The 'Romantic Faëry':
Keats, Tolkien, and the Perilous Realm

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Abstract

The scope of this thesis covers the influence of John Keats's work on J. R. R. Tolkien's tale of Beren and Lúthien, *The Book of Lost Tales* and *The Lord of the Rings*. It draws on Tolkien's academic works: 'Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics', *On Fairy-stories* and brings to light unpublished manuscripts from Tolkien's undergraduate notebooks and 1930s lecture notes held at the Bodleian Library in the University of Oxford. Collectively they evidence his awareness and adoption of material by Keats and the forgers James Macpherson and Thomas Chatterton. The thesis builds on what little scholarship exists on Tolkien, Keats, Chatterton and Macpherson by offering primary evidence and fresh insights into their shared interests into national history.

The thesis argues that Keats and Tolkien share a conception of Faërie as the national heritage of England and Britain, as well as a debt to Macpherson and Chatterton, the early Romantic writers of the 'Age of Forgery' in the 1760s. Keats captured history and Faërie in a tapestry of pictures that afterwards inspired William Morris and the other members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Morris subsequently influenced Tolkien's work and the thesis will argue that the 'perilous', folkloric Faërie that Tolkien examined in *On Fairy-stories* is distilled to him through Keats and Morris in a chain of influence. It will argue that Tolkien initially adopted literary techniques and poetic diction from Keats in his first draft of his mythology in the 1910s. With the second draft in the 1920s, the thesis will argue that Tolkien's maturity led him to critically rework Keats's poems in 'The Lay of Leithian'. The works of Macpherson, Chatterton, Keats and Tolkien reacted against the prevailing taste of their respective times by resurrecting a pre-imperial period of their nation's past; they sought to engender a sense of nostalgia in their contemporaries and prompt a

revived interest in what had been lost. It will identify that Tolkien and Keats inherited two prime methods for authenticating or feigning history: the oral tradition and the written word.

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Note on Publications Referenced

As the thesis maps out the scholarship during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, quotations will be taken from editions either of this period or earlier editions that J. R. R. Tolkien could have consulted in Exeter College's library or the Bodleian Library within the University of Oxford.

All quotations from John Keats's poems or letters come from Harry Buxton Forman's *The Complete Works of John Keats* (1900 – 1901) in five volumes. Or Ernest de Sélincourt's *The Poems of John Keats* (1905). Both were available from the Bodleian Library.

All quotations from James Macpherson come from *The Poems of Ossian* in two volumes (1807). Or *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* (1917). Both editions were available from Exeter College's library.

All quotations from Thomas Chatterton come from Thomas Tyrwhitt's original *Poems* (1778), which was available from the Bodleian Library.

Note on J. R. R. Tolkien's Unpublished Manuscripts

In reproducing the original text found in J. R. R. Tolkien's original manuscripts in this thesis, a specific set of editorial conventions have been followed. The layout, text, punctuation, symbols, underlining, spacing and other markings have been laid out exactly as they appear on the original unpublished manuscripts. Where words have been crossed out by Tolkien, a line has been put through them.

Symbols such as ∵, ∴ and ∵ all exist on the unpublished manuscripts and are correctly placed.

Where editorial interpolations have been used to flesh out the words that Tolkien abbreviated, angle brackets < > have been used.

Introduction – Tolkien, Romanticism, and Faërie

'Romantic fairies are the imagination's powerful voices, and they can speak of

"unheard" things that cannot be spoken of in other ways openly'

(Warner, 2014, pp. 9 – 11).

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien's stubborn defiance against post-Medieval influence is

well known and documented. His good friend C. S. Lewis jokingly declared that 'no

one ever influenced Tolkien – you might as well try to influence a bandersnatch'

(2017, p. 563). Tolkien's own letters naturally support this stance, reflecting on his

lifelong dismissal of anything 'modern':

> I have not been nourished by English Literature . . . for the
>
> simple reason that I have never found much there in which
>
> to rest my heart (or heart and head together). I was brought
>
> up in the Classics . . . I have always best enjoyed things in
>
> a foreign language, or one so remote as to feel like it (such
>
> as Anglo-Saxon).
>
> . . .
>
> I seldom find any modern books that hold my attention. . . .
>
> I am looking for something I can't find (2006a, pp. 172 & 377).

Eminent Tolkien scholar, Tom Shippey, has helped us understand what Tolkien

meant precisely by 'English literature' and 'modern'. He explains that Edmund

Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590 – 1596) was 'hailed by the Oxford English

Dictionary's citations as the dawn of modern literature' (Shippey, 2005, p. 64). Tolkien worked at the Oxford English Dictionary between 1919 and 1920 and will have been familiar with Spenser's position. Such categorisation meant that Spenser's Anglican beliefs and allegorical portrayal of faëries as 'political propaganda' (Flieger, 2005, p. ix) clashed vehemently with Tolkien's Roman Catholicism and devotion to the 'perilous realm' of Faërie (Tolkien, 2014, p. 27). He saw modern English literature as a decline in the traditions and literary forms that had preceded the Renaissance. However, Tolkien's letters also show him contradicting himself, for several of them refer to the influence of post-Medieval writers such as George MacDonald (2006a, p. 31) and the Pre-Raphaelite, William Morris (2006a, pp. 7 & 303). Tolkien academia has sought to trace these as the 'influence of the diction, syntax, imagery, narrative form, and plot elements of Morris's late prose romances . . . were particularly strong in the 1910s, when Tolkien was reading Morris for the first time' (Vaninskaya, 2014, p. 353). In this period he was also reading other 'modern' authors and this thesis will focus on one in particular.

There exists a gap in Tolkien scholarship that has been considerably overlooked and will be filled by this thesis. That is the relationship Tolkien had with the Romantic poet, John Keats. The aim of the thesis is to examine in what ways Keats influenced *The Book of Lost Tales*, especially the tale of Beren and Lúthien, and *The Lord of the Rings* (1954 – 1955).[1] It will expand to consider how their adaption of the antiquarian tradition ties them to the figures James Macpherson and

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[1] Tolkien started *The Book of Lost Tales* in 1917 and modified it significantly before it became *The Silmarillion*, which was edited and published posthumously in 1977 by his son, Christopher Tolkien.

Thomas Chatterton, who feigned history in the 1760s, a period of the eighteenth century that has been called the 'Age of Forgery'.

When we turn our attention to Tolkien scholarship, it is apparent that Keats is scarcely mentioned. He does not appear in Julian Eilmann's *J. R. R. Tolkien: Romanticist and Poet* (2017) (the only existing monograph on Tolkien and Romanticism), nor the bibliography of Romantic related papers and articles that will be examined below.[2] Appendix A provides a list of academic sources that compare Keats and Tolkien but when each text is consulted, it becomes clear that he is not considered a significant literary figure to Tolkien. He is reduced to throw away references that do not seek to develop a connection, they merely state that there is one. This is because of his inclusion in wider arguments that do not purely focus on Keats, he is merely used to strengthen them. Consequently, sufficient space is not given to explain why Tolkien's early work sounds Keatsian. Tom Shippey's *The Road to Middle-earth* (1982) and *Author of the Century* (2000) draw various parallels, but he does not go any further. Verlyn Flieger writes against the influence of Keats, considering the dreaming and wakening of 'La Belle Dame sans Merci' (1819) a 'rude awakening', quite the opposite of what Tolkien wished to achieve in his unfinished time-travel tale *The Lost Road* (1987), the Elvish realm of Lothlórien and *The Notion Club Papers* (1992) (1997, p. 80). There exists only one article that links the two writers together in a positive way.

Marie-Noëlle Biemer's 2010 article 'Disenchanted with their Age: Keats's, Morris's, and Tolkien's Great Escape' is the only study of Keats's connection to Tolkien. Biemer unifies Keats, Morris and Tolkien through the similarities in their

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[2] See pages 19 – 23.

generations and their literary interests. They all witnessed the 'decline of society's values' that led to industrialisation at the expense of nature and sought to 'glimpse Faërie as a beautiful but perilous realm' (Biemer, 2010, pp. 61 & 70).

Each writer encountered the realm of Faërie distilled by their literary ancestor and created a chain of influence. Morris had 'boundless admiration' for Keats and called him 'one of his masters' in a letter to the Romantic poet's friend, Charles Cowden Clarke (Mackail, 1901, p. 200). His appreciation for Keats was mirrored by many other members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and in *The Earthly Paradise* (1868 – 1870), alongside his romances such as *The Roots of the Mountain* (1889), Morris strongly echoed Keats.[3] He inherited the 'popular folklore conceptions of Faërie that became increasingly popular during the Romantic movement' from Keats (Biemer, 2010, pp. 71 – 72). It is noted that they further preferred the 'older spelling "faery" over the contemporary "fairy"', setting their works far back in British history (Biemer, 2010, p. 84). Tolkien experimented with the spelling frequently, fluctuating between 'fairy', 'faery', 'faerie', 'fayery' and 'faierie' (among others) to give his Faërie an archaic air. For consistency, this thesis will use 'Faërie' to refer to the geographical realm of Faërie whereas 'faëry' and 'faëries' will refer to its inhabitants. 'Fairy' will be used when referring to the diminished beings.

The realm of Faërie connects Tolkien to Keats most prominently and the thesis will examine how their visions of the 'perilous realm' are alike (Tolkien, 2014, p. 27). It will argue against the likes of Nicola Bown, who considers the Romantic fairy to be 'tiny and beautiful and possesses butterfly wings' (2001, p. 6). The

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[3] See Short (1944) for the influence of Keats on Morris, Hood (1996) and Scoville (2005) for the influence of Morris on Tolkien, and Massey (2007) for separate comparisons of Keats and Morris, and Morris and Tolkien. It is unfortunate that Massey does not extend his analysis to consider Keats's influence on Tolkien.

Romantic Faëry was actually synonymous with the imagination to the Romantics just as the traditional Faërie was to Tolkien, who built on Samuel Taylor Coleridge's theory of the imagination in *On Fairy-stories* (1939).[4] The fairies Bown references are those of Blake and Shelley; they resemble the diminutive fairies of Shakespeare more than those from British folklore (2001, p. 6). Keats stood out from his contemporaries as the only Romantic who kept to the ancient Faërie traditions that interested Tolkien, making him Tolkien's closest Romantic predecessor (2005, p. 2). Contemporary Romantic and Keatsian scholarship on Tolkien will allow Keats to be contextualised in the early twentieth century, giving us a platform to understand how Tolkien and his contemporaries read and analysed Keats's Faërie or Celtic themed poetry.

At this point, the presence of Spenser and William Shakespeare should be addressed. Keats's debt to *The Faerie Queene* (1590 – 1596) has been sufficiently documented by his friends, Tolkien's contemporaries and present-day scholars. After all, 'it was the *Faery Queen* that awakened his genius' (Brown, 1937, p. 42). In particular, his use of 'elfin' is distinctly Spenserian as it appears throughout the epic. Greg Kucich has explained that Keats was not alone in his admiration of Spenser, 'most of [the Romantics] agreed that one of the remarkable experiences in reading Spenser is the effect of enchantment induced' by his descriptions which 'became one of the great moving energies of Romantic Spenserianism' (1991, pp. 78 – 79). His pseudo-Medievalism gave the Romantics a new insight into the imaginative playground of the medieval period.

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[4] See pages 20 – 21 for how Tolkien works with Coleridge.

Similarly, Shakespeare played an important part in the development of Romanticism and Keats's style. Jonathan Bate has explained how 'the rise of Romanticism and the growth of Shakespeare idolatry are parallel phenomena'; to the Romantics, the 'imagination is defined through the recollection of . . . Shakespearean contexts' (1989, pp. 4 – 6). Keats was frequently placed beside Shakespeare as one of the greatest English poets during Tolkien's lifetime, a posthumous comparison that Keats would have been delighted with.[5] But Spenser and Shakespeare's warped adaptions of Faërie and 'pseudo-medieval coinage' of 'elfin' is exactly why Tolkien disliked them both (Shippey, 2005, p. 64). 'Modern literature' denoted a fall in style and quality to Tolkien. The dominance of French romance had overtaken genuine English forms such as the lay and as a new English literary tradition was being cultivated, it distanced itself further from its true tradition and the figure of the faëry started to diminish in statue. Tolkien frequently chided Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595 – 1596) for its diminution of Faërie and its inhabitants, calling the Bard's 'disastrous debasement' of the word '*elf*' as 'unforgiveable' and 'too much to overcome' (Tolkien 2006a, pp. 143 & 185).[6]

Tolkien was not the only admirer of Faërie who begrudged Spenser's abuse and sought to separate himself from the Renaissance poet. Walter Scott had anticipated Tolkien's views in *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802) where he denounced the 'Fairyland and Fairies of Spenser [to] have no connection with popular superstition, being only words used to denote a Utopian scene of action, and imaginary and allegorical characters' (Scott, 1849a, p. 306). Likewise, Katharine

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[5] See page 40 – 41.
[6] See *On Fairy-stories* (2014, pp. 29 – 30) where Michael Drayton's *Nymphidia* (which was influenced by *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) is considered 'one of the worst' fairy-stories 'ever written'. Pask comments on why Tolkien targeted Drayton, calling *Nymphidia* a 'lesser work' which epitomises how Shakespeare 'reduced the possibilities of fantasy to mere pantomime' (2013, p. 131).

Briggs declared Spenser to have 'used the fays of romance for his allegory, but they had already become a little bookish and faded' (1959, p. 6). Scott did not approach Shakespeare from the same position as Tolkien, but he does admit that 'the Fairies of Shakspeare, Drayton, and Mennis . . . may be considered as having finally operated a change in the original which gave them birth' (1849a, p. 306). This misguided tradition needed fixing and Tolkien saw himself as the person to do it. He openly admitted this in an interview with William Cater of the *Daily Express*: 'elves were large, formidable . . . Spenser wrote about knights who were elves. By writing about elves as tall as men I am restoring tradition, trying to rescue the word from the nursery' (Cater, 1966). He flipped Spenser's approach and eradicated Shakespeare's, granting elves the grandeur that they once held and blowing away the 'damned cobwebs' (Tolkien, 2006a, p. 143).

There is no doubt that it will have disturbed Tolkien when he read newspaper articles that likened *The Hobbit* (1937) and *The Lord of the Rings* to *The Faerie Queene*. He quickly reacted to these comments in order to distance himself from Spenser and retain that he was looking back to literature before Spenser's allegory. When the 'charm' of *The Hobbit* appeared to be its 'Spenserian harmonising of brilliant threads of so many branches of epic, mythology, and Victorian fairy literature', Tolkien was clear that he drew from 'epic, mythology, and fairy-story', not anything 'Victorian in authorship'; '*Beowulf* [wa]s among [his] most valued sources' (2006a, pp. 30 – 31). The likening of *The Lord of the Rings* by Richard Hughes to *The Faerie Queene* had supposedly 'aroused hostility' among Tolkien's readers as it gave a specific impression of what the story would be like (Hammond & Scull, 2017a, p. 624).

His aversion to Spenser was on a literary level as well as publication and readership. In the Foreword to the second edition of the novel, the famous denouncement of allegory appears 'I cordially dislike allegory in all its manifestations' (Tolkien, 2007, p. xxiv). Here Tolkien is dealing with various attitudes at once. Firstly where he had received letters connecting extracts from *The Lord of the Rings* to the World Wars, he wished to make it clear that he was not writing an epic allegory for his generation. Secondly he sought to distance his work, methods and creative aims from those of Spenser, who had appeared on the blurb of the first edition. The 'prime motive' of *The Lord of the Rings* was to tell 'a really long story that would hold the attention of readers, amuse them, delight them, and at times maybe excite them or deeply move them' (Tolkien, 2007, p. xxiii). It was not to provide any dense, 'inner meaning or "message"' for the reader to work out as *The Faerie Queene* presented; it was simply a story (Tolkien, 2007, p. xxiii).

Tolkien's re-writing of the modern English literary tradition is a key focus of this thesis, and it will argue that although Tolkien saw Spenser and Shakespeare as dangerous authors of fairy, he recognised the faëries of Keats as closer to traditional folkloric portrayals of Faërie that had been defiled by the two Renaissance poets. The late poetry of Keats has additionally been understood as medieval in nature and this is thanks to the influence of the pseudo-Medievalist Thomas Chatterton. Significant scholarship from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century examined this connection. The Medieval link is an important factor as it was Tolkien's primary academic focus during his time at the Universities of Leeds and Oxford.

Medievalism was the 'arena in which Tolkien's imagination roamed, a world to which he devoted most of his life', incorporating Anglocentric, Germanic and Icelandic works (Lee & Solopova, 2015, p. 4). *Beowulf* among others took up a lot of

his academic and personal time and worked their way consciously into his fiction. He went on to lecture on *Beowulf* in 1936 and translated it later on. Shippey has commented significantly on the Old English poem's influence on Tolkien's writing:

> The work had always been something personal, even freakish, and it took someone with the same instincts to explain it. Sympathy furthermore depended on being a descendant, on living in the same country and beneath the same sky, on speaking the same language – being 'native to that tongue and land'. . . . Tolkien felt more than continuity with the *Beowulf*-poet, he felt a virtual identity of motive and of technique (2005, p. 54).

There is no surprise then that Tolkien scholarship has extensively examined these Medieval texts. Stuart Lee and Elizabeth Solopova's *The Keys of Middle-earth* has gone one step further and unlocked the Medieval 'world so that the readers of Tolkien's fiction can be exposed to the literature he studied, taught, translated, wrote about, and greatly admired' by extracting parts that showcase influence (2015, p. 4). However, this is not the extent of Tolkien's reading, teaching or influences. A plethora of research has been done into post-Medieval influences from eighteenth-century antiquarianism to Victorian fantasy.

The Victorian fairy had its roots in the Romantic Faëry; poetry from the period was often illustrated and painted, adapted into the visual medium (Silver, 1999, p. 10). The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood eagerly studied and portrayed various scenes

from the poems of Keats, wishing to showcase his speciality in 'pictorial brilliance' (Colvin, 1909, p. 165).[7] Tolkien inherited the Romantic Faëry in this case through the dilution of the Victorians, who diminished its status and size. Tolkien is known for lamenting this but as Dimitra Fimi has argued, 'if we go back to Tolkien's early works . . . we would be initially surprised to find that the protagonists are little beings most often called fairies not dissimilar to the popular diminutive fairies that we know today from the Victorian era' (2010, p. 12). This is contextualised by the fact that in the early twentieth century the 'fairies of the nineteenth century were very much alive and present' (Fimi, 2005, p. 12). Fairy culture countered the stark realism of Britain's industrialisation and in Robert Grave's 1916 poem collection, *Fairies and Fusiliers*, we see the 'juxtaposition of the imagery of the fairy with that of modern warfare' (Atherton, 2012, p. 153). The clearest example of how Tolkien used the Victorian fairy is in his poem *Goblin Feet* (April 1915). He grew to detest the poem because of how it is 'strikingly reminiscent of the visual representations of fairies as expressed in well-known works of Victorian fairy painting' (Fimi, 2005, p. 14). Tolkien did, however, grow progressively out of the diminutive Victorian fairy tradition and entered into the older one found in folklore and Celtic tales.

It is this particular faëry figure and realm that the thesis will be concerned with as it will tie Tolkien to British Romanticism through Keats. Eilmann's monograph is a development in Tolkien studies that should be commended; it is the first book to connect 'Tolkien' to the 'Romantic' in its title. Eilmann opens with the disparaging reflection that 'if we look at the Tolkien research of the last decades, we may

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[7] See Scott (1999) for an impressive survey of Pre-Raphaelite musings on the 'germ' of the Brotherhood. Additionally Sarah Wootton's *Consuming Keats* examines further sketches, illustrations and paintings of 'La Belle', 'Isabella, or the Pot of Basil', 'The Eve of St. Agnes' and others before examining other Victorian interactions with Keats's poetry (2006, pp. 42 – 78).

conclude that the notion of Tolkien as a Romanticist is not a popular approach of interpretation . . . Instead, Tolkien's work is now largely interpreted in the context of his professional background as a philologist and expert of medieval literature' (2017, p. 5). Although Romanticism is not as frequently used as 'philologist' and 'medievalist', the history of Tolkien-Romantic research is not as unpopular as Eilmann would have us believe. If we track the growing architecture of Tolkien scholarship that emerges from the shadow of Tolkien's own comments on source studies, we find that research into Tolkien and Romanticism is more consistent than one may initially believe (noted by Shippey, 2005, p. 388).

Romanticism has been given its own special focus in events and journals since 1968. The Tolkien Society workshop of 1988 did just this with *Tolkien and Romanticism*. In the later *Proceedings of the J. R. R. Tolkien Centenary Conference 1995,* under Section 2: Sources and Influences, Charles E. Noad's 'Frodo and his Spectre: Blakean Resonances in Tolkien' and Chris Seeman's 'Tolkien's Revision of the Romantic Tradition' openly defends how 'Tolkien revises the Romantic tradition by asserting the validity of fantasy as a distinct mode of art' (Seeman, 1995, p. 73). Rachel Falconer developed on Seeman much later in her addition to the cornerstone publication *A Companion to J. R. R. Tolkien* in 2014. She opined that Tolkien 'inherited from Romantic and Victorian writers the view that fantasy . . . should invent and originate' (Falconer, 2014, pp. 303 – 316). Tolkien's similar approach to myth-building has additionally been likened to that of William Blake by Verlyn Flieger. Blake is the only literary figure who 'remotely parallel[s]' Tolkien in mythic scale and achievement (2002, p. xv). Tolkien did read some of Blake's prophetic texts and was 'surprised to find similarities of nomenclature between Blake's creation and his own mythology' (Hammond & Scull, 2017c, pp. 1103 – 1104).

The influence of Coleridge's definition of the imagination on the lecture *On Fairy-stories* is the link to Romanticism that scholars have most frequently published on. Jan Wojcik considered Tolkien and Coleridge to be in near-complete agreement as to 'the functioning of the imagination in art, the nature of the artistic product, and the motives behind creation' (1968, p. 134). The topic has since resurfaced in small paragraphs, with various angles as to the degree that Tolkien is indebted to Coleridge. It is not until Michael Milburn that it became the focus of an article:

> Tolkien's definition of Faery as 'the occult power in nature
> behind the usable and tangible appearances of things' is
> incorporated into his definition of Faery as 'Imagination'
> through Coleridge's definition of imagination, but in such
> a way that it is cleansed of its 'occult' aspect, which
> Tolkien came to feel was incompatible with his religious belief
> (2010, pp. 58 – 59).

Milburn negotiates Tolkien's thought in *On Fairy-stories* and 'Smith of Wootton Major essay' (2015) till he arrives at the conclusion that Tolkien uses Coleridge to take the imagination 'into regions Coleridge never wrote about, especially in a work like *Smith of Wootton Major* (1967), a story where much of the action is actually set in Faery itself' (2010, p. 64). He pins down precisely what parts of Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* (1817) Tolkien agreed and disagreed with. Michael Tomko has taken Milburn's argument one step further:

Tolkien's concern over Coleridge's popular phrase 'willing suspension of disbelief' and the theological implications it raises. He argues that the phrase aided Tolkien in conceiving of something more true and powerful, where 'we would feel "inside" the world of the work' i.e. the secondary world created through sub-creation is the region Coleridge never wrote about (Tomko, 2017, p. 60).

Beyond Coleridge, Tolkien's deep connection with nature (trees in particular) has been compared to Romanticism's spiritual communion with it. Patrick Curry considers *The Lord of the Rings* to generate in its readers an 'ecological activism'; he recounts his meeting with a group of protestors against deforestation and how 'only one person out of dozens who hadn't just read *The Lord of the Rings* but knew it, so to speak, inside out' (2004, pp. 43 – 44). According to Curry, Tolkien would have been 'firmly on the side of the trees and their protectors' (2004, p. 44). He convincingly argues that Tolkien embodies the 'romantic ecology' of Jonathan Bate, who defines the term as:

Reverenc[ing] the green earth because it recognizes that neither physically nor psychologically can we live without green things; it proclaims that there is 'one life' within us and abroad that the earth is a single vast ecosystem which we destabilize at our peril . . . it is in fact an attempt to enable mankind the better to live in the material world

by entering into harmony with the environment

(Bate, 1991, p. 40).

Such a way of life can be witnessed within the 'animate' environments with 'distinct personalities' of Middle-earth: 'the peoples are inextricably in and of their natural and geographical locales: the Elves and "their" woods and forests, the Dwarves and mountains, hobbits and the domesticated nature of field and garden' (Curry, 2004, p. 18). It is no surprise that nature in Middle-earth so strongly evokes 'romantic ecology' when we look to the contexts that lie behind the Romantic Movement and the early twentieth century.

Meredith Veldman's *Fantasy, the Bomb and the Greening of Britain* has compared how in the early nineteenth century 'empiricism and industrialism threatened to reduce the whole of reality to its materialist aspects' to Tolkien's mourning of the 'mechanical destruction of nature, by technological approaches to human experience, and by utilitarian assumptions about ethical conduct' (1994, p. 51). Tolkien noted detail for detail the shocking modifications that had been made to his childhood landscape that surrounded Birmingham and Sarehole Mill in 1933. The 'crossing beyond the now fenced-in pool, where the blue bell lane ran down into the mill lane, is now a dangerous crossing alive with motors and red lights' and he envied 'those whose precious early scenery has not been exposed to such violent and peculiarly hideous change' (quoted in Carpenter, 2002, pp. 169 – 170). The character of Treebeard in *The Lord of the Rings* most closely embodies Tolkien's loathing of the 'hideous changes' that the twentieth century had brought with it. The Last March of the Ents may have been a rewriting of Shakespeare as Tolkien admitted in his 1955 letter to W. H. Auden, but it is also a testament to the

tremendous power of nature tearing down humanity's superimposed-ego; literally flushing it out (2006a, pp. 211 – 212). Tolkien was deeply in tune with the Romantic mindset concerning the role of nature and how humanity should commune with it.

However, these areas have been sufficiently covered. This thesis will build on past scholarship and ground Tolkien's understanding of Keats, Macpherson and Chatterton in primary research conducted at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. It will build on Eilmann and Biemer's work, strengthening the bond between Tolkien and the British Romantic Tradition.

The first chapter will begin by laying out the chronology of when and how Tolkien encountered Keats, building a framework which can be used to understand how the Romantic poet influenced his work in *The Book of Lost Tales* and *The Lord of the Rings*. It will examine overlooked sources such as his undergraduate library loans and his unexamined lecture drafts from the 1930s to uncover just what Tolkien knew about Keats biographically and academically. This will be complemented with a survey of contemporary literature on Keats in order to solidify how the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries understood Keats. The important connection of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood will be drawn on to examine how Keats's aesthetic and youthful figure became a source of inspiration and connection for many young men in the late nineteenth century and Tolkien's lifetime.

Just as Shippey considered Tolkien to be re-writing the modern English literary tradition by 'correcting' particular scenarios or lines in his own works, so too will it be argued that Tolkien re-wrote aspects of Keats with particular attention to his 1819 medieval works 'The Eve of St. Agnes', 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' and *Hyperion*. It will cross-examine elements of these with relevant ones from Tolkien's

'The Lay of Leithian' (1925 – 1931) in order to ascertain how Tolkien was exactly re-writing Keats. It will place Keats as the only Romantic who shared a similar conception of Faërie as 'perilous' to Tolkien. Although Keats wrote in the Spenserian stanza, he did not, in Tolkien's eyes, fully give up the ancient Faërie traditions of Britain.

The connection between Faërie and the mythological backcloth of Britain is integral in linking chapter one to chapter two. Faërie for Tolkien and Keats instigated a dialogue with Britain's cultural and literary past and harkened back to a time before the printing press, to an older society that held a firmer belief in the superstitions that were starting to be forgotten by contemporary society. This approach of reviving a forgotten past neatly summarises the line of argument that ties chapter two together.

The chapter will examine the methods by which Tolkien and Keats engaged and transmitted the past through oral and written stratagems. To do this, it will turn towards their antiquarian ancestors from the 'Age of Forgery' who helped to generate the phenomenon of feigning history for national gain. The 'Scottish Homer' (Stafford, 1988, p. 114), James Macpherson and the 'marvellous Boy', Thomas Chatterton have formed the basis of significant studies on literary forgery and the presentation of history within the literary spheres (Wordsworth, 2008, p. 262; l. 43). Ian Haywood's *The Making of History* (1986) and Nick Groom's *The Forger's Shadow* (2002) are just two monographs that this chapter will draw on. As the chapter will map out, Keats was familiar with both these writers and Tolkien learnt about them during his undergraduate years at Oxford. Further examination of his overlooked undergraduate notebooks and relationship with Lewis will provide proof of his familiarity with the 'Age of Forgery' and the two forgers. It will then bloom into a comparative study of the echoes of Macpherson and Chatterton in Keats's *Hyperion*,

'The Eve of St. Mark', 'The Eve of St. Agnes' and 'La Belle' and Tolkien's *The Book of Lost Tales*, *The Lord of the Rings* and ongoing legendarium.

The thesis looks to broaden Tolkien scholarship by examining previously under-researched areas and his relationships with previous writers that he was familiar with. As Lee and Solopova admit, 'like anyone who reads widely, [Tolkien] was exposed to many influences' (2015, p. 14). Although he attempted to control the public's view of him in his letters by denying the influence of many 'modern' writers, this thesis will make it evident that he was influenced by more than he publically acknowledged.

Chapter One – Reshaping Keats and the English Tradition

'Happy is that nation that develops a true art of its own' (Hunt, 1905, p. xiv).

'Tradition is a symbolic, rather than a natural, relationship across time (or space); it is characterised by discontinuity as well as by continuity' (Atkinson, 2002, p. 27).

J. R. R. Tolkien's early reading of John Keats is complex. Biographers have preferred to focus on his growing interest in Finnish, *The Kalevala* (1835)*, Beowulf* and philology at Exeter College, Oxford instead of his other literary studies. This has left the Romantic poet wholly overlooked. Consequentially, Tolkien's time as an undergraduate and soldier in the Great War is commonly tied to these texts as it was during this time that he was reading them and building his mythology. Any parts of the undergraduate notebooks that do not cover any of the above have generally been labelled 'a few sketchy notes' with 'no indication that he had more than a passing interest' in the lectures (Carpenter, 2002, p. 99). Similarly his undergraduate library loans in May 1915 have been described as 'perfunctory' and without interest (Garth, 2004, p. 81). Tom Shippey has vehemently warned 'followers of Tolkien to pick out the true from the heretical' sources (2005, p. 389), placing particular emphasis on 'ancient works' from 'ancient worlds' (2001, p. xxvii). Stuart Lee and Elizabeth Solopova's *The Keys of Middle-earth* abide by Shippey as it draws on a 'series of episodes from Tolkien's fiction, key medieval texts, or selections from them' as a method of introducing 'the range of medieval language and literatures that Tolkien studied' to his readers (2015, pp. 2 – 3).

This chapter aims to address a gap in Tolkien scholarship which has thus far received little attention. John Keats currently exists on the fringes as a possible

influence on Tolkien's early poetry, particularly in *The Book of Lost Tales* (1983 –
1984)*.* However his words stretch further than has previously been acknowledged,
as this thesis will prove. By extension it will address the question of how much
Tolkien worked within a Romantic mindset, drawing on certain elements of
Romanticism that Keats typified. As Julian Eilmann has reminded us, 'the topics of
Romanticism and poetry have not been central to Tolkien scholarship' since the
publication of *The Lord of the Rings* in the 1950s (1954 – 1955) (2017, p. ii). His
2017 monograph *J. R. R. Tolkien: Romanticist and Poet* is a monumental
development in tying Tolkien to the Romantic Movement of the early nineteenth
century. Although articles exist from Jan Wojcik (1968) to Michael Milburn (2010)
that argue for the Romanticism inherent in Tolkien, Eilmann is the first to write a
detailed and extensive study on Tolkien and Romanticism. The work has, however,
been criticised for neglecting the British Romantic Movement, focusing on the
German Romantic Tradition instead (Holmes, 2018, p. 5).[8]

Chapter one will address this oversight in Tolkien scholarship by presenting a
close examination of his 1915 undergraduate library loans and 1930s lecture drafts.
In turn each will reveal the depth of his familiarity with Keats in poetic, biographical
and scholarly manners. They will also provide a sufficient contextual understanding
for how the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries understood the Romantic
poet's life, poetry and aesthetic ideals. The core concern of this chapter is how
Tolkien read Keats's poetry and letters between 1911, the start of his undergraduate
degree, and 1931, the year he abandoned 'The Lay of Leithian' (1925 – 1931).
Keats's poetry was easily accessible during this period, as T. H. Ward's *The English*

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[8] The monograph is Eilmann's PhD. Personal correspondence with Eilmann's PhD supervisor,
Thomas Honegger, has confirmed that Eilmann had to narrow his approach to one Romantic tradition
for his PhD, resulting in these comments.

Poets (1883) started a trend for English poetry anthologies. The aim was to canonise important writers and present 'what is best in [English poetry], chosen and judged by those whose tastes and studies specially qualify them for the several tasks they have undertaken' (Ward, 1883, p. vi). Keats was ranked very high in the English literary tradition as he was perceived to have 'talent akin to Chaucer' and Shakespeare (quoted in Ward, 1883, p. xxxiv). This particular sentiment would carry far into the twentieth century.

It is precisely this tradition that Tolkien aspired to eradicate and replace with England's Faërie roots that pre-dated the Celtic mythologies. Contemporary scholars had started to locate in Keats's 1819 medieval poems a palpable 'fairy, or "astral" region' that shared similarities to Tolkien's own poetry and tales of the 1910s and 1920s (Noel, 1886, p. 166). Although both writers drew from the same tradition (as twentieth-century folklorist Katharine Briggs noted) this chapter will go on to prove that Tolkien's work in *The Book of Lost Tales*, particularly 'The Lay of Leithian', and *The Lord of the Rings* possesses a strong Keatsian aesthetic that evidences Tolkien's investment in the Romantic mindset (Briggs, 1967, pp. 209 & 263).

Presented in five sections, the following chapter will work chronologically through Tolkien's years as a student at King Edward's School, Birmingham and Exeter College, Oxford. It will begin to explain how he encountered Keats in his youth and his working life at the University of Leeds and Oxford, constructing a foundation which will prove that Tolkien was intimately familiar with Keats on literary and biographical levels. The road begins with the Tea Club and Barrovian Society (T.C.B.S.) and their relationship with Romanticism which was absorbed through the Victorian poets and artists – in particular the Pre-Raphaelites, with their various

meditations on the poetry of Keats, Coleridge, Alfred Lord Tennyson and the Arthurian Cycle.

I – The T.C.B.S. and Romanticism

The T.C.B.S. was a small group of friends from King Edward's School that included Tolkien, Christopher Wiseman, Robert Gilson, Vincent Trought and Geoffrey Bache Smith. They met frequently in the school library and the tea room of Barrow's Store to discuss literature and the cultural matter of Britain. In many ways they were a precursor for the Inklings much later on. The club has received attention for the light it shines on Tolkien's childhood and the origins of his later work. Mark Atherton writes: 'the project of the TCBS – continued by Tolkien – was preoccupied with a myth of revival and rejuvenation'; they wished to cleanse England through the arts (2012, p. 160). A notion that strongly reflected the Romanticism of the Arts and Crafts movement that dominated Birmingham in the early twentieth century. This predominantly came from the popularity of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and their influence on the city, which will be examined in the next section. Romanticism was certainly a part of the curriculum at King Edward's, but as Tolkien's biographers Humphrey Carpenter and John Garth remind us, R. W. Reynolds 'tried largely in vain to spark [Tolkien's] interest in the mainstream giants of English poetry, such as Milton and Keats' (Garth, 2004, p. 13).[9] He was exposed to Keats but failed to find any joy in his work at school. Reynolds did succeed with other members of the T.C.B.S., however, who proved to thrive on the Romanticism of the time.

Vincent Trought has commonly been overlooked as an influential member on the group. Smith seemed to step into the void created by Trought's death on 20th

[9] Referenced in Carpenter (2002, p. 71).

January 1912 and has since overshadowed his friend (Garth, 2004, p. 28). John Garth's *Tolkien and the Great War* has shed light on and praised Trought's under-valued contributions to the club. He notes how Trought's 'influence on his friends had been quiet but profound' (Garth, 2004, p. 28). Trought was a serious Romanticist and provided the closest link to the movement for the T.C.B.S. On 11th November 1910 he presented a paper on Romanticism to the Literary Society at King Edward's School. Tolkien may have been present considering that he had previously read extracts from the Norse sagas to the society. The Literary Society welcomed papers by its students and included a summary of each paper in the next issue of the school magazine: *King Edward's School Chronicle*. The summary of Trought's paper boasts an impressive knowledge of the Romantic poets and treated the audience to 'romantic splendour' from Shelley and Keats, summarising how the 'romantic poet more or less subordinates self-control to emotion . . . is noticeable . . . for their fervour and glow' (MacSwiney & Payton, 1910, p. 92). The reporter concludes with Trought's comment that Romanticism is 'only a tendency [there being] romantic lines in Homer, classical lines in Shelley' and by doing so reinforces to his peers the broader academic debates surrounding the definition of Romanticism and the Romantic Movement of the time (MacSwiney & Payton, 1910, p. 92).

Eilmann has considered the humanities to have 'not yet come up with a consensus on the concept of Romanticism' (2017, p. 11). His unease with the term can be traced back to the philological approach of the scholars contemporaneous with Tolkien. In 1933 Lewis, Tolkien's friend and colleague, despaired over it and dismissed 'Romantic [as] a word of such varying sense that it ha[d] become useless and should be banished from our vocabulary' (2014, p. 232). Such a term would have proven a challenge for a philologist of Tolkien's calibre, as he perhaps did not

agree with Lewis's agitated demand for the word's removal. Its intimate connection to Romance and medievalism will have caught Tolkien's interest and caused him to ponder over its true meaning. As the century progressed, more definitions were allocated. In the 1940s Jacques Barzun referenced twenty-eight (1943, p. 7), and in the 1960s H. G. Schank located more than one-hundred unsatisfactory definitions (1966, p. xxii). At the close of the nineteenth century however, there were at least a few consistencies in scholars' methodology that Tolkien's generation inherited.

The most common process was to split Romantic art from classic art as William Lyon Phelps outlined: 'classic art portrays the finite, Romantic art the infinite' (1893, p. 2). Henry A. Beers would add shortly afterwards that 'the ideal of classic art is completeness and the ideal of romantic art indefiniteness, or suggestiveness' (1899, p. 14). Collectively their work continued the long line of dividedness towards the two styles that worked back through the preface of Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* (1853) to the 'symptomatic . . . break with overriding neoclassical taste' that came in the 1760s. James Macpherson and Thomas Percy eclipsed Samuel Johnson, Horace Walpole overshadowed Laurence Sterne and Thomas Chatterton surpassed them all (Groom, 2018, pp. 13 – 14). Beers and Phelps traced the evolution of Romanticism through the classical period of the eighteenth century. Poets such as Spenser and Milton, who were popularly identified as having their own Romantic styles, were observed influencing writers in the classical period: 'what scholars and professional men of letters had sought to do by their imitations of Spenser and Milton and their domestication of the Gothic and the Celtic muse, was much more effectually done by Percy and the ballad collectors' (Beers, 1899, p. 265). Traces of Romanticism were identified as being spread throughout the Augustan age and James Lowell concluded that 'the whole Romantic School, in its

germ, no doubt, but yet unmistakably foreshadowed, lies already in [William Collins's] "Ode on the Superstitions of the Highlands"' (1890, p. 3). Written in 1749, the Ode focused on the sublimity of the Scottish Highlands and 'prepared the way for the full romantic revival' (McKillop, 1923, p. 1). It was a strong forbearer for the power of the past evoked through later writers like Percy, Macpherson and Chatterton. The past was integral; three of Phelps's chapters came under the collective title 'Revival of the Past' and Beers recalled 'The Gothic Revival'.

The antiquarian discoveries of the eighteenth century fed England and its bordering Celtic nations' 'desire[s] for a common national mythology [that] was often so strong that it even led to fabrications' in each nation (Fimi, 2010, p. 51). National forgeries by Macpherson, Chatterton and Iolo Morganwg amongst others proved influential on the Romantic Movement, showing the past to be a desirable place for the imagination to roam freely. As will be investigated in chapter two, Tolkien notably mimicked Macpherson's *The Poems of Ossian* (1760 – 1765) and Chatterton's forgeries of the Thomas Rowley manuscripts, revealing his curiosity in the malleability of history and the possibilities it presented which falls into the 'literary and historical tradition' generated by antiquarianism and the 'Age of Forgery' (Hunter, 2005, p. 63). It was certainly taught that the Romantic Movement fiercely strode onto the literary scene with the French Revolution and the publishing of Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. However, a Romantic mindset and art aesthetic was easily accessible in any period of history and Owen Barfield would later summarise that granted an 'enhanced sense of *human freedom*' (1944, p. 16).

These debates filtered down into the English school system and can thus be found in Trought's paper. As Eilmann reminds us: 'at the *fin de siècle*, (1890 – 1910)

the arts were in many ways inspired by the period of Romanticism' (2017, p. 438). With England in a state of crisis over its national identity, Romantic nationalism and patriotic ideologies were resurrected to calm the country's anxiety.

It is clear that these concerns were soaking into the curriculum at King Edward's, for the King Edward's Board of Education reported in July 1905 how boys in the First Form 'did good essays on Patriotism' (Gross & Matthews, 1905, p. 7), and on 25th August 1906 how 'many . . . took a rather provincial patriotic tone about England, as if there were no other countries in the scale of civilisation' (Gross & Matthews, 1906, p. 17). Tolkien no doubt partook in classes like this as he moved up to the First Form in the Autumn term of 1907 (Hammond & Scull, 2017a, p. 15). The patriotic attitude of the school would find resonance in Tolkien's letter to Wiseman on 16th November 1914, in which he considered the unifying forces of the T.C.B.S. to be 'religion, human love, the duty of patriotism, and a fierce belief in nationalism' (quoted in Hammond & Scull, 2017a, p. 63). The education reports and Tolkien's letter echo the larger concerns around the waning state of the British Empire and the global push for national pride.

Australia and New Zealand would both achieve dominion status very early on. The Constitution of Australia came into force on 1st January 1901 and New Zealand's Colonial Conference took place in 1907. Their neighbour, Fiji, would attempt to follow its neighbours in leaving the Empire with the native uprising in the Tuka Rebellion, but they were aggressively quelled by the British imperialists (Brewster, 1922, pp. 236 – 248). The 'golden century' of folklore studies, as Richard Dorson called it (1968, p. ix), took place between 1813 and 1914 and 'ransacked the attics of the past for ancient texts' (Flieger, 2005, p. 7). This came 'after the Napoleonic wars' when 'the nations or proto-nations of Europe became engaged in what was almost

an "arms race" to provide themselves with national literary traditions that would cement their claim to having always existed' (2004, p. 147). In 1871 Germany became a unified state, Italian irredentism was still ongoing and would not become fully realised until 1918. But this was bigger than Europe. On the run up to the Great War, 'most of the populations participating . . . already felt to some degree a sense of national identity' (Mann, 2013, p. 174). The empires of the three Great Powers: Austria-Hungary, Russia and the Ottoman Empire all blended national identities with imperial ones to form a unified nationalism (Mann, 2013, p. 174). It was very easy to 'tug at the strings of national identities' and spark a patriotic reaction 'across the classes' of a nation (Mann, 2013, p. 175).

Closer to home the 'rising Welsh and Scottish nationalism during this period w[ere] additional reason[s] for the focus on English nationalism' (Fimi, 2010, p. 54). England's students and writers reacted to this period of national upheaval by deliberately recalling the country's might in their writing 'as if there were no other countries in the scale of civilisation', simultaneously promoting a powerful English nationalism and separating them from their Celtic neighbours. They did, however, find their own history to be lacking a mythological authenticity. Although 'the Anglo-Saxons had been rediscovered and praised as the ancestors of modern England . . . [there was] very scanty mythological material from the literature of this "great people"' which frustrated Tolkien and the T.C.B.S. (Fimi, 2010, p. 54).

Smith would later give a paper on the history of the Arthurian cycle to the Literary Society in 1913 which echoed the club's mourning of the Norman's corrupting influence. He retraced how the 'serenity and calmness of the earlier stories' were lost, along with 'their ancient splendour . . . barbaric description and the frequent mention of place names'; with the Norman rule, the 'pourtrayal of character

changed' to 'romantic biography' (N.A., 1913, p. 5). Whereas the traditional Welsh tales maintained their 'old glorious vigour', the 'great body of European Arthurian literature . . . became conventionalised' (N.A., 1913, pp. 5 – 6).

Tolkien furiously deplored the Norman Conquest in the earlier Debating Society meeting on 4th November 1910. The resulting 'influx of polysyllabic barbarities' had 'ousted the more honest if humbler native words' and Tolkien called for a 'return to something of Saxon purity of diction – "right English goodliness of speechcraft"' in order to maintain the *English* heritage in a period of anxiety over national identity and freedom (MacSwiney & Payton, 1910, p. 95).

Tolkien may have been searching in the Middle Ages for a clue to England's mythological past, but the T.C.B.S.'s collected interests spanned a vast range of literary periods and they would have most certainly discussed them during their meetings in the school library and Barrow's Store (Carpenter, 2002, p. 70). Trought drew on the 'whole lush field of Romanticism' (Garth, 2004, p. 28) and when his devotion to the movement is linked with Smith's 'influence . . . [that] began to wake [other members] to the significance of poetry', it appears inevitable that the Romantic Movement and Keats will have been a topic of discussion (Carpenter, 2002, p. 71). Wider contextual aspects of Birmingham come into play here as the city had cultivated the reputation of being the 'nucleus of pre-Raphaelite work' (and therefore Romanticism) in England (N.A., 1906, p. 285). The Brotherhood greatly influenced Tolkien and the T.C.B.S. and Tolkien even considered the group to be the new Pre-Raphaelites (Garth, 2004, p. 14). Keats was also the dominating poet for the Pre-Raphaelites as most of them admired him above all others and used his work consistently for inspiration.

II – The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and Keats's Youth

Birmingham during the nineteenth century 'owed something to art' (Hartnell, 1996, p. 2). The early work of John Hardman, Augustus Pugin and John Henry Chamberlain had injected the popular Gothic style of the late eighteenth, Romantic and Victorian periods into the city's architecture. This came from its recent promotion by John Ruskin in *The Stones of Venice* (1851 – 1853) – King Edward's was even modelled after Pugin's work on the Houses of Parliament. The city thrived on the handiwork of its workers and Hardman had a 'desire to improve metalcraft techniques' and expose the artistry in the craft (Hartnell, 1996, p. 30). In doing so Hardman anticipated the objectives of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement in Birmingham which similarly aimed to generate 'a new sense of the visual arts in which the crafts would have the same dignity as the fine arts; for workshops which would be a challenge' (Crawford, 1984, p. 5). Contemporary figures such as William Costen Aitken campaigned for development in the arts. He argued that if England were to rise to the quality of French or Greek art then the 'Art-educated workman' must appreciate by 'inspection of what is best in ancient or modern art' (1850, p. 56). This was achievable by building the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery that opened in 1885.

The city would shortly afterwards be classed as 'perhaps the most artistic town in England' by the London art critic, Alfred St. Johnson (1887, p. 156). Parallel to these developments in Birmingham was the presence and popularity of the Pre-Raphaelites Edward Burne-Jones and Morris. The former had grown up in the city and attended King Edward's. Between 1885 and 1891 Morris & Co. produced Burne-Jones's four stained-glass windows for the St. Philip's Cathedral. Morris was to 'mark a significant shift in the emphasis in the philosophy of the School of Art' when he was made President of the Birmingham Society of Arts by Chamberlain (Hartnell, 1996,

p. 70). During his visits to the School of Art he would fill the roles of lecturer, examiner and commissioner. As a result, the ethos and vision of the Brotherhood became deeply ingrained into Birmingham's education.

The Pre-Raphaelites were the closest descendants to the Romanticism of the early nineteenth century and were 'admirers' of Keats, in whom 'one discerns the beginning of the artistic renaissance of England' as Oscar Wilde said (1907, pp. 104 – 105). They adopted him as their 'spiritual leader' and frequently returned to 'The Eve of St. Agnes', 'La Belle' and 'Isabella, or the Pot of Basil' for inspiration (Bottai, 2000). According to Morris 'La Belle' was 'the germ from which all the poetry of [the] group had sprung'; the poem captured and drove the Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic and imagination (quoted in Scott, 1999, p. 503). It 'distilled into a single poem the quintessence of medieval romance and balladry' and elicited a multitude of paintings and illustrations by various members that all focus on the enchantment of the Knight by La Belle (Lowes, 1927, p. 241). For the likes of William Holman Hunt and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Keats was a discovery as he was not well known in Victorian England before the publication of Richard Monckton Milnes's *Life and Letters of Keats* in 1848. Hunt, Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Morris all met to discuss and write about the beautiful intensity of Keats's imagery. Their mutual admiration led to various sketches, illustrations and paintings of scenes from his later, medieval-Gothic poems by Hunt, Rossetti, John Everett Millais and John William Waterhouse among others. Keats poetry is key to the Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic and as Sarah Wootton concludes: the 'Keats-based paintings of this movement mark a turning point in the poet's posthumous career' as they helped to bring him back into the public eye (2006, p. 42).

The Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery exhibited the Brotherhood's work in 1891 and Hunt's *Isabella and the Pot of Basil* appeared among Arthurian art such as Arthur Hughes's *Sir Galahad,* Rossetti's *Tristram and Isoude drink the Love Potion* and Henry Wallis's *The Death of Chatterton.* The *King Edward's School Chronicle* reported how the event brought 'special gratification [to the school], since [it was] justly proud of claiming as [their] own the great artist, Mr. Burne-Jones', an alumni that Tolkien would have certainly been reminded of during his time at the school (N.A., 1891, p. 83). By 1897 a complete list of the Pre-Raphaelite paintings at the Gallery showed only *Sir Galahad* to still be there (Levetus, 1897, p. 467). *The Death of Chatterton* had been bought previously by William Kendrick in 1877 and was returned to him after the exhibition only to be donated back to the gallery in 1918. Additionally *Isabella and the Pot of Basil* was purchased by a Newcastle shipping company director, James Hall, in 1870 and returned after the exhibition.[10] During Tolkien's childhood in Birmingham the gallery continued to elevate the Brotherhood and for this reason, we can strongly presume that he and the T.C.B.S. visited the gallery.

The intensity and focus of the Brotherhood's work had been cultivated from Keats's method of detailed 'pictorial brilliance' and was possibly absorbed by Tolkien (Colvin, 1909, p. 165). Keats's 'astonishingly real mediaevalism for one not bred as an artist', gothic overlays and vivid word-painting deeply attracted the Pre-Raphaelites and became part of their aesthetic framework (Rossetti, 1919, p. 9). The chain of influence will have been strengthened when Tolkien read John Mackail's biography of Morris. It discussed Morris being 'saturated with Shakespeare and

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[10] This information comes from personal correspondence with Sarah Richardson from the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle.

Keats' while studying at Oxford; his 'deep affinities were with Keats more than with any other poet' (1901, pp. 39 & 200).

A reminder of Keats's influence on the Pre-Raphaelites would have also come in Sidney Colvin's *Keats* (1887), the Everyman Biography that Tolkien borrowed from Exeter College library on 15th May 1915 (1909, pp. 133 & 165). Colvin drew special attention to Keats's 'The Eve of St. Mark', calling it a 'pre-Raphaelite fragment' in which Keats 'anticipate[d] the feeling and method' of the Brotherhood (Colvin, 1909, pp. 133 & 165). Most importantly Tolkien read Colvin's book shortly before he completed his degree and enrolled in the army. The Brotherhood was dear to Tolkien; Colvin's insight into Keats's influence on them must have been a revelation. The artistic landscape he had been absorbing had its roots in the vision of a Romantic poet. Colvin will have given Tolkien further ground to think on when he considered 'The Eve of St. Mark' to forestall the 'very tones and cadences of Mr Morris in . . . the *Earthly Paradise*' (Colvin, 1909, p. 165). Colvin drew his attention to Morris's indebtedness to Keats in a text that Tolkien would read shortly afterwards in the trenches of the Great War and use for the structuring of *The Book of Lost Tales* (Garth, 2004, pp. 224 & 296). His reading of Colvin gave him a deeper understanding of Morris and the Pre-Raphaelite's aesthetic sources.

Tolkien started reading Morris's prose and poetry as early as 1908 and keenly drew on Morris's medieval revival and rewriting of Germanic and Icelandic mythology (Garth, 2014, p. 9).[11] Morris found the idea of eschewing contemporary literary convention in Romantics like Keats, who had 'turn[ed] towards formerly unsuitable

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[11] The 'Story of Sigurd' in Andrew Lang's *Red Fairy Book* (which Tolkien read at a young age) was the edited version of Morris's own translation. This remained one of two translations until Margaret Schlauch's in 1930.

topics, such as the fantasy or the gothic . . . giv[ing] his stories grand mythological or medieval backdrops' (Biemer, 2010, p. 64). Tolkien will have discovered this in Colvin eight months after starting his imitation of Morris: *The Story of Kullervo* (2018)*.* It is possible that he drew on Morris's imagery which had its roots in Keats. Clarice Short later mapped these out in 1944 and traced no less than 'forty passages which might be used to illustrate similarities in thought and imagery' (1944, p. 523).

What underpinned Keats's success to the Pre-Raphaelites, Tolkien and every scholar of the early twentieth century was his youthfulness. Contrasting with the aged figures of Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth and Coleridge, Keats's stylistic accomplishments before his tragic, early death at twenty-five were hailed as a conclusive factor that he belonged in the English literary canon.[12] Shortly after borrowing Colvin Tolkien took out Andrew Cecil Bradley's *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (1909) on the 31st May 1915. This contained his lecture on 'The Letters of John Keats'. The lecture reflected the commonly held belief at the time that Keats belonged in 'Shakespeare's tribe' (Bradley, 1909, p. 211). He quoted part of the letter on Shakespeare's negative capability and called it the 'Shakespearean strain' in Keats's poetry (Bradley, 1909, pp. 235 – 237).

The Keatsian scholarship of the 1900 – 1910s culminated in J. M. Murry's *Keats and Shakespeare* (1925) and C. F. E. Spurgeon's *Keats's Shakespeare* (1928) where it was confirmed that he was of the 'spirit of Shakespeare' (Bradley, 1909, p. 238). Ernest de Sélincourt speculated that 'after reading such a work [as "La Belle Dame sans Merci"] one is tempted to ask whether art can go further than this, or what room there is for development in an artist who at the age of twenty-four can

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[12] His earlier inclusion in T. H. Ward's *The English Poets* (1883) proves this.

produce such a masterpiece' (Keats, 1905, p. lviii). 'Ode to a Nightingale' (1819) would be called 'one of the final masterpieces of human work in all time and for all ages' (Swinburne, 1886, p. 211) and Francis Turner Palgrave exclaimed that if 'Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth, had their lives been closed at twenty-five, would (so far as we know) have left poems of less excellence and hope than [Keats] who, from the petty school and the London surgery, passed at once to a place with them of "high collateral glory"' (1905, p. 430). The attraction spread to King Edward's as well for in 1917 K. C. Lawson delivered a paper to the Literary Society on Keats. He suggested that the poet 'should appeal particularly to the audience, both because of his youth (he first began to write at the age of 18 and died when 25) – and because of his very human character' (N.A., 1917, p. 17).

What becomes quite apparent from a biographical perspective is the comparatively catastrophic sense of loss that darkens the early lives of Keats and Tolkien – a feature that Tolkien scholarship has failed to fully appreciate. It will have come to Tolkien's attention when he read the opening chapter of Colvin that his and Keats's early years paralleled each other. Keats was the oldest of his siblings, much like Tolkien and both came from working-class backgrounds. Of their parental losses their fathers died first and very early on. At the age of eight Keats would receive news that his father had fallen from his horse and died; Tolkien was four when he would hear the news about his own father's passing. Both are reported as being extremely close with their mothers and at the age of twelve Tolkien lost his own to the hereditary condition of diabetes mellitus type 1. In Colvin he would read about Keats's devotion to his own mother until her death – he was fifteen. Sympathetic passages such as '"he sat up whole nights with her in a great chair, would suffer nobody to give her medicine, or even cook her food, but himself, and read novels to

her in her intervals of ease'" must have struck a chord for the twenty-two year old Tolkien (Colvin, 1909, p. 10). Carpenter theorises that these early losses in Tolkien's life 'more closely related to his mother's death' generated moods with a 'deep sense of impending loss. Nothing was safe. Nothing would last. No battle would be won for ever' (2002, pp. 50 – 51). It is likely he saw similar grief exhibited in Keats. What may have further cemented the bond was the way Colvin repeatedly described the Keats family's tendency of succumbing to consumption as a 'deadly hereditary enemy' (1909, p. 132).

These sort of youthful bonds would have been felt by more than just Tolkien. Keats's age and early death appealed to many in the early twentieth century because of the Great War. Tolkien fought on the Front in France and he will have undoubtedly encountered fellow soldiers who felt a kinship with Keats. The horrors of the Front meant that soldiers had '"no need of war verse in the trenches . . . what we do need is something which will take our minds off the horrors of modern warfare"' (quoted in Koch, 1917, p. 24). Keats and other nineteenth-century writers offered the soldiers the respite they needed.[13] Detective and adventure stories were immensely popular along with fairy stories, particularly Andrew Lang's anthologies which were read widely (Garth, 2004, p. 77). R. C. Sherriff would recall this desire for fantasy and escape in *Journey's End* (1928). Osbourne reads *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* for pleasure and later recites 'The Walrus and the Carpenter' from *Through the Looking Glass* (1865) with Raleigh to pass the time before going over the top. For Tolkien however, solace was most often found in Morris's *The Earthly*

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[13] Including Nat Gould, Rudyard Kipling, Alfred Conan Doyle, W. W. Jacobs, Robert Louis Stevenson, Ian Hay, Alexander Dumas, H. G. Wells, Edgar Allan Poe, Charles Dickens, Robert Carlyle, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Charles Lamb, John Ruskin, William Shakespeare and Alfred Lord Tennyson (documented in Koch, 1917, pp. 7 – 15).

Paradise (1868 – 1870), a text that may have been about the preservation of Norse narratives but carried significant echoes of Keats. Tolkien will have been exposed to fellow soldiers reading the Romantic poet as well.

Keats was readily accessible through poetry anthologies and his presence in patriotic poem collections like *Pro Patria set Rege: Poems on War, its Characterisations and Results* (1915) meant that he will have been widely read. The monumental *The Word's Best Poetry Volumes 1 – 9* (1904) included a wide selection of his poetry across five volumes and *The English Poets Volume 4: The Nineteenth Century: Wordsworth to Rossetti* (1883) likewise granted him significant space.[14] It is clear that 'Ode to a Nightingale', 'To Autumn' (1819), 'Keats's Last Sonnet' (1819) (which we know today as 'Bright Star'), the prologue to *Endymion* (1818) and 'On First Looking into Chapman's Homer' (1816) were canonical as they appear in both anthologies and with the introduction of the Education Act in 1870, children will have read and remembered them specifically for recitation.

Keats's presence is evident in Theodore Wesley Koch's fascinating 1917 study on the literature that soldiers commonly read. It reports Mr Adcock's interview with a soldier who had 'read for the first time the whole of Keats and Wordsworth' (quoted in Koch, 1917, p. 15). Keats featured in 'Poetry Under the Fire Test' from the *New Republic* issue of 25th November 1916 where another solider, Mason, was presented as having "'lost [his] belief in all beauty'" (quoted in Koch, 1917, p. 24). However, by overhearing fellow soldiers reading from Milton's *Comus* (1634), he started to *recall* poems from his youth that he was undoubtedly made to recite at school (quoted in Koch, 1917, p. 24). This led to requesting poem collections from

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[14] See Appendix B for the poems included.

home which included all of Keats's Odes, 'The Eve of St. Agnes' (1819) and other writers like Wordsworth and Shelley.

Not all soldiers wished to 'recover a sense of beauty and wonder' from England that these poets offered however, some preferred to cope through alcohol and smoking (Garth, 2004, p. 78). But for those who required an escape, it became '"essential"' that they could recall the poems or stories on the battlefield to themselves as '"it is worth all the hazards to discover for one's self that Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty"' (quoted in Koch, 1917, p. 25). Expressing the Keatsian sentiment in this context parallels Bradley's definition of Keats's Beauty surprisingly well, for this 'kind is won through thought, and also through pain . . . [one] cannot reach it unless he consents to suffer painful sympathies, which disturb his enjoyment of the simple and sweeter beauty, and may even seem to lead him away from beauty altogether' (1909, p. 226). The war certainly placed soldiers in painful realities but in his interview, Mason adapted Keats, turning Beauty into a synonym for memory and home, removed from the war. The power of recovery was critical; whether it was spiritual or mental, literature was therapeutic and linked the soldiers back to their homeland.

Mason was just one soldier who theoretically changed Keats. The most well-known example of a soldier who felt a connection with Keats was Wilfred Owen. Although there is no evidence that Owen and Tolkien ever met, the former stands as an example of how Keats influenced young men in this period. Edmund Blunden's 1931 memoir of Owen notably beautified and mythologised the War poet by connecting him to Keats on an intimate level. Blunden 'intuits a circular explanation' for Owen's early death (Najarian, 2002, p. 162). Because he 'died young he was like Keats, and because Owen was like Keats he died young' (Najarian, 2002, p. 162).

Owen has since inspired writers to depict him as wandering the Front as a tormented and deformed avatar of Keats, a poet who has lost his faith in the Romantic's naïve quest for Beauty (Gilbert, 2013, p. 119). The association between the two has in this case been well established since Blunden.

If there was a Keats of the early twentieth century, it was certainly Owen. His intimacy with Keats was exhibited in his letters where he described reading William Michael Rossetti's *Life of John Keats* as 'guid[ing] my groping hand right into the wound, and I touched, for one moment the incandescent Heart of Keats' (Owen, 1967, p. 158). He even considered calling his first published collection of poems *With Lightning and with Music* – a line from Shelley's popular elegy to Keats: *Adonais*. It would have been an 'intertextual manoeuvre' that 'placed the war poems, as it were, at the deathbed of Keats' (Kerr, 1993, pp. 77 – 78). He may have become disenfranchised with the splendour of Romanticism on the Front, but this led to inspiration 'even if by negative example' in poems like 'Exposure' (Kendall, 2006, p. 60). The lines 'My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains / My sense' from 'Ode to a Nightingale' (Keats, 1900b, p. 99; ll. 1 – 2) mutate into 'Our brains ache, in the merciless iced east winds that knive us' (Owen, 1994, p. 71; l. 1). It offers a strikingly realistic alternative to the 'Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty' maxim from 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' (Keats, 1900b, p. 106; l. 49).

For some soldiers on the Front Keats was the solution. Tolkien is well-known for writing the Great Tales of the First Age of Arda during the Great War and this was his most significant link back to England. In composing 'The Tale of Tinúviel', 'Turambar and the Foalókë' and 'The Fall of Gondolin' he imagined an England before the arrival of the Celts and started to fight against the rapidly forming English literary tradition that he studied at university. Before moving on to examine how

Tolkien and Keats's mutual interests in this and the Faërie tradition gave way to Tolkien reshaping 'The Eve of St. Agnes' and expanding 'La Belle' in 'The Lay of Leithian', it is paramount that Tolkien's reading, evaluation and referencing of Keats is documented and examined from his reading through to the *Hyperion* quotation in 'Smith of Wootton Major essay' (Hammond & Scull, 2017c, p. 1220).

III – Contextual Survey of Keats and Tolkien

Tolkien's interest must have been piqued when he read Keats's letter on the termination of *Hyperion* and Chatterton's pure English idiom in Colvin: "'English ought to be kept up . . . [Chatterton] has no French idiom or particles, like Chaucer; it is genuine English idiom in English words'" (quoted in Colvin, 1909, pp. 157 – 158). A canonical English poet expressing a return to English oriented verse over any other language sounds distinctly Tolkienian in notion and pre-dates his comments on the Norman Conquest. The biography explains Keats's thought process behind abandoning *Hyperion*. It contained too many 'Miltonic inversions' and 'The Eve of St. Agnes' countered this by straying into the 'regions beloved by Chatterton . . . the pure charm of coloured and romantic narrative in English verse . . . the charm of the mediaeval colour and mystery is unfailing for those who feel it at all' (Colvin, 1909, pp. 157 – 160). Sélincourt also commented on the shift, purporting that Chatterton 'doubtless . . . guided [Keats] both [in 'The Eve of St. Agnes'] and in the companion fragment the *Eve of St. Mark*, to seek a subject in mediaeval legend and to invest it with an atmosphere of mystery and enchantment' (Keats, 1905, p. lv).

The inclusion of the letter in Colvin evidences that Tolkien was aware of Chatterton's influence on Keats and the latter's interest in English medievalism, a topic he was keenly devoted to by 1915. But these connections will be further

considered in chapter two. What is important here is Tolkien's understanding of the thematic shifting between *Hyperion* and 'The Eve of St. Agnes' (Colvin, 1909, p. 160). Colvin's inclusion of references and passages from 'The Eve of St. Ages' means we can conclude that Tolkien did at least read parts of the poem in 1915. It would make sense for him to read it in its entirety considering his examinations could have questioned him on Keats.

The mention of Sélincourt beckons for a significant link to be drawn from Tolkien to Keats. During the latter's time as Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford, Sélincourt also held the post of Oxford Professor of Poetry (1928 – 1933). A renowned Romantic scholar of the early twentieth century who had already edited Keats's works in 1905, Sélincourt edited Wordsworth's *The Prelude* (1928), Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journals* (1933) and wrote a biography on Dorothy (1933) during this post. Although he went on to lecture at the University of Birmingham, his earlier position as lecturer of English literature at University College, Oxford (1896 – 1908) will have made him a recognised and important figure in the Oxford circle (Kaloustian, 2009). Sélincourt additionally served on the Committee of Examiners at Oxford alongside Tolkien until at least 1927, giving the Professor of Anglo-Saxon many opportunities to be exposed to Sélincourt's editorial work on the Romantics (Hammond & Scull, 2017a, p. 152).

Sélincourt was just one scholar who identified that Keats's medieval poems made explicit references to Faërie culture. In this manner, Keats shares a strong bond with Tolkien as they both draw on the same Faërie topoi to ground their work in the ancient British tradition. It is for this reason that various scholars have considered Tolkien's *The Book of Lost Tales* and his early poems to include 'shadows of Keats', most commonly drawing on key words found in 'Ode to a Nightingale' (Rosebury,

2003, p. 91). They are not wrong to draw such a conclusion. Lines 69 and 70 of Keats's Ode appear in Bradley's lecture and cemented Tolkien's understanding of how Keats writes and portrays Faërie as mysterious, perilous and far across the sea (1909, p. 114). The Ode clearly hit home for Tolkien, who proceeded to dissect the couplet and scatter its keywords among the plethora of Faërie themed poems he produced in 1915. Included in the list is 'The Happy Mariners' (July) which reads like an 'elaboration' of Keats's couplet (Vaninskaya, 2014, p. 352) and an 'opening-up of [his] evocative lines . . . faery lands lie quite beyond reach, and the magic merely tantalizes' (Garth, 2004, p. 89). Another important poem is 'The Shores of Faëry' that uses the same alliterative words such as 'foam' and 'faery' from Keats's couplet to 'tantalize' the reader (Tolkien, 1984, pp. 271 – 272; ll. 13 – 15). Tolkien was clearly drawing on Keats's diction to create a similarly enchanting aesthetic for Faërie and this was later reinforced by his work at the University of Leeds.

Tolkien's knowledge of Keats will have come in handy when he joined the English Faculty at the University of Leeds in 1920 as the Romantic poet's work was a part of the English Language and Literature course. Oronzo Cilli's excellent *Tolkien's Library: An Annotated Checklist* evidences that the reading lists for the English Language and Literature course from 1920 – 1922 included some of Keats's canonical medieval poems such as 'The Eve of St. Agnes', 'Isabella, or the Pot of Basil' and his Odes (Cilli, 2019, p. 140).[15] It is therefore clear that he did have a firm understand of Keats's Faërie themed poetry before returning to his own Faërie mythology in the 1920s. Cilli's research confirms and adds context to the observations of Shippey, Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull, Garth, Rosebury,

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[15] Personal correspondence with Oronzo Cilli has confirmed that these were included in Tolkien's program at Leeds and were mentioned in the Calendars for 1920 and 1921.

Vaninskaya who have all commented on the particularly Keatsian style in different works by Tolkien – whether early or late.[16] The 1920s saw 'an important stage in the evolution of the Matter of the Eldar Days' with the development of 'The Lay of the Children of Húrin' (1920 – 1925) and 'The Lay of Leithian' (Tolkien, 1985, p. 1). Tolkien began to immerse his work further into England's literary history through these poems' forms, titles and thematic material.[17] It would make sense for him to echo or at least develop Keats's poems in this period after encountering them at Leeds. But Tolkien's ties to Keats continue far beyond *The Book of Lost Tales*.

Tolkien's knowledge of Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale' found further use in the 1930s when he wrote a lecture on Old English alliterative verse. The lecture quotes the famous Faërie themed couplet from the Ode. Found on Folio 100 of Bodleian Library MS. Tolkien A 17/2: Notes and Lectures, the following lines appear:

'magic casements, opening on the foam / Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn'

They served as an example of how alliteration had become a poetic ornament for modern poets. The Ode stood as one of the most popular and widely anthologised poems of the Romantic period in the first half of the twentieth century. Consequently no matter who his lecture was delivered to, quoting these lines would have made his lecture much more accessible for his audience (Scott, 2017, p. 335). It is curious to

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[16] See Vaninskaya (2014, p. 352) and (2005, p. 174), Garth (2004, pp. 271 – 272), Rosebury (2003, p. 91), Hammond and Scull (2017c, p. 1104) and Shippey (2005, p. 219).
[17] See chapter one, page 76 for an explanation of the 'lay' form. See chapter two, pages 122 – 123 for an explanation of Tolkien's use of alliterative verse.

note that Tolkien's quoting mimics Bradley's; both miss off the 'Charm'd' that opens line 69. Although it does not add to the alliteration of the lines, it ties Tolkien closer to his earlier reading of Keats that he perhaps recalled or went back to. This was not the only occasion when Tolkien drew on Keats for his lectures. As a popular poet, the Romantic became a useful comparison for Tolkien.

On October 21st 1955, Tolkien delivered the inaugural O'Donnell Memorial Lecture that he titled *English and Welsh*. The lecture worked as a 'warning against theories of "race"' that were popularised in the late nineteenth century by Matthew Arnold in *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (1867) (Garth, 2007, p. 162). Arnold concluded that 'if the Celtic nature is to be characterised by a single term, [sentiment] is the best term to take' (1912, p. 100). Tolkien wholly disagreed with this and called the Old English poem *Beowulf* 'far more Celtic . . . than most things that I have met written in a Celtic language' (2006b, p. 172). To Tolkien's horror, Arnold promulgated the removal of Welsh as an 'instrument of the practical, political, social life of Wales' as it would benefit the English and Welsh (Arnold, 1912, p. 10). Tolkien stoically defended Welsh by calling it the 'language of Heaven', dispelling Arnold's 'confusion between language (and nomenclature) and "race"' (Tolkien, 2006b, pp. 164 & 173).

In the same lecture he would reference a poem by Keats. Arnold had previously labelled Keats as 'abundantly and enchantingly sensuous' and 'in what we call natural magic, [as] ranking with Shakespeare' (Arnold, 1888, pp. 331 & 341). Tolkien's understanding of Arnold's arguments must have brought him into contact with Keats's 'Celticness' and Tolkien's reference to 'On First Looking into Chapman's Homer' (1816) shows him wrestling to separate himself from the English literary

tradition:

> Gothic was the first [language] to take me by storm, to
>
> move my heart. . . . I have since mourned the loss of
>
> Gothic literature. I did not then. The contemplation of the
>
> vocabulary in *A Primer of the Gothic Language* was enough:
>
> a sensation at least as full of delight as first looking into
>
> Chapman's *Homer.* Though I did not write a sonnet about it.
>
> I tried to invent Gothic words.
>
> I have, in this peculiar sense, studied ('tasted' would
>
> be better) other languages since (Tolkien, 2006b, pp. 191 – 192).

Tolkien responded in a purely philological manner by asserting that he found his inspiration in language, contrasting himself to Keats, who had simply written and dedicated a poem to George Chapman's translation of Homer's epics. But this is erroneous for numerous reasons. Tolkien was inspired by the remnants of the Gothic language to 'invent an "unrecorded"' language that he called Gautisk (2006a, p. 214). He was careful to distinguish between the 'historically recorded Gothic and his own reconstructed Gothic' and this came to fruition in prose scribbles and his poem 'Bagmē Blōma' (1936). Arden R. Smith has noted how only thirty-eight of the fifty-five words in the poem can be historically attested, meaning seventeen words came from Gautisk (2006, p. 271). However, the poem tied him closer to Keats than he allowed his audience to believe as Tolkien 'endeavoured to recreate the entire culture' in a

manner not dissimilar from Keats in *Hyperion* (Groom, 2014, p. 297).[18] It acts as a

reminder of Tolkien's intention to 'recreate' England's lost mythology with *The Book*

of Lost Tales:

> I had a mind to make a body of more or less connected
>
> legend, ranging from the large and cosmogonic, to the
>
> level of romantic fairy-story – the larger founded on the
>
> lesser in contact with the earth, the lesser drawing
>
> splendour from the vast backcloths – which I could dedicate
>
> simply to: to England; to my country. It should possess
>
> the tone and quality that I desired, somewhat cool and clear,
>
> be redolent of our 'air' (the clime and soil of the North West,
>
> meaning Britain and the hither parts of Europe; not Italy or
>
> the Aegean, still less the East), and, while possessing (if I
>
> could achieve it) the fair elusive beauty that some call
>
> Celtic (though it is rarely found in genuine ancient Celtic things),
>
> it should be 'high', purged of the gross, and fit for the more
>
> adult mind of the land long now steeped in poetry
>
> (2006a, pp. 144 – 145).

Tolkien admitted that he wished to provide a native English tradition ('the larger

founded on the lesser') with his lays. He was to re-establish a style independent from

the 'land long now steeped in [the] poetry' of the Mediterranean, reconnecting

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[18] See chapter two, pages 106 and 109 for further comments on Tolkien and Keats's mutual feeling of regret on the destructive effects of the Roman Empire on Britain and its ancestors.

England with its Celtic and Germanic neighbours. He was desperate to prove that England had a history and was going to give 'Eriol and his sons the *Engle* (i.e. the English) . . . the true tradition of the fairies, of whom the *Iras* and the *Wéalas* (the Irish and Welsh) tell garbled things', placing *The Book of Lost Tales* chronologically before the stories of Ireland, Wales and Scotland (Tolkien, 1984, p. 290). It explains how he would achieve the Celtic 'fair elusive beauty' by 'reconstruct[ing] . . . Celt[ic] myth' (Barnfield, 1992, p. 7), then claiming the Welsh and Irish tales to be mere shards of the 'broken stained glass window' of his collective original (Tolkien, 2006a, p. 26).

As for his claim that he found his inspiration in language, only two years previous to the delivery of *English and Welsh* Tolkien claimed to have been 'brought up in the Classics, and first discovered the sensation of literary pleasure in Homer' (2006a, p. 172). Tolkien never studied Chapman as he worked from D. B. Monro's 1890 and 1903 translations at King Edward's and Oxford.[19] But he still recalls reading Homer as a 'sensation' that elicited 'pleasure'. This sounds particularly Keatsian in tone and when Tolkien comments on 'tasting' language, he is paralleling Keats in his 27th April 1818 letter to John Hamilton Reynolds where the Romantic poet longs to 'feast upon old Homer as we have upon Shakespeare, and as I have lately upon Milton' (Keats, 1901b, p. 104). Both approach words and language in a synaesthetic manner, exploiting its potential to be a multifaceted generator of verbal, visual, audible and tasteful pleasure. Although he never started, Keats did intend to learn Greek in order to read *The Odyssey* and *The Illiad* in their original language. He even wanted Reynolds to read Homer to him in the original Greek (Keats, 1901b,

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[19] This information comes from personal correspondence with John Garth.

p. 104). By referencing Keats, Tolkien was unintentionally revealing how similar his thoughts on language and literature mimicked Keats's own.

The final time Tolkien tied himself to Keats was in his 'Smith of Wootton Major essay' in the early 1960s. Here 'O aching time! O moments big as years!' from *Hyperion* (Keats, 1900b, p. 132; l. 64) is misquoted as 'O minutes great as years!' (Tolkien, 2015, p. 115). Within the essay the quotation does little more than emphasise to the reader the subjectivity experienced in man's perception of time that Tolkien is at that point explaining. To the reader it draws attention to Tolkien's familiarity with Keats's fragmented poem. However, better light can be shed on this quotation by comparing its similarity to a set of lines in 'The Lay of Leithian' rather than its inclusion in the essay. The lay is brimming with similarities to a range of Keats's 1819 poems, most of which Tolkien was aware of.

IV – Addressing the English Literary Tradition: *Hyperion* and 'La Belle'

'The Lay of Leithian' (1925 – 1931) was developed from the earlier prose narrative 'The Tale of Tinúviel' (1917) and both sound at times like expansions or revisions of Keats's work. They echo lines from *Hyperion*, elaborate on the mystery conjured in the ballad 'La Belle' and re-sketch under-developed scenarios from 'The Eve of St. Agnes'.[20] The next two sections will examine these in detail, explaining how they link into Tolkien's theoretic and fictional works. The parallel between 'The Lay of Leithian' and *Hyperion* is found in the third canto of the former:

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[20] Christopher Tolkien has noted how the original 1917 edition is all but lost, a 'ghostly form of a manuscript in pencil' that has been significantly erased (Tolkien, 2018a, p. 30). The ink edition provided in *The Book of Lost Tales Part II* and the separate publication *Beren and Lúthien* in 2018 has no known date attached, but it can be surmised that this was between 1917 and the start of the tale's second setting 'The Lay of Leithian' in 1925.

> But Thingol stayed, enchanted, still,
>
> one moment to hearken to the thrill
>
> of that sweet singing in the trees.
>
> Enchanted moments such as these
>
> from gardens of the Lord of Sleep,
>
> where fountains play and shadows creep,
>
> do come, and count as many years
>
> in mortal lands
>
> (Tolkien, 1985, p. 172; ll. 435 – 442).

Here Tolkien is putting into practice what he explains much later in the 'Smith of Wootton Major essay'. Thingol the elf comes across Melian the fay and is enchanted by her singing. In this paused moment time is experimented with and in his enchanted state Thingol feels a single moment pass but 'in mortal lands' a year has passed. Tolkien has carefully stretched Keats's initial line over five and acknowledges it with the keywords 'moment' and 'years' that identify the passing of time. In doing so Tolkien strips away the agony and 'aching' weight from Keats's line, loosening it and allowing the enchantment to be more fully realised and expressed.

The notion that 'time and space shrink and stretch' is a common Faërie motif that Tolkien experimented with to great lengths in many of his works, such as the poem 'The Sea-Bell' (1962), abandoned prose tales *The Lost Road* and *The Notion Club Papers,* and *The Lord of the Rings* (Warner, 2014, p. 20). In *A Question of Time*, Verlyn Flieger studies Tolkien's exploration of time and dreams interconnectedness with Faërie. It is considered that the 'overriding thematic concern with time' is 'deeply embedded in his work and his philosophy' (1997, p. 19). Flieger

also quotes from Tolkien's *On Fairy-stories* lecture to share his thoughts on Faërie-stories' connection to time. They 'have now a mythical or total (unanalysable) effect, an effect quite independent of the findings of Comparative Folk-lore, and one which it cannot spoil or explain; they open a door on Other Time, and if we pass through, only for a moment, we stand outside our own time, outside Time itself, maybe' (Tolkien, 2014, p. 48). The enchantment generated by Faërie sets in motion a separate sense of time that is completely alien and otherworldly to any who encounter it. Notice how Tolkien again uses 'moment' to emphasise how even the briefest exposure to Faërie can remove you from the laws of mortal time. In the late 1920s Tolkien still saw his work as a Faërie mythology for England. In 'The Lay of Leithian', Melian is labelled a fay and exhibits powerful enchantments that put Thingol to sleep as soon as he touches her tresses. His growing interest in time can be distinctly seen in his revisions to *The Book of Lost Tales.*

The effects of Faërie's enchantment and time can also be found in Keats's Faërie themed poem 'La Belle'. At the centre of the bleak ballad is the Knight who is 'enthralled by and lost in the land of faery', wandering the barren world until he finds La Belle again (Bennett, 1994, p. 124). The poem received very little serious commentary during the nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries, settling for 'passionate appreciation' by biographers (Scott, 1999, p. 505). Yet it was still remembered as the root of the Pre-Raphaelite movement by the likes of Colvin and its existence as two poems was a hotly debated point by Keats's editors.

The 'Knight at Arms' version appeared in Keats's letter to George and Georgina Keats (Sunday 14th February – Monday 3rd May 1819) whereas the 'Wretched Wight' version was published in Leigh Hunt's *The Indicator* on 10th May 1819. Harry Buxton Forman preferred to print the latter, seeing it as a revision that

Keats decided to print and therefore the authoritative text to consult (Keats, 1901a, p. 23) whereas Morris, Colvin (Colvin, 1917, pp. 469 – 470) and Sélincourt (Keats, 1905, p. 528) all considered it the wrong, less superior version.[21] As the thesis is quoting from Forman's editions of Keats's poems, from here onwards 'Wight' will be used instead of 'Knight'. This will grant a further comparison between Keats's Wretched Wight and Tolkien's Barrow-wights. Neither Colvin nor Bradley quote the ballad, preferring to enthusiastically compliment it instead. But the opportunity for Tolkien to come across both versions abound in the various editions of Keats's poems at the Bodleian and Exeter College libraries and the anthology books that make up Appendix B.

The text and sparse narrative of 'La Belle' evidence how the poem and Beren's loitering in Doriath parallel one another. To surmise, once the mortal figure has crossed the border into Faërie and becomes enchanted by their la belle dame, they both find themselves searching desperately in barren environments. The scenery of Doriath recalls those from 'La Belle' and 'The Eve of St. Agnes': 'or hears a sound but the slow beat / on sodden leaves of his own feet' (Tolkien, 1985, p. 178; ll. 683 – 684) mimics the haunting line 'and no birds sing' (Keats, 1901a, p. 22; l. 4).[22] The blistering imagery of 'the wind dies; the starry choirs / leap in the silent sky to fires, / whose light comes bitter-cold and sheer / through domes of frozen crystal clear' (Tolkien, 1985, p. 178; ll. 687 – 690) reads like a mythical, hyperbolic expansion on Keats's 'bitter chill' and 'frozen grass' (1900b, p. 63; ll. 1 – 3).

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[21] Jerome McGann considered Colvin's stance to be highly influential in cultivating the view that the 'Wretched Wight' version was, on aesthetical grounds, significantly inferior in the twentieth century (1979, pp. 1029 – 1030).

[22] It is worth noting that in the first draft of 'Kôr: In a City Lost and Dead' 'no voice sings' was originally 'no bird sings', a clear lift of the line 'and no birds sing' from Keats 'La Belle' (Tolkien, 1983, p. 136).

In these poems Tolkien and Keats expose the timelessness of Faërie through their frozen landscapes. Tolkien embellishes his through the relentless turning of the seasons from Beren and Lúthien's first meeting to their second:

> A summer waned, and autumn glowed
>
> and Beren in the woods abode
>
> . . .
>
> An autumn waned, a winter laid
>
> the withered leaves in grove and glade
>
> . . .
>
> A night there was when winter died;
>
> Then all alone she sang and cried
>
> And danced until the dawn of spring
>
> (1985, pp. 177 – 179; ll. 653 – 719).

The repetition of 'waned' echoes the timelessness Beren, not the reader, feels in Doriath and structures the section for Tolkien. The asyndetic list from lines 660 – 665 intensifies this sensation of motionless time as its onomatopoeia blends seamlessly together into a symphony that does not suggest an end to the enchantment. Beren is doomed to wander Doriath and hear everything but Lúthien's 'song more fair than nightingale', much like Keats's Wight, is doomed to wait for La Belle Dame (Tolkien, 1985, p. 178; l. 671).

Keats is more subtle than Tolkien, preferring to blur time through his use of verbs. 'La Belle' presents the reader with the understanding that the Wight has

travelled into Faërie, drawing on 'an ancient folk tale, Celtic in origin, that a phantom lover makes her victims fey, and once bewitched, carries them off into the realm of death' (Warner, 2014, p. 158). Keats's emphasis on the pale and feverish countenance of the Wight in the fourth stanza and his similarity to the kings, princes and warriors clearly implies how fey and close to death he is. Additionally, the pathetic fallacy conjured by the effects of autumn insist on the dying nature of the Wight:

> The sedge is wither'd from the lake,
>
> And no birds sing.
>
> . . .
>
> The squirrel's granary is full,
>
> And the harvest's done
>
> (Keats, 1901a, pp. 22 – 23; ll. 3 – 8).

The noun 'wight' was criticised by Sélincourt as it 'brings no distinct image before the mind' for the 'main character' (Keats, 1905, p. 528). But this reading only engages one of the word's meanings. Up 'until the 19th century the word *wight* was used in regional dialect with the meaning "person"' (Gilliver, Marshall & Weiner, 2006, p. 214). An older and much more fruitful meaning 'denotes supernatural beings in general, or in particular a ghost or demon' (Gilliver, Marshall & Weiner, 2006, p. 214). Such a reading would place Keats's Wight in the immediate company of Tolkien's Barrow-wights from *The Fellowship of the Ring*, tying the ballad closer to the traditional Celtic tale and providing a more sinister layer to the atmosphere of the ballad.

But the Wight is forever captured in his current state. Neither dead nor fully alive, it inhabits some perilous Faërie waiting for La Belle Dame to return. The shrinking and stretching of time may traditionally be a natural part of Faërie, but Keats (and Tolkien) turn it into an effect of being enchanted by La Belle Dame. We meet the Wight after his abduction and dream, meaning he is enchanted at the opening of the poem. The interlocutor describes him as 'loitering' in the opening stanza and Keats's employs syntactic parallelism in the closing stanza when the Wight echoes the verb, creating an unbreakable loop for the poem (Keats, 1901a, p. 22; l. 2). However, it follows on from another verb which destabilises the poem's temporality:

> And this is why I sojourn here
> Alone and palely loitering
> (Keats, 1901a, p. 26; ll. 45 – 46).

Even in the first edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'loitering' was defined as follows: 'to allow (time, etc.) to pass idly' and 'to delay action', suggesting a greater passing of time (Loiter, 2019), whereas 'sojourn' emphasised time passing briefly: 'to make a temporary stay in a place; to remain or reside for a time' (Sojourn, 2019). They work as oxymorons, revealing the Wight's confusion over how long he has been waiting for La Belle Dame. Whether the Wight feels time idly drifting by like that in *Hyperion* or if his stay is short like Thingol's, he cannot calculate how long he has been in Faërie. Under La Belle Dame's enchantment time has become the Other Time that Tolkien identified in *On Fairy-stories* and the Wight has been removed from the mortal world altogether.

The chilling aesthetic of the ballad is frozen in place 'on the cold hill side' (Keats, 1901a, p. 25; l. 44), just as Beren's encounter with Lúthien revolves around the 'hillock green' (Tolkien, 1985, p. 179; l. 709). Both writers work with the common topos of Faërie tales that hills are strongly connected to Faërie. Robert Kirk (1644 – 1692) in *The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns & Fairies* subtitled his work *An Essay of the Nature and Actions of the Subterranean*, thereby locating faëries as living inside the hills. The popular study was first edited and published by Sir Walter Scott in 1815 and then by Andrew Lang in 1893. In Lang's introduction, he confirms that 'the dwellings of these airy shadows of mankind are, naturally, "Fairie Hills"' (quoted in Kirk, 1893, p. xxxiii). Tolkien further likens his elves to traditional faëries by having Thingol and Melian physically live beneath the earth in Menegroth, the city that also carries the name the Thousand Caves.

Thingol and Melian's meeting is not dissimilar to the Wight and La Belle Dame's or Beren and Lúthien's. When Beren hears Lúthien sing he is immediately 'enchanted' and 'bound' (Tolkien, 1985, pp. 175; ll. 545 – 548) just like the Wight after hearing the 'faery's song' (Keats, 1901a, p. 24; l. 20). The verb 'bound' is repeated again and again to remind us that Beren, in his newfound dumbness, is still enchanted by Lúthien's song as he wanders through Doriath. Here Tolkien parts from Keats and the sinister Faërie tradition by reuniting Beren with Lúthien. At the 'dawn of spring' Beren's bonds are broken by Lúthien's new song and he is free to pursue her (Tolkien, 1985, p. 179; l. 719). Tolkien upturns Faërie convention, transforming the villainous La Belle Dame of Keats into the redemptive Lúthien. Rather than sap the life from Beren, Lúthien's singing heals his heart and gives him a 'new life' (Tolkien, 1985, p. 175; l. 556).

Beren's enchantment by the song of Lúthien is important because it anticipates Tolkien's theory of elvish 'creative magic' (Pask, 2013, p. 134). Tolkien explained that their '"magic" is Art, delivered from many of its human limitations: more effortless, more quick, more complete (product, and vision in unflawed correspondence)' (2006a, p. 146). Elvish art is lifted far beyond the capabilities of mortal beings, they 'not only practise enchantment as their art, they embody it' so that the voice of an elf is enough to render a mortal enchanted (Curry, 2014, p. 1). Shippey has most prominently commented on the elvish tradition as achieving a 'romanticism, multitudinousness, imperfect comprehension' that smothers the audience in 'rich and continuous uncertainty' (2005, p. 219). It offers us 'romantic glimpses' of the wider mythology and enchants us to imagine the greater world and its history (Shippey, 2005, p. 219). Shippey's chosen illustration comes from the chapter 'Many Meetings' in *The Fellowship of the Ring*:

> At first the beauty of the melodies and of the interwoven
> words in elven-tongues, even though [Frodo] understood
> them little, held him in a spell, as soon as he began to
> attend to them. Almost it seemed that the words took
> shape, and visions of far lands and bright things that he
> had never yet imagined opened out before him; and the
> firelit hall became like a golden mist above seas of foam
> that sighed upon the margins of the world. Then the
> enchantment became more and more dreamlike, until he
> felt that an endless river of swelling gold and silver was
> flowing over him, too multitudinous for its pattern to be

comprehended; it became part of the throbbing air about

him, and it drenched and drowned him. Swiftly he sank

under its shining weight into a deep realm of sleep

(Tolkien, 2007, p. 233).

The effect on Frodo is powerful and indicative that 'Tolkien's idea of poetry mirrored

his ideas of language; in neither did he think sound should be divorced from sense'

(Shippey, 2005, p. 222). Shippey considers Frodo to be 'listening in a highly

Keatsian style' (2005, p. 219). There are various interpretations to what Shippey

could mean by 'Keatsian style'. The most obvious is the observed mental flight that

Frodo experiences when he is enchanted. His mind is transported far away, across

the 'foam / Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn' to the 'margins of the world' just

as the narrator of Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale' flies on 'viewless wings of Poesy'

thanks to the song of the Nightingale (1900b, pp. 100 – 101; ll. 31 – 33). It should be

noted that mental flight was a strong trope of Romantic poetry. Jack Stillinger has

commented on the structure of the Romantic lyric as ascending to mental flight and

descending finally back to reality (1971, p. 101). However, in the early twentieth

century, mental flight was more closely associated with Keats's poetry. In his 1926

work, *The Mind of John Keats*, Clarence Thorpe commented on the effect as 'poetic

flights into dream-worlds, where the soul of the poet is detached temporarily from the

actuality of men and things, and builds for itself a habitation of its own' (Thorpe,

1926, p. 36).

The second viewpoint is the synaesthesia that Frodo experiences. The

technique has long been considered an 'essential factor in [the] conception and

make-up' of much of Keats's poetry (Ullmann, 1945, p. 826). The early twentieth

century saw synaesthesia as an 'innovation of the eighteenth (or even nineteenth) century and narrowly associated it with a specifically Romantic psychology' (O'Malley, 1957, pp. 397 – 398). Keats was seen as reacting to the 'dryness and didacticism of certain pseudo-classicists' (Babbitt, 1910, p. 130) who had 'deliberately repressed the individual life of the senses' in favour for an 'analytic-objective way' of poetic presentation (Erhardt-Siebold, 1932, p. 583). The Romantics were the ones who 'rediscovered the life of the senses' (Erhardt-Siebold, 1932, p. 583) and Keats's 'O for a Life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts!' exemplifies this, throwing theoretical weight behind his use of synaesthesia (1901c, p. 47).

Remembering the link that ties Keats to Morris and Tolkien, it is interesting that the technique is used frequently in the Pre-Raphaelite's work. The Brotherhood to a larger degree 'believed in synaesthesia as a means of realistic effects' and aimed to portray it in their visual as well as their written art (Ullmann, 1937, pp. 143 – 144). There is no doubt that this line of thought came directly from Keats, whose use of the technique was well-known. Morris's poetry has been described as 'decorative in the deepest sense of the word. His realism is the result of a careful observation of little details, of nuances which would seem almost commonplace if they were plucked out of their surroundings' (Ullmann, 1937, p. 145). In his study of six works by Morris, Stephen Ullmann located approximately three hundred and two accounts of synaesthesia. They did not include Morris's larger works, in which 'certainly hundreds' still exist (Ullmann, 1937, p. 147). Ullmann broke the three hundred and two down in order to ascertain how Morris knitted the senses together:

	Touch	Heat	Taste	Smell	Sound	Sight	Total Amount
Touch	—	18	2	10	131	45	206
Heat	—	—	—	2	4	4	10
Taste	3	9	—	4	46	10	72
Smell	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sound	1	—	—	—	—	3	4
Sight	1	1	—	—	8	—	10
Total Amount	5	28	2	16	189	62	302

(Fig. 1, 1937, p. 148).

If sound (horizontal axis) is cross-referenced with touch, heat, taste and sight (vertical axis), we find that there are a total of one hundred and eighty nine occurrences. This vastly outweighs sight by one hundred and twenty seven. It is clear that sound took precedent and this could have been inspired by Keats. Although 'no other poet refers to taste-reactions so often' as the Romantic poet, his keen interest in sound can be located in a multitude of poems (Erhardt-Siebold, 1932, p. 591). Morris could have drawn on Keats's synaesthesia, which was subsequently inherited by Tolkien in his intense reading of Morris.

Returning to the extract given above from 'Many Meetings', the hobbit likens the song to an 'endless river of swelling gold and silver . . . flowing over him'. Frodo visualises the words of the poem as the rich colours of 'gold and silver' while they physically course over him. The effect is at the same time mental and deeply physical, as synaesthetic as Tolkien whenever he 'tasted' a new language or when Keats 'feasted' on Homer. When Frodo wakes up he can still feel the residue of his enchantment through his synaesthesia. The hobbit recalls how the 'sweet syllables of the Elvish song fell like clear jewels of blended word and melody' (Tolkien, 2007, p. 238). For Tolkien and Keats, synaesthesia was clearly a powerful result of vocal enchantment, tying it closely with the transcendency of Faërie.

Keats and Tolkien's similar use of thematic Faërie material binds them closer together more so than any other Romantic poet. When we turn to Tolkien's early verse in *The Book of Lost Tales*, it does not come as a surprise to find that the poems Vaninskaya and others have singled out as 'Keatsian' contain either mental flight, synaesthesia, or both. 'The Happy Mariners' and many others poems are saturated in mental flight:

> chanting snatches of a mystic tune
>
> go through the shadows and the dangerous seas
>
> Past sunless lands to fairy leas
>
> (Tolkien, 1984, p. 274, ll. 28 – 30).

The lines sound like an embellished parallel of the Nightingale's song in 'Ode to a Nightingale'. To recall Shippey, there are mere 'glimpses' of the 'faery lands forlorn' but the vision is not fully 'grasped'.

For Tolkien the 'Ode to a Nightingale' was not just a poem about Faërie, it was the prime example of a 'synesthetic experience in which sight and hearing merge so totally as to form a metaphorical unit that flouts conventional sensory boundaries' and 'weaves a delicate tapestry of correspondences whose resonance exceeds by far the linear logic of syntagmatic combination' (Cavallaro, 2013, p. 164). The Ode gave Tolkien more than just keywords to use, it acted as a reference point for how synaesthesia could be used as a tool for vocal enchantment in 'The Lay of Leithian'.[23] Examples of synaesthesia are scattered across various poems in *The*

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[23] In the third canto of 'The Lay of Leithian' when Thingol is enchanted by Melian her voice is described as 'sweet singing' (Tolkien, 1985, p. 172; l. 437). This is repeated later when Beren is

Book of Lost Tales and most frequently focus on sound. In 'The Shores of Faëry' for instance, the foam of the sea is 'silver music' (Tolkien, 1984, p, 271; l. 15). In the first version of 'Kortirion among the Trees', Tolkien writes of the 'sad and haunting magic note' and the 'mellow sounds of sadness' (Tolkien, 1983, pp. 34 – 35; ll. 63 – 89). As the poem was reworked, these were experimented with so that the 'haunting flute' came to produce a 'thin and clear and cold . . . note' and the sounds of sadness are now intermingled with 'musics sweet' (Tolkien, 1983, pp. 37 – 38; ll. 61 – 87). The second version added the line: 'odour and the slumberous noise of meads' (Tolkien, 1983, p. 38; l. 72). Finally, Tolkien seems to settle on the description of 'Chill music' (Tolkien, 1983, p. 41; l. 58).

The most significant poem is 'The Horns of Ylmir' (1917) which started out as a poem that celebrated the coast of the Lizard Peninsula in Cornwall. 'The Tides' (1914) became 'Sea Chant of an Elder Day' (1915) then 'The Horns of Ylmir'.[24] The poem 'mirrors the germination of Tolkien's mythology over a period of four significant years in his life' and is built around the synaesthesia of the ocean (Atherton, 2012, p. 123). Atherton has noted how 'in the vivid expression "and their war song burst to flame" (line 32) the sense of something heard (war song) is transformed into something seen and felt (the flames)' (Atherton, 2012, p. 125). The poem could possibly be read as powerful personification that gives life to the ocean. But several passages go beyond personification into synaesthesia. Lines like 'whose roaring foaming music crashed in endless cadency' which was afterwards edited into 'whose endless roaring music crashed in foaming harmony' are prime examples (Tolkien,

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chasing Lúthien and her 'music welled . . . and swayed his soul with sweetness' (Tolkien, 1985, p. 176; ll. 600 – 603). In his wanderings in Doriath Beren further senses the 'murmurous warmth' of surrounding nature (Tolkien, 1985, p. 178; l. 660).

[24] See Appendix C for the complete poem.

1986, pp. 216 – 218; l. 16). 'Roaring foaming' and 'foaming harmony' embody Tolkien's synaesthesia. Sound is at the core of the poem for the 'immeasurable hymn of Ocean' is likened to the musical instrument of the organ and the storm acts as an 'endless fugue of echoes' that 'splashed against wet stone' (Tolkien, 1986, p. 217; ll. 45 – 49). Notice how the 'magic drift[s]' only when the 'music loosed its bands' which ties the poem to those examined above and the extract from 'Many Meetings' in *The Fellowship of the Ring* (Tolkien, 1986, p. 217; l. 67). The enchantment felt by the narrator is solely generated through synaesthesia with sound, nothing else.

As Briggs noted 'the English poets of the Romantic Revival showed comparatively little knowledge of fairies or interest in them' (1967, p. 208). Although anachronistic to the time when Tolkien was writing 'The Lay of Leithian', it has already been established that by 1931, he was familiar with the Romantics. He could have easily made this assumption himself, deciding perhaps to pay more attention to Keats, especially those poems that engage with Faërie, such as 'La Belle' or 'The Eve of St. Agnes'. His fondness for synaesthesia indicates his familiarity with Keats, and his choice to rewrite the Faërie seductress suggests how he intended to show the multifaceted nature of Faërie. Keats may be closer to Tolkien's ideal vision of Faërie, but in 'The Eve of St. Agnes', the Romantic poet fell short of depicting the true 'perilous land' that is full of 'pitfalls for the unwary and dungeons for the overbold' (Tolkien, 2014, p. 27).

V – Addressing the English Literary Tradition: 'The Eve of St. Agnes'

Madeline and Porphyro's climactic flight in 'The Eve of St. Agnes' bears much resemblance to Beren and Lúthien's own in 'The Tale of Tinúviel' and 'The Lay of

Leithian'. The medieval, fantastical, Gothic setting is a close parallel and the structure of the escapes mirror each other: the threatening parties in both narratives lie asleep; the couples must escape without waking anyone and at the final door they encounter a canine guard. In a 1907 study on 'The Eve of St. Agnes' it is noted how the tale draws from the tower scene in Boccaccio's *Filocolo* (1336), but 'the elopement of the lovers in St. Agnes Eve is not in *Filocolo*', Keats adds it in 'to make the episode a complete unit' (MacCracken, 1907, pp.148 – 151). He uses it to frame the scene in lush, symbolic imagery: the guards are 'sleeping dragons' and the lovers must escape through a 'darkling way' with only a few 'chain-drooped lamp[s]' while portrayals of predatory animals pose the reminder that they could be caught (1900b, pp. 89 – 90; ll. 353 – 358).

In the prose version 'The Tale of Tinúviel' Tolkien hurries over the escape in a single sentence: the 'twain fled desperately from the hall, stumbling wildly down many dark passages till from the glimmering of grey light they knew they neared the gates' (1984, p. 33). As of yet there is a loose structural similarity, only extended slightly by Keats's 'sleeping dragons' becoming the more corporeal 'adders', 'wolves' and 'evil things' (Tolkien, 1984, pp. 32 – 33), and the final obstacle of the 'wakeful bloodhound' being refashioned into a very real, vicious wolf, Karkaras, who bites Beren's hand off before they escape (Keats, 1900b, p. 90; l. 365).[25]

With the second setting of Beren and Lúthien, this time as the long poem 'The Lay of Leithian' (written between 1925 and 1931, then abandoned), Tolkien embellished the couple's escape from Angband, the headquarters of the Dark Lord, Morgoth. Set in iambic tetrameter with rhyming couplets, the 'evil things' have now

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[25] In 'The Lay of Leithian', the name Karkaras changes to Carcharoth.

been fully realised as familiar beings in the bestiary of Tolkien's world:

> About [Morgoth] sat his awful thanes,
>
> the Balrog-lords with fiery manes,
>
> redhanded, mouthed with fangs of steel;
>
> devouring wolves were crouched at heel . . .
>
> Orc and beast
>
> (Tolkien, 1985, pp. 296 – 298; ll. 3896 - 3989).

Although no dragons are present the passage is more overwhelming with its attention on the carnivorous mouths of the Balrogs and wolves that could 'devour' Beren and Lúthien – which is repeated in their later encounter with Carcharoth, whose 'jaws were gaping like a tomb, / his teeth were bare, his tongue aflame' (Tolkien, 1985, p. 307; ll. 4191 – 4192).

The transition from Keats's bloodhound to Carcharoth sees some important folkloric development. A hound is a tradition folkloric symbol of a guardian and Cerberus from Greek mythology stands as a fine example of this. Keats and Tolkien's hounds both guard the exits of their respective lairs and stir when approached. However, Keats falls short of presenting his bloodhounds as truly intimidating, it simply does nothing as Madeline and Porphyro glide by and in doing so conjures an ending devoid of tension and genuine fear for the lovers. The bland conclusion will have possibly bored Tolkien. For all the poem's celebrated attributes, it failed to provide a satisfyingly enticing ending. In 'The Lay of Leithian' he recast

Keats's hounds as Carcharoth, a truly terrifying guardian who held strong ties with the English folkloric figure of the Black Dog.

From when Carcharoth is first introduced he is presented as a vicious guardian: 'none may walk, nor creep, nor glide, / nor thrust with power his menace past / to enter Morgoth's dungeon vast' (Tolkien, 1985, p. 289; ll. 3721– 3723). His fury at being tricked by Beren and Lúthien leads to action and Carcharoth tears Beren's hand off. The act echoes the Norse wolf Fenrir, who similarly consumed the hand of the Norse God, Týr, tying Tolkien's hound to European mythic history. The connection to myth and folklore is important in making Carcharoth a terrifying threat. He stands guard over the 'brink of hell' (Tolkien, 1985, p. 291; l. 3804) which links him to the Black Dog, who is either a 'supernatural creatures in [its] own right or manifestations of the Devil' (Simpson & Roud, 2003, p. 25). A further attribute that aids in painting this supernatural portrait of Carcharoth is 'his eyes new-kindled with dull fire' (Tolkien, 1985, p. 307; l. 4189) which recalls the Satanic 'glowing eyes' of the Black Dog (Simpson & Roud, 2003, p. 25). His presence is enough to impart intense fear into any who come across him. It has also been commonly believed across England that a Black Dog is an 'omen of death' and on first meeting Carcharoth (Simpson & Roud, 2003, p. 25), Beren foreshadows his own death by calling the hound 'the very maw of death' (Tolkien, 1985, p. 289; l. 3740).

Keats failed to impart these terrifying characteristics to his hounds in Tolkien's eyes and posthumous portrayals of the scene still failed to inject any sense of fear into it. In the 1848 depiction by the Hunt, *The Flight of Madeline and Porphyro during the Drunkenness attending the Revelry* (Fig. 2)*,* only two sleeping figures and harmless looking hounds block Madeline and Porphyro's path. The captured 'caution' of the lovers pays more attention to the lushness of Keats's imagery than

the terror of the escape (Wootton, 2006, p. 47). Tolkien's setting is ultimately wilder than Keats's instead of suggesting that Faërie exists over the hill, he places his protagonists in a subterranean Faërieland (dungeon-like if we reference *On Fairy-stories*) that is filled with deformed and hybridised humanoid beings.

(Fig. 2, 1848).

In 'The Lay of Leithian' Tolkien's 'dark passage' broadens into an excerpt that fits the Gothic overtones of the poem:

> Up through the dark and echoing gloom
>
> as ghosts from many-tunnelled tomb,
>
> up from the mountains' roots profound
>
> and the vast menace underground,
>
> their limbs aquake with deadly fear,

terror in eyes, and dread in ear,

together fled they, by the beat

affrighted of their flying feet

(1985, pp. 306 – 307; ll. 4176 – 4183).

Although both authors use similes to compare their fleeing couples to dead figures: 'ghosts' (Tolkien) and 'phantoms' (Keats), the tone has dramatically changed. Keats's characters are silent and 'beset with fears', our attention is easily diverted from them onto the typically Keatsian pictorial elaborations that inspired Hunt (1900b, p. 90; l. 352).[26] Tolkien deliberately avoids this and breaks from Keats's tradition. In fact he is closer to Ann Radcliffe's definition of terror where it 'expands the soul' (1826, p. 150). The flight is intensified by describing the characters' senses: 'vast menace underground', 'limbs aquake with deadly fear', 'terror in eyes', 'dread in ear'. It creates a much more dramatic, suspenseful flight where Beren and Lúthien are genuinely terrified of being caught. The enjambment of the stanza blends with the rapidly flowing alliteration to quicken the poem's pulse 'gloom . . . ghosts', 'tunnelled tomb', 'many . . . mountains . . . menace', 'fled . . . affrighted . . . flying feet'. The scene in 'The Lay of Leithian' unfreezes and humanises the lifelessness of 'The Eve of St. Agnes', showcasing how poetry can return to the wilder, less restrained side of Faërie when set in a looser form than the Spenserian stanza.

The achieved effect in each form is quite different. It has been noted how Spenser 'exemplified much that [Tolkien] hated' and the frigid, square frames of the Spenserian stanza certainly would not have appealed to him (Shippey, 2005, p.

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[26] When the oil painting was included in the 1848 Royal Academy Exhibition, it was accompanied by lines 361 – 369.

182). Spenser's Anglican faith, 'maligning [of] Catholics' in *The Faerie Queene* (Miller, 2008, p. 200), allegorical portrayal of Faërie and 'reduc[tion of] the ancient and sinister figures of the Elves to domestic Fairies' deeply upset Tolkien (Groom, 2014, p. 287), whose Roman Catholicism and advocacy of the unattainable meaning of Faërie drove his writing (Tolkien, 2014, p. 32). Considering Tolkien studied the Romantics at school and university and later taught Keats at Leeds, he may have noticed the Spenserian stanza as performing the opposite of the 'infinite' and 'suggestiveness' that scholars used to define Romanticism. Subsequently ripping the same qualities from Faërie that he admired so much: 'Faërie cannot be caught in a net of words; for it is one of its qualities to be indescribable, though not imperceptible' (Tolkien, 2014, p. 32). Contemporary scholars may have noted how the Romantics did not use the stanza for satirical or epic reasons (as was common practice in the eighteenth century; see Phelps, 1893, p. 48 and Morton, 1913, p. 384), instead paying 'especial attention to its pictorial capabilities', identifying 'The Eve of St. Agnes' as a key example (Morton, 1907, p. 649). To Tolkien, this was damaging to the infinity and unattainability of Faërie as much as it was to the Romantic oeuvre. In freezing Faërie and the imagination in place on the page, the Romantics had ignored its '"rationalisation", which transformed the glamour of Elfland into mere finesse' (2014, p. 29).

The pictorialism of 'The Eve of St. Agnes' has always 'made the strongest of impressions on admirers' and 'reads like a series of painted windows, each framed by the hexameter closure of Spenser's stanza' (Kucich, 1991, p. 203). Watching Keats limit his possible tie with Faërie because of the restrictive boundaries of the Spenserian stanza would have highlighted how dangerous the Renaissance poet's influence really was. His preference for 'colour, richly ornate, tremulous with emotion'

drove his poem away from the medieval tradition for Tolkien, distilling it of the action and danger that was poured into 'The Lay of Leithian' (Beers, 1901, p. 125).

Tolkien worked to reshape Keats and Spenser so they become, to use Shippey's phrase, 'more positive' (2005, p. 208). It strongly anticipates his later rewriting of Shakespeare's 'shabby use . . . of the coming of "Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill"' into 'a setting in which the trees . . . really march to war' (Tolkien, 2006a, p. 212). Tolkien found scenes from the English Literary Canon which lacked drive and action and subsequently revised them in his own work so the mythic wonder and excitement he admired so much from the Northern literary tradition shone brighter. Shippey first applied this phrase to Shakespeare and argued that Tolkien reconnected him with the 'old English stories and traditions [he] had too often neglected . . . for later and sillier interests' (2005, p. 208). He locates this specifically in one linked moment from *Macbeth* and *The Two Towers*. Macbeth's apprehensive 'If we should fail?' is unconvincingly answered with Lady Macbeth's 'We fail?' and to Tolkien (Shakespeare, 2008, p. 120), such a potential 'misprint' of alliterative assonance required a positive stylistic change (Shippey, 2005, p. 206). *Macbeth* features much alliteration (Shippey counts nearly forty examples) which was in itself a traditional poetic form that Tolkien admired, but alliterative assonance was also 'very common in Old English poetry' and he tried to bring it into the twentieth century with works like 'The Lay of the Children of Húrin' and *The Fall of Arthur* (Shippey, 2005, p. 207). In chapter six of *The Two Towers,* 'The King of the Golden Hall', Gandalf responds to Théoden with the rally 'if we fail, we fall', correcting *Macbeth* and strengthening the play's connection to the traditions that existed before the Renaissance (Tolkien, 2007, p. 518).

The habit of reconnecting authors of the English canon with their English roots via Old English techniques and forms is, Shippey implies, deeply Tolkienian. In reading Colvin, Bradley and Keats, Tolkien must have understood how Keats had a similar root in old English stories and traditions to himself. Christine Gallant has even tracked 'folkloric touches in ["Imitation of Spenser" and "Calidore: A Fragment"] not found in Spenser or Shakespeare', revealing how from his earliest poems (the latter being quoted in Colvin) Keats wished to be a 'native bard of Britain' (Gallant, 2005, pp. 42 – 46). In 'The Lay of Leithian' Tolkien stylistically reconnects Keats to the folkloric traditions and wildness of the Northern tales through the form of the lay, freeing him from harmful implications of Spenser's shadow.

For the English, the lay performed a similar service to the ballad as it documented 'pre-literate traditions' that were absorbed by epics and forgotten over the course of time (Shippey, 2001, p. 234). Tolkien's choice places his poem before the epics of Homer and Virgil, *Beowulf* and 'The Eve of St. Agnes' chronologically, implying that behind the latter 'there must have been [an] earl[ier] . . . tradition' in England which Keats dipped into but, like Shakespeare, chose to misshape with Spenser's 'sillier' form (Shippey, 2001, p. 234). By reshaping English literary tradition in this way he was forging stronger links between canonical writers and England's forgotten traditions, Keats in particular.

Tolkien's life is brimming with moments when he was exposed to Keats's life, his poetry and relevant scholarship – whether he was aware of it or not. It was particularly noted that Keats's youth made him a fashionable idol for many young men at the time (even on the war Front) and in Tolkien's own life, he hypothetically found he could relate to Keats through their shared domestic tragedies. It is clear

from the mythology of *The Book of Lost Tales* that Tolkien read, taught and understood Keats to the extent where he utilised scenes from Keats's poetry to cultivate a truly inspiring vision of Faërie. The 'infinite' and 'suggestiveness' of Romanticism that contemporary scholars attributed to the movement and mindset is deeply rooted in Tolkien's vision of an English mythology that trumps all others. The fragmented glimpses into the past help conjure the sense of historical depth that readers have long been enchanted by in Tolkien's early and later works. His nods to Keats in texts as late as *The Lord of the Rings*, *English and Welsh* and the 'Smith of Wootton Major essay' show a curiosity that goes deeper than has previously been examined. Tolkien aligned Keats closer to his folkloric roots that Spenser had originally corrupted, saving him from a marred vision of Faërie that started to take over, in Tolkien's eyes, from the Renaissance. To consider Tolkien's early work to be in the 'shadow of Keats' is erroneous. They both saw Faërie as England and Britain's heritage and Tolkien certainly used Keats to swiftly build his mythology until he became, like Keats, a master of Faërie.

Chapter Two – Reviving the Lost Past

'Then comes a voice to Ossian, and awakes his soul! It is the voice of years that are gone! they roll before me, with all their deeds! I seize the tales, as they pass, and pour them forth in song' (Macpherson, 1807, p. 319).

'If a young, perhaps a female author, chooses to circulate a beautiful poem . . . under the disguise of antiquity, the public is surely more enriched by the contribution than injured by the deception' (Scott, 1849b, p. 16).

Sidney Colvin's *Keats* (1887) illuminated to J. R. R. Tolkien, more so than A. C. Bradley's *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (1909), that John Keats was concerned with the history of the English literary tradition. Keats's letters made it clear that he preferred one that contained 'no French idiom', only 'genuine English idiom in English words' (in Colvin, 1909, pp. 157 – 158). He anticipated Tolkien's own attitude to the 'polysyllabic barbarities' of the French language after the Norman Conquest (MacSwiney & Payton, 1910, p. 95). Keats found the figurehead for this in Thomas Chatterton and as this chapter will showcase, through new research into Tolkien's undergraduate notebooks, Tolkien was aware of not only Chatterton but his 'forger' predecessor, James Macpherson.

Macpherson and Chatterton were both pivotal influences on Keats's later work and through his reading and reworking of their mythological works, we can see Keats's interest in the past turning from the Mediterranean back to his native shores of Britain. Work has also been done on the similarities that exist between Tolkien and these two figures. Overlooked elsewhere in Tolkien scholarship, only Nick Groom, Jamie Williamson and Dimitra Fimi have thematically linked Chatterton to

Tolkien. The former acknowledges that 'it is not clear that Tolkien ever studied Chatterton' but notes that he was later a colleague of David Nichol Smith, an eminent eighteenth-century scholar, and was supposed to supervise a thesis on Thomas Tyrwhitt, the first editor of Chatterton's work (Groom, 2014, p. 295). Williamson's regrettably brief mention of Chatterton calls him a 'clear precursor to the . . . elaborate invented languages of Tolkien' (2015, pp. 64 – 65). Fimi then proceeds to 'tease out similarities and parallels' between the two antiquarians in their methods of approaching history (Fimi, 2016, p. 60). Macpherson has received slightly more attention. Tom Shippey explains that Tolkien would have seen the Scottish writer's work as 'phony', a poor example of a myth cycle (2007, p. 22). However, W. W. Robson, Howard Gaskill, Jamie Williamson, Brian Rosebury, Nick Groom, Deidre Dawson, John Hunter and Anna Bugajska have all examined the similarities and echoes of Macpherson that exist in Tolkien's works.[27] This chapter will build on these pre-existing areas of Tolkien scholarship that are still under-researched, offering new, primary evidence that Tolkien was familiar with Macpherson and Chatterton from Tolkien's undergraduate notebooks. It will argue that Tolkien and Keats drew on Macpherson and Chatterton's content as well as their methods of presenting history in order to revive the past they mourned and wished to re-establish. It will engage with early twentieth-century scholarship on Macpherson and Chatterton in order to present their academic portraits that Tolkien will have most likely known from his reading or encounters with other scholars in Oxford.

Macpherson and Chatterton were writing during the 1760s, a period that was known as early as the 1910s as the 'Age of Forgery'. This epoch saw a vast array of

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[27] See Shippey (2007, p. 22), Robson (1986, p. 234), Gaskill (1991, p. 6), Rosebury (2003, pp. 3 & 22), Groom (2014, pp. 294 – 295), Dawson (2005, pp. 108 – 118), Hunter (2005, pp. 61 – 72), Williamson (2015, pp. 63 – 64) and Bugajska (2014, pp. 159 – 168).

literary activities that included Horace Walpole's short-lived, spurious preface to *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) that supposed the novel to have been 'found in the library of an ancient catholic family in the north of England' and greater forged works by William Ireland, Macpherson and Chatterton (Walpole, 2014, p. 5). The latter two forged respective histories and mythologies in an effort to 'explore imaginatively the idea of authentic regression into the past' in order to reclaim it and revive a national pride (Haywood, 1986, p. 30).

In the *fin de siècle* and early twentieth century, Chatterton had developed two varying guises in the eyes of the public. The first was generated by the literary critics and philologists, who broke his work down and exposed his ignorance of Middle English. In particular, Walter Skeat's philological essay shed immense light on the origins of what he called the 'Rowley dialect', demystifying a key element of Chatterton's mythology (1872b, p. xl). In his editions of Chatterton's work, Skeat controversially swapped the language around so the medievalism were the footnotes and the modern English became the language of the poems. Skeat's editorial decisions started a trend in Chatterton scholarship, editions by Henry D. Roberts's (1906) and Sidney Lee (1906) replaced the Rowleyan words with the modern equivalent. To Skeat and others, Chatterton was simply a forger and second-rate language adapter.

The second was presented by the artists. Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Oscar Wilde are two members of an 'impassioned generation of artists and writers who established the conviction that Chatterton's works had positively redirected the course of English poetry' (Bristow & Mitchell, 2015, p. 15). They anticipated Groom's argument that Chatterton is a 'poet of English identity' (2002, p. 170). As Rossetti would insist, not knowing Chatterton 'is to be ignorant of the *true* day-spring of

modern romantic poetry', his work was to be revered and admired, not cast aside as juvenile rubbish (2010, p. 186). In 1906 Francis E. Clark argued that English in the early twentieth century owed much to the 'boy poets' Chatterton and Keats and, as chapter one noted, Keats was already a role model of sorts for England's youth around the Great War (1906, p. 265). Views were conflicted and Tolkien fitted somewhere in between them both. As a philologist he could have sided with Skeat, but as a fellow poet, forger of 'feigned history' and medievalist, he would have appreciated Chatterton's efforts and methodology in reconstructing the lost Anglo-Saxon past and drawn parallels with his own attempt to do the same thing from 1915 on.

Addressing the approach of the forgers much later, Marilyn Butler has called their intentions 'not a motive, but rather a strategy, part of a drive to unseat or delegitimise something in the present, by claiming authority from the past' and both writers certainly engineered their authority through the ancient figures of Thomas Rowley, Turgot and Ossian (2015, p. 4). Although Keats did not present a second identity as Macpherson or Chatterton, Tolkien did. Furthermore he similarly claimed numerous times that he had found, translated, selected and arranged his Arda material for the 'Men of a later age' (1996, p. 12). He briefly noted how the mythology grew from his discovery of the name Eärendel in Cynewulf's *Crist* in the summer of 1913 (Carpenter, 2002, p. 92), quickly 'adopting' the figure into his mythology (Tolkien, 2006a, p. 385). As Fimi speculates, his approach is not 'dissimilar from Chatterton's layers of ancient Bristol history via Rowley and Turgot' (2016, p. 52), Tolkien frequently makes his protagonists storytellers, editors or translators as a strategy to deepen the historical texture of the tales.

Tolkien's interest in these characters came from his own academic fascination in editing and translating ancient texts. Like his mythological characters, he was in charge of 'bringing ancient works and forgotten authors back to life' and ensuring the past lived on (Shippey, 2014, p. 41). 'The Golden Book of Heorrenda', which recorded the tales of the Elves by Eriol's third son, Heorrenda, and 'The Book of Lost Tales' by Ælfwine are the texts that were translated into *The Book of Lost Tales* (1983 – 1984). The Red Book of Westmarch contained *The Hobbit* (1937) and *The Lord of the Rings* (1954 – 1955) and had a long history of textual transmission. Bilbo Baggins was its first author, who handed it to his nephew, Frodo Baggins, who gave it to his friend Samwise Gamgee. It then travelled to Minas Tirith for antiquarian editing and expansion before finally returning to the Shire for marginalia (Tolkien, 2007, pp. 14 – 15). Verlyn Flieger has addressed the role that Tolkien played in the genealogy of The Red Book of Westmarch, calling him 'the last in the line' of 'transmitters, translators, redactors, scribes, and copyists'; he 'inserted his own name into the header and footer on the title-page of *The Lord of the Rings* (and thus into the history of the "book"), not as the author of the book but as its final transmitter/redactor' (2012, p. 42).

All of these texts have been 'filtered down to us through many minds, many disagreements, many rejections' much like *Beowulf*, Macpherson's *The Poems of Ossian* (1760 – 1765) and Chatterton's Rowley texts (Shippey, 2007, pp. 161 – 162), proving the tales' antiquity and converting them from 'tales and narratives' into 'historical artefacts' (Noad, 2000, p. 32). The reader is further reminded that they are reading a 'found' text by references to the Red Book: 'In presenting the matter of the Red Book, as a history for people of today to read, the whole of the linguistic setting has been translated as far as possible into terms of our own times' (Tolkien, 2007, p.

1133). Like Macpherson and Chatterton, Tolkien was deeply invested in presenting his works as found historical artefacts that had come from ancient texts.

The chapter will be structured in four sections and will build an understanding of Tolkien and Keats's approach to history in comparison to Macpherson and Chatterton's own. It will begin by examining Tolkien's undergraduate notebooks to locate what information he gleaned about the two forgers before he started writing *The Book of Lost Tales*. This will move on to tracking Tolkien's exposures to Chatterton through his friendship with C. S. Lewis and the supervision of several theses. A comparison of the pre-imperial attitudes present in all four writers will develop before examining individual presentational methods that Tolkien and Keats adopted from Macpherson and Chatterton, tying all four together as 'historical forgers'.

I – Tolkien's Undergraduate Notebooks and Contextual Survey

Tolkien's education at Oxford introduced him to a vast range of medieval texts and traditions in England. Through them he was able to observe how the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had compartmentalised the Middle Ages, adapting and romanticising it for each century's gain (Tolkien, 2006b, p. 173). Michaelmas term 1914 is well-known in Tolkien scholarship as being the genesis of his mythology. He came across the name Eärendel, started to read *The Kalevala* (1835) in deeper detail and devoted more time to learning Finnish. December concluded the term with a reunion of the T.C.B.S. that would afterwards be called the 'Council of London'. It was at this meeting that Tolkien 'found his voice' as a writer (Tolkien, 2006a, p. 10).

A year previous to these developments he was exposed to the period of the eighteenth century known as the 'Age of Forgery'. This came from David Nichol

Smith's lecture series 'Johnson and His Friends' that started on Wednesday 15th

October 1913 (Hammond & Scull, 2017a, p. 53). On Wednesday 22nd October,

Smith lectured on Samuel Johnson's criticism of Macpherson and Ossian and

provided sufficient bibliographical information for his students to take away and

investigate further. Tolkien took notes for this lecture and although they focus heavily

on Macpherson, Chatterton is included in the list of forgers:

[BODLEIAN LIBRARY MS. TOLKIEN A 21/4: GENERAL LITERATURE / GENERAL
MISCELLANEOUS, FOLS. 10 – 11]

Folio 10

Ossian ∴

    Johnson's criticism (one of the few critics)

Wordsworth's critic.<ism>

Influence of Ossian. on later poetry (Byron)

controversy . JS Smart. "James MacPherson"

The age of forgery. Chatterton: Horace Walpole.

Castle of Otranto. Ireland .(WH. Skeat. places)

James MacPh.<erson> 1736-1796. amid rain sky

tutor. (of T. Graham). holidaying at Spar of Moffat

in S.Scotl.<and> born Inverness. – univ<ersity> aberdeen

Edinburgh

Dr Blair. Fingall.

Fragment of A. Highland Poetry. 1760.

Folio 11

10 fragments. Celtic scholars find only 2 that have any trace of reality. ∵

Fingal an ancient epic in 6 books "1761".

Name Ossian (Oise) a real name. he made

him a contemp<orary> of the emperor Caracalla.

Temora in 8 book 1763.

This is the bulk of Ossianic poetry ∵————————∵

. ————————— .

They went forth to battle but they always fell.

Sylva Gadhelica —————————

No one denies a certain windy moonlight

Kind of poetry in parts of Ossian. Byron Goethe

etc could not have been so far deceived..

There may be much memory of reality.

Macph<erson> born about Culloden. ~~1745~~

It has real scenery <u>of a Kind</u>.. [28]

Strong strain of litt<erary> reminiscence.

(Milton a great source)

The lecture works as a key moment in Tolkien's developing fascination with myth and provided him with a list of his mythical ancestors. Although there is no evidence that Tolkien borrowed any copies of Macpherson, there was nothing preventing him from reading about Macpherson or his works. The notebook mentions the author J. S. Smart, whose 1905 book *James Macpherson: An Episode In Literature* Tolkien could have easily read as well. It is evident that David Nichol Smith's lecture derives from Smart's book, referencing it as a recommendation for students to consult. Tolkien appears to have also copied down quotations that resonated strongly with him: 'They went forth to battle but they always fell.' is the misquoted line 'they came

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[28] These three words are underlined four times.

forth to war, but they always fell' (Macpherson, 1807, p. 244). This contains a poignant thematic echoing of the Northern courage that Tolkien admired so much in Norse and other Northern mythology, using it to enrich his own fiction as early as the 1910s. The noting of Ossian as a 'real name' and his temporal positioning as a 'contemp<orary> of the emperor Caracalla' evidenced to Tolkien that Macpherson was tying his mythology into authentic Celtic and Roman history. This of course preceded Tolkien's own attempt to tie authentic English history (Hengest and Horsa) into his own mythology only a few years later. Although he would reference *The Kalevala* as a key influence on him, his earlier exposure to Macpherson's mythological framework for Scotland will have surely stirred Tolkien's interest.

The biographical information will have brought to Tolkien's attention how Macpherson was trying to preserve a disappearing Scottish heritage, much as he would soon try to preserve a lost English heritage. The parallel in their motives stem very much from their shared sense of loss (Dawson, 2005, p. 113). Ossian's melancholy and sorrow will have further indicated to Tolkien that he was 'a leading force for chang[e in] the popular taste' of Europe as various names are mentioned as engaging with the texts either in a critical sense (Johnson and Wordsworth) or through inspiration (Byron and Goethe) (Saunders, 1894, pp. 16 – 17). Macpherson was understood at the time as an important ancestor of the Romantic Movement who started to break away from the Classical restrictions of the Enlightenment. Contemporary scholars, such as Henry Beers, read Macpherson through a Romantic lens. Beers filtered Macpherson through the sublimity of Edmund Burke's culturally and aesthetically significant *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas on the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757): 'the mountain torrent, the dark rock in the ocean, the mist on the hill, the ghosts of heroes half seen by the setting moon' (Beers, 1899,

p. 310). Smart thought that Macpherson 'stood at the parting of the ways: as a poet he went, little as he knew it, with the full current of the modern stream; as a critic he was pedantically attached to classical rules and strove to adapt his writings to their requirements' (1905, p. 86). For Smart, Macpherson's melancholy and brooding Highland mountainous terrain 'swelled the romantic movement' (1905, p. 86).

The European appeal for this particular scenery was documented by Smart, noting the revolution of taste and pride in the highland landscape that found favour widely with other writers and composers such as Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Johann Gottfried Herder, Gottfried August Bürger, Johann Heinrich Voss, Friedrich Schiller, Madame de Staël, François-René Chateaubriand, Novalis, Ludwig Tieck, Alphonse de Lamartine, Franz Schubert, George Sand, Felix Mendelssohn and Johannes Brahms (Smart, 1905, p. 16). The poems brought Scotland's highland terrain into the forefront of European literary taste and culture, challenging the sublimity of Switzerland's mountain ranges. Macpherson and Ossian's 'regret for a great and heroic past, not lost beyond all recall, and of lamentation for the warriors of an earlier time whose day of glory [wa]s gone' (Smart, 1905, p. 29) strikingly anticipates the mourning in Chatterton's Rowley texts, Keats's 'defeat of the British Celts by the Romans' in *Hyperion* (1819) and Tolkien's mourning for England's lost Faërie culture (Gallant, 2005, p. 67). All four attempted to show that the 'shadow of the past is not only inescapable but motivates and defines the present' (Groom, 2014, p. 294).

The mention of Chatterton in the undergraduate notebook is also highly significant. It shows that Chatterton was part of the British literary backcloth like Keats, Johnson and Macpherson, that Tolkien will have had some awareness of as a Literature and Language student. The David Nichol Smith October 1913 lecture

proves that the poet was taught (if briefly) at Oxford in the 1910s as part of the literary period known as the 'Age of Forgery'. The lecture came one year prior to Tolkien's investigation into the backstory of Eärendil and the composition of *The Story of Kullervo* (2018). Although there is no evidence that he looked further into Macpherson or Chatterton at this point, there are some contextual details that give us reason to understand that they were both recurring figures in Tolkien's life.

Tolkien had recently started to read the poetry of Francis Thompson and the year 1913 marked the publication of *The Works of Francis Thompson* in three volumes, which Tolkien purchased across 1913 and 1914 (Hammond & Scull, 2017c, p. 1292). Although Thompson's failed suicide attempt was not mentioned in these editions, contemporary texts did explain how 'the hand of Thomas Chatterton – reaching out to [Thompson] from the twilight world of poetry and of death – stayed his own hand' (Brégy, 1912, p. 144). A vision of Chatterton supposedly appeared to Thompson in this moment of despair and stalled him. It was still believed in the early twentieth century that Chatterton had committed suicide and was a 'fatal model for the Romantic, and later Pre-Raphaelite, poet' (Groom, 2002, p. 12).[29] Tolkien spoke about Thompson to the Exeter College Essay Club on 4th March 1914 and began with 'biographical details' on Thompson's life before proceeding to analyse his poetry (Hammond & Scull, 2017a, p. 58). Thanks to Andrew Higgins, we can consult the transcript of Tolkien's talk. The apparition is not mentioned, but this does not mean that Tolkien was not aware of the biographical detail (2015, pp. 288 – 290).

Tolkien's undergraduate notebooks suggest that he was aware that calling Macpherson a fraud and forger was a popular move. Contemporary scholarship in

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[29] See Clark (1906, p. 258).

Alfred Nutt and J. S. Smart ridiculed Macpherson's work and Tolkien was exposed to *The Poems of Ossian* in a lecture on the publication's most hostile critic, Samuel Johnson. So when Tolkien came to creating a typescript of his essay 'The Kalevala', it is of little surprise that he refers to Ossian in a derogatory way. The dating of the typescript is problematic. Flieger consulted various Tolkien scholars and a conjectured range of dates appears to place the composition of the typescript between 1919 and 1924 (Tolkien, 2018b, p. 64). It is only in the typescript, however, that the following appears:

> The lateness of the date of the [*The Kalevala*] and publication is apt to make those with the (probably not entirely wholesome) modern thirst for the 'authentically primitive' doubt whether the wares are quite genuine. Read and doubt no more. Bogus archaism and the pseudo-primitive is as different from this as Ossian is from Middle Irish romance (Tolkien, 2018b, p. 112).

Relating Ossian to Ireland's tales ties back to his undergraduate notes, where the *Silva Gadelica* (1892) is misspelt as 'Sylva Gadhelica'. Standish H. O'Grady's publication fell within the 'Celtic Revival' that sought to reclaim Ireland's folkloric heritage and this meant taking back the Irish heritage of Ossian. Tolkien's reference to 'Middle Irish romance' appears to imply that he saw Scottish lore as descendent in some way from Irish.[30] The 'bogus archaism' in Ossian strengthens Shippey's point that Tolkien considered *The Poems of Ossian* to be nothing but 'phony' (2007, p.

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[30] Thanks to John D. Rateliff for this insight.

22). However, as was discussed in chapter one, Tolkien had a tendency to engage with texts that he considered 'flawed'. The additional popularity of discrediting Macpherson in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries must have influenced these lines to some degree. The northern courage that the texts emulated must have shown Tolkien that there was something desirable about *The Poems of Ossian*.

Macpherson and Chatterton would continue to come to Tolkien's attention. The next encounter will have been after he returned to Oxford, this time as the Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon. Here he would meet C. S. Lewis, and together they would be considered the 'origins of modern fantasy' (James, 2012, pp. 62 – 63). Lewis became a Fellow and Tutor at Magdalen College, Oxford in 1925. Much later he briefly mentioned Macpherson and Chatterton in his 'Addison' chapter of James L. Clifford's *Eighteenth-Century English Literature* (1959). He called both of their mythological projects objects of 'wish-fulfilment' with a 'sincere impulse' to 'seek in the past that great romantic poetry' (Lewis, 1959, pp. 154 – 155). His reference to the Romantic Movement links neatly back to the start of his career where he lectured on the eighteenth-century Romantics between 1926 and 1929. Lewis's library included two annotated volumes of Chatterton's works signed by his brother, Warren Lewis, with the date 8th November 1928 (Marion E. Wade Center, 1986, p. 12).[31] At this time Warren was serving in the British Expeditionary Force in Kowloon, China. He retired on 21st December 1932 and returned to England, but these dates come after Lewis's lectures. It is therefore likely

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[31] Chatterton, T. (1842). *The Poetical Works Of Thomas Chatterton: With Notices Of His Life, History Of The Rowley Controversy. A Selection Of His Letters, And Notes Critical And explanatory*. [Ed. Willcox. C. B.]. Cambridge: Metcalfe and Palmer. This information comes from personal correspondence with Laura Schmidt from The Marion E. Wade Center, Wheaton College.

that Warren owned the two volumes initially and gave them to Lewis when he returned.

In his second term of employment Lewis commenced in presenting his first set of lectures on 23rd January 1926: 'Some Eighteenth-Century Precursors of the Romantic Movement' (Heck, 2019, p. 417). He would revise the lectures over the following two academic years: 6th May 1927 Trinity term saw the lecture series change to 'Eighteenth-Century Romantics' (Heck, 2019, p. 460), and 23rd January 1929, the final series, changed again to 'The Eighteenth-Century Medievalists' (Heck, 2019, p. 483).[32]

Contemporary scholarship gives us further reason to believe that the two writers featured. At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, writers were deeply concerned with the origins and scope of British Romanticism. Works from Henry Beers and William Lyon Phelps placed Macpherson as a key precursor to the Romantic poets. William Courthope (a previous Oxford Professor of Poetry between 1895 and 1901) grouped Macpherson and Chatterton with various other eighteenth-century writers in 'The Early Romantic Movement in English Poetry' chapter of *A History of English Poetry: Volume V* (1905).[33] He classed Chatterton as a pseudo-medievalist (Courthope, 1905, p. xxv) and called the Rowley forgeries a 'typical result of the Romantic Movement in English Poetry during the eighteenth century' (Courthope, 1905, p. 418). Chatterton's interest in the Anglo-Saxons, his conjuring of the tenth century poet Turgot and his lasting impression on the key

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[32] The change from 'Romantics' to 'Medievalists' could possibly be down to Tolkien's influence. Dimitra Fimi and Andrew Higgins note how 'by 1927, Tolkien had got Lewis involved in his newly formed informal club to read Old Norse sagas in their original', suggesting that Lewis's perception on the scope of his lectures may have changed (quoted in Tolkien, 2016, p. xxxvii).
[33] It is curious to note that Courthope's volumes are noted as 'useful' by Tolkien during his work in Oxford (quoted in Cilli, 2019, p. 62).

Romantic poets (especially Keats) was further documented by biographies like E. H. W. Meyerstein's *A Life of Chatterton* (1930). To Lewis, these all signposted Macpherson and Chatterton's integral connection to the Romantic period; they could not be ignored.[34]

Meyerstein's *A Life of Thomas Chatterton* will have sparked interest in Oxford as he had conducted some research for the book at the Bodleian, examining the original 'Yeloue Rolle' and 'Songe of Ælla' that the library held (1930, p. viii). It must have caught Lewis's attention as well – thinking about the future of his 'Eighteenth Century Medievalists' lecture series. There are no recordings of Meyerstein ever meeting Lewis or Tolkien. It should be further clarified at this moment that the Magdalen archives provide no evidence that Meyerstein was a Fellow at the College during his life, he was never offered any position after completing his degree.[35] The only other tie that exists between Meyerstein and Tolkien is the publication of their poems in the *Oxford Poetry* anthologies during their overlapping years as students. Tolkien published 'Goblin Feet' in the 1915 collection whereas Meyerstein saw his poetry appear in volumes from 1910 through to 1917. It is possible therefore that Tolkien read some of his poetry during his time as a student and was aware of the name.

After Tolkien and Lewis first met on 11th May 1926 during an English Faculty meeting at Merton College, they continued to bond over their shared love of Norse Mythology in Lewis's office (Carpenter, 2002, pp. 192 – 194). Although this was initially their key motive, there is no doubt that they discussed other literary works

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[34] Meyerstein would draw on and evaluate these references in *A Life of Chatterton*, examining Chatterton's influence on Coleridge, Blake, Wordsworth, Shelley and Byron.
[35] This information comes from personal correspondence with Dr Charlotte Berry from Magdalen College.

and Tolkien later recalled Lewis's remark: '"Tollers, there is too little of what we really like in stories. I am afraid we shall have to try and write some ourselves"' (2006a, p. 378). They 'really liked' myth and in their discussions on the mechanics of myth-building Lewis's knowledge of Macpherson and Chatterton will have come in handy. During meetings of the Inklings, a group of '*practicing poets*' (Tolkien, 2006a, p.36), Tolkien would present extracts from *The Lord of the Rings* as it was being written. Just as Keats could have been discussed during meetings of the T.C.B.S., it is possible that the Inklings explored the topic of mythic forgery as a response to the mythic scope of Tolkien's Middle-earth. Lewis could have then easily interjected the names Macpherson, Chatterton and the 'Age of Forgery'.

The early twentieth century saw a rapid increase in Oxford's interest in Keats as chapter one demonstrated. Significantly, the university's scholars had started to tie Keats back to Chatterton. In Colvin (albeit not an Oxford employee), Tolkien will have read how 'the archaic jargon concocted by [Chatterton came from] Kersey's *Dictionary'* (1909, p. 53), but not how Keats tried to emulate the style in 'The Eve of St. Mark'. Mentioning 'WH. Skeat. places' in his undergraduate notebooks most likely referred to Skeat's research into the origins of Rowleyese that would have at least reminded Tolkien of the development of his own Faërie languages from his studies on other ancient languages. Colvin's brief nod to Keats's letters laid the path for Ernest de Sélincourt, who held the position of Oxford Professor of Poetry between 1928 and 1933. In his introduction to his 1905 edition of Keats's poems, he identified Keats's admiration for the Rowley dialect as the origin of the 'unfortunate attempt, in ['The Eve of St. Mark'], to reproduce the actual language of the Middle Ages', locating the occasional similarity of cadence to those in 'Excellent Ballad of Charitie' (Keats, 1905, p. lv).

Building on Sélincourt, Courthope (Oxford Professor of Poetry between 1895 and 1901) would see both poets as sharing a common motive, giving reason for Chatterton to be the 'most English of poets' to Keats: 'both of them sought to create an ideal atmosphere for poetry by reviving old words and arranging them in metres and rhythms far removed from the idioms of living speech' (Courthope, 1910, p. 339). Although Keats perhaps did not understood how Chatterton constructed Rowleyese, it was evident at the time that he was not shy in experimenting with a medieval-style on a medieval-themed poem. It had therefore been established that 'The Eve of St. Mark' (1819), alongside 'The Eve of St. Agnes' (1819), 'Isabella or the Pot of Basil' (1819) and 'La Belle Dame sans Merci' (1819), were all medieval-themed poems.

The publication of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's letters on Keats in 1919 further confirmed this (*John Keats: Criticism and Comment*). Although Rossetti did not reference Chatterton, he considered 'The Eve of St. Mark' to show 'astonishingly real mediævalism for one not bred as an artist' and it cannot be forgotten that Rossetti, like Keats, wrote a poem on Chatterton in 1881 (1919, p. 9). His brother, William Michael Rossetti, had previously noted in his *Life of John Keats* that Keats's poetry 'testifies' his 'admiration' for Chatterton (1887, p. 67). The connection would not have gone unnoticed.

The Chatterton-Keats criticism finally led to Meyerstein, who paid even closer attention to Chatterton's influence on *Endymion* (1818) and other pieces. It was suggested to Meyerstein that 'Endymion may stand for Keats himself, Glaucus for Rowley-Chatterton, and their task for the deliverance of English Poetry from the death-like bondage of the eighteenth century' (1930, p. 511). His interpretation has the slight echo of nationalism that had permeated England in the first few decades of

the twentieth century. The statement also reflects Tolkien's own work in *The Book of Lost Tales* but instead of just the eighteenth century, Tolkien wished to upturn the English literary tradition that had been accumulating since Spenser. If Tolkien did read Meyerstein's book, he will have been unconsciously absorbing the culmination of over thirty years of scholarly work on Chatterton and Keats.

In 1939, Tolkien would deliver his *On Fairy-stories* lecture at the University of St. Andrews. As Verlyn Flieger and Doug. A. Anderson have identified, Tolkien owned all four volumes of J. F. Campbell's *Popular Tales of The West Highlands* (1890 – 1893 editions) and referenced them in his lecture (Tolkien, 2014, p. 98). Campbell sought to locate some of Macpherson's sources and celebrated *The Poems of Ossian* as part of Scotland and the wider Celtic heritage. If Tolkien read the fourth volume, which maps out the Ossian controversy, he will have been presented with a very different viewpoint to that of Alfred Nutt and J. S. Smart. Campbell compiled a vast list of poems and ballads that held the 'the germ of Ossian' and presented the argument that 'anything which has ever been extensively known amongst the Scotch Gael has been equally well known to their Irish brethren' (1893, p. 131). He concluded the fourth volume by ranking *The Poems of Ossian* with Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* (1859 – 1885) and Homer, noting how the latter and *The Poems of Ossian* both draw on 'floating ballads' and 'genuine materials' (Campbell, 1893, p. 228).

Tolkien would later take over the supervision of Thomas J. A. Monaghan's thesis on '*Thomas Tyrwhitt (1730 – 1786) and his contribution to English Scholarship*' from David Nichol Smith in 1945 to its completion in 1947 (Cilli, 2019, p. 350 and Hammond & Scull, 2017a, p. 314). Within the history of English scholarship, his editorial edition of Chatterton's works in 1778 was the first collected publication of

Chatterton's Rowley works and will have naturally been covered. The Tyrwhitt edition was significant in the development of the Rowley controversy as the full title proved his scepticism:

> *Poems, supposed to have been written at Bristol, by Thomas Rowley, and Others, in the Fifteenth Century. To which is added an Appendix, containing some observations upon the Language of these Poems; tending to prove, that they were written, not by any ancient author, but entirely by Thomas Chatterton* (1778).

If Tolkien looked into the edition he will have read about Chatterton's efforts to provide Bristol with a deeper history. Tyrwhitt quoted George Catcott, who identified the 'Account of the ceremonies observed at the opening of the old bridge' as being Chatterton's emergence into print (Chatterton, 1778, pp. vi – vii). Chatterton wrote this shortly after the opening of the new bridge between Bristol and Redcliffe and it will have proved how he wished to 'bring the past alive' (Haywood, 1986, p. 144), a notion Tolkien had been invested in for just over thirty years. This will have been enhanced over the page where Tyrwhitt draws attention to the descriptions of 'Ethelgar' and 'Cerdick'. They were 'translated from the Saxon' with numerous appendages such as 'Observations upon Saxon heraldry' and 'Saxon achievements' (Chatterton, 1778, p. viii). These will have illustrated to Tolkien how the intention behind *The Book of Lost Tales* and his rapidly increasing interest in designing documents from Middle-earth followed very closely in Chatterton's footsteps.

The next mention comes in 1950. Here Tolkien was appointed to supervise G.

M. G. Evans's B. Litt Middle English subject, which was Thomas Chatterton

(Hammond & Scull, 2017a, p. 390). He did not, however, end up supervising the

thesis as it is not included in 'Supervisor & Examiner' section of Oronzo Cilli's

Tolkien's Library: An Annotated Checklist. If Tolkien did supervise Evans then a

variety of editions will have been available to them from the Bodleian Library. Henry

D. Roberts's 1906 two volume edition of *The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas*

Chatterton was the first 'complete collection of the poems' since Skeat's

controversial edition (Chatterton, 1906, p. ix). However, he followed in Skeat's

footsteps by 'retaining the spirit and as much as possible of the original words' but

removing all the archaic spellings (Chatterton, 1906, p. xi):

O Christ, it is a grief for me to tell

How many a noble earl and valourous knight

In fighting for King Harold nobly fell,

All slain in Hastings field in bloody fight

(Chatterton, 1872b, p. 134).[36]

Sidney Lee did the same with the two volume *The Poems of Thomas Chatterton*

(1906). Maurice Evan Hare later edited *The Rowley Poems by Thomas Chatterton* in

1911, reprinting the texts from Tyrwhitt's 1778 edition and keeping the original

spellings. Tolkien will have most likely recommended Tyrwhitt's edition that he had

most likely examined with Monaghan in the 1940s.

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[36] See the original spelling of these lines (from Tyrwhitt's 1778 edition) on page 106.

However, he could have additionally consulted Skeat's edition as a modern reaction to Chatterton's Rowleyese. Although Skeat modernised the language of Chatterton's work and removed the archaic language that gave it its medieval-sounding aesthetic, Tolkien was very familiar and comfortable with Skeat's name and significant philological work. He is mentioned in Tolkien's undergraduate notebooks, Tolkien was awarded the Skeat Prize in 1914 and had borrowed his editions of Chaucer many times as a student and professor (Cilli, 2019, pp. 47 – 52). It is possible therefore that Tolkien was aware of Skeat's editions of Chatterton for their philological approach.

Skeat had provided a detailed linguistic breakdown of Chatterton's 'Rowleyese' (the language Chatterton generated for his Rowley poems) which must have piqued Tolkien's interest. Additionally, Edward Bell's 'The Life of Thomas Chatterton' that introduced the first volume identified 'Ethelgar' and 'Kendrick' as being 'obviously written in imitation of Ossian' (Bell, 1872, p. xxvi), and the inclusion of Chatterton's letters revealed that 'the pieces called Saxon are originally and totally the production of my muse; though I should think it a greater merit to be able to translate Saxon' (Chatterton, 1872a, p. 333). Such a point will have reiterated to Tolkien that Chatterton's work was 'deeply rooted in Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman, and English history' as he 'addressed events that were either significant in the development of his native Bristol or crucial in defining the modern English nation' (Bristow & Mitchell, 2015, p. 10). He and Chatterton shared a passion for resurrecting what they believed was the lost Anglo-Saxon culture and history.

The final known reference comes in a letter from Hugh Brogan in December 1954. In it, Brogan describes parts of *The Two Towers*, especially 'The King of the Golden Hall' chapter, as '"Ossianic"' (quoted in Tolkien, 2006a, p. 225). Tolkien does

not directly reference Ossian or Ossianic in his reply, but does return to a similar point he had made previously in his typescript to 'The Kalevala' essay. Comments such as 'the proper use of "tushery" is to apply it to the kind of bogus "medieval" stuff which attempts (without knowledge) to give a supposed temporal colour with expletives' and 'learn to discriminate between the bogus and genuine antique' recall 'The Kalevala' essay because of the word 'bogus', which he had previously used to describe Ossian (Tolkien, 2006a, pp. 225 – 226). Although this would superficially suggest that he was not fond of *The Poems of Ossian*, as I stated earlier, he could have absorbed aspects of Macpherson's work with the intention of stylistically bettering it. Additionally, Tolkien used his letters to control the public's view of him. He was very clear which authors and texts had influenced him in his writing process. However, as I stated above, his letters also show him contradicting himself. In a drafted response to Robert Murray, S. J., Tolkien recollects how there are 'always defects in any large-scale work of art; and especially in those of literary form that are founded on an earlier matter which is put to new uses – like Homer, or Beowulf, or Virgil, or Greek or Shakespearean tragedy! In which class, as a class not as a competitor, *The Lord of the Rings* really falls' (Tolkien, 2006a, p. 201). His summary perfectly suits *The Poems of Ossian* and as Murry's letter came shortly before Brogan's '"Ossianic"' comment, it is possible that Tolkien thought about Macpherson as he was writing this paragraph.

Tolkien's consistent exposure to these writers meant that they could have been on his mind while he was working on his legendarium and *The Lord of the Rings*. There are several key connections that tie them all together but what stands out most is their collective interest in a pre-imperial past; one that occurred before particular events in their nation's history. By portraying this era of pre-invasion they

aimed to generate nostalgia for their contemporary readers and regain a culture and time that had been lost.

II - Locating a Pre-Imperial Past

In order to delegitimise the present by resurrecting the authority of the past, the four authors first had to acknowledge the dates of their nations' fall to colonial forces. From here they could work backwards to unearth a culture supposedly forgotten by their contemporary society. For Macpherson it was the defeat of the Highland Clans by the English at the Battle of Culloden in 1746; for Chatterton, the Battle of Hastings to the Normans in 1066. Through his reading of Chatterton, Keats also implied a displeasure for Hastings. However, the Napoleonic War would have further fuelled his uneasiness for all things French. For his *Hyperion* (1819) project, he looked further back to the Roman conquest of Britain in the first century. It was slightly more complex for Tolkien, who not only expressed his disgust for Hastings but also mourned the ruining of England's ancestors, the Goths, by the Romans. He further itched to revolt against the dominating Celtic mythologies that, after being appropriated by the French Romance genre, had superseded the earlier Anglo-Saxon culture. When planning their respective mythological works, each writer either carefully aligned them with these dates or set them far into the distant past so as to prove the melancholy passing of history. This strategy sought to cast blame on the invaders for suppressing the previous culture and simultaneously revive a national appreciation for their ancestors' skills.

The emphasis on defeat and the fall of culture is integral to these revivals. They rejuvenated and inspired later writers to recall what had been lost. Culloden marked the collapse of the Jacobite rebellion and their Highland way of life. It was an integral instigator of Macpherson's work, which stood as a 'hopeless gesture towards

the preservation of Celtic Scotland' (Stafford, 1988, p. 160). Chatterton drew on Macpherson and will have been aware of how the Battle of Hastings and Battle of Culloden both triggered cultural collapses. These monumental defeats signalled the end of the cultural heritages in the Highlands and England respectively; the predominant society collapsed under the influence of the respective invaders and cultural practices were revised under new eyes and tongues.

Previous to Culloden however, in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, English as a spoken and written language had started to feature in Lowland society and was creeping up into the Highlands. Thomas Tucker in 1655 reported on the split in Inverness; some spoke Gaelic and some English 'such that one halfe of the people understand not one another' (Tucker, 1825, p. 36). The culturally-defining Act of Union in 1707 also connected Scotland with England to form the United Kingdom and Gaelic, 'the vernacular language, together with vernacular style, was sacrificed to some extent in order to achieve conformity with wider religious, political and literary designs' (Meek, 2002, p. 112). Scotland in the eighteenth century 'remained bilingual in its speech (with large repertoires of poetry and song in Erse/Scots Gaelic and in Scots English) and trilingual (Erse, Scots, and standard English) in its literary life' but the geography played a significant role in where these spoken and written languages were accepted (Trumpener, 1997, p. 73). Although Lowland Scotland complied with the Act and more readily allied themselves with the English, the Highlands witnessed significant unrest. The Highlanders watched as the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge built schools in the Highlands from 1709. They 'aimed to eradicate Gaelic by teaching English in its schools' up until 1755, suppressing Gaelic language and culture (Meek, 2002, p. 94). For this and various other reasons, the Highlanders held much enmity

towards the Lowlanders and 'southerners' which ultimately led to the Jacobite rising of 1745. The rebellion sought 'independence from the union by asserting Scotland's "ancient rights"', leading to a string of conflicts and the Jacobite's fall at Culloden (Groom, 2017, p. 164).

Macpherson would attempt to manoeuvre his nation's conformity with Ossian by various methods. He tackled the Christian religion and Druid order with subtlety, explaining that 'the druidical superstition was, in the days of Ossian, on the point of its final extinction . . . the Christian faith was not yet established' (1807, p. 112). Underneath this lies the melancholy that Hugh Blair's *A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian* (1763) asserted. The Celtic pagan faith and Druid order were slowly declining in Ossian's time and the gap was being closed with the 'introduction of Christianity' from the south of Britain which signalled the clear end of the Druids and the upward march of English colonialism (Ossian, 1807, pp. 11 – 12 & 40). Fiona Stafford has argued that 'Macpherson's ancient poetry demonstrates the horror of a world without God'; it holds a mirror up to the contemporary sceptical philosophy in Enlightenment Scotland that started to denounce Christianity (1988, p. 107). But third century Highland Scotland is actually presented as a freer world, linked closer with nature and its inhabitants' dead, tangible ancestors who still have an influence on the living.

Macpherson's decision to translate and publish *The Poems of Ossian* from ancient Erse into modern English complicated matters. He may have succeeded in reviving the heritage of the Highland's lost past, but he did so by conforming to the language of its coloniser. Macpherson drew partly from the Red and Black Books of Canranald which were important historical documents from Clan Donald's heritage. They had been compiled from ballads and other surviving tales from the Highlands

by Niall MacMhuirich (Red Book) and Christopher Beaton (the main compiler of the Black Book) and transcribed into Gaelic script. To translate aspects of them into English meant conforming in a way that some Highlanders were not happy with. Macpherson was subsequently criticised for his efforts by his fellow Scotsman, J. F. Campbell, in his review of Clerk's *Ossian* in *The Times* on 15th April 1871. Campbell noted that the texts borrowed heavily from the English language. Smart agreed with this critique as he considered the poems to be full of 'English influence' that made them 'bad' in style (1905, p. 198). But such clear linguistic decisions as that of 'ghost', which stems from Old English *gást,* subsequently opens the 'English to the Celtic, and the Celtic to the English' as a strategy to spread *The Poems of Ossian* and the lost Highland culture as widely as possible (Bugajska, 2014, p. 161). The matter will have remained that if Macpherson had published them in Erse, his readership and influence across Europe will have not been as wide.

When Macpherson was preparing the Ossian texts, English was very much the national language of the Lowlands and some parts of the Highland. The Act of Proscription (1747) forbade fundamental elements of Gaelic and Clan culture. Clan tartan, the teaching of bagpipes and the Gaelic language were all outlawed.[37] In Highland schools 'texts of instruction were all in English' (Fox & Woolf, 2002, p. 25), the Scottish Gaelic translation of the Bible would not appear until after *The Poems of Ossian* in 1767, and the Highland Clearances of the 1750s had eliminated the figure of the tacksman which stood as the 'clearest demonstrations of the death of the old Gaelic society' (Devine, 1994, p. 34). Although the approach was not to the approval of his fellow Highlanders, English did attract readers from across the globe and

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[37] Thanks to the Act of Proscription, the only languages that teachers could teach were 'English, Latin or Greek'. A copy of the Act of Proscription can be found at http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/proscription_1747.htm

allowed Macpherson to share Scotland's lost past. His emphasis on the oral tradition and on modernising language from old Erse to modern English did not convince everyone. Some believed there were betters ways to approach history, most prominently Chatterton.

When it came to composing the Rowley poems Chatterton learnt from Macpherson's entanglement with English. Whereas Macpherson modernised his language, Chatterton aged his by dressing his 'words in medieval armour', as Groom has suggested (2019). Skeat identified that Chatterton had developed a fluctuating dictionary of Old English spellings from John Kersey's *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum* (1708) and Nathan Bailey's *Dictionarium Brittanicum* (1730) that he deemed to be 'false old english' (1872b, p. xlii). However, it still presented for late nineteenth and early twentieth-century readers a 'vision [that] is not medievalism for the faint-hearted' (Groom, 2014, p. 294). Chatterton built on Macpherson by portraying a modified 'form of post-colonial resistance' through his alternative spellings, the poems' subjects and their 'original' composer and translator (Williams, 1999, p. 55). Chatterton was clear that he had found the texts of the 'Battle of Hastings', 'The Tournament' and 'Ælla' in the church of St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol and they had been organised by the fifteenth-century author Thomas Rowley. He went one step further in cementing his spelling and approach in history and claimed that Rowley had translated the texts from the originals of Turgot in the tenth century. Tolkien's contemporaries could read both names (thanks to Meyerstein) on the contents page of Chatterton's 'Antiquities Book 3rd' where Turgot was labelled a 'Saxon Monk', a move which saturated his forgeries in history (quoted in Meyerstein, 1930, p. 85). He was detailed enough to footnote the exact date of the battle so as to alert his readers to when the Saxons fell to the Normans. Making the writer of this

history a Saxon further gives the 'Battle of Hastings' political motivation. Chatterton is subverting history so it is told from the perspective of the conquered yet mighty English, supplying a fresh approach that re-envisages the events of the battle.

By the mid-eighteenth century, there existed 'no large body of myth or even of historical fact' about Hastings (Taylor, 1978, p. 91). What information Chatterton could scavenge he presented in a new light so the reader could witness 'Hastings from the point of view of the heroic English; the Normans are to be, with a few exceptions, treacherous, cowardly, or incompetent' (Taylor, 1978, p. 92). If Tolkien read Tyrwhitt's edition, the opening of 'Battle of Hastings No. I' will have exemplified Chatterton's aversion to the Normans and his medieval spellings.[38] Tyrwhitt's original publication in 1778 read in authentic 'Rowleyese' as follows:

O Chryste, it is a grief for me to telle,

How manie a nobil erle and valorous knyghte

In fyghtyne for Kynge Harrold noblie fell,

Al flyne in Haftyngs feeld in bloudie fyghte

(Chatterton, 1778, p. 210; ll. 1 – 4).

The tenth-century persona, Turgot, echoes Macpherson's third century melancholy in his 'grief' for his fallen Saxon comrades. He makes the reading of the poem more intimate by implying that Turgot wrote it shortly after the battle and was overcome with pain for his nation's loss. Such a tone towards a pivotal moment in English history will have drawn Tolkien's attention and may have spurred him to read on, as

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[38] His exposure to Chatterton most likely will have been Tyrwhitt's original edition as is explained on pages 97 – 98.

he had also expressed outrage at the contamination of the English language by the French.

Chatterton tailored both 'Battles of Hastings' into his mythological framework for Bristol. The body of myth was already filled with fragments and small extracts and alongside 'The Tournament' and 'Bristowe Tragedie', he sought to challenge the Mediterranean writers who had dominated much eighteenth century scholarship: '"Homer, Virgil, or any of their Bardships"' (quoted in Taylor, 1978, p. 86). He wished to displace them all with his own native, English work. It pre-empts Keats's 'vastly ambitious project of composing an epic that captures the downfall of the Celtic Empire . . . [and] Celtic Druids by the Roman invaders in Britain' (Gallant, 2005, p. 71) and the opening of *Endymion Book IV* where he proclaims 'Muse of my native land! loftiest Muse! / O first-born on the mountains!' in an effort to shirk off foreign influence (Keats, 1900a, p. 173; ll. 1 – 2). *Endymion's* dedication to Chatterton is no coincidence, it is clear that Keats felt a deeper affinity for the British Isles and its native-born poets than those of the Ancient Mediterranean world, much like Tolkien did when he constructed his mythology for England.

The Celtic backdrop to Keats's poetry was initially identified and made popular by Matthew Arnold in *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (1891, p. 136) and from this late nineteenth and early twentieth-century scholars, such as Colvin, continued to identify Keats's poetry as having a 'Celtic character' (1909, p. 2). A century later Stafford moved Keatsian scholarship along by noticing that Keats's 'exploration of the myth of the Titans [was] . . . closest to eighteenth-century ideas about the Celts and the fallen angels', raising him above the likes of Shelley and other Romantics (1998, p. 176). For Stafford 'the significance for "Hyperion" of the eighteenth-century Celticism embodied in Macpherson's *Ossian* is also much clearer' (1998, p. 176).

The inspiration for Keats's elegy to the lost Celtic culture can therefore be found in his reading of *The Poems of Ossian*.

Stafford drew on biographical factors to suggest that Keats had read Macpherson such as his attendance and attentive responses to William Hazlitt's 1818 lectures where Ossian was raised to the level of Homer, the Bible and Dante (Stafford, 1998, p. 176). Preceding these was his walking tour of Scotland with Charles Armitage Brown, which included a visit to Fingal's Cave (Stafford, 1998, p. 176). Keats's 'extraordinary description of Fingal's Cave derives its energy not merely from the startling appearance of the rock formations, but also from the prevailing associations between the Celts and the Titans, and the location of ancient power in the North western islands of Europe' (Stafford, 1998, p. 177). *Hyperion* is 'deeply imbued with Keats's northern experiences' and his reading of Macpherson (Stafford, 1998, p. 179). Stafford sees Keats as responding 'to the broken remains of a giant race, attempting to revive and recreate something of its lost power' (1998, p. 180). His reasoning behind reviving the Celts and Druids in *Hyperion* comes from a position of wishing to oppose Rome's oppression of the Celtic nations. He makes a conscious decision to use Macpherson in the opening of *Hyperion* as Groom has identified. 'Fragment III' starts with a 'typical Ossianic fugue' (Groom, 2002, p. 137): 'Sad, by a hollow rock, the grey-hair'd Carryl sat' (Macpherson, 1917, p. 16). *Hyperion* provides a 'translation of this image back to the genesis of the Celts and the fall of the Titans' (Groom, 2002, p. 137):

> Deep in the shady sadness of a vale
>
> Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
>
> Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,

> Sat grey-haired Saturn, quiet as a stone,
>
> Still as the silence round about his lair
>
> (Keats, 1901a, p. 129; ll. 1 – 5).

What makes this even more Ossianic is the 'far' removed and 'sunken' landscape which sounds like the Scottish Highlands. Saturn is also likened to nature through the simile 'quiet as a stone', a common technique of the *Ossian* mythos. The sprinkled sibilance on every line also adds an oral quality to the passage that harkens back to the repetitive and oral structure of *The Poems of Ossian*.

Saturn is later tied to the Celts through the image of his 'Druid locks' (Keats, 1901a, p. 134; l. 137) and later in Book II the remaining, motionless Titans will recall the opening's remoteness and imagery: 'like a dismal cirque / Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor' which calls Stonehenge to mind (Keats, 1901a, p. 144; ll. 34 – 35). Through her reading of Edward Davies's *Celtic Researches* (1804), which was Keats's prime source on the Celts between 1817 and 1819, Gallant sees 'the powers lost by Saturn since he fell a[s] those of the Druid priest who had adjudicated his society', such as 'the Druidic power to prophesy' (2005, p. 76). Under Roman rule, the Druids were unable to predict how Britain would fare. They lacked the ghosts of Ossian's third century Highlands to help define their future. Keats mimics Macpherson in setting his poem far back in British history in order to show Britain what had been lost because of the Roman conquest.

The dominance of the Roman Empire and its wide-spreading imperial conquest was not just an issue for Keats. To Tolkien the Romans were responsible for the 'ruin of Gaul and the submergence of its native language (or languages) arts

and traditions . . . dooming to obscurity and debate the history of perhaps the most remarkable of the Cymric speaking peoples' (quoted in Hammond & Scull, 2017b, p. 741). His early fascination with the Gothic language drove him to 'regret the past' and the 'vanishing of their tradition, literature, history, and most of their tongue' (quoted in Hammond & Scull, 2017b, p. 741). In response he tried to reconstruct the language which only existed in fragments. This was Tolkien's first foray into the feigning of history that he would later practise on a more regular basis with his English mythology. The Celtic Revival of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw Ireland and Wales suddenly come into their own by celebrating their myths and folkloric roots that were, at this time, 'important part[s] of [their] heart and soul' (Fimi, 2010, p. 5). England was left wanting.

Early twentieth-century English writers found themselves in a period that was deeply invested in a country's mythological origins. Yet England was 'the most demythologised country in Europe' thanks to the Norman Conquest which 'led to near-total suppression of native English belief' and the Industrial Revolution (Shippey, 2005, p. 346). Tolkien decided to try and fill in England's gap and create a context in which the mythology could have been preserved. His intention was to compose a purely English mythology, one that pre-dated Ireland's Tuatha Dé Danann, Wales's *The Mabinogion* and Macpherson's *The Poems of* Ossian. He blamed the Irish and Welsh for stealing and popularising the originally English Faërie tradition. Tolkien often makes it explicitly clear that this mannish appropriation of mythology led to the collapse of the faëries/elves. The arrival of Men into the world, their colonisation of Tol Eressëa (the island that would become England) and incorrect accounts of the faëries had diminished their status:

The Magic Sun is dead and the Lonely Isle drawn back

unto the confines of the Great lands, and the fairies are

scattered through all the wide unfriendly pathways of the

world; and now Men dwell even on this faded isle, and

care nought or know nought of its ancient days

(Tolkien, 1983, p. 25).

Men spread and thrive, and the Elves of the Great Lands

fade. As Men's stature grows theirs diminishes

(Tolkien, 1984, p. 281).

Gilfanon tells [Eriol] of things to be; that in his mind (although

the fairies hope not) he believes that Tol Eressëa will

become a dwelling place of Men (Tolkien, 1984, p. 283).

After the Battle of Rôs the Elves faded with sorrow. They

cannot live in air breathed by a number of Men equal to

their own or greater; and ever as Men wax more powerful

and numerous so the fairies fade and grow small and

tenuous, filmy and transparent, but Men larger and more

dense and gross. At last Men, or almost all, can no

longer see the fairies (Tolkien, 1984, p. 283).

Whether by intentional colonisation or just their mere presence and ignorance of the

true faëry/elf culture, Man's oppression is the root cause of their culture's diminishment. It stands as a warning of the destructive capabilities of his will to dominate. Entire cultures can be eradicated until all that is left is a shrunken set of 'strange and garbled tales that are far from the truth' (Tolkien, 1983, p. 45); 'lies told to the children by women or foolish men' (Tolkien, 1984, p. 288).

In an effort to sync his mythology deeper with England's history, Tolkien etymologically connected his place names (deriving from *The Qenya Lexicon*) to those that were important in his relationship with his fiancé, Edith Bratt.[39] For him:

> *The Elvish isle to which Eriol came was England* – that is
> to say, Tol Eressëa would become England, the land of the
> English, at the end of the story. Koromos or Kortirion, the town
> in the centre of Tol Eressëa . . . would become in after days
> Warwick (and the elements *Kor-* and *War-* were etymologically
> connected); Alalminórë, the Land of Elms, would be Warwickshire;
> and Tavrobel . . . would afterwards be the Staffordshire village
> of Great Haywood' (Tolkien, 1983, pp. 24 – 25).

Significantly these names would pre-date the Norman invasion of the tenth century, establishing England as the resting place of the faëries.

Tolkien would stretch even further to root his mythology into real history by making the protagonist of *The Book of Lost Tales*, Eriol, the father of Hengest and

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[39] See Higgins (2015, pp. 233 – 235) for further linguistic and geographical links between English and *The Qenya Lexicon*.

Horsa, the founders of England in the fifth century (1984, p. 290). Eriol is supposedly the final man to hear the tales of the faëries and his third son, Heorrenda, organised all of his father's writings into:

The Golden Book of Heorrenda

being the book of the

Tales of Tavrobel

_____

Heorrenda of Hægwudu

(Tolkien, 1984, p. 290).

England is the inheritor of the true Faërie tradition, 'one more true than anything to be found in Celtic lands' (Tolkien, 1984, p. 290). When Eriol changed into Ælfwine and the timing of the mythology shifted to just after the Norman Conquest, Tolkien still maintained its connection to England. The timelines of both characters 'mark[ed] the beginning and the end of the Anglo-Saxon period of British history respectively. Tolkien believed that the Anglo-Saxon period was crucial for English identity and the most culturally "authentic"' (Fimi, 2010, p. 55). It meant his mythology was 'anchored in the ancient legendary history of England', pre-dated the Celtic tales and provided a thick layer of authenticity that would obscure the fact that he was forging England's lost and long-forgotten past (Tolkien, 1983, p. 22).

All four writers re-imagined a specific focal point in their nation's past in order to breathe life back into them, reminding their contemporaries what colonisation had stripped away. Their next move was to prove that the societies they depicted were

actually sophisticated and developed to a degree that could make the present mourn the ancient society's fading. This would inject a strong nostalgia into their work and make the readers yearn for the lost past even more. For Macpherson and Tolkien in particular this would stem from the oral tradition.

III – The Oral Tradition: Macpherson and Tolkien

It became apparent that to unseat present society, the primitive or 'rude' societies of the past needed to be presented as either further advanced or purer and less corrupt. One method of achieving this was to reconnect with the power of oral tradition, which Macpherson and Tolkien both employed in the development of their respective mythologies. Deidre Dawson has identified how Macpherson and Tolkien both saw language as 'the key to reviving, recovering, or reconstructing an ancient culture and mythology' (2005, p. 109). Macpherson thought his contemporary Highlanders 'stood outside contemporary civilisation, preserving in their remote wilds the freshness of early life, their own ancient language, their own picturesque costume and simple habits. They even retained, unimpaired by the contagion of luxury, all the valour of the race that had defeated the Romans themselves' (Smart, 1905, p. 5). They were 'preserving the last relics of the ancient culture' of the Celts (Stafford, 1988, p. 97). The failure of the Romans and Normans to colonise Caledonia (the Roman name for the Scottish Highlands) elevated them in Macpherson's view because their history had remained uncorrupted, unlike the rest of Britain. In *The Poems of Ossian* he aimed to remind his contemporaries just how powerful their ancestors were by making a Caledonian recount the wars of Fingal.

According to Katie Trumpener the true subject of *The Poems of Ossian* 'is not epic heroism but the vicissitudes of oral tradition' (1997, p. 75). Macpherson

demonstrates that 'oral performance functions precisely to keep the past alive' (Trumpener, 1997, p. 76). Contemporary works like Thomas Blackwell's *An Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer (*1735), Robert Lowth's *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (1753) and Robert Wood's *An Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer* (1769) argued for the merit and endurance of the oral tradition; it did have the capability to carry the weight and memory of a race or state. These publications helped cultivate a 'rising generation of authors, nurtured on accounts of the fiery eloquence of native speakers, [who] were increasingly willing to speculate that the oral tradition could give rise to literature of outstanding merit' (Hudson, 1996, p. 167). For Blackwell such fiery eloquence could not be found in modern society as 'a language thoroughly polished in the modern Sense, will not descend to the *Simplicity* of Manners absolutely necessary in *Epic*-Poetry' as it has made 'many Words *obsolete*, it coops a Man up in a Corner, allows him but *one Set* of courtly Phrases, and deprives him of many significant Terms, and strong beautiful Expressions' (1735, p. 60). Epic poetry was made in a 'rude Community' only 'a little advanced' where letters were not commonly used (Blackwell, 1735, p. 42). As a result, Homer's 'Poems were made to be *recited*, or sung to a *Compan*y; and not read in private, or perused in a Book, which few were then capable of doing' and Blackwell subsequently called for his contemporary readers to listen to Homer's works for 'his Style . . . cannot be understood in any other light . . . lest we put ourselves in the place of his Audience' (Blackwell, 1735, p. 122).

Works like Blackwell's enthused the public with a renewed passion for the oral tradition and the memories of the cultures it brought with it. Macpherson had 'turned the Highlands into one enormous echo chamber, evoking an emphatically oral world' (Trumpener, 1997, p. 70). Macpherson certainly provided 'absolute proof of its

antiquity' and aided in revitalising the popularity of the tradition with just his

Fragments of Ancient Poetry (1760) (Groom, 1999, p. 75). Blair's speculations of an

ancient Caledonian epic in his preface for the collection created a frenzy in Scotland

– particularly Edinburgh. If he was right then Scotland would far surpass England,

Ireland or Wales's literary heritages and could claim a seat beside Ancient Greece

and Rome, finally reviving the advanced and developed society that Scotland had

since lost.

     Although the publications gained significant popularity across Europe, they

failed to convince everyone in Britain that the oral tradition could have harboured

them in such condition for fifteen centuries. As Smart reminded his readers: 'the

antiquity of the poems was strongly impugned' (1905, p. 17). Eminent sceptic

Samuel Johnson famously deplored the works and the tradition, commenting on the

latter's tendency in early civilisations (such as Caledonia) to corrupt language with

'wild and barbarous jargon' (2006, p. 22). Tolkien was no doubt aware of this depth

of criticism from David Nichol Smith's 'Johnson & Friends' lecture series in which

Macpherson featured, noting Johnson as '(one of the few critics)' of Macpherson in

his undergraduate notebooks. Other key critics included Scottish philosopher David

Hume and Welsh authority on the Celts, Lewis Morris. Prior to the publication of

Fragments, Hume had opened *The History of England* (1754 – 1761) with the

searing critique that 'the history of past events is immediately lost or disfigured when

intrusted to memory and oral tradition' (1947, p. 1). Collectively, all three expressed

the view that tales as long as *Fingal* or *Temora* could not be accurately remembered

and passed down by oral recitation alone. This is best summarised by Morris: 'if they

were handed down by illiterate shepherds or minstrels, without rhyme or numbers,

pray what was the *bondage* that kept the words together?' there had to be some written document to support the sheer length of the epics (Morris, 1909, p. 267).

Looking back over one hundred years of philological investigation, Tolkien will have agreed with Henry Beers that these critics were severely wrong. Although Johnson admitted the national influence Macpherson's work had, he considered barbarous nations like Scotland unable of producing epic works. However, similar 'barbarous' people like the Finns, Scandinavians and Germans had produced *The Kalevala*, *The Poetic Edda* and the *Nibelungenlied* from their own oral traditions, displaying just how capable they were of transmitting tales of extensive length while keeping their integrity (Beers, 1899, p. 313). These were texts that Tolkien worked with for the majority of his life and it was still possible to see Macpherson as partaking in the 'barbarous' tradition to keep the tales of one's nation alive in the present.

Macpherson's issue lay with the actual development of letters. He associated them 'with a degeneration from the earliest stages of society' where the recording of an action was 'seen as inferior to the original experience which it recorded'; action itself and the verbal recount was more poignant than reading about it (Stafford, 1988, p. 154). In fact, 'the heroic age of Fingal was the ideal – the earliest stage based on nature – so its passing marked the beginning of a steady decline' (Stafford, 1988, p. 159). His position mimics his contemporary, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who argued that man was better in the state of nature before the development and corrupting influence of civilisation. Post-third-century Highland society marked the steady degeneration of the noble oral tradition, man's communion with nature and the mighty line of Fingal. This is inherent in the figure of Ossian whose age, blindness,

general decrepitude and heirless position symbolises and foreshadows the fated crumbling of the oral tradition in the Highlands.

The controversy that surrounded the oral origins of Ossian raged across the second half of the eighteenth century. It drove the Committee of the Highland Society of Scotland to scour the Highlands with a questionnaire, intending to establish just how well known the ancient figure of Ossian was to the rural public (Mackenzie, 1805, pp. 2 – 3). It would also continue in the early twentieth century. Alfred Nutt opened *Ossian and the Ossianic Literature* (1910) by reminding his readers that '[Macpherson] undoubtedly had some knowledge of the Ossianic ballad literature existing in the Highlands in his day' (1910, p. 5). This was followed by the comment: 'Macpherson's poems are worthless; they disregard the traditional versions of the legends, they depart from the traditional representation of the material life depicted in the old and genuine texts, and they utterly ignore the traditional conventions of Gaelic style' (Nutt, 1910, p. 6). This is not completely true. Macpherson's reliance on the oral tradition does not digress fully from the traditional 'fiery eloquence' of the Gaelic style. Wood had previously stated that 'it is the nature of oral tradition . . . to magnify and embellish, rather than suppress or pervert truth' (1775, p. 235). Smart, Beers, Nutt, and Phelps prove that early-twentieth-century scholarship was still divided over the quality of the poems. Where Nutt accused Macpherson of abhorrently romanticising and over-inflating the traditions of the Clans, he overlooked how embellishment was a natural part of the oral tradition in eighteenth-century Highland Scotland.

Macpherson's methods mimicked those of the eighteenth-century ballad collectors, and the nineteenth-century writer Elias Lönnrot when he was preparing *The Kalevala*. Tolkien was clearly aware that Macpherson had, like Lönnrot,

collected and consulted his native ballads, as his undergraduate notebooks identify that 'Celtic scholars find only 2 that have any trace of reality.'[40] This number has increased in the century since the lecture, but at the time it was enough to prove that Macpherson had incorporated elements from the ballads he had orally collected on his tour of the Highlands and read in the Red and Black Books of Canranald. It was also common knowledge at the time that he did tour the Highlands as it appears in numerous works such as Smart (1905, pp. 98 – 99) and Phelps (1893, p. 147). Macpherson's travels affirmed that the oral tradition and the memory of the Highlanders were still strong, even if it had been tarnished significantly after the domination of the English and the preference for the teaching of letters instead of oral recitation. Macpherson's research methods and loose narrative framework proved useful for later writers. Rather than using an unknown narrator from *The Kalevala* who refers to itself only as 'I', Macpherson grounded the stories in history by having Ossian partake in them (Lönnrot, 1989, p. 1; l. 1).

For Tolkien, this framework was exactly what he needed. The similarities between Tolkien and Lönnrot's work has been thoroughly covered by Verlyn Flieger, Tom Shippey, Richard C. West and David Elton Gay among others. However, it cannot be denied that his framework for *The Book of Lost Tales* runs closer to Macpherson's.[41] Eriol did not take part in the myths but is still a named character who is interpolated into English history as the father of Hengest and Horsa and undergoes character development in the work. Tolkien's similar fascination with the oral tradition is deeply embedded in his mythology. Long tales are effortlessly recited

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[40] As was noted about David Nichol Smith's lecture, this information was lifted from Smart's book (1905, p. 94).
[41] See Flieger (2005, pp. 27 – 31) and (2004, pp. 277 – 283), Shippey (2001, xv – xvi, 64 & 250), (2004, pp. 154 – 160) and (2005, p. 297), West (2004, pp. 285 – 293) and Gay (2004, pp. 295 – 303).

at will with intricate details, names and lists by the faëries that show their pride in their already long history. Like Chatterton, Tolkien may well have been 'seduced by the longing for the materiality of the manuscript, the tangible artefact that can bestow an "authentic" aura of the past' later in his career, but he still maintained his belief in the power of the oral tradition (Fimi, 2016, p. 52). In the early drafts of *The Book of Lost Tales*, Tolkien specifically imparted the oral tradition to the faëries and the elves as their superior memory and immortality meant that they could accurately relay their history for generations. When he moved onto *The Lord of the Rings*, the elves still maintained their reliance on the tradition, but the Rohirrim also claimed it as central to their 'young' but vigorous and energetic culture (Fimi, 2010, p. 149). The faëries were more advanced than Man and their art surpassed all others. They soon became the template for man's own poetic modes. But the Rohirrim also provided the integral linguistic link that Tolkien required to make them the unacknowledged ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons and through them, the English.

By removing the 'human limitations' of mortality for the faëries and elves, Tolkien's approach to orality links back to Macpherson's view that the oral delivery of an action is infinitely more intense than reading an account (Tolkien, 2006a, p. 146). As Vairë reminds his audience, Eriol and the reader, on Tol Eressëa the faëries 'builded of good magic this Cottage of Lost Play: and here old tales, old songs, and elfin music are treasured and rehearsed' (Tolkien, 1983, p. 20). 'Rehearsed' proves that the tales are frequently shared to keep the past very much alive in the present. These traditions that are recounted in Cottage of Lost Play and later on in Rivendell's Hall of Fire make them both 'locus[es] of memory' for the mythology, empowering the elves with tradition and history that will feed down and become Britain's own (Oberhelman, 2007, p. 485).

The immortality of the faëries and elves also meant that it was possible to employ orators who have a 'living memory' of the events they are narrating (Honegger, 2019). Eliminating the immortal element, this recalls Ossian's 'living memory' of the Highland's decline. Utilising a character's 'living memory' makes their narration more nuanced, laden with depth and meaning. This added dramatic effect in 'The Council of Elrond' chapter of *The Lord of the Rings* when Elrond gravely recalls the history of the Rings of Power and the war of the Last Alliance. The history has the air of obscurity as only 'a part of his tale was known to some there, but the full tale to none' (Tolkien, 2007, p. 243), Gandalf's antiquarian work in Minas Tirith has only achieved so much; it has to be married with Elrond's living memory to form a complete tale. Ultimately it represents Tolkien's balanced reliance on the written and spoken word.

Tolkien is careful to ensure that important moments in the plot rely on characters orally relaying information or writing it down. Although Gandalf searches the material archives of Minas Tirith for the history of the Ring in the Second and Third Ages, he presents his findings to Frodo and the reader orally; Frodo and Sam are informed by Faramir about Boromir's death; on two occasions and through word of mouth is Aragorn urged to tread the Paths of the Dead.[42] The oral tradition is not Tolkien's only method of narrative transmission within the mythology. Tolkien employs various textual objects across his legendarium to generate a sense of a tangible world. When one of these is of historical significance and influences the present, Tolkien is also drawing on what Thomas Honegger has called 'dormant memory' (2019). Bilbo is bound by the written contract that Thorin and Company

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[42] In the chapter 'The White Rider' Gandalf repeats a poem from Galadriel and in 'The Passing of the Grey Company' Elrohir passes on a message from his father, Elrond.

present to him and even when he hands the Arkenstone over to Thranduil and Bard, he recalls the contract that legally classes him as a 'burglar' (Tolkien, 1995, p. 244). Additionally the hobbits and Aragorn also have to decipher Gandalf's runes on a stone at Weathertop so they can deduce where he might be. Cartography is infectious and maps present characters with more than just directions. Pippin and Gandalf fall into dispute about the Fellowship's whereabouts, the entire quest to Erebor in *The Hobbit* relies on the hidden information found on the dwarfish map, the moon runes on Thror's map give the Company the guidance they need on how to get into Erebor.

When Elrond recalls the '"splendour of their banners"' of the Last Alliance, he follows it up with the following: '"my memory reaches back even to the Elder Days. Eärendil was my sire, who was born in Gondolin before its fall; and my mother was Elwing, daughter of Dior, son of Lúthien of Doriath. I have seen three ages in the West of the world, and many defeats, and many fruitless victories"' (Tolkien, 2007, p. 243). An elf's 'living memory' adds incredible gravitas to their tales. It generates the weight that Tolkien would later refer to as 'a past that itself had depth and reached backward into a dark antiquity' in his 'Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics' lecture of 1936 (2006b, p. 27). The 'impression of depth' grants works of historical and poetical importance like *The Aeneid*, *Beowulf* and even Macpherson's *The Poems of Ossian*, a suggested history that the writer is not completely divulging to his audience; a 'coherent, consistent, deeply fascinating world' (Shippey, 2005, p. 259). It links to the lays and ballads that fed the ancient epics, as was explained in chapter one.[43] Elrond and the memory of the elven race offer this depth.

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Elrond's mention of 'Lúthien' is an example of the historical depth of Middle-earth. The name reminds the reader of Aragorn's previous fragmented performance of 'Beren and Lúthien' in the chapter 'A Knife in the Dark', which is rendered from the elvish verse mode *ann-thennath.* His recital also works as a key plot point as it allows the reader to more fully understand the narrator's later remark that 'the likeness of Lúthien had come again to [Middle-]earth' in the form of Arwen (Tolkien, 2007, p. 227). It also evidences that Tolkien 'regarded oral poetic forms and performance as narrative devices for linking the past to the present', therefore reinforcing his mythology's depth (Oberhelman, 2007, p. 485). This modelling of the mythology's poetry (particularly elvish) emphasises how Tolkien used the 'poetics of the early Elves and Men [t]o anticipate that of later generations' (Oberhelman, 2007, p. 485). The *Minlamad thent / estent* verse mode pre-dates the Old English alliterative verse, securing the poetic forms of the early elves as the ancestors of those forms and modes rooted in early English tradition. His verse modes helped to tie his mythology ever closer to England, even years after he abandoned its national angle.[44]

It is at this point paramount to move onto Rohan's rooted ties with England's linguistic and cultural past. The Rohirrim's linguistic history suggests an ancestral stance over modern English because it reveals the chronological evolution of the Germanic languages. It is well documented that the culture was based on that of the Anglo-Saxons. Flieger, Shippey, Stephen Meyer, Carl Phelpstead, John Tinkler and Amy Amendt-Raduege have all noted Rohan's indebtedness to Anglo-Saxon culture,

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[44] See Wynne & Hostetter (2000, pp. 121 – 122) for the background of the verse mode and the link to alliterative verse.

languages and the poem *Beowulf*.[45] In Aragorn's oft-quoted comment on the

Rohirrim, we glimpse this as they are 'wise but unlearned, writing no books but

singing many songs' (Tolkien, 2007, p. 430). Rohan's culture thrives on this older

and wilder model of a youthful society. Fimi has contrasted Rohan with Gondor,

explaining that the latter has reached the 'age of decline by the Third Age of Middle-

earth' reflecting the crippled state of twentieth-century English after two world wars,

whereas the Rohirrim are 'closer to the stereotype of the Northern "barbarians" . . .

[they are] perceived as a stronger "race"' (2010, p. 149). The Rohirrim rely on the

oral tradition just as much, if not more so than the elves, according to Aragorn.

As for the Rohirric language, Christopher Tolkien has identified that its early

form and the names of Rohan's ancestors (pre-Eorl and the finding of Rohan) were

fashioned on Gothic, whereas post-Eorl (the Rohirric that appears in *The Lord of the

Rings*) evolved from Old English (Tolkien, 1998, p. 403). The progression makes

sense. If the latter 'was made to resemble ancient English' (Tolkien, 2007, p. 1136),

then 'the names of the ancestors of the Rohirrim are cast into the forms of the

earliest recorded Germanic language' (Tolkien, 1998, p. 403). Throughout his

mythology Tolkien consistently provided threads that portrayed Middle-earth as our

Northern hemisphere. Cultures like the Rohirrim, the High Elves of Rivendell and the

remnants in the Cottage of Lost Play all utilise the oral tradition to portray this lost

past as infinitely more superior, more courageous and more deeply in tune with their

ancestral history than Tolkien's England. However, as was noted earlier by Fimi,

Tolkien was 'seduced' by the stability of the written word. Bilbo's anxious drive to

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[45] See Tinkler (1968, pp. 164 – 69), Shippey (2001, pp. 95 – 97) and (2005, p. 133 & 141), Phelpstead (2004, p. 444), Flieger (2005, p. 32) and (2007, pp. 528 – 29), Meyer (2009, p. 180), Amendt-Raduege (2010, pp. 119 – 20), and Lee and Solopova (2015, pp. 65, 67, 210, 277 – 280 & 307).

complete his book is evidence of this in *The Lord of the Rings*. In this regard, Tolkien has stepped out from the shadow of Macpherson and into that of Chatterton, the other significant 'forger' of the 1760s who Tolkien was at least made aware of in David Nichol Smith's lecture of October 1913. There existed a multitude of opportunities for Tolkien to become familiar with Chatterton's work as was mentioned earlier.[46] Groom and Fimi have additionally illustrated how the approach of both writers to myth-building, narrative transmission and their attraction to the written word as the recorder of history is quite similar. Keats should be added to this mix for in his medieval and late poems he sought to record the past and England's historical superstitions before they disappeared.

IV – Proofing the Past: History's Textual Transmission

From Macpherson, a long line of eighteenth-century antiquarian collectors 'learned from his mistakes' in order to avoid the label of 'forger' (Groom, 1999, p. 73). These included Allan Ramsay, Thomas Percy, David Herd, Thomas Evans, Joseph Ritson, John Pinkerton, and Sir Walter Scott. In the eyes of his disparagers, Macpherson had manipulated his material to the point where providing tangible evidence in *Temora* was not enough to convince them of its deeply entrenched indebtedness to the Highlands oral past. The ballad and folk-tale collectors at the time made extensive use of what written records they could get their hands on, proving that they had not simply made up their edited and published material. In the second half of the eighteenth century 'the transmission of the past was literary' (Haywood, 1986, p. 120) and 'the handling of the source was crucial to the antiquarian reception of literature and its incorporation into the canon' (Groom, 1999, p. 62).

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[46] See chapter two, section I; pages 83 – 99.

The oral mode of historical transmission lost favour and collapsed under the pressure to evidence antiquarian findings. Haywood has argued that Chatterton advanced and developed Macpherson's experimentations with the past for this exact reason (1986, p. 175). Just his Ossianic imitations alone prove that he was processing and trying to aesthetically replicate the work of 'Scotland's Homer'. The rising controversy around the authenticity of the Ossian epics further emphasised to Chatterton that the manuscript was everything. In fact, the weight that the eighteenth-century antiquarians placed on the validity of the manuscript tipped the scales too far, leading Chatterton to make 'historical fiction out of historical fact' from which his mythology for Bristol grew (Haywood, 1986, p. 121).

Chatterton's 'Battle of Hastings' held a dialogue with England's Saxon past. To the Augustans the Saxons were a rude, uncivilised and uncultured people. No-one promoted this view more strongly than David Hume who channelled the eighteenth-century view of human progress in *The History of England*, in which he attacked the savagery of Saxon society profusely. He presented 'early England as a rude, remote backwater populated by servile bumpkins and ruled by violent lords' (Brundage & Cosgrove, 2014, p. 25). The Saxon period of English history was supposedly an 'obscure and uninteresting period' and Hume does not appear to take pleasure in recording the events, particularly those of the East-Angles, who were 'quite needless' (1947, pp. 1 & 27). He repeatedly refers to the Saxons as 'barbarous'; the Mercian government is 'barbarous, weak, and impudent' and in general the Saxons 'seem not as yet to have been much improved beyond their German ancestors, either in arts, civility, knowledge, humanity, justice, or obedience to the laws. Even Christianity . . . had not hitherto been very effectual in banishing their ignorance, or softening their barbarous manners' (Hume, 1947, pp. 34 & 74).

Chatterton considered this entire ideology to be heavily flawed. He instead promulgated the notion that the invading Normans had 'destroy'd all the Saxon MSS, Paintings &c that fell in their Way; endeavouring to suppress the very Language' (quoted in Meyerstein, 1930, p. 264). Counter to Hume and the views of the other 'Modern Virtuosos' on the 'barbarous' quality of Saxon literature and culture, 'it is certain we are indebted to to [*sic*] Alfred & other Saxon Kings for ye wises of our Laws & in part for ye British Constitution' (quoted in Meyerstein, 1930, p. 265). Chatterton finalised his case by explaining that the 'motive that actuates me to do this, is, to convince the world that the monks (of whom some have so despicable an opinion) were not such blockheads, as generally thought and that good poetry might be wrote, in the dark days of superstition as well as in these more enlightened Ages' (quoted in Meyerstein, 1930, p. 251). In this manner he took after Percy, who yearned to 'show that among the dross of the Dark Ages some literary gems existed' (Haywood, 1986, p. 123). In *Reliques of English Poetry* (1765), Percy was 'attempting to "literate" the Goths, he gave written sources authority over oral sources, and printed texts over manuscripts' (Groom, 2006, p. 183). This would not only influence Chatterton, it would also filter down the antiquarian tradition to Keats and Tolkien, who were both keenly invested in presenting the overlooked grandeur and literary scope of the Middle Ages through the textual transmission of history.

Chatterton's influence on Keats and the Romantics cannot be underestimated. He was the acknowledged 'father of the New Romantic school' (Ward, 1880, p. 401) – a viewpoint that Oscar Wilde shared (quoted in Bristow & Mitchell, 2015, p. 338). It was Chatterton that Keats found refuge with after leaving behind the Miltonic style of *Hyperion* and the Romantic poet mourned Chatterton's impatience. If Chatterton had known the 'magnanimity of Patience; and been aware

that great talents have a Commission from Heaven he would not have deserted his post; and his name might now have posed with Milton' (1935, p. 251). Chatterton inspired Keats to reconsider how one approached the progress of literary history. Keats's imitation of Chatterton's 'purest English' in 'The Eve of St. Mark' was acknowledged as early as 1905 by Ernest de Sélincourt, who provided in Appendix C of *Keats* a list of words that 'gained an additional hold upon him through Chatterton's use of them', noting them as the latter's 'great favourites' (1905, p. 584). Any further reading could have deduced that Keats was mediating much more than just Chatterton's language. Whereas Madeline 'had heard old dames full many times' tell her about the English superstition of the eve of St. Agnes, incorporating the oral tradition into his myth of the Middle Ages, 'The Eve of St. Mark' marked an important moment for Keats (1900b, p. 67; l. 45). As Tolkien's changing of Eriol to Ælfwine in *The Book of Lost Tales* raises implications of historical transmission, there is a shift from the oral tradition in 'The Eve of St. Agnes' to a textual preference in the 'curious volume, patched and torn' that Bertha reads in 'The Eve of St. Mark' (1901a, p. 4; l. 25).

'The Eve of St. Mark' is home to a 'textual obsession' that later tipped over into 'Cap and Bells' (Ulmer, 2017, p. 139). The origins of this shift in transmission can be found in Chatterton and only recently has William Ulmer read Keats as passing 'The Eve of St. Mark' off 'as an actual, historically preserved medieval text' – the same strategy Chatterton used (2017, p. 137). He argues that 'John Keats impersonates Thomas Chatterton impersonating Thomas Rowley' by employing not only their presentational devices but also their make-shift medieval dictionary (2017, p. 137). This would mark an important shift in Keats's meditation on the progress of literary history as he would be showing not only the influence of Chatterton but also

Hazlitt's lecture 'Why are the Arts not Progressive'. Whereas Chatterton was reacting to Enlightenment theories of progress, Keats was additionally responding to Hazlitt by passing 'The Eve of St. Mark' off as a genuine artefact of the Middle Ages. Hazlitt postulated that the 'greatest poets, the ablest orators, the best painters, and the finest sculptures that the world ever saw, appeared soon after the birth of these arts, and lived in a state of society which was, in other respects, comparatively barbarous' (Hazlitt, 1902a, p. 161). His application of 'barbarous' is a nod to the eighteenth-century historians who wrote on the Saxons and sets his allegiance closer to the Ancients than the Moderns. He also declared that all modern poetry pales in comparison to the older masters: Homer, Dante Alighieri, Geoffrey Chaucer, Ludovico Ariosto, Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare, John Milton (Hazlitt, 1902a, p. 161) and Ossian (Hazlitt, 1902b, pp. 15 – 18).

In accordance with Hazlitt and Chatterton, Keats shifted the attention of his poetry to the Middle Ages, that 'barbarous' period of English history which he, like Chatterton and Tolkien, tried to resurrect. This would mean he could then pass his poetry off as a remnant of a forgotten English culture. It is worth noting that it is only after Hazlitt's lectures that Keats composes his medieval oeuvre, using the period's traditions and culture as a backcloth. The name 'Bertha' holds significance here, for it shows Keats's attentive reading of Chatterton's medieval text, 'Ælla', as Meyerstein alerted to his readers, suggesting further intertextual homages to his guide (1930, p. 511). But Bertha also derives from the Old High German *berhta* (meaning 'bright one') and ties to Saint Bertha of Kent (529 – 612). This evidences that Chatterton and Keats are both saturating their work with important Anglo-Saxon words and names, planting their works far back in England's history.

The closer the reader gets to the poem's centre, the more enthralled Bertha becomes with her book. She is constantly rejecting real life for the historical and mythical contents of her book. The modal verb 'could' in line forty one suggests that if she lifted her head, she would see the Minster Square, but she is 'perplex'd . . . with a thousand things' in her book (Keats, 1901a, p. 4; ll. 29 – 41). Even when her head is pressed against the windowpane she still does not pay attention to anything outside of the book. Whenever her surroundings impinge on her ability to carry on reading the text 'that all day long, from earliest morn, / had taken captive her two eyes', she moves to a new position (Keats, 1901a, p.3; ll. 26 – 27). The repetition of 'untir'd she read' in the poem further enforces her captivated state and encapsulates Keats's desire to read and channel Chatterton (1901a, p. 6, ll. 83 – 89). The scene led Ulmer to conclude that Keats's portrayal of the intimacy of reading was his final dedication to Chatterton (2017, p. 137). The implicit dedication adds a further layer of historical weighting, confirming Keats's inherited interest in the 'barbarous' society of the Saxons.

Keats's curiosity does not stop here. When we turn our attention to 'La Belle' we find 'literary balladry famously meet[ing] traditional balladry' (McLane, 2008, p. 268). Keats uses the politically charged genre of the ballad for multiple purposes and this comes from his knowledge of historically famous attempts to revive the genre. In the more immediate Romantic canon, William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge 'offered to the most modern and literary of poets the romance and techniques of a popular, apparently collective, still-living oral tradition' (McLane, 2001, p. 425) by using 'language really used by men' (Wordsworth & Coleridge, 2013, p. 97). But a step further back located the antiquarian tradition of Percy, Chatterton and Scott, who all laid emphasis on the manuscript edition of the ballad

and its importance in literary and cultural posterity. Keats was familiar with the works of all five and was therefore in the perfect position to tinker with the mechanics of the ballad as he wished.

Percy relied on the printing of the ballads in *Reliques* to prove that the Saxons did have a literary history and tradition that was worth recording. In the process he restored the ballad genre's 'dignity by placing it in the evolving canon of English literature', a sentiment and action Chatterton all too fully agreed and experimented with in poems like 'Bristowe Tragedic; or, the Death of Sir Charles Bawdin' (Groom, 1999, p. 104). Scott likewise sought to provide a similar publication for Scotland, proving that it did have an ancient literary history that could match England's. Keats's determination to capture the vanishing glory of the Celts in *Hyperion* perfectly showcased his interest in resurrecting older societies and their beliefs, in particular those linked to his native shores. The ballad was the perfect genre to encapsulate the story of the faëry enchantress.

Keats's composition of his ballad comes after both Eves and in the heart of his rekindled interest in Chatterton and English history. We see him making 'La Belle' an 'exercise in memory' both internally and externally (Duff, 2009, p. 145). He perfectly balances his poem between the 'render[ing] perceptible the sedimented layers [of the ballad genre], built up across time' for the reader and the Wight's ability to remember his encounter with La Belle internally (Duff, 2009, p. 145).

By 1819 the ballad genre had generated a plethora of subject matter, tropes and motifs with the help of antiquarian balladeering that had 'amassed and produced first an archive, the proliferating mass of ballad *documenta* in various mediums (e.g. manuscript, black-letter broadsides, chapbooks, multivolume compendiums), and

ultimately a canon' (McLane, 2008, p. 47). Writers could now pick out and use at their leisure what ingredients they desired. Such actions relied heavily on Reception Theory, which presented a single ballad as a 'metonymy where it represents the whole' of the genre; it could 'embody reference to all pre-existent moments within the same body of tradition' by employing its tropes, stanza form, rhyme and subject matter (Atkinson, 2002, p. 10). From one ballad such as 'La Belle', one could effectively extract the genre's whole history. This is referred to as traditional referentiality. When a writer works within the borders of the genre, there is a consistency-building within the tradition that keeps it alive (Atkinson, 2002, pp. 10 – 11). Keats relies heavily on aspects of the ballad genre, employing its four-line structure, ABCB rhyme scheme, iambic rhythm, emphasis on orality in the plot and the employing of popular tropes like the supernatural, faëries and a knight. Much like the Spenserian stanza froze 'The Eve of St. Agnes' on the page, restricting it in its engagement of Faërie, the ballad stanza is a tightly compacted form.

By printing it in Leigh Hunt's *The Indicator*, Keats followed in the antiquarian tradition of printing ballads instead of continuing to support their oral history. There are signs that reveal Keats employing similar techniques to the antiquarians. Not only does he rely on the four-line stanza which identifies it as a ballad, but he also prefers to use archaic spellings such as 'faery' that give the poem age and connect it to English folklore. Besides printing it, he further cemented his ballad into literary history by including it in his letter to George and Georgiana Keats. This was a common activity for Keats and Bradley would open his 'The Letters of Keats' by urging his audience to read the letters because of their insight and poetic gems. Keats frequently wrote in his letters and journals what was later termed the 'Posthumous and Fugitive Poems' by Sélincourt, Harry Buxton Forman and his other

editors in Tolkien's youth. By incorporating his poems into his letters, he perhaps did not wish for them to be published, but he at least ensured their survival and transition into literary history. They further granted him the freedom and flexibility to add editorial commentary: 'Why four Kisses – you will say – why four because I wish to restrain the headlong impetuosity of my Muse . . . I was obliged to choose an even number that both eyes might have fair play' (Keats, 1901c, pp. 49 – 50). Bradley considered them 'necessary' for one's 'understanding of *Endymion*' and they even shed important light on the termination of *Hyperion* (1909, p. 210). Keats's letters opened the doors for scholars to understand who he was reading and what editorial processes he was going through with his poems.

For Keats to impart so much material into his letters precedes Tolkien's own utilisation of the letter form to promote his mythology. He went as far as to reply to some of his fans in dwarvish runes and elvish Tengwar, pointing out corrections in their original attempts and the makeup of the alphabets. He also teased excessively about the grandeur of the First and Second Ages, controlling how much information about the stories and characters was released to the wider public. His expansive letter to Milton Waldman is just one of hundreds where he freely provided deeper insights into his work. Indeed, in a letter to Hugh Brogan on 18th September 1954, he included contextual and editorial comments that echo strongly what has been argued throughout this thesis:

> I have tried to present a kind of legendary and history of a
> 'forgotten epoch' . . . Middle-earth is just archaic English for *ἡ*
> *οἰκουμένη*, the inhabited world of men. It lay then as it does.
> In fact just as it does, round and inescapable. That is partly

the point. The new situation, established at the beginning of

the Third Age leads on eventually and inevitably to ordinary

History (Tolkien, 2006a, p. 186).

He made it very clear that he preferred 'history, true or feigned' and gave each fan a reward of sorts for their curiosity (Tolkien, 2007, p. xxiv). For Keats and Tolkien, letters were crucial components to the posthumous life of their oeuvre. Keats even presumed in his letter to George and Georgiana Keats on 25th October 1818 that he would join the canon of English poets after his death, whereas Tolkien hoped that his work and letters would inspire others to 'continue the story' (1901b, p. 176).

Beyond letters, Tolkien's effort to present Middle-earth as a forgotten time of our history echoed Chatterton's work on the history of Bristol. Much like Chatterton, Tolkien felt that he was 'discovering rather than inventing' his work (Groom, 2014, pp. 294). Chatterton had based Rowleyese on genuine Middle-English dictionaries much like Tolkien based his languages on Welsh, Finnish and other languages, using dictionaries and primers as source material. Chatterton crafted 'calligraphy; produced his own complex medieval manuscripts, maps, sketches, and heraldry; loaded his pseudo-antique writings with prefaces, footnotes, appendices, and glossaries; and then wove authentic material into what was his predominantly imagined fifteenth-century world' (Groom, 2014, p. 295). Tolkien may not be a literary forger, as Groom and Fimi have both stressed, but he does 'adopt the techniques' listed above (Groom, 2014, p. 294) in order for him and his readers to become '"immersed" into the imaginary reality of Middle-earth' (Fimi, 2016, p. 58).

It was in the 1960s when Tolkien started to conceive of Middle-earth in a deeper antiquarian manner, providing further tangible material from what had started to emerge with his work on *The Lord of the Rings*. Whereas he had already started by spending 'a considerable amount of time creating three pages from *The Book of Mazarbul*' with the intention of them being incorporated into *The Lord of the Rings*, the cost of printing them in colour meant that Tolkien's vision did not come to fruition in his lifetime (Fimi, 2016, p. 57). He also realised after the book's publication that the three pages contained an 'erroneous extension of the general linguistic treatment' he gave the Red Book (Tolkien, 1996, p. 299). The inhabitants of Middle-earth at the point of *The Lord of the Rings* spoke the Common Speech. This is what Tolkien claimed to translate into English, keeping the other languages: elvish, entish and dwarvish, intact. However, 'the text he had transcribed in runes and Elvish script was actually in modern English' (Fimi, 2016, p. 59).

Catherine McIlwaine's significant companion book to the 2018 exhibition *Tolkien: Maker of Middle-earth* is a welcome help here as it not only illustrates Tolkien's antiquarian experiments of the 1960s but also contains all three facsimiles from *The Book of Mazarbul* in colour. The task for Tolkien was a 'labour of love' (Fimi, 2016, p. 57) and McIlwaine fondly describes how he 'burnt the paper with the edges with his pipe, pierced holes along one side to resemble the holes where the parchment would have been stitched to the binding and washed them with red paint to resemble bloodstains' which mimics Chatterton's use of vellum to age his own documents to give them the air and look of historic authenticity (2018, pp. 348 – 349).

When Tolkien returned to the matter of the Silmarillion he spent time doodling on newspapers, developing 'designs for brooches or clasps' and ceramics for the

Númenórean race (McIlwaine, 2018, pp. 188 – 194) and 'drew heraldic devices for the main characters or houses in his legendarium' (McIlwaine, 2018, pp. 236 – 238). He also 'had a lifelong interest in calligraphy, which he attributed to his mother's influence' and can be paralleled biographically to Chatterton (McIlwaine, 2018, pp. 186 – 187), who '"*fell in love* with the illuminated capitals"' at a young age when his own mother was tearing up old books to put on the fire (quoted in Meyerstein, 1930, p. 22). Tolkien had also learnt from Edward Johnston's popular *Writing & Illuminating, & Lettering* (1906), granting him formal training. Chatterton's experiments in calligraphy were based on the old manuscripts that lay around St Mary and, comparatively, Tolkien was also familiar with the medieval manuscripts that the Bodleian held. The *Ancrene Wise* and Old English *Exodus* are both examples of physical manuscripts that he will have handled, consulted, worked and lectured on which contained such illuminated capitals.

His passion for calligraphy shone most brightly when he was writing out Tengwar. Tengwar was the elvish alphabet and allowed the languages to inhabit both the oral and written worlds. In *The Hobbit* Tolkien relied on Nordic runes to build the dwarf alphabet, giving them the air of authentic history. The Tengwar that featured on the Ring (Tolkien, 2007, p. 50), the Doors of Durin (Tolkien, 2007, p. 305) and the Appendices (Tolkien, 2007, p. 1109) in *The Lord of the Rings* attempted to cement the languages in history, imprinting and recording the elvish culture onto tangible and historical objects. The written word or symbol bore significant meaning for Tolkien, as it did with Chatterton. Both sought it for its security in capturing history and freezing it on the page. It meant that their history could stand the test of time; when written down it could never truly disappear, no matter its composer or editor. As Tolkien granted the oral tradition primarily to the

elves (with the exception of the Rohirrim), their immortality adding significance to it, he reflected the morality of men and hobbits through their antiquarian dependency on the written word.

In *The Book of Lost Tales* it is only when a mortal human, Eriol, and a half-man half-faërie, Heorrenda, hear the lost tales that the idea of transmitting them into writing even occurs. To Tolkien it is only mortal memory that requires the textual transmission of the oral tradition, reflecting their limited life spans and their anxieties over posterity. Even in the 'Tale of Ælfwine' it is the human who proceeds to copy down the elvish history. This is of course how he planned for his English mythology to have survived down to the early twentieth century. His 'chains of transmission', like Chatterton's alter-egos Rowley and Turgot, deepen and reinforce the historicism of his mythology (Fimi, 2016, p. 52).

Tolkien's central stance on the written and oral traditions came to its climax in *The Lord of the Rings*. Here he was able to channel his anxiety over narrative posterity into Bilbo, the now-turned antiquarian hobbit. He goes on a 'holiday' to Rivendell with the intention of completing his book (*The Hobbit*) and once there, requests Aragorn's help to finish his poetic setting of Eärendel's travels – yet another example of a mortal transmitting the tales of the immortals onto the page (Tolkien, 2007, p. 233). He even asks Frodo to bring back 'all the news you can, and any old songs and tales you can come by' for 'I should like to write the second book' (Tolkien, 2007, p. 278). His final words to Frodo in Rivendell mimic strongly the activities of Percy, Scott, Lönnrot and Macpherson and many other eighteenth-century folklorists who travelled specifically with the intention of recording ballads and songs for their antiquarian projects. By the end of *The Lord of the Rings* we are given the final title page for the Red Book of Westmarch, a collective text that was

'intended to echo the great medieval manuscript books' of the Northern hemisphere such as The White Book of Rhydderch, the Black Book of Carmarthen, the Yellow Book of Lecan, the Red Book of Hengest – the latter being the closest in scheme and nationality (Flieger, 2012, p. 43). We can add to these the Red and Black Books of Canranald that Macpherson drew from for *The Poems of Ossian*, linking Tolkien closer to the Scotsman. The italics are Bilbo's sketches and the rest is Frodo's:

My Diary. My Unexpected Journey. There and Back Again.
And What Happened After.

Adventures of Five Hobbits. The Tale of the Great Ring,
compiled by Bilbo Baggins from his own observations and
the accounts of his friends. What we did in the War of the Ring.

<div align="center">

THE DOWNFALL

OF THE

LORD OF THE RINGS

AND THE

RETURN OF THE KING

</div>

(as seen by the Little People; being the memoirs of Bilbo
and Frodo of the Shire, supplemented by the accounts of
their friends and the learning of the Wise.)

Together with extracts from Books of Lore translated by
Bilbo in Rivendell (Tolkien, 2007, p. 1027).

Tolkien passes off *The Lord of the Rings* as Frodo and Bilbo's actual work. His Red Book 'takes us into metafictional territory, where Tolkien playfully collaborates with historical authors, translators, and editors that he himself created, treating his own work as if it were written by someone else' much like Macpherson and Chatterton with their respective alter-egos (Croft, 2018, p. 192). Words like 'compiled', 'observations', 'accounts' and 'translated' give the Red Book the air of Percy's *Reliques*, Macpherson's translations and Chatterton's 'Antiquities', placing it strongly in the antiquarian tradition.

The writing of Bilbo's part of the Red Book of Westmarch caused him much angst and the various titles betray his fears of finishing his work. Much like Tolkien with the Silmarillion, Ossian and Fingal's lineage, or Keats with *Endymion* and *Hyperion*, Bilbo agonizes over the completion of his book. Phrases like 'if I am spared' and 'I am getting very old' mirror Ossian's mortal plight in trying to keep the Caledonian traditions alive in his old age, as well as Keats's fears after coughing up arterial blood (Tolkien, 2007, p. 238). Bilbo exclaims 'Don't adventures ever have an end? I suppose not. Someone else always has to carry on the story. Well, it can't be helped. I wonder if it's any good trying to finish my book?' (Tolkien, 2007, p. 232). He has no interest in the oral tradition which is only temporary; he wishes to provide a tangible record of his adventures in the wider world of Middle-earth so they can surpass his mortality. The reflective phrase 'someone else always has to carry on the story' neatly summarises Tolkien's efforts to conjure a universe where a wealth of storytellers have added to the story of Middle-earth. In a way, Bilbo is anticipating the longevity of the Red Book, for the Prologue to *The Lord of the Rings* records that 'the original Red Book has not been preserved, but many copies were made' (Tolkien, 2007, p. 14), noting the importance of the Thain's Book as the first. Its

history of 'interwoven multivalent, identifiable source-traditions . . . and voices [therefore] produce the effect of age' and crucially lend the text antiquarian authenticity (Painter, 2016, p. 125). For Bilbo and Tolkien, the editor (many of whom appear in the life of the Red Book) counted very much as a storyteller. Janet Croft notes that to edit meant collaborating 'with the long-dead original author or transcriber of the piece' to Tolkien, and this allowed a work to cultivate a history of its own (2018, p. 177). It is understandable why Tolkien gave space at the end of the Prologue, just before the beginning of the story, to tell the history of the book itself. From the start he clearly intend to present the work as a truly 'discovered' text.

Tolkien's antiquarian approach to his magnum opus strongly channels the quotation from Scott that opens this chapter. It is undeniable that Tolkien's work has 'enriched' the literary world and as Shippey so perfectly summarised at the opening of *Author of the Century*, 'the dominant literary mode of the twentieth century has been the fantastic' (2001, p. vii). To achieve what he did, Tolkien harkened back to earlier writers and learnt from their mistakes and successes in order to reclaim a pocket of English history that had been forgotten in its annals. Macpherson, Chatterton and Keats were a part of this group as that saw their respective historical epochs as significantly lacking in literary representation. Collectively, they revived the past for societies that had lost touch with their roots, proving that the past could 'motivate and define' the present (Groom, 2014, p. 294).

Conclusion – Faërie as Heritage

Elizabeth Fay has called Romanticism a 'Janus-faced movement, always looking back even as it looks forward' (2002, p. 1). This can be extended to Tolkien and Keats's approach to the past and Faërie. They brought it back to remind their contemporary society what it had lost with its 'modern' literary tradition that had shrunk the faëry and stripped it of its powers. History was 'no longer irrelevant to present times' for Tolkien or the Romantics, 'it beg[a]n to provide an imaginative field of potential solutions to the crises of the now' (Fay, 2002, p. 2). Fantasy quickly became the vehicle for twentieth-century society to reconnect with its past just as the Romantics 're-discovered and re-valued the medieval romance' to connect with its own (Holmes, 2018, p. 5). This tradition of reviving the past by bypassing significant literary movements is a part of the Romantic make-up just as much as it was Tolkien's. The latter sought to ignore all 'modern' literature that came after Spenser, the Romantics did the same with the 'domestication' that they associated with the literature of the Enlightenment (Beers, 1899, p. 265).

With the eighteenth century came the antiquarian frenzy around the ballad revival and the 'Age of Forgery'. By publishing ballad collections their editors 'sought to align them more closely with a literary tradition, bringing ballads within the domain of the advancing notion of stable textuality' (Atkinson, 2002, p. 25). Macpherson and Chatterton likewise drew on their nations' histories and drew them into the 'literary tradition' of the period, presenting them to fresh eyes and ears through their own subjective viewpoints. As a result the Romantics inherited their view of the Celt from Macpherson which was handed down to the Victorians and Chatterton portrayed the Battle of Hastings from the perspective of the brave English.

The Pre-Raphaelites did the same with painting. Hunt recalled how the Brotherhood 'exclude[d] the influence of such corrupters of perfection' as the Bolognese Academy, whose teachings 'were introduced at the foundation of all later schools' and were 'lethal in their influence, tending to stifle the breath of design' (1905, p. 137). They strove for a 'simply fuller Nature' that they considered the Academy to be lacking (Hunt, 1905, p. 87). The Pre-Raphaelites helped to popularise a 'new wave of romanticism' that dominated the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century (Flieger, 1997, p. 34). They were the 'direct heirs' to the Romantic legacy and helped to stir a nationalism that was present at King Edward's School when Tolkien was a student (Flieger, 1997, p. 34).

With the Pre-Raphaelites also came a renewed interest in Keats, whose immortal, youthful figure fascinated and inspired early twentieth-century poets. His presence was felt in the school curriculum and on the university syllabuses, giving Tolkien sufficient opportunity to familiarise himself with Keats's biography and poetry. His interest in the synaesthetic nature of language points back to Keats's own rich use of it, particularly fusing sound with taste. It is possible that through Tolkien's close reading of William Morris, he further picked up a certain 'Keatsian' poetic as there exists a chain of influence between the three writers and *Hyperion* (1819) is evident in *The Earthly Paradise* (1868 – 1870) which helped form *The Book of Lost Tales* (1983 – 1984). In the 1910s, it is clear that the first draft of *The Book of Lost Tales* adopted techniques and poetic diction from Keats's poetry. Andrew Higgins has commented on how Tolkien borrowed texts such as Colvin's *Keats* (1887) and Bradley's *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (1909) when he was 'working on his early mythic poetry and suggest him looking for both models and inspiration for his own creative work' (2015, p. 31). Keats was indeed a model in the 1910s. In the 1920s

however, when 'The Lay of Leithian' (1925 – 1931) and 'The Lay of the Children of Húrin' (1920 – 1925) were being composed, Tolkien started to critically address Keats's work. Tolkien broke Keats from the restrictions that Spenser's influence had placed on him by eradicating the Spenserian stanza. He replaced it with darker, more Gothic overtones in 'The Lay of Leithian' that freed Faërie and Keats from the poisonous chains of Spenser and Shakespeare. In doing so, Keats's work flowed into Tolkien's, allowing scholars to claim his early work to be 'Keatsian' in style.

Keats was a key Romantic who was hailed as the equivalent of Shakespeare during Tolkien's life. Tolkien must have been aware of this as he relied on Keats's fame when he referenced *Hyperion*, 'Ode to a Nightingale' (1819) and 'On First Looking into Chapman's Homer' (1816) in his various public lectures and private essays. Keats was importantly a part of the Romantic tradition of jumping back; he wanted to 'escape the present . . . by returning to a medievalised space' (Fay, 2002, p. 110). Like Tolkien, he gleaned from Macpherson and Chatterton 'how to refine his poetics in terms of temporality' and revived aspects of folklore for popular consumption (Fay, 2002, p. 112).

For Tolkien and Keats, Faërie was a part of the national heritage that had been side-lined by the allegorical fairies of Spenser and diminutive figures in Shakespeare. Tolkien scholarship has most often drawn on Blake and Coleridge as ancestors to Tolkien's theories and legendarium from the Romantic Movement but in doing so, it has neglected Keats. *The Book of Lost Tales* revives the traditional Faërie as the national heritage of England and Britain. Within, Tolkien's mythology fused with Keats's poetry to build a national mythology that restored to England its lost Faërie.

Appendices – Appendix A: Keats and Tolkien Scholarship

This list of academic sources does not claim to be definitive. It aims to make the reader aware of Keats's minute place in Tolkien scholarship.

Author	Work	Page(s)
Verlyn Flieger	*A Question of Time*	80
Tom Shippey	*J. R. R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*	278 & 281
Brian Rosebury	*J. R. R. Tolkien: A Cultural Phenomenon*	91
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Ode to a Nightingale		X				X	X	X		
Ode on a Grecian Urn					X	X	X	X		
To Autumn			X			X	X	X		
Keats's Last Sonnet (Bright Star)	X					X	X		X	
On First Looking into Chapman's Homer				X		X	X	X		
On the Grasshopper and the Cricket			X			X				
Extracts from *Endymion*:										

'Beauty' (Book I; Lines 1 – 24)					X		X				
'Hymn to Pan' (Book I; Lines 279 – 292)							X				
'Bacchus' (Book IV; Lines 193 – 203)							X				
Our Peace – To Kosciusko											X
Cynthia's Bridal Evening							X				
Extracts from The Eve of St. Agnes:											
'The Flight' (Stanzas XXV – XLII)							X				
Blue Eyes	X										
To Benjamin Robert Brown						X					
Fancy					X			X			
Extracts from Hyperion:											
'Saturn' (Book I; Lines 1 – 51)							X				

'Cœlus to Hyperion' (Book I; Lines 209 – 357)						X				
'Oceanus' (Book II; Lines 167 – 243)						X				
'Hyperion's Arrival' (Book II; Lines 347 – 378)						X				
Ode: ('Bards of Passion and of Mirth')						X	X			
Lines on the Mermaid Tavern						X	X			
Sonnet Written in January 1817						X				
Sonnet Written in January 1818						X				
Addressed to Haydon						X				
The Human Seasons						X	X			
On a Picture Leander						X				
The Bard Speaks (from						X				

The Epistle to My Brother George)										
Happy Insensibility							X			
La Belle Dame sans Merci (Knight at Arms)							X			
La Belle Dame sans Merci (Wretched Wight)								X		
'To one who has long been in city pent'							X			
Terror of Death ('When I have fears')							X	X		
Ode to Melancholy								X		
Ode to Psyche									X	
Fragment of an Ode to Maia									X	

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Appendix C: 'The Horns of Ylmir'

What follows is the third version of the poem that was edited in the Spring of 1917. It exemplifies Tolkien as a synaesthetic writer who focuses chiefly on sound and its merging with other senses. The poem is correctly replicated from *The Shaping of Middle-earth* (1986, pp. 216 – 217).

'Twas in the Land of Willows where the grass is long and green –

I was fingering my harp-strings, for a wind had crept unseen

And was speaking in the tree-tops, while the voices of the reeds

Were whispering reedy whispers as the sunset touched the meads,

Inland musics subtly magic that those reeds alone could weave –

'Twas in the Land of Willows that once Ylmir came at eve.

In the twilight by the river on a hollow thing of shell

He made immortal music, till my heart beneath his spell

Was broken in the twilight, and the meadows faded dim

To great grey waters heaving round the rocks where sea-birds swim.

I heard them wailing round me where the black cliffs towered high

And the old primeval starlight flickered palely in the sky.

In that dim and perilous region in whose great tempestuous ways

I heard no sound of men's voices, in those eldest of the days,

I sat on the ruined margin of the deep-voiced echoing sea

Whose roaring foaming music crashed in endless cadency[47]

On the land besieged for ever in an aeon of assaults

And torn in towers and pinnacles and caverned in great vaults;

And its arches shook with thunder and its feet were piled with shapes

Riven in old sea-warfare from those crags and sable capes.

Lo! I heard the embattled tempest roaring up behind the tide

When the trumpet of the first winds sounded, and the grey sea sang and cried

As a new white wrath woke in him, and his armies rose to war

And swept in billowed cavalry toward the walled and moveless shore.

There the windy-bannered fortress of those high and virgin coasts

Flung back the first thin feelers of the elder tidal hosts;

Flung back the restless streamers that like arms of a tentacled thing

Coiling and creeping onward did rustle and suck and cling.

Then a sigh arose and a murmuring in that stealthy-whispering van,

While, behind, the torrents gathered and the leaping billows ran,

Till the foam-haired water-horses in green rolling volumes came –

A mad tide trampling landward – and their war-song burst to flame.

Huge heads were tossed in anger and their crests were towers of froth

And the song of the great seas were singing was a song of unplumbed wrath,

For through that giant welter Ossë's trumpets fiercely blew,

That the voices of the flood yet deeper and the High Wind louder grew;

---

[47] This line was changed to: '*Whose endless roaring music crashed in foaming harmony*' (Tolkien, 1986, p. 218).

Deep hollows hummed and fluted as they sucked the sea-winds in;

Spumes and great white spoutings yelled shrilly o'er the din;

Gales blew the bitter tresses of the sea in the land's dark face

And wild airs thick with spindrift fled on a whirling race

From battle unto battle, till the power of all the seas

Gathered like one mountain about Ossë's awful knees,

And a dome of shouting water smote those dripping black facades

And its catastrophic fountains smashed in deafening cascades.

<p align="center">*   *   *</p>

Then the immeasurable hymn of Ocean I heard as it rose and fell

To its organ whose stops were the piping of gulls and the thunderous swell;

Heard the burden of the waters and the singing of the waves

Whose voices came on for ever and went rolling to the caves,

Where an endless fugue of echoes splashed against wet stone

And arose and mingled in unison into a murmuring drone –

'Twas a music of uttermost deepness that stirred in the profound,

And all the voices of all oceans were gathered to that sound;

'Twas Ylmir, Lord of Waters, with all-stilling hand that made

Unconquerable harmonies, that the roaring sea obeyed,

That its waters poured off and Earth heaved her glistening shoulders again

Naked up into the airs and cloudrifts and sea-going rain,

Till the suck and suck of green eddies and the slap of ripples was all

That reached to mine isléd stone, save the old unearthly call

Of sea-birds long-forgotten and the grating of ancient wings.

Thus murmurous slumber took me mid those far-off eldest things

(In a lonely twilit region down whose old chaotic ways

I heard no sound of men's voices, in those eldest of the days

When the world reeled in the tumult as the Great Gods tore the Earth

In the darkness, in the tempest of the cycles ere our birth),

Till the tides went out, and the Wind died, and did all sea musics cease

And I woke to silent caverns and empty sands and peace.

Then the magic drifted from me and that music loosed its bands –

Far, far-off, conches calling – lo! I stood in the sweet lands,

And the meadows were about me where the weeping willows grew,

Where the long grass stirred beside me, and my feet were drenched with dew.

Only the reeds were rustling, but a mist lay on the streams

Like a sea-roke drawn far inland, like a shred of salt sea-dreams.

'Twas in the Land of Willows that I heard th'unfathomed breath

Of the Horns of Ylmir calling – and shall hear them till my death.

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