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MODERN ROMANCE: A STUDY OF TECHNIQUES AND THEMES

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
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INTRODUCTION

As the generally accepted founder of modern romance, William Morris (1834-1896), at the end of the nineteenth century, begins a new era in anti-realistic prose fiction. The uses and abuses of the new industrial society caused strong reactions among the intellectuals of Victorian England. While Dickens described in great naturalistic detail the mills and factories, Morris turned to fantasy as an expression of his alternative to the horror of what Blake called the "dark, Satanic mills." Morris expressed his fear of the dehumanization of society both in his political tracts, and in his constant artistic search, particularly in the latter part of his life, for an idealized, pastoral world. One of the leading socialist reformers of his day, Morris' politics were tempered by his attitudes on art. As active in the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments as in The Socialist League, he turned to the past as an expression of his hopes for the future.

Morris' medieval world, however, is a personal, non-historic artifact. He borrows the trappings of medieval romances and the Northern sagas, but the transfer is not achieved organically. His romances are a hybrid form with certain affectations of language, plot, and subject matter borrowed from medieval romance, but it is his own Victorian imagination that breathes vitality into his works. Morris'

medieval and rural world is an ordering device, an attempt to conquer the chaos and sense of loss caused by the change from an agricultural to an industrial society. The dissolution and disruption of age-old ties to the land, caused by the move from the countryside to the city, leaves the Victorian with a sense of fragmentation of the universe.¹ Over and over again, writers of this period speak of feeling that theirs is an age of import in history, because it is a period of transition. The resulting attempts to adjust to a new modus vivendi were characterized by a sense of moral responsibility and a great deal of introspection and self-criticism. It is the age of Ruskin and Carlyle.

Morris himself reacted particularly to the ugliness of industrial life. He was a designer at heart; his companies produced furniture, wallpaper, printing type, all with the implied notion of the necessary coexistence of utility and beauty. He wished to return to the medieval guild system, for in it he saw the possibility for the artisan and craftsman to create beautiful things. He also wished to return to the peaceful, domesticated landscape of rural England. In his prose romances, all written towards the end of his life as a kind of "escape" from his world, Morris uses the quest plot structure, for "Romance meant action as well as escape,

¹For a representative discussion of the Victorian literary mentality, see: E.D.H. Johnson, ed., General Introduction to The World of the Victorians: An Anthology of Poetry and Prose (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), pp.xi-xx. Also, J.H. Buckley, The Victorian Temper (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1951).

even if it was action long ago."¹ He also uses the traditional confrontation of good and evil as personified in idealized heroes or heroines, the rite de passage, and the use of magic; but in doing so, he creates an artificial world, malgré lui, possible only in our modern times.

The world of romance is a wish-fulfillment dream world, harmonious, ordered into clearly defined topic areas and problems. Good inevitably conquers evil, and order prevails over chaos. Non-ordinary, or magical, reality is accepted although often contrasted with ordinary reality. Displacement in time and space occurs--in romance we are dealing with an imaginative past. Romance owes a good deal to the fairy tale, as we shall see in the first chapter. Like other genres which partake of vision of non-ordinary and imaginative reality rather than the ordinary, romance seeks to order and define our inner and outer environments. It thus corresponds to the psychological phenomenon upon which myth is based. Modernity, however, has modified this vision. The elemental archetypes typical of fairy tale, for example, will become more complicated, infinitely more ambiguous, as well as more personalized, in modern romance in particular, and in all genres of anti-realistic fiction in general. It is a creative vision that bursts the bonds of einfache Formen and typology in typically twentieth century ways. As this is true, romance develops as a genre opposed to the novel (an anti-novel) while it shares certain of the

¹Asa Briggs, ed., Introduction to William Morris: Selected Writings and Designs (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1962), p. 15.

characteristics of the novel, especially its characterization and its narrative techniques. Fairy tale, science fiction, and romance all create closed, organically unified spheres that are distinct from the ordinary environment in which they are written.

For a further understanding of the world of fantasy, let us examine briefly J. R. R. Tolkien's essay, "On Fairy Stories." For Tolkien, the creation of fantasy is vital to living. It is a rational activity and thus despite its wish-fulfillment dream aspect not a dream, nor can any story that says it is a dream be a true fairy story. Fantasy satisfies many human desires; at its heart is the task of realizing, "independent of the conceiving mind,"¹ imagined wonder. Faerie, the state of wonder, immediately makes visible the images of fantasy. Not all are beautiful, because they reflect all aspects of their creators. This Tolkien calls Sub-creation. Sub-creative art that includes images of wonder is Fantasy. Other human desires linked to this quality of strangeness and wonder are the desire to survey the depths of space and time, the desire to communicate with other living things, the desire to be free, and the desire to escape from hunger, thirst, poverty, injustice, and most of all, death.

Fantasy is a form of literary art which creates a Secondary World, recognizing, but not enslaved by, the Primary

¹J. R. R. Tolkien, "On Fairy Stories," The Tolkien Reader, with an Introduction by Peter S. Beagle (New York: Ballantine Books, 1966), p. 14.

World. Both the sub-creator and the reader step into the Secondary World "to the satisfaction of their senses"¹; this process Tolkien labels Enchantment. Tolkien emphasizes repeatedly that Fantasy is a natural--and rational--human activity, artistic in desire and purpose. It attempts to renew, to regain a clear view of things. Like Morris, he is horrified at our Industrial age, which he considers unreal and out of touch with the life of nature and of human nature as well. This "Recovery" of health and a clear view is the "Escape" and the "Consolation" of Fantasy. These two words are used seriously, without pejorative meaning. For Tolkien, Escape is accompanied by Anger and Revolt. The Consolation is the happy ending, which is defined as "joy"--"a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth."²

As is apparent from this brief summary, Tolkien and Morris share the view that the industrial age is not only ugly, but also unnatural, dangerous, and ultimately destructive. Tolkien, because of his love of nature, which he symbolizes in the tree and the leaf, returns in this essay, and in The Lord of the Rings, to a mythical past in which wonder is created both by magic and by a kind of inversion of ordinary things, caused by the Recovery of a clear view. Important also is his emphasis on the complete surrender of both reader and creator to the world of fantasy (Secondary World) while in it, and also his determination that the faculty of

¹Ibid., pp. 52-53.

²Ibid., p. 71.

fantasy-making is an essential part of our existence. This sentiment will be echoed by many writers of the different genres of fantasy, in particular Lord Dunsany. What Tolkien defines as Fantasy, we define as modern romance, leaving the word fantasy to designate a broader spectrum of imaginative visions. Tolkien's story, however, has undergone, as we pointed out earlier, many modifications, the result of our modern literary age.

In this study, we shall attempt to define modern romance as a genre of narrative prose fiction, very much alive today. This will be done by attempting to isolate some of the more important elements that make a romance and by analyzing them especially in the works of four major romancers: William Morris, Lord Dunsany, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Mervyn Peake. Each of these authors has contributed in a special and important way to the development of the genre as a twentieth century fictional form. Finally, we shall place romance in the larger family of fantasy by suggesting parallels and differences with other modern genres, such as science fiction. The psychological impulse that generates fantasy is always the same; its variations are as numerous as those who express their visions.

CHAPTER I

QUEST

The simplest way to describe romance is to begin with the quest, which is central to the plot. Investigation of the subject matter via form, given the necessarily episodic nature of this genre, will aid in arriving at some understanding of its essence. The desire for order, so much a part of both fairy tale and fantasy, is reflected in the essentially sequential nature of their adventure plot structures.

The quest itself, no matter how, when or where it appears in literature, is always a passage through difficulties toward some goal. In the popular fairy tale as in traditional romance, the goal is achieved, so that there is a happy ending. This is the "Consolation" referred to by J. R. R. Tolkien in his essay "On Fairy Stories." When the quest appears in its basic, archetypal forms in romance (for example, the young man who sallies forth to seek his fortune), it is most closely related to the folk tale. The hero and other characters are not as vital to the telling of the tale as to the events themselves. In his Introduction to The Wood Beyond the World, Lin Carter describes modern romance as "The tale of quest, adventure or war set in an

invented age and worldscope of the author's own imagination."¹ In his often cited book, The Folktale, Stith Thompson defines fairy tale: "A Märchen is a tale of some length involving a succession of episodes or motifs. It moves in an unreal world without definite locality or definite characters and is filled with the marvelous."² Later he says: " . . . the plot structure of the tale is much more stable and more persistent than its form."³ If we compare these two statements, we see both the striking similarities and relationships between fairy tale (both the artistic and the popular) and modern romance, and the point at which they diverge. Fundamental to both definitions is what we have called quest plot structure.

In modern romance, the young hero in archetypal search of self begins to incorporate, slowly but unmistakably, many of the characteristics of the psychological hero of the modern novel, reaching his culmination in the intense interiorization of Titus Groan and Steerpike in Mervyn Peake's fantasies, and the height of ironic self-criticism in James Branch Cabell's Horvendile alias Felix Kennaston. For all their sophistication and for all the

¹Lin Carter, "About The Wood Beyond the World and William Morris: The Fresh, Scrubbed, Morning World of William Morris" in The Wood Beyond the World, by William Morris (New York: Ballantine Books, 1969), p. ix.

²Stith Thompson, The Folktale (New York: Dryden Press, 1946), p. 8.

³Ibid., p. 10.

imaginary ingenuity of Tolkien's Middle Earth and its inhabitants, the basic quest structure remains.

Like fairy tale and myth, fantasy allows an imaginatively knowable but unrealizable reality to become actuality. As both André Jolles and J. R. R. Tolkien point out, one of man's fundamental characteristics is the desire for the wonderful, the marvelous, the magical. Romance, fairy tale, and myth all depict man's search for an ordered, knowable world, in which he can be comfortable. Myth and ritual are man's attempts to control the environment; fairy tale and fantasy express the need and yearning to do so.¹ All of these are also closely associated to dream reality. The titles of many quest stories, as for example H. P. Lovecraft's Dream-Quest of the Unknown Kadah, clearly demonstrate this connection. A world in which order reigns and good triumphs over evil is a wish-fulfillment dream world. Yet the moment the romancer overtly equates his magical world of fantasy with dream, he violates the norms of modern romance.² MacDonald's romances Lilith and Phantastes destroy the boundaries of this integral, organic world, and therefore are not true romances. This may be contrasted with one of the medieval antecedents of modern fantasy, The Romance of

¹A related form, the epic, expresses this desire even in the Gilgamesh. The hero is two-thirds god, one-third human; his quest is for eternal life. During the course of his journey, he goes to hell and receives, then loses, the gift. The return home and the rest of his life are disposed of very briefly.

²See Tolkien, "On Fairy Stories," p. 13.

the Rose, which has a dream structure. The interplay between magical and ordinary reality as though both were equally a part of the world is essential to modern romance.

The successful completion of the quest, in reality a ritual enactment of the quest for self, is a necessary concomitant to the wish-fulfillment dream world in which it is set. The journey comprised of obstacles, almost always evil forces, either human or supernatural, is the price the hero pays for peace, knowledge, and self-fulfillment. There is a progression of complexity in this quest form, moving from the folk tale to the art fairy tale to romance. Often it has been difficult to separate art from popular art, as in the Grimm brothers' collection of tales. The fairy tale quest hero is often a socially unacceptable person, either because of his supposed stupidity or some other handicap, or he is a younger son, as for example Iron Hans or Tom Thumb. Yet just as often he is a prince or some other socially acceptable person. Fairy tale demonstrates both extremes and thus embraces the whole spectrum of human reality. What is important is that the fairy tale hero often undergoes a metamorphosis: the swineherd becomes a prince, or Cinderella marries one, etc. As Max Lüthi points out, the heart of the fairy tale is humanity's capacity for change.¹ Kingships, gold, and the like are age-old symbols for what is good, high, and noble, while

¹All the remarks on fairy tale in this paragraph are based on: Max Lüthi, Once Upon A Time: On the Nature of Fairy Tales, trans. Lee Chadeayne and Paul Gottwald, with an Introduction and notes by Lee Utley (New York: F. Ungar Publishing Co., 1970), pp. 138-48.

witches, ashes, and dragons represent the dangerous, bestial, and unfathomable aspect of our existence. The fairy tale quest is therefore a description of the processes of development and maturation. Its hero is often a wanderer, isolated from his fellows, but free and unamazed at magical works, which allows him to be in contact with the world surrounding him. He journeys through a series of landscapes and adventures, always accepting the supernatural aid offered to him, and as a result, achieves his goal and "lives happily ever after." The style of the fairy tale, which is brief and definite, contributes to this feeling of freedom and ease. Extraneous details are left out, and the hero is not psychologically developed.

It is the quest and the wish-fulfillment atmosphere that unite fairy tale and romance. From this summary description of the fairy tale quest, its psychological background and imagery, the role of the hero as wanderer, and the supernatural accepted as an integral part of human existence, we can see how similar the two genres are. Modern romance diverges from fairy tale, and even to some extent from medieval romance, in its stronger emphasis (even if unconscious, as in the case of Morris or Eddison) on the individual psychological development of the characters, as well as in its greater specificity of time and place.

Modern romance's quest format is of course a direct literary descendant of the medieval romance, in which quest is one of the most important aspects, especially as manifested in the Grail quest romances of the Arthurian cycle.

If we accept Jessie Weston's explanation of the origins of the Grail quest romances as christianized versions of certain vegetation cult rites of pagan times,¹ the close links to myth and ritual are apparent as well. Although Roger Sherman Loomis, in his The Development of Arthurian Romance, refutes Weston's interpretations of the Grail and Lance as sexual symbols, and also her theory that they are christianized pagan rites,² he believes that the Arthurian romances are a combination of historical reminiscence and pagan mythology,³ owing a great deal to Welsh and Irish saga. He cites the prototypes of the Fisher King, Perceval, and Galahad as examples of this debt.

A review of some of the best-known Arthurian romances reveals the quest--the search for adventure--to be an integral part of the medieval code of chivalry. The other important element is chivalric love. Very often the two intertwine, as is most obviously the case in the many versions of the story of Tristan and Iseult, or the illicit love affair of Guenevere and Lancelot. This is a result of the notions implicit in the chivalric code that the knight must prove his worth to his lady and that chivalric love is possible

¹Jessie L. Weston, From Ritual to Romance (New York: Peter Smith, 1941), p. 39.

²Roger Sherman Loomis, The Development of Arthurian Romance (London: Hutchinson, 1963), p. 62.

³Ibid., p. 22.

only outside of marriage.¹ The adventures encountered by the questing hero are as often supernatural as not, just as there are often no boundaries between ordinary and magical landscapes. The entire adventure comprising Gawain and the Green Knight is of this nature. The initially inimical Green Knight is transformed into the jolly host of Gawain, Sir Bercilak, and all is blamed on Morgan le Fay, an important enchantress of Arthurian romance.

Other anthropologists, in particular Mircea Eliade, have uncovered evidence complementary to Weston's theories. In Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return, Eliade describes symbols used by primitive societies mythically associated to the center of the world, as a means of transcending historical time and space, and achieving spiritual knowledge. The "Center" is a sacred zone, an area of absolute reality, bearing a marked resemblance to the goal (as for example the Chapel of the Grail) of the quest romance. All symbols of this "Center," such as the "Sacred Mountain," trees of life and immortality, and by extension sacred cities, houses and temples, are places where heaven, earth, and hell meet. The journey to such places is difficult, as befits the rites d'initiation. It serves the function of education

¹For a full discussion of this question, see: C. S. Lewis, "Courtly Love," The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition, 3rd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 1-43.

and purification during the course of the quest for absolute time and space.¹ According to Jung's investigations, both the mountain and Christ are symbols of the spiritual self,² a psychological statement paralleling Eliade's anthropological one. There can be no question but that all quest literature is a further example of the human need to seek spheres of imagination not found in quotidian life, as well as the desire somehow to escape from death.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines quest this way: "In a medieval romance: An expedition or adventure undertaken by a knight to procure something or to achieve some exploit; the knights engaged in such an enterprise."³ If we take this definition as our starting point, we can see that the word "medieval" must be replaced with "modern", and in many cases the "knight" may not be the quester but some other character type. It is, however, my belief that modern romance as a sub-genre of fantasy distinguishes itself from other sub-genres and aligns itself very closely with the artistic fairy tale by virtue of its quest form and its association with the past. Adventures to achieve some end, or to obtain something, are essential to this form, although the quest itself reflects to a greater or lesser degree a psychological

¹See Mircea Eliade, The Myth of the Eternal Return or, Cosmos and History, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 5-34.

²Carl Gustav Jung, Psyche and Symbol: A Selection From the Writings of C. G. Jung, ed. Violet S. Laszlo, trans. Cary Baynes and R. F. C. Hull (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1958), pp. 35-36.

³Oxford English Dictionary, rev. ed. (1961).

exploration as well. It is for this reason that modern and medieval are so closely connected, the one flowing from the other as though a hiatus of hundreds of years had not existed. The importance of medieval and Renaissance romances cannot be stressed enough in tracing the roots of modern romance, no matter how varied or distinctive its different shapes may be. Whether the source of inspiration is Malory's Morte d'Arthur, or the Amadis de Gaula and its school, or the Northern sagas, whether the influence is one of tone, setting, or plot, whether the degree of influence is great or small, it is important and fruitful to recognize it. Nevertheless, while modern romance makes use of pseudo-medieval trappings almost universally, it remains essentially modern.

As the quest appears in a multitude of forms, it is sometimes difficult to see the unifying outlines of its occurrence in modern romance. Yet we have seen that it is usually either a search for self-definition or for peace, and that both are in reality the same thing. The overriding theme of romance is good versus evil; good is associated with order and harmony, as are inner and external peace, and evil is associated with chaos. The pattern of the human need for change, the process of maturation and individuation, the attempt to order the inner and outer environment, the hunger for further knowledge of imaginative and spiritual realities, as well as the physical and emotional worlds, the desire for peace and immortality, the constant internal struggle of human beings with their darker aspects; all contribute to a unified view of the quest phenomenon in literature.

If we look at representative examples of modern quests in anti-realistic fiction, the patterns discussed above are discernible, though complicated by the sophistication of the modern historical context. This displacement of historical circumstances to post-industrial societies affects the structure of the quest itself. The modern quest often does not end where the medieval one did. As we shall see, the return from the quest assumes more importance in the modern fantasy novel, from its beginnings at the end of the nineteenth century. As the modern quest becomes less imitative of medieval romance, it uses more of the psychological complexity of the modern novel, while retaining pastoral elements and nostalgia for the past, as well as a resultant aesthetic distance. It would be convenient now to review more closely some of the variations of the quest plot structure within the framework of modern romance.

Let us first examine the modern imitations and interpretations of the Arthurian cycle and the Matter of Britain. Malory's influence on modern romance is considerable. The best-known of the modern Arthurian romances is T. H. White's tetralogy, The Once and Future King. The only source White ever recognizes is Malory. These romances are concerned with the various quests of the heroes, including several rites de passage, especially those of Sir Lancelot and Arthur himself. Merlin has undertaken Arthur's education; his methods are unorthodox, but he teaches his pupil to think for himself. Arthur's quest thereafter is first to use Might in the service of Right, and then to establish Right as a viable force in

England. To this purpose he creates the fellowship of the Round Table. White's interpretation of Malory becomes a modern psychological exploration into the chivalric code and the beginnings of civil law in England. When Arthur's fellowship has put down wrong and chaos (though it turns out to be temporary, through a sort of tragic flaw), Arthur sends the knights out to find the Holy Grail, in other words, spiritual reality. For all but a very few, the quest is a failure. Lancelot sees the Grail for a few moments, but it is only Bors, Percival, and Galahad who are allowed to enter the Chapel of the Grail, because they have given up all worldly attachments. For them, the conditions of fulfilling the quest have meant total detachment from worldly love and the utmost purity of spirit and body. The success of their quest leaves them only death; at least, they are lost to their earthly attachments. For these knights there is no return. Arthur's quest ends less purely on the one hand, but on the other with the knowledge that his death may not be forever--he may return to rule again. The latter quest is open-ended, as are many modern quests, whereas the former is definitive and final, ending with death and spiritual fulfillment, as does for example David Lindsay's A Voyage to Arcturus.

Several modern writers of romance have dabbled in medieval studies. Both Anna Taylor and Sander Anne Laubenthal, two contemporary romancers of the Arthurian cycle, demonstrate (and actually point out to the reader in their prefaces or in the text) their sources and also their deviations from the source. Taylor's Drustan the Wanderer,

for instance, is as deliberately different from Malory's rendition of the Tristram and Isolde story as possible.¹ The style of this particular romance is interesting because of its extreme modernity. The first lines are: "The beginning, what's that? The coupling of mother and father, or her groans when, little more than a child herself, she gave birth to the child that killed her: me, Drustan, King Cynmor's first son."² The language does not of course resemble Malory's fifteenth century English, yet the same intimations of tragedy are present in the portrait of an eternally restless man, wandering all over the isles of Britain, searching first to find himself, then to escape from himself. This quest is modern not only in its language but in its psychological interpretation of the notion that "to love is to destroy", an inheritance in our mythology of medieval chivalric romances. Drustan and Isolde are "round" characters in this version of their story, and therefore more protagonists of the novel than of romance. Taylor has neatly fashioned a hybrid form, one that Mervyn Peake effectively exploits also.

Lin Carter defines the mainstream of what he terms "heroic fantasy" as being represented by Morris, Dunsany, Eddison, Pratt, Howard, Tolkien, and Peake.³ His definition

¹Anna Taylor, Drustan the Wanderer (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1972), p. vii.

²Ibid., p. 1.

³Carter, op. cit., p. ix.

of heroic fantasy corresponds to a considerable extent, we have seen, to my definition of modern romance. This study will therefore consider all of the above names, with the exception of Howard. These authors all use medieval themes other than those of the Arthurian cycle as the material of their fictional worlds. Such romances as Morris' The Roots of the Mountains, Eddison's The Worm Ouroboros, Pratt's The Well of the Unicorn, and Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings (not to mention other, lesser works such as Poul Anderson's The Broken Sword), make full use of the Scandinavian heroic sagas. Other medieval themes, especially those of the continental romances or largely original romance worlds, are visible in Morris' major romances, Dunsany's The King of Elfland's Daughter, The Charwoman's Shadow, and Don Rodriguez, Peake's Gormenghast trilogy, and others, such as Cabell's romances in the province of Poictesme, Beagle's The Last Unicorn, and Andre Norton's adaptation of a fragment of the Carolingian cycle, Huon of the Horn. The peculiarities of each pseudo-medieval world are outweighed by their similarities. And in each there is a quest, which forms the plot structure, often interwoven with a war.

William Morris is the first of the modern romancers, although not, of course, without some literary ancestors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. His fantasies are deliberate attempts to imitate medieval romances, with the accoutrements of knights, swords, witches, and evil kings. In all of his major romances, from The Wood Beyond the World to The Sundering Flood, the hero or heroine embarks upon a

quest to find peace. His best known romance, The Well at the World's End (1896), contains a classical quest to a center symbol. For the young patrician hero, Ralph of Upmeads, the quest serves to mature a boy into a man. He must overcome human, natural, and supernatural forces in order to achieve his goal, the drink of water from the Well that "quencheth all sorrow." This quest has the characteristics of ritual cult initiation. The seeker cannot succeed unless he or she is wearing a particular bead necklace. During the course of the journey, the seekers must stop several times to meditate as a mode of preparation for gaining knowledge of the Well. At such times they wear special clothing--long white robes--to symbolize their temporary withdrawal from the world. The ritual motif is obvious here, making the archetypal aspect of this quest easily visible. The terrain through which Ralph and Ursula must pass on their way to the Well becomes more a supernatural landscape as they approach the edge of the world, the Ocean Sea that "girdles the earth about," and the Well. Its waters are magical, although it is crafted by human beings and accessible to all those equal to the task. Interestingly, Ralph's quest would not have been successfully completed without the aid of many women: Katherine, his god-mother, the Lady of Abundance, Ursula, Agatha, and others.

After the completion of their quest, Ralph and Ursula attain semi-divine status in the eyes of others. It is as though the symbolic act of drinking the water (symbolic of the attainment of self-knowledge and spiritual life, in itself manifested by the increased life span and renewed vigor and

health of those who have tasted the Well's water) enables them to lead others to peace. Through the integration of the conscious and the unconscious, symbolized by the act of drinking at the Well, they attain balance and peace. The quest bestows benefits not only upon them but upon the land as well.

Morris' departure from the traditional quest form is seen most clearly in his description of the return from the quest. Ralph's quest does not end with his own integration of self; it is not completed until he returns home and uses his new knowledge and power to aid in bringing peace and order to his homeland. His assumption of the kingship of Upmeads is tied to the ritual renewal of fertility in the land, but it is also the triumph of good, order, and peace through the work ethic. Morris takes Ralph through one hundred and fifty pages more after his draught of water from the Well, before his quest is complete. Ralph must return from the mythical, magical "end of the world" to use what he has learned in his own historical reality. We see here the tentative beginnings of modernity in Ralph's quest.¹ Morris' other romances demonstrate this groping towards modernity in varying, though always subtle and unconscious ways.

The quest in The Water of the Wondrous Isles is structurally similar to Ralph's journey in The Well at the World's End. It too may be divided into three parts. Like

¹The fragmentation of the quest hero into a male and female persona is further indication of the unconscious fragmentation in the Victorian psyche and environment.

Ralph, Birdalone undergoes a preparatory stage; she is taught by Habundia, the nature goddess mother figure, whereas Ralph's initiation into manhood is undertaken by a lover (the Lady of the Wood), who is however also a nature goddess. Both Habundia and the Lady have magical powers, and it is striking to note that both the Lady and Birdalone were thralls to witches, and both escaped with the help of semi-divine woodmothers of mysterious origin. The reader learns a great deal more of Birdalone's childhood than of Ralph's, because part of the completion of her quest lies in finding her mother. In any case, Birdalone's magical preparations, as well as her skill in the woodcrafts, allow her to begin by using the witch's black magic to her own advantage. (The Sending Boat is her means for escape.) A stranger, more disjointed quest has never been described and it does not really cohere. Morris succeeds in this romance because of human interest, not because of the quest plot structure. While he attempts to make the Wondrous Isles interesting, and even gives their name as title of the romance, they are dull, irrelevant, and in fact occupy little of the space in the telling of the tale.

While Ralph's and Ursula's quest is unified and spatially ordered, Birdalone's is not. Her journey is never actually called a quest, despite the fact that she is the quest heroine of this romance. There is another quest, which although it dilutes the focus of interest on Birdalone's quest, does serve to heighten the poignancy and force of the psychological motifs. The Castle of the Quest, in which Baudoin the Golden Knight, Hugh the Green Knight, and Arthur the

Black Squire reside, is the center of the other quest, and the place in which the two searches are joined for a time. The Champions' quest apparently has a different flavor from Birdalone's, for hers is a flight from evil together with a journey back to her origins. She eventually comes full circle, and ends her quest in the woods of Evilshaw, her childhood home, where she recovers her love. Together, she and Arthur become leaders, as they already have individually and separately, and set their lands in order after their return to Utterhay. This motif of division and unification is also reminiscent of The Well at the World's End.

Birdalone's quest, after the initial preparation, is in two parts; in the first, she flees from all she knows, loves and hates, and in the second, she seeks and finds them again. A good part of her search is an attempt to integrate herself into society, after having been alienated for the first twenty years of her life. She seeks to belong. Her great deeds are not in battle or the like, but in the way she moves people. It is because of her courage and ingenuity that the Champions find their lost loves (complete their quest), and they are always grateful to her. Whereas Ralph and Ursula remain alone together for the greater part of their quest and after their return, Birdalone, in spite of her name, is largely responsible for the fellowship formed by the Champions, the sisters, and her,¹ thereby incorporating

¹William Morris, The Collected Works of William Morris, with Introductions by May Morris, vol. 20: The Water of the Wondrous Isles (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966), p. 374. All subsequent references will be to this edition; page numbers appear in parentheses in the text.

herself into society by forming one. Birdalone and the others find their peace and contentment in each other and in society, rather than within themselves. The single exception to this rule is Atra, whose love is denied when Birdalone replaces her in Arthur's heart. She then turns to the spiritual nourishment offered her by Habundia. There is a prefiguration of this love first requited, then withdrawn, in The Roots of the Mountains (1889), when Morris first turned to romance for artistic expression and was still experimenting with a hybrid of saga and romance. There, the hero/quester leaves his childhood sweetheart for a new love that unites personal benefit with benefit for the land. Unlike Atra, his rejected lover finds happiness with another man.

The major attraction of The Water of the Wondrous Isles is the love story and its complications. Were it not for that, the fantasy would not hold together at all, since the action is in other ways so disjointed. There is no coherent goal, in reality, and the portrayal of the battle between good and evil is vague, because the evil forces are weak and too easily overcome. Both the witch and her sister are outwitted; the latter is a caricature of evil, for she cannot even remember events from one day to the next.

Morris' last romance, The Sundering Flood, contains many of the same elements as his previous works. There are some differences, however, such as the slighter emphasis on magical figures. They do exist, but Habundia, for example, is now an old woman with some vaguely magical powers. The quest in this romance centers around an apparent conflict between

the hero's personal interests and benefit to the land, a common feature also in medieval romance. The hero resolves his conflict in The Sundering Flood by uniting the two causes, thereby bringing archetypal prosperity and happiness to himself and his land upon the successful completion of the quest. Here too Morris has written a good love story, sparkling with adventure, and maintaining the reader's interest above all through the tension of the love and separation of Osberne and Elfhild. The quest form's episodic structure is closely adhered to, making for an organically unified whole. Osborne simply wants to get to the other side of the water, to be with Elfhild. However, as he himself says repeatedly, he must leave his home in order to return to it, his quest completed. The motif of apparently aimlessly wandering recurs here as in most quests. A physical journey and the inability to stay too long in any one place because of the magnetic quality of the goal, are leitmotifs in both medieval and modern romance. It is to Morris' credit as a storyteller that he maintains the reader's interest through many episodes peripheral to the major quest in The Sundering Flood. This is not the case in The Water of the Wondrous Isles, just as it is so much so in The Well at the World's End that we recognize it as his masterpiece. Both of Ralph's quests depends upon each other and finally merge, giving the fantasy greater depth and richness.

One of the interesting aspects of Osborne's quest derives from Morris' Victorian "socialism," which is demonstrated here to a larger extent than in his other romances.

Morris uses the pastoral mode in The Sundering Flood to picture his ideal society. The notion of fellowship occurs again. Osberne, another of Morris' universally loved protagonists, is fighting for social justice and equality. Not quite accidentally, Morris uses the backdrop of a war between the Baron's League and the Small Craft Guilds as a means of expressing his notion of socialism, based on a medieval guild system. Nor is it accident that the Red Lad (Osberne) refuses to be knighted. The injection of political ideas into this form has the effect of modernizing it. Despite the magical beings who aid in the quest, the conflict occurs around a socio-political issue; Osborne fights for the Small Craft Guilds, against tyranny and absolute rule. This kind of politicization of good and evil is a uniquely modern phenomenon. The Sundering Flood ends happily both because Elfhild and Osberne are united and because "democracy" has come to the City of the Sundering Flood.

The general outline of the modern quest constitutes the battle between good and evil, as in medieval romance. The persona of the hero embodies good and his adversaries evil. However, modern romance concerns itself with the internal struggle between good and evil in the hero much more than does medieval romance. The two are often confused by modern hero and modern reader. Central to this ambiguity is the modern role of magic. The different conceptions of the role of magic in the struggle between good and evil of Pratt and Morris can be seen by comparing the two Wells.

Fletcher Pratt, in the prologue to his romance, The Well of the Unicorn, states that "This is the reader's book."¹ This is a common statement of twentieth century novelists. However, as the publisher says in his Forward to The Well of the Unicorn, the difference is that it is the reader's own book, but not in a technical sense. The book is the reader's map of good and evil, authority and voluntary agreement, free will and foreordination, original sin, confession, atonement, and a state of grace.² We remember that Ralph's goal in his quest was to drink the waters of peace from the Well to save himself and his land. In Pratt's romance, the young captain and clerk (sorcerer) Airar learns that his knowledge is unhealthy and refuses to drink the waters of peace, for he cannot then be a good leader. His personal quest to free his homeland is a part of a larger cause, a war against imperialistic oppression. Although the Well is seemingly a minor part of the quest, it is the title of the romance. Airar, as king, refuses to drink from the Well and thus be initiated into its fellowship. He thus forfeits spiritual fulfillment (through magic) for political and military reasons. It is interesting that the two are seen as in conflict; this is further emphasized by the fact that his wife is a sister of the Well. There is the implication that the deeper a person indulges in the magic arts, and thus the correspondingly

¹Fletcher Pratt, The Well of the Unicorn, with a Publisher's Forward (New York: W. Sloane Associates, 1948), Prologue.

²Ibid., p. ix.

closer he comes to that reality, the further he is from human fellowship.

This suspicion of non-ordinary, alien reality is discernible in the works of many modern romancers, such as Dunsany, Tolkien, and Anderson. Human beings are often portrayed as tools of the gods, deceived into believing that their quests are necessary for their own ends, whereas they are but a thread woven into some vast tapestry of fate. This is a characteristic especially of the Scandinavian sagas and those modern romances influenced by them. We see this clearly in The Broken Sword, in which the interchange between human and magical realities results in the destruction of the former. Even Skafloc, the hero and changling of the elves, must be destroyed. Elves, trolls, and other magical beings on earth are also the playthings of the higher gods, especially Odin. Skafloc himself is used by Odin as a means of fulfilling the quest of reforging the broken sword to be used in battle against his enemies. The theme of the broken sword forged or reforged for a specific quest is common especially in those romances related in some way to the Northern sagas. Skafloc's sword is too powerful for his, or any human being's use, and its destructive powers must eventually destroy the wielder himself.

The peril of magic in human hands is demonstrated in Lord Dunsany's romances as well. They are a vital link between Morrisian and more contemporary treatments of the genre. His choice of worlds expands the horizons of modern romance from the medieval Northern climate of Morris and his

own romance The King of Elfland's Daughter to a fictionalized Golden Age of Spain (The Charwoman's Shadow and Don Rodriguez: Chronicles of Shadow Valley) to the oriental fantasies of many of his short stories, and finally to dream worlds. His influence on Lovecraft was strong, especially in The Dream-Quest of the Unknown Kadah. The weird, horrifying, ornate fantasy world of Dunsany's short stories is continued in other modern romancers such as Clark Ashton Smith (Hyperborea), and the ordinary contemporary world's intrusion into the heroic or magical past by raising a curtain between the different levels of time and space is found also in A. Merritt's The Ship of Ishtar and Joy Chant's Red Moon and Black Mountain. C. S. Lewis uses the same technique in his Narnia series.

Alveric's quest, in The King of Elfland's Daughter, is first to find and marry, and then after losing his wife, to find her again. He remains totally unconcerned with the course of events in his little domain and leaves readily both times. The first time, his magic sword allows him to break through the spells guarding the borders of Elfland. He brings Lirazel home with him, but though they love each other and have a son (Orion), the mixture of human and magic proves too difficult for them both. It is not Alveric's lot to sit quietly at home; after Lirazel returns to Elfland, he devotes the greater part of his remaining years to searching for her. His alienation from other humans is visible in many ways. His companions are all insane. In their years of wandering, the questers never sleep in houses but remain outside human

reality in order to approach the magical. Paradoxically, the magical sword is now a hindrance, for each time the king feels its presence on the borders of his land, he withdraws it. Alveric must give up his magical sword, and ironically return home after years of wandering, in order to have Lirazel and Elfland find him. They are reunited within the magical reality of Elfland, and live happily ever after. Both the strength of imagination (magic) and its alienation from ordinary reality are apparent. The process of searching has irrevocably changed Alveric and his reality; he is no longer wholly human.

For J. R. R. Tolkien's hobbit quest-hero, successful completion of his task leaves him unable to remain a part of his old reality on Middle Earth. Frodo Baggins retires to the Grey Havens (heaven--or death). The burden of self-knowledge for modern man (though men are present, the hobbits are really the human beings of The Lord of the Rings) is too painful and heavy to sustain. Even after being relieved of the Ring, Frodo has been so irrevocably changed by his quest that he can no longer partake of fellowship on Middle Earth.

Tolkien's Ring functions symbolically in a manner similar to Morris' Well in that they are both sources of power. The difference lies in the fact that the Ring must be destroyed as something evil, and with its destruction the destruction of absolute good also occurs. The nature of the quest has grown more complex since the Victorian age: The difference between good and evil is more ambiguous; Middle Earth is far more complex than Morris' medieval world; fragmentation is more evident, particularly in the quest itself;

and Frodo's journey to the Mountain of Doom is set against a background of colossal magical beings who play a deadly serious chess game, while the Ringbearer continues his journey almost unnoticed. Thus, although the quest is the most important aspect of the plot structure, it is always counterpointed to the War between Sauron and Gandalf.

Frodo must reach a mountain, not at the center of the world, but in Mordor, the wasteland far more terrible than any other land through which he passes. Even more terrible, however, is the growing darkness within the Ringbearer himself. The closer he gets to the mountain, the heavier the Ring becomes. It represents an eternal temptation to Frodo; as the journey progresses, his obstacles become not so much the external circumstances as he himself. The Ring changes him, brings him closer to evil, and finally threatens to enslave him, although he is ultimately saved by the consuming greed of his "shadow," Gollum. Just as Ralph received help in his quest, so does Frodo. It is the society formed by Frodo, Sam and Gollum (Sméagol) that ultimately determines the successful completion of the quest.¹ Although Tolkien gives us the "Consolation" of the "Happy Ending," and the "Moment of Joy" at the destruction of the Ring (to use Tolkien's words), the complexity of his world and the mixed nature of the quest make his happy ending a mixed blessing. The return from the quest is marked by Frodo's death (without spiritual fulfillment) and

¹Roger Sale, "Tolkien and Frodo Baggins," Modern Heroism (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1973), p. 225.

the restoration of the Shire's provinciality to normality. For the most part, the magical elements of the world have disappeared, and we are left with a new age--the age of man and ordinary reality. In this sense, Tolkien betrays his quest not to evil, but to the English country manor. The Ents, earth's oldest beings, cannot procreate. Tom Bombadil remains within his small domain, and the elves and the wizard leave. Very little of their magical world remains, so that the quest appears only partially successful. Some of the tragic greatness of the quest lies in the foreknowledge of these mythical beings that this would be so. In this sense, as well as in the exploration of the internal process within the quest hero, Frodo's quest is the obverse side of Ralph's quest.

It must be stressed, however, that Frodo's quest is also a passage from ignorance to knowledge. Although not a boy who becomes a man through the quest, Frodo grows in stature during the course of the journey and undergoes a rite d'initiation. The basic pattern is evident, as is the desire for peace and order that characterizes romance. The complexity of the Ring symbol as both a sign of unity and a source of evil, and the fragmented nature of the plot do not destroy, though they do modify, the quest nature of the genre.

Tolkien carefully structures the trilogy so that half of each volume is devoted to the war on Sauron and half describes the Ringbearer's quest. In doing so, he uses the dialectical form inherent to romance¹ in unprecedented ways.

¹Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 225.

Without conflict, this genre does not exist. As we have seen, the conflict is usually between good and evil. We have also observed how frequently the hero's personal interests (usually a love affair) may hinder or conflict with his quest, and how the quester must resolve the conflict from within. This last is true for Frodo as well. However, the nearly balanced dialectic structure of war vs. quest is a novelty. It is "nearly" balanced because in reality the quest retains the reader's interest more than the war, due to Tolkien's vividness and vitality of description. Nevertheless, the journey through Middle Earth is carefully designed so that the reader grows along with Frodo and Sam in complexity and understanding. Knowledge is accompanied by fear and awareness of danger; that is, as the cosmos becomes more knowable, it becomes more frightening.¹ Greater wisdom brings greater temptation to evil, so that Gandalf, for example, will not bear the Ring. Only Tom Bombadil is exempt from this temptation, as he does not care for the Ring or for power. Gandalf plays a role at once extremely important for the quest and also subsidiary to it. The quest needs his war, but only as a means of distracting Sauron from the two "small grey insects"² desperately crawling across his barren horror to the Mountain of Doom. The image itself is a masterpiece of ironic contrast, for in spite of

¹Sale, p. 212.

²J. R. R. Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings, 2nd ed., vol. 1: The Fellowship of the Ring; vol. 2: The Two Towers; vol. 3: The Return of the King (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1965), 3:219. All subsequent references will be to this edition; page numbers appear in parentheses in the text.

their small size and ordinary nature, the hobbits save Middle Earth from Sauron, as Gandalf cannot.

More emphasis is placed on the internal struggle of the quest hero in Tolkien than in Morris. In spite of Tolkien's denial of any allegorical intentions, Middle Earth is twentieth century Europe, and Frodo is a characteristically twentieth century hero engaged upon a quest for knowledge and freedom. Tolkien, malgré lui, has created a very modern quest, replete with psychological and socio-cultural indicators of our times. His invention of richly imaginative languages, beings, settings, and his imitation of forms of medieval sagas cannot conceal this modernity. His achievement lies in using old forms and revitalizing them in modern ways, so that despite the fantastic nature of Frodo's quest it is often painfully relevant to the twentieth century reader. The age-old conflict between good and evil has become infinitely more complex and ambiguous, and therefore highly sophisticated in tone, language, and structure; but the same human struggles still lie beneath.

Also modern is Tolkien's concern with what to do with the attained goal. This was prefigured to a certain extent in Morris. Interestingly, Frodo's metamorphosis into a wise hobbit is too painful a burden for him to bear in his old home, the Shire. Once he has revealed to himself the darkness within, he is able to contain it only at times and only by white magic, in the form of Galadriel's phial of light or Arwen's gem of light. He can find no use for his knowledge other than to write his memoirs and join the elves and Gandalf

on the voyage to the Grey Havens. The end of the quest is pessimistic in this respect. Frodo's quest has separated him from his fellows; he no longer belongs, and reality has changed its meaning for him through his newly gained insight. Dream, illusion, and ordinary reality are no longer in "their proper place." Towards the end of the quest, when Sam asks Frodo if he remembers a meal of stewed rabbit, Frodo replies:

'No, I am afraid not, Sam . . . At least, I know that such things happened, but I cannot see them. No taste of food, no feel of water, no sound of wind, no memory of tree or grass or flower, no image of moon or star are left to me. I am naked in the dark, Sam, and there is no veil between me and the wheel of fire. I begin to see it even with my waking eyes, and all else fades.' (3:215)

This could almost be the revelation of some terrible mystic or visionary. The worst of Frodo's wounds is the one from the sword of the Black Riders, about which after two years, back in the Shire, Frodo says, "I am wounded, . . . wounded; it will never really heal." (3:305) Frodo's ability to see the darkness and his angst remind one of the alienated intellectual hero of the twentieth century novel. Tolkien seems to imply that the human potential for good and evil depend upon one another, and that this quest has not really resolved anything, but simply fulfilled its role in the cyclical nature of history and myth. Evil, at least in the form of Sauron, has been destroyed, but the coming new age is as diminished in good magical forces as in bad.

The cyclical nature of human history and reality is most evident in E. R. Eddison's The Worm Ouroboros. Although it begins clumsily with an Englishman's dream journey to the planet Mercury, it is a genuine romance because, as Orville

Prescott says, everybody--readers and Eddison--forgets about Lessingham and Mercury very quickly.¹ The imaginary world depicted here is divided into two major parts, Witchland and Demonland, but there are constant references to Earth, such as quotations from Shakespeare. The quest in this romance is interesting and "modern." Lord Juss' difficult journey in search of his brother is the preliminary stage in a quest that ends only when Witchland is finally conquered. As the end of the book proves, however, the quest is what gives these characters life; without it they are spiritually and emotionally dead. Therefore they magically restore the struggle for power with their enemies, in order to be fulfilled. The romance ends with the same lines as those of the beginning. Eddison's ingeniousness in using the symbol of the serpent eating its own tail to allow his characters to replay their romance over and over is at once a highly sophisticated stylistic device and an effective means of describing a psychological reality particularly meaningful in the twentieth century. There can be no real "return" from the quest, because it is the quest itself that defines life. Man's existence is the sum total of his actions; complete fulfillment is death, while the search for it is life. That this quest must repeat itself is also characteristic of the never-ending human potential for good and evil, and our eternal search for self-definition.

¹Orville Prescott, Introduction to The Worm Ouroboros, by E. R. Eddison (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1962), p. xiv.

The "modern" quest for self-definition, with its emphasis on the psychological, is well exemplified in Mervyn Peake's Gormenghast trilogy. Despite its classification as a romance, the physical journey of the young hero does not occur until the last volume. Titus Groan's quest is initiated with much the same spiritual restlessness that characterized Ralph of Upmead's; it is the search for a magical woman (a sprite, in Titus' case), who disappears fairly early in the journey. The Thing that inspires Titus Groan actually dies before he begins his journey; he is in love with what she symbolizes for him:

. . . a Thing of fierce and shameless insolence--of a rebel like himself who gloried in it: of a rebel like a lyric in green flight.¹

Titus' quest is also a journey towards self-knowledge and identity, clearly circular in nature. Titus achieves peace only when he returns to Gormenghast, after having escaped the death of empty ritual there. He discovers that he carries Gormenghast within himself always, and is reborn. There his quest ends--at the Well, so to speak. It is, however, explicitly internalized, as neither Ralph's nor Frodo's was. It is a young man's search for, and discovery of self, a Bildungsroman. Peake strains the bonds of romance more than Morris, Dunsany, or Tolkien. His characters more closely resemble those of the novel, yet other elements essential to

¹Mervyn Peake, The Gormenghast Trilogy, vol. 1: Titus Groan; vol. 2: Gormenghast; vol. 3: Titus Alone (New York: Weybright & Talley, 1967), 2:456. All subsequent references will be to this edition; page numbers appear in parentheses in the text.

romance function within the trilogy also. This hybridization of the genre constitutes a major new direction of contemporary fantasy literature.

Titus' ritual journey through death to rebirth as a man develops in, through, and because of, his home, Gormenghast Castle. Titus uses the castle as a means of seeing himself--twentieth century's absolute reality. The castle is the external symbol of the quest; through it or in it most of the search for enlightenment occurs. The castle is at once the major structural and thematic device of the work. Travel through its dark, damp, labyrinthine corridors constitutes a quest in itself and duplicates the exploration of the psyche. From the beginning of the first volume, Steerpike recognizes that knowledge of the castle is a means of knowing and controlling its inhabitants. Flay uses the anonymity possible within its confines to save the Gormenghast ritual that Steerpike attempts to destroy.

Titus' quest is modern in other ways. His journey takes him through many futuristic, perhaps post-atomic, landscapes; Peake often balances on the border between heroic fantasy and science fiction. The complexity of the quest, however, lies in its psychological orientation. Peake still utilizes the magical world of romance, but he approaches dream reality and the unconscious more than either Morris or Tolkien. Withal, he still offers us the "Consolation of the Happy Ending," the wish-fulfillment dream. In spite of everything, evil (Steerpike and Swelter) is destroyed, and Titus' quest is completed, although like Frodo, he can no longer participate

in the life of his homeland.

The unorthodoxy of the quest lies in Titus' freeing himself from the decay and stultifying atmosphere of ritual without meaning (form without content) which life in Gormenghast has become for him. It is for this reason that the Thing, who is pure natural instinct (she cannot speak), is so attractive to Titus. She is also his foster sister; her mother Keda was Titus' wet-nurse. Keda also embarks upon her own quest, before Titus does. She too leaves home to attain self-knowledge and to escape from ritual law. And like Titus, she returns home but dies soon after she gives birth to the Thing.

Evil is already destroyed when Titus leaves Gormenghast, but he cannot tolerate the hypocrisy of artificiality and emptiness within himself without rebelling. During that part of the quest dealt with in Titus Alone (the third volume), he meets other forms of evil, such as machines, a woman named Cheetah who devours men's souls, and Veil, the Mantis-man of Under-River. This last world constitutes the hero's descent into hell, as well as the ritual death by water, both with the purpose of purification of the hero to make him worthy of the quest. Just as Ralph and Ursula pass through the Thirsty Desert and bypass the Dry Tree (both symbols of death) to be reborn at the Well, and just as Frodo goes to the center of Mordor, a fire and brimstone hell surrounded by desolation, so Titus Groan descends into the earth to continue his journey for the self and eventually to find his center in the Gormenghast that exists within him.

The modern quest tends to be more explicitly psychological than its ancestors. This, along with "modern" experimentation of language, tone, and structure, is its principal distinguishing characteristic. The range of modern quests is enormous, as we have seen. Although external action, and especially the journey and the overcoming of obstacles, has continued to be an essential element even in such overtly psychic quests as Titus Groan's, the psychological implications of the journey are much clearer to the author and reader of the post-Freudian age, and particularly in our own very psychological era. While Morrisian and post-Morrisian romance retains the symmetry of a quest fulfilled in all senses for the benefits of all, and usually ends on that note, those romances more clearly associated with dream states or psychological exploration are more open-ended in terms of external action. In these last, however, internal achievement is fulfilled, or death (physical or spiritual) occurs, so that the quest is partially fulfilled.

Although quest literature is flourishing in contemporary times, modifications in its structure reflect an increasingly more complex and pessimistic Zeitgeist. Morris, Dunsany, Tolkien, and Peake are representative examples of certain characteristics of modern romance. While this literature has been labelled "escapist," it exemplifies all too clearly the loss of faith and vulnerability to the chaos experienced by twentieth century Western man. Even such an intensely lyrical and non-psychological work as Peter Beagle's The Last Unicorn reveals the unreliability of reality and the ease with which

human beings are deceived. The visionary is by definition alienated from his fellows. The quest must always be a lonely experience. As early in the history of modern romance as The King of Elfland's Daughter, we see the lack of communication and the sense of exile that is a part of every quest. James Branch Cabell's Horvendile/Felix Kennaston is interesting as a split personality who is at once a character in the romance that is life and an observer and recorder of the same romance. The tragic sense of irony inherent in this novel manner of using the genre reinforces its poignant immediacy to the reader's experience.

CHAPTER II

LANDSCAPE

As in all other sub-genres of the pastoral mode, the scenery of the story plays an especially important part in modern romance. Fictional setting and imaginary landscape or, as Lin Carter says, the creation of imaginary worlds¹ is a most significant element in distinguishing successful fantasy from its unconvincing counterpart. William Empson, in Some Versions of Pastoral, finds that the pastoral is a work of art containing simple characters and an uncomplicated setting used to portray a complex society.² It has been a vital strain in poetry since Virgil, and in the narrative since Jorge de Montemayor's Diana. Beatus ille literature, in the tradition of Horace, is a closely related form. The desire to escape from court or the city is reflected in these works, just as the desire for a better world is reflected in the folk fairy tale. Modern romance combines these two tendencies and redefines them within the context of a post-Industrial Revolution society, thereby achieving the kind of "complex

¹Lin Carter, Imaginary Worlds (New York: Ballantine Books, 1973), pp. 174-78.

²William Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral (Norfolk, Connecticut, n.d.), pp. 20-29.

pastoralism" that Leo Marx discusses in The Machine in the Garden.¹

Since the advent of the machine age in Victorian England, modern romancers (one thinks especially of Morris and Dunsany) have sought to depict the non-industrial, domesticated, and magical aspects of reality, which reflect the lessons of their immediate artistic ancestors. The eighteenth century in England was the golden age of pictorialism in all the arts. The formal English garden, geometrical in design, and eminently classical in conception, was as true to the spirit of the age as was the nature poetry of Pope, Gray, Denham, Ambrose Philips, and others.² Shelley's poetry, as an example of the Romantic rebellion which follows, reveals a sensibility towards nature that is quite the opposite of this rational, controlled intellectual landscape. It is not strange that William Morris, whose interests were wide, should combine the lessons of the Georgians with his own more romantic aesthetic views. His interest in the visual experience is as apparent in his descriptions of Upmeads as in his wall-paper designs. Likewise, the terrain in his romances reflects a nostalgia for simplicity and rurality, demonstrated also by his activities to preserve medieval monuments in England.

¹Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 362.

²Ian Watt, ed. Introduction to The Augustan Age: Approaches to its Literature, Life, and Thought (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Publications, 1968), p. 25.

Like Morris, other modern romancers have used the world of their creations as antidotes to the bleak, desolate urban terrain surrounding them. In a manner modern and paradoxically reminiscent of the eighteenth century, these writers portray the English countryside. There is none of the medieval allegorical background or the non-situated ordinary landscape of the fairy tale in modern romance. Morris' *Upmeads* is England; Dunsany's "fields we know" are England; Tolkien's Shire is England. The domesticated landscape of gently rolling hills, peaceful streams, and green, regular fields is their pastoral, and harmony with nature is their ideal.

This type of generic landscape is not the only kind to appear in modern romance; the idealized, lyrical world and its opposite, the totally desolate, evil landscape are also found. The spectrum of lands in romance ranges from the icy wastes of northern Scandinavia to the tropical jungles of South America. The worlds created in fantasy novels are inevitably mythical. However, the more deeply a writer delves into his imagination to create a world, the closer he appears to approach the world he knows. It is essential for the landscape of fiction to contain certain features recognizable to both the author and the reader. Often the romancer will encapsulate a mythical world within a more ordinary one, as for example in Joy Chant's Red Moon and Black Mountain, or C. S. Lewis' Narnia series. In the latter, the magical world is entered through a closet door! This separate magical world is often initially doubted by one or more of

the major characters, especially in the works of contemporary romancers such as Joy Chant's Red Moon and Black Mountain and Sanders Anne Laubenthal's Excalibur. This scepticism is characteristic of the "rational" twentieth century.

Green Mansions contains a felicitous illustration of this technique of encapsulation. First, the jungles of Guayana are so removed from the European reader that they contain an element of the fantastic, although described with great detail. Second, within the jungle reality Hudson creates a specifically mythical landscape, regarded as supernaturally evil by the Indians, because Rima lives there. She is a nature-spirit whose appearance in this work invests it with its magical qualities. Hudson thus portrays the European's encounter with a reality alien in terms of population and natural environment. He is sympathetic to the ethereal beauty that Rima represents and afraid of the bestial qualities that the Indians represent. This conflict is apparent in a modified form in the Gormenghast trilogy. The Thing, also a nature spirit, is pitted against the Bright Carvers, who fear and hate her. She is killed by lightning, and Rima by fire, both victims of a brutal reality that does not understand them, and which they in turn do not understand.

Magical realms in romance must be separate from concrete, generic landscapes. The moment a romancer attempts to integrate the two, he treads on tricky literary grounds, and often fails. One means of attempting this reconciliation is by overtly equating the fantasy world with the dream world. George Macdonald uses this technique in Phantastes. But once

this is accomplished, we no longer have true modern romance. One of the sources of the tradition of the romance is an allegorical dream story, The Romance of the Rose. The poet specifically states that all the action takes place in a dream. In modern romance, however, this is not possible. Although the romance world is related to dream and myth, fictionally it functions as a metaphor of dream and imagination and is not a statement of its existence. This is precisely why it must be treated separately from the ordinary world also contained in the romance; it must have its own construct. In this sense, Morris' treatment of landscape in The Water of the Wondrous Isles is not convincing, as we have discussed in the previous chapter. Tolkien, Dunsany and Peake are more interesting in their portrayal of the lands through which their heroes travel.

Although the mythical and magical realms in modern romance are alienated in some ways from the concrete, generic terrain, they are often the raison d'être of the quest, and associated with the absolute and the "Center." This kind of dichotomy, however, becomes increasingly unclear in the more contemporary romances such as those of Tolkien and Peake in a manner similar to the greater diffusion of the linear succession of events in the quest plot structure. As the distinction between good and evil grows increasingly ambiguous in modern romance, the recurrence of grey, shady areas rather than light or dark places increases also. As in the fairy tale, however, the sense of place is of utmost importance

in modern romance, in contrast to the ambivalence and ambiguity characteristic of the modern sensibility evidenced in other ways. As Roger Sale says, Tolkien needs all of Middle Earth to demonstrate the power of evil;¹ one can feel both the Shire's vitality and the death-like unreality of Mordor. Significantly, the dichotomy in modern romance's treatment of landscape is less a matter of good versus evil or dark versus light than of estranged versus familiar land. The magical areas, whether good or evil, are not familiar and therefore not as desirable as more ordinary places. In this respect, Tolkien's style betrays his Victorianism. Anything or any place suggestive of domesticity becomes pictorial and thereby comes to life through vivid description. Thus the domestication of the landscape reflects a part of the pastoral romance's wish-fulfillment of humans to control the environment; but it also mirrors the fear of all phenomena that we cannot understand or order. If we review the evidence of Eliade's investigations of primitive societies, we see that cultivated areas reflect a double of a higher cosmic level, while uncultivated areas reflect the chaos of pre-Creation.² We have also seen that the human need to control and understand the environment is also the desire to order our internal chaos. As a result, the landscapes of romance are to a considerable degree psychological in content and form.

¹Sale, p. 223.

²Eliade, p. 9.

The need to control, and its immediate effect, the desire to make knowable, is expressed in another way. Along with the extended descriptions of terrain that occur in most romances, there is often a map of the land area covered during the course of the story. The space is often concentrated (although there are exceptions, as for example in H. Warner Munn's Merlin's Ring) and accompanied by density of detail. Maps provide references to place names mentioned in the text, and also amplify and elaborate. Fletcher Pratt, in The Well of the Unicorn, places maps at the beginning of every chapter. In the foreward to the 1948 edition the publisher states, "The vague and yet extremely definite nature of the physical world in which this tale occurs is no mistake."¹ Why? As the author explains it, the book is each reader's own map of good and evil. Still, we should not forget that the maps are also devices to strengthen credibility in the story. The same is true for Morris, Tolkien and others. The difficulties involved in creating fictitious languages, cultures, and in short, worlds that cohere in all senses, are relieved to some extent by the reader's being able to refer to a map. (Romance and science fiction share these difficulties.) Extensive descriptions of the terrain aid verisimilitude as well.

Often real and magical landscapes depend upon one another by means of a contrast similar to the Hindu notion

¹Pratt, p. ix.

of the cycle versus the absolute. That is, one remains on the wheel of life until it is transcended and absolute reality is attained, marked by a joining with the cosmos. In romance, the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth basic to the human condition and to the natural world is juxtaposed to the static unchanging absolute reality of the mythical or magical landscape. This quality, found in fairy tales also, is essentially foreign to the human condition. Voltaire's *Candide*, after spending some time in Eldorado, finds that he must leave; its timeless and changeless quality, which makes it a paradise, is unacceptable to him. We see versions of this theme in modern romance. In Morris' The Glittering Plain the hero also gives up eternal youth and eternal joy to return to his homeland. There is a strong rejection of human participation in this kind of existence, as well as the desire to return home. Man may not dwell where it is forever spring and summer, but only visit for a short time.

As the troll Lurulu points out (The King of Elfland's Daughter), the single most important characteristic of Earth is perpetual movement and perpetual change.¹ Elfland knows a peace and stability that Earth cannot, because time there stands still. There are also other qualities that distinguish the magical realm from ordinary space. Elfland has lawns, flowers, forests, streams, but as enchanted dwellers of Elfland they have strange shapes and colors. Strangely

¹Lord Dunsany, The King of Elfland's Daughter (New York: G. Putnam's Sons, 1924), p. 193. All subsequent references will be to this edition; page numbers appear in parentheses in the text.

enough, there is something of the quality of Earth, even in Elfland: " . . . all things seen there have something of the look of our trees and flowers in June reflected in water. And the color of Elfland . . . may yet be told, for we have hints of it here." (17) Dunsany consciously places the borders of Elfland quite close to the "real." He also allows Elfland more earthly characteristics than is at first apparent, without sacrificing its separation from the ordinary landscape. In his short stories, he allows himself more exoticism and flights of fancy. He usually states that the experience in his short stories is an hallucination or a dream, which does not really remove them from the genre of romance because their importance and interest lie in the fantastic adventure and not in a state of dream or hallucinatory reality.

Lord Dunsany's division of the land of magic and the ordinary reality is expressed as "beyond the fields we know" and "the fields we know." Elfland lies to the east; of humankind, only Alveric dares to journey there. Dunsany's description of Elfland's borders as mobile is especially effective; for the two lands may touch but never overlap, until the very end when the king uses his last great rune. Dunsany sees magical reality as another possibility, but he never relinquishes and always returns to the "fields we know":

I hope that no suggestion of any strange land that may be conveyed by the title will scare readers away from this book; for, though some chapters do indeed tell of Elfland, in the greater part of them there is no more to be shown than the face of the fields we know, and ordinary English woods and a common village and valley, a

good twenty or twenty-five miles from the border of Elfland. (Preface)

The people of the "fields we know" are ambivalent about Elf-land; not even the leatherworker who lives next to its border will acknowledge its existence. There are, however, lyrical descriptions of great beauty of the English countryside, as there will be later in The Lord of the Rings. The greater parts are viewed through the eyes of Lirazel (magical reality):

It was early morning and the sun was shining, giving soft colors to our fields, and Lirazel rejoiced in these fields of ours . . . So glad was she, so gay, . . . that there seemed to Alveric a beauty he had never dreamed of in buttercups. (33)

When Ziroonderel forges Alveric's magical sword from the thunderbolt iron, she puts in the magic of the English woods and downs. (8)

Although the English countryside is magical and important, Elfland nonetheless retains its significance in Dunsany's story because it is a metaphor, a psychological image of the human capacity to create, of the beauty of imaginative freedom, and of the spiritual impulse. There are several concrete indications of this. Of the marvels of Elf-land, the narrator says that Lirazel "yearned for the bells of Earth and the English cowslips, but would not forsake again her mighty father nor the world that his mind had made." (274) The king of Elfland is powerful because of the magic of his runes, which enables him to exercise freely his imagination; Elfland is marvelous and wonderful; its essential beauty lies in the power of the imagination. Thus, at the feel of Alveric's

magical sword, signaling the end of his realm as it has been for ages, he is able to shift the borders of his land. Where Elfland was is now waste and desolation, " . . . and at sunset the eastern horizon showed clear against the turquoise sky, all black and jagged with rocks, . . . " (97) Alveric soon discovers, while walking over "that dreary plain," searching for Elfland, " . . . as sooner or later many a man must, that he had lost Elfland." (86) As a corollary to this notion of the poverty of life without imagination, Dunsany pictures the edge of the world as being a dividing line between fertility and sterility: " . . . and on the left of them blew . . . the scent of lilac from cottage gardens in May, . . . and on their right was always the desolate land, . . . " (148)

Alveric's search sets him apart from other men. They are afraid of Elfland, and never turn their eyes to the "pale blue peaks" that are the elfin mountains, for if they allow themselves to think of its glories, they will forget the lands of Earth that need care. Alveric is in this sense a typical fairy tale hero, able to achieve his quest and see larger relationships among the various elements of the universe because of his alienation from ordinary human society and his freedom from fear of the (magical) unknown. .

William Morris' flawed magical worlds, characterized as "watercolor" by C. S. Lewis, do not possess the stylistic fluidity of Dunsany, the pictorial power of Tolkien, or Peake's poetic vision. In an essay on Morris (in Rehabilita-

tions) Lewis distinguishes between scenery and geography. According to Lewis, Morris is "content with recording obvious facts in very general language, . . . He is not concerned with 'painting' landscapes; he tells you the lie of the land, and you paint the landscape yourself."¹ He cites examples of birds that are merely "brown," and the sea that is "blue" or "green." Striking examples of Morris' bent for geographical exactness are found throughout his works, from his first true romance, The Wood Beyond the World, to his last, The Sundering Flood. In the former, when Walter's ship is blown off course and the men land in a strange place, uninhabited except for a hermit, they see a "green plain going up after a little in green bents and slopes to the feet of the said cliff-wall."² As they draw nearer, they enter the mouth of a river "not right great," that is "deep and clear, running between smooth grassy land like to meadows." (13) Despite being the "outlands," this country bears a great similarity to rural England. And so does the land of the Wood Beyond the World. This is Walter's first impression of this land: ". . . and there were many trees, . . . set as though in order on the flowery greensward, even as it might be in a great king's park." (27) The contrast between the inten-

¹C. S. Lewis, "William Morris," Rehabilitations and Other Essays (London, Oxford, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1939), p. 40.

²William Morris, The Collected Works of William Morris, with Introductions by May Morris, vol. 17: The Wood Beyond the World (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966), p. 13. All subsequent references will be to this edition; page numbers appear in parentheses in the text.

tionally archaic language and the domesticity of the land is startling. Although Morris attempts to depict a magical land, he succeeds only in describing a great park. There is little magic in any of his romances, and what there is is in the characters. In The Sundering Flood, the importance of geography is supreme, but it lies in the inaccessibility of Elfhild and Osberne to each other.

Although Morris attempts his most extensive descriptions of magical places in The Water of the Wondrous Isles and in The Well at the World's End, these lands either do not work as effective landscapes or are in fact the English countryside. For example, the land around the Castle of Abundance, which pertains to the magical Lady, is simply fertile farmland. The forests are apparently suggestive of evil, but a closer examination reveals that they are merely uncultivated. In The Well at the World's End, the forests' names are the Wood Debatable and the Wood Perilous, in The Water of the Wondrous Isles, Evilshaw, and in The Sundering Flood, the Wood Masterless. All these names suggest the ambiguity and chaos characteristic of evil, yet they are easily penetrated and transformed into benign sanctuaries by the hero or heroine, and therefore are not effectively evil. Further, the forests are also usually associated with white magical forces, and especially with the earth goddess archetypes generally called Habundia in Morris' prose romances. Other magical, seemingly evil places are often simply desert in Morris' works. Typical is the Thirsty Desert in The Well at the World's End, in

the middle of which stands the Dry Tree. Yeats, in his essay on William Morris ("The Happiest of Poets") states that this tree is indicative of Morris' association of sterility and desolation of nature with ugliness and evil, as the Castle of Abundance and the greening of the Dry Tree reveal the fertility of nature, associated with beauty.¹

For Morris, as an artist alienated from the socio-economic structure in which he lived, the peace and order of the tamed, benevolent English countryside represents his "Earthly Paradise." Although he loved Icelandic literature and translated one of that nation's sagas, he never used its landscape in his prose romances. Perhaps it was too far from the placid green rolling hills and meadows of England. There is a strong sense of safety and security in the worlds of his prose romances, because his personal vision of a medieval rural landscape à la Malory leaves little room for a true sense of evil. Even in *Utterbol* he does not quite succeed in convincing the reader.

The metaphor of good as associated with abundance and fertility in a domesticated natural setting is common to romance, as its opposite, the image of winter, cold, sterility and desolation is very often equated with evil. Appropriately, Northrop Frye entitles his discussion of the genre, "The Mythos of Summer: Romance."² Fertility and abundance of

¹William Butler Yeats, "The Happiest of Poets," Ideas of Good and Evil (New York: Russell & Russell, 1967), p. 88.

²Frye, pp. 186-206.

life in romance is allegorically representative of good and beauty, especially in those romances influenced by the Northern sagas. For a lyrical interpretation of this theme, Peter Beagle's The Last Unicorn is a felicitous example. In the forest where his unicorn lives, it is always spring. She is both magical and immortal. When with the help of Schmendrick the magician she frees her kindred from the bondage of King Haggard and the Red Bull, the countryside which has stood ravaged and desolate for many years becomes green and fertile again: "For, very slowly, spring was coming to the barren country that had been Haggard's . . . the withered earth was brightening with a greenness as shy as smoke . . . ' Unicorns have passed here;' . . ."¹ Other interpretations of this theme exist in the heroic fantasy based on Northern legends. In Michael Moorcock's The Sword and the Stallion for example, Corum, Prince of the Scarlet Robe and Eternal (archetypal) Champion fights the most significant battle of his life against the forces of chaos and evil, this time incarnated in the Cold Folk. To every land they reach, this race brings cold so freezing that it is difficult for men to survive. Corum must free the Mabden (men) from both physical and spiritual death. Another version of winter, this time approximating the fairy tale, is revealed in C. S. Lewis' children's romance, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe. The witch is strongly reminiscent of the Snow Queen archetype; while Narnia is under her

¹Peter S. Beagle, The Last Unicorn (New York: Viking Press, 1968), p. 206.

rule, there is only winter.

Winter thwarts the Fellowship of the Ring almost at the very beginning of their quest. Cruel Caradhras prevents them from using the mountain pass by means of a snow storm. This mountain is one example of the elements of nature too active (alive) for the protagonist's comfort in The Lord of the Rings. The author betrays in many ways his yearning for the familiar domesticated land of rural England. The reader is introduced to English country life at the very beginning of the trilogy, whose first two chapters are largely devoted to the hobbits' life in the Shire. Both the Shire and the hobbits are described in great detail, and are carefully and unceasingly guarded during the course of the three volumes. The Shire seems almost like a park, fenced off by a high wall of hedges, carefully tended and meticulously drawn. When Sharkey and his men take it over, the park is ravaged. When Sam the gardener returns, he does not domesticate a wilderness, but simply restores the park.

To return to the notion of familiar versus estranged landscapes, Tolkien unconsciously betrays his magical lands because of his essential provincialism. When Frodo, early in his quest, meets with Gildor and other High Elves, he says of the Shire: " . . . and yet, it has always seemed so safe and familiar." (1:93) It is almost as though Tolkien is complaining of the loss of his safe and familiar world to the ravages of the modern age.

Many critics have seen Mordor as an allegory of the destruction of war, of the evil of Nazi Germany, of the deso-

lation caused by industrialization. It is also the barrenness of life without imagination and an example of the corruption of power. In the Dead Marshes, the gateway to Mordor, winter is an evil counterpart of summer; for example, the only green is "the scum of livid weed on the dark greasy surfaces of the sullen waters." (2:233) Mordor succeeds in inspiring a sense of awe of the power of evil, but Tolkien is also able to leave the reader with a very real sense of what the Shire and its denizens are like. Despite the horrifying descriptions of Sauron's realm, Tolkien's style reveals a greater interest in the Shire, and so Mordor is less important in some ways than the Shire. We find abundant lavish description of this land:

The Shire had seldom seen so fair a summer, or so rich an autumn: the trees were laden with apples, honey was dripping in the combs, and the corn was tall and full. (1:76)

and:

The late afternoon was bright and peaceful. The flowers glowed red and golden: snap-dragons and sunflowers, and nasturniums trailing all over the turf walls and peeping in at the round windows. (1:33)

The hobbit's houses are really earth holes, with round windows. There is no industry; it is strictly an agricultural area, with many well-tilled fertile fields. At every opportunity Tolkien describes glowingly the peace and beauty of the Shire. In contrast, his descriptions of Mordor dwell on its horrors for the quest hero. It is deathly and worse than the Dead Marshes. Tolkien's attention to detail here conveys to the reader a land almost too hellish to be convincing:

Here nothing lived, not even the leprous growths that feed on rottenness. The gasping pools were choked with ash and crawling muds, sickly white and grey, as if the mountains had vomited the filth of their entrails upon the lands about. High mounds of crushed and powdered rock, great cones of earth fire-blasted and poison-stained, stood like an obscene graveyard in endless rows, slowly revealed in the reluctant light. (2:239)

This description, powerful and effective in itself, is of Sam and Frodo's first sight of Mordor proper. It is sustained subsequently, but often as a metaphor for Frodo's suffering. Although Tolkien devotes a good deal of space to the landscape of Mordor, the reader becomes more interested in Frodo and Sam than in Mordor. One feels the great weariness of the Ringbearer, because of thirst, but even more because of his burden. It is his psychological exhaustion that captures the reader, the strength of will that Frodo must have in order to complete his quest; the land itself is a psychological reflection of Frodo's internal hell.

In the third volume of the trilogy, Tolkien devotes a whole chapter, "The Land of Shadow," to Mordor. Its effectiveness lies in the psychological image of the increasing weariness within Frodo. When he reaches the outer edges of Mordor, where the Mountain of Doom is, Frodo sees some vegetation. Tolkien's description is to an extraordinary degree a reflection of Frodo's internal conflicts and emotions, and of the workings of evil and power within human beings. This passage is similar in tone and style to the waste areas of the Gormenghast trilogy:

And here things still grew, harsh, twisted, bitter, struggling for life. In the glens of the Morgai on the other side of the valley low scrubby trees lurked

and clung, coarse and grey grass-tussocks fought with the stones, and withered mosses crawled on them; and everywhere great writhing, tangled branches sprawled, . . . The sullen shriveled leaves of a past year hung on them, grating and rattling in the sad airs, . . . (3:198)

The use of adjectives and verbs in this passage is remarkable both for its establishment of the landscape of Mordor as an external representation of evil and the resultant (implied) comparison with evil, corruption, and power within the psyche. Thus, the land succeeds in supplying an image that "evil" characters such as Sauron and Saruman do not. As Peake demonstrates, psychological evil is far more real and potent than any other to twentieth century Western man.

In this psychological sense, Tolkien sustains Mordor not with Sauron and his servants, who often are either abstract or caricatures but in the evil comprehensible through the scenery. Their greatest weapons, as various characters repeat, are fear and despair. Sauron himself never appears; he remains an amorphous spirit, able to communicate mentally and through his servants, but not really available to any of the major characters, and therefore to the reader. The Black Captain is more tangible and more real than his master, but the sense of Sauron's controlling all the evil of the world combined with his lack of reality, despite the action of the romance, relegate him to the background. Far more real is the evil at work inside of Frodo, symbolized in the nightmarish landscape of Mordor.

The shadow of Mount Doom and the hellish moonscape surrounding it is cast over the whole of Middle Earth; it is

the extreme end of a process visible in all parts of Middle Earth, but the danger is more potently psychological than physical. The War itself, we may repeat, is uninteresting when compared to the quest. And curiously enough, it is in the fires of the Cracks of Doom that the salvation of Middle Earth lies, just as the success of the quest lies in the possessiveness of Gollum. All beings and lands of Middle Earth partake of this process of evil whose extreme is evidenced in Mordor; its cyclical nature is apparent.

The Shire is the true opposite of Mordor in Tolkien's romance. The idealized, lyrical scenes are fragmented and almost independent vignettes, disconnected from the main line of action of the story. One function that they share is to relieve the tension of the mines of Moria, the Dead Marshes, and other evil spaces. These set pieces of magical scenery are densely forested shady areas--last refuges of the powers of magical abundance. Even these "light" places are fading: the encroachment of ordinary landscape comes with the Age of Man after the Great War. While Galadriel, the Ents, and Tom Bombadil remain on Middle Earth, the possibility of a stable and unchanging magical natural world exists. But the end is clear, and although of the three only Galadriel retires to the Grey Havens, the Ents cannot reproduce (they have lost the Entwines) and Tom Bombadil is lost to the knowledge of the new age.

The first of the magical realms in the trilogy is the land that Tom Bombadil rules. During the quest journey Frodo and his companions always find a refuge from trial or evil

recently undergone. Their first trial is in the Old Forest, whose trees are alive with hatred. They nurse a terrible bitterness toward all living things free to move and not rooted to the earth, particularly men, who burned down large parts of what was once an enormous wood. Pippin and Merry are imprisoned by Old Man Willow in his trunk, in this forest. They and the whole party are saved by Tom Bombadil's timely arrival. He is a peculiar kind of nature demi-god, concerned only with the earth and growing things. For this reason the Ring can have no power over him, for he is not interested in power at all. This quality he shares with the Ents, and it makes them divine in a way that neither Gandalf, Galadriel, or Elrond can be. Frodo's stay at Tom's house allows Tolkien space for lyrical rhapsodizing, but it is unnecessary for the advancement of the plot. The realm borders another evil--the land of the barrow-wights, who possess men (and hobbits) and make slaves of their shadows. The following day, Tom rescues the hobbits from them. His own land is beautiful, but not magical. It is Tom who makes it so.

When Tolkien does indulge in literary pictorialism, the result is scenery viewed through the eyes of a hobbit:

. . . In that direction, the land rose in wooded ridges, green, yellow, russet under the sun, beyond which lay hidden the valley of the Brandywine. To the South, over the line of the Withywindle, there was a distant glint like pale glass where the Brandywine River made a great loop in the lowlands and flowed away out of the knowledge of the hobbits. Northward beyond the dwindling downs the land ran away in flats and swellings of grey and green and pale earth-colours, until it faded into a featureless and shadowy distance. Eastward the Barrow-downs rose, ridge behind ridge into the morning, and vanished out of eyesight into a guess: it was no more

than a guess of blue and a remote white glimmer blending with the hem of the sky, but it spoke to them, out of memory and old tales, of the high and distant mountains. (1:146-47)

If we examine this passage, we notice an emphasis on color and perspective. The description begins with an objective look westward towards the home of the Hobbits--obviously it is the low hills and pastures of England that we and the hobbits see. The eye shifts to the South, less familiar to the hobbits than the West; but the Brandywine flows there also, until it passes from the "knowledge of the hobbits." To the North the land becomes flatter, the downs dwindle, take on muted colors, and eventually fade into the distance, "featureless" and "shadowy." For the East, which is the direction of the magical unknown, the description becomes more lyrical, and links itself to a past made up of personal and popular memory. The Barrow-downs rise "into the morning," and vanish into a "guess of blue," which speaks to the hobbits of the magical past as represented by the "high and distant mountains." Dunsany's magical lands likewise are always to the East, the mountains that pertain to them always pale blue, and their association is always with the magical past as expressed in memory and dream. The result of Tolkien's increasingly subjective language in this passage through the use of similes and other stylistic devices is not only a vivid pictorial description but also a passage of extremely lyrical narrative poetry.

In Lothlórien, which was once the "Valley of Singing Gold" and is now the "Dreamflower" the hobbits find the center

of what is left of the magical realms on Middle Earth. Lothlórien is the most glorious of the lands left on Middle Earth, but its peace and almost overwhelming beauty are tinged with sadness. The shadows of the past, present, and future lie over this land, although the shades of the mallorn-tree protect it temporarily. Galadriel's land is ever mindful of the lost glories of the past and of the encroachment of the future upon its existence. "The air was cool and soft, as if it were early spring, yet they felt about them the deep and thoughtful quiet of winter." (1:374) Although the season is actually winter, the feeling that the end of magic is near is reinforced in other parts of the chapter. One of the elves is made to say: "Yet I do not believe that the world about us will ever again be as it was of old, or the light of the Sun as it was aforetime." (1:363) Galadriel says of their battle against the Shadow, " . . . we have fought the long defeat." (1:372)

Despite Lórien's loss of greatness, its magic persists. The mallorn tree itself (in which the elves live) is the symbol of the white magical natural world at its apex. The leaves turn gold in the autumn, and its wide trunk is smooth and grey, like silver. There are other complementary kinds of vegetation, such as the small yellow star-shaped flowers called "elanor." This land also is most vividly described through a hobbit's eyes:

A light was upon it for which his language had no name. All that he saw was shapely, but the shapes seemed at once clear-cut, as if they had been first conceived and drawn at the uncovering of his eyes, and ancient as if they had endured forever. He saw no colour but those he

knew, gold and white and blue and green, but they were fresh and poignant, as he had at that moment first perceived them and made for them names new and wonderful . . . On the land of Lórien there was no stain. (1:365)

And Sam adds, " . . . I feel as if I was inside a song, . . . " (1:365) It is as though Tolkien needs the hobbit's sight and touch in order to feel the life of his description, as Frodo delights in the life of the tree itself that he touches in Lothlórien. (1:366)

This description of the elves' land is similar to Dunsany's treatment of Elfland. All things are special and beautiful in an unearthly way, yet they maintain their relationship with the English countryside. Lothlórien's riches are by no means only those of her natural surroundings, aided by magic, but these last are given most importance in the work itself. Queen Galadriel is one of the keepers of the three Elven Rings forged with the One Ring. Yet her gift to Sam of a box of earth and the seed of a mallorn-tree for the Shire save it from the destruction of Sharkey's men. She thereby achieves importance as an earth goddess archetype as well as an elvish queen. The elves live in trees and inhabit only dense forests surrounded by swiftly flowing rivers, which protect them from attack. They love and bestow great care on their trees, in this respect second only to the Ents.

In the chapters dealing with Fangorn and its guardians, the Ents, Tolkien pays homage to the trees he loves. The Ents are tree shepherds; they look like trees, but have mobility and speech. Treebeard, the oldest Ent, is the oldest living being on Middle Earth. He, like Tom Bombadil, laughs a lot,

sings, and has Tom's deep love for growing things. They also share a lack of interest in everything outside their domains, and consequently are absolutely good. They desire to maintain the natural order of things, nothing more. Within both resides great strength and power. The forest of Treebeard, Fangorn, offers Tolkien another opportunity to lyricize about nature. For Merry and Pippin, it is a refuge from the Orcs. The forest is peaceful because all the other beings of Middle Earth, except the wizards and the elves, are afraid to enter. The Orcs destroy trees around the edges of the forest, an action which provokes the Ents into action. When moved to anger, they are frightening. Together with the Huorns, trees who can move, they attack and destroy Isengard.

The Ents are also in decline. Although they are immortal, many have become tree-like--stiff, unmoving, and dumb. They no longer have contact even with the elves, who long ago gave them speech. And they cannot reproduce, because they have lost the Entwives, who preferred domesticated vegetation to the forests.

The forest is another of the magical sanctuaries from the horrors of the War and the quest in The Lord of the Rings. Merry and Pippin's stay with Treebeard and the Ents not only allows them to recuperate, and even to grow from Treebeard's nourishing drinks, but also serves to further the action by warning the Ents of the danger threatening them and Middle Earth. The Ents' destruction of Saruman's stronghold prevents the conquest of Rohan. However, Fangorn and the Ents represent primarily another aspect of idealized nature.

A great deal of the space of The Lord of the Rings is taken up with descriptions of the various landscapes discussed above. Tolkien manages to create a cohesive world; the natural scenery is more than a backdrop for the action of the quest and the War. Each of the magical worlds is isolated, disconnected to a large extent from the narrative line, as in fairy tale and other quest forms. For the "modern" sensibility, however, "disconnection" is a view borrowed from other, differently structured fiction. There is organic unity in The Lord of the Rings. Mordor and the Shire stand in opposition to each other; they are also the end and the beginning of the quest and illustrations as well as of the importance of places in this romance. Tolkien has created a fictional world replete with intimations of the modern world, despite (or because of) the fictional cohesion of Middle Earth, the victory of rurality over industrialization, and the lyrical magical spaces. The white magic of the trilogy fails to maintain its strength except as a sort of curio for Frodo to put in the history of the quest, and so is betrayed by its creator, in spite of the overcoming of evil by good. Mordor begins to sprout life, and Sam succeeds in re-greening the Shire, but Lothlórien, Fangorn, and Tom Bombadil's realm fade with the passing of Sauron. The shades of the forest, the filtered light, the use of the word "grey," all predict the fading away of magic long before the departure for the Grey Havens. Bright, clear light is rare in the trilogy. Tolkien returns to his Shire for the end of the pastoral, but

leaves the reader with vivid recollection of Lothlórien and Fangorn because of his vivid pictorial descriptions.

Light, bright spaces, rare in The Lord of the Rings, are almost non-existent in the Gormenghast trilogy. There is an increased sense of darkness and despair in Peake's work, even more so than in The Lord of the Rings. The world of Gormenghast is a long way from Morris' Upmeads. The landscape in this work is not as recognizably English. It is an internal landscape more than anything else. As Steerpike and the others walk through the Stone Lanes of Gormenghast Castle, Peake explores the labyrinthine corridors of the psyche. These are the "Lifeless Halls," one of the several aspects of his exploration of the human soul, seen in its saddest, bitterest, most frightened face. The shadow of the castle and of Gormenghast mountain lie over the entire trilogy. Yet this strange, decaying land is a "Center"; through ritual and the support derived from it, the castle remains a stabilizing force, a means whereby Titus and the others create and assure their identity. Peake depicts other landscapes in the last volume of the trilogy, which follows Titus after he leaves Gormenghast. They are darker and more evil than his home. The cityscapes, which place his work on the border of science fiction, and the entre-acte Under-River, are other sides of the depths of human consciousness.

Titus Groan and Gormenghast, volumes one and two, both take place within the confines of the realm of the Earl of Gormenghast, except for the brief journey of Keda, Titus'

wet nurse. Titus is heir to " . . . the miles of rambling stone and mortar; to the Tower of Flints and the stagnant moat; to the angular mountains and the lime-green river . . . " (1:57) If Gormenghast is a "Center," it is a "grey," "moss-like," "crumbling," "rotted" one. When Titus sees the sleek glass buildings of the city he frowns, and the narrator comments:

He had been born and bred to the assumption that buildings were ancient by nature, and were and always had been in the process of crumbling away. The white dust lolling between the gaping bricks; the worm in the wood. The weed dislodging the stone; corrosion and mildew; the crumbling patina; the fading shades; the beauty of decay. (1:34)

The sense of place of the fairy tale and the dark, psychological vision of the modern age combine in this romance to produce one of the most coherent worlds of romance. Peake's sense of the demonic, the grotesqueness of both characters and setting, his intellectual precision, and great linguistic powers reveal him as a most effective creator of the world of romance. Gormenghast is isolated, sufficient unto itself, enormous not only in size but also in its importance to those living in and near it.

The Castle, with its fetid ruins of rooms and its confused, empty, dark corridors, is surrounded by a compatible landscape. Clinging to the building itself are many forms of barely discernible life. The dwellings of the Bright Carvers cling to the outer walls of the Castle, just as the Carvers themselves live for the one important yearly event in their lives, when their sculptures are judged by Castle's

inhabitants. Strong adhesion to the Castle and the Groans is the raison d'être of all living within the shadow of Gormenghast. The Castle is itself a landscape. When Steerpike escapes from the room Flay has locked him in, he spends almost two days atop the "roofscape" of the Castle, until he finds a way down. Gormenghast Castle is a " . . . stone forest--that terraced labyrinth of broken rides." (1:481) It is a "mist of masonry" (1:143) at first for Steerpike, but he soon learns that he is "a spectator of a stationary gathering of stone personalities." The Castle is so vast that despite Peake's elaborate use of visual imagery, it is difficult to picture its shape. It has four corners, and towers, and stretches for miles, but the reader learns little more about its structure.

Gormenghast Castle and Gormenghast Mountain face one another, each a "Center." Each becomes a refuge for wildlife and people during the great flood; each allows sanctuary for those in the area outside of society. Titus often goes to the mountain to escape ritual. The Thing lives there. Flay and Steerpike both have secret rooms in the Castle, as does Fuschia. The Castle, however, takes on a personality that the mountain does not. It is an important character in the fantasy, and a source of great power. Although Steerpike attempts to climb up "the spiral staircase of its soul," (2:11) the Castle finally outwits even him. Often it seems that the Castle is alive. It, and all it stands for, the traditions that are the roots and being of Gormenghast, are the

most important concern for all the major characters. The Castle sets the scene for the action not as a backdrop but actively participating in the course of events. As a counterpoint to the "aliveness" of the building itself, we see also slow death encroaching upon it. In spite of its power, the Castle is crumbling, rotting, decaying. If one views Gormenghast as the world (as its inhabitants do), and if one thinks of this landscape as a psychological representation, then its effect is prodigious and frightening.

The Mountain is vast and sinister, with clouds always above. Although it appears close to the Castle, it is in reality a day's journey away. Between the two, " . . . the land was desolate, for the main part empty wasteland, with large areas of swamp where undisturbed among the reedy tracts the waders moved." (1:289) Fuschia, looking out the window, also sees " . . . the undulating darkness of the Twisted Woods; to the west the unkempt acres, broken here and there with low stunted trees bent by the winds into the shape of hunchbacks." (1:290) There are many other descriptions of the land around Gormenghast, and they all complement this vision of " . . . the dreary moors and rocky tracts of country . . . " (1:288) The Twisted Woods can be lived in, but it takes such strength of will and endurance of purpose as Flay has in order to survive. All signs of fertility and growth are either destroyed or distorted into grotesque parodies of themselves. Even the most lyrical pictorial descriptions are tinged with sadness; summer is stifling and

overbearing--it scorches the life out of the land--and winter is cruel and severe, causing the death of many birds and animals.

Nature and Gormenghast have an intimate relationship. Flay, who serves as a point of contact between the two while living in the Twisted Woods, compares them. He is surprised that Nature is as vast as Gormenghast and even more varied. (1:475) Although he becomes the Long Man of the Woods, blends in and feels quite at home there, his thoughts are always in the Castle, the true center of his being. The Castle is also identified with the seasons; it becomes itself autumn, (1:208) and grows ill in the summer. (1:443) The great Tree of the Room of Roots, whose branches have been painted by the twin aunts, is an appropriate example of both the way in which the Castle is the center even of the vegetation of the area, and at the same time its power to transform things into something bizarre, as is the norm in Gormenghast. Titus is heir to " . . . a crumbling summit: to a sea of nettles: to an empire of red dust: to rituals' footprints ankle-deep in stone . . . Gormenghast." (2:1) The flood only temporarily upsets this pattern.

When Titus leaves Gormenghast, he travels through lands as desolate as his home, although different. He goes through regions " . . . thighbone-deep in sumptuous dust: through lands as harsh as metal, . . . " (3:1) This landscape is polarized into city and rural areas, yet the two seem to be alike in their capacity to alienate and harm human

beings, and in their loneliness and desolation. The countryside is "great phosphorescent slopes of oak and ilex," (3:4) while the city is a fantasy of glass and metal, a thousand acres of grey marble. (3:35, 37) In both, Titus feels lost. "Lost in the bright gray night . . . Lost in swath of space in which the city lay like one-thing, secure in its cohesion, a great moon-bathed creature that throbbed in its sleep as from a single pulse." (1:5) There is always this alienated feeling in the estranged landscape outside of Gormenghast. When Keda sets forth on her journey from Gormenghast, the trees seem to be leering at her; she feels terrible hostility from the land. This is partially due to its estrangement from her, and partially her fever, which induces hallucinations. Peake, whose vision is different from that of Tolkien, makes his estranged landscape seem a futuristic portrait of our modern industrial society. There is, " . . . on every side, a lunar landscape, infinitely brittle." (3:210)

In the grotesque, surreal manner of the twentieth century, Peake's sense of evil is very real to the contemporary reader. When Titus must go underground because he is an alien without a passport, he encounters another "scape"--the world of Under-River. It is "A world of sound and silence stitched together. A habitation under the earth . . . under the river: a Kingdom of the outcasts; the fugitives; the failures; the mendicants; the plotters, a secret world with a roof that leaked eternally; . . . " (3:128) Titus goes down, "Down into an order of darkness," (3:122) to the

monotony of the black and hollow land, eternally damp and dark. The quest hero's descent into the underground has been a common theme since Gilgamesh. It is prevalent in modern romance as well. Just as Frodo must come through the roots of the mountains (the mines of Moria) and Jorgen must descend into Hell in order to reach Heaven, Titus must escape from his persecutors by way of the secret passages of the Under-River. His guardian, Muzzlehatch, gives him the password to the entrance, and also saves him again when Titus fights Veil, the mantis-man. Veil is as incurably evil as Steerpik, but he is not as well-developed a character, nor does he have Steerpik's importance. In any case, he and Black Rose serve to demonstrate the subconscious instinctual possibilities of evil, as Cheeta and her father exemplify the psychological and social aspects, respectively.

The factory owned by Cheeta's father is foul, the "Center" of evil that Muzzlehatch destroys. Cheeta's evil, however, is much more potent. She almost succeeds in driving Titus insane, through the stage she sets for him at the Black House--a grotesque parody of Gormenghast and his family. Cheeta and the space-age machines are fair to look upon (such as the pale-green needles), but terribly destructive. The whole of the third volume, which takes place outside of Gormenghast, is not successful. Despite the evils (and good) encountered by Titus on his journey, which is a subconscious voyage through the possibilities of good and evil within him, and the desolation and darkness of his soul, Peake's construct outside of Gormenghast is never as real as the fictional world

isolated from the rest that the Castle and its surroundings represent. The Lichen Fort, the Tower of Flints, the Twisted Woods remain vital, as the city, the Black House, and the factory do not.

Although the worlds of the various romances discussed above are disparate in many respects, they share some significant characteristics. We have seen patterns of estranged versus familiar landscapes, of good versus evil as represented by fertile, domesticated landscapes as opposed to desolate or uncultivated terrain. Heaven and Hell are defined in very particular ways in all fantasy literature; they are the expression of both the highest ideal and the basest potential of humankind. Creativity, the fertility of the mind, is also of the utmost importance. Withal, we can see that each author attempts to define his wish-fulfillment dream world, and that the diversity of these worlds rests upon the diversity of imagination in these authors. A romance betrays itself, wilfully or unconsciously, when it does not sustain its portrayal of this idealized world. This quality, a characteristic of modernity, is often mixed with the traditional "and they lived happily ever after" ending of the fairy tale, in modern romance.

This is William Empson's answer to charges of escapism in the pastoral mode:

The poetic statements of human waste and limitation, whose function is to give strength to see life clearly and so to adopt a fuller attitude to it, usually bring in, or leave room for the reader to bring in, the whole set of pastoral ideas. For such crucial literary achievements are likely to attempt to reconcile some conflict between

the parts of a society; literature is a social process,
and also an attempt to reconcile the conflicts of an ¹
individual in whom those of society will be mirrored.¹

¹Empson, p. 19.

CHAPTER III

CHARACTER: CONVENTION AND PSYCHOLOGY

Traditionally, the hero of romance is engaged in a quest, which constitutes the major focus of interest and the chief line of action of the tale. By virtue of his superior moral, physical, and psychological qualities, he gains the object he seeks. His antagonist helps to create the obstacles and dangers of the quest and must therefore be overcome. From these two persons a symbology of good and evil is created, and with it a series of opposites. Good is associated with order, light, creation, fertility, beauty, unity; evil is associated with chaos, darkness, destruction, ugliness, sterility and disintegration. In modern romance, although the archetypes of the hero and anti-hero recur (as symbols of good and evil) there has been closer and closer approximation to the individualized portraits of the modern novel. It is in this aspect of modern romance that we see most clearly its relationship to the novel. One of its defining characteristics, according to Ian Watt,¹ is the tendency to particularization, to a definition of an individual. However, modern romance also occurs within a context similar

¹Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1957), p. 18.

to that of the fairy tale, and its heroes and heroines are often as important as ethical concepts as they are as individuals.

Magical beings, whether maleficent or beneficent, function in modern as in medieval romance and fairy tale. The realm of faerie is part and parcel of all fantasy writing, in some imaginative form. We have already seen how the magical landscape functions in romance, and the various emphases of different authors on different aspects of that landscape. We have seen also how there appears to be a strong fear of all that is unknown to human beings. Now we shall see also how, through these magical beings themselves, many romancers portray the pathos of a dying reality. As Katherine Briggs, in The Fairies in English Tradition and Literature states, "In nearly all the fairy stories of this century . . . the fairies are everywhere fugitive and in hiding . . . They have always been the 'Hidden People'."¹ As is evidenced by Ms. Briggs' remarks, fairies (and for our purposes, all other magical beings in romance), have always been in a more precarious position in human imagination than their supernatural powers would seem to warrant. Increasingly in modern romance, however, their transience has been emphasized despite their "immortality."

From folk fairy tale and medieval romance to our own time the hero of the quest story has always received mythical

¹Katherine Briggs, The Fairies in English Tradition and Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 210.

or magical aid and has had some mysterious rapport with nature. Let us look first at the folk fairy tale. According to André Jolles, fairies and demons in fairy tales are not people but executors of ethical occurrences.¹ As such, they aid either the hero or the antagonist who are not important as individuals but as types. Hence in the folk fairy tale one sees typology rather than characterization. "The characters of the fairy tale are not personally delineated; the fairy tale is not concerned with individual destinies."² Yet precisely through this kind of abstraction, the fairy tale portrays certain human phenomena, and through external events and visible objects precisely describes interrelationships of things.³ The hero is in a sense isolated, but he is also in touch with all things.⁴ Man's capacity and desire for growth, his ability to turn from an inauthentic existence to a true one,⁵ or as Jung puts it, the shifting of the center of possibility from the ego to the self,⁶ are symbolized in the fairy tale. The central metaphor of fairy tale, which is portrayed in its form, is change, external and internal, conscious and unconscious. For this reason, battle is a theme basic to both

¹André Jolles, Einfache Formen (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1965), p. 244.

²Lüthi, p. 24.

³Lüthi, p. 56.

⁴Lüthi, p. 141.

⁵Lüthi, p. 138.

⁶Jung, p. 147.

fairy tale¹ and romance, for change and growth presuppose the overcoming of obstacles, the search for attainment of the highest goals, i.e. the quest. In Rapunzel, according to Lüthi, the process of maturation is described. There is a " . . . progression with clearly marked transitions, and the development is toward an ever fuller and richer existence, symbolized at the end in the union of youth and maiden."² Always there is a suggestion of the interplay of forces larger than man, of which he is to an extent a tool. The marvelous occurs as a matter of course in the fairy tale, often pertaining to the aid and succor of an otherwise helpless hero or heroine. Cinderella affords a classic example of this. Kindness often brings unexpected benefits, as in the story of "The White Snake," in which a young man is aided by fish, ants and other animals in return for having saved their lives previously. The reward of heroic good deeds--in other words, growth from ego to self--is transcendence of the ordinary human lot, expressed by the formula, "and they lived happily ever after." In the words of Eliade, "The folk fairy tale transposes the initiation process into the sphere of the imagination . . . "³

Medieval romance too treats the marvelous as concrete and believable. In Andre Norton's adaptation of Huon of the

¹Lüthi, p. 121.

²Lüthi, p. 113.

³Quoted in Lüthi, p. 59.

Horn, a little-known fragment of the Carolingian cycle, the hero becomes the king of Elfland in Oberon's stead because of his unusual prowess. Even the magical beings are christianized to fit the ideology of the age; the great quest of Arthurian romance is the search for the Grail, for example. According to Roger Loomis, the requirements of a hero in Arthurian romance are courage and strength, i.e. physical virtues, to the exclusion of the use of the intellect.¹ Yet some of the great themes of the Middle Ages, such as chivalric love, and the need for purity of spirit, also find their place in medieval romance; Sir Galahad achieves his vision of the Holy Grail only because he is the purest of knights. Sir Gawain, who wears his green ribbon in token of his shame and contrition, is rewarded by the praises of the court for his deeds. There is no doubt that romance tends to exalt the hero as the symbol of good in all its aspects. As Weston points out, his task is to restore the land.² In doing so, he demonstrates his larger-than life spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical qualities. This is another aspect of the tendency in romance and fairy tale to incorporate idealized, magical worlds, accepting them as tangible and real. In this sense, these two genres pertain to the lands of myth and dream, and by extension, to death, as we have seen.

¹Loomis, p. 187.

²Weston, p. 21, for example.

Women, as they are linked to the theme of chivalric love, are treated with ambivalence in medieval romance. They are either witches or objects of an idealized love. Frye speaks of the lady of duty and the lady of pleasure--the light and the dark.¹ In any case, in the chivalric romances, women are often seen only in the light of their lovers, waiting for them, betraying them, or deceiving them. They are often the cause of quests, but no highborn lady is an active agent; she is weighed down by her skirts. Curiously, in the Northern sagas, women are often active warriors and achieve fame in battle just as the men do. However, they are not permitted to sit in Valhalla except as Shield-Maidens, a kind of auxiliary. Still, women are essential to theme, content, and form of romance, even though the attitudes behind their participation in the events are ambivalent.

All over Europe, the traditional romance and ballads were gathered and adapted into different, more elaborate forms during the Renaissance. In Spain, for example, the later romances of the Carolingian cycle and those that developed from the Moorish influence on art and the mixture of the Christian and Arabic cultures on the peninsula, increasingly reflected the chivalric code, treating above all princesses and their knights. Eventually, as more gentlemen of the court began writing chivalric romances (as for example Chrétien de Troyes in France, and Geoffrey de Monmouth in England), the genre evolved into a prose form. Perhaps the

¹Frye, p. 196.

height of these ornate, fanciful works was the Amadis de Gaula (1508). From this work one can date the decline of the genre into a stylized, empty form, until it receives its death blow from Cervantes in 1605. In doing so, Cervantes made use of another narrative form, the novel. Beginning by satirizing the chivalric romance, and gradually developing a new form, Cervantes in many ways anticipates the peculiar quality of modern romance. Modern romance's deviation from fairy tale and medieval romance may be seen largely in terms of the psychological aspects of the genre, including treatment of character.

In traditional forms, there are standard types: the hero, his lady, the king, the sorcerer, the witch, the evil knight, and other magical beings. The hero embarks on a quest, saves or thinks of his lady, restores the king to his lands, overcomes the evil knight(s) and black enchantments, is aided by white magic, and achieves his quest, marries his lady, and lives with her in their paradisaical land forever. The quest is achieved of course only after a long series of peripetiae in which the hero is tested as to his true worth, although often there are intimations from the very beginning that he is chosen by God or destiny. One can easily see, however, the pattern of individuation and self-realization inherent in this form. From this perspective, as we pointed out in our examination of quest, one can view all quest stories psychologically. The obstacles to be overcome are within the hero, as he struggles to unite the various parts of his unconscious with his conscious, his female aspect with

his male aspect. The same is true of heroines, who are more common in folk and fairy tales than in romances.

Although these archetypes are visible in modern literature, there is as well as emphasis on individual, particularized growth in the major characters. The change in sensibility from Morris to the most contemporary romancers may be viewed in this light. Modernity's influence on fantasy makes it more complex than the traditional forms. Ambiguity of definition of good and evil, for example, is characteristic. We have already asserted that Peake is for this reason modern; his evil is portrayed psychologically, and therefore it is real to the twentieth century reader. Absoluteness of both good and evil becomes highly unusual in modern romance, even in Eddison's The Worm Ouroboros, which though epic in conception, is a traditional romance in its orientation and development. However, the evil characters of Witchland are portrayed somewhat sympathetically. The trend towards author's and character's interiorization and self-consciousness is also an aspect of the modernity of the genre. Modern romance becomes more narrative and less epic in formulation and technique. We see this especially from the Victorian Age and William Morris.

The Wood Beyond the World (1895), not generally considered Morris' best work, is his first true romance. Although set in a neo-medieval world, this fantasy reflects from the first page the spirit of the times in which it was written. Walter, the son of a successful merchant, sets out

on his quest because of domestic unhappiness. Here are two interesting facts: Walter is not an aristocrat or a knight, but middle class and his reason for leaving home is his wife's unfaithfulness. By means of this prosaic device, aided by a vision he has that makes him restless, Walter undertakes a number of mercantile voyages. Only when the ship is caught in a storm and washed ashore on an unknown, almost uninhabited land does the real quest begin. Here Walter begins to follow the vision he has seen of the Lady, the Maid and the Dwarf, although he is not really conscious of his purpose until later. He separates himself from his companions and acts in a manner contrary to the express advice of the hermit they encounter. In spite of Walter's action and his resolve to leave his companions, he is portrayed as being confused and unsure of himself. The language is, I believe, a hindrance to the story. It is highly artificial and requires the reader to adapt himself to the style. Undoubtedly, Morris thought to make his fictional world more verisimilar through his style, but the reader is left with the sensation of looking at a modern imitation of an artifact, rather than the artifact itself. Interspersed among the archaic words and phrases peculiar to Morris' style, such revealing adjectives and adverbs as "confused," "snappishly," "troubled," "wonderingly," etc. are quite common. They indicate the preoccupations of a sensibility turning inwards, the hallmark of twentieth century literature. This interiorization characteristic of Morris' characters is tentative, however, and

often in the context of a love affair, a traditional device. Walter makes his way from the ordinary world into a desert, and from there into the Wood. It is a magical land, but there is a veil of evil over this land, ruled by the very Lady of Walter's vision on the wharf. When Walter returns for the carcass of the lion he has killed it is gone, from which he concludes that this is a "land of mere lies" (70). Throughout the book, this seems to be the narrator's attitude towards magic; even the Maid Walter loves practices magic in order to deceive first her mistress, the Lady, and then the Bear-folk. Interesting also is the fact that she loses her magical powers when she loses her virginity. In any case, she dresses herself as one of Morris' nature goddesses.

Walter's flight into the enchanted Wood, and his subsequent escape from the evil magic set to ensnare him, the deceptions, treachery, and illusions encountered by him in the Wood, all have a dream-like quality. It is almost as though by escaping from the Wood, Walter and the Maid escape from a nightmare. This journey is clearly a rite de passage for Walter, culminating in the tests in the City of Stark-Wall. Yet it seems also to be of great psychological importance for Walter, as a means of freeing himself from himself and his internal nightmares. The external consequence of this process is his ability to be a ruler, in much the same way that Ralph journeys to the Well and back to rule. There is great emphasis on Walter's confusion and fear, and

he is terribly afraid of re-integrating himself into society, a symbolic means of freeing himself from his past inner turmoil and adolescence. When he speaks to the Maid of his fear of the city, he says: "But there be evil things in yonder city also, though they be not fays or devils, or it is like to no city that I wot of. And in every city shall foes grow up to us without rhyme or reason, and life therein shall be tangled unto us." (115) The Maid tells him that the evils of the city may be combatted with strength and courage, whereas those of the Wood could not, and he should therefore prepare himself, for he must help her as she helped him with her magic in the wilderness. Here is on the one hand Morris' fear of industrialized society, as represented by the city, and on the other Walter's own experiences, internal and external, with such a society. Nevertheless, he passes the test, by choosing clothing for war over the clothing of wisdom, the former apparently being a more important virtue for a king than the latter. The quest is therefore achieved, and the boy has become a man, having resolved his own inner conflicts. The final resolution is his marriage to the Maiden, by which they both become completely re-integrated into human society.

In many ways, Ralph of Upmeads is a more conventional hero than Walter. All Morris' heroes are saved by love. Ralph, however, is loved by all, and only because of his superlative qualities is he allowed to drink of the water of the Well. We have already seen Ralph's quest as a maturation

process, to prepare him for his kingship. Now we may look a little more closely at this process, in terms of Ralph's growth as an inner process toward individuation in a modern sense. This modernity is extremely tentative; Ralph never achieves the self-awareness of Frodo or Titus Groan. He is to a large extent the archetypal young patrician hero. Ralph's quest begins as an act of rebellion against his parents, who keep him at home when his three older brothers go off to find their fortunes. (Only Ralph succeeds at maintaining and increasing his aristocratic status; one brother becomes a wealthy merchant, one a lowly man-at-arms, one a monk.) He runs away, after receiving aid in the form of money and a curious blue-green bead necklace from his godmother. Although he is obviously a young boy when he leaves, he is portrayed as being loved by everyone from the very beginning.

Ralph's adventures begin almost immediately. He makes friends with some shepherds (a fact that will later become important in his unification of the various lands), encounters a strange, dark knight, experiences the city for the first time, and is confused by the noise and the people, meets Ursula, who tells him a pitiful tale and falls in love with him, and finally meets the Lady, whom he rescues from her captors, and with whom he falls in love. All this occurs in approximately the first fifth of the story. During that time, Ralph's interest in the Well at the World's End is nourished by references to it, and he begins to mature from his experiences. Ursula tells him he must be single-minded for the

quest, but his "manhood seemed changed" after meeting the Lady, and he goes off to find her.

The Lady's role in Ralph's growth is very important. She is a mother-figure, a guide and a savior, as well as a lover. She is older than he, far wiser and more learned, a leader of men, though not "of the race of Adam." She is often presented as a kind of nature goddess; she says of herself, "I am both well-knit and light-root as the Wood-wife and Goddess of yore ago."¹ She is seemingly young and beautiful, from draughts of the water of the Well; her task is to guide Ralph there. In spite of Morris' seeming emphasis on the Lady's supernatural qualities, there is something very human about her. She is always in danger; Ralph rescues her once, and his appearance saves her again when her husband wants to kill her. In a reciprocal action, she saves him and some of the men of the Dry Tree from execution. She is of course beloved of all men, as Ralph is of all women.

As C. S. Lewis has pointed out, Havelock Ellis' definition of love as lust plus friendship is appropriate to Morris' characters.² While Ralph is waiting for the Lady at the Castle of Abundance, an old woman describes the Lady's body to him. There is a great deal of description of this

¹William Morris, Collected Works, with Introductions by May Morris, vols. 18-19; The Well at the World's End (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966), 18:47. All subsequent references will be to this edition; page numbers appear in parentheses in the text.

²Lewis, Rehabilitations, p. 41.

sort in Morris. When applied to the Lady, it indicates a kind of ambivalence towards her; even her death after a few days with Ralph in the woods, at the hands of her husband, proves at once her human vulnerability to morality and her inability to be a part of ordinary reality. Before she dies, we learn that she has prepared Ursula for the journey to the Well, and even to be Ralph's companion on that journey. Much later, the Sage says to Roger of the Ropewalk,

'What! dost not thou know, thou that knowest so much of the Lady of Abundance, that she it was who ordained this Ursula to be Ralph's bedmate, when she herself should be gone from him, were she dead or alive, and that she also should be a Friend of the Well, so that he might not lack a fellow his life long?' (19:166)

If the Lady of Abundance represents Ralph's initiation into manhood, Ursula represents the culmination of his individuation, and together they symbolize the unification of the psyche within itself and into the social context. After the Lady's death, Ralph is grief-stricken, but he soon decides to continue on his quest instead of returning home to Upmeads. He is confirmed in this decision by a dream he has of the Lady and Ursula, both of whom urge him on to the Well. Thereafter, until Ralph is united with Ursula, he seeks both her and the Well. He continuously experiences visions and dreams of her during this part of his quest. Morris uses this device awkwardly, as he always states that they are either visions or dreams. The dreams lack motivation or explanation, such as the one which deceives Ralph to the extent that Ursula calls herself Dorotea. These techniques are Morris' attempt to strengthen the supernatural aspect of his story, or to link

his romances with traditional forms, but they do not function as integral elements of the story. Ralph grows more and more apart from others from this part of the quest until he comes home again. Yet he also seems to be developing extraordinary qualities. For example, the Queen of Utterbol suddenly sees herself as cheap and coarse, merely by looking at Ralph. By contrast, her husband is referred to as the Devil, (18:286) and his men are "like the shapes of an evil dream." (18:289) Ralph manages to find friends even in this land (Hell), and is able to escape.

The second volume of the romance is concerned with the last stages of the journey to the Well and the return of both protagonists to Upmeads. Together, Ralph and Ursula become semi-divine personages, called the "Heavenly Folk" by the Innocent Folk. The object of the quest is achieved; they drink the water. These are the words carved on the Well:

'Ye who have come a long way to look upon me, drink of me, if ye deem that ye be strong enough in desire to bear length of days; or else drink not; but tell your friends and the kindreds of the earth how ye have seen a great marvel.' (19:81-82)

The inscription on the Well warns of the dangers of long life, and of the strength needed to endure it. The Well itself is located just at the beginning and the end of the earth, or in other words, earthly reality: " . . . without any great rock-wall or girdle of marvellous and strange land, there was an end of earth, with its grass and trees and streams, and a beginning of the ocean, which stretched away changeless, and it might be for ever." (19:79) Now the initiation stage of

the quest is truly over, the psychological aspect, so to speak, and the social remains. That is, they must put to use their new-found gifts:

'Therefore ye do but right to seek to the Well at the World's End, that ye may the better accomplish that which behoveth you, and that ye may serve your fellows and deliver them from the thrallldom of those that be strong and unwise and unkind, of whom we have heard strange tales.' (19:66)

This need to better oneself in order to benefit all is emphasized over and over again. The pattern is identical to that described by Jessie Weston of the sick and dying king, whose land is sterile, and the restoration and renewal of the land through the good offices of a young knight. In the medieval romance, the old king usually would be saved only by being asked the right question. Morris' socialism intrudes here, to emphasize the freeing of slaves, and improvement of the lot of the poor, although he does incorporate the traditional in the legend about the Dry Tree and its greening.

Ralph not only frees Upmeads from invaders; he also brings about an alliance of all the neighboring lands, of which he becomes either king or leige lord in some capacity, thus creating a new society in fellowship. He has fulfilled the promise of the strength and wisdom that his quest has taught him. Ursula and he reap the traditional rewards of the successful quest, both inwardly and outwardly.

From these extremely tentative beginnings of self-consciousness and interiorization, romance in the twentieth century develops more and more novel-type characters, while retaining its archetypal origins. Thus a new hybrid form is

created. Tolkien's and Peake's works reflect this tendency, though in different ways. As we have mentioned previously, Tolkien's Frodo Baggins is by no means a typical quest hero. The character that fits that archetype far better, Aragorn, is relegated to second or third place in the trilogy. In his essay on Tolkien, Roger Sale reiterates this point many times. His thesis is that Frodo is a new, middle-class hero, a product of the twentieth century's values.¹ We shall see how true this assertion is.

When we first meet Frodo Baggins he is a rich, fat hobbit in the process of inheriting his uncle's estate. It is Bilbo's inheritance to Frodo that makes a hero of him, for he leaves him the Ring, among other things.² Tolkien very carefully portrays the insularity and park-like quality of the Shire and the provinciality of its inhabitants. Frodo himself is an English country squire; Sam is the proverbial English manservant. He also states many times over, however, through the mouths especially of Gandalf and Aragorn, that the hobbits conceal an extremely tough fiber beneath their apparently soft skins. They differ from humans physically only in size and in their furry feet. At any rate, Frodo inherits the Ring, and with it his fortune for the rest of his

¹Sale, p. 213, for example.

²There is a striking parallel in Wagner's version of the Niebelung cycle--when Odin steals the dwarf's Ring from him in the cave by the waterfall, the dwarf lays a curse on it. This is inherited, just as Gollum's curse on Bilbo (when the latter takes the Ring by the underground stream) is inherited by Frodo.

life on Middle Earth--the essential restlessness that characterizes all the Ring-bearers. When Frodo, after long years of delay, finally does leave the Shire, at Gandalf's insistence, we still see an almost-ridiculous, middle-aged, pot-bellied hobbit, reiterating that he is not made for perilous quests. Tolkien even adds the gently ironic touch of Frodo's complaint that his pack is too heavy. (1:79) From Frodo's first encounter with the High Elves (Gildor and his folk) he begins to take on larger and larger proportions. Tolkien's Middle Earth is replete with all kinds of white and black magic such as elves, dwarves, Ents, Sauron, Saruman and Gandalf, as Morris' fictional worlds were not. His was to a large extent an ordinary, though romanticized, world. Not so Tolkien's. His depends upon magical and mythical beings for a good deal of the action and for a good deal of the symbolic dialectic between good and evil upon which the trilogy is based. Other secondary characters, especially other hobbits, are also extremely important in The Lord of the Rings. Sam Gamgee, Frodo's companion and squire, will become more and more important during the course of the quest. His loyalty to Frodo has never been questioned, but he also becomes a hero through force of circumstance. This pattern is visible as early as the encounter with Gildor, when Sam reveals a depth of perception which surprises even Frodo. His ability to see relationships is important in Tolkien's "good" characters.¹ Sam believes that the elves are " . . . 'a bit above

¹cf. Sale, p. 236.

my likes and dislikes, . . . so old and young, so gay and sad, as it were.'" (1:96)

Of the nine members of the Fellowship of the Ring, four are hobbits, two are men, one is a dwarf, one an elf, and one a wizard. The hobbits provide at once the homeliness, the humor, and also the heroism of the trilogy. It is they who come alive more than any other beings on Middle Earth, and it is a hobbit who wins the war against Sauron by destroying his Ring. Only a hobbit would think of, and make, rabbit stew in the middle of Mordor, as Sam does. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Tolkien's language comes alive, and most important events are seen, through the hobbits. The four hobbits Frodo, Sam, Merry, and Pippin travel together until they reach Elrond's house in Rivendell, where the Fellowship is formed. Their journey to Rivendell is a preparation for the rest of the quest. Even before they leave the Shire they encounter the Black Riders, who are searching for Frodo. They are saved only by the timely arrival of Gildor. After leaving the boundaries of their world they meet with the evil magic of the Old Forest and are saved by Tom Bombadil, the Eldest. They are imprisoned by the barrow-wights and again saved by Tom. Upon arriving at The Sign of the Prancing Pony, in Bree, Frodo endangers them all by vanishing in the midst of a crowd. They are rescued by Strider, and he then guides them to Rivendell. Without Strider, their chance of arrival is scant. It is Frodo's decision to allow Strider to become part of their company; he is becoming less

and less the staid, somewhat ridiculous figure he was, and more and more a leader.

Frodo is betrayed by the Ring several times. Wearing it, even around his neck, means becoming involved in a contest of wills with the evil that the Ring represents. In the inn at Bree and, more importantly, on Weathertop, Frodo puts it on and thus becomes a part of the world of shadows to which the Ring belongs. As a result, he is wounded, as the Black Riders can see him only because he wears the Ring. Thinking to hide himself, he instead becomes visible. As Paul Kocher has pointed out, each of the principal characters in the trilogy has a moment of choice, in which he is given the opportunity to become the Ring-bearer.¹ It is sometimes a highly dramatic moment, as when Strider reveals his full strength as Aragorn to the hobbits in the inn at Bree, (1:183) or later when Galadriel gives herself the test, and passes, as she says. (1:381) Gandalf has his moment towards the beginning of the trilogy, when Bilbo offers him the Ring after having been frightened into parting with it, (1:43) and again when Frodo does. (1:70-71) And so with each of the others; only Boromir succumbs to the temptation when the moment arrives. Frodo, however, is constantly being confronted with the choice of using the Ring, and thus it is he who must, in accordance with the structure of the romance, be the hero. The challenge will either make him larger than life,

¹Paul Kocher, Master of Middle-earth: The Fiction of J. R. R. Tolkien (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1972), p. 50.

or it will destroy him. But the important thing is that the center of interest is focused on Frodo because it is he who must endure the trials of Hercules. The burden of the Ring is terrible; its significance will be discussed later.

It is not until they reach Weathertop that Frodo fully realizes his predicament. The hobbits do not dream of going to Mordor, but view Rivendell as the end of their journey, until the council of Elrond. They may always turn back up until that point, but after they leave Rivendell they are committed to the task at hand and never look to going back to the Shire until the quest is completed. Significantly, however, "home" is an extremely important concept for all of them, and for Tolkien, as Sale has pointed out.¹ On the journey to Rivendell, the hobbits begin to gain knowledge and therefore a greater capacity for understanding and fearing the cosmos than ever before leaving their homes. The contrast between the Travelers and the other hobbits, when they return home, is startling, humorous, and important. They have achieved a spiritual growth of which their neighbors have no conception. Rosie Cotton, for example, tells Sam, "If you've been looking after Mr. Frodo all this while, what d'you want to leave him for, as soon as things look dangerous?" (3:287), when they lead the battle of the Shire against Sharkey's men. On the journey to Rivendell also, Frodo has the first of many dreams which, in the aggregate, reveal the depths of which he is capable, and also his spiritual growth

¹Sale, p. 249.

through the union of his subconscious and conscious. His first dream is in Tom Bombadil's house; it is of the sea and a white tower. His second is also in Tom's house, after he and Tom together have rescued all the hobbits from the barrow-wights. The dream is of Gandalf's rescue from the tower by Gwaihir. Both are prophetic, and demonstrate Frodo's increased communication with "the other world." After Frodo is wounded by the Black Rider he dreams of the Shire, but the garden in the dream is less real than the black shadows above it, signifying Frodo's real danger, that of succumbing to the dark powers of the Ring, which are really within him. Frodo begins to see only greys, that is, shadows, and to welcome night, . . . "for then the world seemed less pale and empty." (1:224) This process however, corresponds to the archetypal pattern of death in one form, and rebirth in another, which is in reality what Frodo experiences spiritually, and eventually bodily. Gandalf begins to see a slight hint of transparency about Frodo already, as he lies wounded in Rivendell. (1:235) He is gradually sloughing off his Shire skin, although he is not yet aware of it. Which way the scale will tilt has not yet been decided.

According to Sale, it is at Elrond's house that Frodo's metamorphosis begins. This is true only to the extent that here Frodo chooses to take the Ring to The Cracks of Doom, and destroy it. He does so only after he has heard the complete history of the Ring, and all related subjects, such as the tale of Saruman (the White) and his corruption

through the thirst for knowledge, rule, and order. (1:271-73) The Fellowship is born, and a change laid upon all of them that is flexible for all but Frodo. He has irrevocably chosen a path from which he cannot turn back. His humility upon announcing his decision is characteristic of the traditional quest hero's large spirit: "I will take the Ring, . . . though I do not know the way." (1:284) Tolkien carefully and thoughtfully reveals Frodo's emotional state and increasing depth to the reader at all times. Thus, when the Fellowship is attempting to find the way through the ancient Mines of Moria, we learn that Frodo is now able to see better in the dark than any of his companions save Gandalf, that the Ring sometimes seems a heavy weight, and also that he has a premonition of evil to come, although he keeps it to himself. (1:325) He is still a hobbit, for even deep in the heart of the Mines, he wishes to be back in the Shire, mowing the lawn. (1:332)

After Gandalf's fall with the Balrog at the Gates of Moria, Aragorn assumes leadership of the Fellowship, although the Ring-bearer is always the most important personage. He leads the group to Lothlórien, the paradise of Galadriel and her people, maintained with the power of her Ring, one of the Three. As we have seen, Lothlórien is unstained, timeless (although its time is nearing an end), absolutely good, for, as Aragorn says, the only evil in Lórien is within one's own heart. Galadriel tests every member of the Fellowship, to see how committed they are to the quest. Each is given

a choice, secret to the others, between something they greatly desire, and continuing on the quest. The results of that examination are not revealed until later, and then only by the deeds of each individual. Galadriel serves as a spokeswoman for elfish "magic," although as she tells Sam, she doesn't quite understand the word, for it is also used for "the deceptions of the Enemy." (1:377) She is the creator of Lothlórien, and functions similarly to the King of Elfland in Dunsany's story, in this respect. As a representative of her people, Galadriel's reality is beautiful (so striking is her beauty that for love of her Gimli and Legolas become friends, thus ending the old hatred between elf and dwarf) and timeless like a memory or a dream. Frodo, with his newly gained insight, sees her as " . . . present and yet remote, a living vision of that which has already been left far behind by the flowing streams of Time." (1:389) Throughout the trilogy, the elves are Tolkien's sustained metaphor of beauty and culture beyond the limits of ordinary reality. Writers of romance often insert subtle commentaries, as do Dunsany and Tolkien, about the ways in which that other world of non-ordinary, imaginative reality has been vulgarized and misunderstood in our time. Tolkien in particular gives a fairly complete picture of his version of white magical reality, especially as represented in the elves. He often takes the opportunity to contrast elves and men, elves and dwarves, elves and all other races on Middle Earth. As a result, their grief and his at their passing away "into the West" is also

felt by the reader. Indeed, as we have said before, it is one of the terrible tragedies of the trilogy that light must pass away with darkness.

The end of the first volume of the trilogy marks the breaking up of the Fellowship. Boromir dies, having paid for his sin of coveting the Ring, Merry and Pippin are captured by the Orcs, and Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas search for them. In a sense, Boromir's attempt to steal the Ring from Frodo forces him to the final commitment to the quest. Because of this, Frodo sets out alone, and then with Sam, to finish the journey to Mordor. This decision is also reinforced by Frodo's vision of the Eye on the Seat of Seeing, during which Gandalf and Sauron fight for control of his mind. Gandalf saves Frodo, which is to say, good triumphs temporarily over evil within Frodo. The conflict is in reality internal, as the language of the passage indicates:

And suddenly he felt the Eye. A fierce eager will was there. It leaped towards him; almost like a finger he felt it searching for him . . .

He heard himself crying out: 'Never, never!' Or was it: 'Verily I come, I come to you?' He could not tell. Then as a flash from some other point of power there came to his mind another thought: 'Take it off! Take it off! Fool, take it off! Take off the Ring!' . . .

The two powers strove in him. For a moment, perfectly balanced between their piercing points, he writhed, tormented. Suddenly he was aware of himself again. Frodo, neither the Voice nor the Eye: free to choose, and with one remaining instant in which to do so. He took the Ring off his finger. (1:417)

The tension of the moment is carefully and painfully constructed; the sentences are short and exclamatory. The tone is high-pitched, in crescendo, until the anti-climactic sigh of relief when Frodo takes the Ring off his finger. Although

the Voice and the Eye seemingly come from outside Frodo, the two points of power strive within him. Significantly, he removes the Ring at the moment in which he is alone and free to choose. This incident and Boromir's attempt to take the Ring both occur after Sam and Frodo have admitted, to themselves at least, that Frodo must go to Mordor despite his fear. Thus another of Tolkien's themes, that evil in the end must destroy itself, is implied.¹

As we have stated before, Tolkien demonstrates the capacity for both good and evil in all men. Aragorn says to Éomer, "'Good and ill have not changed since yesteryear; nor are they one thing among Elves and Dwarves and another among men. It is a man's part to discern them, as much in the Golden Wood as in his own house.'" (2:40) We see many times over how good can be corrupted into evil. Saruman, because he studied Sauron too long, became his vassal. Denethor, desiring knowledge, ended being betrayed by the knowledge that Sauron cared to give him. Gandalf and Galadriel both express the danger of the Ring for themselves. Gandalf says that the Ring would make him too powerful and too terrible, winning its way into his heart through his chief virtue, pity. It is precisely this eternal temptation to use power to do good and correct evil that Frodo must fight, for it can only end in his doing evil. White's thesis in The Once and Future

¹Two parallel examples immediately come to mind: the first is Eddison's romance, which uses the serpent eating its own tail as a symbolic device, and the second is the fairy tale "Hansel and Gretel," in which the witch is roasted in her own oven.

King is similar; Arthur discovers that Right maintained by . Might is not Right at all.

The third book of the trilogy, which is the first half of the second volume, traces the paths of the Fellowship (except Sam and Frodo) after its dissolution. Merry and Pippin, after displaying great ingenuity and courage in escaping from the Orcs, meet Treebeard. They (and the reader) learn to look at the earth as the Elves and Ents do, getting inside other things (especially the natural world), and become less interested in themselves. Treebeard's descriptions of the trees and the earth personify and deify at the same time. He makes statements such as, "'Hill. Yes, that was it. But it is a hasty word for a thing that has stood here ever since this part of the world was shaped.'" (2:69) Other descriptions in the story, such as this one in the mouth of the narrator, confirm this treatment of the natural world as a great and respected personage: Isengard, and the tower of Orthanc is as though " . . . riven from the bones of the earth in the ancient torment of the hills." (2:160) The existence of Ents themselves also bears this out.

Aragorn slowly begins to reveal himself more and more as a center of power. When he, Legolas and Gimli meet the men of Rohan, his majesty persuades them, as it helps to stem the tide of battle and then gain victory at Helm's Deep. It is confirmed when he accepts the palantír (seeing stone) from Gandalf as rightfully his, and Gandalf concurs. His status as heir of Elendil, and the wielder of Andúril is gradually

recognized by more people; the weather-beaten, suspicious-looking man is becoming the High King. Éowyn, Éomer's sister, and niece to Théoden, the King of the Mark, recognizes and loves this in Aragorn. Her love is unrequited, for Aragorn gently lets her know that he loves Arwen, daughter of Elrond. Still, Tolkien manages to create a good deal of pathos and emotion from this love, and skillfully breaks up the battles and deeds of war and cunning with it. When Théoden and Aragorn ride out to battle, for example, Tolkien closes chapter 6 not with a description of their array, but with Éowyn's loneliness and despair at being left behind. Aragorn, the true patrician hero, is beloved by all, as Frodo is not. Frodo has no lady love, nor does he ever acquire one, as even Sam does.

After Sam and Frodo escape from the rest of the Fellowship, they create a fellowship, or rather Frodo creates a fellowship, with themselves and Gollum. Frodo's urgency grows as they approach Mordor, for he feels more and more "naked," (2:211) and exposed to the Eye. There, where Sam and Frodo are scrambling about on the rocks, trying to get down into Mordor, Frodo tames and appoints Gollum their guide. Part of Frodo's modern heroism, for Sale, is the ability to form a new society. He is able to recognize the otherness of others, "while reaching out to assert our common livingness."¹ Frodo has new powers, because of the Ring, yet he also is in constant danger of succumbing to the Ring. This terrible hunger he

¹Sale, p. 237.

shares with Sméagol, and makes him pity him and be merciful, even as Gandalf is:

For a moment it appeared to Sam that his master had grown and Gollum had shrunk: a tall stern shadow, a mighty lord who hid his brightness in grey cloud, and at his feet a little whining dog. Yet the two were in some way akin and not alien: they could reach one another's minds. (2:225)

Sam sees Frodo here with other vision, as Frodo might be if he used the Ring. It is almost a replica of the scene at the Cracks of Doom when Frodo does give in, and states his decision to keep the Ring. Sméagol is terribly torn, a pathetic creature whose will has been completely absorbed by the Ring's, a warning to Frodo of what he might become, for Tolkien lets us know that Sméagol comes originally from some hobbit-like race. This conflict of Gollum's between his fear of the "Master" and his promise on the "Precious," as he calls the Ring, and his consuming hunger to possess it again, causes him to act ambivalently towards Frodo and Sam. The power of Frodo and his promise on the Ring together, however, sustain his leading them until Sam calls him a "sneak," in a moment when his desire for affection has caused him to reach out to touch Frodo, and they hear and see the Black Riders circling around in the air above them. (2:237) Without him, Frodo and Sam would not have been able to get through the Dead Marshes. Even his betrayal of them to Shelob saves them in the end, for it is the only way that they could have entered Mordor without being seen.

Frodo, while seemingly more powerful because of the Ring, becomes less and less strong as they approach Mordor.

This is because he is approaching the Eye, and the hostile will it represents, and fights not only to reveal himself to Sauron, but also not to use the Ring for himself. He enters more and more into the grey, dream world of the Ring as they approach its place of forging. The Ring also feels the call, and becomes stronger and heavier, more of a burden to bear. When they reach the Crossroads this tension becomes almost unbearable:

The luminous tower fascinated him, and he fought the desire that was on him to run up the gleaming road towards its gate. At last with an effort he turned back, and as he did so, he felt the Ring resisting him, dragging at the chain about his neck; and his eyes too, as he looked away, seemed for a moment to have been blinded. (2:313)

and:

Weariness and more than weariness oppressed him; it seemed as if a heavy spell was laid on his mind and body. 'I must rest,' he muttered. (2:314)

The journey takes on nightmare qualities as they approach Mordor: "The remainder of that journey was a shadow of growing fear in which memory could find nothing to rest upon." (2:238) and they are "like men on the edge of a sleep where nightmare lurks, . . . " (2:239) They see themselves as "little squeaking ghosts." (2:239) Paradoxically, Frodo begins to sound more and more like Gandalf; as his depth of understanding and wisdom increase, so does his susceptibility to the Ring. He loses more and more hope. When he speaks to Faramir in the wilderness, he says, "'I do not think I shall ever get there.'" (2:290) The countryside reflects Frodo's gradual withdrawal from ordinary reality. First the horrors of the Dead Marshes, and then the desolation and terror of Mordor

itself, and finally the grotesque flora, which are " . . . like the demented forms in an uneasy dream, . . ." (2:313) all indicate a psychic crisis, a confrontation between dissociation and integration from actuality. Although Frodo makes the decision to enter Mordor through Shelob's lair, it is almost the last active role he takes in the achievement of the quest. He has become too involved with the Ring, which fills his vision more and more as a "wheel of fire," and the Eye, which is searching for him, to be able to do more than walk.

Thus, from the end of the second volume of the trilogy to the end of the trilogy, others take over. As far as the quest itself is concerned, Sam becomes much more active and important. The reader has been prepared for this by speeches of Sam's about Gollum and the elves. That is, we see Sam also undergoing a transformation, becoming more perceptive and acute, during the course of the quest. He repeats Aragorn's statement (as his own) that people take their peril to Lórien with them, they do not find it there. (2:288) He warns Frodo about Gollum again and again. Yet he also slips to Faramir about the Ring, thus giving Faramir his moment of choice to take the Ring or not. He is still the old Sam, above all loyal to Frodo, and thinking first always of his needs. For this reason, he lights the cooking fire that brings Faramir to them. It is Sam's love for Frodo that saves him in his moment of choice about the Ring, his love for Frodo and his common sense, his "hobbit sense," as Tolkien says. Sam is a curious mixture of ordinary person and wise man. At

times he reveals hitherto unknown depths. Not only does he grow spiritually on the quest, he also finds a tremendous amount of strength and courage. As we shall see later, it is really Sam who completes the quest, Sam and Gollum together, in the micro-society created by Frodo.

After Shelob stings Frodo, Sam accomplishes one heroic deed after another. He fights off Gollum, and then faces the monstrous spider, and with the aid of the elvish sword Sting and Galadriel's phial of light, he wounds her, and sends her back into her lair. Sure that Frodo is dead, Sam remembers his own words from the beginning of the quest, "I have something to do before the end. I must see it through, sir, if you understand." (2:340) His tenacity and courage in the face of almost unsurmountable obstacles are typical of the quest hero; the way in which he expresses his sentiments is not:

'Let me see now: if we're found here, or Mr. Frodo's found, and that Thing's on him, well, the Enemy will get it. And that's the end of all of us, of Lórien, and Rivendell, and the Shire and all. And there's no time to lose, or it'll be the end anyway. The war's begun, and more than likely things are all going the Enemy's way already. No chance to go back with It and get advice or permission. No, it's sit here till they come and kill me over master's body, and gets It; or take It and go.' He drew a deep breath. 'Then take It, it is!' (2:341-42)

Sam has shrewdly appraised the situation on Middle Earth in a few unpolished sentences. He then takes up the burden (which he too finds very heavy) and continues the quest. Almost immediately after leaving Frodo, Sam finds out that Frodo is not dead. His quest then reverts back to finding Frodo. To

do this, he puts on the Ring, and although he is invisible he is terrified. But Sam's love for Frodo conquers all else within him, and saves him more than once. At the very end of the second volume, The Two Towers, Sam is locked out of Mordor, and Frodo is a prisoner within.

The Return of the King reaches heights of heroic display as well as depths of despair on the part of all the major characters. All of them except Frodo and Sam take part in a last gamble; they proffer themselves as bait for Sauron in order to divert his energies from the search for the Ring. Each of the members of the Fellowship performs at least one great deed, as do other characters such as Éowyn and Théoden. Between them, Merry and Éowyn down and destroy the Captain of the Black Riders, so that he dissolves into nothingness. Pippin in battle tackles several trolls at once. Gimli and Legolas each kill large numbers of the enemy troops, as well as accompany Aragorn and the Rangers through the Paths of the Dead.

Aragorn in battle and war becomes more and more openly the King of the West. After he dares to show himself to Sauron, leaving him to ponder the tidings that Ilsideur's heir exists, and has reforged the Sword That Was Broken, Aragorn decides that in order to save Gondor from destruction, he must fulfill more of the ancient prophecies by calling on the Dead that lay without resting, until they have fulfilled their broken oath. When Aragorn follows the Paths of the Dead, to call upon them to aid him, he repeats the archetypal pattern

of the quest hero who goes underground, and returns. Each of Aragorn's actions from the moment he has his sword re-forged is taken in order to confirm and solidify his position as Isildur's heir, and to fulfill the words of the ancient seers. There is very much a sense of some larger forces, of a supernatural nature, who govern the actions of all. This is not to say that each must make his own decisions, but it seems fairly clear that most of the actions of the major characters in the trilogy have been predestined. Aragorn further confirms his position by healing Éowyn, Merry, and Faramir of their injuries of body and spirit from the Black Riders. It is said that the hands of the king are the hands of the healer. Later, he brings Frodo and Sam back from near-death also.

Aside from his huge armies, one of Sauron's most powerful weapons is despair. As the war between the East and the West begins, the sky darkens and grey permeates the whole of Middle Earth. There is a specific correlation between the grey and the loss of hope in those that fight: "All the lands were grey and still; and ever the shadow deepened before them, and hope waned in every heart." (3:73) Gandalf appears as Gondor's light in the darkness, (3:83) as the White Rider, to fight the Shadow. Along with the darkness itself, Sauron sends the Black Riders to strike fear into the hearts of his enemies. Their cry alone is enough to frighten the strongest men, and very few can withstand them in Gondor, or on the march to Mordor. "For yet another weapon, swifter

than hunger, the Lord of the Dark Tower had; dread and despair." (3:96-97) Even within the City of the White Tower, Gondor, Sauron manages to use dread and despair to harm, and then indirectly cause the death of, its Steward. Only Gandalf has the power to save the city and the son of the Steward, Faramir, from destruction. Pippin the hobbit does not give in to despair either. It is a mark of the good characters in the trilogy that they do not despair even in the direst of circumstances. As Pippin says to Denethor:

'I will take your leave, sir . . . for I want to see Gandalf very much indeed. But he is no fool; and I will not think of dying until he despairs of life. But from my word and your service I do not wish to be released while you live. And if they come at last to the Citadel, I hope to be here and stand beside you and earn perhaps the arms that you have given me.'
(3:99)

He then goes in search of Gandalf, to save Faramir. His words bespeak both his courage and his hope, partially founded on his greatness of spirit and partially on his faith in Gandalf.

Even Pippin's faith in Gandalf is based on morally right behavior, within the context of the trilogy. Between them, Gandalf and Aragorn display the kind of ancient wisdom and present urgency needed to guide the war against evil.¹ Good characters are greatly interested in names and in the past they evoke, while the evil characters seek to alter or destroy the right relation of the namer to the named, and of the present to the past.² Gandalf attempts to restore things

¹Sale, p. 202.

²Sale, p. 201.

to their "right" place, as Sauron seeks to destroy them. This is how he becomes the head of the White Council, after Saruman's corruption. The hobbits have a tremendous sense of things being in their right place. They also feel very strongly their roots in the Shire:

'It is best to love first what you are fitted to love, I suppose: you must start somewhere and have some roots, and the soil of the Shire is deep. Still there are things deeper and higher; and not a gaffer could tend his garden in what he calls peace but for them, whether he knows about them or not. I am glad that I know about them, a little.' (3:146)

These things that Merry is talking about could be summed up in the kinds of things that Gandalf, Aragorn, and Galadriel are and stand for. It is Tolkien's definition of good, as we have seen before, at least as it is expressed in the trilogy. Gandalf has passed through terrible ordeals in order to attain his terrible wisdom. He is awe-inspiring and frightening, although he only shows that aspect of himself when facing his enemies. Thus his portrait as a kindly, wise old man is never fully eradicated. After all, we first meet him as a master in the creation and execution of fireworks. This same person however has almost single-handedly planned and carried out a large part of the strategy of the West. One of his great moments is his confrontation with the Balrog, when he falls into the abyss and is thought dead by the members of the Fellowship. He defies the Balrog as a "servant of the Secret Fire, wielder of the flame of Anor," and he tells it to go back into the Shadow from which it came, (1:344) just as later, after his return, before the

gates of Gondor he tells the Black Captain, "'You cannot enter here . . . Go back to the abyss prepared for you! Go back! Fall into the nothingness that awaits you and your Master. Go!'" (3:103) His words are not so much a challenge as a command, in both cases. In the latter instance, however, we are more prepared for his revelation of supernatural strength from the brief account of his battle with the Balrog. Gandalf has literally returned from the dead; his "old life has burned away," as he puts it. From this trial, Gandalf the Grey becomes Gandalf the White, having passed through sacrificial fire and ritual burning, to be born again, more powerful than before. All the other "good" characters depend upon him, even Aragorn. Frodo always tries to act as he thinks Gandalf would want him to. In spite of all his power, Gandalf cannot aid Frodo and Sam beyond a certain point. He must also leave Middle Earth when his task is done, and he departs to the Grey Havens. This does not diminish his enormous powers in battle and as counselor and chief representative of the white magical forces on Middle Earth. Gandalf unites the peoples of Middle Earth against Sauron more than any other character.

From the moment Frodo and Sam leave the Fellowship, they no longer have contact with any of the other aspects of the war except themselves and Gollum, with but one exception. That is their encounter with Faramir in the wilderness, which we have already mentioned. Once they are in Mordor, Frodo and Sam are isolated. After Sam has his moment of choice, he

no longer uses the Ring in his search for Frodo, unless it is absolutely necessary to be invisible. But Frodo can no longer lead. The combination of his and the Ring's proximity to Orodruin (Mt. Doom), and the sting of poison he received from Shelob have so weakened him that he becomes almost completely passive, except when he thinks the Ring is in danger of being stolen from him. Frodo retains his wisdom however, because of the very thing that is breaking his will. Of the orcs he says, "'The Shadow that bred them can only mock, it cannot make: not real new things of its own.'"

(3:190) This statement has been anticipated by Treebeard, when he describes how trolls were made in evil parody of the Ents. Frodo is straying farther into the Land of Shadows, internally as well as in the external action of the plot. He cannot see the Shire anymore, and the Ring takes up all the space in his mind, "like a great wheel of fire." (3:196) As they cross the dreadful wastes, Sam and Frodo's only salvation are the wafers of food that the elves gave them. As they go deeper and deeper into Mordor, their strength lessens and the land becomes more evil. The elvish lembas feed their will as well as their bodies, and so provide them with the only source of strength left aside from Sam's loyalty. Despair creeps on them more than before, and " . . . the time lay behind them like an ever-darkening dream" (3:212) since their escape from the orcs. Sam completely takes over, making all the decisions about how they should continue and when. The only thing he cannot do is to share the burden of

the Ring, which is precisely why Frodo remains the hero.

Frodo says:

'It is my burden, and no one else can bear it. It is too late now, Sam dear. You can't help me in that way again. I am almost in its power now. I could not give it up, and if you tried to take it I should go mad.' (3:214)

This speech indicates not only his failing strength, but also his almost complete enslavement to the Ring. He is almost totally occupied with it, and all his remaining strength is reserved for walking the path to the Cracks of Doom. He is by this time almost dissociated from ordinary reality, "naked in the dark," immune to any memory of trees, flowers, or stars. Sam on the other hand, uses these things to regain hope and strength, and finally becomes so hardened to the task that he carries Frodo almost the whole way up the mountain. Frodo has the strength to crawl a little way, and they do, "like small grey insects."

There, on the slopes of Mount Doom, the only thing that could have possibly raised any more strength from Frodo occurs; Gollum again attacks them, and tries to take the Ring. Frodo throws him off, and reveals himself as terrible and powerful. His will has been hardened by the quest, he has gained wisdom, and the Ring gives him the power to use both. However, it can only be used in the way that the Ring will use it, so that Frodo's danger is even clearer now than earlier, for he now has the capacity to use the Ring. Significantly, he no longer feels pity for Gollum. Now it is Sam who has the greatness of spirit not to kill Gollum even

there, next to the Cracks of Doom, because he pities him. At the very edge of the precipice, Frodo refuses to give up the Ring and decides to become its master. He has failed in his quest, he has not passed the test but has been enslaved by the power of the Ring. It is only because of Sam's pity and Gollum's lust for the Ring that the quest is completed. It is because of Sam also that they move far enough down the mountain so that Gwaihir can find them after the holocaust. Frodo, like Sauron, claims the Ring. Like Sauron, he now has the will to use it. Like Sauron also, he loses the Ring along with a finger, so that he becomes Frodo of the Nine Fingers, just as Sauron has only nine fingers.

In many senses, Frodo is a hero. Tolkien makes it quite clear that no one else could have even carried the Ring as far as Frodo did, and not use it, including Gandalf and Galadriel. Their heroism lies in refusing the Ring; Frodo's lies in accepting it. Tolkien might also have developed Aragorn's trials and suffering, as well as his heroism, more than he did. Although Aragorn, not Frodo, is the perfect patrician hero, his internal turmoil is not emphasized as Frodo's is, so that the reader does not respond to him the way she responds to Frodo. As the Ring attracts attention, so does the Ringbearer. Tolkien chose to reveal the inner conflict between good and evil most deeply in Frodo, so that in spite of, or perhaps because of, his failure to recapture his soul, he is the hero of The Lord of the Rings. In this sense, Frodo's heroism is modern. He is an ordinary person

(hobbit) given the opportunity to become larger-than-life through exploration of his soul. Had Frodo succeeded in resisting the temptation to evil, he might have been able to remain on Middle Earth. As it is, he, like the other magical characters in the trilogy, must go away. The Age of Man is not kind to these characters; they do not feel at home. In Moorcock's The Sword and the Stallion, much the same thing occurs. The Eternal Champion, who is immortal, is finally killed because the new age is hostile to him. But he does not die until he has completed his quest.

After Sauron's fall, Aragorn becomes the principal architect of the new Middle Earth. He unites all the peoples of the earth, and reigns with mercy for many years. He marries Arwen, who has given up her elfhood to be his wife. When Galadriel, Elrond, and the other elves pass away to the Grey Havens, Arwen remains, giving her place in the Grey Havens to Frodo. She is called the Evenstar of her people, as Galadriel is the Morning. As Gimli fears, it will soon pass away forever. Aragorn's line is associated with the White Tree that must bloom, in order that he may marry. Together, he and Arwen bring peace and fertility to all of Middle Earth. As all the wisest characters knew from the beginning of their war with Sauron, they must also lose their power with his fall, and the earth will be robbed forever of their magic as well as Sauron's evil. Gandalf too goes to the Grey Havens, for he has completed his task. His enemy, as he says, was Sauron. Now he may rest.

It is left to the hobbits to bring peace and fertility back to the Shire. We come full circle; the trilogy begins and ends there. When the four hobbits (Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin) are left alone again to finish their journey home, it seems to Merry almost to have been a dream, but to Frodo, it feels "more like falling asleep again." (3:276) He has been irrevocably changed during the quest, and his return can never be a true one. He asks Gandalf,

'There is no real going back. Though I may come to the Shire, it will not seem the same; for I shall not be the same. I am wounded with knife, sting, and tooth, and a long burden. Where shall I find rest?' (3:268)

The "scouring of the Shire" from the evils wrought by Saruman and his men is therefore carried out by Merry, Pippin, and Sam. Merry and Pippin captain the war; Frodo's major role is to keep hobbits from killing other hobbits. He no longer will use a sword, or fight; he has become a sage, not a warrior, because of his internal suffering. Sam re-plants the trees and grass of the Shire, with the help of Galadriel's gift to him of her magic soil. He marries and has many children, and like Merry and Pippin, re-integrates himself into the life of the Shire. Frodo passes unnoticed by most of the hobbits; he retires from action, and devotes himself to writing. He is troubled by his old wounds, drawn into the shadow at times, so that he can never really be part of the Shire. Once having seen the darkness within himself, he can never be wholly free of it. And so, along with Bilbo, the other Ringbearer, Frodo departs from Middle Earth to the Grey Havens with the elves and Gandalf, after making

Sam his heir. His dream in Tom Bombadil's house of a green country with white hills comes true, thus uniting dream, myth and memory.

Just as Tolkien's solution to the quest without real return is a kind of afterlife, and Eddison's is the symbolical eternal recurrence of the action, T. H. White's answer is a blend of the mythical, religious, legendary, and modern revolts against death. The Arthur of The Once and Future King bears some resemblance to his model in Malory's Morte d'Arthur. He is however, modern in his presentation. This is a man, not a hero, an individual seen matter-of-factly, seemingly without the stuff of legend. The tone is informal and humorous; Arthur and Lancelot (and Guinevere) are often like low mimetic heroes. White manages to convey Arthur's essentially ordinary, although well-meaning, sensibility, as well as Lancelot's terrible fanaticism and loneliness, through the Matter of Britain. His approach is often psychoanalytic; he even makes references to it in the romance, as well as offering diagnoses of the various neuroses of the major characters.

The Sword in the Stone is the first of the four pieces of fiction that comprise The Once and Future King. It is extremely farcical in tone and style. The language White uses is modern colloquial English. He uses the technique (typically twentieth century) of speaking directly to the reader deliberately to destroy credibility. Satire permeates all aspects of The Once and Future King. He also uses his char-

acters to present certain ideas, representations of abstract goals that are implicit in his interpretation of Malory. Arthur's education is conducted by Merlin in an unorthodox manner; he is turned into various species of animals in order to learn how to think for himself. White uses the animals to demonstrate certain aspects of human nature. For example, the fish despot has a face ravaged by "cruelty, sorrow, age, pride, selfishness, loneliness and thoughts too strong for individual brains."¹ It is he who first introduces the theme of Might is Right, so basic to the concept and structure of the tetralogy.

Wart himself, the nickname used for Arthur during his childhood, is a "hero-worshipper," "stupid," and "interested in birds." He does learn from his stay with the fish, the ants, the birds, the wild geese, and the badger, but he is mostly just kindly and conscientious throughout the first narrative. When, at the end of this part, he pulls the sword out of the stone and thereby ascends to the throne of England, he is more surprised than anybody else. Merlin has tried to give him experience and self-reliance, (41) for Arthur has inherited an England without civilization. Throughout, whenever White has the opportunity he both understates and most humorously portrays any scene or character. Merlin, when the Wart first meets him, is busy doing household chores in

¹T. H. White, The Once and Future King (New York: G. Putnam's Sons, 1958), p. 47. All subsequent references will be to this edition; page numbers appear in parentheses in the text.

his none-too-clean robes. He is constantly forgetting whether things have happened or are going to happen, as he has the gift of foresight. One of the funniest scenes of the book is the joust between King Pellinore and Sir Grummore, the knight of the Questing Beast. By portraying both as inept, heavy old men who know only the empty formulae of the chivalric language, White effectively mocks and points out the barbarity of this part of the chivalric code. We also learn that Robin Hood's real name is Robin Wood, "like the Wood that he is the spirit of. . . " (116) Wart and Kay, his foster brother, go on a quest with Robin and his band, to rescue the Dog Boy and the man without a nose from the enchantment Morgana has laid on them by tying them to pillars of pork fat. All the traditional magical and legendary characters are present, but they are considered in a farcical light.

In The Ill-Made Knight, the third of the four books that make up The Once and Future King, the tone is more serious as well as more psychological. Lancelot, le Chevalier Mal Fet, is quite clearly presented as a terribly unhappy man, who worships Arthur the king, and wishes to perform a miracle. To these two ends, he trains himself unsparingly to be the best knight in the world. He succeeds, and comes to Arthur's court, gentle, courteous, shy, awkward, with a " . . . medieval respect for honor" (353) that causes him unceasing pain his whole life, because of his incurable love for Guinevere. He has, as White says, an inferiority complex because he is ugly, and this also causes him to act in

the way he does. Lancelot has been introduced to Arthur's desire to end strong-arm rule in England when very young. He devotes most of his life to helping him carry out this wish. Arthur's theory is that through Might, by channeling the skills and courage of the knights, he will achieve Right. To this end, he established the Round Table, as a means of providing fellowship and a sort of honor society for his champions.

The tragedy of both Arthur and Lancelot is that they are idealists, and can never live up to their own ideals of themselves. Arthur comes to realize rather late in life that he will never achieve Right through Might, that there is something basically wrong with the concept, and so he sends his knights on a last quest, the search for the Holy Grail (that is, spiritual reality). Lancelot performs his miracle, but it causes him endless grief because of Guinevere's jealousy. In the end, he is forced into fighting Arthur, and never fully achieves his last quest, because he cannot fully give up earthly reality (Guinevere). This is left for his son Galahad. The irony is that Lancelot has fulfilled most of his quests simply to get away from Guinevere, and his torment lies in the knowledge that it is this, and not the firm religious and ethical codes he acknowledges, that has spurred him to right action. Arthur has sinned unknowingly, by sleeping with his own half-sister; Mordred, the product of that union, causes Arthur's downfall and death. White thus uses the quasi-medieval world he cre-

ates in order to reflect on the modern world. He makes this very obvious in the ways we have discussed: the use of modern colloquial English, the satirical treatment of heroes (who come to seem ordinary Willy Lomans, caught up in forces that they do not understand and cannot control), and the tongue-in-cheek psychoanalytic discussions about these characters. White also makes references to the twentieth century, usually in the mouth of Merlin, who can see into the future. But there are other allusions, such as those on several occasions to "red propaganda." The human race emerges from The Once and Future King as somewhat ridiculous, almost inept, and pathetic, but capable at times of tragic depths. White's book is interesting because it is the most famous, and perhaps the best, of the neo-Arthurian romances. The blend of Malory and our modern age in his work is indicative of one of the directions modern romance may take. Psychology and satire together are very much a part of modern sensibility. The other great romancer who effectively uses wit as a literary technique in romance is James Branch Cabell. The modern romancer closest to other forms of narrative fiction, especially in terms of characterization, is Mervyn Peake, to whom we may now turn.

There are many eighteenth (and early nineteenth) century characteristics in the Gormenghast trilogy. The atmosphere is gothic in nature, at times oppressively so. Some of Peake's character descriptions remind one of Dickens, as for example the portrayal of the schoolmasters. There is

also an element of the horrible and grotesque such as Horace Walpole initiated in The Castle of Otranto. The most important character of all, however, aside from Gormenghast Castle itself, is an excellent study in modern evil. Steerpike is the modern Mephistopheles. Strangely enough there is no real antithesis of good in the romance to his evil. As Tolkien demonstrates his modernity by recognizing and exploring the possibilities of evil within all of us, in a novel way, Peake presents a case study of the inner workings of a man, or a representation of a man, who is obsessed with the need for power. His hunger for that power over other human beings, and his total commitment to using whatever means are necessary to achieve that end, are the basis of part of the dramatic and psychological tension in the first two books of the Gormenghast trilogy. Interestingly, the last part of the trilogy also deals in part with the evil of power over others, especially in the psychological sense such as Cheetah achieves, rather than in a kind of physical terrorizing. Magic is replaced by ritual in this romance; it too exercises a great deal of power over people. The trilogy is an exorcism of evil and a re-integration and re-ordering of the fragments of the self through that ritual act. Titus' true maturity is gained at the moment when he accepts himself and his psyche rather than Gormenghast as the centering force of his reality.

Peake peoples his world with a myriad of characters, united above all in their bizarreness. In the first two books,

Titus Groan and Gormenghast, they all share also a firm belief in the sanctity of Gormenghast and all it represents. Only Steerpike, the Thing, and finally Titus question the assumption that the Castle and its ritual existence have a claim on their lives. The kind of existence that Gormenghast engenders, however, is complex and subtle to a point that becomes difficult to maintain. The members of the Groan line, especially the Count, must devote themselves almost exclusively to performing the requisite rituals priested first by Sourdust, and then Barquentine his son. Each member of the family and the servants of Gormenghast perform some specific functions in order to further the smooth workings of the Castle. Titus' christening, for example, offers the occasion for Sourdust to direct the activities of the chief Cook, Swelter, Pentecost the gardener, Flay, the first servant of the Count, Prunesquallor, the doctor, and Nannie Slagg, Titus' nurse, as well as the various members of the Groan family: the twin aunts Cora and Clarice, Fuschia, Titus' sister, Lady Groan his mother, and Sepulchgrave, the Count of Gormenghast. Each of the characters often seems to be only one small part of a vaster scheme of things, of which Gormenghast is the center. On the other hand, Peake devotes a great deal of imagery and space in the fantasy to a close portrayal of the characters, even the secondary ones.

We are introduced almost immediately to the violent personal feud between Flay and Swelter. Each is the opposite of what the other represents; they are equal in their hatred

of each other. Flay is terribly thin, emaciated: "It did not look as though such a bony face as his could give normal utterance, but rather that instead of sounds, something more brittle, more ancient, something dryer would emerge, . . . His passage across a room--in fact his passage through life--was accompanied by these cracking sounds, one per step, which might be likened to the breaking of dry twigs." (1:10-11) Flay is the bitter enemy of Swelter, a man compared to a "cataleptic mass of wine-drenched blubber." (1:33) In spite of Swelter's enormous size and his undoubted tyranny in the kitchen, he appears to have control over Flay because of his quicker wit. The two men are united also in their roles as cogs in the wheels of Gormenghast. The narrator says of Flay: " . . . he was so much a part and parcel of Gormenghast that he could instinctively tell when the essence of its tradition was running in a true channel, powerfully and with no deviation." (1:21) This does not prevent them, however, from so despising each other that they must fight to the death eventually to resolve their feud. The scene of their battle, and the events leading up to it, is as beautiful as it is macabre. Swelter, after Flay has slapped his face in front of the kitchen boys, plans revenge by murder with a butcher's knife. He leaves a warning card of a cake, whose top has: " . . . in the center a minute area of jade-green icing, across whose glacid surface the letters S lay coiled like a worm of cream." (1:349) Peake's language, which is one of the major achievements of the romance, helps

to build up the tension with sentences like this one: "More and more in the darkness the notes of grimmer passions could be discerned: hatred and anger and pain and the hounding voices of vengeance." (1:345) When vengeance finally comes, it is Flay who has his, though he has lost his position (probably forever) and therefore his raison d'être. He returns to counterstalk Swelter. The scene of their final confrontation in the (Hall of) Spiders Room in the attics of Gormenghast is vividly macabre. Flay stalks Swelter like a "stick-insect." (1:452) Swelter, on the other hand, flows:

He insinuated himself through space. His body encroached, sleuthlike, from air-volume to air-volume, entering, filling, and edging out of each in turn, the slow and vile belly preceding the horribly deliberate and potentially nimble progress of his fallen arches. (1:453)

The scene ends with the death of Swelter in the moat with a sword in his body: " . . . and as the lunar silence came down as though forever in a vast white sheet, the long-drawn screech of a death owl tore it, as though it had been calico, from end to end." (1:472)

Peake's Gormenghast tapestry is intricately woven of this kind of colorful, grotesque thread. All the characters contribute to the whole, and they are interesting individually as well. There is constant personification of the various elements of nature and within the castle surrounding the characters. For example, "The Christening Room itself looked cool and clear and unperturbed. With space and dignity it awaited the entrance of the characters." (1:104) Each individual is caught in at least one vignette, one piece of action,

in order to introduce him or her to the audience. The imagery is visual, the description cinematic in nature. Colors are important, for example. The Countess of Groan keeps a herd of white cats with her. She herself has flaming red hair piled on her head. Her daughter's name is Fuschia; she is always dressed in scarlet red dresses. Peake includes as part of the work his drawings of all the major characters, so that one gets a good idea of how they look. The twins are always dressed identically in purple dresses and pearl necklaces. Titus' eyes are violet. Even the appearance of Steerpike is important:

His body gave the appearance of being malformed, but it would be difficult to say exactly what give it this gibbous quality. Limb by limb it appeared that he was sound enough, but the sum of these several members accrued to an unexpectedly twisted total. His face was pale like clay and save for his eyes, masklike. These eyes were set very close together, and were small, dark red, and of startling concentration. (1:133)

This emphasis on physical appearance could possibly be construed as an inheritance from the realist novel of the nineteenth century, but is more likely an expression of Peake's almost morbid concern with the smallest details of his work, as well as his background as a pictorial artist. Gormenghast Castle is some sort of vast labyrinth, within which each denizen must find his own niche. The vastness and antiquity of the building allow a great deal of activity unauthorized by the tenets and ritual of Gormenghast. Thus, Steerpike can have no less than nine rooms scattered throughout the castle, which serve some secret purpose of his, Fuschia can have her attic as a fantasy realm for her imagina-

tive adventures, and Flay can commit the heresy in letter, although not in spirit, of returning to the castle when his instincts, even from exile in the Twisted Woods, tell him that something is amiss. The greatest fear of all those loyal to the Groan line is of change, for they depend upon its stasis for their stability: " . . . this intangible suggestion of change, that most unforgivable of all heresies." (1:438)

The three rebels against this kind of thinking are Titus Groan, Steerpike, and the Thing, Titus' foster sister. The Thing is a nature-sprite, Titus' first initiator into the heresy of being different from what is expected of him. She dies when he tries to materialize her, make her more tangible to him than she wants to be; she is struck by lightning. The other two are personal enemies, but Titus, the quest hero, is not good, nor is he an antithesis to Steerpike (evil). Steerpike first appears in the romance as a kitchen boy, but he almost immediately acts in a singular enough manner to warn the reader that he will be an important character. He escapes from the kitchen, and then from the locked room in which Flay puts him. It is through his eyes that we see the roofscape of Gormenghast Castle. He eventually manages to get Fuschia not to betray him, to be at least indifferent to him, by speaking her language. Steerpike is nothing if not coldly calculating and logical to an extreme. He exacts superhuman actions from himself through his almost inhuman efforts of will. This, and luck (or as Peake says, the "questionable

gods") win him a great deal. When he meets Fuschia, when she finds him on the floor of her sanctuary the attic, he at once recognizes her imagination, and uses it against her for his own ends. This quality also of understanding without appreciation allows him to burn the library, but to save a few books, because he regrets the destruction of anything well-made. He is " . . . almost entirely cerebral in his approach . . . " (1:173) so that he can play the flute brilliantly but emptily for lack of emotion. Having gained access to Fuschia, Steerpike uses her to meet Dr. Prunesquallor and his sister Irma.

Prunesquallor is perceptive about Steerpike, and calls him " . . . 'A diabolically clever little monster.'" (1:189) This pleases him, however; "What pleased him especially was the mixture of cunning and honesty which he did not yet perceive to be a still deeper strata of Steerpike's cleverness." (1:196) In other words, he does not yet see that Steerpike is using him, and treating him exactly as he wants to be treated. From the doctor, Steerpike learns chemistry; of this the narrator says, "Of the compromising and tragic circumstances that were the outcome of all this, is not yet time to speak." (1:200) The doctor has intelligence and sensitivity, so that everybody trusts him. He lives in a house within the castle walls with his sister Irma, who takes a fancy to Steerpike as soon as he enters their service. She provides Peake with the opportunity to indulge in humorous entre-actes. Of all the characters in the fantasy, she and the schoolmasters are the most easily recognizable as typical English stereo-

types. Steerpike soon uses his presence in the doctor's house, when the twins Cora and Clarice drop in, to move from the house into the castle, in their service.

The twins are extremely useful to Steerpike in carrying out his plans. They are at first an unexpected entrée into the main building of the castle, and then become his implements in the burning of the library. Only later does he begin to enjoy their blind obedience for its own sake. They are almost without intelligence, but live with certain idéés fixes that govern their lives. Steerpike uses their hatred of Gertrude, the Countess of Groan, and their "desire for power" to overpower them. Cora and Clarice look, act, and think identically:

She turned her expressionless eyes to Cora, who met them as though she were her sister's reflection. It may be that between them they recognized shades of expression in each other's faces, but it is certain that no one else, however keen his eyesight, could have detected the slightest change in the muscles that presumably governed the lack of expressions of their faces. (1:230)

In his association with them, as with everybody else, he opportunistically uses everything he learns:

There were few secrets hidden from him, for he had that scavengerlike faculty of acquiring unashamedly and from an infinite variety of sources, snatches of knowledge which he kept neatly at the back of his brain and used to his own advantage as opportunity offered. (1:229)

Steerpike treats the twins as an experiment in control, from which he will move on to more and more power. He plans down to the minutest detail how he will treat them and what he will say to them, knowing that it will be extremely difficult because of the illogical nature of their minds. "He

was working with a low-grade material, but one which contained an element which nature's more elevated lack--the incalculable." (1:239-40)

The fantastic nature of the twins' imagination is astounding. Their Room of Roots is a perfect example. They have a room filled with roots of an enormous dead tree; the twins have spent three years painting each one of the roots a different color, so that birds of the same or a complementary color may perch on them. They have a little platform outside the window, high off the ground, where they have tea. One of their reasons for hating Lady Groan is because although they have worked so hard, no birds come to rest on their painted branches, whereas the Countess of Groan has a gift with animals of all kinds, and she is a friend to many birds. Steerpike gets their agreement to the burning of the library by promising them the power of Gormenghast, and harping on their resentment of their sister-in-law. He promises them gold thrones and even brings them sketches of the design (after they burn down the library), when his promise does not materialize. The arson occurs during Titus' Christening, an important part of the castle ritual.

The library fire marks the first murder caused by Steerpike and begins the changes in the castle. Sourdust dies in the fire, and the seeds of insanity, long lying dormant in Sepulchgrave's mind, begin to grow from the loss of his precious books, his one source of joy. Steerpike comes out of the fire as a hero, because he saves them all (except Sourdust) from burning. He then installs himself in a suite

of rooms in the South wing, where the twins live. The saga of his relationship with Cora and Clarice is pitiful in the extreme, and as bizarrely Machiavellian as Steerpike ever becomes. He attempts to keep them quiet about the library burning by promising such things as golden thrones and crowns. Unsuccessful at this, he imprisons them in a dank, remote part of the castle, " . . . its very breath was double pneumonia," (2:47) telling them that there is a terrible plague in the castle that only the utmost isolation can prevent. He himself brings them their supplies, at the same time keeping them alive only so that he may perform in front of them, and make them do exactly as he wishes. Somewhere, somehow the twins conceptualize and execute their desire to kill their oppressor. When he comes to them after being away for a long time, they have prepared an axe for him. He manages to avoid it, and does not return again until they have died of starvation.

Steerpike gains control of, or eliminates almost all the other major personages in the castle, aside from Lady Gertrude and Titus. He becomes Barquentine's pupil, and learns the ritual of Gormenghast. When he finally reveals his true intentions to Barquentine, whose overriding characteristic is fierce loyalty to his task as Master of Ritual, and to the ritual itself for its own sake, he meets partial defeat. Steerpike tries to kill Barquentine, but the latter reminds him " . . . that in his adversary he was pitting himself against Gormenghast. Before him he had a living pulse of the immemorial castle." (2:309) Barquentine dies,

but he manages to cause Steerpike severe physical damage, and also, unknown to Steerpike himself, to shake his emotional self-assurance. Steerpike emerges from his terrible burning and subsequent submersion in the moat scarred by the possibility that he can almost fail. He has lost some of his control over himself, and this causes him to fail ultimately.

Another of his mistakes is Fuschia. Steerpike spends a great deal of time and his usual care and thoroughness in wooing and winning Fuschia. The first time they embrace is on her nurse's grave, for whom Fuschia had a tremendous love. When Fuschia realizes what she is doing, she runs away screaming. However, she comes back to Steerpike during the course of the second volume, seduced by his banter and his feigned love for her. Fuschia is terribly lonely; she has nobody after Nannie Slagg dies; she can never really express her love for her father or her mother. When Steerpike therefore begins to court her, she responds because of her unfilled, starved emotional life. Her other major concern at this time is her brother, to whom she grows very close. She rescues him many times from the tyrannies of Barquentine and the rituals he hates. Fuschia is for a time terribly pained by the hatred and enmity between Titus and Steerpike. However, Steerpike undoes all the good he has done for himself. He decides to seduce her, in order to ensure his control, for their relationship, that of a commoner with a daughter of the Groan line, is illicit. He makes the dire mistake of calling her a fool when she comes to one

of his rooms openly. With that one word, he destroys the trust he has built upon so painstakingly and so delicately. He might have won her back, but that very night the hunt begins. Flay, Prunesquallor, and Titus follow him to the twins' apartments, and there after seeing evidence of the twins' murder, attack him. Steerpike kills Flay, and escapes. But it is almost the end for him, for one of his chief weapons has been stealth and subterfuge. He has been caught in flagrante delicto. All his plans and calculations are now for naught, and so he turns to open evil:

His future was ruptured. His years of self-advancement and intricate planning were as though they had never been. A red cloud filled his head. His body shuddered with a kind of lust. It was the lust for an unbridled evil. It was the glory of knowing himself to be pitted, openly, against the big battalions. Alone, loveless, vital, diabolic--a creature for whom compromise was no longer necessary, and intrigue was a dead letter. If it was no longer possible for him to wear, one day, the legitimate Crown of Gormenghast, there was still the dark and terrible domain--the subterranean labyrinth--the lairs and warrens where, monarch of darkness like Satan himself, he could wear undisputed a crown no less imperial. (2:432)

Peake brings the psychological study of this individual to a climax with this paragraph. All the stratagems and intricate weavings of Steerpike's psyche are brought together in the dramatic scene in Cora and Clarice's tomb. We see Steerpike dancing in front of the skeletons of the twins, then confronted with the forces of "good": in the doctor and Flay, respect and loyalty to the traditions and ritual of Gormenghast, and in Titus a purely personal hatred. We see that power has in fact been his one real motivating force, and the manner of rule in indifferent to him. Steerpike, who

wanted to climb up the spiral staircase of Gormenghast's soul, now is forced into the only outlet for power open to him. We see also the warped delusions of grandeur flowing through his mind, for Peake subtly changes the point of view from the narrator to Steerpike, in order to demonstrate his megalomania and his increasingly rapid disintegration from the brilliant, calculating, machine-like being who planned the library burning to a primitive lustful killer, whose one desire is to do evil to the end. At his last stand, when his fight against Gormenghast has been reduced to a knife battle with Titus, Steerpike is pure killer instinct, completely non-intellectual:

His lust was to stand naked upon the moonlit stage, with his arms stretched high, and his fingers spread, and with the warm fresh blood that soaked them sliding down his wrists, spiraling his arms and steaming in the cold night air--to suddenly drop his hands like talons to his breast and tear it open to expose a heart like a black vegetable--and then, upon the crest of self-exposure, and the sweet glory of wickedness, to create some gesture of supreme defiance, lewd and rare; and then with the towers of Gormenghast about him, cheat the castle of its jealous right and die of his own evil in the moonbeams. There was nothing left, no, of the brain that would have scorned all this. The brilliant Steerpike had become a cloud of crimson. He wallowed in the dawn of the globe. (2:553)

The instinct to destroy is so strong that he is more than willing to destroy himself in order to perpetuate the evil of which he dreams. Steerpike gives in completely to his dark side, and so destroys himself, dying ignominiously at the

hands of Titus Groan. His self-destruction is the history of an increasing dissociation of intellect from instinct, of conscious from subconscious, of ordinary from non-ordinary reality. In short, Steerpike destroys himself because he destroys his soul.

In this sense more than any other, Titus is Steerpike's spiritual opposite. His is the story of the integration of the soul, of the gradual welding together of the different aspects of the psyche and the personality, through a long search for self, whereas Steerpike, in seeking to absorb the souls of others, is himself absorbed in his own creation. One of Tolkien's themes is present, then--the power of evil to destroy itself, through its own means. The list of the dead is long: Swelter, Sepulchrave, Mrs. Slagg, Keda, Barquentine, the Thing, Cora and Clarice, Flay, Fuschia and Steerpike. Those remaining alive adhere to, and rebuild, the ritual of Gormenghast, save Titus. He is a modern hero by virtue of his introspection and his scepticism; he completes the archetypal journey to spiritual wholeness, and for this reason he is Steerpike's opposite. Despite the title of the first volume, Titus Groan, he is portrayed only as an infant, and is but one of the excuses for Peake to create the atmosphere and the 368-year-old history¹ of Gormenghast and its inhabitants. In our examination of landscape in romance we have seen how Gormenghast castle and mountain become living

¹The evidence in Titus Groan (p. 313) allows the reader to conclude that Gormenghast is 368.5 years old.

characters, often semi-divine personages. In this chapter, we have seen a few of the major characters and their reactions to Steerpike. Although the Countess has not been mentioned in this light, it is she who organizes the painstaking search for Steerpike after he escapes from Flay, Prunesquallor and Titus. Paradoxically, the search also coincides with the great flood, the other holocaust, which along with Steerpike's revolutionary influence, changes Gormenghast at least for a time, and probably irrevocably. (The analogy to the flood and Noah's ark is obvious.)

Peake uses other techniques that bring him close to the novel in his treatment of character. In Titus Groan there is a chapter entitled "The Reveries," (419-31) which is entirely a stream-of-consciousness portrayal of the characters. The external circumstances are the Groan family's celebration of Titus' first birthday, in the form of a breakfast. Steerpike has hidden himself under the table, at which sit the twins, Sepulchgrave, Gertrude, Fuschia, Barquentine, Nannie Slagg, and Irma and Alfred Prunesquallor, with Flay attending. The Earl of Gormenghast has just succumbed for the first time to the shock and melancholia of his library's burning, and changed himself into a death owl. He now has the semblance of normality due to Prunesquallor's drugs, but the effects of his ever-weakening battle against insanity are telling on him. Soon he will give himself up to the death owls of the Tower of Flints. Fuschia has watched her father perched on the mantel, in the attitude of an owl, and

is very shaken. During the course of the inevitably long and complicated ritual, the only person who takes any interest or delight in it is Barquentine. The others drift off into their own worlds, each labeled by Peake but written in the stream-of-consciousness style. Samples from some of these will illustrate Peake's ability to understand and portray the human psyche, as well as his tremendous stylistic gifts.

From Cora:

' . . . and it's so cold, hands and cold feet but nice ones mine are nicer than Clarice's which she pricks with her embroidery clumsy thing but hers are also cold I hope but I want Gertrude's to be colder than the ice in dreadful places she's so fat and proud and far too big and I desire her frozen with her stupid bosom and when we're stronger we will tell her so Clarice and I . . . ' (419)

From Prunesquallor:

' . . . and although it is patent that he hasn't very long I can't keep pumping hydrophondoramischromatica of ash into him every five hours or so and he'll need it even more frequently than that his mouth is slipping already devil take it which is too near the mark by all that's gruesome it is . . . ' (420-21)

From Fuschia:

' . . . what can I do oh what can I do he is so ill and pale like the thin face that he has got that is broken all alone but he is better better than he was oh no the sickness in me no I mustn't think of eyes oh who will help me who will you must look now Fuschia be brave . . . ' (422)

From Irma Prunesquallor:

' . . . and I'd very much like to show what advantages I am getting out of having spent so long a time in the bath and preparing myself for them so exquisitely for my swan-white throat is the most perfect one in Gormenghast . . . ' (424)

From Gertrude:

' . . . at any rate the old Sourdust would have taken

longer over this job than this one and it won't be long before I can have my white cat who is crying at my heart again may the fiends wrack the long servant's bones . . . ' (426)

From Sepulchgrave:

' . . . and there will be a darkness always and no other color and the lights will be stifled away and the noises of my mind strangled among the thick soft plumes which deaden all my thoughts in a shroud of numberless feathers for they have been there so long and so long in the cold hollow throat of the tower and they will be there forever for there can be no ending to the owls whose child I am to the great owls whose infant and disciple I shall be so that I am forgetting all things and will be taken into the immemorial darkness far away among the shadows of the Groans . . . ' (430)

In Gormenghast, volume two of the trilogy, Peake portrays the events of Titus' childhood, leading up to and including his killing of Steerpike and his decision to leave home. These circumstances provide Peake with both the tragedy and comedy characteristic of the eighteenth century novel in Britain, or even of Cervantes. His portraits of the schoolmasters, for instance, are masterpieces of set humor, providing the necessary relief from the stark tragedy of the events and atmosphere of Gormenghast. Irma Prunesquallor's "soirée" and the schoolmasters who attend, with names such as Bellgrove, Perch-Prism, Fluke, Spiregrain, Cutflower, and Mulefire, provide a delightful contrast to tragedies surrounding them. Scenes such as Irma using hot-water bottles for breasts, or the fat old Headmaster courting her with a dirty neck, or the fight for the one good chair in the professor's room during their breaks, could be staged by Ionesco. Titus' growth from infancy through childhood and adolescence form the nucleus of the novelistic aspects of the romance.

Titus is a half-picaresque, half-modern hero in the manner of Stephen Daedalus, whose quest takes him through all the pain and hell of the modern Everyman. Paradoxically, this second volume of the Gormenghast trilogy is concerned mainly with Titus' growth and Steerpike's disintegration, whereas the first (Titus Groan) concerns Gormenghast more than any other subject. Gormenghast begins with a rapid review of the events and characters of the first volume, and then with the image of Steerpike's rise to power. We see the imprisonment of the twins, but not yet the discovery of that fact, only the Countess' suspicions, and then Titus at school. From his earliest years, Titus is different, partly because of his position as heir to Gormenghast, but also because of his nature. His encounter with the Thing, as we have already indicated, makes a turning point in his life. He is a rebel, fleeing Gormenghast whenever he can muster the courage, discovering Flay alive, the tunnel from the castle to the Twisted Woods, searching always for the sprite who represents freedom and another reality to him. Titus defies Steerpike when a schoolboy, and from then on they are implacable enemies. Steerpike by this time is Master of Ritual, and Titus' defiance is defiance of Gormenghast, not just Steerpike:

" . . . For Titus . . . realized what had happened--that he had cried, 'Shut up!' to the arch-symbol of all the authority and repression which he loathed--knew instinctively that this was a moment in which to dare the blackest hell.

To apologize would be to submit." (2:350)

Titus commits treason the moment he imagines that he has a life of his own apart from Gormenghast. It is precisely this attitude that the Thing inspires, and that causes the Bright Carvers to hate and fear her even more than they did her mother. When the Thing dies, Titus reaches adulthood, and completes an experience. The exact wording of the event is interesting in that Peake here reveals his definition of romance as imagination:

At seventeen he stepped into another country. It was his youth that had died away. His boyhood was something for remembrance only. He had become a man
At a time when he should have been broken by the scene he had just witnessed--by the death of his imagination--he found himself to be emptied of distress. He was himself. He was free for the first time. He had learned that there were other ways of life from the ways of his great home. He had completed an experience. He had emptied the bright goblet of romance: at a single gulp he had emptied it. The glass of it lay scattered on the floor. But with the beauty and the ugliness, the ice and fire of it on his tongue and in his blood, he could begin again. (2:474)

Romance here is equated with imagination, which is equated with the Thing. The death of all these things in Titus prepares him for his final act of retribution in Gormenghast; he now has the strength to do battle with the evil knight, the dragon called Steerpike. But he is not Lancelot or Arthur, because his battle is personal, not for "good," but in order to define himself. His hatred and anger are not against evil, but to seek revenge for the deaths of Fuschia and Flay.

To his mother he reveals his real reasons for seeking Steerpike in a long emotional speech, which ends with "'To hell with Gormenghast'" (2:512) He tastes the power of himself in the ordering of the search and in the final showdown

with Steerpike. He kills in order to be a participant, not a spectator, in the drama of life. After he kills, and recuperates from his exertions and illnesses, Titus realizes that he can no longer remain in Gormenghast, that being a living symbol is not enough for him. He is haunted by the memory of the Thing, for she has opened other possible worlds to him. He discovers his own restlessness and accepts the fact that to his mother and everybody else in Gormenghast he is now a traitor. But he must leave on his quest, in order to discover Titus Groan.

Paradoxically, Titus' inner quest for self is, as we have said, achieved only through the external journey he undertakes symbolically. This is one of the major defining characteristics of romance, both medieval and modern. In the case of the Gormenghast trilogy, however, it is Gormenghast that is most interesting, despite the author's last volume, and contrary to the tradition of romance. Even in Tolkien's work, though the Shire is of great interest to the reader, other parts of Middle Earth are almost as interesting and occupy most of the space. In spite of himself also, Peake defines Titus Groan to a large extent before he leaves his ancestral home, portraying him as a self-conscious hero. Thus the third volume, Titus Alone, is almost anti-climactic and a travesty of the romance. Cabell's intentional anti-romance romances, which proceed from very different philosophical and stylistic bases, succeed whereas Peake's does not.

Titus Alone traces Titus' journey through other parts of the world, which bear futuristic resemblances to our Western world. In traveling, Titus is forced to re-define not only himself, but good and evil as well. He has, of course, succor from others along the way. The outstanding characteristic common to all other landscapes outside the boundaries of Gormenghast is their ignorance of the existence of Gormenghast. This fact shakes the foundations of Titus' being, and forces him to the realization that, in spite of his rebellion against Gormenghast and all it stands for, his essential being depends to a large extent upon his home. Again and again, Titus' terror and need for Gormenghast to exist, not just as a figment of his imagination but to exist for himself, and for that belief to be reinforced by the credence of others reasserts itself as a leitmotif in his imagination and in the third volume of the romance. He clings, as the lichen clings to the walls of Gormenghast castle and Sepulchrove to his library, to the piece of flint from the Tower of Flints of Gormenghast Castle (2:21 for example). His central fear in this volume is that he has no identity; in order to prove his identity, he must prove the existence of Gormenghast. Many time references are made to his being terrified of "having no proof of his own identity," (3:36) and of his being a child of Gormenghast:

It was a feeling that in leaving her he had once again to face the problem of his own identity. He was a part of something bigger than himself. He was a chip of stone, but where was the mountain from which it had broken away? He was the leaf; but where was the tree? Where was his home? Where was his home? (3:115)

When interrogated in court, where he has been brought on charges of crossing the border without a passport and vagrancy and the like, he replies to the question of why he left home that he wanted to find out if there were other worlds. Yet he has not been able to write to his mother since he left home, because all his letters have come back stamped "Address Unknown." It is Gormenghast that seems to be unreal, the dream that nobody accepts as being valid, just as in Gormenghast the rest of the world did not exist. The split within Titus threatens to destroy him, but he is a romance hero because he successfully heals and integrates the various fragments within him.

There are some characters that either aid or hinder Titus, as is true with all quest heroes. Titus uses women to further his growth, but he never really establishes contact with them. The Thing is too intangible, Juno becomes too much of a mother figure, from whom he must detach himself to maintain his self, and Cheeta is evil. The Thing does create the turning point of his life, and Juno saves him for a time from the savagery of bureaucracy, but it is Cheeta that finally forces him to the balancing point between sanity and insanity, by attempting to drive him insane through a parody of his existence in Gormenghast, presenting his past to him on a stage of her choosing, gathered from the delirium of his fever while she nursed him. She deliberately puts the nightmare on stage because he is the first man ever to have found her unnecessary. She is a witch, an archetype of pure

female evil. (She tells him she has arranged a party for him, and blindfolds him until he gets there, another mock parallel with the celebration of his tenth birthday in Gormenghast.)

Other evil figures, that is, antagonists to Titus, are Veil, the Mantis-Man of Under-River, and the Helmeted Figures. These last are two identical android types who pursue Titus and attempt to kill him. He always escapes them, sometimes with the aid of others, but before they are destroyed, they kill Muzzlehatch. From the sketches in the book, these two resemble certain of the figures of the Tarot cards. They may represent some part of Titus that calls himself traitor, or they may represent some aspects of bureaucracy; their origins are unclear and their place in the action of the story is awkwardly handled and obscure.

Among the people of Under-River, living beings who are to all purposes dead, Titus finds three protectors and followers in Crabcalf, Slingshott and Crackbell. He thus forms a micro-society, unwillingly, outside of society. It is they who find Muzzlehatch for him, and help to save his sanity, in the Black House. Muzzlehatch is a strange sort of supernatural helper for Titus. He is an eccentric, an outcast, at ease only with his zoo of animals, which the authorities destroy because they cannot tolerate his strangeness to them. Juno is the only woman he has ever loved, and Titus is as a son to him. He saves Titus many times over from the very beginning of the third volume to the end, when he dies for him, after destroying the center of destruction,

which is owned and run by Cheeta's father. He is a strange character, as are all the characters in Titus Alone.¹ The dialogue is too stilted and poetic, and the characters do not hold up as characters, but merely as bits of bizarre players in some kind of theater of the absurd. Only Titus remains at all real to the reader, because the world he comes from is forever real and viable, even amidst the artificial language and action of the last part of the trilogy.

After Cheeta's "party," and Muzzlehatch's death, Titus again flees, always alone. His wanderings take him to the slopes of Gormenghast Mountain:

The recognized existence, the very proof of the stone, there before him, not twenty feet away, argued the no less real existence of a cave that yawned at his right hand . . .

At first he did not dare to turn his head, but the moment had come when he must do so, and there it was at last, away behind his right shoulder, and he knew for very proof that that he was in his own domain once more . . .

There burned the ritual; all he had lost; all he had searched for. The concrete fact of it. The proof of his own sanity and love . . .

His heart beat out more rapidly, for something was growing . . . some kind of knowledge. A thrill of the brain. A synthesis. For Titus was recognizing in a flash of retrospect that a new phase of which he was only half aware, had been reached. It was a sense of maturity, almost of fulfillment. He had no longer any need for home, for he carried his Gormenghast within him. All that he sought was jostling within himself. He had grown up. What a boy had set out to seek a man had found, found by the act of living . . .

With every pace he drew away from Gormenghast Mountain, and from everything that belonged to his home.
(3:283-84)

¹For a similar poetic treatment of the grotesque, see David Lindsay, A Voyage to Arcturus (New York: Macmillan Co., 1963).

Titus finds himself, integrates the conscious and subconscious, reaches maturity, on the side of Gormenghast Mountain. But he can never return to Gormenghast, although the sight of it has ensured his adulthood, for he himself knows he can be Earl of Gormenghast only outside of his "domain." His moment of recognition reminds one of Lily Briscoe's last line to complete her painting, in Woolf's To The Lighthouse. In both moments of epiphany, the internal maturation process is achieved.

The lines of continuity in the treatment of character from the romances of William Morris to that of Mervyn Peake are clear. The quest hero remains. He fulfills the task set before him. He has magical aid and magical enemies of some kind, and these form the nucleus of the secondary characters. In the more modern romances, secondary characters become more important, and the distinction between the hero's goodness and his antagonist's evil becomes ever more ambiguous. We have seen how the quest is, on one level at least, a journey through the subconscious with the integration of the psyche and self as the goal. In the more modern romances, the hero in particular, who is often not of heroic proportions at all when he begins his travels, becomes more and more introspective. His inner growth is emphasized. With increasing modernity, romance has moved closer to the novel, still retaining certain characteristic features that distinguish it in tone and treatment of spatial and temporal reality, as well as the metaphysical, from other narrative forms. We have seen its kinship and its differentiation from both the fairy tale and the novel, in particular, and all other narrative forms in general.

CHAPTER IV

THE STRUCTURES OF ROMANCE

One of the principal difficulties in any discussion of the structures of modern romance is the striking variety of forms in which it has appeared, especially from the Romantic period to the present. Allegory, history, fairy tale, etc., have been classed as romances,¹ and the entire question of structure has most obviously been complicated by the overwhelming presence of the novel. However, we are less concerned with generic distinctions as such than with the possibility of characterizing a few representative structures of modern romance. The foregoing sections on quest, landscape and character offer the basic ingredients, for it is precisely the "modern" integration of these three elements into the traditional dialectic of the genre (good vs. evil, etc.) which produces what we refer to as the structure of romance.

Most forms of modern narrative tend to fragment, distort and restructure time and space and thus to create a new kind of unity. Romance, while adhering to the traditional dialectic, asserts its modernity primarily in its treatment of time, especially as it effects the separation of romance and "real," the magical and ordinary world. We have seen elsewhere how these two worlds can either encapsulate each other, intermingle, or exist almost totally apart. The more

¹Gillian Beer, The Romance, The Critical Idiom, No. 10 (London: Methuen, 1970), p. 66.

nearly separate and distinct they are, the more successful the romance will likely be. Time is the major determinant in such a separation, and in answer to the question of its role in structure, we may point first to the basic tension between the immortality of magical beings and the inevitability of human death. Again and again in romance we encounter the human knowledge and fear of coming death, an awareness that seems to be present both within and outside the romances themselves. Tolkien for example, asserts that the most pressing reason for writing fantasy is to stave off time and death, while Lord Dunsany makes the passage of time our (the mortal being's) real enemy in the romances themselves. Immortal beings in all romances offer a contrast to human beings, as well as demonstrating their consequent inherent superiority.

A second major role played by time may be found in the plot, that is the romantic quest itself. We have seen that quest contains a number of meanings; it is first and most simply the story-line, the movement through time (or "timelessness") and space of the hero; and such movement may be construed as a rite de passage, an initiation period during which the hero passes from innocence to knowledge or from childhood to adulthood; and it may be seen, finally, in mythological terms as a ritual passage from sterility to fertility. The latter two movements or plot progressions, which we call ritual or mythological, effect the basic meaning of quest as story-line in that they transform linear to circular movement. Since the story-line remains, however,

the result appears to be cyclical as well as linear, episodic structure. Movement and conflict, therefore do not remain simple plot or action elements, but become important to the structure as well; battles and obstacles overcome on the journey to achieve the goal, for example, represent at the same time the conflict between life and death and the knowledge of human transience and thereby form a basic element in the mythic or symbolic structure of the romance. Eddison's The Worm Ouroboros is the most obvious example of the cyclical meaning within the linear or episodic narrative. Form and content, structure and action are perfectly welded into a cycle, here a circle symbolized by the serpent eating its own tail. Because the heroes of this romance die a spiritual death after their quest is fulfilled and their war won, through a special petition of high gods they are allowed to begin their wars over again and the book ends with precisely the same incident with which it began.

In more general terms, the use in modern romance of mythoi--the meanings or levels beneath the story-line--confirms the paradoxical simultaneity of cyclical and linear structure. The mythos of summer, for example, of fertility and fulfillment, becomes tinged with the mythos of autumn and tragedy because there is often no absolute fulfillment in modern romance.¹ The evidence suggested by such a modern romance as The Worm Ouroboros indicates that this lack is

¹There are exceptions; e.g. The Well at the World's End and The Charwoman's Shadow.

necessary to human growth. Needless to say, the failure of the modern quest hero to live happily ever after denotes linearity, lack of geometric completion. It may also be said to emphasize his "modernity" in that the goal of the quest recedes in importance, or one may say that the quest is internalized and made into psychological movement.

If, then, romance in modern form combines linearity and circularity, and involves both mythical and psychological movement, there is still what is perhaps the most essential ingredient to be accounted for, the magical. Tolkien insists that one of the major motivations for writing fairy stories is the human desire to explore the depths of space and time. The magical world is significant not because of magic per se, but because of its modus operandi. Both Tolkien and Frye speak of some moment of epiphany in romance. For Frye, it is the point at which the undisplaced apocalyptic world and the cyclical world of nature come into alignment.¹ As we have explained in the Introduction to this study, Tolkien states that the "peculiar quality of the 'joy' in successful Fantasy can thus be explained as a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth."² Is this not simply another means of describing the point of contact between the hero and the magical world? Although the two worlds remain for the most part separate and distinct, there must be an injection

¹Frye, p. 203.

²Tolkien, "On Fairy Stories," Tolkien Reader, p. 21.

of one into the other for the epiphany to occur. If we review the evidence in modern romance, we find that most often the education of the hero consists of entering into a magical reality, whether by drinking water from the Well at the World's End, falling in love with a nature spirit like Rima, pricking the thin skin of Elfland, or infiltrating Lórien and Mordor. The acceptance of the magical reality, a world cautiously guarding its separateness, by the ordinary world must of course be reciprocated for the alignment to take place, the point at which the "joy" and the ritual reconciliation occur. Structurally, it is the convergence of the various elements in romance.

We may conclude these preliminary remarks on structures in modern romance by raising again briefly the question of other ways in which the worlds of reality and magic are related. Sometimes the distinction between the two worlds is not entirely clear. In Andre Norton's adaptation of Huon of the Horn, the idealized human hero, after completing his quests becomes King of half of Elfland, and thereby becomes a part of magical reality. William Morris betrays a largely medieval conception of romance in that he retains this mixture of real and magical and their mutual acceptance. While it is apparent that he reflects a Victorian nostalgia for a pre-Industrial past, his conception or emotional reaction to his material does not allow him to present a fully structured, "other" reality in his romances. On the other hand, in Lord Dunsany's work, the magical world of Elfland is seen

as isolated, even alienated, from the ordinary worlds. Its distinctive feature is its desire to remain so, for not only is time (the passage of time) inimical but the chaos and movement of earth are equally destructive to the peace and tranquility of the timeless, static world of magic. Lovecraft may be cited as representative of the way in which modern romance equates the fragmented, distorted world of fantasy with dreams and thereby infuses the genre with psychological and archetypal elements. Another method of separating magical and ordinary worlds, often employed by contemporary romancers, is to portray a coexistent magical past and ordinary contemporary reality, joined by magical means. An outstanding example is Merritt's The Ship of Ishtar, in which the contemporary hero shuttles between twentieth century England and the ancient Middle East.

We may now turn to a closer examination of four writers, Morris, Dunsany, Tolkien, and Peake, and indicate how they exemplify the representative structures of modern romance.

William Morris remains chronologically the oldest and esthetically the closest of writers of fantasy to the traditional forms. His romances, modelled largely on Northern sagas adapted to English neo-medieval situations, are an attempt to "order the raw stuff of human experience into the clearer mode of artifice," so that the reader may comprehend the experience emotionally and intellectually.¹ This is

¹John C. Stubbs, "Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter: The Theory of the Romance and the Use of the New England

accomplished literarily by the author's use of a fictional re-created past to objectify the present. Ralph of Upmeads, Walter, Birdalone and Osberne all fulfill their quests and live happily ever after, having overcome a series of ritual obstacles placed in their path. Good and evil are more or less clearly distinct from each other, although there are not as much of the magical aspects of good and evil here as in other romances. In Morris' fantasies, the distinction between the two worlds of magic and ordinary reality is not clear, although there is no sense of a structured "other" reality in many of his romances. There are always, as we have seen in the character chapter, supernatural figures. They are usually feminine and sometimes associated with nature.

In our examination of quest we have shown how in Morris' more successful romances he divides the story into clearly successive ritual stages of the initiation period of the hero or heroine. In The Well at the World's End, action and structure crystallize around Ralph's activities. The progression from the fragmentation of the various peoples and lands to a unified population occurs concurrently with, and because of, the inner progress of the idealized hero. There is a correspondence between Ralph's fulfillment of the quest, the triumph of good over evil, and the metamorphosis from a tribal existence to political unity. Ralph's erstwhile thrall, Bull, for example, transforms himself from

Situation," PMLA 83 (October 1968), p. 1439.

a wild mountain man into the new leader of Utterbol, due at least in part to Ralph's influence upon him. He marries the wife of the old Lord of Utterbol, who is portrayed as weak rather than like her first, evil husband. Thus, all ends happily. Hell (Utterbol) becomes a humane state. Most of the other peoples of this world choose to owe allegiance to Ralph and therefore to Upmeads. The forests are rid of thieves. In fact, Ralph completely orders his world (and his psyche). He brings fertility, peace, and happiness to all. The structure is clearly linear, despite apparent digressions. The events succeed each other logically and coherently, and the progression to the final Earthly Paradise is inevitably resolved. Ralph is seemingly diverted from his quest, when he first searches for the Lady of Abundance, and then for Ursula. However, these are not really diversions at all; without these two as guides to ultimate fulfillment, Ralph would not have succeeded.

Much the same linear structure appears in The Sundering Flood, although the diversion from the quest is more apparent and important in and of itself. In this romance, two apparently parallel lines of movement, the wanderings of Elfhild and Osberne, come together, and thereby overcome a seemingly impenetrable barrier, the river. The Sundering Flood is the supporting beam upon which the entire romance rests. Contact between the two lovers can occur only by crossing the river. In the beginning of the story, an arrow shot

across the separating water must suffice.¹ The river is the most important obstacle to their happiness. Osberne's and Elfhild's quest depends vitally upon movement; they must separate in order to come together. The two lines of movement are not woven together except at certain very specific points. Most of the space is taken with a description of the Red Lad's heroic deeds, all accomplished, ironically, with the secret goal of finding Elfhild. These actions also happen to bring him nearer to the mouth of the river and closer to the fulfillment of his quest, thus uniting the various aspects of the romance, as discussed above. The uniting of the lovers coincides with the overthrow of the Barons and the unification of the City of the Sundering Flood under Sir Godrick, Osberne's commander. Peace and order are restored on all levels, although the division between good and evil is more ambiguous especially in certain of the characters in this romance than in The Well at the World's End--an unwitting concession to modernity. The end of this romance is also curiously ambiguous, for there is a coda to the main body of the story. It does not end with "and they lived happily ever after" until Sir Godrick is overthrown and fights again to regain the City, without the personal aid of Osberne.

Lord Dunsany's use of the fictional past is strikingly different from Morris'. His vivid imagination describes to us the magical world of his romances, which he associates

¹Frye, p. 200. The arrow is symbolic of sexual contact.

with past time. It is not an objectified past time as is Morris', but rather an experiment with several varieties; human history, human fictional history, and the individual's past (childhood), as well as dream. The strange and wonderful occurrences of Dunsany's romances almost always take place "beyond the fields we know." This space may be either a place of childhood or of a dream or a fantasy. The flowers and lawns of Elfland are " . . . seen only by the furthest-travelling fancies of poets in the deepest sleep." (31) Whatever its form, certainly for Dunsany there is no life without this other reality. The dream is the union of magical space with past time (memory), which causes one of the chief difficulties in gaining entrance:

Dreary with lost romance was the plain from which Elfland had gone, though here and there Alveric saw again and again those little forsaken things that had been lost from his childhood, dropping through time to the ageless and hourless region of Elfland to be a part of its glory, and now left forlorn by this immense withdrawal. (84)

The King of Elfland's Daughter is a study of the irreconcilable differences between those with imagination and those without, as well as demonstrating the conflict between mortals and immortal magic. The boundaries are well-defined between the two worlds, and the man who attempts to cross them is thwarted by both for many years before he realizes his dream.

As the chief difference between "the fields we know" and Elfland is a question of time, let us examine more carefully this phenomenon in both worlds. Initially, the men of Erl begin the communication between Elfland and their own land

by requesting of their king a little magic for their valley. The king sends his son Alveric to find and marry the princess of Elfland, and thus the quest begins. In spite of the people's desire for magic, they will not look eastward toward Elfland, nor do they care to understand or explore the twilight barrier that separates Elfland from the fields we know. Alveric, with the help of his magical sword forged by Ziroonderel, penetrates the barrier and succeeds in winning Lirazel. Elfland itself, as we have described above, is not as different as it would at first appear from the fields we know. Its colors and shapes are the same, although a bit brighter, a bit truer, than in the ordinary world. Once past the barrier time stands still, and consequently peace and beauty reign. The king of Elfland attempts to bar passage to Alveric (that is, the ordinary world) once Lirazel has returned. He removes his land to "beyond the moon" when he feels the prick of Alveric's magical sword. This movement seems to be an instinctive reaction to attack from external alien forces. When the sword is far to the North and he no longer feels its presence, he brings Elfland back to its original position, next to Erl.

Orion, the son of Lirazel and Alveric, feels the call of Elvish magic as a desire "to cast off his allegiance to Time." (178) He hears the horns of Elfland blowing for him every day at sunset, yet only once is he tempted to cross the barrier; he is prevented by one of his dog's licking him. (180) Strangely, Dunsany dates Orion's killing of the unicorn to

the year 1530, thereby consciously betraying his work, as he says, as a concession to "those who care little for a tale if it be not here and there supported by history, . . ."

(167) This is even more significant because Orion is the synthesis of the two worlds. His killing of the unicorn is a symbolic act demonstrating at once the attraction to magic and recognition of its existence, paradoxically through the act of destruction. The unicorn itself is an appropriate (and well-known) symbol of both the beauty and strangeness of magic.

As the King of Elfland does not wish to be known, so the Freer attempts to prevent the coming of magic to Erl. He tries to get the people to renounce the existence of the unicorn, for if the unicorn does not exist, magic does not exist. When at the end of the long conflict between the two worlds, they finally merge, there remains a little island of ordinary reality in the middle of Elfland, presided over by the Freer. Thus this romance has a partly circular structure, but this is left geometrically incomplete.

The structure of the romance, then, is based upon the division between the two worlds and the attempt to cross it. The border of twilight runs through The King of Elfland's Daughter as the Sundering Flood runs through the fantasy of the same name, providing the major obstacle to be overcome during the quest.

One of the most interesting aspects of the romance is the magical beings' interest in ordinary reality. In the narrative, and therefore structurally, it is they, and not human

beings, who break down the barrier in great numbers. Because time does not exist in Elfland, there is serenity. Lurulu the troll, when he observes time passing, is amazed at the restlessness of Earth more than anything else. Elfland is incapable of this kind of movement:

Perpetual movement and perpetual change! He contrasted it, in wonder, with the deep calm of his home, where the moment moved more slowly than the shadows of the houses here, and did not pass until all the content with which a moment is stored has been drawn from it by every creature in Elfland. (193)

Lurulu and his fellow trolls "squander immortality" in the service of Orion, becoming whips for his hounds. They hunt unicorns in the fields we know when they come to eat the green grass there. Although magic is the spice and essence of life, as Ziroonderel says, ordinary reality is seemingly also important. Finally, it is because of Lirazel's love for a man and her fascination with the fields we know that Elfland and Erl merge.

Lord Dunsany has effected an interesting alteration of the form of the fairy tale by making the subject of the romance the quest for the rediscovery of Lirazel, rather than ending it with the marriage between the two. By doing so, he portrays the frustration of humankind aware of the existence of other realities and for the most part unable to reach them because of a lack of faith: " . . . for Lirazel dwelt not only over the border but even, as he saw now, beyond human belief; . . . " (288) Therefore Elfland also depends upon human faith and need for its existence; although the King has created it with his mind, he prophesies its

ultimate failure if left defenseless and without mystery:

'Beyond our border . . . material things stand fierce and strong and many, and have the power to darken and to increase, for they have wonders too. And when this last potency be used and gone there remains in all our realm no rune they dread; and material things will multiply and put the powers in bondage, and we without any rune of which they go in awe shall become no more than a fable . . . ' (278)

Ultimately, the structure of this romance, and all romance, is based upon the simultaneous inherent dichotomy and conflict and interdependence together with the impossibility of reciprocity, knowing that survival depends on it. In other words, in the true romance, the tension caused by fragmentation is resolved into unity when the two worlds merge, or chaos is replaced by order, on all levels of structure, plot, landscape, and characterization. In modern romance, the structure is never quite complete, the quest is never quite fulfilled, the landscape is partially flawed, etc. Given the twentieth century Weltanschauung, it is difficult to achieve the absolute.

Although The Lord of the Rings is at least partially about absolute good and evil, its various narrative elements reveal a modern lack of faith in these opposites. As we have stated before, Tolkien's trilogy is neatly divided into two parts: the Quest and the War. Apparently, the subject matter of the trilogy is the war between Sauron and Gandalf, but the structure and the language of the romance betray this by concerning themselves with Frodo's battle, which is largely internal rather than external. The parallelism and duality in the trilogy are ultimately ambiguous because the fantasy

treats two different and distinct issues, as the structure demonstrates. The internal and external finally come together through an artificial contrivance of plot. The two apparently converging lines of narrative ultimately do not meet. Nevertheless, Frodo's passage into the West parallels the elves' loss of power, and his four-fingered hand is a reflection of Sauron's evil.

One of the most striking aspects of the trilogy is the precision and meticulousness with which it is constructed. Although it begins as The Hobbit does, with Gandalf's arrival at Bag's End to play some tricks, the similarity between the two is thereafter minimal. Tolkien may say that when the hobbits are in Bree, he himself did not know what to do with Strider or Gandalf,¹ but that is irrelevant. He very neatly divides the trilogy into its two parts, alternating each so that the reader's attention is focused on both at the same time; each volume is divided into two books, each book deals with either one or the other. Good and evil, strictly observed on the ethic, if not on the psychic level of the fantasy, are introduced early in the first volume in the form of Lórien and Galadriel, bearer of one of the Elf Rings, and the Nine Ringwraiths, chief servants of Sauron, and bearers of the Rings made for Men. Against the Nine Ringwraiths of Sauron go the nine Walkers of the Fellowship of the Ring. The Tower of Minas Tirith of Gondor stands to combat the Dark

¹Tolkien, Introductory Note to Tree and Leaf in Tolkien Reader, p. 2.

Tower of Minas Morgul. Each of the peoples of Sauron is an evil version of one of the races of Middle Earth. The trolls, for example, are imitations of the Ents. As Fangorn says, evil cannot create, it can only distort and destroy.

Tolkien eventually gathers together each of the threads of his vast tapestry. Part of the trilogy is devoted to an account of Gandalf's preparations to confront his enemy Sauron. Only after he falls into the abyss and emerges as the White Rider does he reveal his full strength. Thus also, Aragorn reveals his full strength only when it is necessary, showing himself to Sauron in the palantír as the heir of Isildur. In this manner, the ancient war between his ancestor and the evil king Angmar, now chief of the Ringwraiths, is renewed, and the unit of cyclically viewed history is revealed. Each of the hobbits also plays a vital role in the War, peculiar to their situation. Merry's sword, recovered from the barrow-wights near Tom Bombadil's house, destroys the Black Captain. The hobbits also provide comic relief to all the other characters and to the reader. Tolkien does not allow humor in magic or magical beings (see "On Fairy Stories"), but the hobbits are the least magical of all the characters in the trilogy.

Thus far we have spoken only of the external, epic events of the War. The timing is always so precise as to seem somewhat artificial in the trilogy, as when Aragorn arrives to save Gondor after following the Paths of the Dead, or when Théoden arrives at that battlefield, also in the nick of time. The most extravagant coincidence of moments is

when the Armies of the West, having offered themselves as bait to Sauron, are on the point of being defeated at the Last Battle, and the Ringbearer completes his Quest, turning the tide of the battle, marking the defeat of Sauron, and joining the Quest and the War.

The time of The Lord of the Rings is in some distant part of Earth's pseudo-mythical past (probably before the last Ice Age); the place is Earth with the revisions necessary for the existence of magic. The characters, some of whom are magical and some not, aid in developing the harmonious mixture Tolkien has created of fantasy and the ordinary, which he calls the Secondary and Primary worlds.¹ We have seen, especially in the chapter on Landscape, how his descriptive powers permeate the work and to a large extent give it its form. By giving a series of seemingly disconnected, isolated vignettes coherence, Tolkien fulfills the mission of the dream wish-fulfillment world he creates. The trilogy moves from isolation and fragmentation of the various parts to unity and creativity. Gandalf's and Aragorn's tasks are completed, and the "well of joy" buried beneath the wizard's stern aspect is allowed to spill over, although he retains always the mystery of his origins.

But what of the other half, the Quest? Is it integrated into the work? We have already stated that the Quest is internal, despite the physical circumstances surrounding it. Very early Frodo is wounded by the Ringwraith's knife

¹Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories," Tolkien Reader, pp. 52-53.

on Weathertop. This wound never fully heals. It is his introduction to the terrible potential power of the Black Lord. His struggle not to let the wound overcome him until they reach Elrond's house is the beginning of the internal battle that will thereafter be a part of his life. Frodo, the modern hero, finally does give in to temptation and refuses to part with the Ring, only to be saved by a greed matching his own, which is significantly accompanied by destruction. The structure of the trilogy is determined in part by the internal narrative of the hobbit Frodo and his two companions. The sadness with which The Lord of the Rings is tinged originates in the knowledge of the impossibility of complete innocence (good) as much as in the passing of magic from Middle Earth.

Just as for Lord Dunsany magic is associated with either past or imaginative time, for Tolkien humanity's spiritual regeneration lies in the past. This is demonstrated in his short story "Leaf By Niggle," the companion piece to his essay "On Fairy Stories." Not until the power of Niggle's imagination (which Tolkien calls "sub-creativity") is disciplined by Parish's meticulousness and his own new-found knowledge of how to structure his time and energy (after death), does he create the pastoral scene he has strived all his life to put on canvas. Lórien is similar to Niggle's Parish. The stay in Lórien helps the Fellowship of the Ring to clarify its objectives, both internally and externally. The peace and beauty this place affords it is a necessary prerequisite to continuing the quest. This is Frodo's first

impression of Lothlórien:

As soon as he set foot upon the far bank of Silverlode, a strange feeling had come upon him, and it deepened as he walked on into the Naith: it seemed to him that he had stepped over a bridge of time into a corner of the Elder Days, and was now walking in a world that was no more . . . in Lórien the ancient things still lived on in the waking world. (1:364)

and his last sight of the Lady Galadriel:

Already she seemed to him, as by men of later days Elves still at times are seen: present and yet remote, a living vision of that which has already been left far behind by the flowing streams of Time. (1:389)

It is evident from these two passages about Lórien and its queen that Tolkien makes the same equation that Dunsany does between dream and memory. Throughout, a kind of nostalgia for older and better days pervades, when magic was far more powerful and accepted.

Magic in the Gormenghast trilogy is largely replaced by Gormenghast and its rituals. Structurally, Gormenghast castle and its surrounding domain serve similar functions to Elfland in Lord Dunsany's romance. Although Gormenghast does not respond to a stimulus, as Elfland does, it does maintain itself as an isolated microcosm, separate and alien from the rest of the world to the very end of the narrative, because of its difference from that world in both time and place. Titus Groan, the quest hero, serves as the link between his birthplace and world outside it, but he is an alienating influence in both worlds because he violates the integrity of each by moving from one to the other. Thus, all of his letters to his mother are returned, marked "Address Unknown." Ultimately, they join and recognize each

other only within Titus himself, and not in the external narrative.

In the first two volumes of the Gormenghast trilogy, Titus Groan and Gormenghast, save for a brief interlude containing a description of Keda's quest, we are exposed only to the world of Gormenghast. The castle itself is the arena for a great deal of the action. The battle between good and evil, as ambiguous as it is, takes place within its walls. Structurally, the world outside of Gormenghast is subsidiary to the earldom of the Groans and functions largely as a counterpoint to Gormenghast. Only after we gain an intimate knowledge of Gormenghast in the first two volumes, does Peake lead us outside of that place and time into an infernal futuristic landscape and epoch. Once there the reader, along with Titus, continually searches for Gormenghast.

Gormenghast is an anachronism to the rest of the world of the trilogy; that is, it is a pattern continually repeating itself without change, sufficient unto itself and its rituals, which form the only truth that its people recognize. Each act of each day has a ritual significance that stagnates life in the ordinary sense and distorts it into various kinds of grotesque forms. As we shall see, Peake creates by means of language an altogether bizarre but viable world in Gormenghast. When he ruptures the microcosm and transfers his space to the worlds of the third volume, he is less successful. The beauty and magic of the trilogy reside in Gormenghast; the structure and language of the volumes reinforce this view.

Essentially, the trilogy is a portrayal of an extremely complex and closed world, governed entirely by its past and the (present) Master of Ritual's interpretation of its past. All must obey to the letter the Groan laws, which are both complex and detailed to the point of absurdity. For example, on the anniversary of a previous earl's death, the grooms must wear face masks at a particular angle to mourn for the earl, who was a great horse lover. It is precisely this reductio ad absurdum that Steerpike exploits in his bid for power. Steerpike's evil is his use of the important rituals of Gormenghast as weapons against themselves. He attempts to destroy Gormenghast by becoming its ruler. His evil is the will to power, which is pitted against the not so evil force which prevails in the status quo. Titus' place in the conflict is to destroy the evil and escape from a present which for him is too closely associated with the past. Both Steerpike and Titus violate the Groan Law in their refusal to accept the status quo. It is for this reason that Titus is a traitor, and it is the root of Steerpike's black rebellion. When he kills Barquentine, the Master of Ritual, he remembers " . . . that in his adversary he was pitting himself against Gormenghast. Before him he had a living pulse of the immemorial castle." (2:309)

None feels more than the exiled First Servant Flay the treachery of the desire to change the old rituals:

'But the Ritual! The instructions; who has given them? Who has directed the Procedure--day by day--interpreted the Documents--O God!' said Flay, suddenly unable to control himself any longer. 'Who has made the

symbols come to life? Who has turned the wheels of Gormenghast?' (2:329-30)

Titus, although he kills Steerpike, compounds the crime of rebellion against Ritual:

At a time when a devil was loose and the whole energy of the place was concentrated upon his capture, it was stupefying to find that the castle has been stabbed to the heart by the perfidy of its brightest symbol, the heir himself to the sacred masonry, the Seventy-Seventh Earl. (2:455)

In both the above quotes, the word "symbol" is extremely important. Gormenghast castle functions as a Center, a symbol of a divine order, sacred ground to be treated reverently, the life-giving force. It is the ritual symbols, the special code of existence that Gormenghast has developed, that provide the core of the trilogy and of the lives of those in it. The structural unity is thus also derived from the Castle itself; isolated island of the past though it is, in the midst of the future, all aspects of the romance depend upon and encircle it:

'There is nowhere else,' . . . 'You will only tread a circle, Titus Groan. There's not a road, not a track, but it will lead you home. For everything comes to Gormenghast.' (2:568)

The fragmentation of the world of Gormenghast is attained partially by Steerpike, but even more vitally by Titus. For him, it is sufficient to have his Gormenghast, that is his center unchanged, within himself. It does not matter that the morning bells toll every day for the Earl who will not return--the line is broken. The integrity of this world may continue for a time, but Titus in renouncing his land forces it to eventual and inevitable change. Unity is thereby trans-

ferred from the world that Peake has so painstakingly created to the quest hero himself. The circle is thus completed internally. This final emphasis on the hero's internal development rather than on the episodic adventures generally found in romance is reminiscent of Tolkien's treatment of Frodo Baggins and is a hallmark of modernity. The fragmentation of the world intimated at the end of the Gormenghast trilogy is a betrayal of traditional forms of romance.

Despite fragmentation of time and space, and despite a kinship with dream reality, there is in romance a kind of unity associated with ordinary reality. Because of its nature as an ordering, idealized perception of reality, romance's internal logic dictates the emergence of unity from within itself. This unity is partially based on the convergence of quest, landscape, and character discussed above as occurring through the structure. The nature of the genre itself, which precludes complete interiorization, focuses the attention of the reader on the narrative. The quest, for example, is never just a search for self but is also a chronicle of the attempt to discover the magical mode. This is true even in the most audacious attempts of romancers such as Peake or Cabell to stretch the boundaries of the genre. And this also makes the structure of romance similar to other narrative forms such as science fiction, the gothic novel, and other kinds of fantasy.

CHAPTER V

THE LANGUAGES OF ROMANCE

Modern romancers employ a variety of devices in order to create the language or languages of their works. For some, this process is a re-creation of the past through fictional archaic languages or syntax. Ironically, this is one of the ways in which modern romance betrays its modernity most clearly; the recreated languages of a fictionalized past are essentially modern, despite the author's intention. Other modern romancers completely disregard linguistic re-creation of the past and often use modern novelistic language. The enormous variability of languages both within the genre and within each individual romance causes differences of tone and emotive values, ranging from the intensely personal and therefore lyrical to the intellectual, which of course supposes a narrative aesthetic distance. These differences are caused also by varying points of view. As one looks more deeply into modern romance, one sees more and more the same kind of narrative problems typical of the novel and other related modern forms. Words (vocabulary), techniques (usage), and style (expression of a particular life view) form the basis of an approach to the discussion of language in modern romance.

It is characteristic of almost all romances of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that they are narrated in the past tense. Suzanne Langer describes the normal function of the past tense in literature: to " . . . create the 'historical projection,' i.e. the appearance of events in the mnemonic mode, like a reality lived and remembered."¹ It is the mode of completed experience, upon which memory acts to organize consciousness. As such, it not only complements the idea of the fictionalized past inherent to romance but at the same time functions as an ordering agent in the idealized world attempting to free itself from the chaos of ordinary human reality. The present is the tense of lyric poetry; it implies not only immediacy but also timelessness. In romance, the past tense creates historical and aesthetic distance from the fictional world for the reader. Even when the protagonists enter the magical world, the past tense is most often used, thereby making it more concrete, and also creating distance. Fairy tale often occurs in a mythical past, timeless within itself, but always in the past. Romance accomplishes this same atmosphere in a similar manner. The time of Tolkien's Middle Earth, for instance, suggests a pre-Ice Age epoch to some critics,² although it is almost impossible to pinpoint his Third Age.

Although modern romance most often uses an omniscient

¹Suzanne K. Langer, Feeling and Form (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 273.

²e.g. Kocher, p. 5.

narrator's point of view, the ways in which this functions are specific and varied. Often the pretext of a chronicle is used, as in The Lord of the Rings, which is seemingly a translation of the memoirs of Bilbo and Frodo Baggins concerning the War of the Rings, along with some translations of various odes, poems, songs, ballads, and other mythic literature of Middle Earth. A modification of this point of view may be seen in James Branch Cabell's use of a fictional self, very explicitly his own alter ego, to narrate many of the chronicles of The Biography of Manuel. This character, when he takes the form of Horvendile, is a minstrel and a clerk, because Cabell's romances also are based on apochryphal documents such as genealogies (although the works are generally in the first person). In Dunsany's romances, the author himself often intrudes upon the story to address the reader about some detail of the plot or to make an apparently playful metaphysical statement. William Morris' "watercolor" world seems to be presented to "gentle readers" by a paternalistic author-narrator. Mervyn Peake's metaphors close the aesthetic distance somewhat, as do his multiple points of view, which are achieved mainly through modern techniques of interior monologue. The differences among these authors' techniques of point of view lie more in the tone created by their different languages than in any very unusual experimentation with narrative point of view.

William Morris' romances are usually simulated ballads, seemingly recited orally by some minstrel. The beginning, "Long ago there was a little land, . . . " from The

Well at the World's End, is typical of his attempt to re-create an abstract medieval world, not distant from the world of fairy tale. In the tone, there is a strange mixture of paternalism and archaeology. The narrator's attempts to imitate medieval speech patterns through archaisms of vocabulary and syntax, leave the reader with a sense of artifice rather than art.

Morris' fictional worlds, as we have seen, seem to be highly personal interpretations of the medieval period. His language is no exception. We see this most vividly in the dialogue; for example, in this part of a dialogue toward the beginning of The Well at the World's End:

Quoth the dame: 'I could weep for thy mother; but for thee nought at all. It is good that thou shouldest do thy will in the season of youth and the days of thy pleasure. Yea, and I deem that thou shalt come back again great and worshipful; and I am called somewhat forseeing . . . ' (18:13)

The verbs, subject pronouns, and possessive adjectives are all in archaic form. The narration is also imitative of archaic forms, but not to so great an extent as the dialogue. The characters use the same vocabulary and sentence structure; it is difficult to differentiate among them. Through such vocabulary as "thrall," (slave) "gossip" (god-mother) "carline," (woman) "verily," etc., Morris creates a world coherent within itself but artificial to the reader. In The Sundering Flood, when the old woman is recounting the story of Osberne the Red Lad and Elfhild, Morris reveals his lyricism in the description of the many years of waiting and loneliness that the two have had to suffer before

being joined. Despite the artifice of language, there is pathos and emotion:

. . . 'Sooth to say, the Maiden had a love, a fair youth and stalwarth, and a glorious man, and many were the words they had spoken together, but never had her hand touched his hand, nor his lips her lips; because betwixt these two was a river such as are few upon the earth, unbridged, unfordable, unferryable' . . .¹

She continues to describe the anguish and fear of the Maiden, afraid that she will never touch her lover. Morris here approaches modernity with the beginnings of a psychological point of view, which is however not quite reached.

Morris' prose is stripped of most devices of language such as metaphor and symbol. With the exception of the complex sentence structures and the ornate vocabulary in which he indulges, he relies almost entirely upon unadorned facts. His language, therefore, often has little expressive value. As we have seen in the discussion of landscape, even his descriptions often do not reach the poetic or the lyrical, although they are striking in their wealth of detail. Here are two descriptions of Evilshaw, the forest in The Water of the Wondrous Isles:

She was wont to go to a knoll there where the grass was fine, and flowery at this time with white clover and dog violet, and lie down under the shade of a big thorn with a much-twisted bole . . . (24)

and

. . . there it was a broad bight of greensward of the fashion of the moon seven nights old, and a close hedge of thicket there was at the back of it; and the lake lay south and the wood north. (6)

¹William Morris, Collected Works, with Introductions by May Morris, vol. 21: The Sundering Flood (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966), p. 97.

The difficulty lies in the necessity for the reader to wade through page after page of obviously contrived prose. It is finally a matter of taste; there is little doubt that Morris is a poet; his insistence upon the "decorative" aspects of style discussed above, hinders the modern reader's enjoyment of his works. While he does convey a pastoral atmosphere in all of his romances, it is often achieved through (objective) description and not by lyricism. As we have seen, even the evil landscapes have this spun-sugar quality. Perhaps this is due to Morris' understanding of human motivations. Evilshaw itself is not evil; it owes its reputation to the witch who loves there. The Wood Debateable in Upmeads is also a dangerous place only because of the thieves who live in it, and as Ralph's father says, they steal mostly from the rich and give to the poor. Altogether, any real sense of evil in Morris' romances lies in the characterization.

Morris' attempt at archaic language leaves little room for his Victorian tendency at least to begin interiorization. When he describes a character's feelings of distress or sorrow, the kind of language used removes the reader from the shared experience. This is part of the description of Ralph's grief at the death of his love, the Lady of Abundance:

After a while he rose up with a most bitter cry, and ran down the green slope and over the water, and hither and thither amongst the bushes like one mad, till he became so weary that he might scarce go or stand for weariness . . . And therewith his breast arose and his face was wryed, and he wept loud and long, and as if he should never make an end of it . . . He took up the body of the lady and with grief that may not be told of, he drew it into the cave, and cut boughs of trees and laid them over her face and all over her body, . . . (18:202-03)

This description covers almost two and a half pages of the text, yet the reader is left not with a feeling of grief but only with desire to see what Ralph's next task will be. This is due surely to Morris' style.

Despite all that we have said, one becomes accustomed to Morris' archaisms and expects a certain vocabulary in his romances, so that the language does not interfere so much as one becomes more familiar with his works. It is doubtful, however, if his fantasies gain from it. Rather, the stylistic techniques that Morris uses serve to enhance the quaintness of his fictional worlds and not their integrity. The conflict between the Victorian world Morris lived in and the medieval worlds he envisioned is apparent in the attempts at archaism. Significantly, however, he does take an important and coherent step toward the development of a modern genre of narrative fiction based on fantastic worlds of medieval courtly romance and the Northern sagas.

It remains for Lord Dunsany to expand upon and vivify the foundation laid by Morris. In Dunsany's romances there exists a well-articulated world, sufficient unto itself and its various parts. The languages of his works are based upon his almost purely poetic vision of the universe. In all three of his major romances, The King of Elfland's Daughter, Don Rodriguez: Chronicles of Shadow Valley, and The Charwoman's Shadow, as well as in his short stories, Dunsany's imaginative powers are beautifully displayed. The names of characters and places alone--Ziroonderel, Lirazel, Moraño,

Serafina, Alvidar, Aragona, etc. testify to Dunsany's ability to evoke sonorous, rhythmic music from words. The phrase "beyond the fields we know," encapsulates both the magic and the beauty of 'anywhere' in these imaginary worlds. Dunsany has the gift of turning even the most ordinary sentence into a thing filled with magic: "The old man knew that he had talked too much, voicing that grievance again of which even the rocks were weary."¹; or "The day dawned splendidly, and air and fields glittered all the morning with sunlight, which welled up over the world and was only stopped by the forest."²

The thin barrier of twilight that separates Elfland from the fields we know, and dream from waking reality is, metaphorically speaking, Dunsany's language, which separates the reader from the work. The entire world of his romances is articulated as another, idealized reality, fragile and delicate, to be glimpsed and perhaps shared for a while; but the reader, despite his fascination with Elfland or Shadow Valley or Aragona, is warned not to stay. There is a kind of aesthetic distancing achieved through the language of dream imagery, that creates the dilemma. From The Chronicles of Rodriguez:

¹Lord Dunsany, The Chronicles of Rodriguez (London: G. Putnam's Sons, 1922), p. 20. All subsequent references will be to this edition; page numbers appear in parentheses in the text.

²Lord Dunsany, The Charwoman's Shadow (London: G. Putnam's Sons, 1926), p. 174.

Let us in fancy call up the shade of Morano from that far generation. Let us ask him where Rodriguez is going. Those blue eyes, dim with the distance over which our fancy has called them, look in our eyes with wonder. 'I do not know,' he says, 'where Don Rodriguez is going. My master did not tell me.' Did he notice nothing as they rode by that balcony?

'Nothing,' Morano answers, 'except my master riding.'

We may let Morano's shade drift hence again, for we shall discover nothing; nor is this an age to which to call back spirits. (149-50)

In this passage Dunsany is doing several things at once. First, as author he is intruding upon the work, thereby disrupting the nature of the closed world of the romance. Second, he is a medium, not only between the reader and the work but between our reality and another, as well as our time and the past. He states this clearly, giving notice also that this is not an age "to which to call back spirits." He reinforces the notion that Morano, and by extension the other characters, are creations of his imagination by holding conversation with him and using the reader as an audience. Miguel de Unamuno, in his novel Niebla, does almost the same thing; that is, as author he holds a conversation with his protagonist during the course of the novel. In Unamuno's case, the author demonstrates that the character is, unlike the author, immortal and that he is therefore more real than a human being. Dunsany's purpose is quite different, but the self-conscious probing of an author no longer certain of his omnipotence is characteristic of the twentieth century and evident here.

In his use of point of view Dunsany makes clear the distinction between the modern age and the (fictional) medi-

eval age of his romances. In all three of the romances we are discussing he continually reminds the reader of the gap between his own epoch and that of his characters by intruding upon the story and making references to our modern age. Through his language he creates a desirable world, reveals his keen nostalgia for that world (as does Morris), but reminds himself and the reader that it is only "fancy." Despite these reminders, the force of Dunsany's evocative language is such that he tells a very good story.

Another favored technique of point of view in Dunsany's romance is that of the chronicle. Like many other modern romancers he imitates certain archaic forms of address and style of the medieval romance or ballad. In Don Rodriguez, for example, each chapter is a "chronicle;" the book begins abruptly, as do many of the medieval romances, and closes with "and they lived happily ever after." Dunsany thinks this device important enough to attach a note of "Chronology" to the beginning of the book, in which he states that he cannot ascertain the exact date of the chronicles because of the magic involved in the story, which has the effect of acid upon some metals, "curiously changing its substance, . . . " He portrays himself therefore as an eccentric scholar who has found some old manuscripts, which he now brings to the public, much as Cervantes declared himself to be the translator of the Quijote, and as Cabell uses Horvendile as his scribe. Dunsany thus manages to incorporate several points of view into his romances, mixing his intrusions with state-

ments about the chronicles' authenticity, as well as a third point of view which completes the modern tone of the work: the point of view that recounts the story as though it were in the process of happening, complete with dialogue. In short, it is the third person view of the nineteenth century novelist narrator, who oversees the entire book.

The language is a curious mixture of modern novelistic vocabulary and syntax, and archaisms. Dunsany also transforms his archaisms into modern forms more often than not by his tongue-in-cheek tone. Both The Charwoman's Shadow and The Chronicles of Rodriguez begin with a long speech by the hero's father, proclaiming his duty and sending him on his quest. Both are comic characters:

'O eldest son of mine, your younger brother being dull and clever, on whom those traits that women love have not been bestowed by God; and know my eldest son that here on earth, and for ought I know Hereafter, but certainly here on earth, these women be the arbiters of all things; and how this be so God knoweth only, for they are vain and variable, yet it is surely so: your younger brother then not having been given those ways that women prize, and God knows why they prize them for they are vain ways that I have in my mind and that won me the Valleys of Arguento Harez, from whose heights Angelico swore he saw Valladolid once, and that won me moreover also . . . but that is long ago and all is gone now . . . ah well, well what was I saying?' . . . 'For himself he will win nothing, and therefore I will leave him these my valleys, . . . But to you I leave my long, most flexible, ancient Castilian blade, . . . and what it will not win for you in the wars, that shall be won for you by your mandolin, . . .'
(The Chronicles of Rodriguez, 3-4)

The speech of Ramon Alonzo's father is similar in tone and style, if not exactly the same in content. Ramon's father sends him off to learn alchemy from the sorcerer, and Rodriguez's father sends him off to earn his fortune at war, but

both are the objects of Dunsany's humor, betraying themselves by their choice of words.

Although Dunsany sometimes mocks his young heroes as well, he reserves for them the wonder and magic of romance as well as any kind of interiorization that occurs. Almost any page in his romance, especially those concerned with his quest heroes, is filled with a beauty unsuspected in the hackneyed quality of each situation itself. Thus, when Don Rodriguez finds himself in a duel by moonlight, outside the balcony of his love (from afar), Dunsany uses the opportunity to recreate archetypes from Serafina and her mother of the Maiden and the Mother, as well as to portray the essence of what he calls romance. Both are expressed by means of dream imagery:

And Serafina was moving through the moonlight as though its rays were her sisters . . . And there came upon Rodriguez that feeling that some deride and that others explain away, the feeling of which romance is mainly made and which is the aim and goal of all the earth . . . and he pictured her native place as far from here, in mellow fields near the moon, wherein she had walked on twilight outlasting any we know, with all the delicate things of our fancy, too fair for the rugged earth. (The Chronicles of Rodriguez, 162, 164)

He then describes Rodriguez's depression, a half-serious, half-comic mixture resulting from having lost Serafina, having wounded an hidalgo, being angry at his servant for violating the code of chivalry by defending him with a frying pan, being "tired with the weariness of defeated dreams that slept in his spirit exhausted," (165) and also being hungry. This is a series of causes that ironically juxtaposes the sublime and the ridiculous aspects of human reality. The contrasts

and conflict between the ethereal quality of romance and the more material aspects of reality are continually revealed through the author's satiric tone. Dunsany's ironic word plays and abrupt changes in tone and vocabulary effectively mirror the modern sensibility while retaining always a sense of the importance of idealized imaginative reality.

In The King of Elfland's Daughter, Dunsany uses the author-intruder point of view as well as the omniscient third person narrator, but he restrains his irony somewhat. The split hero--father and son--is viewed with less distance, and therefore more distress. Alveric and Orion are different and alienated from other human beings; that much is made quite clear. Specifically, Alveric's quest is viewed tragically and not romantically, in spite of the "happy" ending. Here are two descriptions of his years of searching:

So day by day and season after season that company wandered on, the lonely mateless man, the moonstruck lad and the madman, and that old grey tent with its long twisted pole. And all the stars became known to them, and all the four winds familiar, and rain and mist and hail, but the flow of yellow windows all warm and welcome at night they knew only to say farewell to: . . . and the days were away and the years. (222)

and:

By weary ways with lonely wanderings they came far to the South, and never the border of Elfland appeared with its heavy layers of twilight; . . . (226)

This is of course very different from the lightheartedness and earnestness of Rodriguez's and Ramon's quests. Futility is demonstrated by Dunsany's choice of language, such as the recurrence of "weary" and "wore away," and by the fact that Alveric's search comes to an end back in Erl, his home, and

only because the King of Elfland cannot bear to see his daughter sad. It is magic that finds him at last, and not the other way around. He never finds it because he is restrained by madness, which Dunsany carefully distinguishes from imagination, and pride. Dunsany's tone in portraying this fruitless search reveals his closeness to the quest and the quester, as differentiated from the other two works. His view of Orion, the young hero, is more akin to that of his other young quest heroes. Orion's alienation is greater than theirs, however, because he is half faery and thus responds equally to two separate and distinct languages.

Just as Lord Dunsany seems identified with his no longer young hero Alveric in The King of Elfland's Daughter, J. R. R. Tolkien's language becomes most emotionally charged in the mouth of Gandalf, the White Rider. Before discussing the expressive value of the various languages in The Lord of the Rings, however, we should point out that Middle Earth seems to have been conceived originally as a linguistic experiment. Tolkien catalogues and uses in his text various fictional languages more exhaustively than any other modern romancer. He includes in the appendices at the end of the trilogy copious notes on the pronunciation, spelling, etymology, and origins of the various languages of Middle Earth. As Tolkien was a scholar of medieval linguistics, this emphasis on languages seems natural. As "translator" of The Lord of the Rings, he gives his reason for each of the terms he uses in the text and for his translations of certain forms in

modern English. In Appendix E, "Writing and Spelling," he painstakingly reconstructs the alphabets of two of the languages used in the romance, and gives their rules of usage, pronunciation, and spelling. In Appendix F, containing "The Languages and Peoples of the Third Age" and "On Translation" he first lists the various languages of the period and then discusses his methods and certain problems encountered in translating them for the trilogy.

Interestingly, the hobbits have no language of their own, but speak a dialect of Westron, the Common Speech of the Third Age. Tolkien has translated this language into modern English. Since the language of Rohan is similar to Westron, Tolkien says, he has therefore translated it as resembling ancient English. He has left untranslated only those languages alien to Common Speech. There is a certain psychology behind each of the languages of the trilogy; the High Elvish languages for example are associated with "wonder and delight," and the hobbits' dialogue is often used to introduce a comic tone. The hobbits' manner of speech, and their delight in good food, drink, and good times provide a form of relief from the sombreness and the tragedies of the War and the Quest. This is one of Sam's more important functions. His Sancho-Panza-like earthiness and humor fortify and renew Frodo when he most needs it.

Tolkien says also in Appendix F that "Hobbits such as Frodo, and other persons such as Gandalf and Aragorn, do not always use the same style." (3:412) He goes on to say,

however, that the one thing all these various languages had in common was a reverence for "what was ancient," and "they took pleasure in it according to their knowledge." In other words, good is associated with reverence for ancient things, language included, and evil with disrespect:

But Orcs and Trolls spoke as they would, without love of words or things; and their language was actually more degraded and filthy than I have shown it . . . Much the same sort of talk can still be heard among the orc-minded; dreary and repetitive with hatred and contempt, too long removed from good to retain even verbal vigour, save in the ears of those to whom only the squalid sounds strong. (3:Appendix F, 412)

Tolkien makes his symbolism clear by stating that even today there are the "orc-minded," and by telling us who they are and what they represent. One can tell, in other words, what people are like by the way they speak. From a description of the various languages of Middle Earth, we have already moved into the realm of symbolic value and psychology. Needless to say, words are of the utmost importance to Tolkien. Often it appears, as Stimpson points out, that Tolkien "frequently treats a word, neither as reference or gesture, but as a thing, a dead end, unto itself."¹

There are innumerable poems and songs in The Lord of the Rings, as well as runes and other graphic devices, particularly maps. The poems and songs, almost all apparently old ballads and sagas of ancient heroes, belong to the heroic ritual that Tolkien creates of the War of the Rings, as a part of a greater cosmology which explicates the history of

¹Catherine R. Stimpson, J. R. R. Tolkien, (Columbia Essays on Modern Writers, No. 41 (New York, London: Columbia University Press, 1969), p. 5.

Middle Earth. Only hobbits who have had contact with Elvish things (the most concrete affiliates of the ritual) attempt to compose their own songs or even to translate old ballads. Together they are treated in their own glossary-index after the appendices. There is a suggestion also that these poems and songs form the litany of a religion only subtly hinted at in the trilogy. Prophecies, such as those spoken by Galadriel or Elrond, are often in verse. And there is of course the poem of the Rings, which ends with the refrain:

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.

All heroic deeds and great love stories are recorded in the ballads of the trilogy, as is the tradition in all European romance. One of the greatest honors bestowed upon Frodo at the completion of his task is the ballad of "Frodo of the Nine Fingers and the Ring of Doom." The songs and poems are used generally to approach another, higher reality; they are usually written in the Elvish languages, preferred to the other languages of Middle Earth for their inherent beauty and the idealized reality they evoke.

The ruse of the translation from the Red Book, written by hobbits, offers us once again the emphasis on the hobbit's point of view. It is a highly personalized chronicle we read, unlike those of Lord Dunsany or Hrolf Kraki's Saga, Poul Anderson's translation and adaptation of certain fragments of Scandinavian heroic literature. The first person is prominent in The Lord of the Rings; as such, subjectivity plays an

important role in the expressive language of the trilogy. Depending upon the various types of languages scattered throughout the trilogy, moments of action or high expressive import are dramatic, poetic or simply emotional. There is, in other words, a first-person narrator, the hobbit, and there are also other narrators, not the least important being the author's fictional self as revealed through his choice of words. Gandalf's confrontation with the Balrog, for example, is seemingly a highly dramatic moment, but because of the emotional context in which it is placed, linguistically created, it becomes highly personal and lyrical rather than narrative.

It is obvious that while Tolkien sympathizes most with the hobbits, he empathizes most with Gandalf. The result is a double first-person point of view, accompanied by other points of view. The wizard is in many ways simply a kindly old grandfather--the Shire has known him for many years only as the inventor of spectacular fireworks. Only when the hobbits become part of the Fellowship do they learn more about him, although they never learn (nor does anybody, including the elves) all there is to know about Mithrandir, the Grey Pilgrim, as he is called in the Elvish tongue. Gandalf, as we have seen, refuses the Ring at his moment of choice because he would succumb to its powers through pity for the weak. Yet in his battle with the Balrog toward the end of the first volume he appears more human, despite his magical strength, than supernatural. Let us look at some excerpts from this scene:

'A Balrog,' muttered Gandalf. 'Now I understand.' He faltered and leaned heavily on his staff. 'What an evil fortune! And I am already weary.' . . .

. . . 'Over the bridge!' cried Gandalf, recalling his strength. 'Fly! This is a foe beyond any of you. I must hold the narrow way. Fly!' . . .

The Balrog reached the bridge. Gandalf stood in the middle of the span, leaning on the staff in his left hand, but in his other hand Glamdring gleamed, cold and white. His enemy halted again, facing him, and the shadow about it reached out like two vast wings. It raised the whip, and the thongs whined and cracked. Fire came from its nostrils. But Gandalf stood firm.

Gandalf then tells the Balrog that it cannot pass, for he is a servant of the Secret Fire and will prevent it.

The Balrog made no answer. The fire in it seemed to die, but the darkness grew. It stepped forward slowly onto the bridge, and suddenly it drew itself up to a great height, and its wings were spread from wall to wall; but still Gandalf could be seen, glimmering in the gloom; he seemed small, and altogether alone: grey and bent, like a wizened tree before the onset of a storm.

From out of the shadow a red sword leaped flaming. Glamdring glittered white in answer.

There was a ringing clash and a stab of white fire. The Balrog fell back and its sword flew up in molten fragments. The wizard swayed on the bridge, stepped back a pace, and then again stood still.

'You cannot pass!' he said.

With a bound the Balrog leaped full upon the bridge. Its whip whirled and hissed.

Aragorn and Boromir now leap upon the bridge to aid Gandalf, but their action serves only to emphasize the solitude and power of the wizard.

At that moment Gandalf lifted his staff, and crying aloud he smote the bridge before him. The staff broke asunder and fell from his hand. A blinding sheet of white flame sprang up. The bridge cracked. Right at the Balrog's feet it broke, and the stone upon which it stood crashed into the gulf, while the rest remained, poised, quivering like a tongue of rock thrust out into emptiness.

With a terrible cry the Balrog fell forward, and its shadow plunged and vanished. But even as it fell it swung its whip, and the thongs lashed and curled about the wizard's knees, dragging him to the brink. He stag-

gered, and fell, grasped vainly at the stone, and slid into the abyss. 'Fly, you fools!' he cried, and was gone. (1:344-45)

This is Gandalf's finest moment in the trilogy, in spite of his heroic actions later in the War after he returns to life as Gandalf the White. His battle with the Balrog is an extremely dramatic moment, but it is moving because Tolkien's language reveals the wizard as a human being rather than because we see a battle between good and evil or darkness and light. These last are obviously implicated in the scene just described, but the moment becomes highly personal, almost lyrical despite its heroic proportions. This is due to Tolkien's point of view and the way in which the languages he uses to describe the scene reveals his identification with Gandalf. We have left out parts of the scene (although very little) in which other members of the Fellowship play a part, and have focused, as Tolkien does, on Gandalf's single-handed battle. The adjectives, verbs, and adverbs Tolkien uses to describe him are an interesting contrast to his assumed extraordinary powers: he "falters" and "leans heavily" on his staff twice during the battle; in spite of the fact that he stands firm, he appears "small" and "altogether alone," as well as "grey and bent;" at the moment when he exerts all his power, his staff breaks, Gandalf is left without support, he staggers and falls, "grasping vainly at the stone," and falls into the abyss.

The battle scene is thus constructed as a series of contrasts between the enormous hidden powers of the wizard

and his weaknesses, also hidden until now. He remains an old man, an old man with awe-inspiring power it is true, but he pays for his power with great pain. When he is reborn as the White Rider, he achieves more supernatural proportions, but always remains a kindly old man first. He and Théoden, the other kindly old man of The Lord of the Rings, have in common the paradoxical combination of warmth and distance that characterizes old age. Together they reveal a great deal about their creator, or perhaps it is better to say that Tolkien reveals himself through his language when writing of them in his romance.

Just as Tolkien reveals his empathy and identification with Gandalf, he also betrays his inability to view women as anything but abstract ideals through his treatment of Arwen, Galadriel, and Éowyn. This is best expressed in Stimpson's statement that Tolkien's women are "either beautiful and distant, simply distant, or simply simple."¹ The most important and influential woman in the trilogy is Galadriel. We have already seen how she functions as a divinity, divorced from most contact with others, except as a symbol of etherality and white magic. She displays little emotion; her role as wife, for example, is only mentioned. When, at the end of the third volume, the Last Ship leaves for the West, her husband Celeborn is not even mentioned. Throughout, he plays an unimportant role in the story; even the forests of Lórien are due to the magic of their queen. It is she who bears one of the three Elf Rings. In spite of her great

¹Ibid., p. 8.

beauty, often mentioned in the romance, it is not an earthly beauty--she cannot be touched. In discussing Galadriel, Tolkien's language is so structured that one thinks of her as an ideal or a symbol but not a woman. One might say that this is because she is an Elf, but Tolkien himself uses the word "woman" in referring to her and describes her as a physically beautiful woman. This ambivalence is best exemplified by her relationship with Gimli, the dwarf. On her first appearance, when the Fellowship (without Gandalf) arrives at Lórien, she is described as having hair of "deep gold." Her voice is " . . . clear and musical, but deeper than a woman's wont." (1:460) When she defends the dwarves, using the name of their ancient home in Moria in Gimli's own language, he looks up:

. . . and it seemed to him that he looked suddenly into the heart of an enemy and saw there love and understanding. Wonder came into his face, and then he smiled in answer.

He rose clumsily and bowed dwarf-fashion saying: 'Yet more fair is the living land of Lórien, and the Lady Galadriel is above all the jewels that lie beneath the earth!' (1:371)

Because of his love for her, Gimli the dwarf and Legolas the elf become very good friends, a thing unheard of until then. Yet she maintains her distance from others; when Gimli asks her for a lock of her hair, she first makes sure that his love for her is free from any earthly bonds. He reveals to her that he will set the hair in imperishable crystal as an heirloom of his house and as a symbol of good will between her people and his; she then gives it to him. All subsequent references to Galadriel are in this vein. She is

seen generally as a vision, either dark and terrible, as when she is offered the Ring, or beautiful and ethereal, as when she takes leave of the Fellowship, and seems to Frodo "present and yet remote: a living vision . . . " (1:389)

Interestingly, Frodo, the quest hero, does not have a love. Aragorn takes his place in this respect. Yet Aragorn's love affair with Arwen is minimized; as Kocher points out, when he sings the ballad of Beren and Lúthien Tinuviel to the hobbits on Weathertop, we do not yet know of Arwen, or of the similarity of his courtship of her to that of Beren and Lúthien.¹ She appears but briefly in the first volume, not at all in the second, and only at the end of the War in the third. Aragorn's raison d'être is to restore his line to the throne of Gondor, and to marry Arwen Evenstar, but she is presented as an abstract being, not quite as ethereal as Galadriel, because she marries a man, but relegated to the background for the most part. Her most important act is to yield her place on the Last Ship to Frodo, so that he may pass into the West. Even when Aragorn speaks to her, it is from afar. Tolkien cannot allow himself to approach women too closely, except as concepts or ideals. Aragorn says to Galadriel:

'Lady, you know all my desire, and long held in keeping the only treasure that I seek. Yet it is not yours to give me, even if you would; and only through darkness shall I come to it.' (1:391)

Elrond will not allow Arwen, an elf-queen, to marry a man, even of so great a lineage as Aragorn, until he proves his

¹Kocher, p. 137.

worth. It is for this reason that he participates in the War of the Rings to the extent that he does. Yet he refers to Arwen obliquely to Galadriel, and to the others not at all; one wonders if it is only for the sake of secrecy.

Éowyn, who also loves Aragorn, is the closest Tolkien comes to describing a woman. Even she is "womanly," and not quite a woman. She falls in love with a concept that Aragorn represents, and not until she (with Merry's help) destroys the Black Captain and then wanders in despair for a while, does she come back to life through Faramir's love for her. However, Tolkien more effectively describes her as a young warrior who does not care to live than as a young woman searching for meaning and fulfillment. Because of the language used to describe her, she retains to the end that quality of a young warrior, lacking some je ne sais quoi as a woman. Tolkien's subjectivity emerges repeatedly through his language.

Clearly, a good part of Tolkien's modernity lies in this exceedingly subjective use of language. His breadth of vision, his rich style and vigorous vocabulary, his changing points of view, all emphasize the depth and clarity he has brought to modern romance. His presence here validates this genre's claim to being a part of the larger family of twentieth century narrative prose fiction.

Although Tolkien and, to some extent, Morris use dreams as prophetic devices in their romances, neither uses the language of dream imagery. Lord Dunsany does, we have seen, and to an even greater extent Mervyn Peake as well.

Dunsany's imagery suggests an idealized imaginary world of bright pastel colors and eternal spring; it is a wish-fulfillment dream world. One can hardly say the same for the world of Gormenghast, despite the successful outcome of the quest. It is a dark, grotesque world and the dream-like quality is nightmarish and bizarre rather than idealized; the castle reminds one more of the House of Usher than a fairy castle. The castle is important as the setting for the dream and plays a large part in the narration of the romance, as well as symbolically representing the psyche. This dream quality is reflected also in the characters, both in the descriptive language used and in their speech, whether with each other or internal. Peake uses various tones throughout the trilogy--comic, tragic, dramatic, narrative--but the qualifying adjective for all these is "grotesque." This grotesqueness is based on the language of the subconscious world rather than upon the satirical content, which is also present.

From what has previously been said about Peake, it is clear that his treatment of romance is "modern" in many and varied ways. Not the least of these is his poetic use of the world of dreams and his intentional portrayal of both his characters and the landscape as archetypes. Peake consciously reconstructs an "other" reality, made possible by his metaphors and other techniques which stretch the English language to new limits. He allows himself long flights of fancy, interrupting the narrative in a way that would seem at least awkward and tedious were these moments not so powerful.

In the midst of describing a little domestic scene, when Nannie Slagg is holding the baby Titus and waiting to be summoned to the ritual of his christening, with Keda next to her trying to soothe her agitation, Peake begins a passage about old age and human history, describing its archetypal, physical, and spiritual aspects:

Titus watched Keda's face with his violet eyes, his grotesque little features modified by the dull light at the corner of the passage. There was the history of man in his face. A fragment from the enormous rock of mankind. A leaf from the forest of man's passion and man's knowledge and man's pain. That was the ancientness of Titus.

Nannie's head was old with lines and sunken skin, with the red rims of her eyes and the puckers of her mouth. A vacant anatomical ancientry.

Keda's oldness was the work of fate, alchemy. An occult agedness. A transparent darkness. A broken and mysterious grove. A tragedy, a glory, a decay. (1:120)

Peake will slip from narration into interior monologue as easily as he slips from the former into meditation. He is just as capable also of switching, as he often does, from past to present tense. In the Gormenghast trilogy, the prose is highly unconventional; Peake experiments with language in a manner usually associated with the modern novel.

The reader is assisted in the attempt to acquire knowledge about the trilogy's characters in many ways. First, Peake includes drawings of each of them. Second, he describes them in minute detail, both physically and internally, offering an omniscient narrator's point of view. Third, he simulates an interior monologue on various occasions, notably the chapter in Titus Groan entitled, "The Reveries." Fourth, he treats some of his characters poetically, as we have seen,

thereby lifting them from the psychological to the archetypal. Finally, most of the satirical content mentioned above is contained in the characterization of some of the secondary characters, such as the schoolmasters and Irma Prunesquallor. The various ways in which Peake treats his characters are influenced by the multiple points of view available in the trilogy.

The narrator often speaks directly to the reader, as in the description of the setting and seating arrangement of Titus' Birthday Breakfast. The description of the Ritual is omitted, says the narrator, because it would be tedious " . . . for the reader to be obliged to suffer the long catalogue of the Breakfast ritual, . . . " (1:417) This narrator relates his account in the present tense, thereby introducing the "reveries" that follow because no one is listening to Barquentine, the Master of Ritual. "His voice is in the darkness--and the darkness is in his voice, and there is no end at all." (1:419) The reveries themselves are written in the language of interior monologue, without punctuation and in a free associative style, although they are deliberately separate. By this time the reader is well aware of the predilections of each of the characters present at the Breakfast; the reveries serve to reinforce our notions about them and to demonstrate how even the inner lives of these people are governed by the attendance to ritual and the tradition of Gormenghast. We have already quoted several examples from different characters in the chapter on Character. The nar-

rator interpolates his own subjective point of view and adopts as well the technique of ending each reverie at the moment when Fuschia dramatically interrupts the ritual by fainting from fear and worry for her father, whose insanity is becoming increasingly apparent. Interestingly, even the language of Sepulchrave's insanity is permeated by symbols of Gormenghast:

. . . 'and there will be a darkness always and no other color and the lights will be stifled away and the noises of my mind strangled among the thick soft plumes which deaden all my thoughts in a shroud of numberless feathers for they have been there so long and so long in the cold hollow throat of the tower and they will be there forever for there can be no ending to the owls whose child I am to the great owls whose infant and disciple I shall be so that I am forgetting all things' . . . (1:430)

The owls and the Tower of Flints, part and parcel of the castle since time immemorial, have become, in the personal iconography of the Earl, his means of escaping Gormenghast through his own destruction.

After leaving Gormenghast, Titus searches for his own set of internal symbols. In his delirium he reveals to Cheeta that he also belongs to Gormenghast and claims his identity from it. The delirium utilizes the owls, borrowing from Sepulchrave's insanity. "Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! The owls are on their way from Gormenghast. Ha, ha, ha! The ravenous owls . . . the owls . . . the little owls." (3:194) Titus, however, succeeds in objectifying Gormenghast. In spite of all the symbolic and mythological associations attached to Gormenghast, it is home to him.

Paradoxically, the more complete and detailed the

description of Gormenghast is, the more it loses its symbolic significance for Titus and for the reader. The language of the first volume of the trilogy reduces the demonic (and therefore the symbolic) value of the castle. As we have seen in chapter three, the castle is an important character in the romance. In such chapters of the first volume as the one entitled "Near and Far," Peake establishes the enormity and complexity of the castle. As we read further, we grow more familiar with it and begin to see Gormenghast as the home of the Groans as well as a symbol. Its variability of value is achieved through the different subjective languages Peake uses to describe it. Almost at the beginning the equation between self and one's world is made clear; they are one and the same:

This is a love that equals in its power the love of man for woman and reaches inward as deeply. It is the love of a man or of a woman for their world--for the world of their center where their lives burn genuinely and with a free flame. (1:178)

For Titus just as for Fuschia (to whom the above quote refers) Gormenghast is all things, because it is really their internal landscape. Titus' quest is fulfilled when he no longer needs the external symbol; by finding it again he completes his quest and is able to free himself from it. The others are less fortunate; they all remain chained to Gormenghast, and most die as a result. Even Steerpike, who understands only the language of power and efficiency, is defeated by Gormenghast.

There is comic relief from this grim struggle. It

occurs almost entirely in the second volume, in the persons of the schoolmasters and Irma. All other characters, even Nannie Slagg and the twins, achieve some kind of depth of characterization that saves them from complete mockery. Irma Prunesquallor's party for the schoolmasters and the description of the smoking room of the schoolmasters are two of the highlights of the second volume. Peake's vivid satiric imagination is fully revealed in the language of these two scenes. For example:

If ever there was a primogenital figurehead or cipher, that archetype had been resurrected in the shape of Deadyawn. He was pure symbol. By comparison, even Mr. Fluke was a busy man . . .

Wrapped up like an untidy parcel in a gun-gray gown emblazoned with the signs of the Zodiac in two shades of green, . . . was Deadyawn himself, and all but asleep. His feet were tucked beneath him. In his lap was a hot-water bottle. (2:63-64)

The description that follows of the reading of the Headmaster's edict, whose existence Deadyawn cannot even remember, let alone write, is highly successful satire.

Irma Prunesquallor decides to have a party in order to get married. She is middle-aged, singularly unattractive, and bad-tempered. On the occasion of the party, she too uses a hot-water bottle, in order to fill out her bust. In spite of her grotesqueness she manages to marry Bellgrove, the new Headmaster. Their courtship is also sardonically amusing. These satirical portraits interrupt the tragic flow of the romance and represent almost Dickensian types, amusing but invariably grotesque.

This sense of the grotesque is perpetuated by the

imagery of the romance. We have seen some examples; another would be useful now as illustrations of the effectiveness of Peake's style. Even the most banal episode may at any moment become in some way nightmarish. Swelter is almost an allegory of gluttony. When he passes out in a drunken stupor, "There was a sound of something spreading as an area of seven flagstones became hidden from view beneath a cataleptic mass of wine-drenched blubber." (1:33) He is altogether impressive, "a galleon," quick-witted in a perverse way. His voice conveys both his enormity and the danger of his presence: "His voice came down from the shadows in huge wads of sound, or like the warm, sick notes of some prodigious moldering bell of felt." (1:25)

The language of the third volume is stranger than that of the first two. The sentences tend to be more fragmented, the thoughts less beautifully expressed. Metaphors are less frequent, although the sense of nightmare remains and is at times stronger. The whole world outside of Gormenghast is a nightmare that Titus does not understand at all. (See chapter two above.) The dialogue in this third volume underlines these qualities of estrangement and strangeness:

'I know nothing about you,' said Titus. 'You are someone to me who appears, and disappears. A rough man; a shadow-man; a creature who plucks me out of danger. Who are you? Tell me . . . You do not seem to be part of this--this glassy region.' (3:55)

All the characters speak like this. It is as though Peake, having found modern novelistic language too limited, even embellished with his own poetic devices, has begun to attempt a

creation of his own language, in the tradition of Joyce and Beckett. It is artificial and difficult, but it is interesting and at times powerful.

Undoubtedly, Peake uses language as he uses other elements of romance. Like Tolkien's work, his trilogy pertains to that which is most "modern" in modern romance. Paradoxically, Peake accomplishes this by stretching the boundaries of the genre so that it becomes one of the innovative forms of narrative fiction in the twentieth century.

Possibly the most important distinction between modern and medieval romance may be expressed in terms of the difference in their respective languages. Language, of course, reflects a particular culture and life-view; their expression in fictional works is a cliché of literary criticism. When reviewing modern romance, or any modern work of art for that matter, its peculiarities and greatness are revealed largely through their means of expression. We have seen how modern romance moves (not chronologically, but linguistically) from an attempted recreation of the past to the most avant-garde forms of experimentation. We have also seen to what extent a variety of languages can reveal the subjectivity of the author and his work. Finally, the use of techniques, metaphors, symbols, and other devices in the service of a language that reveals great psychic depths is evidenced in the most modern examples of the genre. Not the least exciting aspect of modern romance is its employment of our modern tongue to its own purposes.

CHAPTER VI

CONVERGENCES

While modern romance undoubtedly owes considerable debt to its predecessors, especially to medieval romance and the fairy tale, its appearance in modern times coincides with the appearance and development of related genres. As a type of fantastic or anti-realistic fiction romance partakes of the same view of reality as do science fiction, the gothic novel, the love romances, tall tales, and other forms of pure and hybrid fantasy. As such, these genres stand in opposition to the mainstream of realistic narrative fiction, especially the novel, despite occasional overlapping. They also retain distinctive features that differentiate them from each other. However, at the heart of the tradition of anti-realistic fiction, there is chaos. The various forms of fantasy are difficult to categorize; often one can only indicate patterns, not define boundaries. We have demonstrated in many ways how this is true of the Gormenghast trilogy, for example. Nevertheless, an idealized version of reality is common to all fantasy. This kind of idealization may assume many shapes, depending upon the realistic base. If it is negative, the idealization may assume grotesque or horrific forms, creating an inversion similar to the nightmare. Classic examples of this type of fiction may be seen in Love-

craft's tales of wonder and horror. If the realistic base is nebulous or affirmative, some kind of pastoral or utopian fiction results. Morris' romances are of such an idealized reality.

Whatever its forms, fantastic narrative fiction is clearly an important current in the history of modern fictional prose. Forster describes it this way:

What does fantasy ask of us? It asks us to pay something extra. It compels us to an additional adjustment. The other novelists say 'Here is something that might occur in your lives', the fantasist 'Here is something that cannot occur.'¹

Herbert Read agrees, "Real fantasy . . . relies on the force of wonder alone."² Words such as "wonder," "dream," "imaginary," "magic," and "fantasy" recur with enough frequency in discussions of these genres to enable us to identify the type of vocabulary useful in establishing their narrative patterns. All forms of fiction allied with romance converge at a certain point because of their essentially fantastic nature. They are also often mixed with other types, notably allegory, and the picaresque, because of the ultimately uncategorizable cluster at their juncture. All are ultimately opposed to the realistic tradition of Balzac or Madame Bovary, whether they pertain to the wish-fulfillment dream world of fairy tale or to the world of nightmare. They offer the

¹Edward Morgan Forster, Aspects of the Novel (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Wortel, 1954), p. 159.

²Herbert Read, English Prose Style, 2d. ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1952), p. 134.

"other" reality produced by the imagination rather than that of ordinary life, but they do so in varying and distinctive ways.

Different forms of fantastic fiction recreate reality in their own ways. We have seen that romance makes use of a magical past and to a large extent uses an idealized vocabulary, landscape, and typology of character to enhance the quest plot structure. Both science and utopian fiction use future time to create possible human explorations, which are not real because of their relationship to present. In contemporary science fiction, a product of the Industrial Age, these possibilities are often viewed negatively, and a nightmarish quality results. Both science and utopian fiction, if a distinction can be made between them, explore human possibilities based upon ostensibly scientific facts or projections. In the earliest science fiction of Jules Verne or H. G. Wells and their followers, characterization is minimal. The story rests on an interest in ideas, things, or discoveries.¹ Emphasis, both in these older forms and in more contemporary science fiction, may be on an interplanetary or interstellar journey, on the role of a single person, often an outcast, in the course of events being described, or on an inverted landscape, different from our own but necessarily with recognizable features. In more "modern" science fiction,

¹J. O. Bailey, Pilgrims Through Space and Time: Trends and Patterns in Scientific and Utopian Fiction (New York: Argus Books, 1947), p. 212.

the overwhelming influence of the novel, especially in terms of psychological interiorization, is apparent. "New" writers such as Samuel Delany prefer the name "speculative fiction" for their works. There is no question but that in a work such as Dhalgren, with its self-conscious kind of interiorization and more avant-garde techniques of fictional prose, Delany reveals himself as much an inheritor of the Joycean tradition as of the Wellsian.¹ Still, he remains essentially a writer of science fiction, just as Mervyn Peake, despite his language and interiorization, remains a romancer. The difficulties in deciding just when narrative fiction becomes fantasy are as apparent in these two authors as in Cervantes, John Gardner, or García Márquez.

Some critics make a distinction between science and utopian fiction. Richard Gerber, for example (Utopian Fantasy), makes distinctions that often seem a little more than a question of taste. Those works that he prefers he labels "utopian," and those he considers inferior are science fiction. Apart from this, he does make several statements about utopian fantasy that would be fruitful for our investigations. For Gerber, Bulwer-Lytton's The Coming Race (1871) is the beginning of modern utopian fiction.² Other authors whose

¹cf. Gerald Jonas, review of Dhalgren, by Samuel Delany, in New York Times Book Review, 16 February 1975, pp. 27-31.

²Richard Gerber, Utopian Fantasy: A Study of English Utopian Fiction Since the End of the Nineteenth Century (New York: McGraw-Hill Paperback, 1973), p. 212.

works he considers to be utopian have often been classified as science fiction writers such as Olaf Stapledon, Samuel Butler, and Aldous Huxley. "A limited amount of fantasy and the prevalence of social ideas . . . should be accepted as a distinctive feature of the utopian genre; . . . "¹ according to Gerber. A perfect example of this definition is Morris' practical vision in News from Nowhere, a work also classified as utopian by Gerber. But whereas Stapledon, for example, specifically states that his aim is to create a myth, Gerber's emphasis is elsewhere. Stapledon says:

Yet our aim is not merely to create aesthetically admirable fiction. We must achieve neither mere history, nor mere fiction, but myth . . . This book can no more claim to be true myth than true prophesy. But it is an essay in myth creation.²

Gerber states that,

In the creation of Utopia man imposes his will on the imagination, and the non-existent ideal country loses its mythical force and becomes a device, a construct, a fiction . . . fictive activity of logical thought . . . the existence of the ideal country is not meant to be taken literally, but as a help in discovering another, hidden level of reality that could not otherwise be perceived.³

What is myth but a symbolic creation of that other, "hidden level of reality"? Gerber thus reinforces the notion that the primary role of all fantastic fiction is an expression

¹Ibid., p. 122.

²Olaf Stapledon, Preface to Last and First Men in To The End of Time: The Best of Olaf Stapledon, ed. with an Introduction by Basil Davenport (New York: Funk & Wagnells Co., 1953), p. 9.

³Gerber, p. 4.

of the human discovery of other kinds of reality, and he places utopian fiction within that family as well. The distinction between utopian and science fiction is less important, and both could be included under the name of "speculative fiction."

Many of the fantastic genres trace their origins to "pulp" literature. The first science fiction magazine, for example, Amazing Stories, was published in 1926. The gothic novel, on the other hand, began with Horace Walpole's The Castle of Otranto (1764), and was continued in the nineteenth century in the Brontës' works, and later in Poe's tales of horror. Contemporary gothic literature is generally considered "pulp", however. It combines the mystery and terror of the traditional gothic with elements of the popular love romance. Gothic tales generally end happily, after a series of mysterious intrigues involving murder and some kind of love triangle. The resolution of the mystery and the dispelling of the dark atmosphere coincide with the happy ending of the love affair between the female protagonist and her lover. Thus the modern fairy tale utilizes a contemporary situation to idealize reality. This type of love romance often seems to suggest to its readers that their dull lives might someday contain an element of the fantastic. Other love romances, such as Barbara Cartland's, set in some part of England's past, always deal with the upper classes; the protagonists are not only good, but also physically attractive, and the action contains lavish balls and costumes, thus

allowing the reader to "escape" from ordinary reality into a highly refined, completely one-sided view of human reality. Characterization in such works is generally unimportant except as it explains or allows the love interest. In the work of such an author as Mary Stewart, however, the influence of the novel is becoming increasingly apparent; the dichotomy between the "best-seller" and the work of literary merit is less clear.

Pure fantasy, such as in Chesterton's works or those of Ernest Bramah, relies upon distortion of ordinary reality into an imaginative superstructure demanding disbelief.¹ The technique of intentional lack of credibility is similarly used in the tall tales of the American West. The larger the exaggeration, the more interesting the tales become. Thus, in order to make Paul Bunyan's pancakes, two men skate on the griddle with pieces of lard attached to their feet.

We may now look at the various genres of fantasy mentioned above and observe their similarities and differences. The world of fantasy is the realm of faerie, magic, and the pastoral dream, whether viewed positively or negatively. In all these genres the borrowing of themes and techniques (particularly the latter) from the novel is at the heart of contemporary fantasy's modernity and the gradual assertion of its identity within the larger family of narrative prose fiction in this century.

¹This demand may be reinforced by a pronouncement that the fantasy is a dream. Chesterton's The Man Who Was Thursday is subtitled: A Nightmare.

The underlying search for self in romance takes the form of a quest plot structure. In other fantastic genres, this is far less common, although this type does appear. In science fiction, for example, an outcast from society often searches for his rightful heritage, or freedom from tyranny, or excitement. The hero of Isaac Asimov's The Stars, Like Dust is the son of a governor and wealthy ranch owner, who has been executed by the galaxy's ruling alien race, the Tyranni. The young man is at first a fugitive from their attempts to kill him, but later he begins a quest to find the free underground organization supposedly existing somewhere in the galaxy. Thus, the traditional dual benefits to the individual and the land are sought. Although his name is not revindicated and he therefore remains a fugitive, he uncovers the rebellion, finds personal happiness, and thus achieves the quest. The work consists largely of this young man's journeys in space, searching for the hypothetical planet. The quest therefore forms the nucleus of the narration. The young patrician hero fulfills the archetypal quest pattern of rite de passage to spiritual completion and a new sense of self by achieving his goal. Other modern science fiction quests have other emphases. In another of Asimov's novels (The End of Eternity) the shape of time is continually being changed because humankind has discovered how to travel to the past and the future. The hero rebels against the kind of scientific programming of the past that is the new sociology, only to find that his personal quest to destroy this technology has actually been administered by his descendants. The fates

or gods of romance have become the new technologists in science fiction. The theme of the human need and desire to change, without sufficient wisdom to do so, is common in science fiction. An accompanying theme is the search for knowledge, thwarted by machines or bureaucracy.

In older science fiction, the emphasis in the journeys is not internal or individual, but on adventure. Jules Verne's many accounts of voyages to the center of the earth, to the bottom of the sea, or to the moon, are typical of this tendency. The enormously popular Edgar Rice Burroughs series on Venus is almost entirely an adventure story; the planet Venus serves only as an excuse for Burroughs to imagine a "sword and sorcery" story with some embellishments that could be categorized as "science fiction." The hero happens to be telepathic, so that all his adventures are immediately recorded in the mind of his sympathetic recipient on earth for posterity. He battles monsters, falls in love with a princess, rescues her from evil sorcerers, pirates, and the like. The quest consists of trying to bring her back home. Instead of carrying her on a horse, he builds an airplane. All these, and other adventures like them, form the plot of Lost on Venus and The Pirates of Venus. Whereas Verne wrote speculatively, based on then-proven scientific fact, and Wells at least demonstrates an interest in science, Burroughs uses the genre merely as a vehicle for storytelling.

One of the more important early science fiction writers is C. S. Lewis, a good friend and literary colleague of

J. R. R. Tolkien. His Perelandra trilogy opens a new dimension in science fiction writing. The quest hero is Dr. Ransom; his quest is to destroy evil and let good conquer. Lewis uses science fiction for metaphysical reasons; he attempts to prove both the existence and the essential good of God, and even establishes a hierarchy of his agents. The first book, Out of the Silent Planet, takes place on Mars, known to its inhabitants as Malacandra. Earth is Thulcandra, the Silent Planet. Ransom is kidnapped and taken unwillingly to Malacandra by the evil Dr. Weston, a man interested in power and conquest in the guise of science. Ransom becomes the quest hero because he seeks and thwarts Weston, aided by Oysara, ruler of the planet and agent of higher forces. The second book is even more interesting theologically because Lewis uses Venus (Perelandra) as a stage for the re-enactment of the temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden, changing the outcome. Lewis is not interested particularly in creating other worlds, although there are some beautiful descriptions of landscape in the trilogy, nor is he interested in "science" fiction per se, but he turns to fantasy as a vehicle for his theological views. The third novel of the trilogy, That Hideous Strength, confirms this observation. The subtitle is "A Modern Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups." It takes place on Earth (Thulcandra), and not only describes Dr. Ransom's last battle against evil, but also combines Arthurian romance with science fiction. Lewis chooses certain of the topoi of medieval romance and the Matter of Britain thus evoking the past as

a means of making the battle between good and evil timeless. There is a battle for the mind of a woman seer, Merlin is awakened from his tomb, and becomes the champion of Ransom, who is now called Mr. Fisher-King, and also claims to be the Pendragon, guardian of Britain's honor. All these elements are placed in the context of a group of evil scientists who wish to destroy human life and have the power to do so, because they are aided by Ransom's old enemy, the evil eldil who is Satan. Lewis not only writes philosophical science fiction, but he is an example also of the way in which boundaries between the fantastic genres can often be highly ambiguous.¹ His trilogy removes science fiction from the sphere of pulp fiction, and thus hastens the process towards modern recognition of its literary value.

There are other quests with religious outlines in science fiction, usually in the form of mystical visions. Both Lindsay's A Voyage to Arcturus and Clarke's Childhood's End are of this nature. In the latter, the final end of the earth is viewed as a cosmic absorption into the whole, an energy center of universal proportions. The change occurs gradually, supervised and observed by the Overlords, a race of beings whose appearance is similar to the legends of Satan, which the narrator says is because of racial memory in future time of their coming to begin the end, which is also the beginning. Humanity tries to fight the takeover in many ways; one of them is a young

¹It is perhaps significant that Lewis makes reference to Tolkien's trilogy in this novel.

rebel who stows away on one of Overlord's ships, and returns to earth only to watch its destruction. In A Voyage to Arcturus, the hero travels for only a few days on Arcturus, through many allegorical adventures, which are really aspects of his soul. The new organs he grows, which are native to Arcturus, are symbolic of the changes he experiences. He moves from the spiritual to the sensual to the violent to murder, all set in musicological terms, and finally to a sort of death, from which a part of him, Nightspore, continues to live.

If we look at the most modern of science fiction quests, such as the one in Samuel Delany's latest novel Dhalgren, the same process of interiorization that we saw in the Gormenghast trilogy occurs here. The hero of Dhalgren does not remember his name or a part of his past; his quest is an attempt to re-discover himself. The plot is more circular than linear; his quest is never really completed, just as the book is not really finished. It is in many ways the author's own search for self. The work appears to be a work-in-progress; the hero finds a notebook and finds himself writing poetry in it that is seemingly explicated by the notes that he did not write. His writing is further complicated by his amnesia. The quest is almost wholly internalized, despite the action of the plot itself. The hero arrives in Bellona, a city in the United States that has suffered some sort of catastrophe and is consequently almost totally isolated from the rest of the world, and quickly incorporates himself into the life of

the city and becomes famous there. All realities are subjective in Bellona; for example he cannot remember where he has been for days; a week to others is a few hours to him. Throughout, his search for himself is paramount. His internal patterns and thoughts are emphasized, despite all kinds of strange external events (such as the night that two moons rise over Bellona). The hero's search reminds one of Joyce's Finnegans Wake; the techniques used to express it are obviously very much a part of the most contemporary narrative fiction's experimentation.

Other anti-realistic genres do not demonstrate this kind of narrative and structural experimentation. In the gothic mystery-romances of writers like Mary Stewart, Dorothy Eden, or Catherine Gaskin, the primary search is a double one--for the resolution of the mystery, and an implied (usually) successful outcome of the love interest. It usually takes place within the confines of a large estate or a small village, so that an actual physical journey does not take place except to bring the heroine to the "Center," so to speak. There is no inner search for self, except as a revelation of love or of the mystery. Dorothy Eden's Winterwood is a good example of a typical plot pattern in these suspense-romances. The heroine is travelling in Italy, to escape a scandal surrounding her name. She there becomes a governess of a girl with whose married father she promptly falls in love. They travel back to England, and remain in the family ancestral estate, Winterwood. There is a fairly complicated intrigue

surrounding the wife and her dying aunt, as well as a distant cousin, who threatens both the wife and the heroine with exposure of their respective skeletons in the closet. All is resolved conveniently (and simultaneously) by the clarification of the mystery surrounding the aunt's reappearance after death and the wife's suicide, so that the heroine is free to marry her lover and remain in Winterwood. The estate itself becomes almost a character, due to all the "good" characters' love for it. Thus the complications of the story line reside in the manipulation of various secondary plots, but there is no search for self and therefore no quest.

Some forms of uncategorizable fantasy are also distinguished by the lack of a physical journey undertaken to fulfill a goal or "geas," the term used in those romances influenced by the Northern sagas. Others such as Lovecraft's fantasies, which are sometimes considered romances, occasionally science fiction, but always tales of horror, modify the quest in such a bizarre manner as to suggest, if not overtly state, the world of dream. Thus his story, "The Silver Key," begins with:

When Randolph Carter was thirty he lost the key of the gate of dreams. Prior to that time he had made up for the prosiness of life by nightly excursions to strange and ancient cities beyond space, and lovely, unbelievable garden lands across ethereal seas; but . . . Wonder had gone away, and he had forgotten that all life is only a set of pictures in the brain, among which there is no difference betwixt those born of real things and those born of inward dreamings, and no cause to value the one above the other.¹

¹Howard Philip Lovecraft, "The Silver Key," At the Mountains of Madness and Other Novels (Sauk City, Wisconsin: Arkham House, 1964), p. 386.

The story is concerned with his attempt, and final success, to re-discover that key, and to pass over into the world of dreams. This world exists in time and space in Lovecraft's stories. It is the true (or more desirable) reality, and therefore the goal of the quest.

The worlds (space) of the various fantastic genres are often among the most interesting aspects of the work. This is certainly true in Lovecraft's, Smith's, or Dunsany's stories, because in the description of the landscape lies their most vividly used imaginative powers. Lovecraft and Dunsany in particular have a gift for naming places that evokes their strangeness, grotesqueness, and beauty at once, as well as reinforcing these qualities in their descriptions:

It is rumored in Ulthar, beyond the River Skai, that a new king reigns on the opal throne of Ilek-Vad, that fabulous town of turrets atop the hollow cliffs of glass overlooking the twilight sea wherein the bearded and finny Gnorri build their singular labyrinths. . . .

From Dunsany's "The Fall of Babbulkund":

'Hearken, and I will tell you of Babbulkund, City of Marvel. Babbulkund stands just below the meeting of the rivers, where Oonrana, River of Myth, flows into the Waters of Fable, even the old stream Plegathanees . . . Sterile and desolate they float far through the desert, each in the appointed cleft, with life upon neither bank, but give birth in Babbulkund to the sacred purple garden whereof all nations sing.'²

The prose itself is a function of the luscious, ornate, compli-

¹Ibid., p. 397.

²Lord Dunsany, "The Fall of Babbulkund," Over the Hills and Far Away, with Introduction by Lin Carter (New York: Ballantine Books, division of Random House, 1974), p. 42.

cated superstructure of the fantasy, based to a large extent upon the landscape.

Although the emphasis in romance on contrasting modes of idealized and ordinary reality in its treatment of landscape is evident also in other anti-realistic fiction, it is manifestly different in each genre. We have seen how clear a metaphor for the imagination authors such as Dunsany and Lovecraft make of the worlds described in their fantasies. The pastoral mode is, however, not as pertinent to the gothic or science fiction as to romance. Idealized reality may in fact be the dark world of the English moors or the strange worlds of extra-terrestrial landscapes, but it is not the same kind of centering device as it appears to be in modern romance, despite the fact that the contrast between magical or idealized and ordinary or human reality remains. Each is important in many of the ways described in our discussion of modern romance's landscape, but its shape differs in each of the fictional worlds. The nightmare world is pre-eminent, and therefore a negatively idealized landscape abounds far more than in romance.

In the gothic suspense-romances the narrative style is often used only for utilitarian purposes, i.e. the furtherance of the plot. The land itself, as we have seen in Winterwood, often holds a magnetic attraction for the heroine, especially in those gothic novels set in Scotland, or the northern moors of England, where the dark, foggy climate reflects the hellishness of concealed crimes. In this aspect

more than any other the contemporary suspense-romance owes its descendency to the gothic novels of the Brontës. In particular, Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights portray the moors of England as potent forces in the lives of the characters. They are always cold, windblown, and depressed (or invigorated) by the endless rain and dismal weather characteristic of this rural area. On the second page of Wuthering Heights, the narrator says, "Wuthering Heights is the name of Mr. Heathcliff's dwelling. 'Wuthering' being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather."¹ The title itself intimates the importance of the landscape to the author and her creations. Contemporary gothic romance has continued the tradition of the great house set in the moors, as it has largely ignored the Brontës' careful character portrayals. These landscapes remind one of the castle of Gormenghast, which is at once a caricature of the gothic castle and a more highly developed symbol of the dark aspects of human nature. The heroine often gets lost in this new but absorbing countryside; at times somebody wishes her harm and tries to kill her. In Gaskin's A Falcon for a Queen, the heroine returns from China, where her (now dead) father was a missionary, to her mother's family's ancestral home in Scotland because of unexplained circumstances surrounding her brother's death there. Thus a touch of the exotic is added. She falls in love, is unrequited, tries to win over her grandfather and

¹Emily Brontë, Wuthering Heights, Illustrated by Bernarda Bryson with an Afterward by Clifton Fadiman (New York: Macmillan, 1963), p. 2.

his housekeeper, who tries to kill her almost immediately, finds her brother's murderer, finds out that her love object is her half-brother, and ultimately marries a neighbor. Most important is the fact that she chooses to remain in this dark, rural area, as do most of the heroines of this genre. This kind of landscape seems to exercise a great magical fascination over them, despite its apparently depressing aspect.

Occasionally, as in Mary Stewart's This Rough Magic, the scenery is of a different kind. There is always, however, an element of exotic mystery in the land itself. This Rough Magic takes place on Corfu; one of the sub-plots of the work is concerned with proving that the island is the setting for Shakespeare's The Tempest. Here attention is paid to the lie of the land more for its importance to the plot than for its own sake. Corfu is a Greek island but its northern coast lies close to Albania. The chief villain of the story is trying to cause the overthrow of the government of Albania by smuggling large sums of counterfeit money into the country from his residence on Corfu. The heroine is swept up in the events of the story only because of her love interest. Thus Corfu serves geographically, rather than as landscape per se.

Although many science fiction stories emphasize other aspects of the narrative, such as Huxley's emphasis on ideas and characters in Brave New World, many more are concerned with landscape. This is particularly true of those science fiction novels that take place on other planets or in other stellar systems or galaxies. The landscape of Earth is

usually treated as being directly effected by the new science or technology. Vonnegut's satirical fiction is a good example of this; there are also innumerable novels written about the effects of a worldwide atomic war. However, when an author treats a landscape foreign to Earth, it must have at least some recognizable features for the reader. The landscape is often inverted, and therefore treated as an example of the human ability to adapt, given some point of reference on which to base life. When the rebel Jan Rodricks (Childhood's End) arrives at the Overlord's home planet, he cannot stay precisely because the landscape has no points of reference for him:

When he had turned half-circle he saw the mountain. It was not the horizon, but beyond it--a single serrated peak, climbing up over the edge of the world . . .

And then, slowly, the mountain began to change. When he saw it first, it was a dull and almost sinister red, with a few faint markings near its crown that he could not clearly distinguish. He was trying to focus on them when he realized that they were moving . . .

The somber red was brightening to an angrier hue. Streaks of vivid yellow appeared, so that for a moment Jan felt he was looking at a volcano pouring streams of lava down on to the land beneath. But these streams, . . . were moving upwards.

Now something else was rising out of the ruby clouds around the mountain's base. It was a huge ring, perfectly horizontal and perfectly circular . . .

The ring was expanding as it climbed . . .

. . . He watched until it had dwindled to a thin thread of blue, hard for the eye to focus upon in the surrounding redness of the sky. When it vanished at last, it must already have been many thousands of kilometers across. And it was still growing.

He looked back at the mountain. It was golden now, and devoid of all markings. Perhaps it was imagination--he could believe anything by this time--but it seemed taller and narrower, and appeared to be spinning like the funnel of a cyclone . . .¹

¹Arthur C. Clarke, Childhood's End (New York: Ballantine Books, 1953), pp. 195-196.

Conversely, landscape often serves the contemporary science fiction writer as a means of demonstrating humankind's ability to desecrate and destroy not only itself and its planet, but others as well. This is Ray Bradbury's major theme. In Fahrenheit 451, the Earth has lost itself; in The Martian Chronicles, human beings destroy both the Earth and Mars as a result of their highly advanced war technology. Mars and Earth are both deserts, without life of any kind, by 2026.

When science fiction is concerned with expressing philosophical or theological ideas of some kind, landscape is used allegorically, or as a lyrical representation of an idea. Both Lindsay's A Voyage to Arcturus (which is not clearly science fiction, but rather allegorical fantasy) and Lewis' Perelandra trilogy illustrate this point. Just as Hawthorne uses allegorical historical romance, Lindsay uses science fiction, or at least fantasy. We have said already that Maskull's journey to Arcturus is a quest for self, but it is characteristic of contemporary anti-realistic fiction to use fantasy as a means of exploring the psyche. Many authors, as we shall see, and as we have seen in our discussion of romance, accomplish this through modern techniques of characterization and language. Lindsay uses landscape. Thus, when Maskull first lands on the planet Tormance, of the star Arcturus, he encounters peace and tranquility of spirit in his hosts as well as in the lands they inhabit. But he cannot resist exploring more of Tormance; he feels the call of the mountains:

The mountains stood up wild and grand.

They impressed him like a simple musical theme, the notes of which are widely separated in the scale; a

spirit of rashness, daring, and adventure seemed to call to him from them.¹

As he approaches the mountains, the attraction grows stronger:

Like the first mutterings of a thunderstorm, the first faint breaths of cool wind, Maskull felt the stirrings of passion in his heart. In spite of his bodily fatigue, he wished to test his strength against something. This craving he identified with the crags of the Marest. They seemed to have the same magical attraction for his will as the loadstone for iron. (61)

Maskull thus gradually passes from the spiritual to the passionate, as he goes into the mountains. Within the mountain country, the land is chaotic, unstable, dangerous:

The conversation was abruptly cut short by a prolonged and frightful crashing, roaring sound, coming from a short distance ahead. It was accompanied by a violent oscillation of the ground on which they stood. They looked up, startled, just in time to witness the final disappearance of a huge mass of forest land, . . . Several acres of trees, plants, rocks, and soil, with all its teeming animal life, vanished before their eyes, like a magic story. (91)

Maskull's actions correspond to this dangerous, evil landscape. He commits various murders, and other crimes. As Tydomin says to him, "'You came here to carve a strange world, and now it appears you are carved yourself.'" (96) As Maskull's journey continues, he seems to be returning to the origins of life. He follows a river to its source and finds more and more primitive life forms in it. As he undergoes various metamorphoses, caused by physical change in his body, so too the land changes and changes him. As can be seen from the quotations above, which deal with his gradual immer-

¹David Lindsay, A Voyage to Arcturus with an Introduction by Loren Eiseley (New York: Macmillan, 1963), p. 56. All subsequent references are to this edition; page numbers appear in parentheses in the text.

sion in violence, the land itself acts as a symbolic or allegorical device to further poeticize and express the psyche, within Lindsay's mystical construct.

On Perelandra, on the other hand, Lewis represents a Garden of Eden. Dr. Ransom must get used to walking on land that is not fixed, but ebbs and flows with the surrounding sea. The only other humanoids on Perelandra are the Lady and the King, aside from Ransom's arch-enemy, Dr. Weston. The plot focuses on Ransom's struggle with Weston and the evil eldil inhabiting him for the soul of the Lady. The landscape, however, does not quite stay in the background; it is essential to the structure of the work. Here are a few illustrations from some of the many pages of descriptions of Perelandra:

The thing had looked, in that first glance, so like a real country that he had forgotten it was floating--an island if you like, with hills and valleys, but hills and valleys which changed places every minute . . . the floating islands . . . are dry and fruitful like land but their only shape is the inconstant shape of the water beneath them.¹

When he reaches the forest, he finds strange forms:

There was an undergrowth of feathery vegetation, about the height of gooseberry bushes, coloured like sea anemones. Above this were the taller growths--strange trees with tubelike trunks of grey and purple spreading rich canopies above his head, in which orange, silver, and blue were the predominant colors. . . . The smells in the forest were beyond all that he had ever conceived. To say that they made him feel hungry and thirsty would be misleading; almost, they created a new kind of hunger and thirst, a longing that seemed to flow over from the body into the soul and which was heaven to feel. (41)

¹C. S. Lewis, Perelandra (New York: Macmillan, 1968), p. 40. All subsequent references are to this edition; page numbers appear in parentheses in the text.

After a spectacular sunset, in which the colors and shapes impress Ransom with their beauty and strangeness, he falls asleep.

At Ransom's waking something happened to him which perhaps never happens to a man until he is out of his own world: he saw reality, and thought it was a dream. He opened his eyes and saw a strange heraldically colored tree loaded with yellow fruits and silver leaves. Round the base of the indigo stem was coiled a small dragon covered with scales of red gold. He recognized the garden of the Hesperides at once. (45)

From all the above selections, we can see that Lewis uses the landscape of Perelandra for theological, mythological, and therefore symbolic purposes. The land itself acts ethically upon Ransom and changes him. A great deal of his time on the planet is spent alone, in contact only with the land. His battle with the evil Weston, or the Un-Man, as he is later called, is based on the notion that the very essence of good is exhibited and expressed on Perelandra, because it is an innocent world. Ransom fights to keep it that way, with the help of the "angels" who represent the spiritual essence of Malacandra (the masculine) and Perelandra (the feminine).

In science fiction, then, the importance of landscape (space) is defined only partially in terms of actual places or other forms of life. The science fiction writer uses the poetic possibilities offered by the creation of other planets or other stellar systems as a means of further exploring human potential and human nature. Strange places, animals, and vegetation are important because it is probable that other landscapes alien to our own exist, and also because of what these particular imaginative structures represent about and

for human beings. Just as romance may use landscape as a means of fulfilling the pastoral dream, a device for allegorically expressing good and evil, particularly through the dichotomies of light and dark spaces, and chaos versus harmony, or as a metaphor for imagination, so too do all forms of fantasy. In romance this may be expressed in terms of Mordor and the Shire (or Lórien); in science fiction it is the natural world and the technological, in the gothic novel the "Center," which is the estate or mansion, and the dark countryside surrounding it. All partake of the same vision.

As we have pointed out in chapter three, modern fiction requires a "modern" treatment of character as a partial index of its contemporary nature. Some of the fantastic genres have utilized this aspect of technique in surprisingly innovative ways, as indicated in our discussion of the Gormenghast trilogy. This modernity is characterized by avant-garde techniques of psychic exploration, which require the active and innovative participation of fictional language as well as modern psychology. Characterization is nevertheless not usually of strong interest in those works in which that narration of the action takes first place. We have remarked before that in many gothic romances, for example, the characters display little introspection except as a means of advancing the love interest and the resolution of the crime or mystery. In science fiction the strange new world may take priority over the explorer or the inhabitants. In other

fantasies the protagonist is the dreamer (Lovecraft, Dunsany) or the storyteller (Ernest Bramah) but is not important to the work except as agent or aspect of a narrative technique of point of view. Nevertheless many contemporary writers of anti-realistic fiction give their works new depths by their use of character and language.

In treating romance, we traced the very beginnings of tentative interiorization on Morris' part to the more daring exploration of the subconscious of Mervyn Peake and thereby demonstrated some of the ways in which the genre deserves consideration as a vital form of twentieth century narrative prose fiction. Now we shall look at other forms of fantasy and indicate how they too have undergone similar transformations. This is especially true of science fiction, as we shall see. In the fairy tale, typology of character is the norm, and archetypes rather than character are the result. Good and evil are manifested in the young prince and the evil sorcerer, for example. In allegory human traits are personified so that the dreamer and poet of the Roman de la Rose encounters his love, symbol of absolute beauty and good, behind a garden wall representing her virtue, and attended by Gladness, Courtesy, Beauty and others. There are elements of both these forms in fantasy, as we have demonstrated in the romance. Modern fiction, while retaining archetypal forms, especially in its characters, also probes the depths of the conscious and subconscious. As an example of this phenomenon in fantasy we may take science fiction.

We have pointed out that the origins of science fiction during the latter part of the nineteenth century are closely linked to the machine age. Its early proponents made use of the new horizons available to the Western world because of the new developing technology. Soon adventure stories in which an idealized hero or heroes conquers other worlds under highly fantastic conditions became the staple of science fiction reading. As Isaac Asimov says of the beginnings of science fiction, the early stories were "either no-science or they were all-science."¹ He describes the no-science stories as adventure stories in which space jargon replaced Western jargon. The others were populated by "scientist-caricatures." We have already seen how in this type of fiction that the scientist has to an extent replaced the sorcerer² as an example of typology of character. For Asimov the revolution occurs when John W. Campbell, Jr., at the end of the thirties, insists that " . . . science fiction writers stand firmly on the borderline between science and literature."³ One of the most important effects of this change was the increased interest in individual characterization. Another major change in science fiction writing occurred in the early sixties, best expressed in Frederick Pohl's magazine, Galaxy. At this time science recedes and fictional technique becomes important. For this reason the name "speculative fiction"

¹Isaac Asimov, "Forward 1--The Second Revolution," Dangerous Visions, ed. with Introductions by Harlan Ellison (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1967), p. viii.

²Gerber, p. 57.

³Asimov, p. viii.

fits the genre better. Along with an interest in fictional technique, there is often an increased emphasis on characterization in its most "modern" sense, i.e. the exploration of the depths of consciousness.

While science fiction stories that describe the adventures of idealized heroes are still being written, the majority of modern writers use the genre to portray human characteristics negatively. Characters, then, are not so much individuals as representatives of characteristics. In addition to the science fiction novels which describe adventures on strange worlds, there are those that depict the psychological potential of the modern world and its descendents. Even quest heroes such as the men who explore Mars in Bradbury's The Martian Chronicles are no longer idealized archetypes. Surprisingly frequent in modern science fiction is the tendency to humorous satire, and consequently the low mimetic hero. The outstanding practitioner of this form in modern romance, as has been mentioned many times, is James Branch Cabell. His counterpart in science fiction is Kurt Vonnegut, whose rich sense of humor disguises a deep sense of despair at the fate of human beings. His protagonists often stumble across futuristic, technological evil and bumblingly attempt to fight it. Such a novel as Cat's Cradle uses science fiction to demonstrate the potential destruction of our planet because of our war technology. Vonnegut's fantastic imagination creates situations of great force and humor in which the 'heroic' Everyman almost always loses his way.

Even more common is the rebel, the outcast who cannot accept the conformity and essential soullessness of a particular futuristic society. We have already described one. Montag, the fireman in Fahrenheit 451, is another. In his introduction to the 1967 edition of the novel, Bradbury states that Montag is he himself.¹ The novel is essentially a study of the metamorphosis one man undergoes under the influence of books in a society that prohibits their use. The fireman's function in this (future) society is to burn books, not to prevent or put out fires. Their slogan is: "Monday burn Mil- lay, Wednesday Whitman, Friday Faulkner, burn 'em to ashes, then burn the ashes."² Gradually, the man to whom the smell of kerosene is perfume, admits more and more his secret desire for the ideas and beauty contained in books. This process is revealed through a third person narrator in a kind of interior monologue, in which sentences such as, "'What?'" asked Montag of that other self, the subconscious idiot that ran babbling at times, quite independent of will, habit, and conscience."³ punctuate his internal thoughts and feelings. Montag is an ordinary man who ultimately denies his conditioning and the deprivation of his society in order to join a micro-society of men who appear to be hobos, but are really walking books. Thus they hope to preserve literature from

¹Ray Bradbury, Fahrenheit 451 (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1967), p. 12.

²Ibid., p. 23.

³Ibid., p. 25.

fire. Opposed to him is the tempter, his fire chief, who tries to prevent his severance from society through well-reasoned arguments based on some knowledge of the books he helps to burn. His conversations with Montag, together with Montag's internal dialogues, his discussions with Faber, the old man who introduces him to the underground, and his fascination with the girl next door, all are carefully described with such attention to detail that Fahrenheit 451 is clearly revealed as a character study.

Most contemporary science fiction writers use stock ingredients and themes, such as the war between machines and human beings, the ideal of happiness as a completely passive society, often including a return to the womb, the abuse of power, the breakdown of the nuclear family into standardized units, space travel of all kinds, time travel in many dimensions, various beings and worlds at once forgotten and frightening to human explorers, etc. These techniques and themes are, however, treated very differently now from the way they were at the beginning of science fiction writing. Almost always, the emphasis is now psychological. Judith Merrill's Homecalling is the story of the encounter of two human children with a race of insects on another planet. The most compelling aspect of this short novel is the way in which the Mother insect (the Lady of Daydanda) asserts herself as archetypal mother. The little girl fights her at first, mentally, for the insects communicate telepathically, but finally is won to the role of mother to her younger brother.

Other, more avant-garde authors like Samuel Delany probe the subconscious through the use of science fiction's tools, and approximate the novel both in their techniques and in their portrayal of anti-heroes. On A Planet Alien, by Barry Malzberg, is a recent example of an apparent space voyage to another planet, which becomes time travel into the past and ultimately an exploration of the protagonist's dissociated reality. Folsom is the commander of an expedition sent by the Bureau to make contact with the humanoid natives of a planet that is to be named Folsom's Planet. Malzberg gradually introduces the reader to Folsom's insanity through the external and internal action of the book. It is written in the first person; Folsom is the narrator. On the second page of the novel, after describing a moment in the forest on the planet, he says, " . . . unless of course most of this is taking place in my mind and not on the terrain of what they will come to call Folsom's Planet."¹ A little later, after the first seeds of paranoia have been planted in his (and the reader's) mind, Folsom's log reads: "Arched in that position it is as if for a moment that we are not in the forest of Folsom's Planet but in some prehistoric vault of the mind, some concavity in which all emotions come free to stalk and a wind which is not wholly of the planet's making burrows its way through us."² All the dialogue and action takes on

¹Barry N. Malzberg, On A Planet Alien (New York: Pocket Books, 1974), p. 8.

²Ibid., p. 16.

a nightmarish quality, as though to support statements such as those above. The accoutrements of science fiction are all there, but the voyage becomes a psychic inquiry. Ultimately, we are not sure exactly what happens, or if, as Folsom believes, they have really traveled back in time to earth's tribal beginnings. Because Folsom often contradicts himself, confusing "fantasy" and "reality," the reader must doubt the veracity of whatever he says. That is not important, however; what is important is the use that Malzberg makes of science fiction. Just as Peake's romance is in reality an exploration of the psyche, and an internal search for self, Malzberg's hero reveals to the reader his own psyche.

All anti-realistic fiction bears at least some similarity to the fairy tale. It is "modern" because of the zeitgeist implied in the work, the modern treatment of character, either as individualized or as psyche, but in either case interiorized, and finally because of the modern techniques of style and structure. That is to say, for example, that almost never will a reader encounter a facsimile of archaic language, such as Morris used, or of other languages. Modern, novelistic language is most commonly used in pure fantasy, science fiction, and the gothic novel, to mention a few genres. The debt to the fairy tale remains, however. The language of fairy tale is still an indication of wonder and adventure, even in the most contemporary writers. This is the beginning of Mary Stewart's "romantic mystery," The Moonspinners:

It was the egret, flying out of the lemon grove, that started it. I won't pretend that I saw it straight away as the conventional herald of adventure, the white stag of the fairytale, which, bounding from the enchanted thicket, entices the prince away from his followers, and loses him in the forest where danger threatens with the dusk. But, when the big white bird flew suddenly up among the glossy leaves and the lemon flowers, and wheeled into the mountain, I followed it.¹

Other works do not openly acknowledge their debt to one of the oldest forms of European fantasy, but it is real, nevertheless. In this case, the "conventional" patterns of fairy tale are replaced by modern counterparts, but the sense of mystery and magic remains. As we have seen in Malzberg's anti-hero Folsom, the fictional point of view in modern fantasy is often a first person narrator who deliberately invites disbelief. The narrator of The Moonspinners is the heroine of the story; she almost seems to address the reader in a manner reminiscent of Charlotte Brontë or Lord Dunsany. Authorial intrusion is subtler in the twentieth century than in the nineteenth, but still common. Lewis, for example, uses the persona of his hero Dr. Ransom to expound his theological views. He goes so far as to use the device of being the editor of Dr. Ransom's manuscript in Out of the Silent Planet and to include a letter from Ransom to himself at the end of the novel. In fact, the whole trilogy is often merely a vehicle for Lewis to demonstrate his philosophical views. The language of the work bears this out. A typical sequence follows; Ransom and the others are reaching the end of their

¹Mary Stewart, The Moonspinners (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1964), p. 3.

journey to Mars. Looking at the stars, Ransom speculates:

. . . And yet, he thought, beyond the solar system the brightness ends. Is that the real void, the real death? Unless . . . he groped for the idea . . . unless visible light is also a hole or gap, a mere diminution of something else. Something that is to bright unchanging heaven as heaven is to the dark, heavy earths . . .

Things do not always happen as a man would expect. The moment of his arrival on an unknown world found Ransom wholly absorbed in a philosophical speculation.¹

In passages such as this the allegorical intention almost destroys the fictional construct. The use of the exploration of space as a means of religious experience often threatens to violate the boundaries of fiction in this trilogy. From the very beginning Ransom "sees the light," both figuratively and literally. As the personification of human good, in terms of the religious hierarchy constructed by Lewis, he saves humankind from extinction and evil.

Some of the most extreme attempts to break down conventional patterns of language may be seen in the fantastic genres. We have seen how Mervyn Peake uses poetic fiction to do so, as Delany uses apparently incoherent mental wanderings in his Dhalgren. Another important author in this regard is Philip José Farmer, whose short novel Riders of the Purple Wage, not only demonstrates a knack for punning and humor but also for innovative use of fictional language. As science fiction, it takes place in 2166, after the energy-matter converters and duplicators of material objects have been invented. A young man, Chibiabos Elgreco Winnegan, and his great-great-grandfather, are the split-hero figures. Aside from the in-

¹C. S. Lewis, Out of the Silent Planet (New York: Macmillan, 1965), p. 40.

teresting projections of what life will be like in two hundred years, Farmer's story is of interest stylistically. It begins with a dream of Chib's:

The Cock That Crowed Backwards

Un and Sub, the giants, are grinding him for bread.

Broken pieces float up through the wine of sleep.
Vast treadings crush abysmal grapes for the incubus sacrament.

He as Simple Simon fishes in his soul as pail for the leviathan.

He groans, half-wakes, turns over, sweating dark oceans, and groans again. Un and Sub, putting their backs to their work, turn the stone wheels of the sunken mill, muttering Fie, fye, fo, fum. Eyes glittering orange-red as a cat's in a cubbyhole, teeth dull digits in the murky arithmetic.

Un and Sub, Simple Simons themselves, busily mix metaphors non-self-consciously.

Dunghill and cock's egg: up rise the cockatrice and gives the first crow, two more to come, in the flush-rush of blood of dawn of I-am-the-erection-and-the-strife
. . .¹

As is apparent from this quote, Farmer, in the guise of exploring the future, uses language similar to S. Beckett's to explore many different kinds of human potentialities, and particularly the linguistic ones. In doing so, he mocks modern popular, religious, sociological, psychological, literary, and scientific jargon. His story is a potpourri of satire, not so much of the twenty-second century as of our own.

From this brief discussion of a few representative genres of anti-realistic fiction, it is clear that in the twentieth century Anglo-american narrative prose has taken two distinct but often converging directions. Opposed to the tra-

¹Philip José Farmer, "Riders of the Purple Wage," Dangerous Visions, ed. with Introductions by Harlan Ellison (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1967), p. 65.

dition of demonstrating or illuminating some part of ordinary reality, which is most characteristic of the novel, is the tradition of idealized reality. Magic, imagination, wonder, fantasy--all these words imply a view of the other reality, different from our everyday world yet essential to our existence. Romance, science fiction, and gothic novels reflect this aspect of reality in varying ways, and with varying visions even within each genre, but they share a mythical view of our world. Whether this view is a nightmare or a wish-fulfillment dream, a reflection of internal or external patterns, it is a basic component of all fantasy.

On the other hand, although this view is seemingly juxtaposed to the realistic tradition, all narrative prose fiction in this era seems to share the same (or a similar) structure, language, techniques. There is a marked turning away from the nineteenth century's preoccupation with conventional characterization, realistic representation of dialogue, and ordinary use of space and time. Literary concern with stretching the boundaries of fiction in terms of structure and other literary devices is essential to Mervyn Peake, Samuel Delany, and Robbe-Grillet alike. The exploration of the psyche through the use of dream worlds and language is as much in the tradition of James Joyce as of Lord Dunsany and Barry Malzberg. The search for other realities, whether idealized or found in the smallest facts of everyday life, is characteristic of William Morris, C. S. Lewis and Virginia Woolf. Thus, ultimately and despite generic distinctions, literature once again affirms itself as a human enterprise.

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