusion of the theories of semiology suggested by Ferdinand De Saussure and Mikhail Bakhtin's studies on the social aspects of language and ideas of dialogism theorised in the 1920s that related to the text as it was first hinted on in Bakhtin's works where he described the text as a dependent entity and a product of relations with other texts.

As it has been discussed before, Kristeva has been highly influenced by the theory of signs proposing that the structural relationship between a linguistic sign's parts, the signifier (sound image) and the signified (the concept) this combination conveys the language's vast network of relations and is enough to express ideas. Thus, the meaning conveyed depends solely on a process of combination and no sign has meaning on its own. This idea has been viewed as a huge step towards the conception of intertextuality (Allen, 2000, p.8-9-10).

On the other hand, Bakhtin was recognised as the first one who laid the ground for the theory of intertextuality, albeit not directly connected with its inception but his ideas were paramount for its discovery. Bakhtin, similarly to Saussure, was preoccupied with language but in contrast, Bakhtin viewed that language gained

meaning solely in concrete social settings as: "One cannot understand an utterance or even a written work as if it were singular in meaning, unconnected to previous and future utterances or works" (cited in Allen, 2000, p. 19).

In the light of the Bakhtinian concept of dialogic relations, it deciphers that meaning and logic depend upon what has formerly been said and how it will be socially perceived; whilst Heteroglossia enhances the interconnection between utterances as every utterance bears a speck of another one, both in the past and the future (Roberts in Morris, 1994,pp. 248–9). Kristeva, in turn, perceives the text as not a single activity but rather a mixture of cultural textuality. She enhances the concept of the creation of an undistinguished individual text and cultural one from the same textual material as a sort of revision of Bakhtin's dialogue. In her work *The Bounded Text* she echoes Bakhtin's notion of dialogism and sheds light on the way in which a text is constructed of already existent discourses, highlighting the reality that writers' originality is rather relative and their artefacts are rather an assemblage of pre-existent texts; to put it in her words, "several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralise one another" (Allen, 2000, p. 35).

The acclaimed postmodernism critic Linda Hutcheon addresses the notion of intertextuality in her work *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988), arguing that intertextuality has, in reality, challenged the pre-constructed notion of the author-text relationship and introduced the reader-text one, shifting the centre of meaning to the history of discourse as: "A literary work can actually no longer be considered original; if it were, it could have no meaning for its reader. It is only as part of prior discourses that any text derives meaning and significance"(p.126).

Intertextuality is a quintessential deviation from the preconceived notions of literary creation. It exhibits that there is an endless dependence or reliance on the literature that has been produced before. In this matter, Roland Barthes, a stirring theorist, has made a fair contribution with his unorthodox theories, mainly elucidated in his article *The Theory of The Text* in which he clashes the belief of the natural and stable meaning. Building on Bakhtin's and Kristeva's theories, he states that:

> Any text is a new tissue of past citations. Bits of code, formulae, rhythmic models, fragments of social languages, etc., pass into the text and are redistributed within it, for there is always language before and around the text. Intertextuality, the condition of any text whatsoever, cannot, of course, be reduced to a problem of sources or influences; the intertext is a general field of anonymous formulae whose origin can scarcely ever be located; of unconscious or automatic quotations, given without quotation marks (Barthes, 1981, p. 39).

In his insightful study of the text, he differentiates the word 'text' from 'work', explaining that "text as a material inscription of work. It is that which gives a work permanence, repeatability and thus readability" (Allen, 2000, p. 61).Allen echoes his ideas as the theory of the text involves the theory of intertextuality since the text does not only establish a multiplicity of meanings but also weaves together a variety of discourses and spins from pre-existing meanings woven (2000, p. 67).

On that account, Barthes likewise defended the view that a text is not merely a unified and isolated object with a single voice but rather Pandora's box open to a myriad of interpellations enabling him to deviate from the traditional notion of the author-centred text, reckoning that an author is never the core of meaning but a connoisseur of intertextual meanings and relations, clarifying that the author can only imitate an ever anterior, never original, gesture. His sole power is to mingle writings, to counter some by others, so as never to rely on just one; if he seeks to express himself, at least he knows that the interior 'thing' he claims to 'translate' is itself no more than a readymade lexicon, whose words can be explained only through other words, and this *infinitum*(Barthes, 1977, p. 146).

On a further note, Barthes, in his theory penned in *The Death of the Author*, determined some other notable features of intertextuality; for him, texts are detached from another myriad of texts and statements (Barthes, 1977); thus, standing on the same line of thought as Kristeva but endeavouring to take a further step and hold the text's reader as the centre of attention and his role in the course of displaying the text.

His work asserts the idea that the only place the multiplicity of discourses accumulate is the reader, not, as formerly acknowledged: the author; therefore, "the reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up the writing are inscribed without any of them being lost" for the wholeness of a text prevails in its destination rather than its origin and "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author" (Barthes, 1977, p. 142-148). The author's role becomes to direct those appropriated texts in a fashion that serves a particular view. Robert S. Miola has also played a part in the question of intertextuality; according to him, an intertextual transaction comprises a comprehensive range of "textual interactions including those of sources and influences" (Miola, 2004, p.13).

Post the revolution that intertextuality has created in literary theory sphere, a male counterpart of Kristeva, and a leading structuralist, Gerard Genette, dove deep into the model and usage of intertextuality. His paramount focus was the practice of structuralist poetics in the area of intertextuality, and distancing from the poststructural approach primarily using the term "Transtextuality" in what he calls literature in the second degree (cited in Mouro, 2014) and defining it as a textual transcendence "inclusion that links each text to the various types of discourse it belongs to". For him intertextuality is "a relation of co-presence between two or more texts", that is to say, eidetically and most often, by the literal presence of one text within another". Though basing his endeavours on Kristeva's definition, he considers her notion of intertextuality as too general and forwards into proposing five distinguished fractions including: intertextuality, Paratextuality, metatextuality, Architextuality, and Hypertextuality.

Intertextuality as a type of Genette's transtextuality is quite divergent from the notion introduced by Kristeva as, through his restrictive approach, he defines it as "the actual presence of one text within another" (Genette 1992, p.1-2). Genette withers the focus of intertextuality on three main practices comprising 'quotation', an explicit and literal practice overtly used and easily found, it is in essence, duplication of a statement from a certain text though authority, illustration or proof (Gill, 2006, p. 312-313). 'Plagiarism', on the other hand, a less explicit approach as it refers to an

illegitimate usage of another person's and conveying it as one's own text (Genette, 1997, p.2). 'Allusion' is commonly defined as a hint or pointers to another work of literature; often times, its detection within the text can be problematic as it is the task of the reader. For, allusion refers to the type of utterance that must be observed by the reader in order for it to be understood as a reference to another text; therefore, only knowledgeable readers will experience the full effect of an allusion. Elaborately so, Abrams deciphers the nature of the allusion as "a passing reference, without explicit identification, to a literary or historical person, place, or event, or to another literary work or passage" (1999, p.9).

Paratextuality: Paratextuality includes all the texts that hover around the actual text. Thus, the relationship between a text and its paratext consists of the elements that are at the edge of the entrance of the text: titles, chapter titles, introductions and notes. It also includes dedications, illustrations, epigraphs and prefaces (Genette 1997, p. 5).

Metatextuality: the textual relationships placed in this category are in their nature 'commentary' as "it unites a given text to another of which it speaks without necessarily citing it, sometimes even without naming it" (Genette, 1997, p. 4). Therefore, critiques of varied kinds of texts may be considered instances of metatextuality.

Hypertextuality: is a sort of transformative relationship between two texts where hypotext refers to the text that is undertaking an alteration while hypertext is the transformation. Genette argues that the transformation can possibly be simple or indirect, and the example he employs is James Joyce's *Ulysses*, which has altered the narrative of the *Odyssey* from ancient Greece to early twentieth century Dublin (Genette 1997, p. 5-6).

Architextuality: This category deals with all the features that are linked to, for instance, a particular genre or type of text. In Genette's perspective, each type of text possesses its own archetype features that determine attributes of other texts that are part of the same category. In other words: it is "the entire set of general or

transcendent categories-types of discourse, modes of enunciation, literary genres from which emerges each singular text" (Genette, 1997, p. 1).

For giving a comprehensive guideline into a text that is extensive in intertextual utterances, Christiane Achour and Amina Bekkat (2002) claim that a particular text stays all-inclusive; in this sense, they suggest three methods: 'integration', 'collage' and 'citation'. Integration, as the first instance, includes four approaches, integration by installation, which is in a strict sense, when italics or quotation marks are utilised; integration by suggestion, on the other hand, is possible with a mere mention of a title or name. Integration by allusion is, in other words, "multiple associations hinting at the events, facts, characters of other texts, reminiscences, migrant themes, borrowings etc" (Glinka, 2018, p.60); integration by allusion is employed solely through signs and Integration by absorption which merges the original text with a new one in an implicit fashion (Mouro, 2014, p. 32).

Collage, on a distinct line of thought, is based on the notion that a text is a 'mosaic of quotations' as in its core, collage signifies a deliberate reassembly of different shreds in order to mould a new whole (Kundu, 2008, p.448).This multimodal process assures the arrangement of all textual systems: from paintings on a museum wall to words in a novel (Heitkemper-Yates, 2015, p.34).On this account, Thomas P. Brockelman denotes in his book *The Frame and the Mirror: On Collage and the Postmodern* (2001) that "collage practices — the gathering of materials from different worlds into a single composition demanding a geometrically multiplying double reading of each element — call attention to the irreducible heterogeneity of the 'postmodern condition'" (p. 236). Citation, conclusively, is the evocation of a statement captured from an initial text (text$_1$) and inserted in another one (text $_2$) (cited in Mouro, 2014, p.33).

In John Fitzsimons' words (2013), intertextuality can either be accidental, optional or obligatory, and the difference resides within the author's intention or the significance of the reference. When a writer conjures an association or distinction between texts in a deliberate manner, then an obligatory intertextual relationship is

taking place. Getting a full comprehension of the hypertext depends entirely on the reading and prior knowledge of the hypotext (Jacobmeyer, 1998). On a distinct line of thought, a comprehensive reading of the hypotext may not always present itself as a requirement for an understanding of the hypertext; in this case, the author is utilising optional intertextuality as a way to pay homage to the origin of these texts. A pivotal instance is in fantasy literature where one witnesses an inevitable presence of paralleled characters; that is the case in J.K Rowling *Harry Potter* and J.R.R Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings;* they similarly: "... [involve] arduous and fantastic journeys" and put to the forefront ageing wizards as father figures and mentors, while a group or a fellowship to help the protagonist defeat an all-mighty villain and to ruin a powerful being (Keller, 2009, p.4).

However, in some occurrences, and by virtue of the pre-existing knowledge held by the readers, it is possible to encounter correspondences between texts, albeit it had not been intentional from the writer's side to use an intertextual reference. Henceforth, this is referred to as accidental intertextuality; in other words, it is when associations are contrived without any concrete anchor point in the original text (Fitzsimmons, 2013). In this light, the author has no purpose of making intertextual ties and these connections are entirely dependent on the prior knowledge of the reader (Wöhrle, 2012). This is contemplated with the presence of resemblances within different texts at the level of characterisations, storyline, and style, which asserts that this recreation is indeed inevitable (Pagliawan, 2017, p.69).

Fantasy, like any other genre of literary conception, has likewise been inflicted on the theory of intertextuality. In fantasy as well, one can witness the prevailing presence of literary influence, particularly illustrating the concept of the 'strong poets' a term mentioned by Harold Bloom in his work the *Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (1973), indicating the authors who work as a source of influence, exercising strong 'misreading' of their predecessors, as according to Bloom "great poetry is always a "misreading," sometimes radically so, of "precursor poets"--in essence holds that literary history is actually in a perpetual state of disruption and revision." (cited in Green, 2010, p.270). On the other hand, he distinguishes 'weak poets' who merely

duplicate their predecessors on a superficial level, failing to engage in the deeper meaning of previous great poetry. Bloom asserts that the assessment of the meaning of a poem can be achieved only through another poem; according to him, the dilemma for novel writers is to be conscious of the works of their predecessors, to walk on the same road of what has been previously tackled but ultimately "beat history through misinterpretation or misprision" (Willette, 2014, para 7).

As a godfather of the fantasy genre, it is without a doubt that J.R.R. Tolkien enhanced the column of the strong poets in fantasy literature, who has vastly influenced and still remains an idol of the genre. In the context of intertextual influence, Tolkien followed the steps of the founding fathers of 'imaginary fantasy' as previously mentioned, fantasy has existed for eons, with authors recounting their nations' mythological legends, folkloric tales and archetypes in 'renovated fashion'.For instance, English fantasy narratives have largely been impacted by the exorbitant use of Arthurian legends; in this light, Tolkien is known with his unparalleled concern with the Anglo-Saxon literature and culture which he reflected in the epic events and the invented languages of his magnum opus *The Lord of The Rings*.

In the same vein, Mathews (2002) praised *The Lord of The Rings* as the work that converted the preconceived regard of fantasy as a naïve kind of writing and has steered the genre towards a brand new path with its "consummate literary craftsmanship, and the depth and complexity of its vision" (p.54).Thus, he has bestowed the genre with an academic touch and this particularity acknowledged by virtue of his heavy incline on the Christian convention, as Mathews once again affirmed that Tolkien "placed his literary œuvre firmly within a Christian context, … He moved beyond allegory and symbolic moral fable to show that fantasy was full capable of treating complex, sophisticated modern Christian issues" (p. 54). Viewed as the Shakespeare of modern fantasy, it is unsuitable for dismissing his role in the history of the genre as he rushed the dust off the bygone literary heritage (Mathews, 2002, p. 83) for his "consummate literary craftsmanship, and the depth and complexity of its vision" (p.54).

In essence, the theory of intertextuality makes a lucid stand that every literary work crafted in the late twentieth century functions as a response to those that have come before it. In other words, the literary tradition entails the creation of novel texts that re-engage the historical and literary past. An exemplary kind of rewriting that occurs is a combination of these textual methods of intertextuality and dialogism that conjure up the idea of truth and its reformation into the fictional world. It evokes contemplations on history, whether the fashion in which it is written and refined or the narratives that emerged as reliable, true, and authentic; this genre has been labelled as historiographic metafiction.

1.5.3. Historiographic Metafiction

"Self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality" (Waugh, 1984, p.2). In this quote, Waugh pinpoints metafictitious literature's tendency of self-reflexivity and its avidity to question the basic nature of the world that exists outside the text. Metafiction, in a broader sense, refers to novelistic narratives that are immensely "self-conscious of their artificiality" (Mouro, 2014, p. 43).

The significance of history and fiction, the role of one shaping the other, has been a subject of debate for generations; it is as far back in time as Homer. Writers have been committed to writing about and embellishing the past in fictional accounts. Postmodernism, with all its extravagant theories about text and dialogue, contributed to the emergence of another style of writing known as historiographic metafiction. This latter is a literary device strictly associated with modern and postmodern literature that consciously calls upon the literary work as an artefact. It subtly inquires about the relationship between fiction and reality in an ironic and self-reflective way as Nye asserts that: "the function of history was to re-described one era and literature was re-told that era" (Nye, 1966, p. 123).

The term was originally incepted by Linda Hutcheon in the late 1980s, contributing to the fictionalisation of factual historical events and characters; she

showcases the theory of modern historiography as a paramount aspect that abridges the gap found between history and fiction as she believes "Literature and history were considered branches of the same tree of learning" (Hutcheon, 1988, p.105). In a sense, historiographic metafiction is the blend of historical events with the mechanism of metafiction.

For eons and eons history has been represented via fiction, it has been proved as an interesting way to reproduce and rewrite the yore with the aim to insert it into the present. This can be particularly witnessed in postmodern and contemporary literature; where historical figures and historical trials and tribulations have been predominately inserted in historical novels. In the light of the relationship between history and metafiction, Hutcheon argues that:

> Past events can be altered, history gets rewritten well we've just found that this applies to real world too… may be the real history of the world is changing constantly? Why? Because history is a fiction, it is a dream in the mind of humanity, forever striving … towards what? Towards perfection (Hutcheon, 1988, p. 111).

Hutcheon further argues that people are familiar with the history itself solely by virtue of the texts that were preserved, and historiographic metafiction brings endeavours to write history "as a sort of narrativisation (rather than representation) of the past" (Hutcheon, 1989, p. 8). Thus, it attempts to sway both sides of the pendulum of history and fiction, more specifically "Histographic metafiction works to situate itself within historical discourse without surrendering its autonomy as fiction" (1989, p.4).

In the simplest sense, historiographic metafiction is the combination of historical events with the devices of metafiction. According to Hutcheon, Historiographic metafiction narratives are "those well-known and popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages" as an instance she mentions novelistic works such as John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (Hutcheon 1988, p.5).

Chapter One: Theoretical Background

Bradbury (1993) fuels the question of the direction of literature in the nineteenth century, pointing out that fiction has had an inclination towards history as a result of the expansion of the historical sphere, pointing out that "history was observed as an empirical search for external truths corresponding to what was considered to be absolute reality of the past events"(cited in Onega, 1995, p. 120). On a distinct line of thought, Hayden White, in his book *Metahistory* opposes these ideas and joins certain authors like Derrida, Foucault, Genette and Barthes, suggesting that metahistory is a notion related to fiction that orchestrates reconciliation betwixt history and literature (Cited in Hutcheon, 1988, p. 128). Furthermore, he asserts that these historical facts tend to be echoed in a myriad of different ways as a means to display distinct interpretations of these events and empower them with different significance utilising the world's doctrines and different philosophies of life (White, 2001, p. 224). On a further note, White highlights the fact that a historian's ability rests solely on tracing the precedent situations carved in historised scripts and documents without the ability to acquire the vivid circumstances of these events, leading historians to add up certain situations to render past situations more significant, highlighting that the environment is not offered but created (White, 2001, p. 228).Historiographic metafiction tends to blend history and fiction with politics and culture. Ultimately, it shows a connection to the deeper social reality. It rejects certainty and displays contradiction.

In this way, history itself is a kind of fiction because one cannot be sure how it really was. This is something that can be found in the series of *A Song of Ice and Fire* as it is not set in a clear time and place in history but aims to make history as an inspiration, but throughout the story, it is obvious that it aims to recreate several instances of historical momentum. Similarly, Tolkien's building upon romantic historicism has ushered the apprehension and the illustration of the historical imagination in *The Lord of the Rings* (Finander, 2010, p.7).

Hutcheon (1988) argues that historiographic metafiction is multifaceted and over-determined. In this sense, she sorts out five types of references that should be taken into account, represented as Intra-textual Reference, Self-Reference, Inter-textual Reference, Textualised Extra-textual Reference, and Hermeneutic

Reference(p.153).Intra-textual Reference indicates that history is not remoulded in any way, but its discourse has direct access to reality and does not measure the true reality. The intra-textual reference states the reality of fiction is an autonomous and consistent formal unity. In this case, the empirical experience is the real reality; the clearest example can be fantastic works as Tolkien himself asserts that competent story-maker crafts: "a Secondary World which your mind can enter. Inside it, what he relates is 'true': it accords with the laws of that world. You therefore believe it, while you are, as it were, inside" (Tolkien, 1966, p. 37).

Self-Reference or automatic representation is the second kind of historiographic metafiction reference which indicates that "language cannot hook directly onto reality, but is primarily hooked onto itself" (Hutcheon, 1988, p. 155). In essence, it is a kind of reference that sees fiction as fiction, and here fantasy literature is a paradigm. Inter-textual Reference or intertextual, on the other hand, is an act of reworking the past with particular scrutiny on reading text in parallel; the reference can be at the level of word or structure in a work of fiction, in a way it positions textual meaning in discourse. This latter quite resembles the upcoming kind of Textualised Extra-textual Reference which highlights history as an intertext and historiographic as the factual presentation of textual event tracing. Textualised or extra-textual reference aims to get the authority of the document because it takes into account that the documents are a trace of the past (Hutcheon, 1988, p. 155-156). At last, a fifth part of the network of overlapping historiographic metafictional references is Hermeneutics Reference which primarily concentrates on the interaction between the fictive world and the real world of readers. Hermeneutic reference attempts to seek a sign in the form of a word, which repeatedly appears that marks the action of a character in a novel. In the recurrent sign, there is a discourse and possibility of radical ideological change indented by the author (Hutcheon, 1988, p.156).

1.6.   Gender and Identity

Intertextuality and the diverse literary discourses refer to the way that cultural narratives are linked together, with current texts constantly referencing the concepts and structures found in earlier texts; each generation's discourse patterns build on those of previous generations. This research aims at aligning the narrative courses of designated contemporary fantasy books with their medieval sources by highlighting the textual correspondences; accordingly, it dives deeper into the most prominent predicaments in literature in general, and the fantasy genre in particular, the hero's journey and position in the magical realm which is conducted by a quest for the self as one of the most used intertextual archetypes in fantasy. In addition, it aims at exploring women's portrayal in these whimsical writings, the fashion in which these female characters' representation has shifted from its medieval origin to its contemporary heritage.

1.6.1. The Hero's Identity and Journey in Fantasy Literature

As a literary genre, fantasy quintessentially strives to endorse the imaginary world of dreams and grip readers with tales of wondrous events led by heroic figures, placing themselves in the centre of the story and henceforth undergoing the experience with an irrational mode of being.

A tenet that all contemporary high fantasy literature adopts is the hero's confrontation with a severe inner crisis, a detrimental effect of the hero setting out on an ultimate quest. A medieval hero's internal crisis involves two areas, an existential quest for the meaning of life with a pivotal emergence of insecurities and a pursuit of oneself, and the second involves seeking his place within the social hierarchy. This identity crisis usually comes along with an ardent feeling of loss and yearning for accomplishment.

The quest leitmotif, which is predominantly the centre focus of all fantasy fiction, is the literal manifestation of the hero's pursuit of his identity as the outer journey is an adequate metaphor for the simultaneous internal quest for identity, for

the inner self and the accomplishment of the quest collide in carving the true self of the hero.

The question of identity has been woven into literature since the Antediluvian Mythological tales from characters like Odysseus and Achilles in Homer's *Odyssey*, *Beowulf*, and western contemporary fantasy literature protagonists. Therefore, this pattern was drawn in an exactly similar fashion, including an underestimated hero from a certain inferior background that marches towards an arduous quest in an attempt to fulfil an ultimate goal like Frodo Baggins in *The Lord of the Rings* to Jon Snow in *A Song of Ice and Fire* and Harry in the *Harry Potter* series.

Tracing back the origin of the notion of identity from its Latin roots, it means 'the same', implying both similarity and difference. In this regard, Buckingham claims that identity communicates oneness; thus, its fundamental paradox lies in causing tension between two aspects of being oneself and finding one's true self (Buckingham, 2008, p. 1). The hero's journey is a means to make sense of one's authentic self. In William's words, it provides a mechanism for reconceptualisation and a mud map for change; he says that individuals on a journey of self-discovery and self-creation use the hero's journey as a framework to form meaning (Williams, 2017, p. 1-18). In other words, The Hero's Journey is reaching an awareness of the self through trials and experiences.

This periodic pattern utilised generally in narrative tales which found fertile ground in the fantasy genre is called the Archetype, a literary theory that found light through the writings of Swiss analytical psychologist Carl Jung, as well adopted the theory of 'collective unconscious'. The study of the Archetype was delimited by Canadian theorist Northrop Frye in his ground-breaking essay *The Critical Path* (1971) as "the recurring use of certain images or image clusters" (p. 23). Campbell, on the other hand, considers the archetype as a paradigm of a journey that transpires in every literary work. Whereupon he puts forward his progressive ideas on the pattern of the journey of the hero that takes place throughout literary works; for him, every hero transposes the same plot in a myriad of narratives which was popularised as the concept of the 'Monomyth' (2004).

Chapter One: Theoretical Background

The archetypical stories discussing the character's inner struggle with identity have existed in various literary genres. Nevertheless, in the vein of this research, it is primordial to put fantasy literature under particular scrutiny, for as a genre, it tends to blend constituents of the epic and the novel in a dialogic relation that is displayed in the setting and in the characterisation of the hero. It commences by looking at the general understanding of the hero figure, especially in the Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse traditions(Lima, 2017, p. 7).

Heroes in fantasy narratives have a complex function filling the role of protagonists and archetypal figures equally. Frye (2000) supports this notion by highlighting the reality that heroes are more than mere characters put on the leading edge but indeed are an "associative cluster and complex variable" (p. 102), thus reflecting the cognition of all heroes and, ultimately, of the human psyche.

It is worth noting that Frye categorises literary genres in accordance with the nature of the hero of the narrative. For him, a storyline that showcases a hero bestowed with divine peculiarities, superior to his kind and the fictional environment surrounding him belongs to the 'Mythical' genre (Korpua, 2015, p. 126). The high mimetic genre, on the other hand, as Frye suggests, is whereupon the hero's powers exceed other men's but remain not up to scratch vis-à-vis his natural environment. For in this genre, the hero "has authority, passions, and powers of expression far greater than ours, but what he does is subject both to social criticism and to the order of nature" (Frye 2000, p. 34). These heroes lead epic and tragedy narratives and are emblematic for tragic drama characters. On the top of this list are: the lead of the Athenian tragedy Oedipus, Shakespeare's Hamlet and King Lear (p.34).

Contrariwise to the previous notion, the low mimetic genre is represented in comedy, and realistic accounts whereat the hero is perceived as "one of the people" standing on an equivalent level with both his counterparts and the environment. Such hero profile was utilised in Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman*(1949) with Willie Loman, a low mimetic hero that contested the paradigmatic conventions.

Chapter One: Theoretical Background

The romantic hero has an adventurous and chimerical appeal, in the sense that he is superior in status and environment. In Frye's words, he is a hero whose "actions are marvelous, but who is himself identified as a human being" (1971, p. 33). Nevertheless, in the ironic genre, the hero is belittled to a lower degree where the society and the environment surpass his capacity; in a way, readers "have the sense of looking down on a scene of bondage, frustration, or absurdity" (Frye, 2000, p. 34).

Tracing down the allotment of heroes proposed chronologically by Frye, one can notice the hero's transformation and adaptation to the view of the society from medieval narratives to contemporary fantasy fiction while still rooted in ancient cultural tropes. This classification marches from the creation of mythical half-god heroes as in Homer's works to a rendition of realistic, humane characters such as Oedipus (Lima, 2017, p. 9). This taxonomy has prolonged within the Roman Empire and its fall, where a room was constructed for the representation of 'quasi-mythological' heroes that blended heathen, Christian and northern European traditions. On that account, the face of the orthodox hero has changed along his journey across time and space in order to align with the societal constraints (p.9).

The hero's supremacy over men is a reasonably common tenet in fantasy, in remarkably fantastical and archetypical genres; the notion of the hero has been exceedingly reliable in the attitudes of society and the authors to themselves and the world surrounding them (Attebery, 1992, p. 8). Therefore, this reflection on the myriads of subgenres generates a dialogical relationship betwixt the hero motif, its personage, the literary genre and the cultural conditions of both the author and the lector. On those grounds, according to Lima (2017) "while the hero archetype is somewhat universal, every single particular hero and heroic narrative is different in their own right and in relation to the archetype"(Lima, 2017, p. 9).

It is universally acknowledged that Joseph Campbell's archetype of the hero has emanated from Jungian psychology. The idea of the hero and the myth works as a template for human growth and development. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* originally published in (1949), is a manual of heroes voyage throughout world

literature as they embark from an initial ordinance of passage to their crest when they transform into a completely novel person. In this study, he explores the monolithic cycle of the hero based on several and distinct source materials from religious texts; the Bible, the Quran, Buddhist and Jewish texts likewise; sacred recollections, mythology, literature, folklore from ancient Greek, Roman, Persian, Celtic and Egyptian civilisations, and shamanic Siberian tales up to Shakespeare and James Joyce (Nicholson, 2011, p.183).All these works exposed the psychoanalytical and spiritual journey to the self as the hero achieves an understanding of his inner self and his place in society.

The gist of Campbell's work is his trailing of the hero through the road of his discovery as he states: "the standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation – initiation – return: which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth" (2004, p. 28). In short, the hero departs from his common world into a land of magical wonders where he overcomes disputes and achieves victory, only to return home with his newly bestowed power and self-awareness from this map of psychological scenery (p.38).

In an elaborated sense, the hero's journey is epitomised in three prevalent phases; the first one is commonly 'the departure' from his mundane existence, leaving the familiar land he had only known. It is a sort of metaphorical separation of the child from his mother to a supernatural and unknown land as a destination. One salient purpose of the showcase of the ordinary world is crafting an emotional bond between the audience and the hero, through his ordinariness; readers are drawn into a form of association, in which the author attempts to display the hero's "drives, urges, and problems, while showing unique characteristics and flaws that make him three dimensional" (Volger, 1999,p.8).

In the Monomyth's separation phase, the hero obtains a 'call to adventure', an accidental event that obstructs the comfort of his dull life and reveals a challenge or a quest that must be confronted; it can be personified in the form of a herald or a messenger. At this point, the hero is fearful, doubting his abilities and strength against

evil; therefore, the refusal of the call becomes an inevitable response and deviates the adventure into its negative. As these archetypical stages are flexible, an eager hero might skip this part while expressing his worries and anxieties about the risks of the quest (Campbell, 2004, p.54). As the journey is set to begin, the hero is blessed with a supernatural aid of some kind commonly represented in the form of a mentor or a "protective figure" that inserts confidence, guides him through the initial confrontation in the quest and overcomes his initial fears (p.63).

In the second phase, referred to as the 'initiation', the hero is inclined to cross the threshold or the portal that transports him from his ordinary world to the supernatural one, yet is instantly confronted with a road of trials, either physical or mental where obstacles reach their peak. At this point, the journey turns to "a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trials" (p. 89). From Campbell's standpoint, these ordeals and trials represent the "purification of the Self" (p. 93). In this stage, the hero is bound to meet and find unity with a powerful female commonly cast as a goddess, temptress; the female can either tempt and lead him to stray from the quest or aids him with support and synergy. Subsequently, the fourth step in this stage is the atonement with the father; as the hero gets in conflict with the father figure, this atonement leads to the recompilation of the self-image where a great realisation, self-understanding and consequently enlightenment of Apotheosis is reached (p. 119-120).In this sense Campbell (2004) argues that:

> The problem of the hero going to meet the father is to open his soul beyond terror to such a degree that he will be ripe to understand how the sickening and insane tragedies of this vast and ruthless cosmos are completely validated in the majesty of Being (p. 138).

After the Apotheosis, the hero attains an enlightened state where he embraces divine knowledge and perception and is prepared for the final trial, ' the ultimate boon' or the achievement of the quest's goal. This boon is acquired either by force or as a reward for the heroic accomplishments, which will, in turn, affect his return (p.159-178).

However, at this stage, in Campbell's words, "the adventure is here accomplished [and] signifies that the hero is a superior man, a born king" (p. 159)

The return is the concluding phase in the hero's journey and the road back to the ordinary world; as the Monomyth suggests, "when the hero-quest has been accomplished... the adventurer must return with his life-transmuting trophy" (p.179). Withal, this return is often responded with an initial refusal as the hero is eager to dwell in the realm of wonders where he reached enlightenment and bliss. On the road back home, the hero is rewarded with a magic flight which might be in the form of "marvels of magical obstruction and evasion" (p.182) that unleashes numerous dangers and perils. The next aspect in this stage is the rescue from without, the hero return to the ordinary life by means of unexpected assistance, for he had been weakened by the journey or abstained from embarking on the journey back, in this case: "the world may have to come and get him" (p.192). Once the hero is rescued, he crosses the threshold where he might face a final challenge; as the journey has been completed, and the hero successfully overcomes all failures and acquires the elixir, he must learn to adapt to the real world and pass on his knowledge to others and finally becomes a master of the two worlds and form a balance between material and spiritual, thereafter, the hero has the freedom to live in peace as a "result of the miraculous passage and return" (p. 221).

As noted by the Monomyth's crafter himself, the seventeen stages of the hero's journey are a paradigm that most myths and heroic narratives trace. However, these patterns are frequently flexible. Despite the fact that the fundamental elements of the mechanism of the journey (departure, initiation and return) have to occur at one point in the story; some stages are optional possibilities in contrast with the core unit of the Monomyth. In accordance with this, Campbell (2004) explains that the scope of the quest might defy the tradition as:

> Many tales isolate and greatly enlarge upon one or two of the typical elements of the full cycle, others string a number of independent

characters or episodes can become fused, or a single element can reduplicate itself and reappear under many changes (p. 228).

The Heroic Journey image is rooted in folklore but is utilised as a means of personal self-discovery and self-construction. Therefore, in essence, Campbell's paradigm of the hero's journey has transcended folkloristic and mythological limitations to become a tool that employs narrative to impart knowledge and foster the possibility of transformation via self-awareness and self-discovery.(Murray, 2009, p. 108-128). Various scholars from distinct disciplines have utilised his study as a guide to understanding. Therefore, the journey of the hero has created an approach with which one might process and communicate change and a way to create identities.

In such narratives, the feminine aspect has always been set as the 'goal' of the hero's quest or the damsel in distress waiting for the hero to rescue her as he represents the powerful reasonable part of the continuum, while the female represents nurturing and sensitivity. In Campbell's words "The mystical marriage with the queen goddess of the world represents the hero's total mastery of life; for the woman is life, the hero its master and knower"(Campbell, 2004, p.66). Nevertheless, Valerie Estelle Frankel argues that these male-chauvinist representations engage an unequal and biased view of the world. She further points out that this oppression pinned on women by myth heroes effectuates an adoption of helplessness and subject to men rescue or ushers them to become the knight "helmeted and closed off in a cubicle of steel, armored against the natural world, feature less behind a helmet" (Frankel, 2010, p. 3).

1.6.2. Women in the Middle Ages

Women in the medieval period then again in medieval literature were bounded by the values imposed by society. Fictitious characters time and again mirrored the standards of medieval morality in the real world. For the purpose of deciphering women's place in epic and fantasy literature, one must first recognise their position in medieval society and culture.

The common social perspectives regarding women in the Middle Ages were founded on the conventional tradition borne out by classical Greek and Roman philosophers. As such, many studies and scholars throughout the years have been guided by assumptions and misconceptions about women; hence, the study opens a window to the understanding of the ways in which women have been historically understood throughout antiquity and on into the medieval period. Guided by the influence of the Bible, women's role throughout the Middle Ages was mostly reduced to domestic implement and generally perceived as the origin of all sins and frequently associated with snakes. As for their beliefs, Eve was created from Adam's rib, tempting him to sin, fall from paradise and disobey God. In other views, women were put in a status that was lower than men's or human beings, considered servants or animals. The seventeenth century writer Jacques Cujas claims that "A woman, properly speaking, is not a human being" (Cited in Wiesner, 1993, p.9).

Henceforward, this perception painted women as inferior to men and likely to drag humanity into sins as a way to justify man's superiority and showcase the untrustworthy nature of women and put them under male guidance. As such, medieval women were compelled to live in a society flagrant with male conventions. Digging deep into those layers only enables us to find women beneath; being viewed as daughters of Eve, the first sinner on Earth. According to medieval values, women were the "source of the original sin and an instrument of the devil"(Richards, 1990, p.25).

A medieval work that highlights Richards' standpoint is *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,* written in the late fourteenth century. As the protagonist is seduced by the spouse of Lord Bertilak, who lures Sir Gawain every night, these advances are instigated by another female; Morgan, the evil half-sister of King Arthur. This sheds light on the characterisation of women as pure evil, a clear instance of profanity. On the other hand, some female characters, like Virgin Mary and Guinevere, are the epitome of saints. In this Arthurian myth, there exist a myriad of oppositions; the most conspicuous women characterisations are divided into two; for them, females are either sinful creatures who rebel against the patriarchy of men or good-mannered saints yet quiet, submissive and accepting the male dominance.

As the aforementioned strand indicates, the ensemble of medieval English literature had been subject to heavy influence from Greek philosophy. In this sense, Aristotle, one of its pillars, had determined the status of women in life, which had fixated their perception later on, both literary and socially. In *Generation of Animal,* in his illustration of the essence of existence, Aristotle designates the male as the principal, the semen, the effective cause of any existence; whereas the female is the body or the material necessary for the production (1949, p.729).In this fashion, these philosophies planted deep seeds in the society and defined women as a mere 'object of reproduction'. These ideas displayed in the works of Aristotle imposed a certain role for females in books.

In this vein, the positioned inferiority of women has led to their low esteem, paving the way for medieval English literary tradition. Its overarching theme was women's subordination, to produce works enhancing women's ignorance and immaturity, deeming them as weak creatures that ought to be protected from themselves and others. Stripped for minor rights; for a medieval woman, marriage was the expected outcome in her life. However, the institution as well reinforced the subordination of women since when one got married; she lost all formal rights to her property and was anticipated to be submissive to her husband. Over and above, most aristocratic marriages were arranged for economic purposes and to serve the benefit of the social hierarchy. Even individuals of the lower classes planned marriages as a way to secure land holdings. Eileen Power states in *Medieval Woman* that they used to regard "women as an ornamental asset, while strictly subordinating them to the interests of its primary asset, the land" (1997, p.1). Thus, their roles were inscribed by their societies and how they are defined. While the hero is circumscribed with his journey to quest and glory, a woman, on the other side of the spectrum, is defined through the duties that society has assigned to her.

Nevertheless, in the corpus of Old English literature, women were present as maiden mothers and widows, and some were even afforded the status of heroes. These heroines revolutionised the literary tradition by bridging the gap between the well-defined Germanic heroic ideals and contrary to the conventional wisdom that all men

were heroic knights in their shining armour and that all women were mere damsels in distress waiting for warriors to rescue them, as Jeffrey Cohen asserts that:

> The problem is one of cultural imposition and anachronism: masculinity and femininity... the heroic code demands that its adherents live up to its ideals or perish striving. Chivalry established a rule-based method of living that, when adhered to, regulates the body in a way that is beneficial to the smoother functioning of the social body; this fiction is disseminated through the gesta of the hero (1996, p. 4-13).

The ideas suggested by Cohen are examined in fictional epics, especially the Arthurian Legends penned down by Chretien de Troyes, where the female is not the protagonist but plays a predominant and catalyst role in the events of the story. In *Yvain, The Knight with the Lion* introduction, there is a certain hint of women's power as the knights seem to be dependent on them as mentioned " The knights gathered there/ Where the ladies called them" (De Troyes,2018, p. 3). This quote sheds light on women's authority in affairs that orbit around social life.

Yet, female authority and dominance are adjudged to Queen Guinevere, who is a rather powerful and vigorous and active woman, as opposed to King Arthur. Her potency is yet again explicit in court and knights' social gatherings as she steers the conversations forcing the approval of men around her. In an instance, she reprimands Kay for mocking Calogrenant's story but once again, she is reminded of her position and status as a woman "'My lady', said Kay, 'if we haven't gained by your presence, allow us, please, not to lose'" (De Troyes, 2018, p. 5).

Illustrations of women's position in the medieval era are, if ever, mainly witnessed in one of the ground-breaking works that shaped the perception of medieval literature. *The Canterbury Tales* (1387-1400) by Geoffrey Chaucer; is a medieval manual for the customs and practices of the Middle Ages, with a vivid depiction of medieval life and the social relationships amid different genders and classes and an object of considerable secular studies. In this medieval manuscript, the relationship between men and women is portrayed based on unequal grounds, as men were

endowed with the power of affluence and dogma and women were stereotypically restricted to the private, domestic sphere in their roles of homemaker, mother or nuns. As Bennett explains, women without males were viewed as lacking the necessary supervision for their sex. Young girls were monitored by their dads, mature women by their husbands, and widows were frequently supervised by the provisions of departed spouses or the presence of inheriting sons (Bennett, 1987,p. 25). This was remarked in *The Knight's Tale*. Nevertheless, his portrayal of the wife in *The Wife of Bath* deviates from his conventional representation in terms of female stereotypes in the Middle Ages, as she represents the "liberal" extreme; She has her own thoughts and speaks for herself and is intimidating to both men and women (Nabi, 2017, p .63).However, The Wife of Bath is far from being a feminist or progressive representation but rather "stands out and is clearly used as a mechanism to degrade women in this classic work of medieval literature due to her blasphemous nature" (p.62); since the work was intended as a social commentary pinpointing the flawed social development.

The period of the Middle Ages is commonly synonymous with warfare. Due to the constant religious turbulences and feudal concerns, war was a central facet of medieval society. After an in-depth insight into the historically negative representations of women and their broader place in society, one might suppose that women never even figured in treatises on war. Though this belief has been true for a large part; yet exceptionally, women were not entirely overlooked in military tracts as female fighters. While respected within social constraints during the Middle Ages, they were not seen as normative by the people of that time, as history traces the accomplishments of a handful of western medieval women who were involved in the military activity. For instance, the celebrated Boudicca, queen of the British Iceni tribe in East Anglia, ushered a military revolt against the Romans in early Britain (Tacitus, 1953).Another instance in later years, another more well-known female military leader, the so-referred 'Lady of the Mercians' or Æthelflæd, the daughter of King Alfred of Wessex and the wife of Lord Aethelred of Mercia led an army that triumphed in several battles within England and even invaded Wales in the early tenth century (Burghart, 2011, p. 60-63).

However, the most renowned of them all was Joan of Arc, whose name has become equivalent to the notion of female warriors in popular culture and has been for eons a subject matter which academic discussions shed light on. Nevertheless, the representation of women warriors was not merely limited to her. The conversation of women in combat owes its initiation to Megan McLaughlin, who discussed the idea amidst her debate about the question of gender in discourse; she argues that this portrayal of women warriors distorted gender roles in both domestic and public scope, pinpointing that the occupancy of women figures in medieval battles ought not to be discarded as 'accidental' but as an evidence that gender positions were penetrable and open to the fluidity of one's place in society (1990,p .205). Even though a panel of renowned scholars and critics have contributed to the conversation about female martial participation in wars, many historians still deny women's presence in combat, highlighting their "capability, means, and training to engage in bellicose endeavours" (Hager, 2018, p. 3). However, on the other side of the spectrum, few scholars detect contempt in records kept by male-voiced authors with regards to female warriors (p.3).

In summary, women's function in medieval literature and society was very restrained in the first part of the Middle Ages; since their "roles were never stable, but repeatedly re-situated between the poles of constraint and freedom, submission and authority, passivity and agency" (Dietrich 2001, p 194). Women represented a myriad attributes; they symbolised chastity, motherhood, beauty, affection, compassion and sexual desire; object worth worshipping, and at the same, the destruction of mankind (O'Pry- Reynolds, 2013, p. 39). Accordingly, most of these attributes were depicted in fantasy literature.

1.6.3. Women in Epic Fantasy

In order to most effectively scrutinise and comprehend the significance of women's portrayal and uniqueness of female heroes and their evolution in the literary sphere, it is essential to discuss the notion of feminism and its genesis with *The Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792).The revolutionary pamphlet of Mary Wollstonecraft that solicited the equal right to education, emphasising that "till women are more rationally

educated, the progress of human virtue and improvement in knowledge must receive continual checks"(Wollstonecraft, 2014, p.66). In a broader sense, feminism sought an equal representation as men; they are "woman who want power, 'a place in the system, respect, social legitimation" (Cixous, cited in Moi, 1985, p. 101).

Kristeva, on the other hand, inclines to define a *woman,* in the sense that, by giving meaning to the word *woman,* one automatically differentiates it from the word *man.* To believe that one is a woman would give rise to the notion of a superior man. Therefore, she states that a woman is simply something "which cannot be represented, that which is not spoken, that which remains outside naming and ideologies" (Kristeva cited in Moi, 1985, p. 162).

As Elaine Showalter asserts, women's role in any realm has been traced down through different stages. Accordingly, in the first phase, there is a prolonged phase of imitation of the prevailing modes of the dominant traditions with assimilation of its artistic standards and social-role beliefs. In the second phase comes an opposition to these standards and beliefs and advocacy of minority rights and values, including a demand for autonomy. Finally, there is a phase of self-discovery, a turning inward, freed from some of the dependency of opposition; a search for identity (Showalter, 1979, p. 34-36). One can undoubtedly witness the progression of female characters' representation throughout the fantasy narratives.

Fantasy though a contemporary mainstream genre, was the pivotal literature of the western Middle Ages. Although the uniqueness of the fantasy genre is its otherworldliness, its ability lies in casting light on the truths and realities in the real world by enhancing the reader to ponder on the true-to-life predicaments within the sphere of the magical world. In this sense, as Kratz discusses, western medieval literature had the tendency to create narratives where fictional worlds embraced the impossible; thus, medieval literature focuses on highlighting female inferiority as the ideal woman had been identified by the medieval literary tradition moulded by ancient western philosophy and religious books (1999).

The recognized blueprint of medieval fantasy literature *is Beowulf* (ca 725), one of the most ancient poems. It offers a peek into the Anglo-Saxon culture at that time; this old English classic has candidly thrust women into the shelf, mentioned scarcely within side stories, within this palpable lack of female presence and the paucity of their dialogues, one might be excused to deduce that medieval literature trivialised women the same way the Anglo-Saxon in particular and the medieval society in general did.

Contemporary fantasy tracked the premises of the literature of the Middle Ages and in which the harsh realities of women's social injustice are inevitably omnipresent, particularly shedding light on the gender-based violence insulating that these magical universes created in fantasy narratives are as misogynistic as the Dark ages. According to Nicholson (2011): " in early modern books on the hero, heroism is assigned almost exclusively to men" (p. 187); she further denotes that in the instances that writers endow female characters a certain aptitude for the heroism they would depict them as a mere nuance, "a bracketed subspecies of the category Man" (p. 187).

Since the dawn of early fantasy literature, novels have been male-oriented as male heroes were constantly the ones that undertake quests while female characters were rendered merely a support system or an obstacle that must be overcome to achieve their goals. Acting either as villains or passive characters, and damsels in distress anticipative for a rescue or marriage, this idea is supported by Mains et al. noting that roles circumscribed for women have had a relation with the main male character playing as "sexy temptress, the damsel in distress, the virginal bride who is the object of his quest and the reward for his heroism" (Mains et al., 2009, p.180). In the light of this fictional male domination and tendentious gendered representation, the feminist critic Nadya Aisenberg (1994) claims that: "the paradigm of virtue that heroes like Aeneas, like Roland, and the heroic code – maiden-rescuing, dragon-slaying – represent has been destructive both to the individual and to Western culture" (p. 11-12).With the one-sided focus on heroes, it has proved to "neglect concerns with community, negotiation, nature, human relations, and the enablement of individual destinies to flourish in their differences" (p.11-12).In a deeper sense, their capacity as

powerful, independent and autonomous women has never been accounted for in early fantasy.

Time and time again, the roots of fantasy have been credited to the romances and folktales of the past. In accordance, Mains (2009) notes that early twentieth-century novels have set narrative paradigms that hold an immense impact on the development of recent fantasy literature; she further intimates that the most common representation in modern epic fantasy hovers around the heroic masculine warrior and protector and "the dangerously exotic woman, sometimes worshipped as a goddess because of her beauty and sexuality"(p. 34). In essence, and since the early recorded mythologies, women were typically perceived as sexual objects rather than complex, multifaceted characters. This sexual factor of la femme fatale had an extensive presence in works such as *Dwellers in the Mirage* (1932) in prior works as well, like the tale of the late Victorian-era writer H. Ryder Haggard who exploited the theme of the all-powerful woman that must be obeyed in *Ayesha, the Return of She* (1905) (Mains, 2009, p. 34). The depiction of violent, evil female witches and goblins has continued across the literary tradition. In this regard, Lewis Carroll is no exception in *Through the Looking Glass* (1871); he also draws on the female stereotype through his character, the Red Queen, which he paints as a quintessential female antagonist, a frightening, self-righteous character who screams "Off with their heads" at the smallest disagreement and whose remarks diverge from abiding logic.

Works of fantasy which were produced during the First World War witnessed a faint yet substantial change in the attitudes towards females in fantasy fiction; for example, women occupy a much larger role in T.H. White's unique rendition of *Le Morte D'Arthur* entitled *The Once and Future King* (1958) (Mains, 2009, p.43). Nevertheless, several critics, including Mains, argue that the portrayal of women has been in some measure dubious and conflicting in C.S Lewis's momentous fantasy series *The Chronicles of Narnia*, which reflected his personal self-contradictory views on women. He occasionally expressed that equality is essential but can also have negative consequences when used in an inappropriate way (Fredrick & McBride, 2001, p.138).

Chapter One: Theoretical Background

It is worth noting that a wave of rising interest in epic and quest fantasies transpired after the popularity of *The Lord of the Rings,* along with the tremendous technological and economic changes and the prevalence of novel ideologies. In addition to the increase in female fantasy authors who contemplated the deficiency of female depiction in quest narratives; therefore, they "created secondary worlds in which women could be warriors, wizards, and rulers, whether they had to fight for that right or were accepted as such without remark" (Mains, 2009, p. 64).

At a certain point in time, warrior women have become an inevitable and quintessential feature of high fantasy literature favorably as a reaction to the long-established medievalist patriarchal society structure; novel critics endeavoured to examine the manners in which medievalist epic fantasies subvert the bloody Conan-esque genre to a rather "genre-fair" narratives (Forrest, 1993, p.47). Originally, Barr supported the idea that women warriors' characterisation adhered to the same one as their male counterparts; however, narratives succeeded in evolving and conforming to the female ideal. To put it in Barr's words (1987): "female heroes are free to be women, not merely sword-swinging men with female bodies and female names. They are free to be both heroic and female" (p. 85). In this regard are works such as Le Guin's *Earthsea* trilogy (1968-74) through which she challenged the norms and opened new horizons in the fantasy genre, with her female warriors who were as powerful as their male counterparts.

Drawing on the above-stated strand, physical strength is not the sole criteria female heroes can depend on; this is particularly showcased in *The Dragon Chronicles* by Susan Fletcher, in which the character Kaeldra has a cultivating nature as she entrusts her conventional feminine qualities as a means to fulfill their quests; in this way, they display "an alternative feminist heroism, one not dependent on assuming the traditional masculine role of dragon-slayer, an armed warrior who conquers through violence" (Keeling & Sprague, 2009,p. 14). For further explanation, they identify these types of characters as "dragon-sayers", which connotes characters that can control dragons through communication and care; similar to Daenerys Targaryen *in A Song of Ice and Fire*, these women become the mother of dragons, thus reinforcing the view

for the audience of "a positive heroism" that is "based on love and female identity rather than one based on absorption into male roles of violence and destruction" (p.14).

Very often, some female readers adhere to the dragon-slayer narrative as they find it attractive and empowering, while the other half resist it, judging that such female heroes are "unrealistic and subvert what they find powerful and attractive about being women" (p.14). In that respect, contemporary fantasy writers have framed the heroic narrative for a female character in various forms, one being the orthodoxical masculine mode of martial bravery or female protagonists who accomplish their goal by employing "communication, nurturance, and protective love as means to achieving personal agency and the development of self-knowledge, confidence, and competence"(p.17).

Even though female characters' derogatory portraiture has been amended compared to early fantasy writings, as they started to occupy bigger space on the pages; nevertheless, their sexual and physical vulnerability has not ceased to be a central theme; as Jane Tolmie (2006) affirms, "motifs of rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage and other forms of gender-based oppression and violence are markedly interlaced within contemporary fantasy novels" (p. 148). One can mention some instances of such characters like *Avaryan Rising* (1997) by Judith Tarr whose character Elian lady of Han-Gilen is thrust into an arranged marriage but succeeds to escape her faith to become a squire to a conqueror (p.148).

Analogously, the better half of the female characters in *A Song of Ice and Fire* has been subject to such issues, with male characters forcing their siblings and daughters into marriages as a way to ensure alliances. However, they learn to play by the rules of the male-dominated game of politics.

In de facto reality, the heroic tradition has long deemed female characters as sheer passive figures whose presence exhibits a burden rather than a privilege; this idea has been embedded since fairy tale narratives like *Sleeping Beauty* or *Rapunzel*. In this matter, Jones confesses that her urge to create fantasy literature was missing

female writers who mould their heroines as the archetypical male hero but with a gender reverse (1989, p. 135).

As mentioned in the afore-discussed titles, in the Monomyth proposed by Campbell, the hero experiences a myriad of adventures and pursuits. Campbell specifies in his arguments that the hero can be male or female; however, in the light of this account, a panel of critics argues that for the most part, he employs masculine pronouns and tends to refer to folkloric tales that glorify male heroes' triumphs. Thus, he strengthens the belief that "there are more myths about the adventuring male hero than the adventuring female hero, given the customs and conventions of the societies for whom and about whom the tales were told" (Mains, 2005, p. 25).

In spite of this fact, the twenty-first-century literature has proven to be rewarding for female characters as they started to be embedded in certain positions that were deemed far-reached in the past due to societal norms and expectations. However, through time they demonstrated that those heroes' quests could be undergone and performed by female characters all by mirroring the true female qualities of strength, bravery and rationality.

This is particularly true with Martin, who depicts a wide variety of complex female characters who are portrayed as equal to men. He contravenes his fantasist contemporaries who adopted in their novels one-dimensional female characters. His women are neither flat nor completely in accord with the archetypical female characters like the tom-boyish woman warrior, the evil queen or the passive mother. However, this characterisation was not decisive to an excessive degree, as attempting to present women as effeminate and empowered falls into problematic situations. Even so, with this contemporary work, representations of female characters have immensely evolved from their portrayal in one of the earliest works of high fantasy in *The Lord of the Rings*, in which many argue that there appeared to be a significant lack of female representation, though diverse female characters have been involved in the novels, they have no apparent significance in the main story except attributing certain masculine feature to the male protagonist. On the other hand, and despite the

discernible dearth of women in action, Tolkien must be accounted for crafting female characters that possess wisdom and strength in mind that is equal to men and which served as a paradigm for proceeding fantasy writings.

1.7.   Conclusion

This chapter aims to provide a guideline to the driving aspect of this academic endeavour. Initially, by tracing the medievalist literary tropes from the early beginning to the Renaissance, the focus progressively shifts towards an exploration of the legacy of medieval literature and its reflection in the fantasy genre, particularly the heroic tales, which forms a sort of neomedieval narrative. Consequently, the overall objective of this scholarly endeavour is to provide a thorough evaluation of a range of features of the medieval literary heritage in the context of the way these works of the renowned fantasy writers, J.R.R. Tolkien and G.R.R. Martin, intertwine with the medieval heritage inherent in the heroic fantasy subgenre. In fact, the corpus of related pieces works together to forge a literary notion of an independent, vivid secondary universe where fantasy fiction themes are employed in dialogue with the epic literary heritage. This examination is undertaken by means of discourse analysis, relying primordially on intertextuality, dialogism and historiographic metafiction as a way to scrutinise the medieval context in modern and contemporary fantasy by following the archetypical intertextual journey of the hero and heroine through myths and legends simultaneously.

Chapter Two:
Discourse Analysis

Chapter Two: Discourse Analysis

"Truth itself, in its uttermost, indivisible, 'atomic' kernel, is dialogue".

Viladimir Bibler

2.1. Introduction

Literature is far from being created in the void as the concept of influence and imitation has existed since the first literary records. Fantasy literature in this regard has seen no peculiarity. It had possessed a rich and diverse history since the beginning of literary records. For example, the roots of Epic fantasies as well as its related subgenres, can be traced back to ancient times. To elucidate this connection and provide an explanation for the fashion in which fantastical worlds produced by modern authors frequently draw inspiration from books with medieval context and roots, this scholarly venture relies on the important tenets of literary discourse revolutionised in postmodernism.

The fantasy worlds incorporated in the selected novels are immersive and provide home for countless races, social classes, cultures and languages, which create a fusion of lashing speeches and consciousnesses. This opens a window to study the variety and multiplicity of discourses and their interaction within a single framework through a dialogic analysis. Furthermore, the influence of medieval literature on Tolkien and his subsequent influence on other fantasy authors have enabled the creation of works that function as patchworks of allusions, nodes and references that are studied through an intertextual investigation. Historiographic theory is another apparatus in which discourse is analysed in a fashion to discover historical consciousness and the close association between medieval history and the secondary-world event creation in the selected body of fantasy novels.

On the basis thereof, before delving deeper into the intertextual analysis of medieval references inserted in contemporary fantasy, it is essential to provide the summary of the two fantasy series under scrutiny as a way to offer a roadmap for readers concerning the stories taking place in the fictional realms. Taking into consideration that the invented fantasy worlds in the selected novels are both

expansive and hold historical and cultural aspects within their own realm and connected to the authentic medieval era, it is mandatory to give a glimpse of the historical and cultural background that ties them. It is also crucial to observe the aspects in which these made-up secondary worlds echo the atmosphere of the medieval period.

2.2.   The Novels' Summaries

The sprawling works of fiction that have been designated as cases of study *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire* have introduced prodigious and unparalleled realms of fantasy and left an indelible imprint on the genre; as such, a thorough exploration of their synopsis is necessary for a comprehensive understanding.

2.2.1. Summary of *The Lord of the Rings*

The Lord of the Ring has been in numerous occasions mistakenly referred to as a trilogy, though as a matter of fact it was crafted as a single novel published in three volumes *The Fellowship of the Ring (1954)*, *the Two Towers* (1954) and *the Return of the King (1955).* The books are a continuation of his initial story *The Hobbit* (1937) and initially *The Silmarillion* which is set likewise in Tolkien's imaginative world of Arda in the continent of Middle Earth in an earlier era. It focuses on the domiciliary hobbit Bilbo Baggins' quest to acquire an item of the treasure that the dragon Smaug is guarding. In the course of his adventure, Bilbo wanders beyond his amusing, pastoral setting and into hazardous lands.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, is an ongoing battle between good and evil; narratives abound with different races, among them the free people presented in elves, dwarves, men and the hobbits; on the other hand, the tainted races like the Orcs, and Goblins are slaves to evil. *The Lord of the Rings'*- story is set in motion sixty years after the events that transpired in *the Hobbit,-*;the wizard Gandalf learns that the Ring which Bilbo recovered is actually the One Ring, which governs the Rings of Power fashioned in Eregion during the Second Age. Thereof, the story hovers initially around the mystical

object known as The One Ring crafted by the Dark Lord, commonly known as Sauron who aims to gain control over the fictional realm of Middle-Earth with it. Its magical features are that it accentuates the bearer's character defects and draws attention to them. When it is possessed by an ambitious greedy person lacking moral compass, the Ring increases its malicious influence by encouraging the bearer to act cruelly. The only way to avoid being influenced by the Ring is to possess pure intentions and to exhibit selflessness and character strength.

After Bilbo owning the ring for a long period of time, the ring is afterwards inherited by Frodo, Bilbo's nephew, who is in turn compelled by Gandalf to embark on a quest to destroy the item in the Mount Orodruin in the dark land of Mordor. Thus Frodo leaves the safety of the Shire, his homeland, with his friends the hobbits (Sam, Pippin, and Merry) who later on form a group in order to protect the ring with Aragorn, a ranger and a secret king, Gandalf the most powerful wizard in the land, Boromir the man from Gondor, Legolas the elf, and Gimli the dwarf. While on the other hand, the Black Riders that Sauron dispatched from Mordor are pursuing him and wound him with a black blade. The hobbits and the fellowship are able to seek refuge and enter Rivendell's secure land thanks to the Ranger Aragorn.

An important decision is made in the Great Council in Riverdell held by Elrond, Lord of Rivendell. The decision entails that Frodo will be the ring bearer and that the Ring must be destroyed. It is also within this council that the fellowship of the Ring is officially established and gathered in order to assist Frodo in his frantic quest. The Ring can solely be destroyed on Mount Doom, the Mountain of Fire in Mordor, where it was initially forged. On their way, they become discouraged while trying to traverse the Misty Mountains in the winter and snow; Gandalf leads the Company into the underground tunnels of Moria resided by a terrifying balrog. While fighting the spirit of the underworld, Gandalf the grey makes a tremendous sacrifice by giving his life, allowing the others to escape. Aragorn, who has been revealed as the hidden successor of the ancient Kings of the West, leads the fellowship. They proceed through the benevolent land of Lórien where they meet Galadriel before travelling over the

enormous River Anduin. By this time, Gollum, a former hobbit obsessed with the ring and its former owner is on their trail, looking for his stolen Ring.

To wield it against the enemies of his kingdom, Boromir, one of the members of the fellowship seeks to take the Ring by force. However, after realising his mistake and in attempt to redeem himself he is killed while defending the hobbits Merry and Pippin from an orc onslaught. By this time, Frodo and Sam have split off from the rest of the Company and are travelling East towards Mordor. The remainder of the Company travel west along the path taken by the orcs who have seized Merry and Pippin.

The tale then follows Frodo and Sam and the other fellowship members in parallel. Slowly approaching Mordor, Frodo and Sam are now being guided by the cunning Gollum, who is ready to betray them but is restrained from doing so by the tatters of his broken character. Frodo accepts Gollum's offer to guide them to a hidden passage after finding the main gate to Mordor to be inaccessible. He takes them inside Shelob's Lair from there. The two travel to Mount Doom with little chance of returning after facing several dangers (including Frodo coming dangerously close to death). Frodo is unable to toss the Ring into the Cracks of Doom in the last seconds due to its temptation. Gollum chews off his ring finger, but the Ring causes him to plummet to his death. The mission is complete. The two are rescued by eagles and returned to their allies, where they are acclaimed as heroes, while Mordor crumbles and the ghost of Sauron fades. In the parallel plot, Merry and Pippin are pursued by Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli to the Forest of Fangorn, where they had vanished after escaping the orcs. The hobbits encounter the Ent Treebeard, the woodland's protector, in the Forest. The Ents attack and take Isengard, the traitor Saruman's fortress. The hobbits are reunited with the rest of the fellowship, as well as Gandalf, who has been raised from the grave as Gandalf the White.

Gandalf and the others had cured the aging king of Rohan, Théoden, and revealed Worm tongue's poisonous lie as Saruman's hidden servant. The majority of the fellowship moves with Théoden's soldiers towards Minas Tirith, which is now

under attack by Sauron's army. Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli, on the other hand, go into the Paths of the Dead in search of the ghosts of long-dead soldiers bonded by a terrible oath. They lead south to assault the enemy there.

The coalition against Mordor would have collapsed if the Ring had not been destroyed. Though there was no guarantee that Frodo and Sam's mission would be successful, the people of Gondor and Rohan, as well as the other allies, were willing to fight to the death against the horrible adversary. The narrative concludes with the crowning of Aragorn as official King, the slow mending of the country, paving the path for human dominance. The elves' fading is complete as the last ships sail across the sea to the Undying Lands of the West, the Ring-bearers Bilbo and Frodo among them. Sam returns later, with his beloved Rosie, towards a happy life in the Shire.

2.2.2. Summary of *A Song of Ice and Fire*

After the publication of Tolkien's *the Lord of the Ring*, no other gripping fantasy series has been able to grab the attention and seize the mind of readers for nearly half a decade until an American fantasy author took the literary sphere by storm and graced the dusted shelves with his long awaited series of high fantasy fiction. *A Song of Ice and Fire* is a series of dark fantasy books written by the master of contemporary fantasy George R.R. Martin. The series as for the moment spans over five books, set in an alternate world redolent of medieval Europe. The first part entitled '*A Game of Thrones*' written in 1996 with the last ones '*The Winds of Winter*' and its successor still in the making.

The story is set in ancient times in the unbalanced fantasy world of Westeros and its opposing continent Essos, in Westeros the seasons are unpredictable, summers stretch to decades and winters are dreaded for lasting a lifespan. The book engages with three main shifting perspectives and settings in which most of the events transpire, the first is the looming wall that separates the civilised south from the savage north and the land beyond populated by the wildlings, giants, children of the forest and diverse creatures. However it is sinister beings roaming the frozen northern part of

Winterfell wall referred to as "the Others" guarded by the Nights Watch in order to protect the Seven Kingdoms that pose great danger for the whole world of Westeros and serve as the supernatural enemy in the story.

The second setting is established a distance from the North, within the Seven Kingdoms. The continent is at war as the kingdoms fight each other for the ulterior purpose of taking power to the Iron throne and governing the Seven Kingdoms-. At the heart of the conflict lie the families of Stark, Baratheon, Lannisters and the Targaryens

On the other side, the third main setting is in the opposite continent to Westeros called Essos. It is distanced by the Narrow Sea, in which resides a princess in exile. Daenerys is surviving as the only daughter of king Aerys II of House Targaryen, a noble family of Valyrian decent, endowed with the supernatural gift of dragons. They ruled the Seven Kingdoms for centuries; however, their dynasty was put to an end when Aerys II or 'the mad king' was slaughtered in a coup orchestrated by the Baratheons and the Lannisters which resulted in appointing Robert Baratheon as the new king.

In the first part of the book series *A Game of Throne*, the chips start falling with the death of Arryn, the hand of the king, which leads to the appointment of Lord Eddard Stark, friend of the king as his hand. Hethen leaves his kingdom of Winterfell and his children Robb, Sansa, Aryan, Bran, Rickon and his illegitimate son Jon Snow. However, the storyline gets complicated after the departure of the king of Westeros, Robert of House Baratheon. After his death, his friend and right hand Lord Stark learns that the precedent's son and next heir to the throne as well as his other children from Queen Cersei are not truly his children but the aftereffect of an incestuous relationship with her brother. He threatens to reveal this truth, as a consequence, Lord Eddard stark is accused with treason and ultimately beheaded while Lord Stark's eldest son Robb Stark is declared as the king in the North (the Kingdom of Winterfell). A rebellion arises throughout the kingdoms by the brothers of the deceased king who proclaim themselves as the legitimate heirs to the throne.

On the other side in Essos, Daenerys is forced to marry a tribe leader, as her brother starts gathering an army with the sole purpose of conquering Westeros back. However, her brother is killed by her husband who in turn dies, leaving her with the possession of three newly hatched dragons planning to finish their plan to return to Westeros and claim the throne.

The second volume of the literary series, entitled *A Clash of Kings*(1998)expertly expands *on A Game of Thrones* very solid base while pushing the plot and characters to new heights. Westeros' civil wars are still getting worse. The older of the remaining Baratheons, Stannis, opposes the newly-appointed King Joffrey while he sits on the Iron Throne at King's Landing. However, Stannis' claim is being contested by Robb Stark, who has been dubbed King in the North by the inhabitants of the North, and Renly Stark, who has the backing of many Westerosi lords.

The Stark family is entangled in the tumult of the escalating battles. While their sibling, Sansa Stark continues to be held hostage in King's Landing by the House Lannister, Arya Stark, on the other hand, has fled from King's Landing and remains on the run. Catelyn Stark continues her frantic efforts to defend her family by giving Robb council while they are fighting whereas Rickon and the younger son, Bran are the only ones remaining in Winterfell

A Clash of Kings has a particular focus on Tyrion Lannister as a point of view character; in this second part he has been chosen to work as King Joffrey's Hand by his father. Tyrion, becomes the most developed character over the course of fifteen chapters. Particularly when dealing with his sister, Queen Cersei, Tyrion is portrayed as a shrewd master of political scheming. He is always witty and intelligent. On the other hand, he conjures up warm traits as he is the sole one who attempts to defend Sansa Stark.

Daenerys on the other hand, whose importance has been largely established in the first volume, has her presence significantly lacking in this one, as through the majority of story is spent making her way through the continent of Essos with the tribe

and her infant dragons which she named after her late husband and brothers seeking refuge and aid preparing the foundation for her ultimate rise to power in Westeros.

Martin's third installment *A Storm of Swords*(2000) starts right where the previous novel left off. Its events are the most turbulent and violent among the books as the hostilities continue to rage ferociously. Alliances are formed and broken despite the fact that one of the five aspirants for dominance is dead and another is out of favour. The insecure king of the Seven Kingdoms, Joffrey of House Baratheon, sits on the Iron Throne. Lord Stannis, his fiercest opponent and the victim of the envious sorceress who controls him, stands humiliated and vanquished. But from his stronghold in Riverrun, young Robb of House Stark continues to rule the North, and pursues his schemes against his hated Lannister adversaries even as they imprison his sister at King's Landing, the home of the Iron Throne.

As the terrible power struggle intensifies, the damaged and divided kingdom must prepare for its most horrific invasion yet: one that is being led from beyond the dead. In this regard, Jon goes on an expedition beyond the wall in order to search about the creatures; he infiltrates the wildings as an informant for the Nights Watch.

Meanwhile, the exiled queen Daenerys, who is in charge of the fast growing, last remaining three dragons in the entire world, is still making her way through a continent covered in blood in order to reclaim the throne she feels is rightly hers. With her new found power, Daenerys is able to conquer kingdoms, free slaves and continues to gather allies and power for an assault on King's Landing, which is filled with the stink of death and rot from the deadly dynastic war.

The penultimate volume *A Feast for Crows*(2005) along with the last published one *A Dance of Dragons*(2011), were initially intended as a single volume but due to the expansive world the author had created with striking details and varied characters it had to be divided to two parts. The first one is largely concerned with the ongoing power of the Lannisters. Jon Snow and Daenerys Targaryen's plotlines are dismissed in this particular part saved for the next book; thus, the story mostly concentrates on events in central Westeros. Tommen Baratheon, the youngest son of Cersei Lannister,

now occupies the Iron Throne and seeks advice from his relations. The deaths of Joffrey and Tywin, who were allegedly killed by the family Dwarf, Tyrion, are mourned by Cersei and her children. Cersei tries to act logically, but it soon becomes apparent that her judgment is marred by anger.

In light of the death of multiple characters, new points and plotlines come to the picture enabling the series to transition to its next narratives and focus on new characters including figures from Dorne and the Iron Islands, as well as the woman warrior Brienne of Tarth. In Bravos, Arya Stark delves into a fresh story arc, and throughout the realm, religion reemerges to further influence the drama.

The fight and political ploys for the throne and the right to rule Westeros continue in the latter part; however, as its name indicate, it places a particular focus on Daenerys Targaryen and her dragons which are on the central stage of the narrative. Now that Daenerys Targaryen is the sole owner of three dragons, she finally possesses her own strong army. However, as her army swells, so do her adversaries. Daenerys confronts her own struggles on the trip to Westeros that might derail her quest for the throne she rightfully deserves. In the meantime, on the Wall, danger lurks as the brothers of the Night's Watch argue over the entrance of the wildlings, the threat posed by the Others, and Stannis. With Jon as the new commander, a political climate is created that starts to uncover the truth about what lies beyond the Wall and how it could impact the world of mankind.

Although the last part details on the newly inserted characters and storyline, yet contrarily to earlier books, many of the characters' directions became obvious. The crucial pieces of the narrative are falling into place, and the author set fertile ground for the long-awaited epic fights between men and the supernatural Others (good vs. evil) to begin.

The forthcoming sixth volume of the literary series titled *The Winds of Winter* which has been in the process of writing for about a decade will carry on the power struggle story but the audience is still kept in the dark regarding the release date. The series which has been initially planned as a trilogy has been expanded, as the author

has admitted that the final and concluding novel of the series will be named *A Dream of Spring.*

In a nutshell, and through the immense world building, the huge plethora of characters and infinite number of plotlines; it is possible to distil the series *A Song of Ice and Fire* down to just one theme; the study and search for power with each volume examining that coveted position from a unique angle.

Martin drew influence from Tolkien, whom he credited as the inventor of the fantasy genre. Martin developed his neomedievalism primarily in opposition to different features of the medievalism that came before his work, including Tolkien's, whereas other authors built theirs on parallels to and imitations of Tolkien. Martin's neomedievalism is considerably darker, and he purposefully approached sexuality, conflict, and bloodshed in his book series quite differently.

2.3.   Tolkien as a Medievalist and Mythmaker

In the last few decades there were a myriad of criticism that hinted at the presence of a varied range of approaches and techniques to study and reach a thorough understanding of the immersive world of Tolkien. One salient means is the introspection and exploration of Tolkien's legacies in medieval studies. Michael Drout in this sense asserts that learning about medieval literature and the author's interest in it is the ideal method to comprehend and enjoy Tolkien's stories. The ideal situation would be to read the literary works that T.A. Shippey and others have proven to be the roots of Tolkien's universe (Drout, 2013).

Although, Tolkien had the tendency to antagonise the approach of critiquing a literary work in relation to the biography of its author, it is indeed necessary to comprehend his sources of inspiration and the way they are mirrored in his fantasy worlds. When John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, was a twenty-two years old student at Oxford waiting for his military call-up, he penned down a fairy-tale poem titled "The Voyage of Eärendel" about a celestial sailor who travels to the west in pursuit of peace

for Middle-earth. This was the starting point of his conceived mythology (Tolkien & Carpenter, 2000). The mythology of England penned by Tolkien has been a topical subject among medievalist scholars and his motives for undertaking this path has been stated in his letters in which he clarifies:

> I was from early days grieved by the poverty of my own beloved country: it had no stories of its own (bound up with its tongue and soil), not of the quality that I sought and found (as an ingredient) in legends of other lands. There was Greek, and Celtic, and Romance, Germanic, Scandinavian, and Finnish (which greatly affected me); but nothing English, save impoverished chap-book stuff (2000, p.167-168)

For him, unlike other countries that had stories and mythologies of their own that drew the path for literature, England lacked such a salient element. *The Odyssey* was written in Greece, the *Kalevala* in Finland, and the *Edda* in Iceland. The Arthurian universe is mentioned by Tolkien as having some connection to Britain but not to England. As for *Beowulf* despite it was written in Old English it was not set in England. In this sense, Tolkien believed that a mythology for England ought to be English in its language and in its homeland. As a result, he decided to omit it from the English national mythology (Hostetter, 2003, p.281).

Tolkien believed that there ought to be a narrative that would offer his country an inherited mythology and decided to create his own; deriving its characteristics from English history and land as well as other national literatures and legends with languages of English-related roots. In his words, Tolkien declares:

> I had a mind to make a body of more or less connected legend, ranging from the large and cosmogonic, to the level of romantic fairy-story … which I could dedicate simply to: to England; to my country … I would draw some of the great tales in fullness, and leave many only placed in the scheme, and sketched. The cycles should be linked to a majestic whole and yet leave scope for other minds and hands, wielding paint and music and drama" (Tolkien & Carpenter, 2000, p. 168).

J.R.R. Tolkien is for most fantasy enthusiasts recognised as a novelist and the lead novelist of fantasy fiction at that. Yet in truth, he considered himself first and foremost as a lecturer whose interest lay in the field of medieval languages and literature. Among the many languages he studied in his lifetime, are Norse, Latin Old Bulgarian, Old English, Old Welsh, Greek, Old and Middle High German, and Finnish and many more (Tolkien & Carpenter, 2000).

In fact, he perceived himself personally and professionally influenced by his academic work. He repeatedly asserted how crucial it was for his literary and creative works that he pursued a professional background in medieval languages and literature as they delivered an ever-important "soil in which his tree of tales would sink its roots and find nourishment" (Honegger, 2005, p.51).

For this reason, Norse mythology piqued Tolkien's curiosity, and it had a significant impact on his writing in terms of polytheism, magical items and creatures, tales, and languages. As many have argued, the first book Tolkien has written and published the *Silmarillion* was indeed a manifestation of his ardent fascination with the language and culture and literature that stretched from the Nordic mythology to the European Middle Ages legacies.

When many of the Anglo-Saxon and medieval era enthusiasts have found their escape to the Middle Ages times through Tolkien's imaginative fiction; the latter on the other hand discovered the beauty of this ancient period through the body of fantasy works written by William Morris (1834-1896) who had a crucial role in reviving the medieval literature through his writings as well.

In continuation with his inspirations, Tolkien was a member of the Inklings, a non-formal literary exchange group that was formed during his days at Oxford university in England which included several writers, most notably C.S Lewis, that made a significant contribution in the success of its members and the restoration of fantasy fiction by boosting a mutual influence and a positive rivalry. Tolkien repeatedly acknowledged the indebtedness he has towards the members of the literary club for their encouragement and impact on his works.

In a distinct line of view, Tolkien's literary legacy does not solely lay on his novelistic productions but also with his seminal critical works which includes translations and editions of multiple medieval texts and poems among them *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Pearl*(1975). His famous critical essay "On Fairy-stories," (1947) is was one of the earliest and monumental critiques of the fantasy literary form and its workings. This seminal work re-established the value of fairy tales and paved the way for this genre dismissed as children's literature to find its way among respected literary works.

Throughout the pages of his seminal work: *The Lord of the Rings*, there exist explicit evidence of Tolkien's lifelong study of Anglo-Saxon literature and language. Not just in the made-up history of Middle-earth but the story itself incorporates the Anglo-Saxon principles found in battle poetry through the discourse and actions of the characters.

The fundamental influence on Tolkien's literary production goes back to the groundbreaking medieval epic poem *Beowulf* which himself played a role in its popularity with his essay *"Beowulf: the Monsters and the Critics"*(1936) which was first presented as a lecture to the British Academy in 1936. It is still often quoted and anthologised today and remains as the cornerstone work for twentieth-century medieval studies.

The core tenet of nineteenth-century medieval studies was the idea that history contained hidden truths that could be discovered, a notion that was largely rejected in the latter half of the twentieth century. However it was the nineteenth century ideals that shaped Tolkien's identification as a medievalist, he acknowledged the reality of the Middle Ages as both real and objectively recoverable. In hindsight, the Middle Ages' actuality served as a potent justification for modern perspectives.

In accordance with the previous line of thought Tolkien produced pseudo medieval writings with the desire to revive the medieval past as a way to criticise the present and prescribe a better future. His part in the First World War had a ceaseless

resonance through Tolkien's work, since his envisioned Middle-Earth as a world permeated by war like iron ore.

In conclusion, John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was a great intellect who produced a revolution in fictitious literature. He was able to subtly introduce a number of concepts from medieval literature and language to new generations in a humorous way by doing so in his works. Tolkien wittingly transformed the look of an entire literary genre when he used myth and legends to alter readers' perceptions of the different races that may be found in fantasy literature.

With his genius, Tolkien would contribute in inspiring countless generations of fantasy writers, at the head of the list is the nicknamed "the American Tolkien" G.R.R. Martin, the author of the second selected fantasy series who borrowed the essential elements from Tolkien and created his own idea of fantasy realm. Martin has always been candid about what he has owed to Tolkien. He was essentially influenced by the structure of the story Tolkien has pioneered; the idea of creating a secondary world with historical and anthological depths; beginning from a small event in a small setting and expanding it to a whole realm.

2.4. Historical and Cultural Depths

Both fantasy realms created in the respective novels have been established on a solid historical and cultural infrastructure with landscapes, customs and traditions in addition to names that reflect the authentic medieval period. Tolkien, the godfather of modern fantasy and the one credited with its genesis and his avid admirer Martin who developed the genre in America sketched pseudo medieval universes to enthrall and completely engross readers. With his LOTR trilogy, Tolkien revolutionised the fantasy genre by creating the first secondary world where magic functions and seems to be an inherent element of Middle Earth (James & Mendelson, 2012 p. 65). It had a significant impact on contemporary era's views on the fantasy genre. On the other hand, Martin as well had an important role in advancing the fantasy genre by molding a realistic secondary world reminiscent of the Middle-Ages in which magical elements

and political scheming can merge together without requiring a logical explanation. Both worlds can be easily represented on maps as in the following ones:

*Figure 1: A map displaying the Fantasy World of Middle-Earth in *The Lord of the Rings* (Navigating worlds, n.d)

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Figure 2: the map of the fantasy world of *A Song of Ice and Fire* (Imgur, n.d)

2.4.1. Middle Earth (Fantasy World of LOTR)

In *Rhetoric's of Fantasy* (2009), the British author Farah Mendlesohn argues that Tolkien is credited with the initiation of the argument that to design a coherent fantasy world, one ought to be ware of its history, archeology, geology and languages (p. 67). In his thriving sub-crafted secondary world, much like his primary one, Tolkien based his story heavily on cultural identity moulded by a shared experience of a community

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whose understanding of the sense of history associate with the sense of time. For this reason, Tolkien has meticulously orchestrated his 'imaginary mythology' into Middle-Earth scenery and worked on his narrative portrayal of time-depth and a history perception disclosed not merely in articulations but in "the landscape itself" (Sabo, 2007, p. 93).

In light of this, giving his secondary world legitimacy is the main goal of Tolkien's myth-making, which mainly entails rearranging the core materials in secondary patterns (Tolkien and Carpenter, 2000). Parker maintains that fantasy writers are entitled to created fantasy worlds endorsed by primary reality for "there must be some sort of bridge, some connection between the real word and the fantasy world" (1957, p.600).Adding up that Tolkien's work proves to be valuable for unlike any other fantasy, it is tethered to and connected to a reality (p. 602).

As a secondary world designer, Tolkien places great emphasis on establishing Middle- Earth's plausibility with geography, legends and histories but also draws on a range of supplementary sources to further establish the veracity of his Middle-Earth universe, including maps, pictures, calendars, timelines, genealogy, languages, and writing systems which are vital elements to the fantasy collection (Parker, 1957).

The crafted world of Tolkien holds a very rich history; the world in question is referred to as Arda, characterised by different ages that span over thousands of years. From the first creation of races in the first age until the third age which witnessed the threat of the One Ring and the journey of its destruction which completed the events of the franchise. On the other hand, the term "medieval times" describes a time in European history that occurred between the collapse of the Western Roman Empire and the beginning of the Renaissance; termed as the Middle Ages insinuating their existence between two glorious periods of time. In the same line of thought, the events taking place in T*he Lord of the Rings* are set in the third age of Middle Earth years after Arnor's fall. Thus Gondor still exists, but it is only a shadow of what it once was hinting at the similarity of the third age and the real dark ages.

As previously hinted, the themes of war, as well as the devotion between those who fight alongside one another are heavily emphasised and celebrated values in Anglo-Saxon culture and literature. In addition, as a result of the development of the romance genre in the Middle Ages and works connected to the Arthurian legends, the knights and their great actions are frequently romanticised in medieval narratives. Their values and qualities were unwavering; in that event, chivalry became a societal ideal.

Old English epic poetry that reflected the tradition of medieval times as well as J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy are infused with this ethos of knighthood, war victories and intense, unwavering allegiance to family and clan. This kind of civilisation is most directly reflected in Tolkien's book by the Rohirrim, the horse-riding men of the realm of Rohan; their language, social interactions, and even combat skills all reflect the Old English societies. In this regard, *The Lord of the Rings* and through the storyline of destroying the Ring and the ultimate evil developed the issue of loyalty in a society that prioritises warfare by establishing a fictitious community echoing the heroic counterpart of the Anglo-Saxon warriors and by using different characters to develop deep connections. In his analysis, British medieval critic Tom Shippey described the Rohirrim as "Anglo-Saxons on Horseback" (cited in Honnegar, 2011, p. 1)

> They are proud and wilful, but they are true-hearted, generous in thought and deed; bold but not cruel; wise but unlearned, writing no books but singing many songs, after the manner of the children of Men before the Dark Years (Tolkien, 2005, p. 430).

In the same line of thought, the historian Tacitus maintains that the Anglo-Saxon warriors came from a society that prizes courage and pride. The history of the Germanic people and their war glories are solely preserved in ancient songs as recorded in medieval heroic oral traditions.

Taking into consideration that Tolkien's first and utmost passion and interest was the study of ancient languages; for this purpose the novels present different races and

each with its own languages, the fictional languages created by the author are a mirror to the medieval Europe which held many races from the Celts to Norse and Anglo Saxons fighting to seize power. Some of his invented languages are genuinely whole languages with large vocabulary and comprehensive grammars. Albeit most of fantasy writers take the path of invented languages as a way to highlight the unfamiliarity of the fictional worlds and emphasise the unconventionality of the fantasy genre; Tolkien's usage of fictional languages is somewhat unorthodox. In this regard, he maintains that "the invention of languages is the foundation. The 'stories' were made rather to provide a world for the languages than the reverse. To me a name comes first and the story follows" (Carpenter & Tolkien, 2000, p. 233). In a stricter sense, Tolkien has not crafted languages to be of service to his fiction but on the contrary he suggests that the language construction will "breed a mythology" (Zaleski & Zaleski, 2015, p.285).

Throughout his whole life, Tolkien worked on constructing a fantasy world with a genesis tale, a long history, and several races and languages. Because of his preoccupation with philology, he incorporated medieval mythology and linguistic tradition into the narratives, settings, and characters of his writings. Tolkien substantially changed the face of fantasy fiction while introducing the richness of medieval language and literature to modern literature. He did this by using characteristics from a range of creatures to flesh out his plot.

Martin takes up Tolkien's project of creating a coherent world with its history, language, legends and literature. Here, the focus is shifted to intrigue, families, and political history proper. This historical depth is clearly visible in the literary cycle. The history of Westeros as developed by Martin is based on several supports: the family memory of the great lineages of Westeros, the memories of the different protagonists who lived through various historical episodes; tales and legends, myths transmitted orally to children or written down. No chronicles comparable to the great medieval chronicles, but literary tales and courtly songs featuring kings, princes and knights of the Seven Kingdoms, like the storybooks of Stannis's daughter, Shireen, or songs that Sansa remembers. There are also compilations of family genealogies, such as the book

that Grand Maester Pycelle sent to Jon Arryn before he was poisoned. At best, one can see Samwell Tarly delving into the archives, then into the annals of the Night's Watch.

2.4.2. Westeros (Fantasy World of ASOIAF)

Martin provides a more conceivable portrayal of Westeros' history through the characters by letting them search through historical books mentioned in the narrative itself. Though fictional, Martin seeks to align his work with a rendition of the Middle Ages that purposefully deviated from the romanticised archetypical image that has been installed in the audiences' minds through earlier works as the author himself had confessed that part of his objective was to "write an epic fantasy that had the imagination and the sense of wonder that you get in the best fantasy, but the gritty realism of the best historical fiction" (cited in Hodgeman, 2011).Vike, on the other hand maintains that the medieval society portrayed in the novels "very much bears a resemblance to our own historical knowledge of how medieval Europe was structured" (2009, p. 64).

In line with the strand of view proposed by Vike, the main setting of the novels, the Seven Kingdoms, has indeed many similarities to medieval Europe. Feudal monarchy is the system of administration; the sovereignty is for the king and the lords of the principal noble families serve as his subordinates. These lords are the king's vassals, in charge of the territory the monarch has granted them, they are accountable for carrying out the king's orders and acting as the monarch in his absence. These lords have knights and subordinate lords as vassals, and the subordinate lords may have their own vassals. The lowest class of individuals in society is those who do not possess any land. To assist him in governing, the monarch chooses "the small council" as his group of advisors. The individual who serves as his top counsellor is known as the Hand of the King, and he is also in charge of carrying out the king's orders and acting as the monarch in his absence.

Although the main focus is put on royal families and nobility, Martin does not dismiss to reflect the difference between the aristocrats and the commoners that

existed in medieval period in a vivid fashion. Social inequality is prevalent in the world of *A Song of Ice and* Fire as much as it does in reality. The nobility controls practically all of the wealth, the commoners have no participation in governmental decisions, and they do not own the land they labor. The food consumed by Westerosi people reveals the disparity in living conditions between the aristocrats and the commoners.

In Flea Bottom the poor survive on stale bread and "bowl o' brown" which "usually had barley in it, and chunks of carrot and onion and turnip, and sometimes even apple, with a film of grease swimming on top" (p.1320). On the other hand, the conditions in Kings Landing with noble families were entirely different with extravagance "Six monstrous huge aurochs had been roasting for hours… Tables and benches had been raised outside the pavilions, piled high with sweetgrass and strawberries and fresh-baked bread" (p.560).

Concerning religion, the "Faith of the Seven," as referred to in Westeros is the main religion of the Seven Kingdoms. Vike (2009) remarks that this made-up religion's structure and purpose are quite similar to Roman Catholicism in the Middle Ages (p. 62). It is even similar to how Christianity expanded across central Europe in the early Middle Ages. The Andals disseminated the Faith of the Seven throughout Westeros. The Father, Mother, Crone, Maid, Warrior, Smith, and Stranger are the seven faces or facets of the one deity that the Faith's adherents worship. This idea of facets is synonymous to the Christian Holy Trinity. Each of the seven is represented in statue form and has an altar for worship. The many facets of God resemble Catholic patron saints in several ways. Each of them is worshipped in accordance with the regions of life that they each represent. For instance, one ought to pray to the Warrior if wishing for victory in a battle, but prayers would be deviated to the Mother if wishing for the safety of the children. However, before the faith of the seven, the ancient inhabitants of Westeros believed in the old gods; a belief still practiced mostly by people of the North. The Old Gods are worshipped in a natural setting by adherents of this earlier religion, which is based on nature. It is due to its animistic elements and affinity to nature; this religion is strongly tied to a Celtic form of Christianity.

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Similarly to the European Middle Ages, the church in Westeros has a salient impact; the monarch requires the head of the religion to support their authority, and the church needs this most powerful individual to support them in order to survive and maintain their hold on the subjects of the king. Religion exerts influence because its adherents are reluctant to submit to an authority figure who does not share their religious convictions.

Even geographically speaking, the realm has its infrastructure from Medieval England. The wall separating the seven kingdoms of Westeros from the northern part, was built to stop what existed "beyond the wall" which said to be inhabited by "a band of wildling raiders" (Martin, 2011, p.25). The wildlings in the narrative are described as:

> Cruelmen… slavers and slayers and thieves. They consorted with giants and ghouls, stole girl children in the dead of night, and drank blood from polished horns. And their women lay with the Others in the Long Night to sire terrible half-human children (Martin, 2011, p.44).

The origin of the wall is one of the biggest mysteries of the narrative while the aim of the hundred-feet tall wall was to steer the savages clear from the kingdoms and prevent the wildling from "coming over the Wall to steal women, food, beer, wine, food, weapons and other things" (2011, p. 3813). The Wall was made to guard the realms of men since "Wildlings come over the Wall or through the mountains, to raid and steal and carry off women" (Martin, 2011, p.408).

The wall into question is roughly inspired by Hadrian's Wall which served as the Roman Empire's northwestern defensive frontier for over three centuries, constructed by the roman troops under Emperor Hadrian's (117-138CE) commands (Pham, 2014) as Martin himself confirmed the influence it had on him while visiting the monumental site:

> We walked along the top of the wall just as the sun was going down. It was the fall. I stood there and looked out over the hills of Scotland and

wondered what it would be like to be a Roman centurion [...] covered in furs and not knowing what would be coming out of the north at you (cited in Harrop, 2014, para 1).

In the same fashion, Hadrian's Wall was constructed not as a physical boundary protecting the Roman control over Britain but as prevention from barbaric irruptions. This is asserted by Collingwood et al. claiming that the wall was in fact "meant as an obstacle to raiding and plundering, and doubtless also to smuggling" (1937, p. 132).However, by the coming of the Middle Ages, the existence of Hadrian's Wall was an enigma. Although it was unclear who erected it or why, it was widely acknowledged that it had to have been constructed as a defense against the Scottish. Both walls in the history and fantasy narratives have been massive shields against invaders and instilled in its people a feeling of safety.

In tradition with the fantasy genre; these fantasy locations typically follow a structure similar to *The Lord of the Rings* realm and the real world's real topography. Seas, huge deserts, steppes, mountains, or catastrophic wastelands separate the eastern and western environments. In Martin's universe, the Orient is reinforced upon the stereotypical characteristics that the medieval collective imagination is already associated with. From one hand, Westeros is coordinated with Anglo Saxon and Scandinavian areas in terms of geography, inhabitants and culture, on the other hand, the eastern continent named Essos which is situated in the East of Westeros across the Narrow Sea (see figure 2) somehow represents the Orient. It is painted as the territory of abundance, of gold and silk, of jade and spices. The rich port city of Qarth is full of luxury goods. But it is also the territory where slave societies survive as there is the slave towns of Astapor, including Meereen and Yunkai, on the eastern shore of the "Slaver's Bay". The inhabitants vary from recreation of Arabian merchants and different savage tribes, their tone is far darker than those who live in Westeros, they have a different sense of fashion and resort to an exotic lifestyle. Thus, it is simple to include these portrayals in the repertoire of Orientalist clichés that medieval literature has spread since the publication of the *Arabian Nights*.

Past the aspect of geography and following the fantasy traditions and under the influence of Tolkien, Martin as well uses invented fictional languages but unlike Tolkien who has invented entire languages with their semiology; Martin uses these created languages barely to serve a purpose in few instances. His approach to creating languages is minimalistic and is employed as a means to an end. In light of what had been discussed, the usage of diverse languages and dialects has had a salient importance in creating dialogic relations in both respective pieces of work.

2.5.   Dialogic Reading of *The Lord of the Rings* and *A Song of Ice and Fire*

Dialogue in all its forms is the mechanism of human life; in this sense, the text springs from various ideologies that various characters embrace. Contrarily to medieval works composed generally of poems and epics which are constructed in a monologic structure, the novel genre on the other hand "sparks the renovation of all other genres, it infects them with its spirit of process and inconclusiveness" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 7). Thereby, the dialogic novel enables interplay of voices.

The Lord of the Rings abounds with different humans and non-human racial groups; the characters from the multiple regions and landscapes of Middle Earth have each their own language culture and perspectives that includes particular dichotomies and are confronted in a dialogic fashion. Likewise, taking Middle Earth as a source of inspiration in terms of world-building, *A Song of Ice and Fire* by Martin also offers a plethora of natural and supernatural beings, characters from diverse continents and cities who engage and interact in sundry tongues clashing cultures and consciousnesses.

A unique trait of novelistic dialogism is polyglossia, or as Bakhtin explains it "its stylistic three-dimensionality, which is linked with the multi-languaged consciousness realized in the novel" (1981, p.11). Bakhtin mentions the emergence of polyglossia as a transition from the stylised forms to the novel. As there has always been a coexistence of languages, he contends, but with the spread of many languages across the world, this variety changed from peaceful coexistence to mutual illumination. In

his mindset, the novel has successfully distinguished itself from other genres and produced distinctive and believable protagonists due to its tight relationship with language and, consequently, heteroglossia.

To put the aforementioned strand of thought into context, the trilogy of the *Lord of the Rings* gives a clear example of the use of polyglossia for readers can note that different speeches have held a solid space in Tolkien's writings due to his fascination with languages as has been mentioned in previous pages. On this basis, the entirety of characters included in the narrative converse in a handful of different languages.

The three primary tongues in the realm of Arda may be divided into the universally understood Common Language (used as English in the books), the oldest tongue, Elvish, and the tongue of the Orcs. Only the Common Language and Elvish have specific usages like poetry and scripts among these languages. As it is indicated, the language of the Elves appears to hold a more profound significance for the trilogy as it is the oldest language, as mentioned in the novel "Elves made all the old words: they began it" (2005, p.456). In view of this, the way the characters engage in these multiple languages gives space for multiple consciousnesses.

Exempli gratia, different languages can be used in a single dialogue "I thank you indeed, GildorInglorion,' said Frodo bowing. '*Elen sílalúmenn' omentielvo*, a star shines on the hour of our meeting,' he added in the high-elven speech" (p.81). As mentioned diverse language discourses and the code switching between them enhance a shift in consciousness; for example, in the instance when Sam loses his power when Shelob attacks Frodo and causes him to swoon, yet he still wants to muster the will to exact vengeance on the giant spider. He grips the Phial of Galadriel while abruptly speaking in Elf-tongue "And then his tongue was loosed and his voice cried in a language which he did not know" (p. 729):

A Elbereth Gil thoniel,

omenel palan-diriel,

lenallon si di'nguruthos!

A tironin, Fanulios!

In a sense, this part of the story shows Sam speaking the Elven languages which is claimed to contain magical qualities; therefore, changing the discourse enables him to adopt a courageous and fearless identity which aids him to accomplish the challenge.

Much like the Elven tongue, another discourse is eminent in Tolkien's world and possesses unique attributes; the Black speech created by the evil Lord Sauron as a language that would unify his servants of Mordor. Basing on its name, it was a dark language of Middle-Earth that signified the evil consciousness: "It was harsh in sound, sounded utterly menacing, and gave Elves something that resembled a headache" (Faber 2022).In the novel; and during the Council of Elrond, Gandalf when conversing utters a phrase in Westron, the common language in Middle Earth; not much seemed to happen, however, when he switches his discourse to the Black Speech:

> The change in the wizard's voice was astounding. Suddenly it became menacing, powerful, harsh as stone. A shadow seemed to pass over the high sun, and the porch for a moment grew dark. All trembled, and the Elves stopped their ears (2005, p.254).

As opposed to medieval epics, novelistic characters conduct interactions though dialogues. In this way, dialogism gives characters a space to exist through these dialogues; both internal and external. External dialogues are conducted with other characters through the form of conversation and discussions.

These external dialogues establish a link between counter groups and opposing individuals whether in terms of race, religion or authority. In Middle Earth, dialogues are engaged between characters from different races entirely for example; interactions between Elves and Dwarves have a hostile nature due to the conflicts that have taken lieu between several generations from the past. In this light, Legolas an elf and Gimli a dwarf speak in an antagonistic fashion to each other, reflecting ages of Elf-Dwarf feud discussed in his previous work *The Silmarillon.*

The relationship between Frodo and his companion Sam is one of the intriguing ones in the novels as they have a unique bond of friendship but they come from and

represent different social classes. The discourse used in their dialogues enhance the master-servant dichotomy and established Frodo as the holder of authority as Sam keeps referring to Frodo as his master throughout the trilogy despite their friendship.

Dialogues are an important tenet of heteroglossia, which can be internal as much as they are external, as they transpire within characters. Fantasy heroes in the novel genre characters experience internal discussions and disputes as they deal with psychological challenges and go through trials that evaluate their suitability for heroic tasks and personalities. In *The Lord of the Ring*, the characters of Gollum, Frodo and his friend Sam are mostly the subject of these internal debates. Gollum is portrayed as a character who possessed two personalities; Gollum and Sméagol. Sméagol was a hobbit who found the ring and Gollum is his destructive state under the influence and corruption of the Ring. In a stricter sense, this internal division represents the conflict between good and evil and there is a constant shift between them leading to a continual internal battle; shifting his speech from 'I' to 'we'. This obvious split-personality renders his internal dialogues more frequent in the story and oftentimes loud:

> 'Yess.Yess. No!' shrieked Gollum. 'Once, by accident it was, wasn't it, precious? Yes, by accident. But we won't go back, no, no!' Then suddenly his voice and language changed, and he sobbed in his throat, and spoke but not to them. 'Leave me alone, gollum! You hurt me. O my poor hands, gollum! I, we, I don't want to come back. I can't find it. I am tired. I, we can't find it, gollum, gollum, no, nowhere. They're always awake. Dwarves, Men, and Elves, terrible Elves with bright eyes. I can't find it. Arch!' . . . 'We won't!' he cried. 'Not for you.' Then he collapsed again. 'Gollum, Gollum,' he whimpered with his face to the ground. 'Don't look at us! Go away! Go to sleep!' (p.616)

As it can be noticed in the passage above, it is mentioned that the internal voices' tone and discourse has changed within the shift in the character; which is significant since it suggests that the character's identity, consciousness and viewpoints are intimately

connected with his/her discourse. The excerpt showcases a conflict between the attempt to renounce to the Ring and the pernicious desires it radiates while his other dominating side refuses.

Frodo, as the protagonist within the story faces challenging trials which make him repeatedly question his decisions and wonder internally which led Sam to notice, "Sam stared at his master, who seemed to be speaking to some one who was not there" (2005, p.615). Sam likewise, when confronted with an ultimate choice of leaving his Master or carrying on with the quest, falls in internal dialogue:

> 'What shall I do, what shall I do?' he said. 'Did I come all this way with him for nothing?' And then he remembered his own voice speaking words that at the time he did not understand himself, at the beginning of their journey: I have something to do before the end. I must see it through, sir, if you understand. 'But what can I do? Not leave Mr. Frodo dead, unburied on the top of the mountains, and go home? Or go on? Go on?' he repeated, and for a moment doubt and fear shook him. 'Go on? Is that what I've got to do? And leave him?' (p.731).

One salient aspect of dialogism is represented through the inclusion of different genres of literature within one novel. Bakhtin mention a set of inserted genres that can be more akin to the novel; including memoirs, travel journals, poems in forms of songs and elegies. According to him, "Each of these genres possesses its own verbal and semantic forms for assimilating various aspects of reality" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 321). In other words, all of these genres introduce their own languages to the novel as they do so, stratifying its linguistic unity and enhancing its speech diversity in unique ways. The fantasy realm of Tolkien offers a space for these genres.

Throughout the novels, narrative prose is enriched by poetry and songs. The protagonists recite poetry through songs, which is a tradition shared by Hobbits and Elven folks. For example, Legolas recites an important number of poems and elegies

reminiscing about the lore of the past, expressing loss and longing. In total the narrative includes more than sixty poems (Kulmann, 2014).

In terms of memoirs and diaries; the protagonist Frodo is shown to writes his adventures in forms of memoirs; like his uncle Bilbo did previously in the precedent work *The Hobbit* and transferred them to his nephew as a way to finish it. He named it as "The Downfall of the Lord of the Rings and the Return of the King" insinuating he has completed the journey his uncle has initiated and reached the end. In this way, it has created a dialogic connection with the previous narrative. According to Bakhtin, the genre's association with extra literary works, which also lends the heroes an ideological viewpoint, is what causes these linguistic variations to appear in the book.

In A Song of Ice and Fire, as the title denotes, the narrative places a particular weight on songs; therefore, in the same fashion of Tolkien's writings, Martin presents an ampleness of diverse literary genres within the novels engaging in generic dialogues. For example, songs and poems are a salient part of the Westerosi history and culture. They provide a more thorough understanding of the author's imagined universe and a complete picture of the Seven Kingdoms and its surrounds. In doing so, they enhance the "textuality" of Martin's books and offer "the sense that lying behind the text we are reading is a whole tradition (both written and oral) of stories, poems, histories and accounts" (Drout, 2013, p. 4). In this regard, poems provide the appearance of a realm with an abundance of various religious and cultural beliefs, they narrate a tale with a specific objective and from a specific consciousness. For instance, 'the Rains of Castamere' is a narrative ballad passed on through generations recounting House Lannister's victory in battles; therefore, it functions as a reminder of the Lannisters' intimidating history and a warning about overwhelming power and might.

On a different strand of thought, by providing voice to its protagonists, who serve as agents from a wide range of racial groups, socioeconomic classes, and lineages; *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy exhibits polyphony in some measure. Each of these

individuals possesses a distinct voice and provides a unique perspective to add to the narrative, perspectives standing apart from the others. One may examine the use of polyphony in characters' utterances in the novels by contrasting them with the authorial observations, including numerous voices, and considering the speeches from various points of view. According to Bakhtin, polyphony is more than just including several voices; it also refers to the democratic treatment of these voices and their parity with the author's voice in terms of weight.

As opposed to medieval and epic narratives in which the authorial voice is largely dominant over the characters, giving chance to a monotonic feeling in the novel, there exist a direct and balanced interaction between the author and the hero (2005, p.732):

> 'What am I to do then?' he cried again, and now he seemed plainly to know the hard answer: see it through. Another lonely journey and the worst.
>
> 'What? Me, alone, go to the Crack of Doom and all?' He quailed still, but the resolve grew. 'What? Me take the Ring from him? The council gave it to him.'
>
> But the answer came at once: 'And the Council gave him companions, so that the errand should not fail. And you are the last of all the company. The errand must not fail.'

This passage shows the clash between different voices, the character Sam in a sort of monologue, emerging in a dialogue with the voices he is hearing, imbedded with simultaneous and alternating narration that displays the voice of the author as a means of depicting the events transpiring and the instant reaction of the character.

Similarly polyglossia is eminent in *A Song of Ice and Fire.* In fact, it can be described as a melting pot of different languages and speeches, from different continents and cultural and regional places. Among the languages of Westeros, there is the old tongue spoken by the first inhabitants of the continent and the new languages referred to as the common tongue; even the common tongue or the common language

spoken between the Westerosi has several dialects and accents. These dialects arise though dialogues between characters from a highborn or lowborn pedigree which create a dialogic relation and define the social differences. For example, one can notice the servant boy Mycah's speech is different from the king's in the conversation "She ast me to, m'lord," Mycah said. "She ast me to"..."It's not no sword, it's only a stick" (Martin, 2011, p.329).

A Song of Ice and Fire fantasy series follows a pattern in which each volume is divided into several chapters, each of these chapters is centered on the viewpoint of a particular character, thus including more than ten characters narrating and proving a shift in the novel's point of view from members of House Stark including Eddard 'Ned', Jon, Arya, Sansa and Bran, Tyrion's perspective from the House Lannister and Daenerys Targaryen, leading to seeing the same reality in different angles. Each of the perspectives is salient and displayed for the reader.

In *A Game of Thrones*, the first novel, the reader is confronted with seven different characters narrating the story. These characters are located in different geographical areas separated by oceans and mountains. Nevertheless, within the breakout of the War of the Five Kings, which is the most important event in the series, one can see the incident evaluated from different pair of eyes and through different voices and perspectives. With the continuation of the series, several other narrative voices will be included clashing with the previous ones creating dialogic connections.

Fantasy literature in general, and the genre of High and epic fantasy in particular have ceaselessly followed the pattern of the dichotomy between good and evil, with divergent treatments. The realm of *A Song of Ice and Fire* hovers around the theme of seeking ultimate power, which is represented in seizing the Iron Thrones while others battle for virtue and honor.

In this regard, the writer uses in the novels a distinct storytelling approach that contrasts with the brutal society it portrays. Each main character is treated sympathetically and liberally in the narration and away from favoring the heroes; however, it reflects the realm of high politics, coercion and hunger for power. It

manifests numerous perspectives of reality with various thoughts, will, philosophies. There are dialogues between the powerful and the weak, the pacifist and bloodthirsty. For instance, when talking about queen Cersei's infidelity towards her husband, the late king, Ned Stark judges exile would be a kinder punishment for her and a protection from the king's wrath. However, she replies: "And what of my wrath, Lord Stark?" then continues:

> You should have taken the realm for yourself. It was there for the taking. Jaime told me how you found him on the Iron Throne the day King's Landing fell, and made him yield it up. That was your moment. All you needed to do was climb those steps, and sit. Such a sad mistake (2011, p.1022).

Insinuating for thefact that he could have taken the throne "I have made more mistakes than you can possibly imagine," Ned said, "but that was not one of them."

"Oh, but it was, my lord," Cersei insisted. "When you play the game of thrones, you win or you die. There is no middle ground" (p.1022). This statement perfectly depicts the ruthless politics that permeate the whole series, as well as the author'svoice about how violent, vicious, and cutthroat the Middle Ages are. It is a particular dialogue between medieval and contemporary consciousness shaped in a form of neomedieval literature.

Contemporary fantasy despite relying and subtracting all its raw materials from medieval literature and particlarly its epics, bases its structure on contemporary theories, as the investigated novels belong surely to the dialogic narrative. On this basis, there exist dialogic relations between the texts at hand and previous writings which leads to the examination of another theory of postmodern studies within these works referred to as intertextuality.

2.6. Intertextuality

In light of what has been established in the precedent chapter concerning the rhetorical theory of intertextuality, it is a concept that hovers around the idea that all writings are constructed upon and interconnected to previous writings, or put in a more eloquent fashion; authors generate texts out of the sea of former texts that surround them, the sea of language they live in, and readers make sense of the texts of others within the same sea (Bazerman, 2004, p.83-84)

Thereupon, intertextuality enables authors to establish a connection with their readers by utilizing pre-existing "threads" of rhetoric. Accordingly, it is an effective and helpful instrument for rhetoricians because as it allows these authors to use commonly recognized facts, widely held viewpoints, or well-known occurrences to set their writingsin credible and familiar grounds, which in turn enable them to interact with their readers.

Since intertextuality answers to the present-time comprehension and critique of texts, it becomes one of the lures of literary criticism. Thus, intertextuality considers a text to be a network of sign interactions that are influenced by both space and time.This fact explains the various literary interpretations as well as the ongoing productions and renditions of classical literature that are produced today.

With special regard to the fantasy genre, from its outset, renowned fantasy authors have consistently followed the path of whimsical writing, which was based on mythological tales, legendarium, and early fantastical collections. As a result, fantasy literature has become rife with imitations disguised as hints and nodes of allegories and citations.

2.6.1. Intertextuality Usage in T*he Lord of the Rings*

Intertextuality showcases contemporary writers' admiration for earlier works of literature, their ability to comprehend the value of thematic elements, and their creative capacity to weave them into their own stories. Inasmuch Tolkien, who taught Anglo-

Saxon and Middle English at Oxford, was inspired by medieval texts, his work although deemed as an original print in fantasy narrative arena, is undoubtedly associated with the Middle Ages in its genesis and in its intertextuality. The author himself pointed out the importance of literary tradition in the story of *The Hobbit* including the connection to *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien himself contemplates on the idea of influence in an aesthetic fashion noting:

> Who can design a new leaf? The patterns from bud to unfolding, and the colours from spring to autumn were all discovered by men long ago. But that is not true. The seed of the tree can be replanted in almost any soil (Tolkien et al., 2008, p.66)

Working from this perspective, many critics have insisted on the kinship that exists between Tolkien's universe and the Arthurian cycle, which may have been an important source inspiration in the same way as the Nordic texts or in Old English writ, which influence is even more visible. In a sense, intertextuality is a means of communication between authors from the past to present; it can be imbedded through allusions, quotations or references of terms.

In the context of this case study, the first allusion can be witnessed within the settings, Middle-Earth is a term created by English author J. R. R. Tolkien in his mythology that serves as a fictional setting for the legendarium that includes all his works. In Tolkien's Middle-Earth, in addition to Men, there are also Elves, Dwarves, Ents, and Hobbits, as well as other beasts including Dragons, Trolls, and Orcs.

Through the imagined history, all other races disappear, migrate, or otherwise change until, by the end of the time frame depicted in the novels, only Men remain on earth. Middle-Earth was the English translation of the Old English word middanġeard. This word was transformed in the Middle English midden-erd or middel-erd, and the Old Norse Midgard. This is English for what the Greeks called the οικουμένη (oikoumenē) or "the abiding place of men" (Tolkien & Carpenter, 2000, p. 257), the physical world as opposed to the unseen worlds. One can assume that this term for a mythological place has not been selected arbitrarily, in addition to the author's desire

to construct a familiar and authentic setting for his imaginary universe, it was indeed an intertextual reference to a medieval magnum opus and Tolkien's primary source of inspiration *Beowulf* in which the world is also referred to as Middle Earth:

> Wide, I heard, was the work commanded,
>
> for many a tribe this mid-earth round,
>
> to fashion the folkstead. It fell, as he ordered

Another instance of the term Middle Earth is found in yet another medieval work *The Wanderer* which Tolkien was credited with its translation to modern English. In the latter work Middle Earth refers to the transitory world, symbolising that Tolkien's Middle Earth is likewise, an imaginary landscape that has been left in antiquity:

> when I contemplate all the life of men,
>
> how they suddenly left the hall floor,
>
> brave young retainers. So this middle-earth
>
> fails and falls each day;

In continuation with the great influence of Norse mythology, *The Lord of the Rings* as its own name denotes, the central plot element of the story and the core tale is the One Ring or the ruling ring, the artefact forged by the source of evil the Dark Lord Sauron in the fires of Mount Doom in the Second Age as an attempt to intensify his power, control the other rings of power and rule over the people of Middle-Earth, with its abilities to lure its bearer. During the instance that it was forged, Sauron put a large part of his spirit in making it; in this sense, the destiny of the Ring and that of Sauron were intertwined. The strength and power of Sauron would also be lost if the ring were destroyed or demolished. This belief is the kernel the story revolves around, gathering a loyal and powerful fellowship to embark on a quest for the greater good of annihilating the ring and consequently the evil powers of the Dark Lord; the ring was characterised by an engraved quote in the Elven Language (2005, p.74):

> One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,
> One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them

In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.

The ring has been an important item in mythological records that highlighted the power of objects; it was featured in countless tales, considered as a symbol of power and wisdom. *The Exeter* book describes a priceless ring that communicates to those who can grasp its magic discourse without using words. Many tales include talking rings, although most often, the entity speaking to the wearer is a spirit, demon, or something similar that is imprisoned inside the ring. Ring-based memory systems have been employed by alchemists and other scholars as a way to acquire knowledge and power. The Christian Churches, who throughout the Middle Ages attacked heathen traditions, including the mystic use of rings, believed that the information kept by the rings was pagan arcane learning and, thus, evil (Arvidsson, 2002, p.46). Similarly, in LOTR, the One Ring interacts with those who approach it closely and shows interest in its mission, as a means to find a way to return to its creator Sauron. Since Gollum (Smeagol) has worn it for ages, it is plausible that he is speaking both to the ring and to himself when he converses with himself. Gandalf and others claim that it communicates with them and gives them images of what they may accomplish if they decided to wield to its force and use it. In a stricter sense, the One Ring produces a sort of power that would appeal to the targeted person. For instance, Samwise, Frodo's gardener, sees visions of immense and mesmerising gardens in Mordor, whereas Boromir envisions himself as Gondor's savior.

In addition, the direction of the ring story in the novel finds it roots in Norse or Scandinavian mythology, as The One Ring echoes the mystical ring from Nordic legends, which centers on Odin's magic ring, labeled as Draupnir, a symbol of prosperity, which has the ability to create eight rings every nine days. In the Norse lore, Odin is the Supreme Being and the Lord of Wisdom. He is the original Lord of Rings and the Master of the Nine Worlds by virtue of the magical power of his ring. In a sense, the genesis of the ring quest has started in Norse mythology with the narrative of Odin seeking for Draupnir, the ring forged by the dwarfs Eitri and Brokkr. Odin has long sought power to obtain knowledge and wisdom; however he has not always held this magnificent gift. In order to acquire it, Odin had to roam the Nine Worlds,

inquiring to giants, elves, dwarfs, plants, trees, and stones, he even sacrificed his eye. As a reward for his sacrificial deeds, he was gifted with the magical ring. Draupnir's ability to self-multiply is very much reminiscent of Sauron's One Ring which has the power to rule all the others and to perceive all things that were done by means of the inferior rings.

Sir Orfeo is an anonymous medieval narrative poem traced back from the late thirteenth to the early fourteenth century. The principal characters and story structure are similar to those of the Greek tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, which was popular during the Middle Ages thanks to renditions by Ovid and Virgil. The poem entails the story of an English ruler named Sir Orfeo who plays the harp. His wife Herodis dozes off beneath a grafted tree in their orchard one May day. The king of the fairies has visited her and asked that she live with him forever. She will be physically attacked and taken away if she refuses to go. The queen leaves the group as Orfeo collects his warriors. The distressed Orfeo grabs his harp and starts to roam in the desert after telling his followers that they must select a new monarch. He spends ten years on the heath, a dramatic contrast to his previous existence. He frequently observes the fairy king and his court dancing and hunting. He once meets Herodis, but the fairies whisk her away before they can exchange words. Orfeo pursues them through a cave and into a picturesque area with a jewel-encrusted castle. He obtains entry to the castle under the guise of a minstrel and discovers his wife among the victims of the fairies. He enters the room and entertains the fairy king with his harp playing. The fairy king is so moved by his performance that he grants him the option of receiving a prize. Even when the king opposes, Orfeo insists that he fulfill his vow and give Herodis back.

Correspondingly, in his writings J.R.R. Tolkien broke free from the post-medieval literary tradition that was adopted by numerous writers who portrayed fairies and elves in a caricaturistic manner as little, amusing, and childlike beings. Tolkien's elves are the first races that existed in Middle Earth. Descending from a great hierarchy they engage a particular seriousness and grandeur and are endowed with immortality and persisting wisdom and impose respect with their leadership skills and battle powers. This is bluntly shown when describing Elrond, the rulers of elves

"Venerable he seemed as a king crowned with many winters, and yet hale as a tried warrior in the fullness of his strength. He was the Lord of Rivendell and mighty among both Elves and Men" (Tolkien, p.175). In the same manner, the fairy realm presented in *Sir Orfeo* is immensely distanced from the cheerfulness and lightness of characters. In the poem, the main characters Orfeo and Herodis have fallen as prey in the hands of cruel and ruthless creatures. Their sufferings are unjustified, Herodis' kidnapping is uncceptable, and the Fairy King's deeds are malicious. Although fairies in the realm of Middle Earth are not portrayed in such a negative perspective, in both works, these typically over exaggerating depiction of child-like beings are strictly avoided.

Among the quintessential elements in fantasy fiction are forests and wild woods, a gate that travels the narrative from the natural to the supernatural sphere; The inclusion of woodlands emphasises the allure of the enchanted and the fanciful in a particular story and establishes it as a required location for the hero to travel through on his quest. The characters' journeys into and out of the woods frequently serve as key turning moments in their identities, which maybe more fascinating than the adventures that take place there. In this context, Frodo exhibits initial signs of identity transformation in the woods; after leaving his home he visits the edge of the old forest as a scared hobbit doubtful of his abilities to accomplish the mission thrown upon his shoulders "A heavy weight was settling steadily on Frodo's heart, and he regretted now with every step forward that he had ever thought of challenging the menace of the trees. He was, indeed, just about to stop and propose going back" (Tolkien, 2005, p.112). However, it is in this place that Frodo fully assumes the persona of determined hero that will accompany him on his trek to Mount Doom and realises the magnitude of the mission Gandalf has put before him and that, if he decides to move forward, there is no going back. This storyline offers another allusion to the anonymous medieval poem *Sir Orfeo*. After the abduction of his wife the grieving Orfeo abandons his kingdom and travels into the forested woods with nothing but a beggar's cloak and his harp. He effectively sheds his kingly character, keeping just his musical identity. With four eye-catching contrasts between Orfeo's former kingly identity and his new

beggarly identity, the author highlights this change in Orfeo's identity within these lines (Weston, 1914, lines 244-260)

> He that was wrapt in fur withal
>
> And slumbered soft 'neath purple and pall,
>
> On the heather he now must rest his head,
>
> With leaves and grass for a covering spread.
>
> He that had castles, halls with towers,
>
> Rivers, forests, fields with flowers,
>
> Must make his bed 'neath the open sky
>
> Though it snow and freeze right piercingly.
>
> Once knights and ladies, a goodly train,
>
> To do him service were ever fain;
>
> Now none are in waiting to please the king,
>
> But the worms of the woodland coil and spring.
>
> He that erstwhile might take his fill
>
> Of food, or drink, as should be his will,
>
> Now must he dig and delve all day
>
> For the roots that may scarce his hunger stay.

In the same line of thought, in the second part of the novel *The Two Towers*, as Aragorn, Gandalf the white and Legolas marched their way into Edorasin an attempt to encourage Théoden to mobilise his forces against Saruman; on their way, Aragorn starts talking about the Rohirrim and while gazing at the graves of the departed Rohan rulers he engages in chanting some of their poems, particularly a piece called the Lament for the Rohirrim penned by a forgotten poet about Eorl the young- the founder of Rohim – and his adventure from the north to rescuing Gondor way before the breaking of the War of the ring. Aragorn starts reciting the song in Rohenese then translates it to common speech for his companions (2005, p.508)

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

Legolas describes the poem as "laden with the sadness of Mortal Men" (p.508). Rohan is established by Tolkien as a place of fading splendor with a lingering feeling of something lost.

These set of lines composing the poem bear serious analogy to the Anglo-Saxon elegy titled *The Wanderer* mentioned in the previous lines, which is a work preserved in *The Exeter Book*, a late tenth century manuscript in a single copy. It is a powerful poem that explores themes of universal loss while also describing a person's banishment from society and their lonesome wanderings. The poem's verse beginning at line 93 appears to be the main source of inspiration for Tolkien's "lament" queries shaped as emotional longing (Glenn & Glenn, 209, lines 93-100)

> Where is the horse? Where the young warrior? Where now the gift-giver?
>
> Where are the feast-seats? Where all the hall joys?
>
> Alas for the bright cup! Alas byrnied warrior!
>
> Alas the lord's glory! How this time hastens,
>
> grows dark under night-helm, as it were not
>
> Stands now behind the dear warband
>
> a wondrous high wall, varied with snake-shapes,
>
> warriors fortaken by might of the ash-spears,

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Tolkien therefore with this rendition intertextualised the core idea of the elegy , yet used an important tradition of medieval poetry as both laments start with the *ubi sunt* passage literally signifying the English word "where are?" in Latin; it is also the name of a classic Old English poetry stanza format. In such poems, a narrator addresses a series of rhetorical queries in the *ubi sunt* poetry style, which often take the form of "Where are the ... of yesterday?" or "Where has the ... gone?" (Baker, 2022). It is a quintessential motif for medieval poems that significantly invoke a sense of nostalgia while reflecting on issues such as mortality and the fleeting nature of existence. Tolkien himself described *The Wanderer* as an "elegy of antiquity" about the long gone Anglo-Saxon days which bears resemblances to the summary of the events taking place in the *Lord of the Rings* and in particular while narrating the ancient glories of Rohim.

In the same context of recreating medieval laments, throughout the chapters of the novels, a recurring theme takes place, a gloomy longing for the sea. Legolas, the elf, battles with his longing for the sea; this is exhibited on numerous occasions; "The Sea! Alas! I have not yet beheld it. But deep in the hearts of all my kindred lies the sea-longing, which it is perilous to stir...No peace shall I have again under beech or under elm." (p.873). Though leaving Middle-Earth causes Legolas a heartache, his ambition to find the country beyond the bounds of the waters burns strong inside him;

> To the sea, to the sea! The white gulls are crying,
>
> The wind is blowing, and the white foam is flying.
>
> West, west away, the round sun is falling,
>
> Grey ship, grey ship, do you hear them calling,
>
> The voices of my people that have gone before me?
>
> I will leave, I will leave the woods that bore me;
>
> For our days are ending and our years failing.
>
> I will pass the wide waters lonely sailing. (p. 956)

Galadriel also recites: "And in a fading crown have twined the golden elanor/ But if of ships I now should sing, what ship would come to me/ What ship would bear me ever

back across so wide a Sea?" (p.373). The exquisite descriptions of the sea employed by Tolkien within these excerpts engage an allusion to yet another old English poem titled *the Seafarer,* also as previously mentioned is surviving in *The Exeter Book.* In the respective works, Legolas and the seafarer are both misplaced and want to travel the sea to a destination that is superior to their current one and where their banishment will come to an end. They will experience the loss of having to leave something behind due to their individual travels.

Ida Gordon who has worked on Tolkien's works comments on this intertextual resonance between the poem of *The Seafarer* and the general theme of *The Lord of the Rings*:

> Seafarer is much preoccupied with remembering his physical discomforts and loneliness on past sea journeys (1–33a), and he laments the general decay of mortal life. The Elves, too, are burdened with memories of two long ages of strife and sorrow in Middle-earth in contrast with their long treasured memories of the beauty in Valinor, the earthly paradise, from which they are exiled (p. 139).

In continuation with the elegiac discourse, Legolas while wandering in the lands with Gimli and Aragorn grieves over the state of destruction in Middle earth and reminisces over an obliterated civilisation in his "Lament of Stones". Legolas who belongs to the elven race, known in the legendarium as being immortal creatures, are thus portrayed as far older than men or any other race. Legolas' old age and his presence in bygone ages make him a witness of the fading of these civilizations:

> But the Elves of this land were of a race strange to us of the silvan folk, and the trees and the grass do not now remember them. Only I hear the stones lament them: deep they delved us, fair they wrought us, high they builded us; but they are gone. They are gone. They sought the Havens long ago (2005, p.283).

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The metaphoric representation of the stones demonstrates how ruins are often used as a springboard for mourning the long-gone past. The lament of Legolas bears striking likeness to the themes and the tone presented in the old Anglo-Saxon elegy titled *The Ruins* (which as most medieval poems discussed in this section, the identity of its author remains unknown). The poem is about description and reflection by a spectator who is admiring a collection of opulent structures. Thus similarities put themselves in the forefront, as like Legolas in LOTR, the speaker ponders at the ruined buildings and attempts at reliving the splendors of a lost time; the lines of the medieval elegy goes as follows (Hostetter, 2017, lines 1-12):

> These wall-stones are wondrous —
> calamities crumpled them, these city-sites crashed, the work of giants
> corrupted. The roofs have rushed to earth, towers in ruins.
> Ice at the joints has unroofed the barred-gates, sheared
> the scarred storm-walls have disappeared—
> the years have gnawed them from beneath. A grave-grip holds
> the master-crafters, decrepit and departed, in the ground's harsh
> grasp, until one hundred generations of human-nations have
> trod past. Subsequently this wall, lichen-grey and rust-stained,
> often experiencing one kingdom after another,
> standing still under storms, high and wide—
> it failed

In the attempt to pinpoint additional intertextual references, the prefatory scene in the first chapter of the second part of the novels *the Two Towers* titled as "the Departure of Boromir", presents the farewell of the character Boromir, the fallen warrior of Gondor and member of the fellowship who died while saving the Hobbits from the hands of Ors. In his funeral, Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli bid him farewell in a ship burial. Boromir's boat floated down the River of Andurin:

> Sorrowfully they cast loose the funeral boat: there Boromir lay, restful, peaceful, gliding upon the bosom of the flowing water.

> The stream took him while they held their own boat back with their paddles. He floated by them, and slowly his boat departed, waning to a dark spot against the golden light; and then suddenly it vanished (Tolkien, 2005, p.417).

The literary excerpt radiates association to a previously discussed medieval work. The aforementioned burial exudes the same air of respect and melancholy to the seminal text *Beowulf*. In Beowulf's prologue, an importantly evocative event takes place; a ship burial is orchestrated for ScyldS cefing after narrating his glorious reign. The boat's launch into uncharted waters and the body's placement in the vessel while wearing his arms and a golden belt (O'Donoghue & Crossley-Holland, 1999, p.3)

> Then Scyld departed at the destined hour,
>
> the powerful man sought the Lord's protection.
>
> his own close companions carried him,
>
> down the sea, as he, lord of the Danes,
>
> had asked while he could still speak,
>
> the well-loved man had ruled his land for many years.
>
> There in harbour stood the ring-prowed ship,
>
> the prince's vessel, icy, eager to sail;
>
> and then they laid their dear lord,
>
> the giver of rings, deep within the ships. (lines 25-36)

Medieval literature if not all, relied heavily on elegic poems and heroic epics. Tolkien's fascination with medieval poems has opened the door for his important novelistic creations to be a collection of pastiches of medieval ideas and verses. In this sense, the elegic style and elements in the work of *The Lord of the Rings* draw an inevitable structural and intertextual connection to old English poetry. Tolkien was not alone in this arena as his literary devotees have followed his footsteps.

2.6.2. Intertextuality Usage in *A Song of Ice and Fire*

On the other hand, one can claim that the second selected expansive fantasy series written by Martin is also a literary production containing a plethora of references and innuendos to ancient mythologies and medieval historical figures and literary inspirations. Martin himself comes clean regarding the concept of influence and originality in his literary corpus:

> I don't know if I'd ever claim it's enormously original. You look at Shakespeare, who borrowed all of his plots. In A Song of Ice and Fire, I take stuff from the Wars of the Roses and other fantasy things, and all these things work around in my head and somehow they jell into what I hope is uniquely my own (cited in Gilmore, 2014).

Taking into consideration that despite the supernatural elements involved, the story of the narrative chiefly revolves around a monarchy, feudal systems and themes of achieving dominance and staying in power. In this regard, the fantasy saga echoes the medieval political practices that demonstrate the benefits of pragmatism and application of ruthlessness to assure political advantage. For this purpose, and as a reflection of these ideals, the author puts on the forefront an important character: Lord Tywin Lannister, the head of the powerful House Lannister, a cunning politician who served as a hand of the King and realises that the influence could only be attained from a position of strength. While he instructs his grandchild and king of the seven kingdoms he cries:

> Be quiet, Cersei. Joffrey, when your enemies defy you, you must serve them steel and fire. When they go to their knees, however, you must help them back to their feet. Elsewise no man will ever bend the knee to you. And any man who must say 'I am the king' is no true king at all (Martin, 2011, p. 4372).

The aforementioned passage exhibits recognised signs of political tactics. This inevitability of ruthlessness and the approach to mercy can be witnessed in a renowned medieval political text that has influenced ages of literary traditions. *The Prince* the

political treatise penned by the Italian political theorist Nicollo Machiavelli resonates the same ideas about the treatment of enemies:

> In this connection it has to be noted that men ought to be either pampered or destroyed: for men can avenge slight injuries, but not severe ones; hence an injury done to a man ought to be such that there is no fear of reprisal (Machiavelli, 2008, p.307).

In the Middle-Ages, the dream vision was a rich and versatile form that served many purposes. Dreams allowed authors to journey with their writings to mystifying lands where the laws of time and space were distorted. Like the other elements inherited from medieval literature, visions and spiritual journeys through prophetic dreams have been a cornerstone part of fantasy fiction. In this sense, the narratives in *A Song of Ice and Fire* novels heavily rely on prophecies, visions, and dreams that are either about the past, present, or future. In *A Clash of Kings*, the second part of the sequence, one of the striking chapters is Daenerys' journey into the house of the undying. It is an unsettling and prolonged incident. The exiled princess and in an effort to gain the support of the sorcerers who control the city of Qarth makes it her mission to gather an army in order to return from exile and reclaim what was stolen from her and her family, the Iron Throne. For this purpose she accepts warlock Pyat Pree's invitation to visit the land of the dead; "come with me to the House of the Undying, and you shall drink of truth and wisdom" (2011, p. 2406). Upon her entrance to the house of the undying, she is warned by Pree saying that:

> Within, you will see many things that disturb you. Visions of loveliness and visions of horror, wonders and terrors. Sights and sounds of days gone by and days to come and days that never were Dwellers and servitors may speak to you as you go. Answer or ignore them as you choose, but enter no room until you reach the audience chamber (2011, p. 2716).

This extract represents a striking intertextual similarity to a medieval text narrating a spiritual journey into a vision realm of the afterlife. the epic poem, the masterpiece of

Italian literature *The Divine Comedy* or *Divina Commedia*(1308-21) written by the Italian poet Dante Alighieri. It is a narrative poem that tells the story of a protagonist's journey accompanied by the Roman poet Vigil. The poem reflects the journey of Dante himself and every human being through the three realms of Christian hell, purgatory and heaven. The aforementioned quotation presenting the advice given to Daenerys is an intertextual allusion to the inscription over the door to hell in the *Divine Comedy* (Alighieri, 2009, p.19)

> Through me you pass into the city of woe:
>
> Through me you pass internal pain:
>
> Through me among the people lost for ay.
>
> Justice the founder of my fabric moved:
>
> To rear me was the task of power divine,
>
> Supermest wisdom and primeval love.
>
> Before me things create were none, save things
>
> Eternal and eternal I endure.
>
> All hope abandon, ye who enter here.

The allusions to *the Divine Comedy* do not end at this point as it is essential to mention that Dante Alighieri himself like Daenerys has been wrongly exiled from home due to political rifts. He was sent off from Florence and spent his last two decades away from his city. In this sense exile is a pervading state of mind in the narratives of both characters. An apparent longing for the rightful home is noticed in the vast majority of her conversations with Ser Jorah, she repeatedly mentions her yearning to get back "I pray for home too"(2011, p.485) and sorrows that it is not achievable "He [my brother] will never take us home" (p. 486). Though Daenerys fled Westeros at a very young age, and has established another life across the Narrow Sea, she had never considered it as her own "Home? The word made her feel sad Ser Jorah had his Bear Island, but what was home to her? A few tales, names recited as solemnly as the words of a prayer, the fading memory of a red door" (p.1185). She always dreamed of getting

back and claiming what has been taken from her "she smiled, and went to sleep dreaming of Home" (p.806). In her thoughts, there is a constant resentment of people responsible for her exile.

Analogously, *the Divine Comedy* is a literary manifestation of Dante's geographical displacement and sentimental dislocation as he reflects upon the political and spiritual 2exile. For this purpose, there exists an explicit sense of isolation and lostness throughout the journey the protagonist undertakes within the stages of three realms of the afterlife inferno, purgatory and paradise. In a sense, he metaphorically presents this moral quest as being cast out from life to the great beyond. In every place he visits during his 'pilgrimage' he encounters Florentines who remind him of his home; people against whom he bears an overwhelming antagonism and places them through his description in the deepest circles of hell as a way to avenge his exile.

On another note, the fantasy narrative is abundant with a plethora of name references. It is essential to acknowledge that a mention of a name ought to drive the reader to link it to previous texts. This is illustrated with Lancel Lannister, of House Casterly Rock who serves with his brother as squires to King Robert Baratheon "A stalwart boy, Ser Kevan Lannister's son, nephew to Lord Tywin and cousin to the queen" (p.1061). He is considered as a direct reference to the knight of the round table from the Arthurian legends, Sir Lancelot, who had an adulterous relationship with Queen Guinevere; far from coincidence, Lancel Lannister also has an affair with Queen Cersei wife of Baratheon and she ensures he is knighted as Sir Lancel.

Literature has a myriad of facets that are re-modeled and refined to create contemporary tales. Some themes such as mortality, corruption and ambition are universal and timeless as they ceaselessly have been an important part of the human condition. Shakespeare is a revolutionary literary figure who has had inevitably a predominant omnipresence in English literary tradition which can be sensed in modern and contemporary textual productions as his works have been subject to uncountable number of direct and indirect re-creations and re-tellings.

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Martin's fantasy series shares many similar traits with the late medieval literature and drama and Elizabethan one in particular. Martin had a strong admiration for Shakespeare. This has unavoidably led to thematic alikeness and intertextual allusion as it draws the essence of plots and characters from Shakespeare's texts and reformulates them to fit the present era in a shape of unconscious discourse. Due to the fact that they rely on the same set of recognisable themes, motifs and structural elements, both writers have targeted the same historical period as the source for their storylines. However, their respective historical eras had an impact on the shared themes, devices, characters, and narratives they both used.

A large cast of characters, including warrior queens, child monarchs, royal bastards, cunning uncles, fighting families, changing allegiances, usurpation, beheading, incest, toxic masculinity, toxic monarchy adding a fantastical touch with dragons, supernatural evil forces.

The constant struggle for the throne and power, and the conflicts over the monarchical position is as salient in *A Song of Ice and Fire* as it is in Shakespeare's plays most notably *Macbeth*(1623).For example the issue of the crown is fundamental in the narrative as most clashes are around it. Martin's characters saying "Heavy is the head that wears the crown" one can presume this is an explicit quotation of William Shakespeare's Henry IV saying "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown" which denotes the significance of the responsibility thrust upon those who are given authority and since has been a renowned phrase in literature (cited in Wilson, 2021, p.3)

It is clear that the core storyline of Martin's novels has been inspired from the events transpiring during the War of Roses; similarly, Shakespeare's so called tetralogy and eight important history plays concerning this period—Richard II, Henry IV, Part 1; Henry IV, Part 2; Henry V; as well as Henry VI, Part 1; Henry VI, Part 2; Henry VI, Part 3; and Richard III—a collection of plays depicting the turbulent era in English history and dramatising the conflict of the York and Lancasters.

References do not cease at this point; the portrayal of different characters in Martin's fiction throws innuendos to multiple accustomed characters in Shakespeare's

tragedies, characters that shape the story as much as the heroes do. Cersei Lannister can be considered as a reshaping of Lady Macbeth in their mutual desire and thirst for power which has no bound, which includes manipulating the kings. Lady Macbeth pushes her husband into committing a regicide while Cersei crosses all the lines and orchestrates to put her sons in power defying anything or anyone standing in her way.

On a different note, Iago is one of the notorious characters in late medieval drama and in Shakespeare's plays, the main villain in *Othello* (1604).A resentful and conniving figure who is keenly observant of the people around him and can elicit from them any emotion he chooses. In this sense, as a way to take the vendetta of his dismissal for the position of lieutenant and appointing Cassio instead of him; he steadily and discreetly turns Othello against his loving wife Desdemona. In this way, bringing up his uncertainties as a result of their differences and insinuating her infidelity, as such creating the fundamental conflict of the tragedy which leads to Othello's death (Shakespeare & Sanders, 2003).

On the other hand, Lord Petyr Baelish, or known as Littlefinger, much like Iago is a schemer, aware that knowledge is the key to power; for this reason he runs a spy network in King's Landing, in order to collect information about people and keep the upper hand. He is the character that pushes the first piece of domino that creates chaos in the realm with his manipulations. Similar to Iago Lord Baelish radiates an air of honesty and trust for people around him which renders his manipulations more effective. A character bearing striking allusion to Iago's plotline as in order to seize that authority for himself, he sows the seeds of mistrust and doubt in the hearts of all the key characters. He succeeds in orchestrating the major conflict of the saga and igniting the war of the five kings in the seven kingdoms. In a similar fashion, both characters' drives are fuelled with greed and desire for vengeance and gaining authority.

It is worth mentioning that *A Song of Ice and Fire* does not only intertextualise medieval works but also precedents fantasy works that incorporate the medieval aspects such as *The Accursed Kings* (1955-1977), a series of historical novels written

by Maurice Druon; this French works have been one of the primary sources of influences for Martin. Nevertheless, it is *The Lord of the Ring*s which served as a template for intertextual references, primarily in the world building, as Martin continued with the Tolkien's tradition of creating immersive fictional worlds with intricate lores and landscapes, there are several allusion in a ASOIAF to geographical locations in Middle-Earth like the Wall of the North give subtle hints to the Black Gate of Mordor as they both serve as physical barriers against dark and villainous forces. In addition the inhabitant of Winterfell referred to as men of the North use some similarities to the men of Rohan who live in the northern parts of Middle-Earth as they both reflect traits of ruggedness, honour and loyalty. In addition a myriad of other influences will be tackled in the following chapter.

Intertextuality in its core is a sort of dialogue across time as it fosters conversations between classical and medieval literature and the most contemporary ones. On the same framework, another postmodern literary theory runs in the same orbit as intertextuality, a theory that creates dialogues between fiction and history.

2.7.   Historiographic Theory

The infatuation about writing history stretches back to the nineteenth century with authors such as Leo Tolstoy, Charles Dickens, James Fenimore Cooper. However, with the coming of Postmodernism, many more novelists aspired to use historical figures and events and to portray them in a way that would help readers understand the way certain events transpired in a certain era, as well as the worldview and way of life that pervaded it, in a genuine way. According to Hutcheon historiographic metafiction is a highly self-reflexive literary device and at the same time it lays claim to historical occurrences and figures (Abootalebi, 2016).

Tradition holds that the connection between history and literature is a long-standing one between two closely related but fundamentally different discourses. However, due to the uncertainty of history itself, it might be somewhat considered fictional. Henceforth in historiographic novels, the reader is made conscious of the

"fictionality" of the historical events and characters in a narrative and paradoxically aware of "its basis in real events". Fantasy literature and epic genre in particular exhibits occurrences of historiographic metafiction due to their heavy borrowing from the medieval days. This is a theme that runs throughout the series of *A Song of Ice and Fire*. While it is true that the narrative is not literally situated in any real period or location, it does draw inspiration from historical events and personages with new perspectives while still drawing attention to its fictionality. Martin in this context explains "What I'd like to do is write an epic fantasy that had the imagination and the sense of wonder that you get in the best fantasy but the gritty realism of the best historical fiction" (Martin 2018b, online).

The world of *A Song of Ice and Fire* bears striking verisimilitudes with historical sources and events. A historiographic novel is set in a particular setting in a given historical period. In this sense, Westeros is undoubtedly a re-conceptualisation of medieval England with adapted historical incidents and larger sequences shaped into the fictional plot with occasional portrayal of characters' storylines from real historical figures.

As an initial instance, one can witness that the geographical setting of this fantasy world is analogical to the heptarchy (Seven Kingdoms) of England as in the companion book to the novel *The World of Ice and Fire* mentions the origin of the name and explaining further that the kingdoms were separated but gathered together after the conquest:

> For centuries it has been the custom to speak of the Seven Kingdoms of Westeros. This familiar usage derives from the seven great kingdoms that held sway over most of Westeros below the Wall during years immediately preceding Aegon's Conquest. Yet even then, the term was far from exact, for one of those "kingdoms" was ruled by a princess rather than a king (Dorne), and Aegon Targaryen's own "kingdom" of Dragonstone was never included in the count" (Martin et al., 2014, p. 311).

This description bears likeness to the founding seven Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Kent, Sussex, Essex, Wessex, East Anglia, Mercia and Northumbria that were later referred to as the 'Heptarchy'. It is essential to note that these fictional kingdoms echo the different geographical and cultural attributes of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

In this context, his historic inspiration works in a way to mirror the feudal system and the power struggle that took place in England and has spanned over generations during the epoch of the War of Roses; recorded as a series of civil battles fought over the seize of power and rule the monarchy of England. The war earned such a name due to the emblem of the two main royal houses fighting over the crown. The white rose represented the emblem of the House of Lancaster and the red rose was the symbol adopted by the House York, such innuendos are reflected in the works of Martin. The War of the Roses which shaped the history of England is echoed in Westeros as each House tries to reach the throne in the main kingdom, referred to as the Iron Throne. The two primary rival parties are The Lannisters, one of Westeros' wealthiest and strongest houses; they bore the sigil of a golden lion upon a crimson field. The Lannister words are *Hear Me Roar!*(Martin, 2011, p. 1239) representing the Lancasters. On the other hand, House Starks of Winterfell, the rulers of the vast kingdom of the North, adopt a sigil of a grey direwolf in a white field (p.576), and their words are "Winter is Coming" which in turn mirror the York family. These two primary duelling Houses along with other parties also became involved in the conflict that ignited a war in the Seven Kingdoms known as the War of the Five Kings who battled each other for the legitimate inheritance of the monarchy, in this instance the Iron Throne.

The parallels do not stop in drawing inspiration from historical events but also shaping fictional characters according to historical figures. A message about each of the characters is conveyed by the choosing of their historical equivalents. In contrast to his selection of historical events, which offered readers a look into how Martin perceived the Middle Ages, his choice of prominent historical figure more clearly reflects his concerns about the period.

In this regard, the similarities between the fictional queen of Westeros Cersei Lannister and the historical queen Margaret of Anjou are perhaps the most striking in the British medieval history. Both queens of the red symbol thus referred to as red queens have been betrothed to kings for political reasons; Margaret was united to the king of England as a way to secure a truce with France, the same way Cersei was married to Robert for the purpose of creating a political alliance between two powerful houses.

Nevertheless, post her marriage to Henry VI, instead of acting in England's best interests, Margaret acted in her own self-serving and personal interests. When it appeared that peace might be reached several times, Margaret re-ignited the conflict or gathered her forces to attack the Yorks. In the same manner, Cersei Lannister after the death of her husband and in order to secure her son as the next king, condemned the Lord of House Stark "Eddard" with the highest form of treason and orchestrated his execution in front of everyone in the capital of Kings Landing. This incident was the primary event that triggered the War of the Five Kings.

Although it was common in Medieval Europe as various instances of alleged infidelities have been labeled on Women of courts, but both Queens have been targets to speculations regarding their loyalty towards their spouses and the legitimacy of their children. Margaret's legitimacy was put to questioning as she birthed her son Edward while the king has been suffering from mental illness. Margaret was frequently subject to accusations by the Duke of York of having conceived Edward of Lancaster with the aid of her ally, the Duke of Somerset, and that her son was born out of wedlock; although her reputed adultery has never been historically confirmed. However, on the other hand, Cersei Lannister practiced an incestuous relationship with her brother which resulted in having three illegitimate children who were supposed to be the heirs to the thrones.

One of the most memorable incidents that took place within the pages of the realm of Westeros is the red wedding. A massacre that occurs near the end of the war of the five kings "The Red Wedding was an affront to all the laws of gods and men,

they say, and those who had a hand in it are damned" (2011, p. 5869). The events of the tragedy transpired during Edmure Tully and Roslin Frey, one of Walder Frey's daughters' wedding at the western castle of the Twins, which is also where the Freys live. The king in the North Robb Stark and his mother Catelyn are extended an invitation, offered salt and bread by Walder Frey in accordance with the guest right, a long-standing, revered rule of hospitality in Westeros. Any guest served with salt and bread should not be harmed. After the feast and as goes the tradition, the newlyweds retrieve to their chambers. The host commands to play "The Rains of Castamere" a song that celebrates the brutal victory of the Lannisters against the House Reyne, the song was a signal that indicated the start of the slaughter orchestrated by the head of House Frey under the protection of Tywin Lannister as a vendetta against Robb Stark for revoking a marriage pact between them. This massacre was planned to lure the king to the North under the false pretext to forgive him for his broken vow. However, in this ceremony, Robb Stark was decapitated, his mother, wife and unborn child killed and hundreds of northern soldiers slaughtered as well, then attaching the slit-off head of Robb's direwolf to his body (2011, p.4551-4571).

The historical analogue of this fictional incident is admittedly referred to as the Black Dinner. Martin himself confessed fictionalising the Dark Ages history as his inspiration for the Red Wedding was an actual event in Scottish history referred to as the Black Dinner (Hibbert, 2013).The medieval historical series of events have started as Earl William Douglas and his brother were invited to dine with king James at Edinburgh Castle on November, 24th, 1440. The planned slaughter was conducted by Lord Chancellor, Sir William Crichton as a way to get rid of the Douglases who they judged as were becoming too influential and threatening the stability of the nation due to their strong bond with the six years old king of Scotts. During the infamous feast, the servants started pounding a special beat with drums, and black bull's head, a symbol of death, was served down on the table. The Douglas brothers were then led up onto Castle Hill for a sham trial and beheaded along with their friend, Malcolm Fleming of Cumbernauld (Lyons, 2021). The grisly theater of the Black Dinner was a

well-planned and purposeful act by those who wanted to rule the realm and served as an ideal historical inspiration for the dark toned fantasy fiction.

The analysis of the historiographic theory in the second case study is rather outwardly and less thorough than the previous one, for *The Lord of the Rings* may as well be an ideal place to initiate an investigation of the intersection of history and fantasy since Tolkien's epic fantasy not only established modern high fantasy as a genre, but it also has a firmly and thoroughly metafictional and historical grounding. Though, in fact, it rarely reflects real event from history as it is conducted in ASOIAF, the author designs a profoundly historical realm, a realm with its own historical awareness and historicity.

Primarily, the fantasy work plays on metafictional grounds as it is self-conscious and time and again draws on its nature as a literary form as in many instances characters are mindful that they take a part within a story. For example, in the eighth chapter of *The Two Towers,* Sam and Frodo engage in a prolonged conversation about the structure of tales and their place in it"' Don't the great tales never end?''No, they never end as tales,' said Frodo. 'But the people in them come, and go when their part's ended. Our part will end later – or sooner'" (Tolkien, 2005, p.712) giving an inkling that he is aware of their standpoint within the narrative.

In an attempt at drawing on a primary reality for a superficial reality in his secondary world, Tolkien displays references to former eras throughout the book that imply the presence of a history and provide significance to the characters and events in the story. These connections provide a feeling of continuity and association between the past, present, and potential futures, as well as a sense of existence and an indicator of various types of historical awareness. This awareness in exhibited in Middle Earth in various shapes like geographical landscapes, historical remnant, records, languages, legends and tales.

Geographical landscapes are an active and dynamic organism through which meaning is appointed to a particular text. The meticulous description of the land in Tolkien's narratives creates a sensation of the existence of a vivid world. The way the

history of Middle Earth is conveyed through impalpable forms such as transmitted tales legends and written chronicles, it can exist in physical form. For instance, ancient monuments, ruins and relics serve as motifs that capture historical representation through literature.

Ruins signify deterioration and decay as well as the demise of something that was at a certain point in time complete. Likewise in LOTR, ruins serve as a significant tool to reflect the history as, the members of the fellowship undertake their journey, and they encounter countless traces of bygone days. In a certain region they come across the splendid ruins of Noldorin, the previously great realm situated west of Moria which was obliterated during the second age, which served as a visual reminiscence of the town and its inhabitants as Gandalf notes "there is a wholesome air about Hollin. Much evil must befall a country before it wholly forgets the Elves, if once they dwelt there" (2005, p. 283). Throughout their voyage they come across "glimpses of ancient walls of stones, and ruins of towers" (p. 201) that address their ancestry and express knowledge and memories about their past, thus their history.

Similar to landscapes and remains, as it has been established earlier, the imaginative work includes multiple songs and poems. However, musical incorporation are not mere narrative devices. These songs take the shape of rhyming tales that offer insights about the past glories of Middle Earth that play a relevant role in present events and henceforth strengthen the historical nature of the narrative. As a vivid instance while approaching Weathertop; Merry wonders about legendary king Gil Galad and Sam proceeds by reciting the translated and incomplete version of the poem. The first stanza of the ballad called "The fall of Gil-galad" goes as follows (2005, p. 185):

Gil-galad was an elven-king.
Of him the harpers sadly sing;
the last whose realm was fair and free

> between the Mountains and the Sea.
>
> …
>
> But long ago he rode away,
>
> and where he dwelleth none can say;
>
> for into darkness fell his star
>
> in Mordor where the shadows are.

While the poem traces the triumph of Gil-galad against Sauron in the War of the Last Alliance and his subsequent fall, it also offers a historical sprinkling filled with lore that ignites the sense of antiquity and ancestry in Middle Earth. In addition, the poem's inadequacy and the fact that it is narrated by the hobbit Samwise emphasises both the lapse of time and the idea that the current period has fallen after Gil-galad's glorious days three thousand years ago. Furthermore, the poem is recited as a translation from ancient tongue which implies a diversity of Middle Earth in terms of communities, locations, and languages and the manner in which these oral accounts are subject to reformulations throughout time gives a sense of simulated history.

2.8.   Conclusion

The objective of this chapter is to initiate the analysis of the discourse in fantasy literature through the postmodern textual literary theories namely dialogism, intertextuality and historiographic metafiction as a means to highlight the medieval influence on the genre. In order to dive deep into studying the representation of the medieval discourse in the respective works, it was essential to grasp the background of Tolkien as a mythologist and the mechanism in which his background as a medieval critic had an impact on his textual creations. It was also essential to provide the summary and explore the historical aspects of the fantasy worlds within the novels in an effort to delimit the context of the designated excerpts.

In this chapter, it has been discussed that both authors masterfully use the plurality of voices that renders the works dialogic. In addition, intertextual medievalism has been studied with regard to the influences from previous works.

Throughout the section usage of intertextuality by both Tolkien and Martin prove the important influence medieval texts had on both authors and the vast majority of fantasy writers.

Throughout the chapter, with the selected passages one can note that Tolkien drew on the Old English poetry such as *Beowulf* and other works for multiple aspects of his Middle-Earth legendarium. He used intertexts such as names, utterances, and the structure of society in a heroic age. He also emulated the medieval literary style, creating an impression of depth and adopting an elegiac tone intertextual to the renowned medieval epics. Over and above; the historiographic analysis highlights that *the Lord of the Rings* is constructed upon the medieval understanding of history and culture.

On the same note, Martin has carried the spirit of medieval literature through his writings. First, he succeeded in encapsulating the essence of medieval texts that dealt with the Middle Ages issues and blended them with his works in an intertextual fashion and second by remoulding authentic historical events that transpired in medieval times and using them as sources for his fictional world building in a sort of historiography.

The discourse analysis dealt with in this section paved the way for the following chapter concerned with the study of archetypal themes and narrative structures in the novels that switches into the investigation of archetypal characterisation of Heroes and female representation.

Chapter Three: Archetypes, the Monomyth and Women Representation

Chapter Three: Archetypes, the Monomyth and Women Representation

"In all chaos there is a cosmos, in disorder a secret order"

Cal Jung in *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*

3.1. Introduction

Literature is not the product of a single consciousness, as it has been established that there is a heritage passed among literary texts throughout generations. In this light, there is less and less novelty in contemporary literature because every element owes something from others that preceded it. Due to the fact that literary creations are intertwined, archetypes, allusions and references whether intentional or arbitrary run rampant when a specific genre is put under scrutiny. It is evident that there is a common theme that runs through all of the literature. Archetypes are in some sense, intertextual instruments that attempts to put the text within the context of its genre, a sort of generic features that significantly impact the readers' expectations and anticipations from a particular text.

The medieval lore serves as the mother source from which modern and contemporary fantasy manifestations have sprung. In this very fact, this chapter aims at drawing parallels and highlighting the resonances between the selected novels and the previous literary references by investigating the archetypical patterns that are inevitable in fantasy literature. This is conducted through a study of the archetypical elements existing, including characters and their paradigmatic shaping in terms of identity and development in contemporary fantasy, the paradigmatic magical elements and symbols in which both Tolkien and Martin have executed in their fantasy fictions.

Intertextuality is a process of interweaving texts; it signifies the incorporation of previous elements and patterns from one work into another. Nevertheless, prior to Kristeva coining the term intertextuality, previous structural critics have been keen to study the merging tissues between various texts, among them Campbell who identifies a cross-cultural, origin-bound network of relationships in his work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. The Monomyth is one particular sort of intertextuality in which the relationships between many stories from various civilisations are sought for, only to

reveal that each of these narratives has a single hero who assumes various guises in each society. Thus, the hero's journey is a universal pattern that draws on the well of ageless knowledge dating from the period of the medieval era and traces the spiritual voyage of the hero. The key focus lies in drawing parallels similarities, deviations and alterations between the different Monomyths.

This chapter also traces the archetypal portrayal of women of medieval literature into fantasy and the attempt to run free from the boundaries of stereotypical oppression. In this sense, one witnesses an accustomed depiction of female characters that are prisoners of patriarchal society or women who chase their freedom at the expense of their femininity. Nevertheless, before delving deep into this analysis, it is essential to explore the quest narratives that stand out as the first example of intertextual archetypes.

3.2. Quest Narratives

According to Allen, intertextuality is "productions of complex patterns of encoding, re encoding, allusion, echo, transposing of previous systems and codes" (Allen, 2000, p.169). In this sense, the quest narrative is a prominent example of this periodic system. The quest narrative is a genre of well-defined discourse pattern. It is essentially a romance tale enabling individuals with some type of spiritual vision who are impelled to go in search of the divine, and they carry out brave acts along the route (Campbell, 2007). Typically, quest-genre stories begin with a call for departure and describe the traveler's need to look for something outside of themselves. The first defining feature of quest fantasy is the phased trip, which involves the hero and his or her companions in a series of adventures that start with the most straightforward conflicts and perils and progress to increasingly dangerous and terrifying encounters, the narrative conventionally starts out as a single thread but frequently splits into many threads when individuals or small groups venture out on side quests within the larger frame of the plot (Senior, 2012, p. 190). In a typical fashion, quest fantasies begin in a location of safety and stability before an interruption from the outer world happens and

proceeds over a vast, wild landscape that is home to tiny towns, forests, rivers, mountains, valleys, and isolated cities (Senior, 2012, p.190).

The quest narrative has been one of the most reliable and traditional forms of storytelling, it can be tracked down to the story of Odysseus as his journey of return to his wife and children serves as the foundation for the quest tale. Since then, tens of thousands of quest stories have been published from the eighteenth century until recent days, to mention a few *Moby Dick*(1851),*King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table*(1953), detective novels, and several more.

This straightforward notion was appealing in medieval writings as well. For instance, Sir Thomas Malory's English portrayal of Arthur's knights shows them searching for the Holy Grail. In an Old English text from much earlier, the great hero Beowulf sets sail for Denmark to establish his reputation by slaying the monster Grendel, which propels him on to a second quest to eliminate the creature's mother and, fifty years later, to a final quest to slay a dragon. In essence and in spite of their diversity, narratives of the quest demonstrate to the same essential quality of the human spirit; not just a never-ending need for rebirth but also an unwavering conviction in its feasibility.

Most commonly, fantasy stories comprise "Subsidiary quests," which appear around or inside the main quest, provide players the chance to both explore the environment more thoroughly and advance their character. The Holy Grail quest; one of the most renowned journeys in literature also bears this particularity as the physical quest explores the adventures of King Arthur's knights as they explore the countryside in search of the fabled emblem of power – the Holy Grail; but simultaneously it is analogous to the pursuit of morality and spiritual chivalry, showing success through asceticism, confession, chastity, and faith. Accordingly, quest narratives in the selected fantasy novels are quite similar as they initiate with a sole purpose and branch out into different stories; characterized by different quests intersected within one; while most characters display their moral core and embark in a spiritual transformation in the course of the events.

The first and obvious quest in *The Lord of the Ring* and as detailed in the novel's plot is the rescuing of the land which entails the destruction of the One Ring. It is a reversed one and a parody of medieval quests in which the treasure is found at the end of the search. Tolkien's genius crafted a story where the treasure is already at hands the 'mighty ring', a treasure which "evil struggles to gain power; Good to relinquish it" (Cited in Campbell, 2010, p. 161) composing an inverted quest in which it is required to demolish rather than to seek. While the physical quest is a venture to Mount Doom to accomplish the mission, most members of the fellowship are subject to spiritual quests.

The symbolic meaning of the ring is the desire for absolute power and the corruption that comes with it; therefore, a moral quest filled with Christian values, highlighting the binary between good and evil. The Fellowship's moral quest is to face their shadow selves, eliminate the ego in order to liberate the world from the grip of desire and temptation. Martin himself considers the core aspect of Tolkien's revolutionary novels is his sketching of the individuals that struggle with the lure of the Ring, characters that are "fighting these battles in their hearts" (cited in Gonzales, 2021).

The lengthy saga of *A Song of Ice and Fire* is quite different in the sense that it does not construct a single common quest as there is a plethora of characters that follow their own self- centered quests from different parts of the fantasy realm and have different objectives, though the common objective between them is to sit on the throne and seize the power each presuming it is their own right. But similar to the *Lord of the Rings* characters, they do as well get in internal and introspective battles. Through their pursuit of the Iron throne, the story showcases humanity fighting with its iniquitous desires and characters getting in a clash against their inner demons .Thus reflecting the mundane issues of oppression, greed and selfishness.

For example marginalised individuals like Tyron Lannister, Bran Stark, and Jon Snow yearn for some form of public acknowledgment and, most importantly, respect, beyond the frantic pursuit of power at any costs, while female characters like

Daenerys, Sansa and Arya Stark desire to prove themselves as important assets to their respective families.

The other salient quest however refers to the one against the greatest dangers of the supernatural others referred to as the "white walkers", creatures that threaten the stability and safety of the entire realm and its inhabitants equally whether high or low born. The ever-present rivalry and desire for absolute power can only be nullified when there is a greater danger, all parties come together in order to rescue the realm.

All in all, quest narratives are a cornerstone in the literary tradition that represents a universal theme, they have been prevailing throughout history and succeeded to be a paramount aspect of fantasy literature. These narratives often follow a specific structure and incorporate archetypal patterns that provide a framework for a comprehensive understanding of the story.

3.3.   Archetypical Patterns in the Selected Novels

Literature as a mirror that echoes the human experience, feelings and thoughts does not solely generate from the human's conscious mind but from his/her unconscious being as well. The collective unconscious as proposed by psychologist Carl Yung is a repository of dormant memories passed down from ancestors in the past, a past that not only includes the history of the human race as a species but also includes individual ancestors' recollections (Jung, 1981). In this framework of thought, archetypes are the items found in the collective unconscious; although Jung also referred to them as mythical or primordial pictures. Nevertheless, archetypes as a term appear to have gained more traction. In a stricter sense, an archetype is an innate propensity to perceive things in a particular way. The interpretation and comprehension of literature are greatly influenced by the collective consciousness. By linking writings to the collective unconscious, one may link literary works together and better comprehend the authorial intentions. Therefore, intertextuality and archetypes conduct unconscious structure of narratives and are the prominent literary approaches of using collective consciousness.

Archetypal criticism, or in other words, myth criticism is a field of study where archetypes are deemed to constitute the central point of analysis. It contends that archetypes define the structure and purpose of literary works and that a text's meaning is determined by cultural and psychological myths. Archetypes can be divided into various groups of motifs, characteristics, archetypal patterns and genres which are all mentioned by Guerin et al. (2005, pp.182-191). Northrop Frye's "Anatomy of criticism: Four Essays" (2000) made a significant contribution to this field by providing a framework for analysing and understanding the underlying structures and symbols in literature.

In this respect, archetypes serve as a template, a way to create a new representation. In other words archetypes are universal sets of traits that offer particular contexts regardless of culture, setting, or time period, thus rendered persistent within all genres in contemporary literature.

All in all, an archetype is therefore an original figure which belongs to the collective unconscious because it is found in universal stories such as myths, legends or tales but also, by virtue of transtextuality, in numerous "palimpsest works", whether they are iconographic or cinematographic.

3.3.1. Shaping Characters

Due to the shared allusions made by its authors over the years and the universal appeal of its stories, fantasy literature more than any other genre has many features in common with its works. The internal coherence of this literature is also significantly attributed to J.R.R. Tolkien's deep impact, since he is regarded as the "father" of modern high fantasy fiction.

Mythologists have frequently observed the startling similarities of tales produced all throughout the world. In fantasy fiction, which has a limited reservoir of different and complex character and story arcs, numerous scholars of this kind of literature, from folktales to Arthurian literature to the most recent works have recognised the

striking parallels between the fantasy genre's stock character types and the traditional Jungian archetypes.

It is considerable to note that within the quintessential quest, the hero does not undertake the voyage on his own or without company; characters that fit within identifiable categories surround him. In these tales, every hero has a trusted comrade and ally, this shadow figure has an opposite character; the traitor. He also meets a mentor who has a significant impact on him and moulds his character. He oftentimes receives care from a mother figure, occasionally must face an evil magician or a witch and is placed in front of a devil's incarnation known as the dark lord (Frye, 2000).

3.3.1.1. The Mentor (Wise Old Man)

Among the recurrent archetypical characters in the fantasy literary tradition suggested by Carl Jung is the mentor or as Campbell refers to it "the wise old man" for he is often physically depicted as an elderly man who seems out of time with long hair and white beard dressed in robes or cloaks. The mentor is the symbol combining knowledge, wisdom, and strength; one to whom the hero looks for advice and direction when faced with a challenging and perilous undertaking and in moments of uncertainty and fear. Due to the conventional abandoned orphaned hero, the mentor exists as a filler of that space of father figure, he mentors the character to grow, act with wisdom and discernment and use his abilities and powers in the best manner possible. The archetypal image of the wise man, the messiah or redeemer who has been latent in man's subconscious since the onset of culture, it awakens whenever the times are out of balance and human society commits a grave transgression (Jung, 2001, p.175):

> Sometimes the hero requires counselling since his warrioring tendencies have placed him in plenty of desperate, no-win scenarios. This is where the archetypal wise old man intervenes to lend a helping hand. The old one exemplifies the hidden strength that the hero needs to seek out and call upon before confronting the crisis (Iaccino, 1998, p. xvi).

The first figures of this character type appeared in Antiquity, in particular, mythology, as the basis source for contemporary fantasy fiction with the character named Mentor in Homer's *Odyssey*. This wise old man is sent by Odysseus to ensure the education of his son Telemachus during his absence. He will guide the young man in his choices until the return of his father and will ultimately prove to be a representation of Athena, the goddess of wisdom (Anderson & Shannon, 1995, p. 25). In the same line of thought, in Greek mythology, one can likewise cite the character of Chiron: an immortal creature renowned for his wisdom and knowledge; in the *Iliad* he is entrusted with the education of many heroes such as Achilles, Jason, Asclepios or Heracles to whom he teaches the arts of warfare (Mackie, 1997, p.1).

Faithful to the medieval tradition, Gandalf the Grey has become under the pen of J.R.R Tolkien an inspiring and notable mentor figure in line with the mythic standard of the old Wizard with his long hair, white beard and clothed in large robes. In the novel he is described as:

> An old man was driving it all alone. He wore a tall pointed blue hat, a long grey cloak, and a silver scarf. He had a long white beard and bushy eyebrows that stuck out beyond the brim of his hat (Tolkien, p.22).

Gandalf has existed for millennia, he belongs to the Maiar Istari, one of the primordial spirits, or angelic creatures that are sent to Middle Earth to ensure the safety of free people and guide in the fight against evil (Sauron). He is therefore the bearer of a mission of a moral order, like the prophets, and carries the philosophical and moral messages of the author. As a considerable import of stock characters have been derived from past medieval works, Gandalf is an adaptation of an earlier character from the Arthurian legends; the character known as Merlin who gradually emerged from a variety of traditions and cultures during the Middle Ages to become the archetypal wise man, preacher, and visionary. From that time until the present, he has served as a king's advisor and tutor as well as a worker of magical spells and enchantment, shaping dynasties and destinies (Riga, 2008, p.23).

For George Martin, like precedent fantasy writers confronted to the tradition of sketching paradigmatic characters, the characters that fits the mould of the mentor and echoes noticeable similarities with Gandalf is Commander Mormont. The wise old man of the song of ice and fire realm was nicknamed 'the white bear' a direct reference to 'Gandalf the white'. His physical features do not deviate from the previously mentioned. He was an old man "Beneath his chin in a shaggy grey beard that covered much of his chest. He thumped it hard" (Martin, 2011, p.1901) dressed in a black cloak as the commander of the Nights Watch. He is considered a mentor by virtue of his position in Castle Black as Lord Commander; much like Gandalf, he owns the mentor traits as he tends to renounce power for the greater good of the realm. Jeor Mormont stepped down from the seat of Lordship of House Mormont and joined the wall as a way to protect the kingdoms from the coming threat of the wildling beyond the wall; this enabled him as a commander and mentor to raise the coming generations of rangers particularly Jon Snow whom he will guide to the right path of his Quest.

For the purpose of completing the quest, the hero must be endowed with courage and remarkable powers but he does not embark on his path alone since, in reality, he needs assistance to succeed; a circle of devoted friends who would brave any danger to be with him or accomplish a shared objective. However, in particular he is given an assistant, a travel companion or in other words a sidekick.

3.3.1.2. The Sidekick

In the continuation with the notion of archetypical shaping of characters; next to the mentor, another prototypical character that has been adopted since the creation of the story and is heavily included in fantasy literature is the ally. Similarly referred to as the companion or the sidekick, he is a supporting character with a close connection to the hero. The companion might be a close friend, a relative or supportive travel companion. The essence of their existence is to aid the leading character emotionally and assist them in achieving their objectives and overcoming challenges. Although such characters lack the limelight, magical talents or in certain cases the lethal combat

skills endowed to the main character; yet, their presence in the quest is indispensable for guiding the hero with their objectiveness, selflessness and comic relief. Oftentimes, they can serve as a peephole through which views on the hero are displayed.

The dichotomy between heroes and their companions has been an existing motif since mythology; such as the friendship illustrated in *the Epic of Gilgamesh* of Gilgamesh and Enkidu or even in the *Iliad* between Achilles and Patroclus and continued until contemporary fantasy like in the renowned fantasy work *Harry Potter*; the close relationship between Harry and Ron Weasly. In fact, most of ally characters utilised in recent works of fantasy fiction have been in one fashion or another inspired by Tolkien. The exemplification of this character in the world of Tolkien is Samwise Gamgee, commonly called as Sam; the trustworthy and loyal hobbit and companion of Frodo; he is set in the mission with him from the first instance. Tolkien refers to him as "the chief hero" as he takes on the same journey and experiences the same phases of the quest with his friend as he suggests "So that was the job I felt I had to do when I started," thought Sam, "to help Mr. Frodo to the last step and to die with him?" (Tolkien, 2005, p. 934).

Interestingly, and in an attempt to draw parallels, in *A Song of Ice and Fire*, Jon, the designated hero, builds a strong and unique friendship bond with one of the members of the Brotherhood, Samwell Tarly; it is essential to shed light on the intertextual reference used by Martin utilising the same name Sam as a friend of the hero. Sam is physically described as fat and pale; he is timid, with strange and awkward manners but very intelligent and wise, he is very crucial for he grounds Jon in times of crisis. He develops his skills and becomes a reliable character for the protagonist.

3.3.1.3. The Dark Lord

Fantasy writers have proven to be enamored with the quintessential pattern of the conflict between 'good' and 'evil. Consequently, on the opposite side of every fictional hero crafted, there exists a dauntless nemesis.

In accordance with the archetypical characters pattern, fantasy literature is a fertile ground for displaying the persona of the antagonistic archetype of the Dark Lord. The exact nature of the Dark Lord varies depending on the author's world building. Although it is frequently the lord of the underworld, occasionally a strong demon imprisoned from the realm of men, other times just a viciously powerful sorcerer set on dominating and subjugating any who resist him. It is often portrayed as satanic or destructive parody of god. Frye argues that "The enemy is associated with winter, darkness, confusion, sterility, moribund life, and old age, and the hero with spring, dawn, order, fertility, vigor and youth" (2000, p. 187). The traditional "Dark Lord" is a character who has already been vanquished prior to the initiation of the story and throughout the works gathers his powers to rise again; as affirmed by the encyclopedia of Fantasy "he is often, or has been the former servant of some even greater DL, and has often been already defeated but not destroyed eons before" trying to engage in "wounding the land" (Clute & Grant, 1996, p.250).

The tradition of the dark lord persona has existed as long as literature itself. In *Beowulf*, the character of Grendel represented evil and darkness, the force that Beowulf who represented light and goodness had for a role to vanquish. In modern fantasy context, the most notable antagonistic figure in the fantasy tradition is the one portrayed in *The Lord of the Rings*. Sauron existed as a combination of a variety of inspirations, from Odin to the Christian conception of Satan. In contrast to the powers of light, Sauron is connected with the forces of darkness; he is the king of Mordor, "the land of the Shadow" which is a metaphorical representation of the darkest part of the Self. He has an entire army of supernatural being at his disposal named the orcs. In various instances in the book, it is mentioned that the dark figure should not be named loudly, Sauron himself did not allow his name to be spoken, and the idea of prohibition of naming the evil has continued with other following works like in the Harry Potter series, where the primary evil source Voldemort is referred to as the one who should not be named.

On the same note, and keeping with the fantasy tradition, the evil force in the works of Martin is also associated with darkness; the source of sorrow in the realm of

Westeros. Likewise, it is deemed cursed to bring his name that is why he is referred to as "the Great Other whose name may not be spoken, the Lord of Darkness, the Soul of Ice, the God of Night and Terror" (Martin, 2011, p.2651) which exists as the counterpart to "R'hllor, the Lord of Light, the Heart of Fire, the God of Flame and Shadow" (p. 2651). In another instance, he is described as the undefeatable presence:

> The one whose name may not be spoken is marshaling his power, Davos Seaworth, a power fell and evil and strong beyond measure. Soon comes the cold, and the night that never ends. Unless true men find the courage to fight it. Men whose hearts are fire (p.2826).

Although in the T.V. adaptation, the figure has been transformed into the Night's King, a character and according to his name he is as well linked to darkness and winter, master of a tremendous army of undead soldiers, the figure that poses the greater threat that must be fought by the agents of light, or in other words, the heroes of the story. It is worth mentioning that both dark characters lack any point of view in the respective tales as they are present solely as mentions from different characters. This magnifies the mystery and thus the eeriness of such characters.

3.3.2. Emblem of Power

The ultimate objective of the voyage might take countless shapes, just like the other components of this pattern that have been put under study thus far. In myth, fairy tales, and fantasy, every iteration of the quest motif centers around a distinct "boon," frequently a fantastical and intangible treasure with magical capacities. In truth, even though the prize is commonly material, it still reflects an immaterial characteristic. The "true" treasure is acquiring moral lessons, even if the heroes might not instantly realise the real goal. The quest for the treasure serves as a compelling challenge. The hero is aware that the challenges faced in obtaining the desired thing are analogous to those encountered while trying to alter the world or oneself significantly.

The literary portrayal of the Holy Grail as a sacred, precious item that must be sought for in the Arthurian legends has had a great role in molding the quest leitmotif in contemporary fantasy fiction. Since then, it started to serve as a "container of meaning" which is filled differently in accordance with a work's conceptual theme and the context the quest is set for. Therefore, its purpose is to work as an analogy for the hero's spiritual pursuit and desire to reach higher status. In various instances, the designated physical item customarily holds magical and great power.

As opposed to an arduous quest to obtain a physical symbol embodying pure good, in *the Lord of the Rings*, an ancient evil holding enormous power and serving as physical connectors to earlier ages of the world, must be destroyed. The ring quest is a deviation of the norms of the typical or grail quest. As for the latter obtaining it was for the greatest good for its powers, healing abilities and offering eternal youth.Yet, for the first, the evil had the ability to destroy it.

The parallel symbol of power in the story of George Martin is referred to as The Iron Throne. It is the literal chair of power in the Seven Kingdoms in Westeros moulded through the breath of dragons –Balerion- with thousand melted blades surrendered by King Aegon I's conquered and defeated enemies:

> Between each finger was a blade, the points of twisted swords fanning out like talons from arms of the throne. Even after three centuries, some were still sharp enough to cut. The Iron Throne was full of traps for the unwary. The songs said it had taken a thousand blades to make it, heated white-hot in the furnace breath of Balerion the Black Dread. The hammering had taken fifty-nine days. The end of it was this hunched black beast made of razor edges and barbs and ribbons of sharp metal; a chair that could kill a man, and had, if the stories could be believed (p.1032).

It is a symbol of power and conquest and a constant reminder of the force of the ruler. Itis the object that most characters in the series seek. The discomfort it radiates also refers to the difficulty of ruling "He spoke truly; it is a monstrous uncomfortable chair.

In more ways than one" (2011, p. 274). As it is mentioned throughout the novels that many kings and queens have been injured and wounded by the swords within the seat, as were other killed while sitting on the throne referring in a way to show punishment and the rejection the realm has against the appointed ruler not fit to govern "This Iron Throne you speak of sounds monstrous cold and hard. I cannot bear the thought of jagged barbs cutting your sweet skin" (p. 2778).It is a symbol of unimaginable abilities, an emblem which generated bloody wars and thousands of lives have been sacrificed for reaching it and it is also "the object of desire".

Both items which give their book titles justice are not only physical emblems but throughout both literary works display the corrupting impact laid on people perusing it. The lure both artifacts have and their power to draw evil are flagrant reminders of the harm that power can cause, and those similarities go all the way to their respective destruction. The One Ring at the conclusion of *The Lord of the Rings* series: *Return of the King* is destroyed by the fires of Mount Doom insinuating the sense of things going full circle at its conclusion since the ring was originally created in those same fires. Though the throne destruction was not witnessed in the books of a *Song of Ice and Fire* due to the lack of the last volumes; it was included in the T.V. adaptation drawn from Martin's notes about its ending that is manifested in the largest of Daenerys' dragons, Drogon—often compared to Balerion—melting it down again in the same fire that had originally forged it.

In terms of diversity and richness of imagery, fantasy fiction is at the pinnacle of contemporary writing. The right imagery is essential for placing the reader into the author's fictional world in order for a novel set outside of reality to succeed. In the midst of its unfamiliarity, familiar patterns have been imbedded in the genre to create a unified atmosphere for the genre with archetypal characters and themes. These themes and imagery that a literary work shares with other texts are more likely to be where greatness in that work emerges. It is an uncountable truth that heroes and heroines are the central piece in the plethora of fantasy literature works.

In line with the aforementioned idea of archetypal characters, it is essential to pinpoint that the primary archetypal character is the heroic figure around which the narratives evolve. Fantasy has always been a fiction traditionally centered on heroes who promote noble traits, such as bravery, discernment, patriotism, generosity, compassion, and selflessness, which are widely recognised and mirror the characteristics of the cultures they originated from. These male protagonists sprung out of the classic hero who was frequently featured in medieval romance literature; then reshaped to the romantic heroes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Romanticism.

These fantasy heroes follow various recurring patterns; the most utilised one among others is the repetitive formula of the orphan or the hidden monarch. According to Joseph Campbell(2004), the hero must endure a challenging upbringing through which his identity as a hero is denied, unknown, or neglected. The discussed heroes in the following section have all experienced a tragic childhood as a preservation of the medieval literary tradition themes.

3.4. The Hero's Journey

In his research and endeavours in the field of myths and universal mythology, Joseph Campbell comprised religions, artefacts and written stories from around the world and has suggested "the shape shifting yet marvelously constant story" (2004, p.3) of the hero. He notes in an interview "It is essentially the one deed done by many many different people…a certain typical hero sequence of actions which can be detected in stories from all over the world and from many many periods of history" (Cited in Moyers, 1988). This designated, intertextual paradigm includes the hero's experiences in the different narratives from different parts of the globe while reflecting the experiences and journey of humanity. Having detailed the main features and background for Campbell's theory of the hero's journey and the storylines of the novels in the foregoing chapters; one can initiate the analysis of archetypical journeys of the main heroes in the selected fantasy works.

3.4.1. Frodo's Hero's Journey

The Lord of the Rings trilogy traces the story of different main characters; however, in its essence, it is a narrative of a journey undertaken by Frodo Baggins, a hobbit, selected mysteriously to return a Ring that possesses great evil power to the place where it was originally forged (Barber, 1986, p. 1). Therefore, Frodo's journey contrary to medieval and mythical narratives is not a quest for a hidden treasure or legacy but a quest driven by sacrifice and desire to save humanity by destructing malicious forces.

In accordance with Campbell's theory the "Departure" is the initial stage of the hero's journey, during which the hero embarks on his mission while being psychologically and physically supported by greater powers that direct him. The 'Departure' phase contains the following sub-stages.

As suggested in the aforementioned parts the very first phase in the departure stage of the Monomyth is referred to as the call for adventure and it "signifies that destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown" (Campbell, 2004,p. 53). In this context, the narrative in *Lord of the Rings* starts with Frodo Baggins living in tranquility within the shire around his kind, the hobbits, including his friend Sam and uncle Bilbo. The call for adventure in Frodo's instance is introduced subtly. It begins with the disappearance of Bilbo and the inheritance of the One Ring by Frodo as his uncle's only heir. Joseph Campbell suggests that the call can be bought by a herald or a messenger, quintessentially regarded as "dark, loathly...judged evil by the world"(Campbell 2004,p. 48).In Frodo's case, Gandalf is evidently the call maker for his description, make him quite suitable for the mould created by Campbell, this is further hinted in the book that Gandalf is considered as "unpopular, a nuisance and a disturber of the peace" (Tolkien, 2005, p.41). He gives the ring to Frodo detailing the its story, its destructible power and the importance of destroying it, setting the objectives of the mission "There is only one way: to find the Cracks of Doom in the depths of Orodruin, the Fire-mountain, and cast the Ring in there, if you really wish to destroy it, to put it beyond the grasp of the Enemy for ever" (2005, p.61).

It is worthwhile to mention that the call to adventure in literature is commonly bounded to the theme of destiny and fate. In Campbell's words, the hero has been called by destiny; which has additionally relocated his spiritual center of gravity from within the confines of his society to an uncharted region, a dangerous area with both riches and potential hazard (2004, p. 53).This is noted in the book as Gandalf in his speech ensures that the ring is destined to be protected by Frodo in order to save Middle-Earth:

> Behind that there was something else at work, beyond any design of the Ring-maker. I can put it no plainer than by saying that Bilbo was meant to find the Ring, and not by its maker. In which case you were also meant to have it. And that may be an encouraging thought (Tolkien 2005,p. 5).

Thus begins Frodo's journey with the separation phase, beginning by leaving the comfort of his dull life in the shire after realising the danger it will bring to his hometown as Gandalf explains that Sauron is after his possession: "he may be seeking for it now, if he has not already found out where it lies" (Tolkien, 2005, p.59).

As traditionally shown in early literary works, when the hero is faced with the ultimate decision for the call, it seems as an impossible challenge; thus, it is commonly initially answered by a refusal. Frodo as well, is a hero who initially refuses and abandons his previously accepted Call to Adventure; he finds himself not ready to undertake such a great responsibility and embark on a perilous quest:"I do really wish to destroy it!" said Frodo "Or, well... to have it destroyed. I am not made for perilous quests. I wish I had never seen the Ring! Why did it come to me? Why was I chosen?" (p.49). He tries to make excuses to dodge the dangerous task and persuade Gandalf to take up the mission himself. However, Gandalf endowed with knowledge and wisdom resisted taking up the power of the dark ring for himself "With that power, I should have power too great and terrible! And over me, the Ring would gain a power still greater and more deadly." (p.49); leading Frodo's attempts to avoid the quest end all in failure.

Crossing the threshold is a decisive part in the main hero's arc; this phase of the Monomyth indicates the hero's commitment to the quest, as he becomes prepared to cross the physical boundaries of the ordinary world to go to the entryway into the magical or supernatural world usually an unknown, dangerous place. This crossing signifies the hero overcoming his fears and doubts. In this sense Campbell explains The First Threshold is crossed by the hero, who then leaves his comfortable surroundings and enters the Unknown, where Evil Forces and Mortal Perils are awaiting (2004, p. 71-82).Therefore, he approves to face the after-effects of dealing with the challenges ahead. In the *Lord of The Rings*, Frodo executes this stage by crossing the boundaries of his hometown, the Shire, and entering the Old Forest, as Merry says:"You have left the Shire, and are now outside, and on the edge of the Old Forest"(2005, p. 110), the old forest is described as an exotic, alive place full of danger.

According to Campbell (2004), when the hero agrees to take on the quest's responsibilities, a helper embodying destiny's preserving power appears. Therefore, in his endeavors, the hero is assisted in several ways; particularly a supernatural one. This is illustrated in the novels when the hobbits are being pursued by the Black Riders, the High Elves under the leadership of Gildor Inglorion save them. Then again, Frodo is rescued from the Black Raiders at the River Bruinen, by Glorfindel the Elf Lord. In another strand; Galadriel the esteemed Elf stands in for the "Cosmic Mother," and aids Frodo by providing him with the crystal phial of light which radiates light in the darkest of places, which symbolises her lighting his path and keeping him alive in various circumstances. She gives each member of the company a priceless gift and, more importantly, she encourages them in understanding their true selves; which is a vital part of the journey. There are other forms of assistance offered to the hero; as such the presence of Aragorn and Gandalf had a role in helping and guiding the ring bearer however they did not offer him any magical gifts.

The hero will face difficult trials and tribulations throughout this stage in order to reach a spiritual transformation. For this purpose, the hero will gain assistance from all advisories, talismans, and secret agents "The hero is covertly aided by the advice,

amulets, and secret agents of the supernatural helper" (Campbell, 2004, p. 89).It is in this particular stage that "dragons have now to be slain and surprising barriers passed – again, again, and again. Meanwhile there will be a multitude of preliminary victories, unretainable ecstasies, and momentary glimpses of the wonderful land" (2004, p. 100). Frodo faces several trials and tribulations, as soon as he crosses the threshold on his way until reaching Mount Doom, where he faces the final of his trials. This phase occurs several times throughout his journey; Rivendell and Lothlórien are the "beautiful lands" that Frodo sees while traveling the Road of Trials. Whereas for his supernatural assistance, Frodo is able to acquire a rhyme that summons Tom Bombadil, a figure that guides them, the sword Sting, the mithril jacket, and the elf gifts from Galadriel including the phial of light, cloak, lembas food, and haithlain all help Frodo. He is helped by Gandalf, who makes arrangements for traveling companions and Aragorn's leadership. At first, the hero will seem helpless and defenseless but will start to display growth and maturity.

After overcoming the hazardous trials, the hero is bound to meet with a powerful female figure described as "the paragon of all paragons of beauty, the reply to all desire, the bliss-bestowing goal of every hero's earthly and unearthly quest" (Campbell, 2004, p.101). She either lures or helps him in attaining his goals. For Frodo, the goddess is represented in the character of lady Galadriel, whom he meets soon following Elrond's council. Galadriel is of the oldest and most powerful elves in the realm of Middle-Earth as she owns the unique attributes of beauty and wisdom; she has the ability to see the past and the future. She was described physically as "Very tall [Galadriel and Celeborn] were, and the Lady no less tall than the Lord; and they were grave and beautiful. They were clad wholly in white; and the hair of the Lady was of deep gold ... but no sign of age was upon them (Tolkien, 2005, p.354).Her demeanour and appearance reflect the example of Greek goddesses who had a salient role in Greek mythology as Athena who was famous for aiding heroes in their quests such as Odysseus, Hercules, the Greeks and Perseus. Athena was the main cause for Odysseus success in returning home. In the same vein, Galadriel guides the fellowship; and allows Frodo to see in the eye of Sauron.

In the Apotheosis stage, the hero attains a higher knowledge that prepares them for the last and most challenging stages of their journey or metamorphosis. It can be in a form of death and resurrection or as Robert Segal notes in this regard that in this step the hero "discovers his true identity. He discovers who he really is. He alone knows his failure. Yet his is heroic all the same" (1987, p.5).For Frodo's case, the Ring's increasing power has become tremendous and Frodo has failed to withstand it; thus he experiences a metaphorical death in which he embraces the offer from his evil side to transgress morals and release himself from the weight of being an honourable individual. At the Cracks of Doom, Frodo subdue to his Shadow self and claim the Ring as his inheritance refusing to destroy it:

> Frodo stirred and spoke with a clear voice, indeed with a voice clearer and more powerful than Sam had ever heard him use … I have come,' he said. 'But I do not choose now to do what I came to do. I will not do this deed. The Ring is mine!'' (Tolkien, 2005, p. 945)

The last point in the initiation phase one can reasonably say is to ultimately reach the boon or the goal of the journey as Campbell writes, the lead "achieves a world historical, macro cosmic triumph . . . brings back from his adventure the means for the regeneration of his society as a whole . . . [and conveys] the message to the entire world" (2004, p.35). The boon must be obtained either by theft or by accepting it from the entities in possession of it. In *The Lord of the Rings* context the boon can symbolise the power of Sauron that has been stolen after the demolition of the one ring "With the crisis of the Ordeal passed, heroes now experience the consequences of surviving death… lay claim to their Reward" (Volgler, 1999, p.11).

Thus, with the annihilation of Sauron, Middle-Earth seems to have been revitalised and reborn. Frodo's mission to save Middle-earth from the evil terrors of Sauron turns as the greatest valuable accomplishment and reward a hero can obtain "in his eyes there was peace now, neither strain of will, nor madness, nor any fear. His burden was taken away. There was the dear master of the sweet days in the Shire" (2005, p.947).

Unlike medieval hero stories, where the boon is finding the treasure, the Holy Grail or elixir of life, in Frodo's case, the ultimate boon is the destruction of the ring and securing the safety of Middle Earth after the collapse of Sauron.Yet, the true importance of the hero journey is conveyed in his self- realisation and transformation from an outsider to someone who holds power and knowledge.

The third and final stage of this heroic venture is referred to as the return; a phase in which the hero has to journey back to the place he left in the early stages, referred to as the realm of light. Nevertheless, in accordance with the initial call, the return is also first faced with a refusal. This denial to return can be either forcibly restrained from leaving the gods' realm by the hero's own desire to do so or by an outside power. After the Ring is destroyed, Frodo has been wounded on both physical and mental levels. The hobbits as well were worn out and have given up on making a comeback. Another obstacle that prevents them from returning is that their home the Shire has been in ruin by Saruman.

Once the hero is able to return to his homeland he has to cross the return threshold; then he is considered as master of the two worlds; free to roam between these worlds. In this context, after saving the Shire, Frodo is revered as a hero both at home and in the lands beyond the Shire although internally he believes he has not accomplished the mission.

In the end of the quest, the hero obtains his freedom to live by his own terms. For Frodo's case, the quest has had a powerful effect on him on both physical and mental levels, as he found troubles regaining his place within society he deems that he requires several years to heal from it and seek for other wonders. He subsequently decides to embark on a new journey with Gandalf the grey and the Elves to the kingdoms beyond the sea, to the undying lands. This last journey is allegorical to King Arthur's trip to get his wounds treated, as he travels accompanied by the three Queens, Morgan le Fay, the Lady of the Lake and the Queen of Northgalis to the Island Valley of Avalon.

3.4.2. Aragorn's Hero's Journey

Even though *The Lord of the Rings* focuses on Frodo as the main hero in the story; yet, there are other heroic characters; in the sense that there are other quests and journeys in the novels. Aragorn who serves as the third installment's titular hero T*he Return of the King*; represents the classic romantic hero who is heroic beyond measure, a leader, a soldier, a lover, and a healer as opposed to Frodo. He belongs to the high mimetic hero category considered to be simply superior in their positions of power, influence, or expressive ability. They frequently act as leaders to others (Milkovic, 2021, p.4).

He is the symbol of the prince in exile pattern, a typical quest character who seeks to retake his rightful place as King. Therefore, his journey is essentially adoption of identity, his ascension to the throne and fulfilling his destiny as a ruler. Most of Aragorn's story is not clear until much later within the novels. In this regard, it is necessary to mention that the stages' order in the journey of Aragorn do not necessarily follow the accepted Campbellian formula of the Monomyth, but rather deviate or escape in some aspects.

Following the outline already settled through the analysis of the previous character; the first phase of this formula is the separation from the normal world which begins in an state of normality where some information is acquired that serves as a clear call to seize the armor (literally or figuratively), and venture into the unknown. In this case, and following the decease of Aragorn's Father, Arathorn II, Elrond Halfelven the Lord of Rivendell took Aragorn in, fostered and loved him as his own son, thus keeping him in the dark concerning his true lineage until he was twenty of age as an attempt to keep his existence a secret and protect him from Sauron. In this sense, his call to adventure begins when he is made aware of his true heritage as Isildur's son and rightful heir to the throne of Gondor.

Aragorn since the first installment of the story fell in love with an elf. Therefore, his purpose has been to marry Arwen, daughter of Elrond; but is deemed unworthy of her hand until proving himself as a legitimate king. For this purpose, his quest is to defend Minas Tirith, the capital of Gondor, from a direct invasion by Sauron's armies

while safeguarding Sam and Frodo on their quest to destroy the all-powerful ring. In this way, he asserts his birthright to rule Gondor of the two worlds, that of Men and Elves. For this purpose, Aragorn is since the beginning portrayed as a strong ranger of the North certain of his abilities who does not hesitate taking up challenges; thus there is no sign of any refusal of the call which had been a necessary step in other heroic quests. At the same time, Aragorn does not obtain the luxury of refusing as he solely is responsible for his quest.

Nevertheless, concerning the following phase of the journey which centers around the supernatural aid; similar to Frodo, he receives help on his journey whether from a mentor or characters who cross his way and aid him in the right direction. In this sense, the same characters that acted as helpers for Frodo did as well for Aragorn; for instance, Gandalf and Galadriel. His supernatural aid is represented in the sword of Isildur who had a salient role in defeating Sauron the previous time it had been forged. It has been re-forged by the elves and offered to Aragorn who renamed it as Anduril. He additionally receives another supernatural instrument from Galadriel a sheath explaining that "the blade that is drawn from this sheath shall not be stained or broken even in defeat" (Tolkien, 2005, p.374). She also provides him with an elven cloak to hide him from hostile gaze.

In the Road of Trials and according to Petty, in this stage Aragorn's true trial is the "assumption of total leadership of the quest through the loss of Gandalf"(Petty, 1979, p. 56). In this regard, these trials offer him experience for his upcoming destiny as a ruler. During the trials and after Gandalf's fall; Aragorn has to make a paramount decision; either ride in the company of Frodo to Mordor in order to destroy the ring or save the members of the fellowship Merry and Pippin from the hands of the Orcs. He selects to rescue the hobbits; then departs to aid the Rohirrim in their struggle against Saruman before departing to defend Minas Tirith from Sauron's armies. All of Aragorn's trials become completed by the end of his journey.

Meeting with the goddess has already been pointed out, as Galadriel serves a goddess for Aragorn as well as she did for Frodo by aiding both materially and

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morally. Arwen can also be considered as one as she acts as his drive to complete the quest since the 'sacred marriage' is a compensation for persisting throughout the ordeals (Campbell, 2004, p.228) and Aragorn's ultimate goal is becoming worthy of her.

After his triumph in defeating the enemies in the battle of the Fields of Pellenor and aiding the wounded from the battle with his healings powers, Aragorn launches the return stage. He is declared as the king who has returned "The hands of the king are the hands of a healer, and so shall the rightful king could ever be known" (2005, p.860). Despite becoming recognised and approved as a ruler, he postpones his claiming his kingship and embarks on his final mission: to challenge Sauron, and act as a decoy to help Frodo destroy the ring and finish his quest and eradicate the evil force that has been threatening the realm. In this case, the refusal of the return was characterised in the desire of completing his duty. As the ring is shattered, Sauron's might wanes, and his soldiers leave and submit. Aragorn indeed fulfills his last duty; he crosses the threshold another time as he journeys back to the real world to Minas Tirith; leaving the roaming and battles behind him.

Aragorn gains the respect of Elrond, his old protector and father figure, and proves that he is fit to rule and wed his daughter. In this sense Elrond consents to give his daughter Arwen in marriage to him. In accordance to Petty's words Aragorn's "'Atonement with the Father' occurred as he faces his fears and 'proclaims his identity'" (1979, p. 61). The rewards Aragorn receives for spending so many years in the desert include being crowned king, having his land returned to fertility, and getting married to Arwen Evenstar in the middle of the summer. He is given the freedom to lead the typical life of a monarch in his position as a result. Elrond offers him his scepter on the day of his wedding, recognising him as the ruler of both the realms of elves and men.

Aragorn's quest is undoubtedly paralleling the medieval romance and also tracing the trajectory of the journey proposed by W.H. Auden's six tenets of a typical quest included in his sonnets; firstly by aiming for the throne of Gondor and the hand

of Arwen as his bride while already exhibiting the valiant traits of character and breeding required to complete his mission. He possesses a weapon with a heritage, is descended from immortals, and has the power to heal and regenerate. He adopts an increasingly regal bearing and youthful appearance. To win his throne and marry an immortal princess, he defeats an evil character with the aid of a magical ally (Gandalf). His transformation from darkness to light and triumph over evil bring wealth and harmony to Middle-earth. In a nutshell, Aragorn fulfilled the destiny of the common hero by fighting for the land Gondor, challenging the enemy represented in Sauron and claiming the throne and getting rewarded with the betrothal to Arwen.

Much like the attributes of the hero that moulded Aragon as traditional figure of hidden monarch were inherited from medieval texts, subsequent fantasy writers continued with this route. In this sense the journey of Jon Snow, one of the main protagonists in the second case study *A Song of Ice and Fire* is highly intertextual to Aragorn's.

Instead of criticising Tolkien and Le Guin's works for using standard heroic figures, authors like Martin provide their own homage to the archetypes they created, departing from the norm. He has the tendency to escort his leading characters into early graves since the first and primary protagonist whom the story is constructed upon Eddard Stark is killed abruptly within the first stages of his heroic tale.

In *A Song of Ice and Fire* literary series, Martin uses a system of multiple plots filled with a set of important protagonists and heroes whether male or female. These characters are vital for the progression of the storylines and pursue their own quests. However, considering the development through the fantasy work, Jon Snow is the more suitable character that moulds in the hero archetype. Martin seems to have adopted Jon Snow as his version of the more conventional fantasy hero which to some extents fits the journey; although in an antithetical fashion, it is essential to note that his journey is highly intertextual and considered as a reconfiguration of both discussed quests from *The Lord of the Rings*. First, like Frodo, Jon's journey is driven by virtue of morality and burdened with the ultimate responsibility to rescue the realm. On the

other hand, and similarly to Aragorn, his voyage includes a pursuit of his roots and search for the true identity as he belongs to the hidden prince discourse.

3.4.3. Jon Snow's Hero's Journey

Jon Snow is one of the main characters in the *Song of Ice and Fire* world and a notable point of view character. Jon is introduced in the first pages of the very first volume *A Game of Thrones* as the fourteen years old illicit son of the Lord of Winterfell, Eddard Stark, the identity of his mother remains a mystery. Contrarily to his brothers and sisters he is allotted the surname 'Snow' usually given to the illegitimate off springs of noble Lords in the North " the bastard who bore the surname Snow, the name that custom decreed be given to all those in the north unlucky enough to be born with no name of their own"(Martin, 2011, p.61).This largely hints on the story of the protagonist of the Arthurian masterwork *The Once and Future King,* Arthur is the illegitimate child of king Uther Pendragon; throughout the beginning of the story and before discovering his true identity, he is referred to by a pejorative nickname "the wart" tending to reflect his position in society and the castle: "The Wart was not a proper son. He did not understand this, but it made him feel unhappy, because Kay seemed to regard it as making him inferior in some way" (White, 1987, p.8).

Described as an outsider, who idolises his father and draws from his honorable and dutiful traits, Jon is loyal and skilled. He is protected by his father, maintains a close relationship with his true born siblings yet is detested by his step-mother Lady Catelyn; for she considers him as a daily reminder of her husband's unfaithfulness. He is cast aside and deprived from attending any family gatherings or celebrations as shown in the following conversation:

> "Why aren't you down in the yard?" Arya asked him.
>
> He gave her a half smile. "Bastards are not allowed to damage young princes," he said. "Any bruises they take in the practice yard must come from trueborn swords" (p.177).

Jon Snow has a complexity of character that in a way deviates from the prototypical journey of the hero; but still follows the steps of development of a hero's Monomyth. The journey of this specific character is traced throughout the literary series of the books and continues with its television adaptation as the novels are yet to be finished. The TV. adaptation is based on Martin's story.

As discussed previously, the call for adventure enters after the protagonist is first introduced in his ordinary world and natural habitat, and then an event alters the situation leading him to depart from his initial location. For Jon Snow, he is introduced as the bastard of Winterfell. His journey is initiated with the coming of his uncle Benjen Stark – Eddard Stark's brother, who is a pledged brother in the Night's Watch and who persuades him to join the Nights Watch; a military order located in the far North of Westeros referred to as "The Wall" committed to protect the continent from any dangers inhabiting beyond the wall. Members of this order are sworn to celibacy and remain loyal to their duty for the rest of their lives. Jon shows to be willing to renounce his life, accept his inability to father a child, wear only black, and devote his entire life to serving the kingdom. This step comes as an escape from the reality of his status as an illegitimate son and an unwanted burden to his family since his existence damages the paragon of the perfect family. In this sense he seeks to find his purpose, as his half-siblings had their lives planned but considering his status, Jon had no prospect:

> Robb would someday inherit Winterfell, would command great armies as the Warden of the North. Bran and Rickon would be Robb's bannermen and rule holdfasts in his name. His sisters Arya and Sansa would marry the heirs of other great houses and go south as mistress of castles of their own. But what place could a bastard hope to earn? (2011, p. 137).

For Jon, Castle Black was the perfect place, a refuge for rejected people "The Night's Watch is a midden heap for all the misfits of the realm" (p.291). Jon Snow is intrinsically painted as the outsider hero,the child of destiny that endures a protracted period of anonymity. He is faced with peril, difficulty, and disgrace "whether he is flung out into the unknown or inward into his own depths, whatever he touches is an

uncharted world of darkness" (Campbell, 2004, p. 301).This is seen in the first book when he goes to bid farewell to his half brother when his step mother expresses her hatred "He stood in the door for a moment, afraid to speak, afraid to come closer…Something cold moved in her eyes.."I told you to leave," she said"We don't want you here" (p.223). Thus, Jon leaves the place he has always considered home venturing to a new adventure as a member of the Night's Watch.

Concerning this second stage Campbell maintains that a "refusal of the summons converts the adventure into its negative. Walled in boredom, hard work, or "culture," the subject loses the power of significant affirmative action and becomes a victim to be saved" (Campbell, 2004, p. 54).Soon after joining the Night's Watch, Jon's devotion to his calling is put to the test in different and recurrent ways repeatedly. First, Jon is made aware of the truth, the wall is not a safe haven and the sworn brothers do not appear to be as loyal as his uncle had insinuated. He becomes distant from the others. In spite of this, he commits initially to the path he had chosen and plans to take his vows and becomes a sworn brother.

Another refusal occurred when Jon received the news of his father's imprisonment and later execution. When his brother Robb marched south in order to be at war with the Lannisters, his two loyalties conflicted, Jon became torn between his family and his duty. Jon considered breaking his oath and deserting from the castle to join his brother in his cause. Although the punishment of breaking vows is immediate death, Jon attempts to flee Castle Black and joins his family. However he is stopped by the brotherhood and saved from a mortal fate.

Unlike Frodo, Jon encounters several mentors; some do not reach the position of the mentor but participate in guiding him during his quest. He first forges a counseling relationship with Tyrion Lannister on his way to the wall. Tyrion basing on his own experiences as an outcast of his family as well teachers him the importance of accepting oneself and the insecurities in order to face and protect himself of the obstacles ahead in Castle Black "Let me give you some counsel ... Never forget what

you are, for surely the world will not. Make it your strength. Then it can never be your weakness. Armor yourself in it, and it will never be used to hurt you" (p. 142)

Another wise old man appears before Jon as an advisor, Maester Aemon Targaryen. After witnessing the internal battle Jon goes through as to whether remain a member of the Nights Watch or go to avenge his father and join his brother in his war; he tries to remind Jon of the importance of duty and responsibility towards the realm and the path he had chosen. He reminds him where his loyalty should lie "for love is the bane of honor, the death of duty" (p.1455). Maester Aemon has a great impact in shaping Jon's character; he urges him to get rid of self doubting and uncertainty and leads him to be one of the most impactful leaders in the series "it takes a man to rule ... you have the strength in you to do the things that must be done. Kill the boy, Jon Snow. Winter is almost upon us. Kill the boy and let the man be born" (Martin b, 2011, p.170).

Lord Commander of the Nights Watch, Jeor Mormont is established as the most impactful mentor in Jon's arc, who acts as his protector in the nights watch and takes him under his wing by choosing Jon to be his personal steward. His first act after Jon saves his life is to pass on his family sword Longclaw, a Valyrian steel sword, the most precious metal in Westeros and reputed to have been created by magic; thus putting Jon in a position of a son and his successor as the leader of the Night's Watch. This emblem is considered as his supernatural aid as it will bear a great importance in Jon's quest. This supernatural gift strengthens the fact that Mormont is Jon's primary mentor. All this mentoring from different father figures who crossed Jon's path had for a purpose to make him adopt his actual identity as an honorable member of the Nights Watch and overcome his insecurities of being an illegitimate bastard; armor him with abstract and concrete weapons to prepare him for the upcoming trials.

When joining the watch he comes to the realisation of the presence of the others, the White Walkers, the supernatural creatures that are threatening the Seven Kingdoms and the savages that inhabit the North of the wall; adding to that the commander becomes a target of an attack by an undead creature in which he was saved by Jon.

Thus Lord Mormont orchestrates an expedition beyond the wall in order to go explore, he directs Jon and few members of the brotherhood to cross the Wall as an attempt to "ride in force, against the King-beyond-the-Wall, the Others, and anything else that may be out there" (p.1714). In this case, the Wall represents the literal threshold and by passing it, Jon will be crossing the threshold symbolising accepting his commitment to his journey as a true brother of the Nights Watch.

Jon's mission beyond the Wall establishes the archetype of the initiation chapter, also referred to as the second stage of the Campbellian paradigmatic hero's arc. After stepping past the threshold into the unknown, the hero must go through various levels of ego-shedding through both internal and external psychological tests.

Jon starts off his initiation ritual as the hero who is ready to set aside his personal interests for the benefit of the community, at the price of death. Jon experienced many challenges in his road of trials; he initially loses the whereabouts of his companions from the brotherhood. He is then captured with one of his brothers of the Nights Watch Qorrin Halfhand who sacrifices himself, forces Jon to kill him in order to gain the trust of the Wildlings, join them and attempt to unravel the dangers that these folks represent. The sacrifice did not go in vain as Jon succeeds to infiltrate. He is given the opportunity to meet Mance Rayder, the King-Beyond-the-Wall, and is encouraged to enlist in a party of raiders that will scale the Wall and assault Castle Black from the South. In this period Jon lives among the wildlings and learns their ways putting him in a serious moral quandary. His last trial was to cross the Wall and this latter ends with success but as Jon refuses to kill a farmer by order of the wildling to prove his loyalty, his cover up broke and he is then revealed as a traitor. He runs back to Castle Black and engages in a fight against the wildlings.

Similarly to the previous heroes discussed, Jon's trajectory likewise crosses with a woman's; however, as opposed to Frodo and Aragorn the goddess in Jon's Monomyth presents herself as his love interest and temptress as well. A character that acts as a temptation and obstacle from the true path as often times "the hero faces those temptations, often of a physical or pleasurable nature, that may lead him to

abandon or stray from his quest" (Campbell, 2004).This is true in Jon's case, inn his meeting with Ygritte, a wildling, a spearwife and a member of the Rattleshirt War group that attempts to cross the wall in order to invade the Seven Kingdoms. Jon's affection towards Ygritte works as an impetus for him as he breaks his chastity vow by initiating a relationship with her and goes against his Night's Watch oath and aid the Wildlings. Nevertheless, in the end Jon chooses his duty and continues his quest to protect Castle Black against the Wildlings.

In an Apotheosis, the hero dies, either a physical or spiritual death, and attains a condition of wisdom and knowledge that will prepare him for his return. Jon Snow gets daggered by his crew comrades; then he is resurrected as the Azura Hai; the alleged prince that was promised; an individual whose prophesies entailed he will save the world from the greatest dangers, arguably, the White Walkers.

Due to the incompletion of the last volumes of the novels which are still in the process of writing, Jon Snow's hero's journey has not been achieved in the books. Yet, its continuation is clearly exhibited in the renowned HBO TV adaptation of the books titled *Game of Thrones* (2011-2019).The producers and script writers David Weiss, and D.B. Benioff with Martin's blessings and basing their sources and script from the author's notes drafted for the upcoming books continue the events taking place in the realm of Westeros. In the light of this revelation, the last part of Jon's journey is tracked by considering the events taking place in the adaptation as a source material.

After Jon's resurrection, he then is subject to a metamorphosis, deemed that his rebirth endowed him with a new sense of purpose. It displays a shifting point for his quest's goal and frees him from his responsibility as a Lord Commander. He passes the cloak and decides to leave the Nights Watch; as his loyalty to his family wins out, he travels back home to save his sister and retake the North from the grip of enemies who captured Winterfell after the murder of his older brother Rob Stark in the Red Wedding. He succeeds to reclaim Winterfell, and is appointed once again to lead the people as the king in the North. After this point, Jon's heroic journey continues with the mission to bring people together and heal differences by willingly risking his life

as a way to stay united against the supernatural threat marching south of the Wall. In this regard, similar to Frodo, Jon Snow's quest is motivated by a desire to preserve other people's lives outside his own. He pledges his loyalty to the mother of Dragons with the hope to obtain her help and save the realm and attempts to cease the hostilities between the feuding noble families and unite against the external danger:

> The long night is coming, and the dead come with it. No clan can stop them, the free folk can't stop them, the Night's Watch can't stop them and all the southern kings can't stop them. Only together, all of us (Weiss and Benioff, 2015, 37:11).

The boon as illustrated in the preceding pages is the completion of the journey's objective; the initial goal the hero set out on his quest to obtain. The hero is prepared and purified for this phase by all the preceding ordeals. Jon's ultimate purpose to undertake the quest had been to flee his presumed identity as a bastard. In view of this, Jon's boon was to be revealed as Ned Stark's nephew rather than illegitimate son; he is the son of Lyanna Stark and Raeghar Tagaryan who were lawfully wedded in secret; his real name is Aegon Targaryen, the last living member of Targaryen dynasty and thus the true heir to the Iron throne. However Jon refuses the kingship and concedes it to Daenerys; and shifts his focus to his other quest, eliminating the looming dangers. With the aid of Daenerys' dragons and her armies, and the help collected from all the kingdoms of Westeros which reunited as one force, Jon is able to defeat the Night's king and his army of supernatural slaves named the White Walkers.

In the end, the hero is free to live the way he wishes. For Jon, despite being condemned to be back to the wall, he feels that it is his true home in which he will be able to live without the burden of duty, his freedom also comes from the knowledge of his true identity—a king, not a bastard.

Highlighting on the intense influence medieval legacy weighs on both authors of the selected case studies one can notice the extent the journeys of Aragorn and Jon Snow intertwine with the medieval one of Arthur in the Arthurian legends. The three kings and legitimate heirs of their corresponding realms were born as orphans, hidden

far away and oblivious to their royal heritage. All in possession of enduing and powerful swords and embark to their quest in order to seize their right. These heroes learn how to go from rejected individuals to leaders of men, then to acclaimed kings and rightful heirs to the throne. The two heroes first presented as subject to the authority of an admired and loved elder, and each one of them concludes his story by adopting his destiny and lives with it. While the paths of the male protagonists are quite predictable and heroic; on the other hand, female characters have faced additional challenges in their journeys whether within medieval fantasy narratives or contemporary ones.

3.5.   Gender Representation in Fantasy Fiction

This scholarly endeavor has for an aim to investigate the medieval reflections on fantasy literature whether from historical or literary aspect. It attempted to study the cultural depths of both fantasy realms as parallels to medieval ages, intertextual references of medieval texts in contemporary fantasy genre and study the archetypal characterisation of heroic figures.

With regards to the aforementioned idea, the discussion of femininity and the roles played by women in fantasy literature is notably absent from the genre's critical discourse. As the high fantasy genre owes much of its narrative to medieval sources and in medieval epics; male leading characters are put on the forefront while:

> [Women] are usually defined in relation to the hero. As mother, princess, beloved, or opponent hero, women play important roles, but they often remain, narratively, speaking, places, obstacles, test through which the hero must pass in order to fulfill his destiny" (cited in Koplowitz-Brier, 2007, p.14).

A literary fantasy is created within and shaped by its social context. Just like any other textual production; it cannot be understood apart of this context, despite the fact that it may battle against its constraints and frequently express that struggle. From this

vantage point, it is inevitable that a literary work set in a patriarchally dominant culture will reflect the patriarchal subjugation of women.

3.5.1. Female Characters in *Lord of the Rings*

The role of women in J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy has been a topic of discussion ever since it was first published. The lack of women, in addition to the restricted roles they are assigned in Tolkien's narratives starting from *The Hobbit* has drawn criticism from some scholars; claiming that the legendarium is centered around male figures, and Tolkien only includes a small number of female characters who play minor parts in the plot's development. His portrayal of women is frequently flat and barely dynamic. In this light, Edith L. Crowe (1995) pinpoints that "the most problematic aspect of Tolkien is indeed the disappointingly low percentage of females that appear in his best-known and best-loved works, The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings" (p. 272).

Unfortunately, Tolkien's limited personal experiences with women in his own life find their way into his writings. In Frederick and McBride's words: "very few women played significant roles in his life, especially in his professional and creative endeavours" (2001, p.45). He was raised in a Catholic all-boys school, which had a significant impact on his life and writings, then spent the majority of his life as a soldier.

On the other side of the spectrum, many critics have defended Tolkien, particularly those who justified this lacuna as a way to reflect "his sources and his time" particularly Nancy Enright in her classic essay titled "Tolkien's Females and the Defining of Power" (2007).She argues that despite their scarce appearance in the novel, women have an essential impact on the story; she asserts that female characters in Tolkien's realm accomplish better and more substantially than many of the male characters, which undermines much of the presumed masculine supremacy that readers of the work may have assumed, a belief partly based on the lack of female characters (Enright, 2007).

In light of the two conflicting tendencies regarding where Tolkien stands in regards to feminism and the representation of women, it is essential to study the way female characters carried themselves in his writings. Whether his admiration for medieval customs and values were reflected through his portrayal of women or he succeeded to bring a fresh perspective on gender issues in fantasy literature.

3.5.1.1. Arwen

The first female character to be put under scrutiny is Arwen, as she is the first significant female character that readers of the trilogy encounter. Tolkien introduces her for the first time from Frodo's perspective "Frodo saw her whom few mortals had yet seen; Arwen, daughter of Elrond, in whom it was said that the likeness of Lothorien had come on earth again; and she was called Undomiel, for she was the Evenstar of her people" (p.972). Her name refers to the literal meaning of "Noble Maiden"(Hammond & Scull, 2005,p. 205) which highlights her status as a high-born daughter of a powerful family in Middle-Earth, the daughter of the most influential Elf Elrond.

On a further note, Tolkien notes that Arwen literal meaning in Welsh dignifies someone who is "profoundly blessed" (Scull & Hammond, 2006, p.706). As the aforementioned quotation conveys, the first striking characteristic about her that is illuminated is her incomparable beauty. Another defining aspect of her character is that she is the love interest of Aragorn; their story had already started before the events of *the Lord of the Rings.*

Arwen is described as "her whom few mortals had yet seen" (Tolkien, 2005, p.227),due to the fact that she had been staying with her mother's family in the remote Lothlórien away from the rest of the world. She is frequently portrayed as a female character who prefers the quiet of her own house, which also places her in the category of traditional femininity; typically defers to the males to handle political conversations and crucial choices instead of becoming involved herself. She is intentionally kept hidden by the male figures in her family as a jewel that should be protected and shielded from the public eye awaiting the hero to return from war. This is illustrated

when Aragorn admits to her: "in dangerous days men hide their chief treasure. "Yet I marvel at Elrond and your brothers; for though I have dwelt in this house from childhood, I have heard no word of you" (2005, p.1058). This further strengthens her position as a passive female character in the tide of the dominant male authority.

Concerning power, her role at first glance seems inessential and for the display of power she is the most passive of the other female characters. In a sense, she participates in Aragorn's quest yet as a distant but active partner. She appears less as a character and more as a reference in Tolkien's writings. Her greatest power is her "devotion to Aragorn" (Enright, 2007,p.97).

The peak of her power is demonstrated in renouncing her immortality and being an elf. By choosing to be mortal for the sake of love, she made a personal sacrifice to develop her agency. She proves that her own personal love and ambitions are greater than societal expectations by refusing to sail west to the Undying Lands as was expected of her.

Despite the pain her choice caused her father Elrond, Arwen's decision was never contested or deemed invalid by male leaders of her family. Instead, by the end of her story, her authority was recognised and she was not forced to change the plans she made for herself or leave for the Eternal Lands. This asserts an obvious equality and lack of hierarchy between the genders within the elvish race; this notion is also reinforced through the portrayal of the powerful elven character Galadriel.

3.5.1.2. Galadriel

Galadriel, lady of the golden Wood has an important role in ruling the realm of Lothlorien. Much as Arwen, Galadriel is described as a woman with exceptional beauty and grace "she stood before Frodo seeming now tall beyond measurement, and beautiful beyond enduring, terrible and worshipful" (2005, p. 66). However, much like her beauty, her power is flagrant. Not only does she belong to the mythical race of elves with superhuman abilities, but she is also the female character who possesses the highest hierarchical and political power. Unlike Arwen, to a certain extent, she is

invested in the political matters of Middle-Earth. She even seems to dominate her husband Celeborn, who nevertheless holds the reins of the same kingdom. She is also the sole woman of the White Council. Although she maintains one of the three Elven rings; she uses her power to heal people with it, lending greater credence to Tolkien's idea that peace and healing are more vital than conflict and warfare. Her power is sensed throughout the novel, and through several instances. This is confessed by Hadir when speaking to the hobbits when the fellowship arrives to Lothlorien "'You feel the power of the Lady of the Galadhrim" (Tolkien, p.268).

Galadriel thus occupies a prominent place in her society: Lothlórien seems much more ruled by the queen than by her husband. She corrects her husband, telling him to be tolerant, forgiving, and understanding. She exhibits her ability to unite. She possesses a crucial "decision-making authority" despite the fact that she does not actively participate in the War of the Ring as she stays in Lothlórien for most of the trilogy and does not participate in the council. Her wisdom and strong mind are what enables her to be one of the few characters who resists Sauron's deception and temptation. This primacy is to be compared to Celtic sovereignty, where the role of the leader is often entrusted to a woman: one must think for example of the Celtic queen of the Iceni tribe Boudica, British counterpart of Vercingetorix who guided her people to a revolt against the Roman rule (Jarus, 2022).The mode of government of the Lothlórien is therefore inspired by a model of pre-medieval matriarchal society; or maybe inspired by the monarchy of England which is the pride of its citizens, and which was often marked by the reign of a woman.

Tolkien in writing Galadriel was driven by his Christian faith as she is an inspiration of Virgin Mary and attributes of chastity and virginity are used to describe her. In her introduction she is described as "clad wholly in white" her hair is "of deep gold"(p. 354).Tolkien himself admitted his source for the character "I think it is true that I owe much of [Galadriel] to Christian and Catholic teaching and imagination about Mary" (Tolkien & Carpenter, 2000, p. 442).

However her power and authority are time and again misjudged by the people, reflecting the medieval ideals, that wise and strong women with magical abilities are bound to be sorceresses and conjure an antagonistic attitude as magic grows increasingly erratic and possibly dangerous, especially in the hands of women. While magic in the hands of male protagonists holds a vital and beneficial force in the narrative, as an instance to characters that spread rumors about her powers "Few escape her nets, they say. These are strange days! But if you have her favour, then you also are net-weavers and sorcerers, maybe" (Tolkien, 2005, p. 432). Another female character is likewise respected and feared for her bravery and swordsmanship.

3.5.1.3. Eowyn

Eowyn , the white lady of Rohan, a member of the House Erol and the niece of king Théoden, the ruler of Rohan. She is arguably the most celebrated feminine figure in Tolkien's fictional world as she is the only female character whose story takes more space in the novels contrarily to the other women; and plays as a shield against criticism of Tolkien's alleged misogyny. Her story is not tackled solely on the surface but rather deeper than other female characters allowing readers to engage in her development and character building. Even so, within the beginning of her narrative, in the second part of the trilogy *The Two Towers,* she is given the role of a treasure that a man may obtain, with the main focus of her existence throughout the course of her life is to be loved and competing for a man's affection—in this case, Aragorn's—the future king of Gondor whom she yearns for. However, Aragorn refuses her affections on the grounds that he is betrothed to Arwen.

Nevertheless, through the pages, within the third part of the trilogy *The Return of the King,* her role proves to be more prominent. She becomes the sole female figure who has her own subplot, not only that but she is equal to male characters as she also ventures into her own heroic quest which used to be exclusively reserved for male characters appropriating the conventional phases proposed by Joseph Campbell.

Her journey commences when the war broke in Middle Earth between the two opposing sides, and ahead of The Battle of Hornburg. Eowyn is provided a glimpse of

empowerment albeit disguised in an attempt to keep her safe and away from the battle field. King Theoden entrusts her with the leadership of the kingdom during his absence and names her the ruler of Rohan "There is Éowyn, daughter of Éomund ... She is fearless and high-hearted. All love her. Let her be as lord to the Eorlingas, while we are gone" (p.423). Not long after the men's departure to war, Eowyn comprehends that her appointment as a leader was in fact, a celebrated domestication, burdened with the role of caregiver to the fragile people of the kingdom who were not able to participate in battles. Displeased, Eowyn does not hesitate to voice her discontent clearly to Aragorn when he tries to dissuade her from joining the fight:

> Too often have I heard of duty," she cried. "But am I not of the House of Eorl, a shieldmaiden and not a dry-nurse. I have waited on faltering feet long enough. Since they falter no longer, it seems, may I not now spend my life as I will?" (p.784)[…]

> "Shall I always be chosen?" she said bitterly. "Shall I always be left behind when the Riders depart, to mind the house while they win renown, and find food and beds when they return?" (p.784).

After being kept in the kingdom as a caregiver and post the rejection from Aragorn, overwhelmed by disappointment and exasperation, she takes leave from the safety of her home and embarks on a dangerous mission. Dressing as a man, a rider, and she rides into the Battle of Pelennor Fields. Before the battle, men dissuade Éowyn from pretending to be a man and riding on to defend the Rohirrim, but she ignores them, defies their orders and does as she sees fit instead.

Venturing into the war in a male disguise is itself a challenge against people's expectation and an exhibition of her desire of freedom. Eowyn's freedom was manifested in taking her destiny into her own hands, even though this destiny meant her demise she was "the face of one without hope who goes in search of death" (Tolkien, 2005, p.803). Eowyn succeeds in destroying the witch king who presumed no man can hinder him, yet her bravery and thirst for freedom could not match any man's to which Eowyn responds:

But no living man am I! You look upon a woman. Éowyn I am, Éomund's daughter. You stand between me and my lord and kin. Begone, if you be not deathless! For living or dark undead, I will smite you, if you touch him (2005, p.841).

In a sense, defying the commands of her king and undertaking this deadly quest brings a revolution in the representation of women in fantasy fiction as she rebels against the scripted masculine gender roles opposed on women. For instance; when Aragorn asks her about what she is afraid of, to which Éowyn responds "A cage . . . To stay behind bars, until use and old age accept them, and all chance of doing great deeds is gone beyond recall or desire" (Tolkien , 2005, p.784).

Eowyn's attitude and her fearless march into the Battle of Pelennor Fields and confronting the strongest of Sauron's servant displays the clear influence of Norse mythology upon Tolkien as she is a reflection of the Valkyries, lady fighters who ride a wolf or a boar while carrying a spear. They decided the destiny of warriors in combat and transported the dead to Odin's Valhalla (Mark, 2021, para1).

After the battle, she is gravely wounded and sent to the house of healing, saved by the healing abilities of Aragon but never entirely recovered, thus denied to join any more battles. She is put under male care-taker. She then meets Faramir, the ruling prince of Ithilien also recovering from his injuries. Eowyn is given a suitable immobile domestic environment. She then abandons her military career and chooses to be a healer. Ina sense, she chooses conventionality and renounces rebellion as she marries Faramir; she says: "I will be a shieldmaiden no longer ,nor vie with the great Riders, nor take joy only in the songs of slaying. I will be a healer, and love all things that grow and are not barren" (p. 965). However Tolkien shows that choosing to be a healer does not necessarily signify downgrading her position; for the gift of healing in the world of Middle Earth is associated with power and royalty as for Aragorn "The hands of the King are the hands of a healer!"

One can notice an intriguing and newfound diversity in Tolkien's portrayal of Éowyn. For as the previous female characters, Eowyn is also offered her share of

characterisation of beauty and feminine fragility concerning matters of love and emotions. At the same time she can be a furious warrior who yearns to taste vengeance and triumph which is demonstrated when she slays the Witch-King of Angmar. In a sense, Eowyn is the most multifaceted and rounded female character in the legendarium displaying Tolkien's modern ideals inserted in a medieval setting.

Some critics bear a sense of truth regarding Tolkien's handling of female characters. For example, there is no space for a woman among the Fellowship because Tolkien's legendarium is overwhelmingly male-focused and almost all female figures are not the primary characters. Arwen, as an instance is practically catatonic and is only used as a god-worshipping idol and almost exclusively serves as one of the male heroes' romantic interest. Indeed when compared to Galadriel or Éowyn, Arwen's value is not as clear, but without her, Aragorn might not have joined the fellowship on their journey, and as a result, he might not have become king. Therefore, she does play a minor role in the flow of the narrative. Galadriel, in truth may not act actively in the quest bestowed upon male characters of the novels, yet she has a display of power and wisdom; she is an important role in the efficiency of the fellowship as she guides and aids them with her magical abilities which oftentimes turn to be crucial for their survival. Eowyn on the other hand, although her fearlessness and wild nature has been tamed; in important moments, she showed how a female character can be powerful.

Although not an explicit feminist, Tolkien provides a perspective on gender that undoubtedly conveys the suffering a woman like Eówyn endures in a world where men predominate. He showcases a different type of strength that women display. Nancy Enright makes the case that the female characters in *The Lord of the Rings* redefine the whole idea of power via their virtues of caring, sacrifice, and love. By virtue of the fact that Tolkien lived before developments in modern women's studies and gender theory, it is unrealistic to expect that women characters in his writings will adopt recent feminist perspectives.

3.5.2. Female Characters in *A Song of Ice and Fire*

George Martin constructed a straightforwardly patriarchal society in the books and hints that people in the world of Westeros are misogynistic as a way of adopting the accepted perception of women in medieval society as fragile and belittled creatures. This is mentioned in various conversations between characters "the gods made men to fight, and women to bear children. A woman's war is in the birthing bed" (2011, p.6070), or another instance: "women were made to fight their battles in the birthing bed" (2011, p. 5673). Martin also pointed out that "the books reflect a patriarchal society based on the Middle Ages" that did not have an idea about sexual egalitarianism and has a "strong idea about the role of women" (Hibberd, 2015).

Nonetheless, the majority of female characters whose arcs the story traces are far from this description, he presents the work with a diverse spectrum of female characters from docile to powerful, a number of women go through a hero's journey, not lacking from their male counterparts. In this regard Martin points out:

> I wanted to present my female characters in great diversity, even in a society as sexist and patriarchal as the Seven Kingdoms of Westeros. Women would find different roles and different personalities, so women with different talents would find ways to work with it in a society according to who they are (cited in Guxens, 2012).

In the very fact, most female characters in ASOIAF are multi-dimensional and own a point of view in the stories. There is a special focus on their skills, desires, and motivations and can be studied through different lights. However, through the bulk of strong female characters included in the high fantasy series, only three will be put under scrutiny, Brienne of Tarth the Warrior, Daenerys Targaryen the rising queen and Cersei Lannister.

3.5.2.1. Brienne of Tarth

In the second volume of *A Song of Ice and Fire* series, *A Clash of Kings* (1999), a significant female figure is introduced, named Brienne of Tarth. To a certain extent,

she resonates with Tolkien's Eowyn; for, she also stands as a character who breaks free from the traditional restrictions that women in medieval culture experience by becoming a warrior. Brienne begins her narrative unable to make choices or act in ways that are consistent with modern super heroines from mainstream culture because she is adherent to the historical realities of patriarchal ideals connected with medieval society.

Martin in contrast to Tolkien's female warriors identifies Brienne away from the unrealistic beauty standards of fairy tale princesses or the aesthetic perfection of modern women warriors. She enters in the category of female warriors who were characterised similarly as their male counterparts, characters whose power was displayed in their physical strength. This led that she was oftentimes confused to be a male and was a subject of mockery and harassment by others. She was described physically to have male traits, which was a point of focus on the novels "her features were broad and coarse, her teeth prominent and crooked, her mouth too wide, her lips so plump they seemed swollen. A thousand freckles speckled her cheeks and brow, and her nose had been broken more than once" (Martin, 2011, p.1527). In another downgrading instance she is described to have "huge freckled hands, the wide flat face, the thrust of her teeth. Out of armor, her body seemed ungainly, broad of hip and thick of limb, with hunched muscular shoulders but no bosom to speak of". Bienne was affected by this "it was clear from every action that Brienne knew it, and suffered from it" (p.1530). This notion of unreachable beauty standards becomes more suitable and credible to the readers as Varkitta Kaul maintains in this regard:

> Much like their male counterparts, their bodies are hypersexualized, but their attractive physical presence is also fearsome and daring, not to forget that they embody an impossible physicality—a narrow waist, a muscular body and large breasts. The "super body" of a female superhero just cannot be attained. No human, super or otherwise, can sustain these anatomical dimensions (Kaul, 2018, p.22).

As the highborn daughter of a noble lord and only heir of the kingdom of Tarth, she is trained with the highest skills and weaponry. She manages to be a skilled fighter who

triumphs against several male knights. However, she is still expected to act like a noble lady, display graciousness and follow the patriarchal custom of using convenience marriages to build political ties. Thus, she was a target to courting and betrothed to several men; among them Ser Humfrey Wagstaff who tried to control and force her to behave as a proper woman "I will not have my lady wife cavorting about in man's mail. On this you shall obey me, lest I be forced to chastise you" (Martin, 2011, p.3795). Nevertheless, Brienne challenges the expectations of her position and gender by engaging in a duel in exchange of the right to reject her future husband, a duel she fairly wins by defeating her opponent:

> She found the courage to tell Ser Humfrey that she would accept chastisement only from a man who could outfight her. The old knight purpled, but agreed to don his own armor to teach her a woman's proper place. They fought with blunted tourney weapons, so Brienne's mace had no spikes. She broke Ser Humfrey's collarbone, two ribs, and their betrothal. He was her third prospective husband, and her last. Her father did not insist again. (Martin, 2011, p. 3795)

Later on, Brienne leaves her father's home to serve as a personal guard to Renly Baratheon's, one of the pursuers for the Iron Throne. However in Renly Baratheon's camp, she starts being objectified by other soldiers, including purportedly honorable knights, who are solely interested in Brienne because they wish to steal her virginity. She starts experiencing challenges to live up to their expectations of her and the duties they have for her, both noblemen and commoners are disrespectful of her.

Due to the fact that she is a woman, her gender places her at a severe disadvantage compared to other fighters of comparable skills and disqualifies her from knighthood entirely. Even before they see her engage in combat, they discredit her swordsmanship skills. Few people are able to look past her gender and appreciate her for the warrior she is. She is also placed in between blurry lines of the prescribed gender roles; she fits neither with the ladies nor with knights. In this sense, Brienne believes she has failed society by not fitting the expectations and more particularly her father; she could not be feminine to adopt the role of a daughter of a noble lord nor be

a son; placing her position in this area of in-between. She is constantly reminded of this truth "it is said that your father is a good man. If so, I pity him. Some men are blessed with sons, some with daughters. No man deserves to be cursed with such as you" (Martin, 2011, p. 4095). Brienne herself confesses:

> A daughter' Brienne's eyes filled with tears. 'He deserves that. A daughter who could sing to him and grace his hall and bear him grandsons. He deserves a son too, a strong and gallant son to bring honor to his name. (…) I am the only child the gods let him keep. The freakish one, not fit to be a son or a daughter (p. 4234).

This idea of her gender ambiguity is further clearly displayed when the character Podrick is indecisive how to address her upon first meeting "She could hear Podrick calling her, as if from far away. Ser?" he kept saying "Ser? My lady? Ser? My lady?" (p. 3873)

Despite all the turmoil she experiences, Brienne is shown as a devoted, obstinate, and honest character and owns a fervent moral code stronger than of male knights. She also acknowledges that she does not perceive herself as a mother but rather as a warrior.

Many instances show that Brienne in all likelihood is inspired by the medieval legendary female figure Joan of Arc; although they do not come from the same pedigree, as Joan was a peasant girl but their journeys intertwine in giving their oath to kings and sacrificing their lives to fight their causes. Brienne vowed to fight for King Renly Baratheon war to lay hold of the throne, while Joan was a renowned historical warrior who led Prince Charles' French troops into several military victories against the English in the hundred year's war. Yet, the striking analogy is the two women broke gender norms. As aside from her achievements, Joan was imprisoned and tortured for wearing men's clothes and threatened with death sentence; however, with her resilience to assume her identity, she was ultimately executed for cross-dressing which in medieval times defied the Christian ideals (Matzner, 2015, p.1-2). Similarly

Brienne was bullied for wearing armors and taking part and succeeding in battles that should have been led by male knights.

It is worth mentioning that Brienne's power, however limited it may be, comes from her decision to be a warrior. Therefore, sexuality and romantic relationships are not empowering prospects for her. In a certain fashion, Martin expresses his critique of patriarchy in a mediaeval context through Brienne's character. As despite the gender challenges imposed on her; he does not, however, allow Brienne to fall short and portrays her character as tenacious and resilient. Another resilient feminine character that has a fundamental role in the realm is Daenerys of House Targaryen.

3.5.2.2. Daenerys Targaryen

A continent apart from the seven kingdoms, and across the narrow sea, a female protagonist is introduced as a scared and oppressed girl. Daenerys Targaryen is a thirteen years old girl. She is sold to an older foreign warlord Khal Drogo, the chief of a clan of nomadic Dothraki notorious for its brutality and enslavement of the conquered people. She is sold asa child bride in return for an army of one hundred thousand Dothraki warriors by her brother Viserys who believes to be the rightful heir after their father Aerys Targaryen, known as The Mad King was slaughtered by Robert Baratheon. With the help of Drogo's troops he will be able to invade Westeros and reclaim the throne .Viserys treats her badly and according to the Targaryen traditions to keep the dragon blood pure and maintain their control over dragon eggs "the kings blood, the golden blood of old Valyria, the blood of the dragon" (Martin, 2011,p.89). For this purpose, Targaryens used to commit incest. Therefore, Daenerys had believed she will ultimately be forced to wed her brother and never gain freedom; however she was used as a pawn to gain political alliances and military aid.

> 'We go home with an army, sweet sister. With Khal Drogo's army, that is how we go home. And if you must wed him and bed him for that, you will.' He smiled at her. 'I'd let his whole khalasar [bed] you if need be, sweet sister, all forty thousand men, and their horses too if that is what it took to get my army" (Martin, 2011, p.70).

This marriage has another anterior motive for Viserys as it enables him to gain his supposedly lost kingdom and assure the continuity of the Targaryens bloodline thus Daenerys serves the role of a peaceweaver which is mainly referred to women who were forced to marry a member of an enemy clan for the sole purpose of securing peace and sealing alliances between clashing groups. This practice has been particularly inserted in major medieval works. Such marriages did not always result in peace, and the peacemaker was always forced to carry two burdens. Such is the case of Hildeburth in *Beowulf*, she was the Danish king's daughter and was given in marriage to Finn, the king of the Jutes. She accomplished her mission in one way: she at least had one son, a symbol of the mixing of the two tribes' bloodlines. However, the conflict between the tribes continued after the game, and Hildeburh was forced to return to her native Danes after losing her son, brother, and husband (Porter, 2001, para 10). Daenerys fate regarding this arranged marriage did not go differently.

Although her nuptials with Khal Drogo was unorthodox and oppressing as she was still a child of thirteen springs forced to marry a man on his thirties; y et, this union played a crucial role in her ascent to power. Since she was married, she started developing sexual agency in their relationship and feelings of endearment for her husband as slowly Daenerys started to find her voice. Initially she became emotionally detached from her brother Viserys, and stood against his constant manipulations, she started to win the Khal's favor and gain power in the khalasar. She also gained respect as the wife of the Khal, adapted to the customs of her new people and became pregnant with the Khal's child, increasing considerably her status as a khaleesi. Moreover, his future son is prophesied to unite the Dothraki in one khalasar:

> The stallion is the khal of khals promised in ancient prophecy, child. He will unite the Dothraki into a single khalasar and ride to the ends of the earth, or so it was promised. All the people of the world will be his herd (Martin, 2011, p.1101).

What associates Daenerys with the Virgin Mary is her portrayal as the mother of the miracle child and the future Saviour. Therefore, it represents the khaleesi as the epitome of the perfect queen, carrying out her customary duties and having a

significant, indirect impact on the king. These perfect conditions do not last for very long. When Drogo is seriously wounded in a conflict, Dany is faced with the realities of patriarchal society. It turns out that his warriors and his blood-runners will not accept orders of a woman because it is against the customs of the Dothraki. According to their traditions, she is expected to serve out the widow's life in seclusion from the community as it is required of her. In addition, her role as a peaceweaver turns to a disaster while she seeks to save her husband through a rite of blood magic, in which Daenerys unwillingly sacrifices her unborn son, this tremendous sacrifice turns out to be useless and leaves Drogo alive but catatonic.

The most important thing that subverts the character of the Khaleesi and enables her to shift from a position of weakness to gain ceaseless power is her dragons. While initially, on her wedding day she is presented with three dragon eggs as a gift, these eggs are believed to be dormant and unable to break "the eons have turned them to stone, yet they still burn bright with beauty" (Martin p. 86). In spite of this, Dany begins to see prophetic visions about them and develops an undeniable maternal bond with her dragon eggs as she does with her unborn child. McLean argues in his critique of *Earthsea* that for women dragons are a sort of "metaphor of empowerment in their search for a better self-image in our own patriarchal world" (1997, p. 116).

However, the serious transformation manifests itself by the ending of the first novel, when she shortens the sufferings of her half-dead spouse and enters in her funeral pyre after losing all hope in an attempt to die with him. She enters the fire but exits it unhurt with the three dragon eggs formerly thought to be petrified that had been hatched formerly, to emerge from the fire and be reborn as the Mother of Dragons:

> Ser Jorah Mormont found her amidst the ashes ... The cream-and-gold dragon was suckling at her left breast, the green-and-bronze at the right. Her arms cradled them close. The black-and-scarlet beast was draped across her shoulders, its long sinuous neck coiled under her chin" (2011, p. 1767).

While in literature male characters are always engaging in combat against dragons; women on the other hand are viewed as a metaphor for dragons, as they were also victims of male aggression and oppression as dragon- slayer. In this sense, female characters interact with these mythical creatures, work together to unite, assimilate, and in certain cases, fuse with dragons. However, a religious scenario forms the basis of their engagement.

The image of a nude Daenerys surrounded by dragons carries on a long tradition of wonderful art iconography featuring sensual women regaining control and reuniting with the dragon, a representation of the Great Goddesses.

Daenerys' body is treated with reverence in the sequence, which elevates her to the status of a deity. And this is deeply shown when the Dothraki people willingly bend the knee for her. Ultimately, she becomes Daenerys Targaryen, the First of Her Name, Queen of Meereen, Queen of the Andals and the Rhoynar and the First Men, Lord of the Seven Kingdoms, Protector of the Realm, Khaleesi of the Great, Grass Sea, called Daenerys Stormborn, the Unburnt, Mother of Dragons" (Martin, 2011, p. 6579)

In the later parts, as Daenerys is a waken dragon, she names her dragons after the three men that were in her life: Aegon, her older brother who was deceased when she was still a child, her other brother Viserys and Drogon after her husband Drogo. By naming her creatures after them; she put them under her control in another way, challenging the patriarchal society and avenging for her previous oppression. She utilises the strength and violence her dragons bring for her own purposes but learns to subdue it, and tames it just as she has done with the aggression of her husband and his clan.

However, even after taking charge of her tribe, Dany remains only a minor player in Essos, and she must increase her authority before she can end patriarchal supremacy and sail off to govern the seven kingdoms. Forthis purpose, Dany relocates to Slaver's Bay after learning that one of the three cities there, Astapor, is selling a sizable army referred to as the Unsullied. An army tortured and educated from infancy to be expert

warriors who will submit to their male masters. Subjected to castration from their childhood is one of the abuses they endured, reinforcing the theme of sexual violence throughout this narrative which Daenerys has experienced. When she is granted command of the Unsullied, she turns on the master and kills him with her newly acquired army. She then grants the unsullied freedom and declares that anyone who wants to stay can do so without restriction, but she requests that they fight for her as free men rather than as slaves. By doing so she gains the respect and loyalty of her followers and underlines her emphasis on eradicating injustice and tyranny as a fundamental aspect of her character and her rule.

Following her miscarriage, Daenerys is unable to give birth to children, but she still able to adopt motherhood in other ways. She is referred to as the "mother of dragons" as soon as her dragon eggs hatch, as was previously mentioned, and as she travels across Slaver's Bay, her role as an unconventional mother deepens. After her prominent role in setting all the slaves free, the people of Yunkai lift her up on their shoulders and address her as "Mhysa," their name for "mother" *Mhysa!*" they called. "*Mhysa!MHYSA!*" They were all smiling at her, reaching for her, kneeling before her. "*Maela,*" some called her while otherscried "*Aelalla*" or "*Qathei*" or "*Tato,*" but whatever the tongue it all meant the same thing. *Mother. They are calling me Mother*" (p.4568). Dany has liberated them, giving them power and agency, and they acknowledge this by appreciating her and placing her as a mother figure. Daenerys challenges the patriarchal and oppressive norms not only by empowering herself but also allowing other to break free from their subjugation. In this sense she is pictured as the savior, a role prescribed purely for male figures.

As the novels stand as of this writing, Daenerys departs from the continent Essos to Westeros, beginning to claim her right and disrupting the oppressive and patriarchal systems of Westeros. In a nutshell, Daenerys had risen from a position of full enslavement and oppression to take control of one of the largest human forces in the realm of ASOIAF. She initially gains sexual dominance, leadership position then displaying her sensitivity and power to lead others to their independence. She achieves

a pinnacle of her empowerment as she marches towards her ultimate goal and journeys to Westeros in the conclusion of the later novels.

3.5.2.3. Cersei Lannister

Cersei's analysis is estimably harder than other female characters, for she is from the first glance established as an antagonist and throughout the first books she lacks a point of view and her description is presented though the lenses of other characters with whom she engages in interactions, and who oftentimes occur to be male. Cersei Lannister, is the wife of Robert Baratheon, and the queen of the Seven Kingdoms of Westeros. At the outset, her tale seems to echo Daenerys' as her union to Robert was planned by her father as a political ploy to unite the two powerful houses of Lannister and Baratheon. These unions were fairly frequent throughout the Medieval Ages. While Cersei and her husband do not share a romantic relationship, as Robert was intended to Lyana Stark and Cersei to Aegon, Cersei has a weakness for the power that comes with her position as a queen despite her struggle with it.

Paradoxically, although she is supposed to be the most powerful woman in the realm as the queen she starts her story as the least empowered, living in an unhappy marriage, not wanted by her husband and frequently sexually abused by him. Raised in a house led by powerful men, Cersei is aware of her position as a woman in the patriarchal society of the Seven Kingdoms but she gains empowerment through using her femininity as a way to manipulate. Cersei resents her gender and the confines it places onto her. In her assessment, she does not obtain the respect she is due and the only cause is her gender, she believes her femininity is the origin for her issues; this is particularly hinted at in an encounter she has with her husband:

> Robert's face was dark with anger. "How many times must I tell you to hold your tongue, woman?"
> Cersei's face was a study in contempt. "What a jape the gods have made of us two," she said. "By all rights, you ought to be in skirts and me in mail" (p.955).

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Her queenship does not offer her direct power or a say in the matters of the realm, the only way she is able to rule is by manipulating her son; she envies men in the realm "If I were a man I would be Jaime... If I were a man I could rule this realm in my own name in place of Tommen's" (2011, p.6749).

Unlike Daenerys who subverts the patriarchal system or Brienne who resists it by selecting her path, Cersei imitates the subjugating system. She uses what has been thrust upon her as an act of disempowerment and uses it to her own benefit. From being a victim of conjugal sexual abuse; she, in turn uses her sexuality as a way to manipulate and emasculate others, she shares her beliefs on this matter with Sansa Stark "Tears are not a woman's only weapon. You've got another one between your legs, and you'd best learn to use it" (p.3213).The tranquil fashion in which she carries this conversation emphasises her readiness to use or sacrifice even a woman's precious possession to reach her objectives.

Cersei is in all likelihood, the female character that is distant from the audience, for throughout the novel acted as a proud, ambitious and manipulative character; leaving little room for audiences to empathise with her. Nevertheless, she starts to have a voice and a point of view in the fourth part of the books *A Feast of Crows* in which events starts to unveil from her perspective. Martin is far from picturing one-dimensional characters; even female antagonists never represent pure evil as was the tradition in medieval literature. In this sense, Cersei suffered the consequences of her actions when her resilience is breached and becomes the target of a powerful religious organisation in Westeros. The retribution for Cersei's imprudent political scheming and sexual encounters with the men she used to manipulate the court resulted in a heavy chastisement as she is forced to experience "the walk of shame". It is a public atonement walk which entails to walk around King's Landing naked as punishment, to be subject to insults and screams by people repeating the words "shame … shame" which is a penalty and humiliation that is not imposed out to any male characters who commit the same adultery. In such a situation, Cersei refuses to show her weakness "I am a lioness. I will not cringe for them" (Martin, 2011b, p.1304).

However, her endurance to this abuse does not last as long "She did not feel beautiful, though. She felt old, used, filthy, ugly ... she was only a woman, not so very different from their wives, more like their mothers than their pretty little maiden daughters" (2011b, p.1312). George Martin refers to the tradition as a "punishment directed at women to break their pride and Cersei is defined by her pride" (cited in Bilyeau, 2019). In fact, the walk of atonement was not only a fictional incident but this fashion of punishment was a medieval practice thrust upon women accused with adultery. This particular incident does bear historical antecedent, for example, The Penance of Jane Shore, the mistress of King Edward VI, who was sentence to an atonement walk in the streets of London for adultery and allegedly conspiring against King Richard III (Connolly, 2017). This penance was made popular through William Blake's painting holding the same name. Within this incident, the author opens a door to see the character under a new light and adopt an empathetic stance towards her actions.

Contrarily to Tolkien who featured powerful female characters despite their surfaced description, Martin incorporated female characters as protagonist who played an important role in the direction of the narratives despite being victims to rape and violence that reflect the circumstances of medieval times. He succeeded into incorporating contemporary ideals of women empowerment.

Female power in Westeros' repressive patriarchy can be displayed through the selected female characters and their sturdy will to live life the way they see fit. Formerly a victim, Daenerys arguably becomes the most dominant character in *A Song of Ice and Fire* by virtue of her use of her position as a once-powerless childbearing figure to a mother of dragons whose reputation spreads fear throughout the Seven Kingdoms. On the other hand, Brienne realising she fails in filling the expected role of the lady decides to take the path that will allow her to be true to her own personality and objective using her power in shielding herself from the ugliness of the world.In a way, Brienne reflects the attributes of medieval women warriors but contrarily to medieval warrior stereotypes, she mirrors the contemporary equality in physical strength and masculine features. Far from the spectrum, Cersei Lannister although

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manipulative uses her power of sexuality as a way to pull the strings, strive and survive in a male dominated family.

3.6.   From Maidens to Female Warriors

Fantasy literature has gone through monumental changes since its conception and female portrayal in this fiction has along with it developed tremendously from forms of narratives that relied heavily on mythical and medieval sources and sought to reflect the societal norms in an authentic fashion; in this regard, it aimed at reflecting the gender norms and values.

In its representation of the feminine gender, the genre has had a long and dubious past. Even now, it is difficult to find female writers and strong female characters. This is partially because the genre struggles with not just societal conventions but also the chivalric ideals and gender roles of medieval periods, which it frequently imitates.

In this sense they did not receive a favorable portrayal in early modern fantasy novels as the bulk of female characters featured in such fiction have been depicted in a rather misogynistic way; while conducting flattering and superior descriptions of male heroes as Sandqvist notes that while "the male characters contribute in war, resolve alliances, rule and dominate the society. Women are depicted as assets where they are either married to men or live to serve and obey them" (Sandqvist, 2011, p.14).

In the few instances women were indeed put under analyzing lenses, the stereotypical result was to be painted as either damsel in distress or sorceress. An explicit example of modern fantasy's stereotypical painting of women was C.S. Lewis' in *The Chronicles of Narnia*(1950)*,* which sets a particular focus on female beauty and sexuality and moulds the personification of the evil as a female with a powerful presence of wicked women. The Narnia stories have included some of the most physically magnificent women, yet the more attractive they are, the more evil they represent.

However with the coming of Lewis' contemporary and literary counterpart Tolkien who was part of the literary group Lewis belonged to " the Inklings", traditions have changed since society in general and Literature in specific has shifted since the moment *the Lord of the Rings* trilogy hit the shelves. Although Tolkien was put under scrutiny for his under-representation of female figures especially in his first literary product *The Hobbit* who included no female characters except some few mentions; then female figures in his trilogy received contradictive views spanning from critics who criticized the way the gender was handled to others who praised the portrayal of his women and argued that they reflected his times and the position of women during the medieval era which works as his fundamental sources; in addition to the fact that Tolkien lived before developments in modern women's studies and gender theory, it is unrealistic to expect that women characters in his writings will adopt feminist perspectives.

Despite these strands of thoughts, one must disclose that feminine characters in Middle Earth in point of fact are diverse and display some contemporary traits; in truth there exist a sort of development of female empowerment within the novels from the passiveness and submission of Arwen to the portrayal of Galadriel as a symbol of wisdom and authority to the rebellion of Eowyn against the patriarchal powers reveal a discernible liberation movement. On the other hand, a more in-depth examination of Tolkien's writings revealed that women's roles were crucial to the predominance of men in the War of the Ring as well as to the events depicted in the novels.

This liberation continues with Martin's pen as his portrayal of female characters is more complex; to a certain extent it abides to the feminist ideals and contemporary standards despite the criticism of the over-sexualizing of his female characters. Martin employs medieval elements but then again, subverts and attempts in working against them; he jumps beyond the accepted patterns, works on destroying them through the volumes. This subversion is essentially displayed in his portrayal of female characters; Martin uses a variety of them, and these characters are crucial to the progression of the plot. In many instances, they hold a greater importance than male characters.

Even in *A Song of Ice and Fire*, males are still the predominant gender; female figures in many instances reflects the medieval notions of treatment of women, they are flawed and fall in the archetypal female characters. Nevertheless, the majority of female characters embarks on their own individual quest and reaches their boon.

Fantasy has not always been genteel to women especially when it comes to the way it portrays them, whether as damsels in distress, passive ladies who do nothing more than fill in the castle's backdrop, or mere assets who bear their lords' heirs. Nevertheless, as society evolves, so too must the literature that results from it.

In a nutshell, Tolkien therefore favours women's equality. Tolkien is a feminist in the manner that he portrays stereotypically feminine traits favorably and in the way that his female characters successfully revolt against patriarchal authorities. Tolkien's emphasis on reproduction reflects his time, but Martin's more inclusive portrayal of women is quite contemporary. There is still an emphasis on motherhood and reproduction, but there is also an emphasis on the diversity of women outside of their capacity for reproduction.

3.7. Conclusion

In recent times, there has been flooding interest towards fantasy literature. This genre's broad appeal has been credited to its basic framework built on archetype and myth, which holds a powerful allure for its readers. Many literary genres share antecedents that make up a large portion of their structure, which effectively compares works of that genre to one another. However, it is unprecedented how much of this is true in fantasies.

Fantasy fiction has adopted many of the same concepts that made those stories so comparable without that their authors fall victim to mere imitation by flavoring these pseudo medieval themes with contemporary ideals. In this regard, the aim of the study was to identify the intertextual relations through the archetypal components that these works of fantasy literature included. Although the two respective fantasy novelists were distanced by time and subverted in terms of writing styles, it was kept in mind

that they undoubtedly reflected the same medieval elements with considerable deviations and commentaries regarding the era they have been writing in.

The third chapter is broadly concerned with "The Hero's Journey," which is built on the core idea of the quest, a motif that permeates fantasy literature. In order to complete his journey, the hero must leave his familiar home. Regularly, he travels with amiable companions who understand the hardships of the journey. Both a literal and figurative search and voyage may be involved. According to Carl Jung's theory, the 'Self' undertakes the journey in order to become individuated. In this regard, the heroic characters in the given novels have all walked the same path within the Monomyth.

The third and conclusive chapter is concerned as well with the portrayal of female characters in fantasy fiction and its evolution that has mirrored the development of the genre itself; from a palpable absence of femininity in worlds controlled by patriarchy to submissive feminine characters or stereotypical portrayal of malicious women. The portrayal of female figures has developed and enabled the casting of strong leading female rulers and warriors that define their own terms, female characters who reflect the tremendous changes that the waves of feminism have brought in the last decades.

General Conclusion

Literature and history have since ancient times been ceaselessly braided into one another. Literary criticism has constantly examined how literature depicts reality in various ways. From modern to contemporary times, literature has shown an eager attempt in establishing a literary dialogue with tradition, a desperate return to the roots. In this regard, the fascination of fantasy literature with the Middle Ages as a preconceived setting for fantastical narrative has been a direct outcome of tradition and imitation. Once this compelling medieval era has been adopted as the suitable source material and gained the likeness of audiences, it was difficult to resist its lure and started to be the main skeleton around which these wondrous narratives were weaved.

Fantasy literature is one of the most important genres that stimulate the existence of wondrous elements; in this light, fantasy writers draw inspiration from medievalism to situate their imaginary worlds in between the period when magic was still thought to exist and the period when supernatural phenomena have diminished as a result of the development of science and technology. The Middle Ages were, in a manner, a midway between fiction and reality. On the basis of the research conducted in this dissertation one can argue that the infatuation with medieval literature by fantasists can be pinpointed in several points.

First, the Middle Ages were an epoch which witnessed a predominance of mystery and uncertainty that emerged as a result of an absence of scientific understanding. In this case, the existence of supernatural forces permeated the mindset of medieval society, which provides rich material that may be transformed into a credible but also unexpected fantasy world that will satisfy the writer's and readers' wistful yearning for the long-gone past. In addition, this widely held conception of the Middle Ages as a mystical epoch that was inherited subconsciously throughout the literary tradition offers a foundation for a secondary universe that is more or less already constructed and nearly universally recognizable. In this fashion, the author need not go into great depth while describing such a universe; instead, he/she may pick out the most important features and concentrate on them, readers just need to be made aware of the secondary world's overall medieval character; everything else will be furnished by their imagination.

On another note, it has been established that fantasy genre deemed as anti-real or unrealistic literary tendency and thus has been totally dismissed within the canonical sphere. This embodiment of medieval elements, adoption of medieval ideals and the vivid representation of medieval literary themes and including them in their works brushes off this degrading etiquette, stimulates the merits of fantasy writing and enhances its scholarly recognition.

This dissertation had for a purpose to trace the footprints of medieval literary reminiscence in contemporary writings and particularly the fantasy genre; therefore, it studies through an intertextual approach the links forged between medieval poetry, historical events and product of contemporary time's fantastical tales. In this respect, *The Lord of the Rings* can be deemed as a heroic rendition of the Middle Ages, a fantasy tale that sprung from medieval roots with modern branches as it brings a modern critique on the medieval era. It reflects the heroic ideals and chivalry of that time. It also recreates the geography of the Middle Ages, mimics their customs and traditions through Tolkien's world building. In a sense, Tolkien amalgamated the various mythical threads he was familiar with, bestowed upon them the hues and patterns of his own inner muse, and wove them into the world known as Middle-earth.

Through the intertextual analysis conducted, it has come to attention that the novel weaves a rich tapestry of intertextual references. First, it borrows the stylistic narrative from medieval literature with the poetic insertions and wandering songs that overflow the stories and mirror the medieval folkloric nature. It also revitalises the mournful and elegiac themes pervasive in medieval elegies. In this manner, it adds a critique on the medieval melancholy. This latter was burdened with existential trauma and alienation which was caused by the constant medieval warfare and the feeling of loss and longing to simpler times. Tolkien reflected the atmosphere of renowned medieval elegies while also infusing his stories with a depth and resonance that echoes through times.

On a further strand of thought, the analysis of archetypal moulding of characters reflects that the hero is a medieval based framework revived through the literary

tradition. The hero is the face of human consciousness and portrays heroic metamorphosis. Over the course of human history, mythology has helped people comprehend existence through allegorical explanations, but while the modern world provides secular explanations for life's mysteries, fantasy takes readers back to the origins of heroic myths and gives them the chance to enjoy telling tales from distant eras. A sense of magic and mystery that is missing from everyday life in the contemporary world but has always been an essential and global feature of human awareness may be brought back to readers' minds through fantasy novels.

Therefore, in terms of archetypal characterisation, the majority of heroes portrayed in *The Lord of the Rings* march in a paralleled course as mythical heroes in medieval records but some bear apparent deviations that redress reality according to modern and contemporary concerns. Frodo, the heroic and virtuous figure, who has followed the medieval orthodox journey, gradually succumbs to the fascination exerted by the object, bounding his mission to end in a failure. It is unlike any journey found in medieval folklore; thus, Frodo is a modern critique opposing the belief of the idyllic legendary hero and the eventual triumph of good over evil.

As far as gender representation is concerned, women have long been subject of disempowerment; first in the dark ages then in literature whether through religion or politics. Fantasy with its subversive nature has succeeded to capture the medieval frame of mind concerning gender issues and paint it in their pages; however it worked on glorifying the scarce instances of women empowerment of medieval history through incredible female characters.

Tolkien, in his representation of women is frequently found careful and archetypal by virtue of reflecting the ideals of the dark times marked by patriarchal characteristics. Nevertheless, in his modern invented mythology, the few women portrayed hold a multidimensional role; therefore rendering them essential ingredients to the overall story and necessary for its balance. After all, the impression of sexism left by the work is mainly caused by the limited presence of female characters and the author's literary influences.
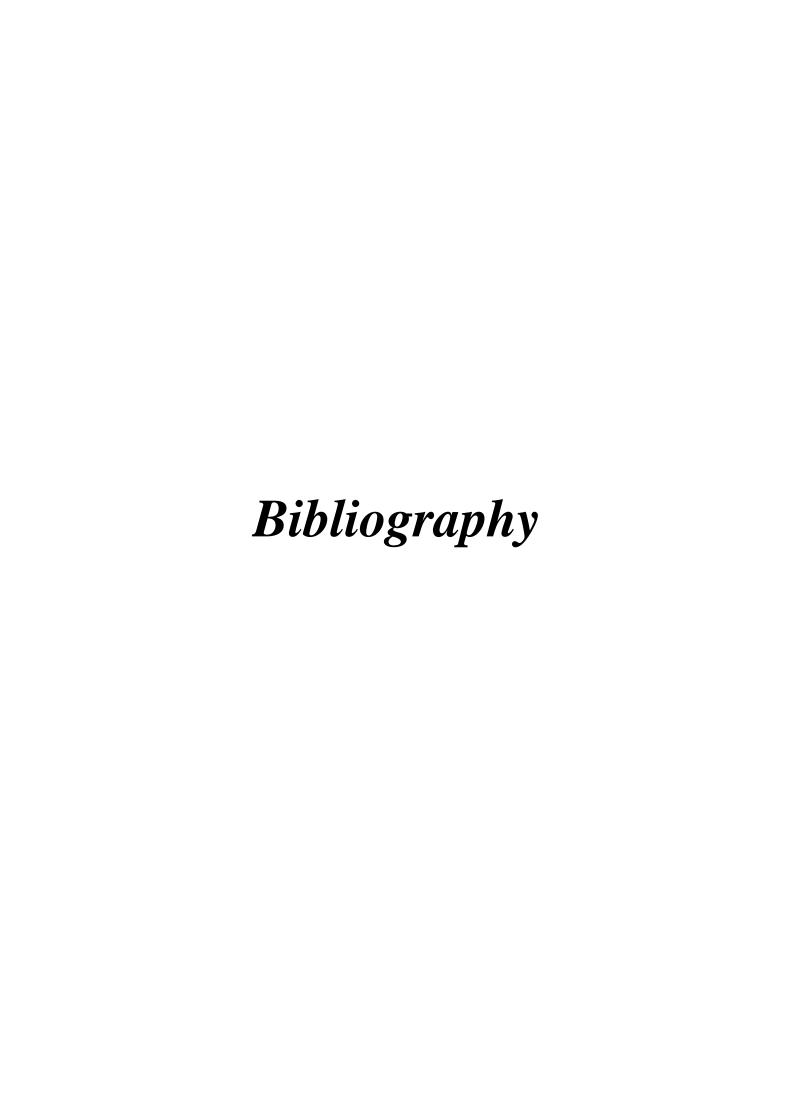
A Song of Ice and Fire, published decades after the precedent case study is still a dream of Middle Ages, yet disguised in a contemporary cloak that deviates from the preconceived idealism of his precursors. In a stricter sense, Martin builds on Tolkien's innovation and continues in his own quest to recreate the medieval literary discourse. He intends to subvert the adopted structure of medieval literature within his anatomy of the Monomyth. He initially defies traditional heroism and embraces the gritty realism of human nature. For example, the heroic figure he portrays, Jon Snow, marches within the preconceived steps of the archetypal hero; however, his journey becomes a more ambiguous and unpredictable endeavor. Since, in the end, he denies his prescript faith, effuses his ascension to the throne for the better benefit of the realm and is left to trace his own path. In this manner, he reflects the character's realistic nature that stems from contemporary ideals rather than the whimsical medieval.

In another instance of reflecting the break of contemporary literature from the chain of the traditional way, *A Song of Ice and Fire* is one of the rare epic fantasy writings in which a woman is offered such a prominent part. If not all, most of the female characters in the narrative are taken into account, it is displayed that they achieve their greatest success when they choose to pursue a reinvention of their identities in line with contemporary feminist politics and reject the roles that have been assigned to them by the refined culture and patriarchal society.

In this light, Martin in *A Song of Ice and Fire* does indeed relocate the atmosphere of the Middle Ages in his series by reshaping the medieval history in his narrative, intertextualising medieval works, their inherited themes and following the patterns of the medieval heroic figure through his male and female characters. However, they adopt the contemporaneity by bringing a fresh and progressive perspective in terms of gender and heroic identity.

To encapsulate, this research explores the hero's journey as a recurring motif in both medieval and contemporary literature. In medieval texts, the hero's journey often followed a linear, predictable structure where the protagonist embarks on a quest to overcome obstacles and achieve a certain goal; however, authors like Tolkien and

Martin have expanded and subverted this narrative template, introducing morally ambiguous characters, unexpected plot twists and more nuanced exploration of personal growth and redemption. In addition, it investigates the manner in which female representation has evolved in fantasy; as often relegated to passive roles in medieval texts, in contemporary fantasy, writers have challenged these traditional archetypes by crafting strong complex female characters that play pivotal roles which reflects broader shifts in societal norms and gender dynamics.

Succinctly, this undertaking contributes to a deeper understanding of how medieval influences shape contemporary fantasy literature. Through an intertextual exploration of connections between these two renowned works, it becomes patent that authors like Tolkien and Martin have paved the way for more inclusive and complex storytelling, challenging the evolving traditional tropes of the genre; thus shedding light on the enduring power of medieval literature as a foundation for modern day fantasy.

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Abstract

This thesis aims at studying the influence of medieval literature on modern and contemporary fantasy through the lense of discourse analysis. To this end, the study provides a comprehensive background on fantasy fiction, its development, and medievalist contexts. It outlines the importance of the discourse concept within the novel, specifically highlighting intertextuality and dialogism as essential tools to the overall objective of the research. Next, it focuses on analyzing medieval intertextuality in the fantasy genre by comparing and reexamining various themes, as well as investigating the extent to which writers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries create fantasies set in medieval environments. Furthermore, it seeks to explore intertextual resemblances by analyzing archetypal patterns, specifically focusing on the Monomyth or the Hero's Journey, and also examining how fantasy literature manifests in the context of female representation. The influential epic fantasies *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien and *A Song of Ice and Fire* by G.R.R. Martin's have been adopted as the primary sources by virtue of their richness of medieval elements and global appeal.

تلخيص

تهدف هذه الاطروحة إلى دراسة تأثير الأدب العصور الوسطي على الخيال الحديث والمعاصر من خلال تحليل الخطاب. ولهذا الغرض، تقدم الدراسة خلفية شاملة حول الخيال الروائي، وتتبع تطوره وتوضيحه ضمن سياقات العصور الوسطى. وتسلط الضوء على أهمية مفهوم الخطاب داخل الرواية، مع التركيز بشكل خاص على التناص والحوار كأدوات أساسية لتحقيق الهدف العام للبحث. بعد ذلك، تركز على تحليل تناص العصور الوسطي في نوع الخيال من خلال مقارنة وإعادة فحص مختلف المواضيع، بالإضافة إلى استقصاء إلى أي حد قد يقوم كتّاب القرنين العشرين والواحد والعشرين بإبتكار خيالات في بيئات العصور الوسطى. وتسعى الدراسة أيضاً لاستكشاف الشبهات التنصية من خلال تحليل الأنماط الأصلية، مع التركيز بشكل خاص على رحلة البطل، و استكشاف كيفية تجسيد الأدب الخيالي لتمثيل النساء. وقد تم اعتماد على سيد الخواتم لج.ر.ر. تولكين و اغنية الجليد و النار لج.ر.ر. مارتن كمصادر أساسية بسبب غناها بالعناصر الوسطية وجاذبيتها العالمية.

Abstrait

Cette thèse vise à étudier l'influence de la littérature médiévale sur le fantastique moderne et contemporain à travers l'analyse du discours. À cette fin, l'étude offre un contexte sur la fiction fantastique, son développement et ses contextes médiévaux. Elle souligne l'importance du concept de discours dans le roman, mettant en lumière l'intertextualité et le dialogisme comme des outils essentiels. Ensuite, elle se concentre sur l'analyse de l'intertextualité médiévale dans le genre fantastique en comparant et réexaminant divers thèmes, ainsi qu'en enquêtant sur la mesure dans laquelle les écrivains des XXe et XXIe siècles créent des fantasmes dans des environnements médiévaux. De plus, elle cherche à explorer les ressemblances intertextuelles en analysant des motifs archétypaux, se concentrant sur le Monomythe tout en examinant également la manière dont la littérature fantastique se manifeste dans le contexte de la représentation féminine. Le Seigneur des Anneaux de J.R.R. Tolkien et Le Trône de Fer de G.R.R. Martin, ont été adoptés comme principales sources en raison de leur richesse en éléments médiévaux et de leur attrait mondial.