

THE OXFORD SCHOOL OF CHILDREN'S FANTASY LITERATURE:
MEDIEVAL AFTERLIVES AND THE PRODUCTION OF CULTURE

Maria Sachiko Cecire
Keble College
University of Oxford

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Hilary Term 2011

ABSTRACT

THE OXFORD SCHOOL OF CHILDREN'S FANTASY LITERATURE:
 MEDIEVAL AFTERLIVES AND THE PRODUCTION OF CULTURE

MARIA SACHIKO CECIRE
 KEBLE COLLEGE

DPHIL
 HILARY 2011

This thesis names the Oxford School of children's fantasy literature as arising from the educational milieu of the University of Oxford's English School during the mid-twentieth century. It argues that J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis lay the foundations for the children's fantasy genre by introducing an English curriculum at Oxford in 1931 (first examined 1933) that required extensive study in medieval literature, and by modelling the use of medieval source material in their own popular children's fantasy works. The Oxford School's creative use of its sources produces medieval 'afterlives,' lending the Middle Ages new relevance in popular culture. This research directly compares medieval literature to children's fantasy works by Tolkien, Lewis, and four other Oxford-educated children's fantasy authors in order to reveal the genre's debt to actual medieval texts and to the Oxford English syllabus in particular. The four authors are Susan Cooper, Kevin Crossley-Holland, Diana Wynne Jones, and Philip Pullman.

This thesis situates the tendencies of medievalised children's fantasy in relation to Lewis and Tolkien's personal and scholarly convictions about the patriotic, moral, and aesthetic qualities of medieval literature and folklore. Building on the theories of Michel de Certeau, this thesis demonstrates how Oxford School fantasy produces new mythologies for England and argues that, as children's literature, these works have an implicit didactic function that echoes that of the English School curriculum. This thesis traces the attempts of some Oxford School authors to navigate or explode generic conventions by drawing upon new source material, and contends that the structures and hierarchies that underpin the genre reassert themselves even in texts that set out to refute them. It suggests that such returns to the norm can produce pleasure and invite diverse reading, growing out of the intertextual associations of each new rewriting.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful for the insight and guidance of my supervisors, Dr. Carolyne Larrington and Dr. Diane Purkiss, whose expertise and feedback have been invaluable to this project. I would also like to thank Professor Christina von Nolcken for her early encouragement and Professor Michael Murrin for inspiring my interest in the afterlives of medieval literature. Special thanks go to my students and colleagues at Oxford, in Bath, and at Bard College for their enthusiasm and many thought-provoking ideas.

I am extremely beholden to the Rhodes Trust for their substantial financial support during the years of my doctoral research, and to the staff of Rhodes House for the many other forms of support that they provided. I am also indebted to the English Faculty's Meyerstein Fund, Keble College, and the Keble Association, which generously funded several conference trips to present my research. I would like to thank the staffs of the English Faculty and of Keble College for their help, and especially Dr. Marc Brodie of Keble College for his kindness and aid.

I am grateful to the staff of the Oxford University Archives and Examination Schools Degree Conferrals Office for their assistance in my research, as well as to the staff of the following libraries: the Bard College Library, the Bodleian Library, the English Faculty Library, Harvard University's Widener Library, Keble College Library, and the Schwarzman Building of the New York Public Library.

Finally, I wish to thank my wonderful friends, my family, and my partner for their encouragement, support, and love. I would especially like to acknowledge my sister Natalia Cecire, without whom this project would not have been possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE	
The Making of the Oxford School	23
CHAPTER TWO	
Stories of Home: Writing the ‘Voice’ of the Nation	75
CHAPTER THREE	
The Educational Authority of the Oxford School	124
CHAPTER FOUR	
Walking in the Father’s City: Negotiating Influence	168
CHAPTER FIVE	
From Home to Home: The Persistence of Generic Structure	214
CODA	267
BIBLIOGRAPHY	275

ABBREVIATIONS

EETS Early English Text Society

MED Middle English Dictionary

OED Oxford English Dictionary

For all works cited repeatedly, the first citation is given in full and successive citations are in a short, easily recognised form.

REFERENCING POLICY

Unless otherwise specified, the dates in parentheses refer to the first published editions of the works mentioned.

I have followed the format given in Russell David Harper, ed., *The Chicago Manual of Style Online*, 16th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010). <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org>.

INTRODUCTION

‘[S]omething which the educated receive from poetry can reach the masses through stories of adventure, and almost in no other way.’

--C.S. Lewis, ‘On Stories’¹

Knights, wizards, dragons, monsters: twentieth- and twenty-first century children’s fantasy literature continually reuses and renews such emblems of the Middle Ages, and its plots echo the battles and quests of heroic and chivalric literature from the medieval period. The medievalisms of such children’s fantasy owe much to previous literary revivifications of the Middle Ages; however its child audience and its focus on Manichean conflicts distinguish it from its predecessors. The reproduction of large-scale moral conflicts set in (pseudo-) medieval time and (pseudo-) English space imply the continued significance of each in the contemporary world, and the reuse of tropes such as the young hero (often a child), rightful monarchy, monstrous enemies, magical tutor figures, and perilous femininity establish conventions that frame and define the genre. These are not just invented and circumstantial medievalisms; many children’s fantasy authors borrow directly from medieval literature to construct universes and storylines in their works, thereby creating ‘afterlives’ for medieval literature. These altered but continued existences identify contemporary meaning in the motifs and narratives of the Middle Ages, recasting them as sources of entertainment and instruction for young people.

This thesis identifies the origins of this use of medieval literature in the fantasy of J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, and in the English School curriculum that they established at the University of Oxford, which was in place for nearly forty

¹ C.S. Lewis, ‘On Stories,’ in *Of This and Other Worlds*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Collins, 1982), 40.

years (1933-1970) and studied by generations of British authors. This curriculum, as this thesis demonstrates, strongly influenced three generations of British fantasy writers, thus revealing the broad popular impact of a specialized area of academic study. The primary focus of this curriculum was medieval literature and language: all three course choices called for the detailed study of Old English, Middle English, and at least one philological paper, and the syllabus ended at 1830.² Amongst the students of this curriculum are four prominent children's fantasy authors: Diana Wynne Jones, Susan Cooper, Kevin Crossley-Holland, and Philip Pullman, whose work reflects their course reading and the influence of Lewis and Tolkien's ideals and scholarship. Jones (St. Anne's College) and Cooper (Somerville College) both matriculated in October 1953 and graduated in Trinity Term 1956, attending university lectures while Tolkien and Lewis were dons.³ Crossley-Holland (St. Edmund Hall; matriculated Oct. 1959, graduated TT 1962) and Pullman (Exeter College; matriculated Oct. 1965, graduated TT 1968) became students after Lewis took up the Professorship of Renaissance and Medieval English at Cambridge in 1954 and Tolkien retired from his post as Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon Literature in 1959.⁴ However they all read the texts set by these academics and studied medieval English literature as the key to all English literature and culture, as so defined by their curriculum. Tolkien, Lewis, and their Oxford-educated successors form what this thesis names the Oxford School of children's fantasy literature: a school of children's writing that gives medieval literature new life in popular culture.

² A detailed description of the curriculum appears in Chapter One, pp. 62-3.

³ Charles Butler includes Cooper and Jones's reminiscences of Lewis and Tolkien as lecturers (the former inspiring, the latter dry) in his *Four British Fantasists: Place and Culture in the Children's Fantasies of Penelope Lively, Alan Garner, Diana Wynne Jones, and Susan Cooper* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2006), 16.

⁴ Oxford, Oxford University Degree Conferrals Office Archive.

It is not only the use of medieval literature that unites Oxford School works, but also its means of engaging with these texts. Tolkien and Lewis's interests and beliefs laid the foundations for the Oxford School style, just as they guided the construction of the English curriculum. Both scholars considered the study of medieval English literature to be patriotic and salutary, conveying the roots of English culture and encouraging contemplation on themes essential to moral living. They also found it aesthetically rewarding, capable of providing a 'Joy' that they likened to religious experience.⁵ These founders of the Oxford School believed that stories of magic and adventure – 'romance' in the popular sense, and 'fairy story' – could convey many of the same sensations and concepts to a wide audience. Lewis suggests that such tales *are* the public's poetry: if 'the reader of popular romance – however uneducated a reader, however bad the romances – goes back to his old favourites again and again, then you have pretty good evidence that they are to him a sort of poetry.'⁶ Their fantasy novels, especially Tolkien's Middle Earth fiction and Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-1956), use medievalisms to create popular literature that attempts to communicate the messages and experiences that they identified in medieval literature. This 'new' medieval literature attempts to function as 'poetry' for the masses: new English myths.

Tolkien's *The Hobbit* (1937) and Lewis's *Chronicles* aim this communication specifically at children, an authorial decision in keeping with their generation's view of fantasy as a genre most appropriate for the young. In spite of their insistence that this association is accidental and inaccurate, both authors used children's literature as the means by which to introduce their medievalised fantasy to a broad readership.

Although Tolkien shifted his tone to address adults in *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-55)

⁵ See Chapter One, pp. 40-42.

⁶ Lewis, 'On Stories,' 41.

following the success of *The Hobbit*, it is significant that Middle Earth first appeared in print through children's literature. Writing in 2002, John Pennington argues that the very standards for the genre are now laid out, as Brian Attebery suggests, 'not by boundaries but by a center,' with '*The Lord of the Rings* being that centre by which we judge other fantasies.'⁷ The immense popularity of *The Lord of the Rings* made it an extremely important influence on medievalised fantasy thereafter, including children's fantasy. Lewis and Tolkien's use of children's literature as a means to disseminate their stories both accords with publishing trends of the period and capitalizes on the didactic function that has long been associated with literature for children.⁸ Their fantasy thus offers a kind of education to the reader, if at times unintentionally. Their curriculum design – which was by definition didactic – suggests the same desire to bring medieval literature and its supposed effects to a wider audience, in a more explicit sense: it grounds the understanding of all English literature in linguistic and literary familiarity with its earliest incarnations.

Thus Lewis and Tolkien's influence on the secondary Oxford School authors (Jones, Cooper, Pullman, and Crossley-Holland) is twofold. First, the founders dictated the shape and content of the secondary authors' undergraduate studies, identifying key medieval texts as the most significant works for the understanding of English language and literature. These include tales of adventure such as *Beowulf*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *The Canterbury Tales*, medieval balladry, *Le Morte Darthur*, and other English romances. Second, their fantasy writing provided examples (intentional or not) of how to translate and transmit elements of such significant works to the public. The secondary authors that I discuss in this thesis both emulate and react against their

⁷ Brian Attebery, *Strategies of Fantasy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 12, and John Pennington, 'From Elfland to Hogwarts, or the Aesthetic Trouble with Harry Potter,' *The Lion and the Unicorn* 26, no. 1 (2002): 81.

⁸ On didacticism in children's literature, see Chapter Three, pp. 127-28.

predecessors, thereby expanding and developing the genre as they contribute their rewritings of medieval literature to it. They each engage with the hierarchies and oppositions that Lewis and Tolkien identify in the medieval tradition, and make use of English settings that invoke the patriotic sentiments associated with literary study in the Oxford English School. Magic enables their protagonists to travel through time and space, folding the distance between the ‘real world’ present and their predominantly ‘medieval’ fantasy realms. This suggests that an imagined Middle Ages continues to exert considerable power in the English-speaking world, even when the novels set out to refute just this suggestion. Oxford School conventions now dominate the genre of children’s fantasy literature, due in large part to the models that Lewis and Tolkien’s fantasy provide and to the continuations and innovations of the secondary authors. This kind of fantasy is best described in the terms that Tolkien used for ‘fairy-stories’ in his essay ‘On Fairy Stories.’ Lewis calls this essay ‘perhaps the most important contribution to the subject that anyone has yet made,’ and refers to it often in his own writing about fairy tale and fantasy.⁹ Tolkien asserts that ‘fairy-stories are not in normal English usage stories *about* fairies or elves, but stories about Fairy, that is *Faërie*, the realm or state in which fairies have their being.’¹⁰ Oxford School fantasy and its successors create landscapes of magical possibility in which fairies might plausibly exist, even if they do not feature in the tales: alternate worlds or our own world, in either case defined by the pre-modern associations of fairies and elves.

Oxford has produced a number of children’s authors, but as this thesis inquires into the institutional influence of the English School on the production of

⁹ C.S. Lewis, ‘On Three Ways of Writing for Children,’ in *Of This and Other Worlds*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: Collins, 1982), 61.

¹⁰ J.R.R. Tolkien, ‘On Fairy Stories,’ in *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*, ed. Christopher Tolkien (London: HarperCollins, 2006), 113. First given as an Andrew Lang lecture, which took place at the University of St. Andrew’s on 8 March, 1939. The essay first appeared in print nearly ten years later in the volume *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*, ed. C.S. Lewis (London: Oxford University Press, 1947).

culture, it does not address children's literature from Oxford in general.¹¹ It is thus necessary to omit the fantasy works of such important Oxford-educated authors as Alan Garner, who read classics, or Penelope Lively, who read history.¹² This thesis does consider the Oxford School's impact on the wider genre, however, using the work of J.K. Rowling as an indication of the directions that medievalised children's fantasy has taken in works by authors outside of the Oxford School. Her *Harry Potter* series (1997-2007) merges the traditions of children's fantasy and those of the boarding school genre, and its negotiations of Oxford School conventions are instructive for understanding the influence of the Oxford School on authors who did not study Tolkien and Lewis's syllabus but are familiar with fantasy's generic conventions. It also serves as an indication of the trends in contemporary children's fantasy, which include sympathetic depictions of difference and an emphasis on tolerance. The success of Rowling's novels transformed the children's publishing landscape and caused a dramatic rise in children's fantasy publication, and thus serves as an influential body of texts for the future of children's fantasy literature and medieval literature's afterlives within that genre.¹³

To assess the influence of medieval literature on the work of Oxford School authors and their successors, this thesis reads children's fantasy texts alongside medieval literature from the English School curriculum. It compares them to one another and interrogates the borrowings, alterations, and recastings of medieval

¹¹ Oxford has 'produced and nourished critically so much literature for children'; Val Cunningham, 'Literary Culture,' in *The History of the University of Oxford*, vol 8, ed. Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 439.

¹² This thesis also omits Roger Lancelyn Green, who was one of Lewis's pupils and who occasionally drank with the Inklings, because the vast majority of his children's literature is not original fantasy but direct retellings of ancient mythology and legends. See Humphrey Carpenter, *The Inklings: C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles Williams and their Friends* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978; London: HarperCollins, 2006), 223. Citations refer to the HarperCollins edition.

¹³ Claire Squires, 'Marketing at the Millenium,' in *Children's Literature: Approaches and Territories*, ed. Janet Maybin and Nicola J. Watson (Houndmills NY and Milton Keynes: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009): 183-84 and 188.

works for contemporary child audiences, with special attention to tropes and narratives that recur in multiple children's fantasy works. In doing so, this thesis departs from the historical approaches that currently prevail in literary criticism, namely either the synchronic study of a narrow historical period or the tracing of a continuous (diachronic) genealogy of influence. This transhistorical approach enables this thesis to recognise the potential for gaps in reception, and to consider the role of institutional influence in facilitating connections and cultural conversations between texts separated by long periods of time. These conversations do not happen in a vacuum, however, and this thesis therefore situates them within their twentieth- and twenty-first-century contexts. Whenever possible, it refers to the scholarly writings of Lewis and Tolkien in order to relate the primary texts to one another within the framework of a literary culture dominated by the views and approaches of these two academics. It also takes into account the statements of influence and intent by other Oxford School authors. These provide insight into the authors' understandings of their source materials and reveal the interventions of recent events, popular discourse, and literary influences into their readings and rewritings of medieval literature and children's fantasy conventions.

These interventions suggest the complex intertextual relationships that exist between children's fantasy literature and its sources. More than allusion, intertextuality argues that the text invokes and confers with a broad range of other texts, including the social text (that is, the multifaceted, multimediated web of allusions and discourses that belongs to a society), to create a plurality of meanings for the reader. Roland Barthes developed the concept of intertextuality in the 1970s, arguing that it releases the author from responsibility for and authority over the text's meanings: 'the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never

original,’ and her ‘only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as to never rest on any of them.’¹⁴ As a result, in this view of intertextual reading, the ‘reader/interpreter then is free and unfettered in tracing the relations between texts’; with the author ‘dead,’ ‘the text flies off on wings of its own to become the plaything of readers.’¹⁵ For as Barthes suggests, ‘the inter-text is subject to no law but the infinitude of its reprises.’¹⁶ Writing of Barthes, Carolyn Dinshaw reminds us that although ‘[t]he Text is open, a collection of fragments,’ these fragments ‘do not remain unsituated in time or space.’¹⁷ The text imparts the spatial and temporal associations of its fragments to the reader, which Dinshaw argues allows for proximity between those times and places, and the here and now. By ‘taking up and “receiving from the text a kind of fantasmatic order” we “spea[k] this text,” cite it, and this citation theatricalises our lives in turn, [...] renders them capable of further *touching*—other lives, other texts.’¹⁸ Dinshaw’s transhistorical methodology in *Getting Medieval* informs this thesis, which considers how the medieval and the modern can leap over and past the intervening periods to speak directly to each other. Dinshaw writes of ‘[t]he deep desire to physically cross or span temporal divides,’ a desire which the Oxford School purports to fulfil by transporting child heroes between the ‘real’ world and that of an imaginary medieval England. The Oxford School authors’ immersion in medieval literature and the medieval city of Oxford encourage their citation of the medieval in modern fantasy, and produce a genre in which ‘the modern is not characterised as simply different

¹⁴ Roland Barthes, ‘The Death of the Author,’ in *Image/Music/Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 146.

¹⁵ William Irwin, ‘Against Intertextuality,’ *Philosophy and Literature* 28 (2004): 230.

¹⁶ Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), 211, quoted in Irwin, 230.

¹⁷ Carolyn Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Postmodern* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999), 48.

¹⁸ Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval*, 49. Dinshaw cites Roland Barthes, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), 8.

from the medieval but is touched by the medieval, and the medieval is touched by the modern.¹⁹ Both medieval literature and other fantasy texts contribute to building such an interrelation between the present and the Middle Ages in the popular imagination.

Oxford School authors are self-aware in their reuses of medieval and fantasy sources; they not only make clear allusions to previous literature but also often discuss these allusions and their intentions for them in separate statements and essays. Such awareness of generic tradition, the body of common source texts, and the process of authorial response demand attention in this transhistorical study. Harold Bloom's work uses psychoanalysis to assert that the author is always knowingly or unknowingly responding to a 'father' of literary influences. Although this assertion seems useful for understanding the borrowings and diversions from preceding texts that are common in the Oxford School, the antagonistic Oedipal relationship that Bloom describes fails to take into account the Oxford School's willing – and playful – reuses of material and forms.²⁰ As Daniella Caselli suggests, in such works 'the repeating text advertises its own repeating as such, thus enacting a retrieval and also labelling its function.'²¹ Oxford School fantasy is aware of its generic debts and expectations, and authors often turn these to their own uses, exercising freedom in a rich but prescriptive literary landscape.

This thesis thus draws on Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* to theorise the Oxford School's relationship to influence. This work argues that authors attempt to appropriate a supposed 'Voice' of culture from popular lore in their writing, as in Lewis and Tolkien's reproduction of medieval motifs and narratives to

¹⁹ Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval*, 43.

²⁰ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

²¹ Daniela Caselli, *Beckett's Dantes: Intertextuality in the Fiction and Criticism* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2005), 3.

express the presumed ‘truths’ of ‘the people’ in their early Oxford School fantasy.²² Such ‘truths’ often point back to the Christian story for these authors, and assume the hierarchies that privilege the power of the ‘lord’ and ‘father,’ supported by the heroic sacrifices of the humble and the unity of the (English) community. However, the process of writing this ‘Voice’ in literature, de Certeau argues, transforms it into a tool of the scriptural economy: the text is a ‘space of formalisation’ with the impulse to change the society to which it speaks.²³ Paradoxically, the process by which Lewis and Tolkien attempt to capture and disseminate an authentic ‘Voice’ of English culture is thus beholden to a system that distorts what it expresses.²⁴ De Certeau contends that it is ‘useless to set off in quest of this voice that has been simultaneously colonised and mythified by recent Western history,’ and that ‘there is, moreover, no such “pure” voice, because it is always determined by a system [...] and codified by a way of receiving it.’²⁵ The very designation of the English School texts as significant to the study of English literature in England is part of such a system of reception for the Oxford School authors:

The writing laboratory has a ‘strategic’ function: either an item of information received from tradition or from the outside is collected, classified, inserted into a system and thereby transformed, or the rules and models developed in this place (which is not governed by them) allow one to act on the environment and transform it.²⁶

The English School’s ‘collecting’ of medieval English literature and ‘classifying’ it as canonical, overseen by Lewis and Tolkien, imbues it with a moral significance that resonates in Oxford School works. The social efficacy of these children’s fantasy texts may be intentional, especially in the case of Lewis and Tolkien, who express

²² Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 137.

²³ *Ibid.*, 135.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 132.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 135.

their belief in the ‘patriotic’ and spiritual benefits of reading medieval literature and popular lore.²⁷ Their work thus establishes generic conventions that seek to capture such sentiments, which serve as guides and possible obstacles to successive authors.

The moralizing implications of such conventions are doubly powerful in children’s literature, which Perry Nodelman calls ‘primarily a didactic literature’ because adults have a ‘duty to teach children what they don’t yet know,’ and because children’s literature is authored by adults.²⁸ Children’s literature criticism recognises an inherent power imbalance between child readers and the adults who write and control their literature; Jacqueline Rose argues that authors construct childhood and its place in the world in ways that benefit adults.²⁹ She contends that the insuperable gulf between children and adults makes true *children’s* literature ‘impossible,’ for it must always function in tension with and in dominance over the child reader.³⁰ Thus the presumed meanings of children’s texts, including but not limited to the image of childhood itself, are taught to children through their reading. Rose compares this relationship to that of colonialism, whereby ‘the child serve[s] to mediate, or resolve, a fundamental contradiction – that of [adult, Western] modern society as degenerate while still wishing to preserve its superiority over an otherwise idealised primitive state.’³¹ For Rose, adults establish and maintain distance from children in order to preserve their own power and stable sense of the world; by fetishising innocence and

²⁷ On the study of English Language and Literature, especially medieval texts, as patriotic, see Chapter One, p. 65. On the spiritual benefits, see Chapter Two, pp. 79-81.

²⁸ Perry Nodelman, *The Hidden Adult: Defining Children's Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 157.

²⁹ Lewis dismisses such distinctions and suggests that it is possible for adult authors to address child readers as contemporaries because authors are outside of the ‘more difficult relations between child and parent or child and teacher’; instead, the author is to the child ‘a freeman and an equal, like the postman, the butcher, and the dog next door.’ Lewis, ‘On Three Ways of Writing for Children,’ 70.

³⁰ Jacqueline Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan, or, The Impossibility of Children's Fiction* (London: Macmillan Press, 1989; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993). Citations refer to the University of Pennsylvania Press edition.

³¹ Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan*, 53. Perry Nodelman expands Rose’s premise to ‘all discourses about childhood,’ in keeping with her wider argument that children’s literature exemplifies adult desires about and for the child generally. Perry Nodelman, ‘The Other: Orientalism, Colonialism, and Children's Literature,’ *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 17.1 (Spring 1992): 34.

assigning it to the child, adults create a child that ‘can be seen, observed and known in exactly the same way as the world can be grasped by rational understanding.’³² Peter Hunt responds to such beliefs about the child’s assimilation of these and other lessons in children’s literature with the proposition that children may read more creatively and playfully than we expect, even ‘against societal norms’ as they create their own meanings.³³ However most adults continue to assume that children’s literature influences and teaches child readers, and tailor their writing to the messages that they want to convey to children (or want to appear to convey).

Children’s fantasy is a special case, however; as I discuss in Chapter One, Romanticism and Victorian children’s fantasy reacted against the overtly didactic children’s literature that was popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, offering an alternative that promised to free the child’s imagination from the moralising of educationalist authors.³⁴ Victorian fantasists such as Lewis Carroll and George MacDonald, whose work influenced both Lewis and Tolkien, are the antecedents of the twentieth-century fantasists, including the Oxford School. Nodelman notes that ‘[i]t has been fashionable for the last hundred or more years for commentators to express dislike of “didactic” children's books. But the often proclaimed distaste for the didactic is usually actually just dismay about the *obviously*

³² Rose, *The Case of Peter Pan*, 9. Karin Lesnik-Oberstein develops Rose’s concept of the ‘impossibility’ of children’s literature for children’s literature criticism, suggesting that all critical approaches to children’s texts similarly appropriate and manipulate the idea of the child for adult purposes. Karin Lesnik-Oberstein, ‘The Psychopathology of Everyday Children’s Literature Criticism,’ *Cultural Critique* 45 (Spring 2000): 222-242. Jack Zipes also argues that children’s literature cannot exist, but attributes this to the ‘prevailing consumerism and commercialism’ of the culture industry to which it belongs, which ‘minimise and marginalise’ its own products. Jack Zipes, *Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children's Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 40-1.

³³ Peter Hunt, *Criticism, Theory, and Children's Literature* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: B. Blackwell, 1991), 156. This thesis does not attempt to speculate on the child’s creation of meanings from fantasy works and medievalisms: this fascinating question requires significant further research into reader responses to Oxford School works from across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and is therefore beyond the scope of this thesis.

³⁴ See U. C. Knoepfelmacher, *Ventures into Childland: Victorians, Fairy Tales, and Femininity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

didactic.’³⁵ Lewis’s insistence that children’s literature should not seek to instil special morals in its readership reflects the persistence of this position against blatant didacticism in the Oxford School. He contends that when composing children’s literature, it is better to ask ‘What do I need?’ than to ask ‘What do modern children need?’, and that ‘it is better not to ask questions at all. Let the pictures tell you their own moral. For the moral inherent in them will rise from whatever spiritual roots you have succeeded in striking during the whole course of your life.’³⁶ The ‘pictures’ of medievalism in the Oxford School often imply a shared set of morals for the genre, however: the castles and cosy villages, the clash of armies, and the threat of monstrous enemies in Oxford School novels reinforce the nationalism, hierarchies, and clear divisions between good and evil that Lewis and Tolkien brought to their scholarly and creative work. Thus while children’s fantasy historically resists didacticism it may do so only nominally, meanwhile maintaining implicit moralising and didactic functions.

The secondary Oxford School authors accept the inherent didacticism of children’s literature and reproduce or respond to the implied morals of Lewis and Tolkien’s fantasy, thus producing texts that variously navigate (but remain in the shadow of) the imposing generic structures established by their predecessors. This authorial manoeuvring echoes de Certeau’s metaphor of the walker in the city, which describes individuals making their own paths through the monumental and apparently overpowering structures of an urban landscape. Secondary Oxford School authors similarly use existing generic forms to create new meanings (and morals) in their novels. To further this argument this thesis also follows Henry Jenkins’s work on ‘textual poaching,’ which draws upon de Certeau to elucidate the freedoms that

³⁵ Nodelman, *Hidden Adult*, 157-58.

³⁶ Lewis, ‘On Three Ways of Writing for Children,’ 69.

individual fans can exercise within the confines of television fan culture. In spite of the television networks' power over its shows, fan culture affords individuals the opportunity to unofficially manipulate the characters and storylines of their favourite programmes to produce new narratives and directions that suit their desires.³⁷

Although secondary authors – and in Jenkins, fans – recognise Bloom's composite 'father' figure by acknowledging and reproducing conventions, they chart their own courses through the 'city' of these expectations, picking and choosing their source materials and their readings of these materials to subvert or create alternative social messages in their works. Such an approach allows authors a measure of the freedom that Barthes attributes to the reader and the creativity that Hunt attributes to the child reader, yielding an authorial experience of the 'pleasure of the text' within the context of literary influences and expectations.³⁸ It is a 'pleasure in getting around the rules of a constrained space,' as de Certeau calls it, a textual manoeuvring that yields further reimaginings of medieval source material in popular culture.³⁹

Using de Certeau's work as a theoretical framework for understanding influence in the Oxford School allows for the proliferation of ways in which fantasy and medieval narratives may 'participat[e] in the discursive space of a culture' through intertextuality.⁴⁰ In response to Bloom's Oedipal arguments about influence, Jonathan Culler contends that

poems do seem to presuppose more than a single precursor poem: what makes possible reading and writing is not a single anterior action which serves as origin and moment of plenitude but an open series of acts, both identifiable and lost, which work together to constitute

³⁷ Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992).

³⁸ Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller, 1st ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975).

³⁹ de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 18.

⁴⁰ Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 103.

something like a language: discursive possibilities, systems of convention, clichés and descriptive systems.⁴¹

In its interrogations of the Oxford School's reuses of medieval literature this thesis traces some of the paths of intertextual relations that make their way through Oxford School works. The links, meanings, and textual references within a given work are too many and diverse to catalogue, and these may also shift, depending upon the reader: as Barthes writes, 'this "I" which approaches the text is itself already a plurality of other texts, of infinite or, more precisely, lost codes (whose origins are lost).'⁴² However, by focusing on a few threads this thesis demonstrates the varied ways in which Oxford School works use medieval sources and medievalisms to join in broader cultural conversations.

The space of Oxford, especially the University of Oxford, is as much a shared text (and thus, source) for the Oxford School as any work in the English curriculum. In Oxford, the medieval and modern overlap: the medieval cloisters and great halls of the colleges delineate contemporary spaces of learning and community, and their dreaming spires rise above an ever-changing city engaged in the commerce, politics, and culture of the present. As Michel Foucault suggests, '[s]pace is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power.'⁴³ The spaces of the University and city of Oxford must have contributed to the Oxford School authors' internal cartography of the Middle Ages, and their depictions of medievalised space within their fantasy works likewise map out new understandings of the medieval to be consumed and interpreted by their readers. John Ganim suggests that every human space enjoys a wealth of associations: '[e]ach place, each crossroads, each building, releases, upon meditation, a past which floats up vertically

⁴¹ Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs*, 110.

⁴² Barthes, *S/Z*, 10.

⁴³ Michel Foucault, 'Space, Knowledge, and Power,' interview with Paul Rabinow, in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 252.

as if exorcised.’⁴⁴ The laboured-upon ‘social space’ that Henri Lefebvre describes displays a temporal intertextuality by which each place, though constantly changing, holds together a web of historical layers. Each layer is a text and can speak to the others, defying chronology. The continued presence of the medieval – both actual remnants of the Middle Ages and medievalisms – in the spaces of Oxford’s geography hints at the role that Oxford’s physicality may have played in the rise of the Oxford School style. Medieval and modern are in frequent dialogue with one another in the legendary spaces of the university town, often seeming to skip over the intervening periods to allow these two to touch and to exist simultaneously. In the same way, the ‘space’ of Englishness in Oxford School works (often embodied in the magical fantasy realms) brings together the medieval and the modern to create an idealised vision of England based in its imaginary past. The land (or space) holds these multiple identities together, and insists on the possibility of their simultaneity.

Space thus serves as a uniting thread that runs throughout the thesis after the first establishing chapter. This undercurrent not only pays homage to the Oxford School authors’ mutual study and living spaces, it also invokes the kinds of spaces with which most children contend during their young lives. Spaces have different connotations in each individual situation, but shared cultural notions of how certain spaces *ought* to function often underlie these. Thus the Oxford School’s uses of space – especially its mapping of medievalisms onto modern spaces – reveals its gestures toward restructuring perceptions of the physical world. For instance, the house, the first and most intimate space for most children, often serves as a metaphor for the nation in Oxford School works. By depicting England as a ‘home’ community united

⁴⁴ John M. Ganim, ‘The Experience of Modernity in Late Medieval Literature: Urbanism, Experience and Rhetoric in some Early Descriptions of London,’ in *The Performance of Middle English Culture: Essays on Chaucer and the Drama in Honor of Martin Stevens*, ed. James J. Paxson, Lawrence M. Clopper, and Sylvia Tomasch (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1998), 89. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 73-4.

by beliefs and traditions, Oxford School authors imbue the idea of England's physical landscape with the emotional attachments of the idealised home. The 'medieval' narratives set in this landscape imply the historical depth of such nationalistic sentiments, and suggest that they are rooted in long-standing cultural 'truths.' This thesis also addresses educative spaces, including school; the gendered spaces of public and private, itinerant and domestic; and the oppositional spaces of home and outside, taken from both local and global contexts.

Each chapter of this thesis contributes to a picture of the processes of borrowing, influence, and interpretation that characterise the Oxford School and its successors. Chapter One, 'The Making of the Oxford School,' provides the context for the remaining chapters. It provides an overview of the circumstances that gave rise to the Oxford School of children's fantasy literature, including an account of literary and popular medievalisms since the Middle Ages and their relationship to folk and fairy tale. The chapter also describes Tolkien and Lewis's personal and professional interests in medieval literature, medievalisms, and fairy stories, their convictions about the national and personal importance of myth, and their contentions about the role of children's literature in disseminating this kind of narrative to the public. From this background it moves into a detailed account of the English School reforms under Lewis and Tolkien, their influence on the new curriculum, and its medieval requirements. The chapter concludes with introductions to the four secondary Oxford School authors whose work this thesis considers. Beginning with Chapter Two, each of the remaining chapters considers the Oxford School's uses of medieval literature and medievalisms in writing children's fantasy, and thus the afterlives of medieval narrative in popular culture.

Chapter Two, ‘Stories of Home: Writing the “Voice” of the Nation,’ demonstrates how Oxford School authors draw upon the narratives, themes, and details of medieval texts in the English School curriculum in their fiction. The chapter considers the historical and cultural forces that influence the reuse of these medieval elements, as well as the variation between authors as they retell the same kinds of stories. I use the Green Knight’s ‘Christmas challenge’ for Arthur’s court in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* as a case study of the ways in which Oxford School authors borrow the same sources, and how this borrowing results in the repetition of ideas across the Oxford School, and thus across the genre. In this case, the repeated idea is that of a tension between inside and outside: a reinforcing of insider identity through alien incursions that transforms into nationalistic sentiments about an imaginary England. The home space at Christmas bears cultural associations that support the Oxford School’s nostalgic connections between contemporary reality and the mythical past, and serves as a unifying concept that becomes a patriotic metaphor when under threat. Lewis’s references to World War Two and post-war austerity in the Christmas encounters of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* assert the Oxford School’s ability to speak simultaneously about England’s distant past and its present; Susan Cooper likewise reuses the medieval Christmas challenge in *The Dark Is Rising* to express the memory of world war. Even when Oxford School works such as Kevin Crossley-Holland’s *The Seeing Stone* describe Christmastime attacks in ways that reconsider their possible meanings for individuals and communities, they do so as a literature that self-consciously speaks about and for the nation.

Lewis and Tolkien assert mythology’s ability to capture a collective voice, and to convey it in medieval narratives, folklore, or new fantasy literature. This is de Certeau’s ‘Voice’ of culture. Once written, however, this ‘Voice’ becomes text and

thus, de Certeau argues, socially efficacious, influencing or transforming the society that reads it. Oxford School works carry particularly strong didactic associations because of their status as children's literature, and, as I will argue, the Oxford School's self-designation as a source of privileged knowledge deepens these associations. Chapter Three, 'The Educational Authority of the Oxford School,' maps out the ways in which the Oxford School both disseminates the contents of the English School curriculum and fictionalizes the learning experience itself. In doing so, the chapter argues, the Oxford School establishes fantasy as a site of specialized learning. Pierre Bourdieu and John Guillory argue that elite educational systems replicate themselves; their theories guide Chapter Three's discussion of the magical tutor figures and learning processes that characterise Oxford School works. Tolkien's Middle Earth novels, Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, and Cooper's *The Dark Is Rising* demonstrate these shared conventions, which also invoke the spaces and practices of the University of Oxford. These texts depict humanistic study of 'medieval' texts as essential preparation for heroism, privileging 'clerkly' knowledge and implying that fantasy novels, as receptacles of medieval narratives and medievalisms, may also serve as authoritative sources of magical knowledge. They portray tutors and scholars as indispensable guides to such knowledge, and imply the Oxford School authors' authority as learned teachers. In this simulacrum the imitation becomes the real, and Oxford School works take the place of actual textual authorities in the public consciousness. The authors' selective borrowing from medieval texts often serves to reinforce their own intended messages, and the influence of other fantasy works also contribute to the refashioning of medieval source material. This is the case with the changing depictions of Merlin and other tutor figures in fantasy literature since *The Sword in the Stone* (1938), T.H. White's 'prequel' to Malory's *Le*

Morte Darthur. White's Merlyn embodies the rising tension between experience-based, tutorial-style learning and overt educationalism in children's fantasy; these later come together in the merging of Oxford School-style fantasy with the boarding school genre in the *Harry Potter* series.

Recognising their status as educational authorities to child readers, some secondary authors express discomfort with certain generic conventions within children's fantasy literature. These authors return to the English School syllabus to choose new medieval material that allow them to produce the kinds of narratives that they wish to convey, while still retaining the authority that the genre and its canonical associations affords them. Chapter Four, 'Walking in the Father's City: Negotiating Influence,' uses de Certeau's metaphor of the city to theorise Philip Pullman and Diana Wynne Jones's attempts to create new heroic possibilities for female protagonists in Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy (1995-2000) and Jones's *Fire and Hemlock* (1985) and *Howl's Moving Castle* (1986). Each author's choices and interpretations of source texts carve out different kinds of feminine space within the traditionally masculinist Oxford School, and demonstrates the authors' differing relationships to the legacies of their influential predecessors. Pullman's sources are not medieval, and include Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, as read through William Blake; Pullman marshals these texts in order to perform a Satan-like rebellion against the legacy of the earlier Oxford School, and Lewis in particular. Jones draws upon oral sources such as balladry and fairy tale and texts such as *The Canterbury Tales*, which mimics orality, to construct 'feminine' versions of medievalism. Both authors portray storytelling as a way to seize control and create change: although Pullman and Jones demonstrate their status as good 'learners' under the English School curriculum, their anti-establishment uses of sources and their

advocacy for unconventional authorship suggests the freedoms that writing can afford, even within the confines of generic expectations. This sovereignty looks back to medieval traditions of retelling narratives: the Wife of Bath comments on this practice when she calls attention to the ‘painting of lions’ in her Prologue.⁴⁵ Retelling tales imparts new meanings to them, as this character demonstrates in her own reworking of the loathly lady legend in *The Canterbury Tales*.

But the Wife of Bath is, as Carolyn Dinshaw points out, still a male fantasy, and the negotiations of generic structure within the Oxford School remain largely negotiations within the confines of the conventions established from the Oxford School’s beginnings.⁴⁶ The final chapter, ‘From Home to Home: The Persistence of Generic Structure,’ argues that the foundational structures of Tolkien and Lewis’s fantasy are largely repeated and renewed across the genre, surfacing in the writing of children’s fantasy authors who did not study their curriculum, such as Rowling. Like the children’s fantasy genre, which constantly returns to its Oxford School and medieval roots, this chapter returns to the tension between inside and outside discussed in Chapter Two: the focus in this chapter, however, is on the outsiders that define the home community by threatening it, rather than on the home itself. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen’s ‘monster theory’ aids in elucidating the genre’s need for monstrous, oppositional foes in both local and global contexts, even in those works that set out to counter exclusionary generic traditions. *Beowulf* and crusade romance offer medieval examples of such enemies, which persist in the monsters and foreign races of children’s fantasy, on the fringes of communities and on the lower edges of world maps. Such repetitions produce a genre that seems definitionally bound to the

⁴⁵ Chaucer, ‘The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale,’ *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 114, ll. 693-96.

⁴⁶ Carolyn Dinshaw, *Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 117.

conventions and themes that Tolkien and Lewis assigned to it, and that continues to depict the Middle Ages in the image that they created for it. The layers of intertextual relationships that each new fantasy text brings to their retellings, however, open up the possibility of a proliferation of readings of such reconstituted norms, and thus the potential for pleasure in such returns to convention.

CHAPTER ONE

The Making of the Oxford School

I. Medievalism and Myth

The relationship between the historical Middle Ages and the medieval era as a space for fantasy projection has always been complex. For instance, Norman Cantor's controversial book *Inventing the Middle Ages* (1991) argues that scholarly studies of the Middle Ages do not so much capture the period as produce multiple interpretations of it.¹ As with all medievalism, Cantor contends that such scholarly medievalisms variously rewrite the medieval past for and through the present. Nostalgia and a sense of this past as culturally relevant ensure that these diverse medievalisms are always also a reflection of contemporary concerns and desires: the (imaginary) roots of cultural identity. In response to Leslie Workman's description of medievalism as 'the continuing process of creating the Middle Ages,' Clare A.

Simmons suggests

that this process of creation involves cultural adaptation. These adaptations occur in a number of disciplines (literature, the visual arts, music, etc.) and may be loosely divided into the use of medieval narrative, form, and perceived codes of values, although these overlap in significant ways.²

Medievalism is characterised by diversity, drawing upon multiple ideas of the broad Middle Ages and manifesting in form and content across disciplines and media. As a

¹ Norman Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages: The Lives, Works and Ideas of the Great Medievalists of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Lutterworth, 1992). This work is sweeping and at times slapdash, but is influential in the study of medievalisms. On critical responses to Cantor, see Richard J. Utz and Tom Shippey, 'Medievalism in the Modern World: Introductory Perspectives,' *Medievalism in the Modern World: Essays in Honour of Leslie J. Workman*, ed. Richard J. Utz and Tom Shippey (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 1998), 5.

² Clare A. Simmons, 'Introduction,' *Medievalism and the Quest for the 'Real' Middle Ages*, ed. Clare A. Simmons (London: F. Cass, 2001), 22.

result individual medievalisms often conflict with one another. This is true of Oxford School medievalisms, as well: although Oxford School authors draw upon the same medieval texts and often address similar concepts and themes, the range of these texts and the many ways of reimagining them give rise to frequent tensions between new fantasy medievalisms. As this chapter discusses below, Tolkien and Lewis's children's fantasy works provide examples of such conflicting medievalisms, even as the authors share a view of the Middle Ages as essential to understanding and reinforcing English identity.

Such ambiguity is further complicated by the fact that even the idea of the 'Middle Ages' is hazy and subjective: Richard Utz and Tom Shippey argue that it is dependent upon 'a sense of two ends – or rather, as it often appears, of two cultural peaks with an unfortunate trough in between.'³ The Middle Ages can only exist in relation to the periods that it is not. We traditionally mark the ends of this age with the classical period on one side and the Renaissance or, as English departments now call it, the 'Early Modern' period on the other, rendering the Middle Ages the 'trough' between modernity and the civilizations upon which modernity is modelled. In the language of Freud and Lacan, the medieval period is modernity's 'other.' Even in the Middle Ages, the mythic past was characterised by its break from the present, and by its irrecoverable passing. As Simmons suggests, '[m]edievalism comes into play even when [medieval] artists distance themselves from part of the Middle Ages.'⁴

There are many examples of medieval medievalism: for example, Tolkien refers to *Beowulf* as 'an echo of an echo,' a 'late' poem constructed from 'materials [...] preserved from a day already changing and passing, a time that has now for ever

³ Utz and Shippey, 'Medievalism in the Modern World,' 6.

⁴ Simmons, 'Introduction,' 2.

vanished, swallowed in oblivion.⁵ The *Beowulf*-poet both transmits and transforms these cultural materials in the retelling, ‘using them for a new purpose, with a wider sweep of imagination, if with a less bitter and concentrated force.’⁶ Other Old English poems such as *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, and *Deor*, which appear in the eleventh-century Exeter Book, likewise seem to convey fragments of lost cultures and ancient legends. They also create and transmit medievalisms, ‘creating in the minds of the poet’s contemporaries the illusion of surveying a past, pagan but noble and fraught with deep significance.’⁷ For instance, the broken and decaying castle in *The Ruin* suggests its former glory:

[...] Hryre wong gecrong
 gebrocen to beorgum, þær iu beorn monig,
 glædmod ond goldbeorht, gleoma gefrætwed,
 wlonc ond wingal, wighyrstum scan;
 seah on sinc, on sylfor, on searogimmas,
 on ead, on æht, on eorcanstan,
 on þas beorhtan burg bradan rices.⁸

[...] The ruins have tumbled to the plain,
 Broken into craggy mounds of stone. Here, long ago, many a happy man
 Was clothed resplendently in glowing gold.
 Proud and flushed with wine, in his shining armour
 He gazed upon his treasure...silver and curious stones,
 Gold, gems, and precious jewels...
 And he gazed at this fine castle, too, built in a great kingdom.⁹

The wonders of that civilization are gone, but the poem that eulogizes them recreates the society in the minds of successive generations, giving it lasting cultural force even as a memory.

⁵ J.R.R Tolkien, ‘*Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*,’ in *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*, ed. Christopher Tolkien (London: HarperCollins, 2006), 33.

⁶ Tolkien, ‘The Monsters and the Critics,’ 33.

⁷ Tolkien, ‘The Monsters and the Critics,’ 27. On the impact of Anglo-Saxon literature on contemporary culture, see David Clark and Nicholas Perkins, eds., *Anglo-Saxon Culture and the Modern Imagination* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2010).

⁸ Anne Klinck, ed., ‘The Ruin,’ *The Old English Elegies: A Critical Edition and Genre Study* (Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 104-05, ll. 31-7.

⁹ Kevin Crossley-Holland, trans., ‘The Ruin,’ in *The Battle of Maldon and Other Old English Poems*, ed. Bruce Mitchell (London: Macmillan, 1965), 69-70.

Arthurian material had a similar function later in the Middle Ages: Helen Cooper calls Geoffrey of Monmouth's 'most famous and successful invention' the 'rescuing of a shadowy Celtic hero named Arthur from the hinterlands of oral legend' for his *History of the Kings of Britain*.¹⁰ This twelfth-century text transformed Arthur into a British hero, and Chrétien de Troyes's subsequent French romances provided the chivalric connotations that remain attached to his name.¹¹ Arthurian works proliferated throughout the continent and English poets rewrought this material in Anglo-Norman and, increasingly, Middle English, claiming Arthur and the medievalisms of his romantic universe for England's legendary past.¹² Catherine Batt and Rosalind Field contend that the rise of Arthurian literature in England

accompanies the gathering strength of English as a literary language and the growing sense of national identity most sharply felt in relation to France. From the fourteenth century onwards French romance is re-interpreted for an English audience for whom Arthurian material is inescapably historic and iconic. The legendary locations of French romance – Camelot, Logres, Astolat – become recognizable English places – Carlisle, Winchester, London, Guildford – the lone knights of preference are local heroes – Perceval of Wales, Gawain of Galloway or Orkney, Tristram of Cornwall.¹³

Thus when Chaucer's Wife of Bath sets her tale in 'th'olde dayes of the Kynge Arthour,' she invokes a shared cultural understanding of England's legendary past and situates her tale within England, or Britain at the least.¹⁴

¹⁰ Helen Cooper, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 24.

¹¹ On the French romances, see Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, 'The Shape of Romance in Medieval France,' *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, ed. Roberta Krueger (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 25-7, and Beate Schmolke-Hasselmann, *The Evolution of Arthurian Romance: The Verse Tradition from Chrétien to Froissart* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹² On Arthurian material in medieval England, see W.R.J. Barron, ed., *The Arthur of the English: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval English Life and Literature*, rev. ed. with an additional postscript (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001).

¹³ Catherine Batt and Rosalind Field, 'The Romance Tradition,' in Barron, ed., *The Arthur of the English*, 69-70.

¹⁴ Chaucer, 'The Wife of Bath,' 116, l. 857.

Both the epic universe of *Beowulf* and the landscape of Arthurian romance are populated with the marvellous; the supernatural and the pseudo-historical often intersect in genres that that generate or borrow medievalisms. Even in *Le Morte Darthur*, in which Malory, Richard Barber argues, ‘tends to reject the magic and enchantment that were once so popular with the French writers and their audience,’ magic is indispensable to the cycle.¹⁵ It therefore persists throughout the cycle in forms that Elizabeth Archibald calls ‘good, bad, and baffling.’¹⁶ This expectation of magic remains a feature of many later literary representations of the Middle Ages, culminating in the conflation of the medieval and the magical in twentieth-century fantasy literature.

Literatures from across Europe during the Middle Ages create and transmit diverse medievalisms that contribute to popular and scholarly understandings of that period. Ballads, hagiography, the advice to princes genre, sagas, histories, chronicles, fabliaux, lyric poetry, and virtually every other genre add to the literary picture of the Middle Ages by contributing their own vision of the medieval past. The legacies of these works inform successive interpretations of the period. For instance, Edmund Spenser’s sixteenth-century *The Faerie Queene* unfolds in a merged landscape of chivalric romance and Italian Renaissance epic.¹⁷ Lewis contends that Italian epic poetry was not only a model for Spenser, it also provided inspiration for English writers such as Milton, Dryden, Hurd, Macaulay, and Scott:

¹⁵ Richard Barber, ‘Chivalry and the *Morte Darthur*,’ in *A Companion to Malory*, ed. Elizabeth Archibald and A.S.G. Edwards (Woodbridge and Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 33

¹⁶ Elizabeth Archibald, ‘Beginnings: *The Tale of King Arthur and King Arthur and the Emperor Lucius*,’ in *A Companion to Malory*, ed. Elizabeth Archibald and A.S.G. Edwards (Woodbridge and Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 142. Archibald refers specifically to *The Tale of King Arthur*, but I apply it to the magic and miracles in rest of *Le Morte Darthur* as well.

¹⁷ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. Thomas P. Roche and C. Patrick O'Donnell (Harmondsworth and New York: Penguin, 1978). Spenser was a key text in the Oxford English School literary syllabus, and Lewis effectively reintroduced *The Faerie Queene* as a text for wider literary study in his *Allegory of Love* (1936).

Our oblivion of these [Italian] poets is much to be regretted, not only because it vitiates our understanding of the Romantic movement—a phenomenon which becomes baffling indeed if we choose to neglect the noble viaduct on which the love of chivalry and ‘fine fabling’ travelled straight across from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century—but also because it robs us of a whole species of pleasures and narrows our very conception of literature.¹⁸

Lewis asserts that Italian epic’s role in transforming romance into a reputable literary form allowed ‘literary’ poets to ‘take up the extravagances of popular romance with a smile’: to respectably ‘write of giants and “orcs”, of fairies and flying horses, of Saracens foaming at the mouth.’¹⁹ The fixtures, themes, and narrative patterns of medieval romance and Italian epic remain effective in later incarnations, and the English poets who reuse them ‘find that their pleasure is not only the pleasure of mockery. Even while you laugh at it, the old incantation works. Willy-nilly the fairies allure, the monsters alarm, the labyrinthine adventures draw you on.’²⁰

Both Lewis and Tolkien approached medieval literature through the varied lenses of medievalisms old and new. Lewis writes that in George MacDonald’s *Phantastes: A Faerie Romance for Men and Women* (1858), ‘I met there all that had already charmed me in Malory, Spenser, Morris, and Yeats.’²¹ This short list of authors and poets reflects the major peaks in English literary medievalisms leading up to the Oxford School: Arthurian romance, Spenserian epic, and nineteenth- and early twentieth-century medievalisms. Authors continued to produce medievalisms throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century, but these were less culturally prominent, overshadowed by classical and Biblical material. For instance, Milton famously abandoned his plan to produce an Arthurian epic in favour of writing

¹⁸ C. S Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), 299.

¹⁹ Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, 299.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ C.S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy* (London: HarperCollins, 2002), 207.

Paradise Lost.²² The medieval revival that swept England in the nineteenth century was prefaced by an international rise in interest in folk and fairy tale: beginning in the second half of the eighteenth century, Germany, Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and England began to search for their cultural roots in their ‘native’ literatures. These countries rediscovered—and reinvented—their national folklore as part of an increase in nationalistic sentiments in Northern Europe. In England, Thomas Percy’s *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, published in 1765 in three volumes, put medieval ballads and romances from England and Scotland into public circulation. Michael Alexander posits that Percy’s *Reliques* ‘made the 1760s the decade in which medieval antiquarianism became widely fashionable and then popular,’ helping to bring the narratives and ‘rude style’ of early English literature into literary fashion.²³

One of the most significant products of these movements is the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm: German philologists Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm brought *märchen* to scholarly and wider national attention through their successive editions of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen (Children’s and Household Tales)*, beginning in 1812. In the Preface to the 1819 edition, the Grimms lament the circumstances that instigated their collecting: ‘we observed that little remained of so many things that had flourished in times of yore and that even their memory was soon to fade away, if it were not for folk songs, some books and legends, and the innocent household tales.’²⁴ Although many of the tales that the brothers collected proved to be of French and Italian descent, the Grimms saw their work as part of a larger mission to educate the

²² C.S. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 6-8.

²³ Michael Alexander, *Medievalism: The Middle Ages in Modern England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 16 and 20.

²⁴ Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, ‘Preface to the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen gesammelt durch die Brüder Grimm* (1819),’ trans. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and Jeffrey T. Schnapp, in *Medievalism and the Modernist Temper*, ed. R. Howard Bloch and Stephen G. Nichols (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 481.

German people about their folk tradition, and to foster national pride.²⁵ The *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, as well as the brothers' philological work and Jacob's research on Scandinavian myth, contributed to constructing the idea of a united German identity in the nineteenth century.²⁶ The tales, as well as the Grimms' other scholarship, became known throughout Europe as scholars in many nations reclaimed their literary and folk heritages. In Finland, for instance, Elias Lönnrot compiled a national epic from across Finnish folk poetry and published it first as the *Old Kalevala* (1835-36) and then as simply *Kalevala* in 1849.²⁷ Lönnrot's epic was intentionally nationalistic, and indeed soon after its 1849 publication the *Kalevala* became 'synonymous around the world with Finnish folklore,' and remains the most famous work of Finnish literature outside the country.²⁸

Some recuperations of national lore embraced the myths and legends of supposed cultural relatives as part of their own inheritance. There was especially strong interest in Old Norse and Anglo-Saxon literature and mythology, which frequently overlapped with one another and with philological studies, such as those carried out by Jacob Grimm. For example, Martin Arnold describes the politically charged recuperations of the god Thor by German and Danish scholars (including Jacob Grimm in Germany and Nikolai Grundtvig in Denmark) as influential for the political and cultural developments of both nations during this period.²⁹ The medieval

²⁵ On the development of fairy tales in Europe, see Jack Zipes, ed., *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001).

²⁶ On the Grimms and their tales, see Jack Zipes, *The Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forests to the Modern World* (Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

²⁷ Elias Lönnrot, *The Kalevala: An Epic Poem after Oral Tradition*, trans. Keith Bosley (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

²⁸ M.A. Branch, 'Introduction,' in *Kalevala: The Land of the Heroes*, trans. W.F. Kirby (London and Dover, NH: Athlone Press, 1985), xi.

²⁹ Thor acts as what Arnold calls an 'agent of recovery' for the nation, representing the possibility of rising above ancient rivalries to recognise 'common values and a common cause.' Martin Arnold, "'Lord and Protector of the Earth and Its Inhabitants": Poetry, Philology, Politics, and Thor in Denmark and Germany, 1751-1864,' *Constructing Nations, Reconstructing Myth: Essays in Honour of T.A. Shippey*, ed. Andrew Wawn (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 40 and 34.

North also took hold of the English imagination at this time: Andrew Wawn notes that not only did the Victorians effectively invent the *idea* of the Vikings, they also coined the term itself.³⁰ Writer, artist, and public figure William Morris was among the Englishmen who caught the fascination of Old Norse language and culture, and travelled to Iceland in 1871-1873. Marcus Waithe argues that ‘Iceland came, for Morris, to symbolize an alternate way of life,’ and was a landscape that provided ‘a unique intersection between past and present.’³¹ Morris’s passion for the North was distinct from the chivalric medievalisms of the Pre-Raphaelites, and he called Old Norse literature ‘a good corrective to the maundering side of mediaevalism.’³² The distinction between medievalisms arising from Old Norse and Anglo-Saxon literature and those that descend from chivalric romance is evident in Morris’s work. It began as rooted in Pre-Raphaelite and Aesthetic medievalism, but shifts away from the ‘often wearying emotionality’ of his chivalric writing, beginning with his *Story of Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs*, to a ‘constant emphasis on the Norse heroic code, on courage and stoicism,’ and on the pursuit of fame.³³ These interests would later make his work attractive to J.R.R. Tolkien, while the chivalric medievalisms of his Pre-Raphaelite writing captivated the young C.S. Lewis, as I discuss below.

Much of the nineteenth-century interest in chivalric medievalisms has been attributed to the two new editions of Malory published independently of each other in 1816 and 1817. These inspired the Arthurian works of Alfred, Lord Tennyson and the

³⁰ Andrew Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians: Inventing the Old North in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge and Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 2000), 3-4.

³¹ Marcus Waithe, *William Morris's Utopia of Strangers: Victorian Medievalism and the Ideal of Hospitality* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), 75 and 79.

³² William Morris, *The Collected Letters of William Morris, 1848-1880* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 229.

³³ Richard Frith, ‘“The Worship of Courage”: William Morris’s *Sigurd the Volsung* and Victorian Medievalism,’ in *Beyond Arthurian Romances: The Reach of Victorian Medievalism*, ed. Jennifer A. Palmgren and Loretta M. Holloway (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 117-32.

Pre-Raphaelites, the cultural significance of which are well known.³⁴ However, Roger Simpson has unearthed a wealth of nineteenth-century Arthurian material that predates Tennyson's *Idylls*, and suggests that the Arthurian Revival of the Victorian period grew out of common knowledge about the legendary Arthur and his medieval universe.³⁵ Whatever the cause, medievalisms of all kinds became popular across Europe in this century of political and social change:

[a]s industrialization gradually affected larger and larger groups of people, whole segments of medieval utopian thinking were rudely revived and pressed into service. The Middle Ages began to be associated with a lost state of innocence: for the moralist, they were paradise without sin; for the socialists, without private property.³⁶

Medievalisms entered into nearly every aspect of popular culture in nineteenth-century England, from representations in art and literature to political and religious movements. Multiple ideas of the 'medieval' enjoyed simultaneous and often overlapping popularity: for instance, alongside the Arthurian Revival a 'Cult of Alfred' was born, manifested in sources from 'serious Anglo-Saxon scholarship and textual studies to popular histories, music, magazines, and children's books.'³⁷ This *mélange* of medievalisms contributed to a growing sense of a nation united by history and culture, in spite of the patchwork nature of popular ideas about the Middle Ages.

Stephanie Barczewski traces the emergence of a 'consensual, celebratory national "history"' in Britain during this period through the dissemination of medieval

³⁴ For more on these nineteenth-century works and the editions of Malory, see Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven and London, 1981), 42. See also Alexander, *Medievalism*, 105-126.

³⁵ Roger Simpson, *Camelot Regained: The Arthurian Revival and Tennyson, 1800-1849* (Cambridge and Wolfeboro, NH: D.S. Brewer, 1990).

³⁶ Brian Stock, *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 66.

³⁷ Philip Edward Philips, 'King Alfred the Great and the Victorian Translations of his Anglo-Saxon *Boethius*,' in *Global Perspectives on Medieval English Literature, Language, and Culture*, ed. Noel Harold Kaylor, Jr. and Richard Scott Nokes (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2007), 157. See also Simon Keynes, 'The Cult of King Alfred the Great,' *Anglo-Saxon England* 28 (1999), 225-356.

myths and figures, including the politically dissimilar Arthur and Robin Hood.³⁸ She uses Benedict Anderson's argument that 'imagined communities' spread quickly through print culture at this time, thanks to the technological innovations of the Industrial Revolution.³⁹ Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819), for example, includes appearances by Robin Hood and fuelled Victorian England's fascination with its medieval past. According to Simmons it also 'inspired the beginning of nineteenth-century popular interest in Saxons and Normans,' which encouraged reading the Norman Invasion through a nationalistic lens.⁴⁰ Scott's vilification of Norman nobility in *Ivanhoe* subscribed to the 'Norman yoke' view of English history, in which the Saxons lived as 'free and equal citizens through their representative organizations' until 1066.⁴¹ This identification of a 'true' English heritage in an assortment of medieval sources and the idea of the Saxon as a racial category became important to Victorian England's growing sense of a united and far-reaching national identity.

In the same period as the historical and pseudo-historical associations of medievalisms helped to form national identity in England, the fantastical medievalisms of fairy-story may have provided a means of developing and understanding individual identity. Stephen Prickett argues that MacDonald's *Phantastes* is an English attempt at German *Bildungsroman* that rejects realism and instead uses the trappings of German *märchen* and English romance for the protagonist's journey of growth. This approach to *Bildungsroman* gives 'a new relevance and meaning to the fantastic romances of Malory, Spenser, Morris,' and

³⁸ Stephanie Barczewski, *Myth and National Identity in Nineteenth-century Britain: The Legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1.

³⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London and New York: Verso, 2006).

⁴⁰ Clare A. Simmons, *Reversing the Conquest: History and Myth in Nineteenth-Century British Literature* (New Brunswick and London, 1990), 11.

⁴¹ Chris Waters, 'Marxism, Medievalism, and Popular Culture,' in *History and Community: Essays in Victorian Medievalism*, ed. Florence S. Boos (New York: Garland Publishers, 1992), 145.

other English authors of works laden with medievalisms, and provides ‘a profound critique of genre.’⁴² Anodos (whose name is Greek for ‘pathless’ or ‘ascent’) travels through a fairyland that includes malignant tree spirits and Sir Galahad, as well as a kind woman and her daughter who believe in fairy tales. The inclusion of the idealistic child in the search for the self is in keeping with the Romantic idea of the child that developed in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As William Wordsworth wrote in ‘The Rainbow,’ ‘[t]he child is the father of the man’: that is, the adult self is formed by his or her own childhood.⁴³

Wordsworth’s and Coleridge’s poetry were essential to the idea of the Romantic child, and drew upon Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s suggestions in *Emile* (1762) about ‘the natural goodness of man and the evils of society’ to formulate the vision of the child as initially unsullied by society.⁴⁴ This view of children aligned them with nature and encouraged exposing children to ‘those types of literature—fairy tales, folk myths, ballads, romances—that would best stimulate their innate imaginative powers.’⁴⁵ James McGavran cites Wordsworth’s *The Prelude* as an example of such promotion of fairy stories for children: ‘Oh, give us once again the wishing-cap / of Fortunatus, and the invisible coat / Of Jack the Giant-killer, Robin Hood, / and Sabra in the forest with St. George!’⁴⁶ These chapbook tales are meant to free the child from

⁴² Stephen Prickett, *Victorian Fantasy*, 2nd ed. (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1979; Waco Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2005), 192. Citations refer to the Baylor University Press edition.

⁴³ William Wordsworth, ‘The Rainbow,’ *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* (New Haven: Peck & Newton, 1836), 1.

⁴⁴ James McGavran, *Romanticism and Children's Literature in Nineteenth-century England* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991), 4. See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, trans. Barbara Foxley (London: J.M. Dent, 1996).

⁴⁵ McGavran, *Romanticism and Children's Literature*, 4-5.

⁴⁶ William Wordsworth, *The Prelude, 1799, 1805, 1850: Authoritative Texts, Context and Reception, Recent Critical Essays*, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, M.H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill, 1st ed. (New York: Norton, 1979), 170, ll. 364-69 (1805 ed.).

the educationalist, the Gradgrindian ‘busy helper’ who functions to ‘drive him back and pound him’ when he strays into the realms of imagination.⁴⁷

This model of childhood influenced the production of children’s literature in Victorian England:

While appealing to the innocent, spiritual receptivity that children were assumed to possess, Victorian children’s books had to speak simultaneously to adult readers who were increasingly anxious, as they grew older, to recover their own childhood selves, lost in time, in the children about and to whom they were reading.⁴⁸

Children’s literature was a profitable and diverse division of publishing by the mid-nineteenth century, and included many fantastical works considered appropriate for the innocent, imaginative child.⁴⁹ George MacDonald’s *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872) and its sequel, *The Princess and Curdie* (1883), are among such books.

Collections of fairy tales were also released as children’s books, including translations of the Grimms’ *märchen* in England. Perhaps because of their association with children by way of fairy tales and the medieval, fairies became increasingly small and effeminate in popular representations during this period. Thus J.M. Barrie’s minute Tinkerbell fitted into the prevailing mould for fairies at the time that *Peter and Wendy* was published in 1911. Tolkien deplored this variety of fairies, and refers to Drayton’s *Nymphidia* (1627) as ‘one ancestor of that long line of flower-fairies and fluttering sprites with antennae that I so disliked as a child, and which my children in their turn detested.’⁵⁰

Although fairies remain common in children’s literature, by the time that Tolkien began to publish his own fiction, medievalisms had fallen out of fashion in

⁴⁷ Ibid., ll. 356-57.

⁴⁸ McGavran, *Romanticism and Children's Literature*, 8-9.

⁴⁹ For a history of children’s literature in the English language, see Peter Hunt, ed., *Children's Literature: An Illustrated History* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). See also Seth Lerer, *Children's Literature: A Reader's History from Aesop to Harry Potter* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

⁵⁰ Tolkien, ‘On Fairy Stories,’ 111.

the literary world. Sandra Martina Schwab attributes much of the failure of chivalric ideals to the disillusionment that the First World War brought to Europe. ‘When the Great War broke out and Kitchener made his first call for volunteers, boys and young men, all conditioned on the stories of heroic deeds and gallantry, flocked to the recruiting offices in hundreds and thousands, all believing in a “righteous” war.’ But amidst the slaughter of the trenches, ‘chivalry as a dominant code of conduct received its final deathblow on the battlefields of Europe.’⁵¹ Jackie Wullschläger notes that after the World Wars ‘to die ceased to be the awfully big adventure that Peter Pan had expected,’ and fantasy was replaced by realist (and surrealist) modernism in literature for adults.⁵² Fairy tales, legends, and other literary vehicles of magical medievalisms continued to appear in works for children, but Peter Hunt comments that ‘[c]haracteristic fantasy of the period seems to have had a strong element of expediency,’ with ‘uneasy blends’ of sources and tones.⁵³ By the 1920s and 1930s, fairy tale and fantasy were considered ‘childish’ themselves.

II. On Fairy Stories and the Importance of Fantasy

Popular opinion did not diminish the significance of fairy story, fantasy, and myth for Lewis and Tolkien, however. In the essay ‘On Fairy-Stories,’ based upon a lecture that he gave in 1939, Tolkien dismisses the notion that fairy-stories are

⁵¹ Sandra Martina Schwab, ‘What Is a Man?: Refuting the Chivalric Ideal at the Turn of the Century,’ in *Beyond Arthurian Romances: The Reach of Victorian Medievalism*, ed. Jennifer A. Palmgren and Loretta M. Holloway (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 229.

⁵² Jackie Wullschläger, *Inventing Wonderland: The Lives and Fantasies of Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, J.M. Barrie, Kenneth Grahame and A.A. Milne* (London: Methuen, 1995) 8. J.M. Barrie, *Peter and Wendy*, in *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens and Peter and Wendy*, ed. Peter Hollindale (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 152.

⁵³ Peter Hunt, ‘Retreatism and Advance (1914-45),’ in *Children's Literature: An Illustrated History*, ed. Peter Hunt (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 203-04.

infantile, and asserts that it is an ‘accident of our domestic history’ that there is a special connection between children and fairy-stories.⁵⁴ Tolkien blames literary fashion for this belief: ‘[f]airy stories have in the modern lettered world been relegated to the “nursery”, as shabby or old-fashioned furniture is relegated to the playroom, primarily because the adults do not want it, and do not mind if it is misused.’⁵⁵ He argues that children, who are not a special class except in their ‘common lack of experience,’ ‘neither like fairy-stories more, nor understand them better than adults do.’⁵⁶ This was an opinion that Lewis and Tolkien shared, and Lewis’s frequent citations of ‘On Fairy-Stories’ in his own writing on the subject, especially the ‘nursery’ metaphor, suggest how closely Tolkien’s beliefs coincided with his own.⁵⁷ Tolkien considers the designation of fairy-stories as children’s tales not only inaccurate, but dangerous: ‘[f]airy-stories banished in this way, cut off from a full adult art, would in the end be ruined; indeed in so far as they have been so banished, they have been ruined.’⁵⁸ He wrote in 1955 that he regretted that *The Hobbit* ‘was dressed up “for children” in style or manner,’ and abandoned this approach in *The Lord of the Rings*.⁵⁹

Tolkien’s reasons for ‘dressing up’ *The Hobbit* for children in this way may have to do with its origins as a tale for his own children, but it also made it publishable in its time.⁶⁰ Lewis also recognised the demands of the market, but states

⁵⁴ Tolkien, ‘On Fairy-Stories,’ 130.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Lewis cites ‘On Fairy Stories’ as an authority and uses Tolkien’s nursery metaphor in the essays ‘On Three Ways of Writing for Children,’ ‘Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What’s to be Said,’ and ‘On Juvenile Tastes,’ all in *Of This and Other Worlds* (London: Collins, 1984), 61, 74, and 76.

⁵⁸ Tolkien, ‘On Fairy Stories,’ 131.

⁵⁹ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien: A Selection*, ed. Humphrey Carpenter and Christopher Tolkien (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981), no. 165, p. 218. Page references are to the Houghton Mifflin edition.

⁶⁰ ‘I had the habit while my children were still young of inventing and telling orally, sometimes of writing down, “children’s stories” for their private amusement [...] *The Hobbit* was intended to be one of them.’ Tolkien, *Letters*, no. 257, p. 346. But education was not far from his mind when he began the

that ‘the right sort’ of children’s author, presumably including himself, ‘label their books “For Children” because children are the only market now recognised for the books they, anyway, want to write.’⁶¹ This was, as it seems, the case for both Tolkien and Lewis; Lewis is, however, more accepting of children’s literature as a vehicle for fairy-stories and fantasy than Tolkien.⁶² Lewis notes that ‘at a particular moment’ an author may find ‘not only fantasy but fantasy-for-children the exactly right form for what he wants to say,’ as was the case for the *Chronicles of Narnia*.⁶³ The medievalisms of fairy story and fantasy also play a role in the assignation of these forms to children’s literature, either in the minds of Lewis and Tolkien or in those of their publishers: Seth Lerer postulates that the medieval and children’s literature go easily together, in part because the child has frequently been used as ‘a metaphor for much that later periods considered “medieval” in itself.’⁶⁴ The Middle Ages often represents the pre-modern existence for a public consciousness that sees itself at the advanced end of cultural progression and are, in this sense, the ‘immature’ childhood of English society. In popular discourse, Umberto Eco suggests, ‘looking at the Middle Ages means looking at our infancy.’⁶⁵

This understanding of the relationship between children’s literature and the medieval also extends to literary form; Lerer contends that ‘[i]n many ways, the forms of children’s literature are distinctively pre-modern,’ citing the ‘techniques of allegory, moral fable, romance, and symbolism’ that abound in works for young

tale: Tolkien recalls starting *The Hobbit* ‘on a blank leaf’ while ‘sitting correcting School Certificate papers in the everlasting weariness of that annual task forced on impecunious academics with children.’ *Letters*, 163, p. 215.

⁶¹ Lewis, ‘On Juvenile Tastes,’ 78.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Lewis, ‘On Three Ways of Writing for Children,’ 62.

⁶⁴ Lerer, *Children’s Literature*, 13.

⁶⁵ Umberto Eco, *Faith in Fakes: Travels in Hyperreality*, trans. William Weaver (London: Vintage, 1998), 65.

people.⁶⁶ As a medievalist and children's literature critic, Lerer suggests that '[t]o be a medievalist is to be granted a unique access to children's books, as one finds old techniques sustained to make new moral, educational, or social claims.'⁶⁷ Lewis means it as praise when he calls *Phantastes* a work that 'hovers between the allegorical and mythopœic,' but by the early to mid-twentieth century such forms were not admired in works for adults.⁶⁸ Thus when Tolkien and Lewis began to publish their own medievalised fantasy in the 1930s and 1950s, respectively, children's literature provided the most obvious market for it. *The Hobbit* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* proved not only striking to readers but also commercially viable. The two medievalists welcomed the popularity of their works amongst young people, and both corresponded with their child fans.⁶⁹ They did not consider mythopoetic fantasy trivial, even those works aimed at children; both expressed appreciation of the archaic and mythological and argued for a re-evaluation of the conditions for 'literariness' in favour of these modes.

In his essay 'High and Low Brows,' Lewis argues that '[a] man ought not to be ashamed of reading a good book because it is simple and popular.'⁷⁰ However, this man also 'ought not condone the faults of a bad book because it is simple and popular.'⁷¹ 'Lowbrow' literature, he argues, including fantasy and children's literature, may be able to provide the artistic, aesthetic, 'or even "spiritual" satisfaction' that we expect from 'highbrow' literature. As Lewis points out, the

⁶⁶ Lerer, *Children's Literature*, 14.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ C.S. Lewis, 'Introduction', in George MacDonald, *Phantastes and Lilith* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1962), 8.

⁶⁹ See C.S. Lewis, *His Letters to Children*, ed. Lyle W. Dorsett and Marjorie Lamp Mead (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995) and unpublished letters and Christmas cards from Tolkien's child correspondents in Oxford, Bodleian Library Tolkien Papers MS 21.

⁷⁰ C.S. Lewis, 'High and Low Brows,' in *C.S. Lewis: Selected Literary Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 278.

⁷¹ Lewis, 'High and Low Brows,' 278.

‘highbrow’ arts of one age ‘have most often been the [‘lowbrow’ art] of another.’⁷²

Lewis called this satisfaction ‘Joy,’ a term that Tolkien also used, and for both akin to religious experience.⁷³ Lewis’s association of Joy with Christianity developed in his adult life but he first experienced Joy as a child, when reading works designated for both children and adults. The first literature that affected him in this way were the lines ‘*I heard a voice that cried, / Balder the beautiful / Is dead, is dead -*’ in a translation of Tegnèr’s *Drapa*, and Beatrix Potter’s *Squirrel Nutkin* (1903).⁷⁴ Lewis writes that he was ‘instantly uplifted into huge regions of northern sky’ upon reading the lines about Balder, although he read them entirely without context. *Squirrel Nutkin*, which contains pieces of border ballads in Nutkin’s riddles and taunts, gave him a haunting glimpse of the ‘Idea of Autumn.’⁷⁵ Thus two of Lewis’s most formative aesthetic experiences came from retellings of medieval myths, including a children’s book, experiences that may have informed his advocacy of these forms as literary in their own right.⁷⁶ Lewis argues that good children’s literature remains part of adult tastes, which confirms its literary merit:

I now enjoy Tolstoy and Jane Austen and Trollope as well as fairy tales and call that growth: if I had had to lose the fairy tales [of his youth] in order to acquire the novelists, I would not say that I had grown but only that I had changed. [...] I now enjoy the fairy tales better than I did in childhood: being now able to put more in, of course I get more out.⁷⁷

Lewis suggests that children’s literature, although written for youth, need not be ‘infantile’ in the derogatory sense. Its capacity to provide moments of Joy suggests

⁷² Ibid., 272-73.

⁷³ Tolkien, ‘On Fairy-Stories,’ 153. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 18.

⁷⁴ Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 16-17.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 17-18. See Beatrix Potter, *Squirrel Nutkin* (London: Frederick Warne & Co., 1903), and Francis James Child, Helen Child Sargent, and George Lyman Kittredge, ed., *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (London: Harrap, 1905).

⁷⁶ The third is an early memory of the toy garden that his brother Warnie made from moss, twigs, and flowers in the lid of a biscuit tin when Lewis was very young. Lewis recalls seeing beauty for the first time in this exuberant recreation of a garden, and remembered it with intense desire a few years later, while still a child, ‘as if from a depth not of years but of centuries.’ Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 5 and 16.

⁷⁷ Lewis, ‘On Three Ways of Writing for Children,’ 60.

that it is just as possible for it to be ‘literary’ as writing for adults. Tolkien also recalls childhood reading experiences of medieval legend as his introduction to Joy. Lewis Carroll’s *Alice* books amused him, and he took pleasure in Red Indian stories, but ‘the land of Merlin and Arthur was better than these, and best of all the nameless North of Sigurd and the Völsungs, and the prince of all dragons.’⁷⁸ Tolkien refers here to the final tale in Andrew Lang’s *Red Fairy Book*, ‘The Story of Sigurd,’ which recounts Sigurd’s slaying of the dragon Fafnir.⁷⁹

Both Lewis and Tolkien write about children’s literature in connection with fairy stories for, as Lewis explains, ‘the fantastic type of children’s story’ is ‘the kind I know and love best.’⁸⁰ Their defences of fairy-stories, fantasy, and children’s literature reject the realism and abstraction of ‘modernity’: their friend and colleague Nevill Coghill describes Lewis as having ‘little sympathy’ for ‘what I have called the New Sensibility of the early ‘twenties, for its flat bleakness, its lawless versification, its unheroic tone, its unintelligible images, its “modernity” in short.’⁸¹ Instead, Lewis and Tolkien valued writing that produces ‘Joy,’ a hazy and subjective criterion that involves antiquity, myth, beauty, and nostalgia, and can overcome mediocre (or even poor) writing. Lewis identifies MacDonald’s genius, for instance, in his ability to create striking new myths that transcend the means of telling the tale.⁸² Tolkien also contends that ‘a tale that in any measure succeeds in this point [inspiring Joy] has not wholly failed, whatever flaws it may possess, and whatever mixture or confusion of

⁷⁸ Tolkien, ‘On Fairy Stories,’ 134-35.

⁷⁹ Humphrey Carpenter, *J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1977; London: HarperCollins, 2002), 39. Citations refer to the HarperCollins edition. See Andrew Lang, ed., *The Red Fairy Book*, illustr. H.J. Ford and Lancelot Speed (London and New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1890), 357-67.

⁸⁰ Lewis, ‘On Three Ways of Writing for Children,’ 63.

⁸¹ Nevill Coghill, ‘The Approach to English,’ *Light on C.S. Lewis*, ed. Jocelyn Gibb (London: G. Bles, 1965), 60.

⁸² Lewis, ‘Introduction’ to *Phantastes* and *Lilith*, 10 and 8.

purpose.’⁸³ Their conviction amounts to the proposal of a new standard for evaluating literature, but their inability to quantify Joy – and for others to teach and examine on it – prevented it from becoming part of a serious academic discussion. However, their efforts at syllabus reform at the University of Oxford in the late 1920s and early 1930s and the publication of their children’s fantasy works had a profound influence on literary culture, perhaps more than any theory could have done. Instead of providing criteria for identifying classic works of English literature, Tolkien and Lewis gave their students authoritative models for creating their own.

In spite of their collaboration and shared passions and opinions, Tolkien and Lewis’s fantasy universes differ in sources and organization, and as a result, in tone. While the tales of Middle Earth are philologically derived and depend on Tolkien’s conception of a pre-Christian, pre-Norman North, *The Chronicles of Narnia* are a mishmash of classical sources and trans-historical medievalisms. Tolkien wrote in 1938 that *The Hobbit* is ‘derived from (previously digested) epic, mythology, and fairy-story – not, however, Victorian in authorship, as a rule to which George MacDonald is the chief exception.’⁸⁴ (Tolkien enjoyed George MacDonald’s *Curdie* books as a boy).⁸⁵ However, later in life he admitted, ‘I am not as warm an admirer of MacDonald as C.S. Lewis was [...] I am not naturally attracted (in fact much the reverse) by allegory, mystical or moral.’⁸⁶ Tolkien’s focus on pre-Conquest literature does not mean that he did not enjoy Middle English literature: at school the sixth form master George Brewerton, a medievalist, introduced him to Chaucer and Middle English, encouraging his interest in the history of language.⁸⁷ Brewerton also lent him an Anglo-Saxon primer, and Tolkien soon worked his way through *Beowulf*, first in

⁸³ Tolkien, ‘On Fairy-Stories,’ 154.

⁸⁴ Tolkien, *Letters*, no. 25, p. 31.

⁸⁵ Carpenter, *J.R.R. Tolkien*, 39.

⁸⁶ Tolkien, *Letters*, no. 262, 351.

⁸⁷ Carpenter, *J.R.R. Tolkien*, 46.

translation, and then in Old English. He also read *Pearl* in Middle English and learned enough Old Norse to read *Völsunga saga*, the saga that includes the tale of Sigurd and Fafnir.⁸⁸ Tolkien originally read Classics as an undergraduate at Exeter College, Oxford, but after receiving disappointing Second Class marks for his Honour Moderation Examinations and a stellar ‘pure alpha’ in the Comparative Philology paper, Tolkien switched to reading English Language and Literature.⁸⁹ He subsequently earned a First Class degree in English, with a focus on philology.⁹⁰

Tolkien’s love of literature was inseparable from his love of language, and indeed Tolkien requested that an article on him for the *Daily Telegraph* be rewritten to explain the relation of Middle Earth to language as follows:

The imaginary histories grew out of Tolkien’s predilection for inventing languages. He discovered, as others have who carry out such inventions to any degree of completion, that a language requires a suitable habitation, and a history which it can develop.⁹¹

Tolkien insists that for each of his invented languages ‘the “source,” if any, provided only the sound-sequence (or suggestions for its stimulus),’ though he names Anglo-Saxon as the ‘sole field in which to look for the origin and meaning of words or names belonging to the speech of the Mark’ (the *Eorlingas*), and also for a few ‘survivals in Hobbit-dialect derived from that region.’⁹² In keeping with his field of knowledge as professor of Anglo-Saxon, Tolkien often turned to Old English, Old Norse, and Old German (rather than Old French or other continental languages) in the construction of his fantasy languages.

The sounds of these medieval languages agreed with his ‘equally basic passion [...] for myth (not allegory!) and for fairy-story, and above all for heroic legend on

⁸⁸ Ibid., 55.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 90.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 110.

⁹¹ Tolkien, *Letters*, no. 294, p. 375.

⁹² Ibid., no. 297, pp. 380-81.

the brink of fairy-tale and history.’⁹³ Tolkien admits to being ‘grieved by the poverty of my own beloved country: it had no stories of its own (bound up with its tongue and soil), not of the quality that I sought, and found (as an ingredient) in legends of other lands.’ He cites Greek, Celtic, Romance, Germanic, Scandinavian, and Finnish as cultures with the kind of myth that he desired for England, and states that the Arthurian world alone approaches this kind of legend. But Tolkien found that ‘imperfectly naturalized,’ with a ““faerie” too lavish, and fantastical, incoherent and repetitive’ for his liking.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, Tolkien was interested in Arthurian legend and wrote a long unpublished poem, ‘The Fall of Arthur,’ in modern English. Tolkien wrote this poem with the mid-line caesura and alliteration of Anglo-Saxon poetry, as in these lines, spoken by Arthur:

‘Now for Lancelot I long sorely,
and we miss now most the mighty swords
of Ban’s kindred. Best meseemeth
swift word to send, service craving
to their lord of old. [...]’⁹⁵

What was most troubling to Tolkien about Arthurian legend was its inclusion of the Christian religion, which Tolkien called ‘fatal’: ‘[m]yth and fairy-story must, as all art, reflect and contain in solution elements of moral and religious truth (or error), but not explicit, not in the known form of the primary “real” world.’⁹⁶ In spite of religion’s personal significance for Tolkien, who was Roman Catholic, his fantasy lacks overt Christian messages and avoids the allegory that Lewis employs. Critics

⁹³ Tolkien, *Letters*, no. 131, p. 144.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 131, p. 144.

⁹⁵ Oxford, Bodleian Library Tolkien Papers A16/2, fols. 90v and 91r. Quotation from fol. 91r. In spite of his debts to Old English poetry, Tolkien’s poem also includes medievalisms drawn from other periods. In the excerpt above he uses ‘meseemeth,’ an archaism that he seems to take from nineteenth-century medievalism, since it rarely appeared as a single word before 1800. *OED Online*, s.v. ‘meseems,’ accessed 2 December 2010. <http://www.oed.com>. William Morris, for instance, uses it a number of times in *The Story of Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs*, a text that Tolkien would have likely read. William Morris, *The Story of Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs* (London: Ellis and White, 1877), 307.

⁹⁶ Tolkien, *Letters*, no. 131, p. 144.

have argued that his work represents a Roman Catholic worldview, including Thomas W. Smith's assertion of Tolkien's 'Catholic imagination,' which 'holds that God-in-Christ redeemed all aspects of creation,' and therefore 'everything else can be seen as an analogous mediator as well, including the writer's art.'⁹⁷ Even if such a projection is possible, Tolkien was more obviously interested in the heroic but often elegiac tone of legends that he believed were rooted in a pre-Christian worldview. He thus looked to early medieval sources for his own mythology, in which he embedded a separate religion.⁹⁸

For instance, Tolkien writes that *Beowulf* is

rehandling in a new perspective an ancient theme: that man, each man and all men, and all their works shall die. A theme no Christian need despise. Yet this theme plainly would not be so treated, but for the nearness of a pagan time. The shadow of its despair, if only as a mood, as an intense emotion of regret, is still there.⁹⁹

He argues that before the Christian promise of redemption and afterlife, Northern literature was characterized by an intense awareness of the passage of time and impending doom. Tolkien was not alone in this view: the preface to the popular translation of Norse mythology *Myths of the Norsemen* (1909), which Lewis loved as a boy, describes 'a great unconscious inspiration flowing from [Northern mythology] into English literature,' and argues that 'the most distinctive traits of this mythology are a particular grim humour, to be found in the religion of no other race, and a dark thread of tragedy which runs throughout the whole woof.'¹⁰⁰ A.C. Spearing refers to the Anglo-Saxon worldview as that of the 'man surrounded by a hostile universe, a

⁹⁷ Thomas W. Smith, 'Tolkien's Catholic Imagination: Mediation and Tradition,' *Religion & Literature*, 38.2 (Summer 2006): 75. See also Catherine Madsen's engagement with authors who seek Christianity in Tolkien's fiction in "'Light from an Invisible Lamp: Natural Religion in *The Lord of the Rings*,' in *Tolkien and the Invention of Myth: A Reader*, ed. Jane Chance (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 35-47.

⁹⁸ See J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Silmarillion* (originally published 1977; London: HarperCollins, 1999). Citations refer to the HarperCollins edition.

⁹⁹ Tolkien, 'The Monsters and the Critics,' 23.

¹⁰⁰ Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 89. H.A. Guerber, *Myths of the Norsemen: From the Eddas and Sagas* (originally published 1909; New York: Dover, 1992), xiv. Citation refers to the Dover edition.

warrior fighting against odds, probably defeated and yet heroic in his defeat.¹⁰¹ Spearing attributes this understanding of the self to Northern mythology, whereby in Ragnarök, the Norse apocalypse, men and gods alike are doomed to be defeated by the forces of chaos. In such a universe, ‘heroic conduct has no external incentive in the form of a heavenly reward; [...] [t]hus loyalty and courage, the virtues that the Anglo-Saxons most admired, could be seen only as values that men created for themselves.’¹⁰² In addition to borrowing linguistic elements and narrative motifs from Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse literature, Tolkien’s fantasy reflects what he thought was the distinctive tone, the ‘thread of tragedy,’ arising from this worldview.

A strong example of this tone in Tolkien’s fiction appears in the ‘Song of Rohan,’ which Aragorn sings in *The Two Towers*:

Where now the horse and the rider? Where is the horn that was blowing?
Where is the helm and the hauberk, and the bright hair flowing?
Where is the hand on the harpstring, and the red fire glowing?
Where is the spring and the harvest and the corn growing?
They have passed like rain on the mountain, like a wind in the meadow;
The days have gone down in the West behind the hills into shadow.¹⁰³

These lines echo a number of elegaic Old English works, with the first line recalling one in the poem *The Wanderer* that also asks ‘Where is the horse gone? Where the rider [young man]?’ The poem asks after other signs and figures of glory, now absent, and laments ‘the bright cup’ and ‘the mailed warrior’ that have ‘passed away’ with ‘time,’ ‘[d]ark under the cover of night, as if it had never been.’¹⁰⁴ Although Tolkien argues that he ‘never attempted to “re-create” anything,’ specifically citing

¹⁰¹ A.C. Spearing, *The Gawain-Poet: A Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 23.

¹⁰² Spearing, *The Gawain-Poet*, 23.

¹⁰³ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Two Towers* (originally published 1954; New York: Ballantine Books, 1965), 142-143. Citations refer to the Ballantine Books edition.

¹⁰⁴ Walter John Sedgefield, ed., ‘The Wanderer,’ in *An Anglo-Saxon Verse-Book* (Manchester: University Press, 1922), 31, ll. 92-6. Tom Shippey notes this similarity in *The Road to Middle-Earth* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983), 96, and Stuart Lee discusses Tolkien’s relationship to *The Wanderer* at length in ‘J.R.R. Tolkien and *The Wanderer*: From Edition to Application,’ *Tolkien Studies* 6 (2009): 189-211, with a focus on the ‘Song of Rohan’ on 202-04.

these lines and its echoes in *The Wanderer*, his use of elements from this poem and other early sources reveals his fascination with the decline of a certain medieval (pre-Conquest) grandeur.¹⁰⁵ The ‘Song of Rohan’ also recalls the meditations on passed glory in *The Ruin* and ‘The Lament of the Last Survivor’ that appears in *Beowulf*, and makes use of psalmic language to create a reverent tone in modern English. Tolkien was aware of this elegaic tradition in Old Norse as well as Old English poetry, and conveys it in his fantasy literature. The passing of the Third Age of Middle Earth, and with it the Elves and great Men of the past and their works, is a constant refrain in *The Lord of the Rings*. Frodo’s successful quest to destroy Sauron’s ring carries with it the knowledge that at its annihilation, the related rings that maintain the Elves’ remaining havens will lose their power, and the last of the Elves will leave Middle-Earth. Thus Tolkien maps the Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse ‘shadow of [...] despair’ onto an alternative mythology for England, where the ‘intense emotion of regret’ is for the demise of societies that he invented.

Lewis’s fantasy draws on much wider influences, although the idea of the ancient North consumed him as a youth, and was the common infatuation that inspired two of his most important friendships: with his correspondent and friend Arthur Greeves and later with Tolkien. When Lewis found Guerber’s *Myths of the Norsemen* (cited above) on Greeves’s bedside table in 1914, the two teenagers were ‘soon almost shouting – discovering [...] that both knew the stab of Joy and that, for both, the arrow was shot from the North.’¹⁰⁶ Lewis hints at his passion for Northerness in the *Chronicles of Narnia*: for example, in *The Horse and His Boy* (1954), the fair-skinned foster child of a fisherman in Calormen longs for the unseen

¹⁰⁵ Oxford, Bodleian Library Tolkien Papers A 30/1, fol. 121. Also appears in Lee, “J.R.R. Tolkien and *The Wanderer*,” 204.

¹⁰⁶ Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 151.

North that he later discovers is his birthright.¹⁰⁷ The adventures in *The Silver Chair* (1953) also take place in the remote North, but the fragments of other mythologies and cultural references that populate that landscape are indicative of Lewis's bricolage approach to writing fantasy. As the protagonists cross a crumbling giants' bridge, they notice that 'the balustrade had apparently been covered with rich carvings, of which some traces remained; mouldering faces and forms of giants, minotaurs, squids, centipedes, and dreadful gods.'¹⁰⁸ In Narnia classical minotaurs and ambiguous squids and centipedes all belong to the same cultural history as the giants and gods of the north, a testament to the wide range of sources for Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*.

While an adolescent and teenager at Malvern College, Lewis began reading classical works (he recalls enjoying Euripides's *Bacchae*, and provides a comic rewriting of it in the arrival of Bacchus and revellers at the conclusion to *Prince Caspian*), as well as Yeats, Milton, and Celtic mythology.¹⁰⁹ His passion for the North continued, however:

I passed on from Wagner to everything else I could get hold of about Norse mythology, *Myths of the Norsemen*, *Myths and Legends of the Teutonic Race*, Mallet's *Northern Antiquities* [...] From these books again and again I received the stab of Joy.¹¹⁰

Lewis wrote a tragedy while at Malvern, *Loki Bound*. 'Norse in subject and Greek in form,' it combined his literary passions in a way that anticipated his layering of sources in the *Narnia* books.¹¹¹ As an undergraduate at University College, Oxford, Lewis first read Greats, in keeping with his love of the classics, and received a First

¹⁰⁷ C.S. Lewis, *The Horse and His Boy*, illus. Pauline Baynes (originally published 1954; New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 4.

¹⁰⁸ C.S. Lewis, *The Silver Chair*, illus. Pauline Baynes (originally published 1953; New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 86.

¹⁰⁹ Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 130, 132. C.S. Lewis, *Prince Caspian*, illus. Pauline Baynes (originally published 1951; New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 197-204.

¹¹⁰ Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 89.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 132-33.

Class degree in 1922. Afterwards he decided to also read for a degree in English Language and Literature, and after just one year of study received a First Class degree in it as well.¹¹² His interest in English literature pre-dated this period, however, and included popular works of medievalism. Lewis encountered William Morris's *The Well at the World's End* (1896) on Greeves's bookshelf during the early years of World War One, an event that initiated his love for romance and chivalric material. Lewis called this new infatuation 'partly a revival – "Knights in Armour" returning from a very early period in my childhood. After that I read all the Morris I could get.'¹¹³ Soon, he recalls, 'the letters WILLIAM MORRIS were coming to have at least as potent a magic in them as WAGNER.'¹¹⁴ Wagner and Morris's work both reflect the nineteenth-century urge to produce new national art by drawing upon folklore and medieval history and legend, but represent the production of very different kinds of medievalisms.

Wagner drew together Germanic myth for his *Ring* cycle: Christine Chism contends that he 'ransacked wildly, from the *Nibelungenlied* and *The Poetic Edda* to Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's German folktales and their four-volume summa, *Teutonic Mythology* in his desire to 'stitch together sources into a rich mythology for Germany.'¹¹⁵ In this his interests overlapped with those of William Morris, who published his first English translation of Icelandic myth (with Eiríkur Magnússon) in 1869 and considered his epic poem *Sigurd the Volsung* to be 'his most important poem and wrote no other poem after it.'¹¹⁶ However, Morris's interests were based in

¹¹² Carpenter, *The Inklings*, 13 and 15.

¹¹³ Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 190.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Christine Chism, 'Middle-earth, the Middle Ages, and the Aryan Nation: Myth and History in World War II,' in *Tolkien the Medievalist*, ed. Jane Chance (London: Routledge, 2003), 75.

¹¹⁶ Joanna Banham, 'William Morris and the Middle Ages,' *William Morris and the Middle Ages: A Collection of Essays, Together with a Catalogue of Works Exhibited at the Whitworth Art Gallery, 28 September-8 December 1984*, ed. Joanna Banham and Jennifer Harris (Manchester and Dover, NH: Manchester University Press, 1984), 13.

English literature and myth, and especially the chivalric universe of *Le Morte Darthur* and other romances. Many of his novels, including *The Well at the World's End* (1896), created new magical, medievalised realms steeped in this kind of 'Knights in Armour' medievalism. These influential works marked the beginning of the medievalised 'alternative-world fantasy genre' to which the Oxford School belongs.¹¹⁷

Thus romance-derived medievalisms were a major part of Lewis's literary development, and *The Chronicles of Narnia* reflect his fascination with the chivalric universe and the literature about it. At the conclusion of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, for example, the years in Narnia change the Pevensies' language into pseudo-Malorian diction, recalling the conventions of that Arthurian cycle:

'Madam,' said King Peter, 'therein I pray thee to have me excused. For never since we four were Kings and Queens of Narnia have we set our hands to any high matter, as battles, quests, feats of arms, acts of justice, and the like, and then given over; but always what we have taken in hand, the same we have achieved.'¹¹⁸

Lewis uses the Malorian convention of interrupting a character's speech to name the speaker, and then completing the statement with a longer line, extended through parataxis. He also uses alliteration ('hands to any high matter') and archaic forms such as 'thee' and 'ye' to emulate the medieval language of Malory's chivalric characters.¹¹⁹ Peter's impeccable courtesy and courage, and his willingness to list the heroic achievements that he and his siblings have undertaken, also hearken to both chivalric romance and more recent medievalisms that emulate it.

¹¹⁷ Norman Talbot, 'William Morris and the Bear: Theme, Magic, and Totem in the Romances,' in *William Morris: Centenary Essays*, ed. Peter Faulkner (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), 94.

¹¹⁸ C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, illus. Pauline Baynes (originally published 1953; New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 186.

¹¹⁹ On Malory's language, see Mark Lambert: *Malory: Style and Vision in Le Morte Darthur* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975).

Lewis's intentional archaisms also recall Spenser's creation of 'medieval' language for the universe of *The Faerie Queene*, in which Lewis took great pleasure as an undergraduate. Fellow English student and, later, Inklings and Oxford Faculty colleague Nevill Coghill relates how in an undergraduate literature discussion class Lewis

gave an account of the Spenserian world that championed its ethical attitudes as well as their fairy-tale terms, with a rich joy in the defeat of dragons, giants, sorcerers, and sorceresses by the forces of virtue; it was a world he could inhabit and believe in as one inhabits and believes in a dream of one's own; its knights, dwarfs, and ladies were real to him, and became real to even to me while he discussed them[.]¹²⁰

Narnia offers to children such an invented world, also populated by dragons, giants, sorcerers, and sorceresses, as well as the moral 'forces of virtue' that Lewis enjoyed in Spenser. But Lewis asserts that Spenser's allegorical fantasy world 'is not called up [...] in order to amuse us. On the contrary, it is used for the sake of something yet deeper which it brings up with it and which is Spenser's real concern; the primitive and instinctive mind, with all its terrors and ecstasies.'¹²¹ For Lewis, allegory is an essential function of human thought, across period boundaries. Although he writes of its significance in medieval literature, he argues that '[i]t is of the very nature of thought and language to represent what is immaterial in picturable terms.'¹²² Thus Lewis attributes Spenser's debts to the Middle Ages to be 'not in structure or style,' but in the medieval 'sentiment and outlook' that made allegory the dominant literary mode.¹²³

As a result of his emphasis on allegory and sentiment over internally consistent medievalisms, Lewis's *Chronicles* break with a number of Tolkien's

¹²⁰ Coghill, 'The Approach to English,' 51.

¹²¹ Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, 312.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 44.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 305.

preferences for what constitutes myth. First, the structure of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* is allegorical, a medieval mode that Tolkien professed not to enjoy. He writes,

I cordially dislike allegory in all its manifestations, and always have done so since I grew old and wary enough to detect its presence. I much prefer history, true or feigned, with its varied applicability to the thought and experience of readers. I think that many confuse ‘applicability’ with ‘allegory’; but the one resides in the freedom of the reader, and the other in the purposed domination of the author.¹²⁴

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe purposefully retells Christ’s passion and resurrection, conveying Lewis’s intentions to the ‘wary’ reader. That the message of Lewis’s allegorical children’s fantasy was explicitly Christian also marks it as outside of the range of Tolkien’s interests. Furthermore, the *Chronicles* are internally inconsistent due to their wide-ranging anachronisms, from the unexplained arrival of Father Christmas to the inclusion of classical figures to the lamp-post. Lewis claims that the story was even *based* upon an anachronistic image: ‘The *Lion* all began with a picture of a Faun carrying an umbrella and parcels in a snowy wood.’¹²⁵ Upon listening to the first few chapters of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, Tolkien said that he ‘disliked it intensely,’ and later wrote to a friend, ‘[i]t is sad that “Narnia” and all that part of C.S.L.’s work should remain outside the range of my sympathy, as much of my work was outside his.’¹²⁶ However Lewis was very enthusiastic about Middle-Earth, and in addition to giving *The Hobbit* a very favourable review he was ‘affected to tears by the last chapter’ of *The Lord of the Rings*.¹²⁷ The medievalists’ divergences in taste reveal the multiple and at times conflicting impulses of the

¹²⁴ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (originally published 1954; New York: Ballantine Books, 1965), xi. Citations refer to the Ballantine Books edition.

¹²⁵ C.S. Lewis, ‘It All Began with a Picture...,’ *Of This and Other Worlds* (London: Collins; Fount Paperbacks, 1984), 79.

¹²⁶ Carpenter, *The Inklings*, 223. Tolkien, *Letters*, no. 265, p. 352.

¹²⁷ Tolkien, *Letters*, no. 72, p. 83.

Oxford School, including serious aesthetic disagreements about how medievalisms should function in children's fantasy.

Rather than limiting the scope of the Oxford School, however, these disagreements model the potential range of medievalised fantasy and open up further space for authorial manouvring within the School. Lewis and Tolkien shared the view that medieval literature is central to the study of English language and literature, and drew upon such early material when they produced their own medievalised children's fantasy. For both men fantasy offered a means of creating new myths – even 'feigned' history – for England. This re-creation of the present by means of the medieval past is at the heart of the Oxford School's work. Tolkien expresses his distress at England's lack of a native mythology in a 1950 letter about *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Simarillion*. Tolkien writes that he

had a mind to make a body of more or less connected legend, ranging from the large and cosmogonic, to the level of romantic fairy-story [...] which I could dedicate simply to: to England; 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 [...], it should be 'high,' purged of the gross, and fit for the more adult mind of a land long now steeped in poetry.¹²⁸

Tom Shippey suggests that Tolkien's Middle-Earth was an attempt to form for England what the Grimms had constructed for Germany, what Lönnrot's *Kalevala* was for Finland, and what Grundtvig was able to achieve for Danish identity through ballads, epics, and sagas.¹²⁹ Through his fantasy, Tolkien 'largely created the expectations and established the conventions of a new and flourishing genre,' and created a new mythology for England.¹³⁰ This mythology proved broad enough to

¹²⁸ Tolkien, *Letters*, no. 131, pp. 144-145.

¹²⁹ Tom Shippey, *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*, 1st ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002), xvi.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, xxxiv.

‘leave scope for other minds and hands’ to develop further in later fantasy about Elves, Dwarves, Orcs, and Men, as Tolkien admitted to hoping it could be.¹³¹

Although Tolkien created a self-contained and fully formed mythology and Lewis blended his from far-ranging sources, both look to the Middle Ages as the originary period of English identity and create their fantasy universes in (a version of) its image. Part of this nostalgia for the Middle Ages can involve imitating language as well as themes from medieval literature, as with Tolkien’s borrowed poetry and the Pevensies’ Malorian speech. Lewis’s friend Owen Barfield explains the significance of such linguistic archaism in ‘great poetry’ in *Poetic Diction*, his 1928 book on literary language. He writes, ‘great movements of archaism, which are at the same time returns to Nature, are only inaugurated, as we should expect, by the greater poets. They are led by poets with something to say, in other words, with something to give.’¹³² Lewis and Tolkien knew and embraced Barfield’s theory of language, which argued that mythology is ‘closely associated with the origin of speech and literature,’ and that ‘poetic, and *apparently* “metaphorical” values were latent in meaning from the beginning’ of language.¹³³

The Inklings and the Coalbiters (*Kolbitar*), the two literary circles to which both Lewis and Tolkien belonged at Oxford, provided the men with communities of academics with whom to share their love for medieval language and literature and Northern European mythology, as well as spaces in which to share their mythopoeic fiction.¹³⁴ But Tolkien had wider aspirations for his scholarly and personal interests.

¹³¹ Tolkien self-deprecatingly called this dream ‘[a]bsurd.’ Tolkien, *Letters*, no. 131, p. 145.

¹³² Owen Barfield, *Poetic Diction: A Study in Meaning* (London: Faber & Gwyer, 1928), 184.

¹³³ Carpenter, *The Inklings*, 41, and Barfield, *Poetic Diction*, 70. Tolkien even made a philological reference in *The Hobbit* that refers to Barfield’s theory of language development. In Tolkien, *Letters*, no. 15, p. 22. Lewis was close to Barfield, and dedicated *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* to his adopted daughter Lucy, and *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* to his adopted son Jeffrey.

¹³⁴ See Carpenter, *The Inklings*, on the *Kolbitar* (27) and the rebirth of the Inklings out of Lewis and Tolkien’s friends (67).

Even before the foundation of the Inklings, he was committed to reforming Oxford's English School curriculum in a way that would make his linguistic and literary values the backbone of the course. Tolkien believed that the study of English should be grounded in a balance of linguistic and literary study, with the majority of texts from the Middle Ages, in Old and Middle English and with further reading in the related languages of Old Norse, Old French, Gothic, and/or Old High German. Although Lewis initially disagreed with Tolkien's proposals for restructuring the syllabus, the discovery of their mutual interest in 'Northernness' and the growth of their friendship beginning in 1927 resulted in his adopting Tolkien's point of view on this matter.¹³⁵ Together the men devised and promoted a curriculum that defined the canon of English literature as predominantly medieval, and which required students to read widely in medieval languages. This, as much as the fantasy that they went on to write, was a 'great movement in archaism' by men 'with something to say.' The result of both movements, as I argue in this thesis, is the production of a strand of literary culture that identifies Englishness in medievalism and myth.

III. The Oxford English School

When the English School was established at Oxford in 1894, the first proposed syllabus was composed of ten papers, half of which (papers 1-3, 5, and 7) covered literature and/or history of the language from the medieval period.¹³⁶ Although this

¹³⁵ Carpenter, *The Inklings*, 27-8.

¹³⁶ D.J. Palmer, *The Rise of English Studies: An Account of the Study of the English Language and Literature from Its Origins to the Making of the Oxford English School* (London: Published for the University of Hull by the Oxford University Press, 1965), 113. The papers were: 1. Old English Texts (*Beowulf* and Sweet's *Anglo-Saxon Reader*), 2. Middle English Texts (*King Horn*, *Havelok*, Laurence Minot, *Sir Gawayne*), 3. Chaucer (selections) and *Piers Plowman*, 4. Shakespeare (about six plays), 5.

syllabus was ‘intended to provide a flexible combination of the linguistic, critical, and historical interests’ in the study of English literature, D.J. Palmer notes that

the first examination papers showed that with the pre-Chaucerian texts and the paper on the history of language there was no attempt made to invite a literary approach. The questions on *Beowulf* were linguistic, grammatical, and historical, and even the romance of *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight* only afforded an opportunity to display background knowledge of its authorship, its analogues, or the date of its composition.¹³⁷

Such an approach ensured contact with medieval texts but did not make provision for their study as works of literary merit. The literature that Tolkien and Lewis saw as rich with mythological implications and moving narratives was to be studied only as historical relics and exemplars of dead grammar. This is the kind of approach that Tolkien condemns as ‘quarrying’ significant poetry for historical knowledge, thereby suggesting ‘that it has no literary merits.’¹³⁸ A little over a decade later, Professors Raleigh and Napier proposed reforms to this syllabus on the grounds that it was too ‘rigid,’ but Palmer suggests that this perception of rigidity arose ‘from the failure of the philologists to treat medieval texts as literature [...], from their neglect of literature after the age of Chaucer, and from the inadequate provision of teaching on the literature side.’¹³⁹ Raleigh and Napier’s reforms instituted an effective split between linguistic and literary study, whereby medieval works were primarily taught within the philological side of the English School. In 1919 Raleigh complained that the literature students, ‘who are the bulk of the School,’ have ‘no competent teaching in the first eight centuries of English Literature.’¹⁴⁰ He hoped that this might be

History of the English Language, 6. History of the English Language to 1800, 7. Gothic (*Gospel of St. Mark*) and unseen translations from Old and Middle English, 8. Critical paper, and 9. and 10. Special Subjects.

¹³⁷ Palmer, *The Rise of the English School*, 129 and 114-15.

¹³⁸ Tolkien, ‘The Monsters and the Critics,’ 6-7.

¹³⁹ The proposal for reforms was presented to the Board on 29 November 1905. Palmer, *The Rise of the English School*, 129-130.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 145-46.

corrected by appointing a professor that specialised in medieval literature to the Merton Professorship of English Language and Literature, but the man elected to the position in 1920 was Henry Cecil Wyld, a philologist. His inaugural lecture was ‘devoted to a programme for research in language studies,’ and in it he announced that ‘the first and last word in our aspirations for the future progress of our studies is Research.’¹⁴¹ Wyld expressed concern that requirements in both literature and philology for English undergraduates threatened to distract the student from ‘those pursuits in which lies his chief delight,’ damaging his studies of both. As Palmer notes, Wyld ‘was prepared to see the two sides of the school draw even further apart’ in a school where most medieval teaching was left to the philologists and their language students.¹⁴²

It was not until 1926, one year after Tolkien returned to Oxford as the Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Pembroke College, that the English School ‘finally established its institutional identity by the creation of an English faculty board separate from the modern languages board.’¹⁴³ According to Robert Currie, the new board saw its main task as ‘eradicating what the examiners in the 1926 final honour school called “an old trouble of ours”, namely, “a widespread and wilful neglect of linguistic study.”’¹⁴⁴ Soon after his appointment, Tolkien, who had developed the linguistic side of the English School requirements at Leeds before coming to Oxford, began to address this contradictory picture of the English School as both too focused and not focused enough on the teaching of linguistic subjects (and medieval texts).¹⁴⁵ The faculty complained that students did not select these options

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 147.

¹⁴² Ibid., 148.

¹⁴³ Robert Currie, ‘The Arts and Social Studies, 1914-1939,’ in *The History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 8, Brian Harrison, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 121.

¹⁴⁴ Currie, ‘The Arts and Social Studies,’ 121.

¹⁴⁵ Tolkien, *Letters*, no. 7, pp. 12-3.

often enough: Tolkien sat on an English Board committee for the teaching of languages in the faculty in 1928, and its assessment report notes ‘a serious limitation in the numbers of candidates taking the specialized linguistic or medieval courses.’ It concludes that this lack of interest is due to insufficient linguistic and philological tuition and recommends that provision be made ‘of the same degree of thoroughness as that provided in literary subjects,’ by tutors ‘no less well equipped by special knowledge of those branches of study, and by experience in teaching them, than are the tutors in literature.’¹⁴⁶ This interpretation of why so many students choose to read post-medieval, literary papers may be incomplete, but the report’s concerns with the imbalance of literary and linguistic study in the English School were well-founded. The report recommends a restructuring of teaching priorities in the School, in which

the weight and degree of attention given severally to the literary and linguistic subjects in tutorial instruction should be in reasonable proportion to the bulk of each in the curriculum followed by each candidate, having always regard to the fact that every candidate is required as a minimum to show a sound knowledge of the elements of Old and Middle English and of the outlines of the history of the English language, all of which are new ground to the majority of candidates.¹⁴⁷

The Faculty Board resolved on 18 May 1928 that ‘the same Committee, with Professor Tolkien as Convener, [should] consider the best means of acting on the report’ outlined above.¹⁴⁸

Tolkien’s influence on the development of the curriculum in the years that followed, leading up to its rewriting in 1931, cannot be overemphasized. Together with Lewis, Tolkien negotiated an overhaul to the syllabus that not only ensured

¹⁴⁶ The report complains that ‘neither the University nor the colleges are able to provide for male candidates special tuition in the linguistic subjects of the English school that is comparable in range or thoroughness to that given in literature, or sufficient in amount or quality to enable these candidates to satisfy the minimum requirements of the statutes.’ Oxford, Oxford University Archives, English Faculty Board Reports I, FA 4/5/2/1, fol. 144.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ 18 May 1928. Oxford, Oxford University Archives, English Faculty Board Minutes 1926-46, FA 4/5/1/1, fols. 25-6.

compulsory linguistic study for all English undergraduates (and thus exposure to medieval language and philology), but also cemented the place of teaching medieval texts as *literature*, as well. His initial planning suggested two courses of study, in which the philological course, ‘A,’ still focuses on medieval linguistics but also concerns itself with literary approaches to medieval texts, and in which the more literary ‘B’ course is required to study medieval literature, substituting it for the works of the nineteenth century. This plan gave rise to the three-course system that was ratified in 1931, and that would remain in place until 1970.¹⁴⁹ Some remnants of Tolkien’s original curriculum continue to be part of the English School requirements today.

On 29 May 1930 Tolkien published an article in *The Oxford Magazine* that lays out his ‘purely personal’ comments on the English School and his hopes for improving it.¹⁵⁰ He acknowledges that ‘[d]ivisions in taste [...] as well as the needs and predilections of other educational bodies’ may have played greater roles in the ‘cleavage’ between the language and literature ‘sides’ of the English School than any ‘conscious policy’ by the Faculty.¹⁵¹ He argues that the banishment of the separate titles ‘language’ and ‘literature’ for the two possible courses of study in the School is ‘probably the first need of reform in the Oxford School’; he posits that substituting even the nondescript designations ‘A and B would be more preferable.’¹⁵² Tolkien argues that for both of these courses ‘A’ and ‘B,’ the curriculum needs better provisions for the integration of literary and linguistic study, and condemns the fact that under the existing system a literature student ‘is not allowed by the regulations to

¹⁴⁹ In 1970 the curriculum returned to a two-course system, but it retained strong medieval requirements for all undergraduates, including the requirement to read Old English and two papers which together cover the period 1100-1600. *University of Oxford Examination Decrees*, revised to the end of 1970 (Oxford, Oxford University Press: 1970), 50-1 and 215-29.

¹⁵⁰ J.R.R Tolkien, ‘The Oxford English School,’ *The Oxford Magazine*, May 29, 1930, 778.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 778.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

take a paper in literature up to 1300, even if he wishes to,' because '[t]hat is a "language" subject.'¹⁵³ Tolkien contends that 'the divergence of interests is such that no one person can be expected to deal adequately with both of the "sub-schools," language and literature, in the pursuit of an English degree.'¹⁵⁴

Tolkien admits himself to be 'one outside' the 'B' (more modern and literature-focused) course, but suggests developing it by adding 'worthy' medieval texts, read as literature, to the requirements, and a corresponding reduction in works from later periods:

Personally, I should favour curtailing the thousand years at the modern end, jettisoning certainly the nineteenth century (unless parts of it could appear as an 'additional subject'); and the substitution of a scholarly study of worthy Anglo-Saxon and Middle English texts, with a paper of unseen translation, for the extracts and the meagre 'philology.' If real philology is required it should deal with the periods also studied as literature, and be examined in the same connection; otherwise it is valueless.¹⁵⁵

Of the proposed 'A' course, his own domain, Tolkien argues for a more literary approach to medieval texts in English and related languages. Drawing comparison to the study of Classics, Tolkien argues,

[i]t is possible to view the discipline which has Anglo-Saxon, Old Icelandic, and Middle English for its principal matter, as developing towards, or already developed into, a not unworthy offspring of classical discipline, approaching different matter in the same spirit.¹⁵⁶

Tolkien's insistence that 'Chaucer should be recovered for such [course A] students as a mediaeval author, and part of his works become once more the subject of detailed and scholarly study' seems obvious today, given Chaucer's status in contemporary English departments as the 'father' of English literature.¹⁵⁷ Less familiar is Tolkien's accompanying claim that '[t]he pretence that no "English" curriculum is humane

¹⁵³ Ibid., 779.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 779.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 782.

which does not include Shakespeare must naturally be abandoned, since that author lies quite outside the purview of such a course.’¹⁵⁸ Tolkien’s conviction that the integrated linguistic and literary study of medieval literature ought to form the foundation for the English School is evident in the numerous syllabus reforms that he proposed to the English Board from 1928 onwards.¹⁵⁹

On 21 January 1931, the faculty resolved unanimously that the medieval language papers

V(b) [Old English] and VI(b) [Middle English] should be confined to Old English and Middle English *texts* respectively. Questions should be set on the contents, style and literary history of the texts, and only such linguistic questions should be set as have a bearing on the *literary* and *textual* problems of the texts¹⁶⁰

and also that Paper VII, ‘Outlines of the history of the English Language,’ ‘should be discontinued and a paper of another kind, involving the study of texts, substituted.’¹⁶¹

Both of these resolutions ensure the study of Old and Middle English texts as literature, rather than as mere linguistic exemplars, and indicate the direction in which the English School was leaning by this point.

But the most significant of Tolkien’s reforms were submitted in March and ratified by the Board on 22 May 1931; they went into full effect beginning with the 1933 examinations.¹⁶² This overhaul of the curriculum established not the two

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ The Faculty Board Meeting Minutes for 27 June 1928 note: ‘The changes in the Regulations for special subjects proposed by Professor Tolkien were adopted with minor modifications.’ English Faculty Board Minutes 1926–46, FA 4/5/1/1, fol. 29. These changes, recorded in the English Faculty Board Reports I, FA 4/5/2/1, fol. 157, involve alterations in the examination regulations for medieval languages associated with Old English (Gothic, Old Saxon, Old High German, and Old Icelandic), including the addition of Gothic as a new special subject option and the expansion of the Old Icelandic special option into two new options, Old Norse and Old Icelandic literary history and Scandinavian philology.

¹⁶⁰ Oxford, Oxford University Archives, English Faculty Board Reports III, FA 4/5/2/3, fol. 23. Emphasis mine.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² The Faculty Board Meeting Minutes for 15 May 1931 also cover the adjourned meeting on 22 May in which the Regulations were approved; they note that ‘[t]he Regulations were amended and approved to come into force for the examinations in 1933.’ English Faculty Board Minutes, FA 4/5/1/1, fol. 69. See also Currie, ‘The Arts and Social Studies,’ 121.

courses ‘A’ and ‘B’ for candidates in the English School which Tolkien had initially proposed, but three course options I, II, and III, all of which include significant requirements in both medieval language and literature. Students were required to take nine papers from the options provided for their chosen course, and ten papers for those candidates aiming at a first-class degree. Each of the three courses required students to prepare at least one paper in English Philology, from the newly designated Section A, and five papers from Section B, English Literature. Courses I and II, the philological courses, also provide options from Section C, Subsidiary Languages, composed entirely of medieval languages such as Gothic, Old High German, Old Norse, and Old French:

1933 Examination Requirements for the English Final Honour School ¹⁶³			
	Course I (philological):	Course II (philological):	Course III (literary):
A: Philology	Both: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OE Philology • ME Philology 	All of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OE Philology • ME Philology • MnE Philology 	Only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern English
B: English Literature	All of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OE Texts • OE Literature • ME Texts • ME Literature • Chaucer, Langland, and Gower 	All of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OE Texts • ME Texts • Chaucer, Langland, and Gower • English Literature 1400-1550 • Shakespeare and Contemporary English Dramatists And any one of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OE Literature • ME Literature • Spenser and Milton OR one option from C	All of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old English • Middle English • Chaucer and his Contemporaries • Shakespeare and Contemporary English Dramatists • Spenser and Milton • English Literature from 1400 to 1830 (THREE papers)

¹⁶³ These and all revisions from the Proposed Revised Regulations for the Honour School, in the English Faculty Board Reports III, FA 4/5/2/3, fol. 43. See also *University of Oxford Examination Statutes, together with the Regulations of the Boards for the Academic Year 1932-1933* (Oxford, Oxford University Press: 1932), 143-49.

C: Subsidiary Languages	Any two of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gothic • Old Saxon • Old High German • Middle High German • Old Norse • Old Norse Texts • Old French • Old French Texts 	Any one of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Norse • Old French OR one option from B	
Abbreviations: OE = Old English; ME = Modern English; MnE = Modern English			

Lewis described Course I as ‘frankly medieval’; it includes two papers from Section A (Old and Middle English Philology, respectively), two papers from Section C, and *only* papers that cover literature from the Middle Ages in Section B: Old English Texts (Paper 1(a)), Old English Literature (Paper 2), Middle English Texts (Paper 3(a)), Middle English Literature (paper 4), and Chaucer, Langland, and Gower (Paper 5(a)).¹⁶⁴ Course II, ‘a half-way house’ between Courses I and III, also required Papers 1 and 2 from Section A, as well as Paper 3, Modern English Philology, to accompany the early modern literary papers that the course offers.¹⁶⁵ As in Course I, the literary Papers 1(a), 3(a), and 5(a) ensured a strong foundation in reading medieval texts as literature, but also include literature up to and including Shakespeare in Papers 6 and 7. Students reading for Course II could then choose one more paper from the following options: in Section B, Old or Middle English Literature (Papers 2 and 4), or Paper 8, Spenser and Milton; from Section C, either Old Norse or Old French.

Lewis called Course III ‘the literary course proper, which the vast majority of our students take’: it required one philological course, in Modern English, and the remaining eight options are all from Section B. Two of these, 1(b) and 3(b), focused

¹⁶⁴ C.S. Lewis, ‘The Idea of an “English School,”’ *Rehabilitations and Other Essays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), 61.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

on Old and Middle English literary texts. A third medieval paper, 5(b), covered Chaucer and his contemporaries, and papers 7-11 run from 1400 to 1830, including a paper on Shakespeare and his contemporaries and one on Spenser and Milton. Paper 12, English Literature from 1830 to 1900, was optional. Students read *Beowulf*, Old English poems from the Exeter Book, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Chaucer, and other medieval works important to Tolkien and Lewis and had to be able to comment on their forms and consequence as English literature.

The student response to these changes favoured the more literary, more modern Course III: '[b]etween 1933 and 1939, under the new syllabus [...] the proportion of candidates taking the literary course rose towards 95 per cent of the total. But the changes in the syllabus pleased the faculty.'¹⁶⁶ Lewis was one of the new curriculum's strongest supporters, and explained that in a thorough English education

[t]he tap-root, Anglo-Saxon, can never be abandoned. The man who does not know it remains all his life a child among real English students. There we find the speech-rhythms that we use every day made the basis of metre; there we find the origins of that romanticism for which the ignorant invent such odd explanations.¹⁶⁷

Passing familiarity with Old English does not sufficiently prepare the candidate in the School for true scholarship: Lewis confesses that he even disapproves of the more modern-focused Course III, calling it 'vestigial.'¹⁶⁸ Course III's sampling of literature English history through 1830 designates it a 'composite syllabus' of the kind that he disdains. He argues that Courses I and II better prepare the student to pursue their own intellectual interests in the field, using nationalist and masculinist imagery to depict the process of study and research:

¹⁶⁶ Currie, 'The Arts and Social Studies,' 122.

¹⁶⁷ C.S. Lewis, 'Our English Syllabus,' *Rehabilitations and Other Essays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), 92-3.

¹⁶⁸ Lewis, 'The Idea of an "English School,"' 62.

In the great rough countryside which we now throw open to you, you can choose your own path. Here's your gun, your spade, your fishing-tackle; go and get yourself a dinner. Do not tell me you would sooner have a nice composite *menu* of dishes from half the world drawn up for you. You are too old for that. It is time you learned to wrestle with nature for yourself.¹⁶⁹

In addition to providing a rigorous introduction to English, Lewis also argues that 'our ancient alliterative poetry' boasts 'a prosody based on the same speech rhythms that I hear in conversation to-day.'¹⁷⁰ Writing of Anglo-Saxon culture, Lewis notes,

I see at once that words like *gold* and *wolf* and *heart* and *blood* and *winter* and *earth*, had the same overtones for them as for me. Everything is already unmistakably English. This mere Englishness is usually called Romanticism by those who do not know Anglo-Saxon.¹⁷¹

This was also Tolkien's view, who lectured that the Anglo-Saxon language is

[a] literary language with literary traditions – language, that is, which has risen to full consciousness, and engaged already in that doomed struggle between the human hero, in his hall of light and courteous converse and of minstrelsy, with the Ogre of Ruin and the Dragon of Time, which makes of the classical tongues, great or small, monuments at once tragical and glorious.¹⁷²

It is perhaps not surprising that in pencil, beside this, he wrote 'Beowulf.' Familiarity with such mediievally-rooted, glorious 'Englishness' was considered one of the benefits of studying under this syllabus. Tolkien called the subject of English 'patriotic' in his *Oxford Magazine* article, a sentiment whose popularity is evidenced 'in much wartime and post-war Oxford poetry [by Oxford students], which frequently linked the blitz, Communism and Fascism to themes such as Arthur, Beowulf, and the tramp of the troll kings.'¹⁷³ This use of medieval themes may have also arisen from

¹⁶⁹ Lewis, 'Our English Syllabus,' 93.

¹⁷⁰ Lewis, 'The Idea of an "English School,"' 72.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁷² Oxford, Bodleian Library Tolkien Papers A14/1, fol. 107.

¹⁷³ Tolkien, 'The Oxford English School,' 780. Jose Harris, 'The Arts and Social Sciences, 1939-1970,' *The History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 8, ed. Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 239. For examples of such student poetry, see W. Bell, ed., *Poetry from Oxford in Wartime* (London: The Fortune Press, 1945), which includes a number of early poems by Philip Larkin, and one by Roger Lancelyn Green, both of whom read English at Oxford in the 1940s.

the attitude in the English School that ‘[t]here is an intrinsic absurdity in making current literature a subject of academic study, and the student who wants a tutor’s assistance in reading the works of his own contemporaries might as well ask for a nurse’s assistance in blowing his own nose.’¹⁷⁴ Whether or not the students (or indeed the wider academic community) agreed with this opinion, voiced by Lewis, the curriculum offered little encouragement for the study of modern literature, and created an incentive for the hiring of faculty that specialized in periods before 1830, and especially in the medieval period.

In addition to the hiring requirements that the curriculum dictated, Tolkien and Lewis’s approach to the teaching of English dominated the School for decades through their influence within the faculty. This not only pertained to syllabus control, and, in Tolkien’s case, holding the Chairmanship of the Faculty Board, but also to the election of new professors.¹⁷⁵ Tolkien was an elector on the boards for new appointments to the Rawlinson and Bosworth Professorship of Anglo-Saxon in 1946 and the Merton Professorship of English Literature in the same year, the Jesus Professorship of Celtic in 1947, and the Readerships and Textual Criticism in 1948.¹⁷⁶ He was originally an elector for the Merton Professorship of English Language and Literature appointment in 1945, but was replaced by Lewis and elected himself.¹⁷⁷ In 1953, the year that Susan Cooper and Diana Wynne Jones matriculated at Oxford, the English Faculty Board meeting minutes for 1 May report that either Lewis or Tolkien was elected to each of the five boards of electors for new professorships. In each case Lewis or Tolkien was recorded as *re-elected* into these five-year responsibilities (here

¹⁷⁴ Lewis, ‘Our English Syllabus,’ 91.

¹⁷⁵ For example, Tolkien was elected the Chairman in October 1950 until Michaelmas (Autumn) 1951. Oxford, Oxford University Archives, English Faculty Board Minutes 1946-58, FA 4/5/1/2, fol. 97.

¹⁷⁶ Oxford, Oxford University Archives, DC 9/1/2, fols. 188, 197 and 199; 218 and 220; 213-4; 266; and 265.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, fols. 166 and 171.

lasting until 1958), suggesting that they had also held these posts for at least the five previous years as well.¹⁷⁸ During this particular period only the board of electors for the Merton Professorship of English Literature had need to be active, but Tolkien attended both meetings of the electoral board and Inkling Nevill Coghill was appointed to the position in 1957.¹⁷⁹ Tolkien, Lewis, and friends including Coghill were often present for faculty decision-making: Tolkien rarely missed a Faculty Board meeting until his retirement in 1959, and although he does not attend with the consistency of Tolkien, Lewis appears at a number of faculty meetings from 1931 onwards.¹⁸⁰

In spite of his large personality, prolific academic output, and influence in the faculty, Lewis was not offered a professorship at Oxford, and instead took the newly constituted Professorship of Renaissance and Medieval English at Cambridge in 1954.¹⁸¹ He still had many friends and supporters at Oxford, however; when the Merton Professorship of English Literature became available in 1957, a petition undersigned by 27 members of the faculty implored the electors for the position (J.R.R. Tolkien and Mr Bryson) ‘to offer the Chair first to Professor C.S. Lewis’ before any other candidate. J.R.R. Tolkien’s son, C.R. [Christopher] Tolkien, then a member of the faculty and later the editor of many of his father’s posthumously published works, is among the names on the list. At the meeting ‘[i]t was agreed that since in the opinion of the board the intention of the petitioners had already been

¹⁷⁸ The chairs are the Rawlinson and Bosworth Professorship, the Jesus Professorship of Celtic, the Merton Professorship of English Language and Literature, and the Taylor Professorship of the German Language and Literature. English Faculty Board Minutes 1946-58, FA 4/5/1/2, fol. 147.

¹⁷⁹ Oxford, Oxford University Archives, DC 10/4/1, fols. 88 and 104

¹⁸⁰ See English Faculty Board Minutes 1926-46, FA 4/5/1/1, fol. 73, and English Faculty Board Minutes 1946-58, FA 4/5/1/2.

¹⁸¹ Item 2 of the 18 June 1954 faculty meeting records Lewis’s resignation in favour of the Cambridge position, and adds: ‘His resignation was received with regret and it was agreed to put on record the Board’s appreciation of his services to the faculty.’ English Faculty Board Minutes 1946-58, FA 4/5/1/2, fol. 170.

fulfilled, there was no need for any further action.’¹⁸² Lewis did not leave Cambridge, however, where he remained a professor until his death in 1963.¹⁸³

Many fantasy writers passed through this sphere of influence, which extended beyond the curriculum to the attitudes and administration of the faculty. The children’s fantasy literature produced by Oxford English graduates since 1960 is thus a testament to Lewis and Tolkien’s roles in the production of Anglophone literary culture in the twentieth century. By this date their 1931 syllabus was well established and their fantasy literature was in wide circulation. The medieval literature that students read for their degree modelled possible literary forms, narratives, and tone, all sanctioned by England’s oldest and most prestigious university as authentic ‘English’ literature. Oxford has produced a large number of important children’s fantasy authors, many of whom read English from the 1950s onward, and from these I take the ‘secondary’ authors whose work I read alongside medieval literature in this thesis: Diana Wynne Jones, Susan Cooper, Kevin Crossley-Holland, and Philip Pullman.

All four of the following authors read Course III during their times at Oxford.¹⁸⁴ The medieval portions of Course III remained virtually unchanged between its institution in 1933 and through Pullman’s examinations in 1968, with only minor adjustments. Papers 9-11, designated in the 1933 examinations as ‘English Literature from 1400-1830’, had been adjusted to Papers 9 and 10, ‘English Literature from 1430-1830,’ by the time of Cooper and Jones’s examinations in 1956.¹⁸⁵ Paper 11 was

¹⁸² Ibid., fol. 214.

¹⁸³ Carpenter, *The Inklings*, 251.

¹⁸⁴ Oxford, Oxford University Degree Conferrals Office Archive.

¹⁸⁵ See *The University of Oxford Examination Statutes*, revised to the end of 1955 (Oxford, Oxford University Press: 1955), 179-85 (Cooper and Jones), *The University of Oxford Examination Statutes*, revised to the end of 1961 (Oxford, Oxford University Press: 1961), 169-75 (Crossley-Holland), and *The University of Oxford Examination Statutes*, revised to the end of 1967 (Oxford, Oxford University Press: 1967), 197-203 (Pullman) for these and all Final Honour School comparisons.

replaced by ‘A paper of general critical questions arising out of English Literature,’ and remained so through Pullman’s examinations. There were also some additions and replacements of texts: for example, Paper 5(b), ‘Chaucer and his Contemporaries,’ calls for special reference to *The Canterbury Tales* Groups A and F in Cooper and Jones’s time, but by Crossley-Holland’s and Pullman’s examinations the focus was Group A of *The Canterbury Tales*, and Book III of *Troilus and Criseyde*.¹⁸⁶ Many did not change, however: *Beowulf* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, for instance, remained set texts under Papers B1(b) (Old English) and B3(b) (Middle English) throughout this period, and therefore all four of the following authors certainly studied them.

Diana Wynne Jones, who matriculated in 1953 and graduated in 1956, attributes much of the inspiration for her fantasy literature to the medieval works in the English curriculum. ‘I have a strong sense that everything I do write is quite deeply influenced by what I perceive as the Middle Ages,’ she said at a conference on the Middle Ages at Nottingham University in 1997. Jones married a medieval scholar, John Burrow, but her earliest introduction to medieval literature was at the age of eight, through her mother’s undergraduate copy of Malory.¹⁸⁷ However, she names the Middle English texts of the Oxford English curriculum as what ‘inspired’ her later writing: ‘it was suddenly being confronted with the way writers from the Middle Ages handled narratives. They were all so *different*, that was the amazing thing, and all so *good* at it.’¹⁸⁸ Jones cites Chaucer, Langland, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and

¹⁸⁶ Group A is comprised of ‘The General Prologue,’ ‘The Knight’s Tale,’ ‘The Miller’s Prologue and Tale,’ ‘The Reeve’s Prologue and Tale,’ and ‘The Cook’s Prologue and Tale.’ Group F is ‘The Squire’s Introduction and Tale’ and ‘The Franklin’s Prologue and Tale.’ Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ix.

¹⁸⁷ Diana Wynne Jones, ‘Autobiography,’ on her official website. Accessed 26 July 2010. <http://www.leemac.freemove.co.uk/autobiog.htm>

¹⁸⁸ Diana Wynne Jones, ‘Inventing the Middle Ages.’ Talk presented at Nottingham University, 1997. Accessed 26 July 2010. <http://www.leemac.freemove.co.uk/medieval.htm>.

Sir Orfeo as strong influences, all of which she read as part of Course III for the 1956 Honour School examinations.¹⁸⁹ In an indication of the kinds of ideas that English School students were expected to be able to discuss at this time, one of the examination questions for Paper 3(b) (Middle English) in the year that both Jones and Susan Cooper sat their exams asks the candidate to ‘[w]rite on “Faerie” in Middle English poetry.’¹⁹⁰ Jones has been celebrated several times during her prolific career, and her awards for children’s fantasy include the 1977 Guardian Award for Children’s Books.¹⁹¹

Susan Cooper (like Jones, a student from 1953-56) has also been recognised internationally for her children’s fantasy literature, including a Newbery Medal in the United States for two of the five books in her *The Dark Is Rising* series.¹⁹² Cooper states that she drew the material for her quintet from ‘general cultural osmosis,’ especially the ‘Matter of Britain [...], which consisted of fairytale, folktale, myth.’ She found some of this Matter of Britain in her course reading when she arrived at Oxford in 1953:

I suppose I had read almost as much as was then in print, apart from very scholarly studies, about Arthurian legend, partly because I went to Oxford University and the English School at Oxford is very strong on earlier literature. [...] We had to do a lot of background reading in the French sources, such as Chretien de Troyes. I also read *The Mabinogion*, the chronicles, and many other works that I don’t recall now.¹⁹³

Cooper professes not to have returned to any of her course texts when writing, or to have read the work of other prominent fantasy writers for children (including Lewis)

¹⁸⁹ *Oxford Examination Statutes* (1955), 179-85.

¹⁹⁰ *Oxford University Examination Papers: Trinity Term 1956. Second Public Examination: Honour School of English Language and Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), Section B, Paper 3 (b), Question 5.

¹⁹¹ Jones, ‘Autobiography,’ online.

¹⁹² ‘Biography,’ Susan Cooper official website. Accessed 26 July 2010.
<http://www.thelostland.com/biography.htm>.

¹⁹³ Raymond H. Thompson, ‘Interview with Susan Cooper,’ Cambridge, MA, 2 July 1989.
<http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/intrvws/cooper.htm>

until after she completed the cycle. However, the texts in the curriculum established its own English literary tradition rooted in medieval legend and myth, and conveyed through a reading list what Lewis and Tolkien attempted to create in their fantasy.

Kevin Crossley-Holland (1959-62) not only read English as an undergraduate at Oxford, he later became a translator of Anglo-Saxon and is now an honorary fellow of St. Edmund Hall, Oxford. Crossley-Holland, whose first instalment of the *Arthur* trilogy won the Guardian Children's Fiction Award in 2001, recalls initially failing his Old English exams. But at the age of 19 'there was a moment [...] when the temper and music of Anglo-Saxon poetry got into my thick head, my nervous system and my bloodstream.'¹⁹⁴ While the Middle English literature texts of Course III were more significant for Cooper and Jones, Crossley-Holland attributes his literary development to the Old English requirements of the course. He states on his personal website that when he writes fiction, Anglo-Saxon 'is always at my back and in my ear: an oral tradition; good, strong, quick, keen, earthed words; stress patterning as opposed to metric rhythm; alliteration and other music; the highly-wrought.'¹⁹⁵ Crossley-Holland quotes the last line of Tolkien's '*Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*' on the 'Translation' page of his website, and writes that Tolkien's 'words struck like a gong inside me when I first read them, as a student, and they still do.'¹⁹⁶ Crossley-Holland's writing reflects Oxford's interconnected approach to English language and literature, marrying Anglo-Saxon diction with later material.

¹⁹⁴ Kevin Crossley-Holland, 'Translation,' www.kevincrossley-holland.com. Accessed 26 July 2010. <http://www.kevincrossley-holland.com/translation.html>

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ The quotation reads: 'There is not much poetry in the world like this... it is written in a language that after many centuries has still essential kinship with our own, it was made in this land, and moves in our northern world beneath our northern sky, and for those who are native to that tongue and land, it must ever call with a profound appeal - until the dragon comes.' Tolkien, 'The Monsters and the Critics,' 33-4. Quoted in Crossley-Holland, 'Translation.' See also Chapter Five, p. 223.

For his *Arthur* trilogy Crossley-Holland ‘read and reread Geoffrey of Monmouth, Sir Thomas Malory, Chrétien de Troyes, the lais of Marie de France, *Perlesvaus*, *Culhwch* and *Olwen*, the Vulgate Version, the anonymous *Alliterative Morte Arthure*,’ and other sources, medieval and modern, but even in prose the trilogy retains the ‘temper and music of Anglo-Saxon poetry.’¹⁹⁷ Arthur muses about how little he knows of Merlin, thinking, ‘Merlin isn't a lord or a knight, but he isn't a priest or a monk or a friar. He isn't a manor tenant or a labourer; he doesn't do any days' work for my father. And he isn't a reeve or a baker or a brewer or a beadle. So what is he?’¹⁹⁸ This excerpt exemplifies Crossley-Holland’s philosophy that ‘you don't need long words when you can use good, clean, short ones,’ an argument that, in English, often biases words derived from Old English, although there are several Anglo-Norman- and Old French-derived words in the excerpt above.¹⁹⁹ It also recalls the riddles in the Old English Exeter Book, which Crossley-Holland translated and which Tolkien used for Bilbo’s riddling game with Gollum in *The Hobbit*.²⁰⁰

In contrast, Philip Pullman (1965-68) writes on his website that he ‘went to Exeter College, Oxford, to read English, ‘though I never learned to read it very well.’²⁰¹ It seems that Pullman, who received a third-class degree, did not ‘learn to read’ Lewis and Tolkien’s idea of English ‘very well’ – in particular, ‘he loathed the Old English element of his course and says he would have got a fourth-class degree if

¹⁹⁷ Crossley-Holland, ‘Translation,’ and ‘Fiction,’ www.kevincrossleyholland.com. Accessed 26 July 2010. <http://www.kevincrossley-holland.com/fiction.html>

¹⁹⁸ Kevin Crossley-Holland, *The Seeing Stone* (originally published 2000; London: Orion, 2001), 71.

¹⁹⁹ Claire Armitstead, ‘Arthur Reborn,’ *The Guardian Online*. 29 September 2001. Accessed 26 July 2010.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2001/sep/29/guardianchildrensfictionprize2001.guardianchildrensfictionprize>. This article notes that Tolkien also encouraged the young Crossley-Holland in his attempts to translate *Beowulf*.

²⁰⁰ See also Kevin Crossley-Holland, *The Exeter Book of Riddles* (London and Chester Springs, PA: Enitharmon Press, 2008).

²⁰¹ Philip Pullman, ‘About,’ www.philip-pullman.com. Accessed 26 July 2010.

such things had not been abolished.²⁰² Pullman is a product of the Oxford School who rebels against his education in the children's fantasy that he writes: the *His Dark Materials* trilogy abandons medievalisms and overturns many of the conventions of children's fantasy literature, repudiating the hierarchies and oppositions that Lewis found so central to myth. Instead, Pullman draws upon later sources, including a reading of Milton's *Paradise Lost* through William Blake, who interprets Milton's Satan as a sympathetic and heroic figure.²⁰³ Pullman seems to see himself as a Satan figure rebelling against the authority of children's fantasy norms, and the lack of a medievalised landscape is just one of a number of his departures from the Oxford School style in *His Dark Materials*.²⁰⁴ This 'parricidal' approach to the genre and to Oxford, to borrow Harold Bloom's terminology, is as essential to the picture of the Oxford School as Jones's, Cooper's, and Crossley-Holland's more receptive approaches.²⁰⁵

In the following chapter I demonstrate the how the Oxford School borrows from the English syllabus to produce a body of works with shared characteristics, in spite of their individual approaches and innovations. I begin with a deeper discussion of Lewis and Tolkien's beliefs about what fantasy could and ought to do. That their personal passions and academic lives were intertwined is evident; they identified medieval literature and the medievalisms of fairy stories as conveying potentially

²⁰² Alan Franks, 'Philip Pullman Faces his Daemons,' *The Times Online*, 17 March 2009. Accessed 26 July 2010.

http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/stage/theatre/article5919020.ece
Pullman links to this interview through his personal website, <http://www.philip-pullman.com/>

²⁰³ William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (originally published 1790; reproduction, London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), plates 4-6.

²⁰⁴ Philip Pullman, 'The Dark Side of Narnia,' *The Guardian*, 1 October 1998. Accessed 26 July 2010. <http://www.crlamppost.org/darkside.htm>.

²⁰⁵ Harold Bloom, *Poetry and Repression: Revisionism from Blake to Stevens* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 67.

Christian messages and experiences, and sought to reproduce all of these in new works for their own time, which they hoped could have the same aesthetic and moral effects on their readers. In the tradition of nineteenth-century philologists, they also read their nation in the ancient literature and folklore of England, and thus mapped this religious worldview onto the idea of an England united against enemies that seek to intrude and disrupt it. I use the Green Knight's Christmastime challenge of Arthur's court in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* as a case study for how Lewis, Cooper, and Crossley-Holland retell the same narratives in the light of this nationalistic tradition.

CHAPTER TWO

Stories of Home: Writing the 'Voice' of the Nation

Speaking of the history of stories and especially of fairy-stories we may say that the Pot of Soup, the Cauldron of Story, has always been boiling, and to it have continually been added new bits, dainty and undainty. [...] It seems fairly plain that Arthur, once historical (but perhaps as such not of great importance), was also put into the Pot. There he was boiled for a long time, together with many other older figures and devices of mythology and Faerie, and even some other stray bones of history (such as Alfred's defence against the Danes), until he emerged as a King of Faerie.

--J.R.R Tolkien, 'On Fairy Stories'¹

The Oxford School's reuse and transformation of medieval sources places it within the tradition that Tolkien describes above, seeming to validate his description of how myths evolve. However, the English curriculum that he created with Lewis focused this process by canonising a corpus of English texts that preserve many of the 'figures and devices of mythology and Fäerie' and by institutionalising the study of these texts as integral to comprehending the idea of England. In this chapter I argue that the Oxford School's medieval borrowings produce meanings that seem to read as 'natural' and intrinsic to English identity, based on an understanding of the Middle Ages as the foundational period in English cultural and literary tradition. However the idea of 'Englishness' is complicated by frequent slippages between the traditions of England and those of the constituent countries of the United Kingdom. Lewis's Ulster upbringing and Tolkien's Catholicism are a testament to the fuzzy boundaries of the Oxford School's patriotism: their own roots thus impinge upon their constructions of nationhood and their emphases on national belonging. Perhaps because of such complications, Oxford School works often use medievalisms to create new or altered Englands that serve as the backdrop for adventure. The legacy of nineteenth-century

¹ Tolkien, 'On Fairy Stories,' 125-26.

medievalism and the experiences of a larger Britain in the twentieth century are implicated in this depiction, especially the trauma of the World Wars and the decline of the British Empire. Thus Oxford School works often expand the idea of England, appropriating the Celtic legend and myth in a modern version of the nineteenth-century impulse to adopt neighbouring traditions to strengthen a specifically English identity. This chapter considers the Oxford School's pervasive nationalism, whereby children's fantasy depicts England (or an England-like realm) as a glorious, magical homeland with traditions worth preserving and fighting for.

I read the medieval literature and medievalisms of the early Oxford School as an attempt to manifest what de Certeau calls 'orality': the nostalgic imagining of an authentic 'Voice of the people,' associated with 'poetic and "pagan" pastures where one can still hear songs, myths, and the spreading murmur of the *folkelighed*.'² Tolkien and Lewis's English curriculum supports this picture of the medieval as important to contemporary identity by designating medieval texts as the 'origins' of English culture. As Lewis contends in *The Allegory of Love*, '[w]hatever we have been, in some ways we are still.'³ Medievalisms borrow the authority of the past and create the terms of what 'we have been,' implying what 'we are still.' They invent a 'genuine' 'Voice' of culture, and place it at the service of a socialising urge: in this case, love of (an imaginary version of the) nation. I use de Certeau's figuration of the scriptural economy to theorise this process of appropriation and transformation: he proposes that the blank page that precedes the text is 'a place where the ambiguities of the world have been exorcised,' and on this page the practice of writing 'composes the artefact of another "world" that is not received but rather made.'⁴ The result of

² de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 131. He defines *folkelighed* as 'a Danish word that cannot be translated: it means "what belongs to the people."'

³ Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, 1.

⁴ de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 134 and 135.

this creation is a socialising force: ‘the “meaning” (“*sens*”) of scriptural play, the production of a system, a space of formalization, refers to the reality from which it has been distinguished *in order to change it*. Its goal is social efficacy.’⁵ The Oxford School’s rehandling of medieval sources produces multiple meanings for its readership, including a prevailing image of England as glorious in its supposed connection to an idealised and magical medieval past.

I examine what I call the ‘Christmas challenge’ narrative as a case study for how the Oxford School uses medieval texts alongside later sources in the production of such ‘timeless’ meanings in children’s literature. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, a set text in the English School, serves as the primary source material for the three Oxford School works that I discuss in this chapter: Lewis’s *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (1950), which conveys his interest in moral allegory as well as his desire for a more valiant version of Englishness; Cooper’s *The Dark Is Rising* (1973), which depicts medieval myth and legend as active in the modern-day English landscape; and Kevin Crossley-Holland’s *The Seeing Stone* (2000), which uses a historical medieval setting to pose questions about the locations and legacy of English identity. Each of these texts engage with the intrusion of a giant or wild man into home spaces at Christmastime, and negotiate the oppositions (familiarity vs. difference and inside vs. outside) encoded in the violated sanctity of home during a cultural festival. Before beginning an analysis of the Christmas challenge and its implications, however, I address the Oxford School’s relationship to romance and the ‘spiritual’ functions of the genre, in order to assess the work that re-used medieval motifs perform for the Oxford School.

⁵ de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 135.

I. Writing the English 'Voice'

a) 'Orality' and Writing

Northrop Frye distinguishes two broad varieties of romance: 'naïve,' the 'kind of story that is found in collections of folk tales and *märchen*,' and 'sentimental,' 'a more extended and literary development of the formulas of naïve romance.'⁶ Michael Murrin makes a similar and useful distinction in the narrower genre of 'fairy,' whereby 'art' fairy is a form 'initiated by the German romantics, who distinguished the conscious creation of the individual artist from the folk fairy tale, an anonymous story told among the people.'⁷ The Oxford School may be seen as a subset of 'sentimental romance' according to Frye's formulation, and 'art fairy' according to Murrin's, characterised by its integration of narratives, conventions, and figures of medieval literature. This literature includes but is not limited to medieval romance, a genre that is difficult to isolate or define; Kevin Sean Whetter notes that 'modern criticism has consistently failed to agree on [medieval] romance's essential generic features.'⁸ Frye suggests that romance is predominantly 'secular,' for while the 'Bible is the epic of the creator, with God as its hero,' he argues that romance is 'is the structural core of all fiction: being directly descended from folktale, it brings us closer than any other aspect of literature to the sense of fiction, considered as a whole, as the epic of the creature, man's vision of his own life as a quest.'⁹

⁶ Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 3.

⁷ Michael Murrin, 'The Multiple Worlds of the Narnia Stories,' *Word and Story in C.S. Lewis*, ed. Peter Schakel (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1991), 232.

⁸ Kevin Sean Whetter, *Understanding Genre and Medieval Romance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 47. For a review of literary criticism's attempts to define medieval romance, see his chapter 'Redefining Romance,' 36-98, in the same volume. On English romance in particular, see Helen Cooper's *The English Romance in Time*.

⁹ Frye, *The Secular Scripture*, 15.

Most Oxford School works are at least superficially secular, in the sense that they do not call upon Christianity by name, and the heroic quests and magical otherworlds that unfold within them seem to agree with Frye's assessment of the genre. However, Lewis argues that works that 'introduce the marvellous or supernatural,' when successful, 'draw on the only real "other world" we know, that of the spirit.'¹⁰ The revelations that these works are meant to convey are as difficult to define as the boundaries of medieval romance: Tolkien suggests that the attempt to comprehend these sensations and desires through criticism is futile, for '[s]uch stories have 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.'¹¹ However, in his epilogue to 'On Fairy Stories' he draws a parallel between 'the imaginative satisfaction of ancient desires' and the Christian story. He considers what he calls 'eucatastrophe' to be 'the sudden joyous turn' in fairy story, the happy ending that 'denies (in the face of much evidence, if you will) universal final defeat and [...] giv[es] a final fleeting glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief.'¹² He suggests that the Christian story is, in turn, 'the greatest and most complete conceivable eucatastrophe,' implying fairy stories' potential to serve a Christian worldview.¹³ This relationship between fairy story and religion was what brought Lewis to Christianity, after Tolkien and their friend Hugo Dyson put forward the argument that Christianity is a 'true myth,' and 'the poet who invented it was God Himself.'¹⁴ Upon his conversion, Lewis returned to the Ulster Protestantism of his youth, and called God 'the source from which those arrows of Joy had been shot at

¹⁰ Lewis, 'On Stories,' 36.

¹¹ Tolkien, 'On Fairy Stories,' 129.

¹² *Ibid.*, 153.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 156.

¹⁴ Carpenter, *The Inklings*, 44.

me ever since childhood.’¹⁵ These arrows were delivered, however, through secular texts and experiences of fairy tale and myth.

De Certeau also argues for the inherent connection between the idea of a myth-filled ‘orality,’ or ‘Voice,’ and Christianity. While he describes ‘orality’ as associated with “‘pagan” pastures,’ he also contends that it is defined by the Bible as Spoken Word, as a ‘pre-modern’ voice that proclaims truth to the listener.

If we simplify history [...], one can say that before the ‘modern’ period, this is until the sixteenth or seventeenth century, this writing (Holy Scripture) speaks. The sacred text is a voice, it teaches [...], it is the advent of a ‘meaning’ (*un ‘vouloir-dire’*) on the part of God who expects the reader (in reality, the listener) to have a ‘desire to hear and understand’ (*un ‘vouloir-entendre’*) on which access to truth depends[.]¹⁶

By contrast,

the modern age is formed by discovering little by little that this Spoken Word is no longer heard, that it has been altered by textual corruptions and avatars of history. One can no longer hear it. [...] [I]t does not cross the centuries separating us from it.¹⁷

I suggest that Lewis and Tolkien use medievalisms in their fantasy to enable the return of this Voice of religious and human truth. The archaism of their works is an attempt to recall the pre-modern past, not only as a means of preserving the pleasures of the historical and literary medieval from obscurity, but in order to ‘open a door on Other Time.’ Tolkien contends that ‘if we pass through’ this door, ‘though only for a moment, we stand outside our own time, outside of Time itself, maybe.’¹⁸ This timeless position is the Christian worldview, in which God is alpha and omega.¹⁹

¹⁵ Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 267.

¹⁶ de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 137.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Tolkien, ‘On Fairy Stories,’ 129.

¹⁹ Revelation 1:8.

Fairy stories, for Lewis and Tolkien, can also point to this eternal ‘truth’, for ‘God is the Lord, of angels, and of men – and of elves.’²⁰

Meanwhile, another type of orality is also associated with fairy tales and mythology: they are characterised by their traditional circulation through oral means, often across multiple generations. This gives rise to the idea of an ‘authentic’ relationship between such narratives and the cultures that tell them. Academic scholarship in the 1950s may have contributed to a sense of medieval literature as also especially connected to ‘native’ culture through such orality. Oral-formulaic theory, which was important to Anglo-Saxon studies in the mid-twentieth century, argued that the techniques of formulaic composition often used in Old English poetry matched those of oral narrative and that therefore many of these poems must come from an oral tradition.²¹ Tolkien seems to espouse this theory in his fiction, which depicts the communication of history and culture through song. For instance, he places the ‘Song of Rohan’ in the mouth of Aragorn, at once invoking elegaic Anglo-Saxon poetry like *The Wanderer* and *The Ruin* and suggesting these works’ own possible transmission through oral recitation.²² Although Tolkien and Lewis’s works are written text, their borrowings from myth and medieval literature imply that they are part of a ‘native’ process of retelling that reaches back to the Middle Ages.

The conventions of fantasy derived from (or identified in) fairy stories, contain deep moral significance for Lewis and Tolkien. These authors normalise hegemonic narratives by claiming that they represent a naturalised ‘voice’ of the people as expressed through traditional legends and myths. The Christian allegory in

²⁰ Tolkien, ‘On Fairy Stories’, 156.

²¹ Andy Orchard, ‘Oral Tradition,’ in *Reading Old English Texts*, ed. Katherine O’Brien O’Keefe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 103-04. See also Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr., ‘The Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry,’ *Speculum* 28 (1953): 446-67.

²² See also David D. Oberhelman, ‘Oral Tradition,’ in *J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopedia: Scholarship and Critical Assessment*, ed. Michael D. C. Drout (New York: Routledge, 2007), 484-86, and Gergely Nagy, ‘Orality,’ in the same volume, 486-87.

The Chronicles of Narnia, for instance, is explicit, but both men's fantasy writing also suggests the expression of other assumed 'truths,' which are encoded in the fantastical encounters of the genre. Tolkien suggests that it is possible to discern these truths in the ancient English stories, thereby confirming their supposed legitimacy: he writes of 'the relation of the "fairy-tale element" to gods and kings and nameless men, illustrating (I believe) the view that this element does not rise or fall, but is there, in the Cauldron of Story, waiting for the great figures of Myth and History.'²³ This argument for the continuity of 'gods and kings and nameless men' across texts suggests that religious, feudal, and gender hierarchies are native to fairy story, including those drawn from medieval literature (Tolkien calls *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* an 'admirable example' of a fairy-story that takes magic seriously).²⁴ Such hierarchies also underlie Tolkien and Lewis's fantasy works, which aim to create new fairy stories based on the models that these authors detect in the old. There is no denying the significance of religious, monarchical, and patriarchal power in the Middle Ages, but they were not accepted absolutely in all canonical medieval literature. By identifying such norms in ancient texts and naming them as related to the 'fairy-tale element,' Tolkien designates certain ideas as essential to an invented English 'Voice' across time. The Oxford School then emphasises these when rewriting medieval literature, projecting this view as representative of the Middle Ages and of England's mythological past.

The glorious and united English nation is one of these ideas; writing of Cooper's *The Dark Is Rising*, Michael D.C. Drout argues that although 'the story cannot take place in all locations on earth at once, so some places are privileged (in this case, England) over others,' Cooper 'not only privilege[s] the subjectivities of her

²³ Ibid., 127.

²⁴ Ibid., 114.

characters, she develops a trope familiar from the nineteenth-century adaptations of medieval materials, the notion of a unique and superior British identity.²⁵ Neither Tolkien nor Lewis seems to suggest that modern Britain deserves such exaltation, but instead create mythologies for England that offer a ‘better’ image of itself. Tolkien writes of the ‘escapism’ of fantasy as wholly appropriate: ‘[w]hy should a man be scorned, if, finding himself in prison, he tries to get out and go home? Or, when he cannot do so, he thinks and talks about other topics than jailers and prison-walls?’²⁶ In creating ‘better’ Englands for the people than the ‘prison’ of their modern existences, Oxford School fantasy offers alternative visions of the nation to its readers. In these visions the nation is guided by the hierarchical ‘truths’ of the people, and united against irredeemably ‘outside’ threats.

For instance, both Tolkien and Lewis refer to the profound sentiments caused by the intrusion of monsters and giants in literature, both citing examples with cultural connotations. Tolkien describes ‘the intrusion of the ogre Grendel into the royal hall of Hrothgar’ in *Beowulf*, an example of a piece of English literary myth that he contends belongs to the ‘Pot of Soup, the Cauldron of Story’ from which fairy-stories draw.²⁷ Lewis also writes about the intangible but profound significance of such hulking monsters, asserting that ‘[n]ature has that which compels us to invent giants: and only giants will do.’²⁸ Citing *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and William Wordsworth’s autobiographical *The Prelude*, Lewis notes that

Gawain was in the north-west corner of England when the ‘etins aneleden him,’ giants come *blowing* after him on the high fells. Can it

²⁵ Michael D. C. Drout, ‘Reading the Signs of Light: Anglo Saxonism, Education, and Obedience in Susan Cooper’s *The Dark Is Rising*,’ *The Lion and the Unicorn* 21, no. 2 (1997): 237.

²⁶ Tolkien, ‘On Fairy Stories,’ 148.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 127. The narrative of overcoming such a monster, as *Beowulf* does with the ogre, thus has its own moral connotations, as I discuss in greater depth in Chapter Five.

²⁸ Lewis, ‘On Stories,’ 31.

be any accident that Wordsworth was in the same places when he heard ‘low breathings coming after him’?²⁹

To face and defeat the giant is heroic, but this depends on the greater meaning of such an encounter, in which the giant represents profound alterity that is distinct from humankind. ‘The dangerousness of the giant is, though important, secondary,’ Lewis writes.³⁰ The real force of giants is in the ‘intolerable pressure, the sense of something older, wilder, and more earthy than humanity.’³¹ In fantasy, the struggle between humanity and this ‘wilder’ thing often becomes mapped onto a struggle between the national community and an intruder that threatens to harm it.

A threat from such a being is the central conflict of the Christmas challenge episodes that I discuss below. The winter’s cold and the home’s cheer during the Christmas season reinforce the opposition between giant (inhuman and wild, of the outside) and hero (human and part of a community, of the inside). According to de Certeau ‘spatial practices in fact secretly structure the determining conditions of social life,’ and he argues that at the root of these spatial practices lies the home: the dwelling, which ‘is, as we all know, the reference point of every metaphor.’³² The home’s associations with childhood, belonging, and protection are inextricable; when a house fails to provide the above (including the fuzzy ideal of ‘having a childhood’), it becomes a tragic space, complicating or denying its designation as a ‘home.’ Lewis calls ‘homecoming’ another one of the ‘grand ideas’ that ‘stirs us,’ although in the opposite sense of the giant.³³ A dangerous outside world heightens the desire to return home, to re-enter a familiar space that protects, enfolds, and makes a ‘child’ of the homecomer. Northern Christmases offer just such a pleasurable opportunity for

²⁹ Ibid., 30.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 32.

³² de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 96 and 52.

³³ Lewis, ‘On Stories,’ 44-5

asserting oppositions reflected in the landscape. Gaston Bachelard contends that '[w]inter is by far the oldest of the seasons'; in its danger and alien whiteness it captures Lewis's sense of that which is 'older, wilder, and more earthy than humanity.'³⁴ Christmas, by contrast, is a celebration of humanity, community, and birth; at this time the hostile environment outside magnifies the warmth and abundance within the home. Bachelard writes,

The house derives reserves and refinements of intimacy from winter; while in the outside world, snow covers all tracks, blurs the road, muffles every sound, conceals all colors. As a result of this universal whiteness, we feel a form of cosmic negation in action. The dreamer of houses knows and senses this, and because of the diminished entity of the outside world, experiences all the qualities of intimacy with increased intensity.³⁵

The dialectic of outside and inside is 'tinged with aggressivity'; the vastness of outside challenges the sheltered inside, and in doing so reinforces both of their natures.³⁶ '[W]e feel warm *because* it is cold out-of-doors.'³⁷ As I discuss below, Christmas came to be known as a children's holiday in the nineteenth century, at a time when the child had come to stand for all the innocent good in human nature, thereby intensifying this aggressive dialectic for the generations that followed.

Intruding giants at Christmastime thus not only inspire fear, they also strengthen a sense of human 'home' community. The Oxford School's reading of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* for this opposition yields a nationalistic literature in which the legendary figures of Arthur and his court represent the English nation, united and celebrating at 'Krystmasse.'³⁸ The threat from the half-giant Green Knight groups the court – and the nation – as that which signifies humanity, united and

³⁴ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1958; Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 41. Citations refer to the Beacon edition.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 40.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 212.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 39.

³⁸ Malcom Andrew and Ronald Waldron, eds., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, in *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript*, 5th ed. (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2007), 209, l. 36.

sanctioned as heroic in its opposition to the intruder. This elision of ‘human’ and ‘nation’ places moral value on the nation, and transforms its emerging champion into a nationalistic figure. In the analysis below I will discuss the elements of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* that aid and trouble the Oxford School’s rewritings of the Christmas challenge as a nationalistic narrative for children.

b) Reading the Nation in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is one of the set texts covered under Paper B 3 (b), Middle English, which was required for Course III students from the first institution of Tolkien’s syllabus for the 1933 exams. Tolkien calls the poem ‘one of those greater works which not only bear the trampling of the Schools, endure becoming a *text*, indeed (severest test) a *set text*, but yield more and more under this pressure.’ He attributes this resilience to its historical depth: ‘it belongs to that literary kind which has deep roots in the past, deeper even than its author was aware.’³⁹ Like many works of medievalism, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* compresses the legendary past and inserts it into the background of the narrative; in this case, the poem is bookended by the mention of Britain’s supposed Trojan roots. The question of national identity, such as it was in fourteenth-century England, is implicit in the opening lines of the poem, which recall its legendary ancestors. The opening line, ‘Siþen þe sege and þe assaut watz sesed at Troye,’ repeats in the final long stanza of the poem: ‘after þe segge and þe asaute watz sesed at Troye.’⁴⁰ While the founding of cities is a frequent starting point of many epic poems, marking the relationship of the

³⁹ J.R.R. Tolkien, ‘Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,’ in *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*, ed. Christopher Tolkien (London: HarperCollins, 2006), 72. Emphasis Tolkien’s.

⁴⁰ Andrew and Waldron, *Sir Gawain*, 207 (l. 1) and 300 (l. 2525).

hero to his society, such repeated attention to Troy suggests the parallels between Troy and Arthur's magnificent but doomed reign.⁴¹

The events of the Round Table's fall 'and their meanings are as much a part of the [medieval] audience's past as of the characters' future' in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, which is set in the early days of Arthur's reign.⁴² The text imagines its heroes as 'bot berdlez chylder,' and calls attention to the knights' youth and inexperience several times in the early fyttes of the poem, reminding the audience that 'al watz þis fayre folk in her first age,' and referring to the king as 'sum-quat childgered.'⁴³ The Middle English usage of 'child' was broader than it is today: for instance, it could also mean a 'young man; youth, lad,' or even (as it likely is used in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, a 'youth of noble birth, esp. an aspirant to knighthood; also, a knight or warrior.'⁴⁴ However, the sense of 'child' as denoting inexperience and early life is still relevant in this case. The Christmas adventures of Arthur and his young knights anticipates the heroes of Christmas challenge narratives in twentieth-century children's fantasy, but also has an analogue in the thirteenth-century romance *King Horn*, retold in the fourteenth century as *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimmild*.⁴⁵ In *King Horn* an armed giant from heathendom enters the Irish court 'at Cristemasse, / Neither more ne lasse' and demands that three Irish knights

⁴¹ Paul Piehler, *The Visionary Landscape: A Study in Medieval Allegory* (London: Edward Arnold, 1971), 73. For a reading of the Round Table's downfall that takes into its Trojan history and the gender implications of chivalric society, see Sheila Fisher, 'Leaving Morgan Aside: Women, History, and Revisionism in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*,' in *Arthurian Women: A Casebook*, ed. Thelma Fenster (New York: Garland Pub., 1996), 77-95.

⁴² Elizabeth D. Kirk, "'Wel Bycommes Such Craft upon Cristmasse': The Festive and the Hermeneutic in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*,' *Arthuriana* 4, no. 2 (1994 Summer): 94. For more on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and the fall of the Round Table, see M. Victoria Guerin, *The Fall of Kings and Princes Structure and Destruction in Arthurian Tragedy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

⁴³ Andrew and Waldron, *Sir Gawain*, 219 (l. 280), 209 (l. 54) and 210 (l. 86).

⁴⁴ *MED Online*, s.v. 'child,' accessed 21 June 2011. <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/>.

⁴⁵ The *MED Online* lists *Horn Childe* as an example of the use of 'child' as a title related to noble birth and knighthood. Maldwyn Mills, ed., *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimmild* (Heidelberg: C. Winter Universitätsverlag, 1988).

battle three pagan warriors for the rule of Ireland.⁴⁶ The young Horn, who is visiting, defeats the giant and other combatants, and then leads the Irish in routing the invading pagans from their shores. This action establishes him as a hero and a national leader, and the king offers to make Horn his heir. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the Green Knight's Christmas challenge similarly offers a young Gawain the opportunity to establish his reputation as a chivalric hero in opposition to a threatening giant.

These 'childgered' medieval heroes have a freshness and promise that reappear in Oxford School heroes, but as warriors do not display the vulnerability of the romanticised modern child. Tolkien recognises such a distinction and makes note of the distance between traditional heroes and his small protagonist in *The Hobbit*. Gandalf explains that he tried to find 'a mighty Warrior, even a Hero' to aid the dwarves in their quest to reclaim their gold from the dragon Smaug. However, 'warriors are busy fighting one another in distant lands, and heroes are scarce, or simply not to be found. [...] That is why I settled on *burglary* [...] And here is our little Bilbo Baggins, *the burglar*, the chosen and selected burglar.'⁴⁷ Although Bilbo is not a child, his heroism reflects a shift from the powerful medieval hero to the unlikely child hero that appears in children's fantasy literature today. In other Oxford School works children are the prophesied heroes, with heroism sometimes even reliant upon their status as children. In *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, for example, 'it's a saying in Narnia time out of mind that when two Sons of Adam and two Daughters of Eve sit in th[e] four thrones, then it will be the end not only of the White Witch's reign but of her life.'⁴⁸ Although any two human males and females

⁴⁶ Ronald B. Herzman, Graham Drake, and Eve Salisbury, eds., 'King Horn,' in *Four Romances of England* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1999), 37, ll. 805-06.

⁴⁷ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit: Or There and Back Again* (originally published 1937; London: HarperCollins, 1996), 21.

⁴⁸ Lewis, *Lion*, 82.

may, presumably, fill this role, their designation as ‘sons’ and ‘daughters’ calls attention to their position as children. Moreover the Pevensies’ ability to enter Narnia – the only ones in Narnians’ living memory – indicates that they are, like Bilbo, ‘chosen and selected’ children.

In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the merry-makers at Christmastime are young but still function as adult knights. Their enthusiastic celebrations are fitting for adult enjoyment of the season: the poem opens on New Year’s Day, which in the Middle Ages was part of the fifteen days of Christmas festivities that ran from Christmas until the Octave of the Circumcision on January 8, and the principal occasion for gift-giving. The knights play games and celebrate, and the Christmas challenge even appears at the king’s playful behest. In keeping with Arthurian romance tradition, Arthur sets the action of the romance in motion by refusing to begin the New Year meal until he has heard ‘an vncouþe tale’ or some adventure has befallen the court.⁴⁹ As a community festival, the medieval Christmas offers the opportunity for such revelries, which reinforce the identity of the group. The Green Knight that enters the court to fulfil Arthur’s request is alien and monstrous: although he is not ‘fram paynyme’ like the ‘geaunt’ in *King Horn*, he is inhumanly large and his hair and skin is green in colour.⁵⁰ The text describes him as ‘[o]n þe most on þe molde on mesure hyghe’ (‘the very biggest man on earth in height’), ‘his lyndes and his lymes so longe and so grete’ that he seems ‘half etayn in erde’ (half giant on earth).⁵¹ This unnatural figure disrupts the harmony of the Christmas court, throwing the distinction between insider and outsider into sharp relief. Tolkien notes that ‘etayn’ is the word ‘eten,’ from Old English ‘ēoten,’ or ogre, and suggests that the use

⁴⁹ This is a well-known Arthurian device, and often applies to Pentecost feasts. Andrew and Waldron, *Sir Gawain*, 211, l. 93.

⁵⁰ Garbáty, ed., ‘King Horn,’ 162, ll. 809 and 808.

⁵¹ Andrew and Waldron, *Sir Gawain*, 212, l. 137, 213 (l. 139), and 212 (l. 134).

of ay for e is ‘here perhaps to make the word look more important and romantic.’⁵²

Tolkien compares *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* to *Beowulf* on the basis of the use of ‘etayn,’ stating,

The word in our surviving record is practically confined to Beowulf (and the Mercian form eoten).’ [...] there is no reason to doubt that the word was in common use for the kind of creature we should perhaps call an ‘ogre,’ or in recent times a troll [...] The word was probably derived from etan ‘to eat,’ and was certainly associated with it. Thus Wycliffe (one of the last recorded uses of the word) uses etenes = ‘eaters of man’s flesh.’⁵³

Tolkien’s philological reflections on the Middle English word ‘etayn’ groups the Green Knight etymologically with Grendel, the blood-drinking ‘kin of Cain’ in *Beowulf*, suggesting the kind of morally implicit alterity of fairy-story that divides humans from monsters and good from evil.⁵⁴

But the Green Knight is also a beautifully arrayed and well-proportioned man: ‘[w]el gay waz þis gome gered in grene’ (well noble/beautiful was this warrior dressed in green).⁵⁵ When he enters the court on his horse, he comes bearing objects, in the tradition of visitors during the British cultural ritual of the ‘First Foot’ at Christmas or New Year.⁵⁶ In this tradition, which is still practised in some parts of Northern England and Scotland, it brings luck if the first person to step into a house on New Year’s Day (originally Christmas Day) is a male stranger with certain physical traits such as dark hair. But rather than bearing symbols of warmth, food, or wealth, the Green Knight carries more enigmatic objects: ‘in his on honde he hade a holyn bobbe / [...] and an ax in his oper’ (in his one hand a holly branch, and an axe

⁵² Oxford, Bodleian Library Tolkien Papers A12/1 (notes on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*), fol. 8, note on l. 140.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, fol. 33r, on l. 723.

⁵⁴ See Chapter Five, pp. 218-20.

⁵⁵ Andrew and Waldron, *Sir Gawain*, 214 (l. 179).

⁵⁶ Iona Opie and Moira Tatem, eds., *A Dictionary of Superstitions* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 158-162. See also Clement Miles, *Christmas Customs and Traditions, their History and Significance* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1912; New York: Dover Publications, 1976), 323-24. Page citations refer to the Dover edition.

in his other).⁵⁷ The axe signifies his dangerous potential and the reciprocal beheading game that he proposes, and the holly conveys the mixed pagan and Christian associations of the Christmas holiday in England. This plant also has other ambiguous connotations: it ‘is the grattest in grene when greuez ar bare’ (is greenest when branches are bare), so the greenest item in the wilderness in winter, and was known as the ‘masculine’ evergreen, which according to a fifteenth-century carol holds ‘mastery’ over the ‘feminine’ ivy.⁵⁸ This liminal position recalls that of the fairies of romances; indeed, the Green Knight appears to those assembled like ‘fantoum and fayryze’ (illusion and fairy magic), an ‘aluisch’ (elvish) man whose deadly game suggests magical origins.⁵⁹

In this sense the Green Knight’s half-giant alterity is also a kind of familiarity: it is only recently that Christmas and New Year ceased to be a time for stories of the supernatural and the dead, ‘stories which stress how thin the wall is between humanity and the Other in all its forms.’⁶⁰ Medieval Christmas games and performances played on the trope of the wild or inhuman holiday visitor, and men in monstrous disguises would often enter the courts of English kings at Christmas as part of the Christmas celebrations.⁶¹ Such incidents are recorded as occurring, for instance, at Edward III’s court at Otford, Kent in 1348 and Richard II’s hall in London at Candlemas (the feast forty days after Christmas), 1377. Thus the confrontation between Arthur’s youthful court and the Green Knight participates in a medieval

⁵⁷ Andrew and Waldron, *Sir Gawain*, 215, ll. 206 and 208.

⁵⁸ Derek Brewer, ‘The Colour Green,’ in *A Companion to the Gawain-Poet*, ed. Derek Brewer and Jonathan Gibson (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 187.

⁵⁹ Andrew and Waldron, *Sir Gawain*, 216 (l. 240) and 233 (l. 681).

⁶⁰ Kirk, ‘The Festive and the Hermeneutic,’ 105. Indeed, Dickens deemed the inclusion of supernatural elements as essential in a Christmas tale, as demonstrated in *A Christmas Carol* and subsequent Christmas tales such as *The Haunted Man*. See Michael Slater, ‘Introduction,’ *A Christmas Carol and Other Christmas Writings*, by Charles Dickens (London: Penguin Books, 2003), xxi.

⁶¹ Carl Lindahl, ‘Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and Myth in Its Time,’ in *Telling Tales: Medieval Narratives and the Folk Tradition* ed. Francesca Canadé Sautman Diana Conchado, and Guiseppe Carlo Di Scipio (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 258-59.

tradition that serves to strengthen the identity of the celebrating community. The Green Knight's awkward closeness to humanity heightens this sense of identity through opposition; as the kind Mr. Beaver suggests in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, 'when you meet anything that's going to be human and isn't yet, or used to be human once and isn't now, or ought to be human and isn't, you keep you eyes on it and feel for your hatchet.'⁶² The Green Knight's eerie near-humanity creates tension, and groups the knights in the court as safe, knowable humans by contrast.⁶³

But when the Green Knight offers the exchange of axe-blows to the court, he does so to test the validity of what he calls 'your sourquydrye and your conquestes, / Your gryndellayk and your greme and your grete words': the identity and strength of the fellowship, acted out by a single representative.⁶⁴ No knight volunteers to accept this adventure, and this collective cowardice, as well as the lack of regal decorum that Arthur displays in his angry attempt to take up the challenge, reveals the deficiencies of the court. The Green Knight exposes the knights as *playing at* courtly heroes, as if small children at a game, but unwilling to face the 'Crystemas gomen' that he controls.⁶⁵ The inviolability of the court – and the emerging English nation under Arthur's reign – is at stake in the Green Knight's challenge. The physical hall that houses the king becomes a metaphor for the penetrability of the court's defences – both actual, as in the knights' ability to defend England, and figurative, as in their reputation as good and mighty warriors. The knights' collective inability to rise to this challenge destabilizes the court's chivalric identity, and it is only Gawain's individual heroism that allows the court – and thus the idea of Arthurian society – to regain face.

⁶² Lewis, *Lion*, 82.

⁶³ I develop this discussion of the dangerous near-humanity of the monstrous in Chapter Five.

⁶⁴ Andrew and Waldron, *Sir Gawain*, 219 (ll. 311-12) and 217 (l. 263).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 218 (l. 283).

By taking on the beheading game, Gawain simultaneously displays the knightly courtesy for which he is famous and diverts the immediate danger to the sovereign onto himself. When Gawain beheads the Green Knight, the giant does not die, but picks up his head and announces that he expects Gawain at the Green Chapel in a year's time to receive the return blow. The narrative that follows demands that Gawain leave the safe space of Arthur's court and travel through the wilderness in search of the Green Knight: out of the 'home' and into the unknowable 'outside.' Patricia Ingham notes that 'Gawain represents his king in a wild place' as he journeys through the 'countrayez straunge' outside of Camelot.⁶⁶ Thus Gawain's journey to find the Green Knight takes him to 'other' places within his own country: both the rough countryside, filled with beasts and monsters, and Bertilak's castle, a space that is governed by magic that is beyond Gawain and Arthur's control. During this second Christmas the security of inside(rs) vs. outside(rs) breaks down in ways that I will return to at the end of this chapter, as Gawain takes on the role of the holiday visitor.

Most Oxford School works, however, recreate the Christmas challenge as a threat to the personal and/or national home, a narrative that features in some other medieval texts, as well. For instance, in addition to *King Horn*, this scenario plays out twice in the Old Norse *Saga of Grettir the Strong*. In the closer analogue, a 'great berserk' by the name of Snækoll arrives at the yeoman Einar's house during Yule-tide and insists that Einar hand over his daughter or defend her. Like the Green Knight, Snækoll enters on a horse and proffers his challenge without dismounting.⁶⁷ In an earlier incident, also at Yuletide, Grettir takes responsibility for the farmer Thorfinn's home, wife, and sick daughter while Thorfinn is away. On Yule-eve twelve dangerous

⁶⁶ Patricia Clare Ingham, *Sovereign Fantasies: Arthurian Romance and the Making of Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 117. Andrew and Waldron, *Sir Gawain*, 235, l. 713.

⁶⁷ Peter Foote, ed., *The Saga of Grettir the Strong*, trans. G.A. Hight (London: Dent, 1972), 110.

berserks come to the house, planning to ‘repay’ Thorfinn for having outlawed them. Grettir welcomes them into the house for a Yule feast and plies them with drink, then locks them into an outhouse and kills them. In both episodes Grettir is a guest in another man’s home during Yule, and defends it for the owner, who is incapacitated (in one case, due to old age; in another, absence). The presence of the Christmas challenge narrative in an Old Norse text suggests the age of this tradition. The Oxford School’s retellings of it thus invoke the ‘originary’ roots of English culture, and serves as a nationalistic bridge between past and present that suggests mythical origins for the nation.

When the child becomes the hero in Oxford School Christmas challenges, his (the hero is usually male) championing of the medievalised nation implies its purity, as if in an extension of the child’s presumed innocence. The following section explores the relationship between medievalism, Christmas, and childhood in Victorian England, and examines their manifestations in the Oxford School. I first give an overview of the medievalisation of the English Christmas in the nineteenth century, as well as its transformation into a children’s holiday. I then use *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* and *The Dark Is Rising* to show how Oxford School works transmit nationalistic and moral messages with medieval narrative into popular children’s culture, doing so through the lens of Victorian medievalism and twentieth-century English experience. I conclude by addressing the Christmas challenge in *The Seeing Stone*, which explores the Oxford School’s capacity for re-reading, transformation, and self-reflexivity within this tradition.

II. The Christmas Challenge in the Oxford School

a) The Legacy of the Victorian Christmas

In the most basic sense, Christmas connects the modern Anglophone world to its early cultural origins in medieval England because it was and remains a widespread winter celebration of the birth of Christ. But beyond shared religious grounds, Elizabeth D. Kirk argues that

Christmas offers one of the few occasions in the modern world when [...] an analogue, however muted, of the medieval sense of holiday survives: the security and pleasure created by the cultural interconnectedness between custom, aesthetics, economic and political power, sensual enjoyment, and ideology that was a central characteristic of the late Middle Ages and is generally uncharacteristic of modernism.⁶⁸

In this view, which may itself be romanticised, the extravagance of the season (including the consumerism of post-industrial capitalism) is part of establishing both a synchronic connection to other members of the Christmas-celebrating community and a diachronic one backwards to ‘medieval’ revellers in the community’s earliest cultural incarnation. The shared holiday and customs suggest a common worldview and set of cultural beliefs that leaps across historical boundaries to connect ‘now’ with ‘always.’ The refashioning of Christmas in the nineteenth century played a major role in its reception as a ‘medieval’ holiday in its origins and connotations. Mark Connelly writes that the Victorians ‘so extensively refurbished and reinterpreted Christmas that it amounts to an invented tradition.’⁶⁹ The rise of nationalism and the fascination with medievalisms during the period contributed to this refurbishment; for instance, William Morris captures the intersection of medievalism and enthusiasm for Christmas as a national holiday in several of his Arthurian poems. He locates

⁶⁸ Kirk, ‘The Festive and the Hermeneutic,’ 106.

⁶⁹ On the history of Christmas studies, see Mark Connelly, *Christmas: A Social History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), 2.

moments of emotional intensity for nationally significant subjects ‘at Christmas-time,’ including Guenevere’s first sighting of Lancelot in ‘The Defence of Guenevere.’⁷⁰ Christmas is also the background for Galahad’s questioning—and then reaffirming—his idealized Christian mode of living in ‘Sir Galahad, a Christmas Mystery,’ and Sir Ozana lies dying in the period ‘[f]rom Christmas-Eve to Whit-Sunday’ in ‘The Chapel in Lyonesse.’⁷¹

The Victorian search for the heart of the English Christmas enlisted the Anglo-Saxon period in its attempt to establish national ‘roots’ for the holiday: *The Christmas Book* (1859) suggests that ‘the Saxons were particularly attached to festival-seasons, and Alfred [the Great] gratified them as fully as they could desire.’⁷² By 1902 W.F. Dawson asserts that while the Normans did certainly exert ‘a powerful influence on the Anglo-Saxons,’ the ‘conquerors on mingling with the English people adopted many of these ancient traditions to which they tenaciously clung, and these included the traditions of Christmastide.’⁷³ Connelly argues that ‘[f]or the nineteenth-century historian, the Anglo-Saxons were the base on which all future English liberties were built,’ and Victorians at this time sought to identify (or create) the Anglo-Saxon origins of national heroes such as Arthur and Robin Hood in order to affirm the heroes’ native identities.⁷⁴ Such redefinition of national figures exemplifies the privileging of ethnically exclusive ‘Saxon-ness’ during this time, even as the English borrowed Celtic figures like Arthur for their heroes. Sir John Lingard’s 1849 *History of England* makes reference to the Anglo-Saxon period as the ‘cradle of many of the

⁷⁰ William Morris, ‘The Defence of Guenevere,’ in *Early Romances in Prose and Verse*, ed. Peter Faulkner (London: Dent, 1973), 5.

⁷¹ William Morris, ‘Sir Galahad, a Christmas Mystery,’ and ‘The Chapel in Lyonesse,’ in *Early Romances in Prose and Verse*, 24 and 31.

⁷² In Connelly, *Christmas*, 16.

⁷³ From W.F. Dawson, *Christmas, its Origins and Associations* (London: Eliot Stock, 1902), in Connelly, *Christmas*, 17.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, and Barczewski, *Myth and National Identity*, 124.

customs and institutions which exist among us even at the present day'; this Anglo-Saxon tie was a welcome suggestion less than a decade after Queen Victoria reinforced the royal family's Germanic links by marrying Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha in 1840.⁷⁵

The Victorians did not restrict the historical connotations of Christmas to the early medieval period, however; Connelly notes that they also looked to the Elizabethan Christmas, for instance, as 'a metaphor for a Merry English Christmas.'⁷⁶ The broad and often anachronistic medievalisms of the nineteenth century contributed to a transformation of the Christmas holiday into a lavish festival of home, country, and history. For instance, in keeping with this nationalistic 'medievalisation' of the holiday, the emphasis on abundance and celebration that was typical in the later Middle Ages also became characteristic of the Victorian Christmas. Several medieval Christmas romances emphasise the importance of generosity at this time of year: *Sir Cleges*, a late fourteenth- / early fifteenth-century Christmas romance rewards the 'spendthrift knight' Sir Cleges for his holiday munificence, saying of his feasts that 'Rech and pore in þe cuntre abouȝt/ Schuld be there, wythoutton douȝt.'⁷⁷ Diane Speed notes that Sir Cleges loses all of his wealth because of his charity (which is especially focused on minstrels), but this expenditure draws no criticism in the poem. 'On the contrary,' she writes, 'Cleges explicitly seeks to honour God through his generosity at Christmas feasts.'⁷⁸ He regains his wealth at the conclusion of the poem due to the intervention of providence, which brings Cleges to the king's court on Christmas Day.⁷⁹ Similar correlations between goodness and Christmastime

⁷⁵ Connelly, *Christmas*, 17.

⁷⁶ Connelly, *Christmas*, 19.

⁷⁷ Diane Speed, ed., 'Sir Cleges,' in *Medieval English Romances 1* (Sydney: University of Sydney, 1987), 175, ll. 43-4.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 170. See ll. 39, 56-7, 66, 72.

⁷⁹ In spite of its Christmas setting, this romance does not follow the Christmas challenge narrative.

generosity underlie Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* (1843), with Scrooge's former employer Fezziwig performing the same kind of open-handedness as Sir Cleges.⁸⁰

The late fifteenth-century Scottish romance *Rauf Coilzear* also preaches the importance and benefits of welcoming guests, even strangers, at Christmas. Ralph the collier receives the disguised King Charlemagne into his home shortly before Christmas. In an analogue to the Anglo-Saxon tale 'Alfred and the Cakes' in the *Annals of St. Neot*, Ralph is a fair and generous host in spite of his comically short temper with the visiting king.⁸¹ Charlemagne invites Ralph to his court for Christmas Day, and when the collier arrives Charlemagne knights him and awards him a retinue of squires in return for his earlier hospitality. The narrative of a disguised king and the rewarding of the host is traditional in England, with analogues in Old English works, Middle English histories, and romances and ballads from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁸² *Rauf Coilzear* suggests a deep cultural tradition of hospitality at Yule, which must extend towards friends as well as strangers, including potentially supernatural and dangerous visitors. The Victorians revived and extended this tradition in their expansion of the Christmas holiday, making it a useful bridge for Oxford School texts.

Ecclesiastical expressions of medievalism in the nineteenth century rendered celebrations of 'medieval' excess at Christmas acceptable from a religious, as well as cultural, point of view, even for the Protestant Church of England. The Oxford, or

⁸⁰ Charles Dickens, 'A Christmas Carol,' in *A Christmas Carol and Other Christmas Writings* (London: Penguin Books, 2003).

⁸¹ Elizabeth Walsh, ed., *The Tale of Ralph the Collier: An Alliterative Romance* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1989), 10.

⁸² Although this romance belongs to the predominantly French Charlemagne cycle, the character Ralph only appears in this work, which is written in Scots English. There is also a similar narrative in the Old Norse *Heimskringla*. Walsh, *Ralph the Collier*, 11-3. Shakespeare also reuses this motif in his nation-building *Henry V*.

Tractarian, Movement under John Keble, Edward Bouverie Pusey, John Henry Newman, and Richard Hurrell Froude pushed the Church of England towards a more Catholic ritual and away from puritanical Christianity in the 1830s and 1840s.⁸³ This approach to celebration of Christianity and its feasts, combined with the middle class' nostalgic tendency to 'revere aristocratic and monarchical symbols' after the Great Reform Act in 1832, produced an extravagant Christmas holiday that bound up feudalism, religion, and nationalism.⁸⁴ Connelly writes, '[t]he sheer weight of polemic proclaiming the Englishness of Christmas meant that it was almost inevitable that the season became intimately connected with patriotic causes and images.'⁸⁵ A Christmas edition of the 1857 *Chester Courant* refers to Christmas as 'the great national festival,' a sentiment captured in an 1876 *Illustrated London News* engraving by Alfred Hunt entitled 'Hoisting the Union Jack.' In this image, a small middle-class boy, supported by his parents, tops the family Christmas tree with the flag.⁸⁶ This image conflates Christmas, the home, and nationalistic impulses, and highlights the role of the child in maintaining these associations.

The idea of Christmas as a children's festival is largely a nineteenth-century phenomenon. This transformation was aided by the century's romanticisation of children and childhood, born, Diane Purkiss suggests, of nostalgia for the innocence of an idealized pre-industrial world. Children in their innocence, or in the innocence that their parents wanted them to have, composed the group that adults believed

⁸³ For more on the Oxford Movement, see Nigel Yates, *The Oxford Movement and Anglican Ritualism* (Oxford: Davenant, 2000).

⁸⁴ Connelly, *Christmas*, 33. The Great Reform Act increased the power of the House of Commons at the expense of the House of Lords, giving many more citizens the right to vote and a hand in a government formerly dominated by aristocratic rule. With the waning of the nobility's power, the middle class increasingly idealized their role in British identity.

⁸⁵ Connelly, *Christmas*, 38.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 10 and 39.

would ‘inhabit this idyll at the time, and so keep it open’ for adults.⁸⁷ The popular linking of Christmas and childhood also owes much to Dickens; like many other authors he was appalled by the revelations of the 1843 Second Report (Trade and Manufactures) of the Children’s Employment Commission set up by Parliament, and his Christmas stories helped turn the national attention to the plight of children, deepening the association between children and Christmas.⁸⁸ Dickens makes the connection explicit in *A Christmas Carol*: ‘it is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty founder was a child himself.’⁸⁹ Romantic child characters like Tiny Tim exemplified the innocence and goodness of British childhood in the Victorian imagination. As children became regarded as the primary (and rightful) occupants of a pre-industrial, pre-lapsarian dream, it seems fitting that the Victorians’ medievalized Christmas became ‘their’ holiday. The centrality of the child at Christmas is thus a double focus on the newborn Christ and actual children as keepers of the community’s innocence. The Oxford School inherited Victorian sentiments about Christmas as representative of home, nation, and family at its most secure, thus making it also the most symbolic and dramatic time for the kinds of uncanny incursions that were part of the medieval Christmas, and which remained associated with the season in the nineteenth century. The Oxford School revives this tradition, using the Christmas challenge as a situation from which the child protagonist can, like the young Gawain, arise as a hero that embodies and preserves the nation.

⁸⁷ Diane Purkiss, *At the Bottom of the Garden: a Dark History of Fairies, Hobgoblins, and other Troublesome Things* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 254.

⁸⁸ Slater, ‘Introduction,’ xviii.

⁸⁹ Dickens, ‘A Christmas Carol,’ 89.

b) *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* and *The Dark Is Rising*: Intruders and the National Home

Lewis transforms the Christmas challenge in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* into a battle to defeat the allegorical figure of the White Witch, who banished Christmas as part of her oppressive reign over in Narnia. Narnia functions as a new, ideal England in this narrative, and the Witch as embodied evil. Under her rule it is ‘always winter and never Christmas,’ which suggests a tyranny of bleakness and cold in which homecoming, celebration, and respite are officially discouraged.⁹⁰ In keeping with this wild and hostile climate, the Witch’s monstrous ancestry signals that she belongs to the ‘older, wilder’ inhumanity that Lewis suggests arouses deep-seated fears.⁹¹ Like the half-‘etayn’ Green Knight, the Witch ‘comes of the giants’ on one side of her ancestry; however, she also descends from ‘Lilith,’ ‘Adam’s first wife,’ who was ‘one of the Jinn.’⁹² This merging of English giant, Oriental jinn, and semi-religious figure of female sin is characteristic of Lewis’s combining of sources to produce figures and narratives with multiple but associated meanings. The White Witch’s mixed heritage is united in that ‘there isn’t a drop of real human blood in [her],’ and as Mrs. Beaver explains, ‘[t]hat’s why she’s all bad through.’⁹³ She *is* sin, evil, and otherness personified.

In contrast to the witch, the English children are ‘natural’ insiders in Narnia, heroes prophesied to assume the country’s four thrones. Their undisputed status as such supports a reading of Narnia as an allegorical England, and recalls the nineteenth-century figuration of the child as protector of the nation’s innocence. In

⁹⁰ Lewis, *Lion*, 19.

⁹¹ Lewis, ‘On Stories,’ 32.

⁹² Lewis, *Lion*, 81.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

this context it is significant that *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* is set during the Second World War, during a time ‘when they [the children] were sent away from London during the war because of air-raids.’⁹⁴ The children’s apparent distance from the war places it in the far background of the story, but the allegorical structure of the text suggests its relevance. In this view, the German bombings of Britain parallel (or threaten to parallel, should they succeed) the White Witch’s dominance. Thus the triumph over the White Witch at the conclusion of the novel may also suggest the Allied forces’ victory. But the novel is also an allegory for the Christian story, in which the god-lion Aslan hands himself over to the Witch to be sacrificed for the sins of Edmund, one of the children. His magical return from death and role in the battle to overthrow the Witch therefore maps religious fervour onto patriotism, and delivers it as a single package in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*.

The role of English Christmas in the novel contributes to the development of Narnia as a new (old), ‘better’ England. The Pevensies’ arrival is sufficient magic to allow the restoration of the land to begin, which Lewis signals with the return of Father Christmas. In keeping with holiday tradition, Father Christmas brings the children gifts for the reclamation of Narnia. For instance, he arms Peter, the eldest, with a sword and a shield, assigning him the trappings of a medieval knight. Father Christmas calls these (and the other gifts) ‘tools not toys,’ suggesting that the medievalism of the objects is not nostalgic whimsy, but essential to their role as tools for the destruction of evil.⁹⁵ Lewis writes of knights ‘[w]e must never forget that the medieval Latin for knight is *miles*; [and] that the conception of earthly knighthood and that of the angelic knighthood (*miles*) is sometimes connected.’⁹⁶ Peter’s knightly

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁹⁶ Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, 72. In this passage he invokes the memory of Rome and ‘the discipline of its army’ in medieval English literature.

gifts are simultaneously religious and nationalistic symbols: on the shield, there ‘ramped a red lion.’⁹⁷ The lion serves as the Narnian equivalent of a Christian symbol because of Aslan’s lion form, but it also references medieval coats of arms from England, one or more golden lions rampant on a field of red, which is still included in the Royal Coat of Arms of the United Kingdom.⁹⁸ This moment also recalls the arming of Gawain in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, in which Arthur’s court sends Gawain in search of the Green Knight bearing a pentangle on his shield. This symbol, like Peter’s red lion, explicitly links chivalric prowess and Christian duty, and suggests that the young warrior deserves to bear such an emblem. The text of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* uses the number five to draw together Gawain’s physical and mental ability (his perfection in his ‘fyue wyttez’ and ‘fyue fyngres’), his Christian devotion (including his dedication to Jesus’s five wounds (‘þe fyue woundez / Þat Cryst kaȝt on þe croys’) and the five joys of Mary (‘þe fyue joyez / Þat þe hende Heuen Quene had of hir Chylde’), and his exemplary display of the five characteristics of chivalric behaviour (‘fraunchyse,’ ‘felaȝschype,’ ‘clannes,’ ‘cortaysye,’ and ‘pité’).⁹⁹ Thus the arming of Peter conflates medieval literary tradition, Christianity, chivalry, and national identity, whereby Christmas serves as the bridge between the modern child and the fantasy realm.

Father Christmas’s final gift for the Pevensies and their Beaver guides suggests that the cosy associations of an English home can also function as a ‘tool’ against evil. He produces ‘a large tray containing five cups and saucers, a bowl of lump sugar, a jug of cream, and a great big teapot all sizzling and piping hot.’¹⁰⁰ This parting gift is a comic domestication of the Christmas feast that represents it as a

⁹⁷ Lewis, *Lion*, 108.

⁹⁸ Ottfried Neubecker, *Heraldry: Sources, Symbols, and Meaning* (London: Tiger Books International, 1997), 105. Scotland’s red lion rampant on a yellow field is also part of this coat of arms.

⁹⁹ Andrew and Waldron, *Sir Gawain*, ll. 640-41, 642-43, 646-47, and 652-54.

¹⁰⁰ Lewis, *Lion*, 109.

luxurious version of the middle-class British tea. The contents of this tray held particular meaning for England as a nation at the time at which *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* was written and published (1950): tea and sugar had been rationed in Britain during World War II, and remained so into the early 1950s.¹⁰¹ Cream, which is not typically taken with tea, seems to represent a particularly extravagant version of milk. Thus for the Pevensie children, the tray's contents offer rare access to limited foodstuffs. For the English readers after the war and before the Marshall Plan, the rationing situation was similar, due in large part to Britain's significant war debts. Father Christmas' ready distribution of these much-missed English staples recalls both the sacrifices required during the Nazi threat and the continued hardship of living under an austerity government in the wake of this conflict.¹⁰² Father Christmas spreads traditional English Christmas cheer around the rest of the Narnian countryside, turning the entire landscape into a celebrating 'home' space, and giving the Narnians the hope and resolve to overthrow their foreign dictator.

The events of World War Two were also a particular influence for Susan Cooper, providing the moral force and structure of her *Dark Is Rising* quintet. In spite of her Oxford School education, she states that the inspiration for 'the struggle between the Light and the Dark,' the opposing forces of good and evil in her Arthurian-inflected books,

has more to do with the fact that when I was four World War II broke out. England was very nearly invaded by Germany, and that threat, reinforced by the experience of having people drop bombs on your

¹⁰¹ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain: Rationing, Controls, and Consumption, 1939-1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 86.

¹⁰² A.N. Wilson notes Lewis's aversion to the post-war asceticism of Britain under the Attlee administration; this lavish Christmas tea implicitly criticizes circumstances, foreign or domestic, that limit such celebrations. A.N. Wilson, *C.S. Lewis: A Biography* (originally published 1990; New York and London: W.W. Norton & Co., 2002), 215. Lewis was not alone; on the popular dissatisfaction with postwar austerity, and Clement Attlee in particular, see David Kynaston, *Austerity Britain, 1945-51* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), 115 and 226-27.

head, led to a very strong sense of Us and Them. Of course Us is always the good, and Them is always the bad.¹⁰³

The combination of this worldview and the literary influence of the Oxford School produces a fantasy narrative of nationhood, in which the dichotomy of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ is an explicit concern for the English community. Cooper’s use of sources from across Britain, however, promotes a broader sense of British (rather than exclusively English), nationalism, and her use of the contemporary ‘real world’ as the fantasy realm locates magic and legend in the existing British landscape.

The Dark Is Rising is set during the Christmas season in twentieth-century Buckinghamshire, from Midwinter Eve to just after the New Year. The tension between Light and Dark, Us and Them, and insider and outsider manifests itself in spatial terms throughout *The Dark Is Rising*. The local and communal spaces of the town, church, village manor, and family home oppose dangerous winter weather that accompanies the Dark’s rise at Christmastime. As in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, the weather is a physical manifestation of evil, in which winter’s cold, the Dark, and the foreign enemy are one. In this context it is notable that lines 516-31 of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, which describe the transformation of the land from summer to winter, comprised one of the six passages in the first required translation portion of the English School Final Honour School Examination for Paper B 3(b) (Middle English) in the year that Susan Cooper sat that exam.¹⁰⁴ These lines preface Gawain’s setting off on his quest to find the Green Knight before the New Year. As ‘þe soft wyndez’ (the soft winds) and the ‘blysfyl blusch of þe bryzt sunne’ (the blissful blush of the bright sun) give way to winter, the land loses its beauty, and ‘al grayes þe gres þat grene watz ere’ (all grey is the grass that ere was green) as ‘wynter

¹⁰³ Raymond H. Thompson, ‘Interview with Susan Cooper,’ *Taliesin’s Successors*. 2 July 1989.

¹⁰⁴ ‘Paper B 3(b), Middle English,’ *Oxford University Examination Papers*, 1956.

wyndez a3ayn' (winter returns again).¹⁰⁵ Although it is not clear which passages Cooper chose to translate, it is evident that Cooper would have studied *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and may have spent time thinking about the role of the wintry outdoors in Gawain's Christmas adventures.¹⁰⁶

The protagonist of *The Dark Is Rising*, Will Stanton, wakes on his eleventh birthday to a thick fall of snow, and steps outside to find the familiar landscape of his home transformed into the forest of its medieval past. Throughout the novel Will moves between medieval, Victorian, and modern England, all in his home village and the surrounding countryside, as he learns about and executes his role as a magical Old One. The Old Ones are immortals aligned with the Light and associated with the legendary King Arthur. They engage in a constant struggle with the encroaching forces of the Dark, who plague Britain and, as if by logical extension, all the world. Merlin, under the name of Merriman Lyon, trains Will in his role as an Old One and helps the boy complete his first quest. His task is to collect the Signs of the Light, which are composed of different materials and stored in different time periods and locations in his village. Once he collects them, he enlists a magical smith to join them to create a powerful talisman against the Dark. Each Sign takes the form of a sun cross, a symbol common in prehistoric European artefacts, suggesting Britain's deep history. Using these Signs, Will and the other local Old Ones turn back the Dark and a thaw comes over the land.

Will's collecting and wielding of Signs is emblematic of Cooper's collecting and linking of source materials from across medieval literature, popular legend, and recent history in her text. It also seems to symbolise the strength that arises from the

¹⁰⁵ Andrew and Waldron, *Sir Gawain*, ll. 516, 520, 527, and 530.

¹⁰⁶ One of the later question options asks students to '[d]iscuss the aim and achievement of the poet in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.' In 'Paper B 3(b), Middle English,' *Oxford University Examination Papers*, 1956.

diversity of Britain; although *The Dark Is Rising* is set in England Cooper takes pains to depict Britain as a united entity strengthened – rather than divided – by the individual traditions of its regions and constituent countries. The five books of the series play out in locations in Cornwall, England, and Wales, and even an artefact from the Empire’s former colonies in the West Indies aids the Light in *The Dark Is Rising*. Drout argues that Cooper’s Anglo-Saxon sources ‘re-inscrib[e] their ideology on her fantasy universe’ in spite of her efforts to offer a post-colonial vision of Britishness. ‘Children are to obey benign adults just as the rest of the world (former British colonies) are to report to the highly moral, educated and, most importantly, powerful rulers based in England.’¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, Cooper depicts a variety of British legends and experiences as assets in the battle against the common foe in an attempt to represent Britain as a single, if diverse, community. Figures from Britain’s legendary past link the various traditions in the quintet: for example, both Merlin and Wayland Smith are Old Ones in Will’s village, in the figures of Merriman Lyon and John Wayland Smith, who joins the Signs of the Light. The earliest legends about Merlin can be traced to the Welsh *Myrddin*, while Wayland is mentioned in Anglo-Saxon poems such as *Deor* and *Beowulf*, Middle English romance like *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimmild*, and analogues to his tale appear in Old Norse.¹⁰⁸ In spite of their different sources and national traditions, both are ‘medieval’ and magical beings, and join forces with other Old Ones, including the twentieth-century child Will, to protect their shared homeland from the Dark’s attack at Christmastime.

¹⁰⁷ Drout, ‘Signs of Light,’ 245.

¹⁰⁸ Stephen Knight, *Merlin: Knowledge and Power through the Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 1; Elaine Treharne, ed., *Deor*, in *Old and Middle English c.890-c.1400: An Anthology*. 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 60-3; Bruce Mitchell, ed., *Beowulf: An Edition with Relevant Shorter Texts* (Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 63, l. 455. Mills, *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimmild*, 91, ll. 400-08. On Wayland’s legacy in popular fiction, see my chapter ‘Ban Welondes: Wayland Smith in Popular Culture,’ in *Anglo-Saxon Culture and the Modern Imagination*, ed. David Clark and Nicholas Perkins (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2010), 201-17.

The most direct mirroring of the medieval Christmas challenge in Cooper's fantasy takes place in Will's family home on Christmas morning. The Black Rider, the novel's most representative agent of the Dark, enters Will's home on Christmas Day, once the family has begun opening gifts. Coming in from the snow he is like the Green Knight, practically a giant: a 'tall figure that now loomed in the doorway,' invited inside by Will's unknowing father.¹⁰⁹ The Rider is not only an outsider in the Stanton's home, he is of alien origin: his voice betrays 'a trace of accent' that identifies him as both foreign to the Light and to the British ear.¹¹⁰ In the language of magic, 'the Old Speech, his accent was suddenly much more marked.'¹¹¹ The Green Knight's outlandish but ambiguous difference becomes, in Cooper's World War Two-influenced reading of the inside / outside dialectic, national and potentially ethnic difference marked with its own accent and possibly its own language. Will, 'outraged that the Dark should have dared to interrupt this his most precious family ritual' and enter his home, uses his new powers to freeze time and demand of the man, '[h]ow dare you! At Christmas, on Christmas morning!'¹¹² This outburst includes not only moral outrage, but disbelief: Will took part in his family's holiday decorating the night before, pinning holly over every entrance in the house to guard it from the agents of the Dark. Here pagan and Christian imagery mix, with the holly representing both the family's celebration of Christ's birth and Will's use and understanding of pagan symbols as protection from the pre-Christian Dark. The Rider explains his ability to enter, saying, 'I can cross your threshold, my friend, and pass your berried holly, because I have been invited.'¹¹³ Like Arthur invoking the Green

¹⁰⁹ Susan Cooper, *The Dark is Rising* (originally published 1973; New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1986), 132.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 133.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 134.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 133.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 134.

Knight or the opening of the house for the First Foot, Will's father invites danger and otherness into the home at Christmas. Like the Green Knight, the Rider arrives with the intent to make a dangerous exchange that participates in traditions of gift-giving. Disguised as a jeweller, he enters the Stanton home under the pretence of delivering a ring for Will's mother, and while he is in the house steals a Christmas ornament that he believes will give him power over Will. The Rider's clandestine crime befits his aim: to find a crack in the protection of the Light and thus overthrow it.

Although the Dark exploits the medieval tradition of hospitality at Christmas to enter Will's home and endanger his family, it cannot overcome the united community that Cooper depicts at the climax of the novel. Following the New Year, the Dark causes a dangerous drop in temperatures across England. The villagers shelter in the great hall of Huntercombe Manor, mimicking the medieval movement of peasants into their lord's castle. Will's father notices and is uncomfortable with what he calls this '[a]lmost feudal' arrangement, but Merriman, posing as the butler of the manor, denies the connection, saying that there is 'no such intention.'¹¹⁴ However, this is precisely the intention: the community's presence in the manor allows the Old Ones to guard them against the encroaching Dark. Thus twentieth-century citizens, including adults like Mr. Stanton, live in ignorance of the 'real' forces that have power over their lives. For the few villagers who have access to these powers, the Old Ones, the medieval *is* the present, and they revert to magical 'medieval' activities (such as smithing and service) in their resistance against evil.

Cooper's work implies that the opposition between a nationalistic, medievalised 'inside' and a threatening 'outside' should not apply to relations between countries and ethnic groups within Great Britain. Looking over the

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 168.

‘[b]ubbling’ group in the Manor, Mr. Stanton comments on how the English are ‘[s]plendid in adversity, tedious when safe.’ His observation seems to reflect back on the ‘keep calm and carry on’ mentality of World War Two, but he then turns to Merriman, demanding, ‘[y]ou’re not English, are you?’ At this, ‘Will was astonished to hear a slightly hostile note in his voice.’¹¹⁵ In response to this sudden antagonism Merriman ‘blandly’ acknowledges that he is a ‘mongrel,’ suggesting that Mr. Stanton’s prejudice is of the variety that privileges the (Anglo-Saxon) English over the (Celtic) Welsh, Cornish, Scottish, and Irish. Although the villagers in this scene are primarily English, Cooper works against the production of meanings that separate, rather than unite, a broader British identity. Her heroes instead insist upon a broader, more inclusive and politically useful national identity for a post-World War Two nation. Cooper distinguishes ethnic diversity, which should be considered a source of strength, from internal threats to the ‘home’ in her Christmas narrative.

Both Lewis and Cooper also discriminate between ‘pure’ external evil and the human capacity for sin, seen as weakness. Merriman’s medieval liegeman Hawkin betrays the Light to the Dark in *The Dark is Rising*, and returns in the present as a shambling homeless man, ‘the Walker.’ Like Edmund Pevensie, who joins the White Witch against his siblings in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, Hawkin is tempted to revolt against his ‘natural’ loyalties to master and country by a female figure who embodies evil. In both cases this gendered arrangement implies Eve’s tempting of Adam in *Genesis*, and suggests its archetypal force in medieval and modern English culture. The failure in each case, however, is of human weakness: power, jealousy, and the pleasures of Turkish Delight lure Edmund to evil, and Hawkin betrays the Light when he realises that Merriman is willing to allow him to

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 174-75.

die for its cause. The ‘witch-girl, Maggie Barnes’ arrives in a red dress, and Hawkin finds in her ‘a sweet picture of the Dark to attract him, as men so often do, and beside it he [sets] all the demands of the Light, which are heavy and will always be.’¹¹⁶

Hawkin’s name recalls ‘Haukyn the actif man’ in Passus XIII and XIV of *Piers Plowman*, who cannot keep his clothes from being stained by sin in spite of his good intentions.¹¹⁷ Cooper’s Hawkin is also an allegorical figure that represents the human failure to resist betraying ‘medieval’ hierarchies such as loyalty to a master, to the Light (to Goodness), and to nation (in this text, Arthur as King of a transhistorical Britain). Merriman’s description of the consequences of Hawkin’s human disloyalty recalls Bachelard’s house metaphor: ‘Hawkin will now be a leak in the roof, a tunnel into the cellar. [...] He will be the Dark’s ear in our midst, in this house that has been our stronghold.’¹¹⁸ As a human and former helper of the Light, however, Hawkin is never one of the Dark, but rather ‘the messenger of the Dark.’¹¹⁹ This distinction between humans who fall and the beings that are ‘all bad through’ refers to the shared humanity of the community in opposition to monstrous and unknowably foreign enemies.¹²⁰ Such difference reinforces the separation of ‘inside’ from ‘outside,’ and makes use of national and cultural affinities to delineate the shared identity of the insiders.

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe and *The Dark Is Rising* convey socialising messages about the nation in which England (or Britain, in Cooper) represents essential goodness, which in Lewis is explicitly Christian. The mythological ‘Voice’ of ‘Culture’ that de Certeau calls ‘orality’ becomes, used in

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 114.

¹¹⁷ William Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman* B-text, ed. A.V.C. Schmidt (London: Dent Everyman, 1995), 229. Page references are to the 1995 edition.

¹¹⁸ Cooper, *Dark is Rising*, 115.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 209.

¹²⁰ Lewis, *Lion*, 81.

text, a political force; he argues that by '[c]ombining the power of *accumulating* the past and that of making the alterity of the universe *conform* to its models,' the 'scriptural enterprise' is 'capitalist and conquering.'¹²¹ According to de Certeau all writing serves this function, each text a 'conquering' force of its own. However, in a body of works like the Oxford School, linked by their shared source materials and influenced by one another, they often share models and social messages. As I discuss throughout this thesis, new texts offer new perspectives on these models. At some points they even attempt to destroy or destabilise them, as in the revisions of women's roles in fantasy that I discuss in Chapter Four. In the section below I consider how Kevin Crossley-Holland's approach to the Christmas challenge narrative addresses the key questions of inside vs. outside, individual failing, and the idea of the nation that have been the focus of this chapter. His novel indicates a re-reading *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* through its second Christmas challenge, in which Gawain is the visitor to the Green Knight's castle. Crossley-Holland's work exemplifies the Oxford School's capacity for change, as well as its continued fascination with the same themes and ideas.

c) *The Seeing Stone: Bridges and Crossing Places*

In *The Seeing Stone*, Crossley-Holland merges the magic and legend surrounding King Arthur with a realistic depiction of life at the border of England and Wales at the close of the twelfth century / start of the thirteenth. In the novel, the first in the *Arthur* trilogy, thirteen-year-old Arthur de Caldicot receives a 'seeing stone' from a roaming scholar named Merlin. Arthur connects the scenes that he sees in the

¹²¹ de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 135. Emphasis de Certeau's.

stone, which reveal the (largely Malorian) story of King Arthur's life, with his own daily experiences and discoveries. Arthur experiences a 'real' medieval Christmas challenge during Christmas at Caldicot manor, and the dynamics of the incursion reveal the ambiguities inherent in this symbolic narrative. The many similarities to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* also suggest that Crossley-Holland uses this text as the source material for a revised Christmas narrative that explores the ambiguities and the 'crossing-places' that are inherent to oppositions.¹²²

Leading up to Christmas, Arthur helps his mother and younger siblings decorate the hall with 'as much holly and yew and ivy and mistletoe as [they] could carry' on Christmas Eve.¹²³ At the feast on Christmas Day, following Mass, the hall fills with the feudal residents of the Manor, seated according to rank. The day is characterised by games and riddles, and Crossley-Holland, who has published his own translation of the *Exeter Book* riddles, includes several examples of the kinds of word puzzles that the revellers might have exchanged.¹²⁴ During the feast, a wild man bursts into the castle:

the door burst open, and a wodwo stumbled into the hall. He had a garland of rosemary around his neck, and clumps of black hair flapped against his chest and back. [...] as he lumbered across the hall, pointing at my mother, he shouted out strange words and half-words [...] My mother pretended not to know the wild man was Wat Harelip [the brewer]. She screamed as he clambered right over the table towards her, reaching out with his hairy hands. Then my father put his arms right round her, and Dutton [the pig-man] smacked Wat with his bladder until he fell over backwards, right into Johanna [the wise woman]'s lap, and everyone cheered.¹²⁵

¹²² The second book in the trilogy is called *At the Crossing-Places*, further indicating his interest in intersections and interventions. Kevin Crossley-Holland, *At the Crossing-Places* (originally published 2001; London: Orion, 2007).

¹²³ Crossley-Holland, *Seeing Stone*, 269.

¹²⁴ See Crossley-Holland, *The Exeter Book Riddles*.

¹²⁵ Crossley-Holland, *Seeing Stone*, 271. *MED* defines 'wode-wose,' which may also be written 'wodwo,' as 'wild creature of woods and wasteland, human or semihuman in form and savage in appearance.' *MED Online*, s.v. 'wode-wose,' accessed 7 February 2010. <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/>.

This scene comically re-enacts the Christmas challenge that Arthur's court experiences in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. The similarities include the entry of a wild stranger who frightens the highest-ranking lady of the gathering; in the poem, the Green Knight reveals that the beheading game was instigated by Morgan le Fay in an attempt to frighten Guinevere.¹²⁶ The 'wodwo' in Arthur's home also comes to blows with a member of the household who is not the lord (Dutton), echoing Gawain's defence of the monarchs in the medieval romance. This lighthearted Christmas mummery brings the manor together, performing the defeat of a challenge to their community while reasserting its hierarchical structure. The community stages its own infiltration, and the heroism that beats back the invader. Even the outsider is a member of the community in disguise, familiar even if his harelip identifies him as a physical 'other.'¹²⁷

This intermingling of inside and outside reminds the reader that the metaphorical house is not only porous insofar as it may be infiltrated from within or attacked from without. As de Certeau suggests,

the story privileges a 'logic of ambiguity' through its accounts of interaction. It 'turns' the frontier into a crossing, and the river into a bridge. It recounts inversions and displacements: the door that closes is precisely what may be opened [...] Within the frontiers, the alien is already there, an exoticism or sabbath of the memory, a disquieting familiarity. It is as though delimitation itself were the bridge that opens the inside to its other.¹²⁸

The act of writing house walls invites questions about what lies beyond them and challenges this division, thus inside and outside are revealed to be mutually reliant.

¹²⁶ Andrew and Waldron, *Sir Gawain*, 297, ll. 2459-62.

¹²⁷ Meanwhile his name, Wat, acknowledges Crossley-Holland's place in the tradition of Arthurian children's authors; it invokes T.H. White's *The Sword in the Stone*, in which the noseless wild man of the Forest Sauvage is also named Wat. The Wart (the young Arthur) invites Wat to return to his foster-father's castle after he meets the man on an adventure in the forest, and Wat becomes part of the household, just as Wat Harelip is part of the community on Arthur de Caldicot's foster father's manor. T.H. White, *The Sword in the Stone* (originally published 1938; London: Collins Modern Classics, 1998).

¹²⁸ de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 128.

The bridge – a crossing-place – symbolizes the possibility for intimate interactions between the outside and the inside, the familiar and the unknown. Arthur de Caldicot's Christmas reflects this ambiguity and the complexity of the idea of home, which is also present in the second Christmas episode of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

Arthur refers to the invader in his father's small court as a 'wodwo,' using the same Middle English word that the *Gawain*-poet uses for the wild men that Gawain battles as he searches for the Green Chapel. In his travels through the wintry wilderness, under 'hard iisseikkles' (hard icicles) that 'henge heze ouer his hede' (hung high over his head), Gawain survives 'wormez,' 'wolues,' 'wodwos,' 'bullez and berez and borez,' 'etayne' (giants), and other monsters.¹²⁹ This litany of beasts belong to a world in which it is winter, but without human company or religious outlets it seems not to be Christmas; its cold and danger signal the fear of 'exclusion and desolation' that Lewis calls a 'permanent aspect of human experience.'¹³⁰ The beasts that Gawain overcomes are the forerunners of the White Witch's monstrous followers in the snow-bound Narnia. She names them as she summons them, crying: '[c]all out the giants and the werewolves and the spirits of those trees who are on our side. Call the Ghouls, and the Boggles, the Ogres, and the Minotaurs. Call the Cruels, the Hags, the Specters, and the people of the Toadstools.'¹³¹ But where Lewis's retelling of the Christmas challenge demands their destruction, in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* the line between wodwos of the forest and knights of courtly society becomes blurry when Gawain reaches safety.

Hautdesert, Bertilak's castle, appears as if in answer to Gawain's wish to hear Christmas mass, offering what seems to be the secure and predictable refuge of

¹²⁹ Andrew and Waldron, *Sir Gawain*, 235, ll. 732 and 720-23.

¹³⁰ Lewis, 'On Stories,' 33.

¹³¹ Lewis, *Lion*, 136.

chivalric domesticity. As Gawain ‘rod ouer þe brygge’ (rode over the bridge) to enter the castle, he takes on the role of the Green Knight, entering into another’s home space during the Christmas season.¹³² Gawain’s movement from wilderness to castle over the bridge on Christmas Eve initially reads as a kind of homecoming, but although Gawain discovers the familiar courtly world inside of Hautdesert it brings him into direct contact with the dangerous outsider that he seeks: the Green Knight, the giant he fears, in the form of Bertilak. Thus all of the major characters in Hautdesert become double figures: Bertilak is both a typical courtly host and a frightening supernatural creature. His wife is a model courtly lady and dangerous threat to chivalric harmony. And the lady’s advances turn Gawain into a potentially destructive force in Hautdesert, threatening to transform him from guest to intruder in his host’s home. As de Certeau suggests, ‘the alien is already there’: the exchanges of the second Christmas party reflect back upon the first, suggesting that the perils to Arthur and his court are as inherent to chivalric society as they are foreign and external. This internal danger is more complex than a matter of straightforward treachery; the walls that protect the ‘home’ and its identity are permeable, and even dependent upon internal inconsistencies.

The ‘holyn bobbe’ that the Green Knight carries into Arthur’s court serves as a reminder that even Christmas, with its unifying traditions, likewise contains such contradictions, since both pagan and Christian celebrations use evergreens as symbols and decorations. Many critics have used this overlap to illuminate the ‘true’ folk meaning underlying *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, culminating in John Speir’s argument that it ‘represents an ancient fertility myth, dominated by a vegetation spirit, the Green Knight’ in which the knight ‘entices Gawain into ‘[d]ruid country, the

¹³² Andrew and Waldron, *Sir Gawain*, 238, ll. 817 and 821.

home of the pre-Christian culture, the ancient religion of Britain.’¹³³ However, as Elizabeth Kirk points out,

The text, so far from palliating or censoring the conflicting connotations of green which scholars have glossed, throws them into relief because they involve precisely the conflicting yet overlapping issues with which the text confronts its audience from the outset: the cycle of nature, the erotic, life and death, rebirth and renewal. Each one of the contradictory associations of green passes the test of a good ‘close reading’ by being demonstrably relevant to elements highlighted by the actual language and tone of the text, the test that is supposed to permit us to apply some meanings and discard others.¹³⁴

It is ultimately the myriad meanings (including but not exclusive to his Christian-pagan ambiguity) embodied in the figure of Bertilak / the Green Knight that make him into such an evocative supernatural visitor. His multiple and paradoxical identities mirror the kinds of oppositions – and necessary, if often uneasy, symbioses – that underlie the Arthurian society of medieval romance: nature and civilization, feminine and masculine, magic and Christianity, peace and war. In Patricia Ingham’s spatial terms, ‘by the end of the poem, the Green Chapel and Camelot are not only split, but also joined as cognate twin.’¹³⁵ Although the poem acknowledges such ambiguities, by the end of the romance it seems to return to binaries. Ingham argues that the revelation of Morgan’s machinations (and Gawain’s subsequent misogynist speech) shifts the conflict into a simple aggression between genders, that ‘[t]his text would have us see that male agency is compromised across the difference of gender and not the differences of region or ethnicity.’¹³⁶ However, what has come before in the way of spatial and ethnic negotiations is not simply forgotten at the conclusion of the poem.

¹³³ Quoted in Lindahl, ‘*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and Myth in Its Time,’ 250.

¹³⁴ Kirk, ‘The Festive and the Hermeneutic,’ 103.

¹³⁵ Ingham, *Sovereign Fantasies*, 132.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 131.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight concludes, as it begins, through a nationalist lens: with the assertion of Britain as a coherent nation founded by Brutus, who descended from Aeneas, the truest traitor.¹³⁷ The near-repetition of the opening line about Troy in the final stanza returns the romance back to its starting place, insisting on a nationalist view of the events of the poem. If we are to believe the laughter and celebrations of Arthur's young court, the 'inside' remains affirmed in its unity and superiority, able to outsmart and escape the dangers of the unfamiliar 'outside' that the Green Knight represented in his initial Christmas appearance. But like Gawain returning to Arthur's court, the poem arrives at this point changed by what has come before. Rather than passing judgment on Gawain's behaviour, the romance reaffirms the opening figuration of 'boþe blysse and blunder' as key to the formation of the British nation, a standard set by the reminder of Aeneas's treason and continued in Gawain's failures.¹³⁸ Although the immediate threat that the Green Knight represents at the start of the poem disappears when he retreats at the end, it is not because Arthur's court has annihilated that threat or any of the anxieties that underlie their chivalric community. The line between the various oppositions that the Green Knight signifies—as well as the line between insider and outsider at the holiday season—remains significant but indistinct. This is a lesson that Gawain learns, and one that the Gawain-poet, author of the religious poems *Pearl*, *Cleanness*, and *Patience*, seems eager to teach. Early in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the narrator urges Gawain to 'þenk wel' on the situation that he has 'hatz tan on honde' by beheading the Green

¹³⁷ Aeneas was 'for his tricherie, þe trewest on erthe.' Andrew and Waldron, *Sir Gawain*, 207, l. 4. This version of Aeneas's story, in which 'it is his actions, not those of Sinon, that lead to the introduction of the horse into Troy and the subsequent disaster' was known in the Middle Ages through the work of Dictys Cretensis and Dares Phrygius. See Sarah Spence, 'Felix Casus: The Dares and Dictys Legends of Aeneas,' in *A Companion to Vergil's Aeneid and its Tradition*, ed. Joseph Farrell and Michael C. Putnam (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 133.

¹³⁸ Andrew and Waldron, *Sir Gawain*, 208, l. 18.

Knight.¹³⁹ Although the rest of the Round Table knights never ‘þenk wel’ on the implications of Gawain’s full adventure, as indicated by their cheerful adoption of the girdle at the end of the poem, Gawain is well aware of his own inner conflicts and failings. Bertilak / the Green Knight helps him face these following the parallel exchange game, in which they trade literal game (animals) and kisses in Bertilak’s home over the Christmas holiday.

Thus in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* the dangerous, foreign Christmas challenger is an integrated symbol of Britain’s multifaceted nationhood, and helps a rising national hero recognise the imperfections that necessarily underlie his society. As Ralph Hanna puts it, ‘Gawain’s failure in the poem becomes his introduction to (or initiation into) a world where meaning is not an obvious reading-out of geometrical relationships but a slippery and chancy business.’¹⁴⁰ The poem demonstrates that the barrier between outside and inside has the potential to become a bridge or a crossing-place, as it does when Gawain socialises with and receives instruction from Bertilak / the Green Knight. The Round Table’s decision to transform the girdle into a celebration of its own prominence largely closes the door on such self-reflection, and turns Gawain’s return into a successful quest: one of ‘us’ defeating or outwitting one of ‘them,’ bolstering the ‘us’ identity at the expense of ‘them,’ whoever ‘they’ may be.

As we have seen, many Oxford School authors adopt the attitude of Arthur’s young court, revelling in the renown of a legendary medieval England and building fantastical new ones in which to recreate imagined periods of unity and strength. Within this setting, oppositional structures allow for heroism that conveys moral and patriotic messages to the child reader. Crossley-Holland explores these interdependent

¹³⁹ Ibid., 225, l. 490, 486.

¹⁴⁰ Ralph Hanna, ‘Unlocking What’s Locked: Gawain’s Green Girdle,’ *Viator* 14 (1983), 290.

oppositions through an introspective, rather than traditionally heroic, protagonist. Performing the role of the child reader of Oxford School fantasy, Arthur de Caldicot also ‘reads’ the legendary medieval past in his seeing stone. He translates the adventures of King Arthur and his knights into a way of comprehending the more subtle and complex realities of daily living.

During the Christmas celebrations Arthur’s Welsh grandmother Nain throws doubt on prevailing ideas about history and reality when she offers her own answer to the Christmas riddle, ‘[w]hat it the most precious burden ever borne, and who carried it?’¹⁴¹ The manor priest Oliver asserts that the answer is the baby Jesus and his mother Mary, but Nain demands, ‘[w]hat about the god, then? [...] Carried away by boat from this middle-world.’ When Oliver shows confusion at her reference to what is probably the Welsh mythology that gave rise to the legend of King Arthur, ‘Nain sniffed and shook her head. “Knowing little is worse than knowing nothing,” she said.’¹⁴² These conflicting ideas of the ‘most precious burden ever borne’ indicate the constructed nature of ideas about history and reality, and the role of national and cultural change in shifting these over time. They reveal the existence of competing worldviews in Arthur de Caldicot’s world, as in our own, and hint at the political powers that suppress some and promote others. This disagreement between Christianity and Celtic myth reflects on the biases of the Oxford English School in its constitution of a ‘patriotic’ curriculum, and on the children’s fantasy that grew out of it.

Arthur considers such internal inconsistencies at Christmastime in spatial terms that take into account the cold of winter, complementing Bachelard and de Certeau’s conceptions of space and identity. Arthur thinks to himself,

¹⁴¹ Crossley-Holland, *Seeing Stone*, 271.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 272.

Christmas is like an enclosing wall. A fold. We're inside it, eating and drinking and keeping warm and singing, but we know all the year's hungers and terrors and lessons and anxieties and opportunities and sorrows are still there on the outside. We know they're all waiting for us, just as the Knight of the Black Anvil lies in wait for anyone who rides to the forest fountain, and we haven't forgotten them.¹⁴³

Arthur likens the mundane challenges that await those on the 'inside' of the 'fold' of his community to the threat of the Knight of the Black Anvil, the 'terror of the Marches,' in his seeing stone.¹⁴⁴ He uses elements of story to identify the constant menace that threatens each person, highlighting the impermanence of Christmastide as 'the one and only stopping-place in the long dance of the year.'¹⁴⁵ He sees Christmas as a constructed time for gathering together and celebrating as members of the 'fold,' creating a brief metaphorical shelter that protects the collected community from their individual and shared fears. The dream of vanquishing the Dark or a Witch that embodies the cold and misery associated with winter imagines defeating not only any dangers from the outside, but also erasing the permanent ones that haunt a society.

Arthur is well aware, meanwhile, of those members of his community that are excluded from the fold at Christmas: Tanwen, the chamber-servant pregnant by his brother Serle who lives alone on the fringes of the manor grounds, and Lankin the cowherd, who lost his hand as punishment for alleged theft. Arthur uses Christmas as a time to consider the nuances of who and what is in and outside of the 'fold' of his community, and to consider how he fits into it. At times he uses this as a guide to determine what actions to take, and at others merely to reflect upon the multiple readings of how the world unfolds around him. At the conclusion of the Christmas chapter in *The Seeing Stone* Arthur literally reaches out to Serle, who is both 'inside

¹⁴³ Ibid., 276.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 238.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 276.

and outside the fold' because of Tanwen's situation.¹⁴⁶ Arthur grasps Serle's arm and smiles in an indication of support. He closes the space between himself and his brother (who he later learns is, like Kay to King Arthur, his foster-brother), creating a human bridge that enables brief, unspoken communication between the increasingly divided siblings. Although both boys are 'insiders' at Christmas, Arthur recognizes that the walls that delineate a community are more complex than who is physically inside and outside the walls or borders of a home space. Arthur's reflections on the society and the self at Christmastide echo the multifaceted lessons of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, and model how medievalised Christmas challenge narratives might provide opportunities for interrogations of community identity in children's fantasy.

Arthur's 'reading' is characteristic of the Oxford School, in which child heroes often learn to read texts and situations like students of the humanities. Such privileging of translation and analysis is a regular feature of the Oxford School, perhaps unsurprisingly, given the authors' shared scholarly experience. In the next chapter, I explore how Oxford School authors establish traditions of reading (in all its forms) and tutorial teaching after the style of the University of Oxford. The prominence of personalised instruction suggests the importance of intimate educative spaces – as well as medievalised 'home' spaces – to the idea of the child hero in children's fantasy. As important as the pupil is the identity of the teacher: usually an older bachelor that retains powerful magical knowledge. Merlin-figures often take this scholarly role in Oxford School works, serving as magical Oxford dons, but also modelling the author's potential relationship to the reader as the source of precious

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

information. The teacher and the author unlock essential but otherwise hidden knowledge, and this trope – as well as a reverence for literature and academic elitism generally – becomes characteristic of Oxford School works and subsequent medievalised children’s fantasy. De Certeau’s figuration of writing as socialising becomes the goal of the Oxford School, which is supported in this endeavour by the traditional relationship between children’s literature and education.

CHAPTER THREE

The Educational Authority of the Oxford School

The Oxford School not only produces new magical, medievalised Englands in its works, it also frequently emulates the educative space from which it arose. As children's literature, the legend and pseudo-history that these works convey extend the sense of the Oxford English syllabus to a wider audience of learners. The idea that children's literature is inherently didactic informs my reading of such educationalism in the Oxford School, and the Oxford School reinforces this emphasis on learning through its recreations of the idealised Oxford experience in its texts. These include wise tutors, intimate relationships between youths and their teachers, and humanistic scholarship, especially of ancient texts. This scholarship is so prized as to at times amount to a form or by-product of heroism. 'Medieval' learning thus becomes integral to children's fantasy, in a mirror image of how the fascination with fantasy drew Lewis, Tolkien, and many other medievalists-to-be to the study of early literature.¹ I argue that Oxford School authors write themselves into their fiction through Merlin and other tutor figures and their pupils, reflecting a romanticisation of their experiences that map Oxford's tutorial system onto the kinds of heroic educations that appear in medieval literature. This process exemplifies the Oxford School's ability to produce what Jonathan Culler calls 'presuppositions' and 'pre-texts': 'intertextual space[s] whose occupants may or may not correspond to other actual texts.'² From Alfred and Alexander's studies with Asser and Aristotle to the experiential learning of

¹ The question of to what extent Oxford School fantasy has influenced the modern body of medievalists is beyond the scope of this thesis, but it lingers behind my work as I interrogate the role of educational culture and (non-religious) 'sacred' knowledge in this chapter.

² Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs*, 118.

Arthur's early reign under Merlin's supervision, medieval texts provide exemplars that allow Oxford School authors to include education and scholarship in their figuration of medievalised fantasy adventure for the child.

The emphasis on learning in children's fantasy transforms, however, from the early Oxford School's emphasis on scholarship and tutorial-style instruction to popular fantasy set inside of magical boarding schools. The *Harry Potter* series exemplifies this approach to education, which widens student access to magical learning while retaining the sense of it as privileged and rare. Oxford's influence on the creation of the children's fantasy genre has given medieval studies a special place in fantasy texts, whereby scholars and their protégées enjoy the distinction of belonging to an exclusive 'state nobility.' To help theorise this relationship, I use Pierre Bourdieu and John Guillory's assertions that the elite tends to reproduce itself through education and its products.³ In addition, Jean Baudrillard's contention that the imitated thing can become a truth in itself, 'hyperreal,' contributes to the expansion of this idea to children's fantasy literature beyond the Oxford School; following Baudrillard, the Oxford School becomes an example of the process by which twentieth-century medievalisms come to have more cultural and even historical authority than any actual medieval text. The medievalisms in Oxford School works suggest that each children's fantasy text may be read as a valuable repository of the same 'timeless' and 'magical' knowledge that the heroic characters inside of them gain, turning the *reader* into a 'pupil' and potential hero for the transhistorical nation. By writing the fantasy that conveys these ideals, Oxford School authors imply their own 'magical' powers, implicitly extending the pedagogical authority of the medieval magicians and scholars in their narratives to

³ John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 269.

themselves. Such a loop bypasses actual scholarship and establishes a system by which fantasy writing replaces academic study in the production of authoritative knowledge.

The primary texts that I discuss in this chapter reveal the Oxford School's influence on contemporary fantasy, as well as the changes that occur during the course of this transmission. I focus on the wise tutor figure and his uses in Oxford School works and in *Harry Potter*, which indicates the continued significance of education in children's fantasy. I first consider how medieval literature such as *Le Morte Darthur* may provide 'evidence' for Lewis and Tolkien's construction of learned men as teachers and heroes in *The Chronicles of Narnia* and the Middle-Earth novels. T.H. White's *The Sword in the Stone* (1938), a non-Oxford School work for children published one year after *The Hobbit*, intervenes in this depiction, however; this popular fantasy novel depicts Merlyn as a comical schoolteacher figure, employed to train the hero. Susan Cooper's *The Dark Is Rising* provides an example of how the Oxford School comes to reflect this influence alongside that of Lewis and Tolkien, paving the way for later fantasy works set in wizard schools. This reaches its popular height in the *Harry Potter* series, which merges the fantasy and boarding school book genres to create a universe that is at once legendary and mundane. I conclude with a reflection on the magical powers of books in children's fantasy, which turn children's fantasy novels into educative texts in their own right and make the authors into real-life 'magical' educators, whose medievalisms influence popular ideas about locations of power and the shape of the medieval past.⁴

⁴ I should note here that I intentionally omit Philip Pullman's treatment of the University of Oxford as an academic and magical space in this chapter in order to address it in Chapter Four.

I. Didactic Fantasy Narratives and the Tutorial System

As children's literature, the Oxford School is implicitly didactic: Peter Hunt contends that 'it is arguably impossible for a children's book (especially one being read by a child) not to be educational or influential in some way; it cannot help but reflect an ideology and, by extension, didacticism.'⁵ This understanding of children's literature acknowledges the power struggle at the root of it: '[a]dults write, children read, and this means that [...] adults are exercising power, and children are either being manipulated, or resisting manipulation.' This tension suggests that 'even the most child-friendly [children's book] is adopting some implicit attitudes.'⁶ It is generally agreed that childhood is the time when people 'are most susceptible to new ideas,' and Elisabeth Rose Gruner works from the presupposition that 'the business of the child's life is education.'⁷ Although it is not clear how children assimilate the information and messages that children's literature conveys, didacticism is an assumed element of all children's literature, including in works of fiction and other books for the child's entertainment.

London publisher John Newbery's *A Little Pretty Pocket-book* (1744) 'is often regarded as the most important single point of origin' for English children's literature, in spite of earlier texts aimed at child readers dating to the Middle Ages.⁸ The

⁵ Peter Hunt, *An Introduction to Children's Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 3.

⁶ Peter Hunt, 'Instruction and Delight,' in Janet Maybin and Nicola J. Watson, eds., *Children's Literature: Approaches and Territories* (Houndmills, New York, and Milton Keynes: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 14.

⁷ Hunt, 'Instruction and Delight,' 15, and Elisabeth Rose Gruner, 'Teach the Children: Education and Knowledge in Recent Children's Fantasy,' *Children's Literature* 37 (2009): 216.

⁸ See John Newbery, *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book*, ed. M.F. Thwaite, facsimile ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1966). M.O. Grenby, 'The Origins of Children's Literature,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Children's Literature*, ed. M.O. Grenby and Andrea Immel (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 4. On medieval literature for children, including Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, Chaucer's *Treatise of the Astrolabe* and *Canterbury Tales*, and *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, printed by Malory's first editor, Caxton, see Daniel Kline, ed., *Medieval Literature for Children* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

frontispiece of Newbury's book professed to offer 'Instruction with Delight,' reflecting John Locke's suggestion that this combination of education and entertainment is the best means for teaching the child.⁹ This approach to books for children dominated the rise of children's literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, which was usually moral and religious in its didacticism. Gillian Avery and Margaret Kinnell contend that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, '[c]hildren required schooling in order to fulfil a Christian life, as well as preparing for a good death.'¹⁰ Chapbooks, which frequently contained fairy tales and stories of adventure, also 'pour[ed] off the presses' during this period, often as part of special series for children.¹¹ However, these texts were also put to didactic use by the Romantics, who expected that they would free young people from the constraints of educationalists, give children's imaginations greater license, and thus aid in the child's development into adulthood.¹² Thus even pleasurable texts were produced with the intent to educate and influence the development of the child, and children's books since then likewise serve as official or unofficial instructional texts for young people.

By using medieval sources in their work, however, the Oxford School creates texts that are not only didactic in the sense of being children's literature. The glorification of medievalisms and borrowings from real medieval literature and history distinguishes them as a special group of texts that contain privileged knowledge. The processes by which society uses education to create an 'elite' – and

⁹ John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (London: A. and J. Churchill, 1695). Early English Books Online, accessed 4 January 2010. http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2097/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:101033.

¹⁰ Gillian Avery and Margaret Kinnell, 'Morality and Levity: 1780-1820,' in *Children's Literature: An Illustrated History*, 46.

¹¹ Avery and Kinnell, 'Morality and Levity,' 71. Here they refer to chapbooks containing Perrault's fairy tales.

¹² See Chapter One, pp. 34-35.

therefore the process by which each author was inducted into this elite as an Oxford student – become part of the structure of the fantasy narrative. Special youth are ‘chosen’ (admitted to Oxford), and enter the magical world (Oxford), where they are overseen by learned masters (dons), who give them intense personal instruction (tutorials) in this ‘magical’ knowledge (medieval language and literature). As I discussed in the previous chapter, this ‘magical’ knowledge is part of forming a patriotic character, since it reveals both the depth and the ‘best’ of English identity.

This choosing and training of fantasy heroes intersects with Pierre Bourdieu’s conception of a ‘state nobility’ formed through elite education. The magical educations that the young protagonists receive prepare them to become members of this ‘state nobility,’ ultimate holders of power in cultural and real terms. Bourdieu proposes that these ‘chosen’ youths are complicit in fortifying the system’s existing structure:

In selecting students it designates as the most gifted, that is the most positively disposed toward it (the most *docile*, in the true sense of the term), and the most generously endowed with the properties it recognizes, the elite school reinforces these predispositions through the consecration that it bestows simply by separating its students from the rest. This invisible action is effected through the statutory assignation (*‘noblesse oblige’*) that results from attaching students to a place and a status that are socially distinguished from the commonplace, which we might think of a type of *marking* that creates a magical boundary between insiders and outsiders, often sanctioned by an actual enclosure.¹³

Thus the Oxford School heroes, who are ‘gifted’ in an innate acceptance of and liking for the medieval fantasy universe, are ‘chosen’ – given magical powers and special access to the fantasy realm. Many literally cross a ‘magical boundary’ that Bourdieu suggests distinguishes the elite from the masses; that is, into the fantasy world, or into

¹³ Pierre Bourdieu, *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*, trans. Laretta C. Clough (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 102. Emphasis Bourdieu’s.

the knowledge of it.¹⁴ By this separation, they are ‘socially distinguished from the commonplace,’ and become the heroes of the novels. Their educations, and the reverent references to academic, especially humanistic, study that appear in children’s fantasy consolidate the power of culturally legitimized intellectuals and demand that the child heroes be obedient subjects that comply with the magical system. The many Oxford School texts whose plots revolve around the restoration of rightful monarchs to the throne suggest the interdependence of the academic elite and the highest state authorities in a fantasy of intellectual power.

This fantasy structure models the genre’s own potential importance for child readers: the Oxford school text offers the reader the opportunity to cross the ‘magical boundary’ into the fantasy realm through reading, and to glean the special knowledge that accompanies this movement. This, whether the child chooses to accept it or not, includes the significance of medieval literature and learning, and the idea of England as marvellous and dependent upon its medieval tradition (an idealised England, inextricable from the ‘real’ one). In this way Oxford School texts become what Bourdieu and Passeron call pedagogic work, executed through the efforts of a pedagogic authority:

Insofar as it is a transformative action tending to inculcate a training, a system of durable, transposable dispositions, PW [pedagogic work], which cannot be exercised without PAu [pedagogic authority], has the effect of irreversibly confirming an consecrating PAu, i.e. the legitimacy of PA [pedagogic action] and of the cultural arbitrary it inculcates, by masking more and more completely, through the success of the inculcation of the arbitrary, the arbitrariness of the inculcation and of the culture inculcated.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ibid., 102.

¹⁵ Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, 2d ed., transl. Richard Nice (originally published 1977; London: Sage Publications, 1990), 36-7. They define pedagogic action as ‘symbolic violence insofar as it is the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power’ (5), and pedagogic work as ‘a process of inculcation which must last long enough to produce a durable training, i.e. a habitus, the product of internalization of the principles of a cultural arbitrary capable of perpetuating itself after PA has ceased and thereby of perpetuating in practices the principles of the internalized arbitrary’ (31).

Oxford School authors function as pedagogic authorities in popular culture, transmitting a ‘cultural arbitrary’ that at once lends their activity as writers legitimacy and builds the generic foundations of children’s fantasy on, in part, mythologies of the academic elite to which they belong. By extension, this argument asserts that popular culture – and children’s literature in particular – can function as an agent of pedagogy: of cultural inculcation. Bourdieu more closely examines the role of pedagogic authorities in his subsequent publications, in which he contends that we must ‘ask whether any pedagogic action meant to prepare students to hold dominant positions is not in part – even in its most specifically technical dimension – an act of consecration, a *rite of institution* aimed at producing a separate, sacred group.’¹⁶ Oxford School authors participate in sustaining the aura of mystery around the ‘separate, sacred group’ of scholars, especially medieval scholars, and their students, as well as around children’s fantasy literature as a genre. The reproduction of these groups as magical enclaves promotes both academia and the fantasy genre as special conduits of deep cultural knowledge.

Oxford School works and their successors thus legitimate two kinds of interrelated pedagogic authorities: academics with insight into the medieval universe and children’s fantasy authors. These two authorities exist in tension with each other, with one (fantasy authors) betraying a sense of its position as derivative of the other. Wise tutor figures, often designated as professors, reveal the genre’s obsession with ‘real’ scholarship, above ‘mere’ teaching as one’s primary occupation. Their recurrence in works by children’s fantasy authors who did not pursue academic study suggest fantasy’s reliance on the cultural cache of the professorial figure, and the

¹⁶ Bourdieu, *The State Nobility*, 73. See also his *Homo Academicus* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988).

Oxford School's reverence for its own academic roots. However, children's fantasy literature reaches a wider audience than academic writing, and thus has the greater potential for direct influence on popular ideas about the 'tap-roots' of English culture.¹⁷

The magical tutor is also useful to the Oxford School in the way that he bridges the space between modernity and the mythical past. In addition to his expertise in ancient history, lore, and language, the figure himself is an old one. Northrop Frye notes the frequent appearance of the 'figure of the "wise old man," as Jung calls him, like Prospero, Merlin, or the palmer of Spenser's second quest, often a magician who affects the action he watches over' in romance.¹⁸ Most Oxford School scholar figures are also magicians, and Stephen Knight suggests that such characters in twentieth-century popular literature descend directly from the medieval Merlin:

[t]he white beard that medievalizing Romanticism gave Merlin has made him an educationally transgenerational grandfather figure in the time of Freudian dissent with parents, as seen in his multicultural avatars Obi-Wan Kenobi, Dumbledore, and Gandalf.¹⁹

Oxford School tutor figures embody magical medievalisms and take up grandfatherly teaching roles; several *are* Merlins, inserted into new fantasy narratives. In this the Oxford School echoes the tendencies of medieval writers: in her article on authorial surrogates in Arthurian romance, Carolyne Larrington argues that medieval clerics write themselves into their texts through wizards, enchantresses, and other magical figures. The basis of these clerics' avatars' power lies in 'mysterious and culturally invisible intellectual attainments, made visible in the practices of literacy or

¹⁷ Lewis, 'Our English Syllabus,' 92.

¹⁸ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (originally published 1957; Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), 195.

¹⁹ Knight, *Merlin*, 221.

demonstrated in courtly discourse.²⁰ Larrington further suggests that the Merlin of the Vulgate *Merlin* and Post-Vulgate *Suite* represents the newly rising clerical elite: a kind of ‘hero-as-intellectual.’²¹ The Oxford School seems to take up this tradition in the twentieth century, writing themselves – and often, their professors – into their work through donnish magician figures. Their attributes align with Lewis and Tolkien’s ideals about humanities scholars, reading and translating medieval languages together in Oxford’s medievalised environs with their young, usually male, protégés.²²

C.S. Lewis described ‘the real Oxford’ as a ‘close corporation of jolly, untidy, lazy, good-for-nothing, humorous old men, who have been electing their own successors ever since the world began and who intend to go on with it,’ and added, ‘[t]hey’ll squeeze under the Revolution or leap over it when the time comes, don’t you worry.’²³ Although there are female Oxford School authors, this image of the don dominates the Oxford School’s depictions of magical teaching and learning, and remains the norm in successive children’s fantasy. It aligns magical knowledge and cultural authority with the kind of masculine Englishness that Lewis identifies in Kenneth Grahame’s Badger from *The Wind in the Willows*, which he describes as having an ‘extraordinary amalgam of high rank, coarse manners, gruffness, shyness, and goodness. The child who has once met Mr Badger has ever afterwards, in his bones, a knowledge of humanity and of English Social History which he could not get any other way.’²⁴

²⁰ Carolyne Larrington, ‘The Enchantress, the Knight and the Cleric: Authorial Surrogates in Arthurian Romance,’ in *Arthurian Literature XXV*, ed. Elizabeth Archibald and David F. Johnson (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008), 45.

²¹ Larrington, ‘The Enchantress, the Knight and the Cleric,’ 49, drawing on Bea Lundt, *Melusine und Merlin im Mittelalter: Entwürfe und Modelle weiblicher Existenz im Beziehungs-Diskurs der Geschlechter* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1991), 190-97.

²² Although much can be said about the sexual connotations of such relationships, that will not be the focus of this chapter. Most Oxford School authors attempt to depict the interactions between teacher and pupil as wholly platonic.

²³ C.S. Lewis, *Letters of C.S. Lewis*, ed. W.H. Lewis (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1966), 60.

²⁴ Lewis, ‘On Three Ways of Writing for Children,’ 62.

By contrast, Lewis ‘was not very impressed by his first experiences when reading English Language and Literature at Oxford’ as an undergraduate.²⁵ The absence of the temperament that he admired in the character of Badger distressed him: “‘The atmosphere of the English school,” he wrote in his diary after attending a lecture, “is very different from that of Greats. Women, Indians, and Americans predominate and – I can’t say how – one feels a certain amateurishness in the talk and the look of the people.”²⁶ Lewis and Tolkien’s curriculum sought to combat this ‘amateurishness’ with a strong foundation in medieval literature and required linguistic study for the literary course, as shown in Chapter One. It also secured the position of medieval scholars as pedagogic authorities within the discipline of English literature in England; John Guillory argues that

the institution which is the historical site of [...] evaluative acts – the school – subordinates specific values expressed in works to the social functions and institutional aims of the school itself. It is only when presented as *canonical*, as the cultural capital of the schools, that individual literary works can be made to serve the school’s social function of regulating access to these forms of capital. The canonicity of works is therefore another name for their institutional mode of reception and reproduction[.]²⁷

Lewis and Tolkien’s chosen canon of medieval literature is necessarily restricted through the linguistic inaccessibility of most medieval texts to the general reader and the subsequent need for specialist aid in order to read and understand them. Thus beyond the inherent value that Lewis, Tolkien, and their supporters saw in medieval literature, their choices of these works as keystones of the English literary canon also made medievalists into the gatekeepers of a certain kind of cultural capital and assured their importance at Oxford, in the budding discipline of English Literature, and later in the Oxford School of children’s fantasy. For instance, the narrative voice

²⁵ Carpenter, *The Inklings*, 15.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 269.

in *The Chronicles of Narnia* mentions on several occasions in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* that the disagreeable Eustace Scrubb ‘had read only the wrong books. They had a lot to say about exports and imports and governments and drains, but they were weak on dragons.’²⁸ Eustace’s progressive and pragmatic upbringing and school education and the self-improving but unimpassioned reading that accompanies it leaves the boy unprepared for the adventures that he encounters in Narnia. For Lewis, reading the ‘right’ books, especially under the right learning conditions, is a kind of mental, moral, and even practical training that prepares English children for a moral and patriotic life.

Lewis asserts that in most civilized communities, education ‘endeavours to produce the right sentiments – which are to the passions what right habits are to the body – by steeping the pupil in the literature both sacred and profane on which the culture of the community is based.’²⁹ Medieval literature serves as the cornerstone of English literature according to the Oxford syllabus, and this literature – irrespective of the social conditions that gave rise to its canonical status – is what Lewis and Tolkien identify as the basis of English culture. Lewis distinguishes, however, between ‘education’ and ‘learning’; education, he argues,

implies an immense superiority on the part of the teacher. He is trying to make the pupil a good man, in the sense I have described. The assumption is that the master is already human, the pupil a mere candidate for humanity—an unregenerate little bundle of appetites which is to be kneaded and moulded into human shape by one who knows better.³⁰

This process may, as in Lewis’s own experience, be miserable and damaging to the child. Lewis calls ‘the putting on of school clothes [...] the assumption of a prison

²⁸ C.S. Lewis, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, illus. Pauline Baynes (originally published 1952; New York and London: HarperCollins, 1994), 87.

²⁹ Lewis, ‘Our English Syllabus,’ 81.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 83-4.

uniform.’³¹ In the book that recounts his young life, Lewis names the chapter about his first school experiences ‘Concentration Camp,’ and recalls ‘the canes [for punishment] and the disgusting food, the stinking sanitation and the cold beds’ that he endured with grim seriousness.³² Gruner argues that Narnia is

explicitly an escape from school: see, for example, *The Silver Chair*, which begins as Eustace and Jill escape school bullies; or the end of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, in which we are told that one of the just laws the new kings and queens make limits how much time young dwarfs spend in school.³³

At the conclusion of *The Last Battle*, Lewis likens life in the new, Platonic Narnian heaven to the start of holidays from school. Aslan tells the collected heroes of the previous books, ‘[t]he term is over: the holidays have begun. The dream is ended: this is the morning.’³⁴ To leave school is to find heaven.

For Lewis learning, on the other hand, is ‘the great rough countryside’ to ramble, and ‘an activity for men—that is for beings who have already been humanized by the kneading and moulding process.’³⁵ He insists that the ‘colleges at Oxford were founded not in order to teach the young but in order to support masters of arts’; that the Oxford ‘student is, or ought to be, a young man who is already beginning to follow learning for its own sake, and who attaches himself to an older student, not precisely to be taught, but to pick up what he can.’³⁶ Although Lewis acknowledges that his modern Oxford is ‘very largely a place of teaching,’ he requests that students ‘at least *pretend*’ to be ‘concerned not with education but with knowledge for its own sake.’³⁷ This distinction between learning and education

³¹ Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 24

³² *Ibid.*, 40-1.

³³ Gruner, ‘Teach the Children,’ 217.

³⁴ C.S. Lewis, *The Last Battle*, illus. Pauline Baynes (originally published 1956; New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 210.

³⁵ Lewis, ‘Our English Syllabus,’ 93 and 84. See Chapter One, p. 65.

³⁶ Lewis, ‘Our English Syllabus,’ 84 and 85.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 86.

illuminates his depictions of learning in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and has implications for subsequent works in the Oxford School.

The Pevensie children's interactions with Professor Kirke in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* reflect Lewis's ideal relationship between the student and his tutor. A Merlin-like figure, the professor 'was a very old man with shaggy white hair which grew over most of his face as well as on his head, and they [the children] liked him almost at once.'³⁸ He is known simply as 'the Professor' in this novel, but later works give his name as Professor Kirke, in a reference to Lewis's own tutor, W.T. Kirkpatrick, with whom he studied before entering Oxford.³⁹ Lewis attributes his true education to Kirkpatrick, whom he calls 'Kirke' or 'the Greak Knock' in his autobiography, and describes his learning process with the tutor in active terms that recall the 'great rough countryside' of literary study.⁴⁰ He recalls learning to translate Greek as a process by which 'at first I could travel only a very short way along the trail he [Kirkpatrick] had blazed, but every day I could travel further. Presently I could travel the whole way. Then I could go a line or two beyond his furthest North.'⁴¹ He calls his period of study 'the happy life I led with Kirk, [...] the ideal life I would live now if I could.'⁴² In *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* Professor Kirke does not attempt to give the Pevensie children any formal instruction, but encourages them to use '[l]ogic!' to find the answers to their questions.⁴³ When Peter and Susan approach him with the problem of Lucy's honesty, concerned about her stories of finding Narnia in the wardrobe, his Socratic questioning helps them to conclude that Lucy may not be lying. 'I wonder what they *do* teach them at these

³⁸ Lewis, *Lion*, 3.

³⁹ Similarly, in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, Professor Kirke tutors Peter in preparation for an exam over the summer holidays. Lewis, *Dawn Treader*, 4.

⁴⁰ Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 154.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 165.

⁴³ Lewis, *Lion*, 49.

schools,' he mutters afterwards, and concludes that '[n]othing is more probable' than that there 'could be other worlds—all over the place, just round the corner.'⁴⁴

As later works in the *Chronicles* reveal, Professor Kirke is a source of wisdom because of his own experiences and learning: these make him into the valuable tutor from whom the children 'pick up what [they] can.'⁴⁵ *The Magician's Nephew*, the prequel to *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, reveals that the Professor is Digory Kirke, the boy hero of *The Magician's Nephew*, as an adult. Digory becomes 'a famous learned man, a Professor, and a great traveller' by the time he is 'quite middle-aged,' when he builds the wardrobe out of the wood of a Narnian tree and puts it into 'his big house in the country. And though he himself did not discover the magic properties of that wardrobe, someone else [the Pevensies] did.'⁴⁶ This cycle of experience and advising suggests that heroes can be academics, and vice-versa. It also insists upon a distance between the tutor and the child protagonist that creates space for the young hero to act without supervision, privileging self-guided experience as a means of learning. Thus learning accompanies action and is essential to power in children's fantasy, for both the student-hero and the scholar-tutor.

Like Professor Kirke, Tolkien's Gandalf is not a reclusive, tentative academic; his reputation as a traveller who foments excitement and instigates change precedes him when he arrives in the Shire in *The Hobbit*. True to his reputation, Gandalf initiates the adventures of the child-sized hobbit Bilbo Baggins by selecting him as the 'burglar' for the party of Dwarfs on a quest to regain their hereditary treasure from the dragon that guards it. Although Bilbo is an adult, the Hobbits' relative size and their innocence about the dangers of Middle-Earth make them like children to the

⁴⁴ Ibid., 50.

⁴⁵ Lewis, 'Our English Syllabus,' 85.

⁴⁶ C.S. Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew*, illus. Pauline Baynes. (originally published 1955; New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 201-02.

other races; in *The Two Towers*, Aragorn describes hobbits to other Men as people who would look ‘small, only children to your eyes.’⁴⁷ Nevertheless, and in spite of Bilbo’s initial resistance, Gandalf is confident that Bilbo is necessary for the venture, and states ‘I chose Mr Baggins. Just let any one say I chose the wrong man.’⁴⁸ Bilbo recalls that Gandalf has been ‘responsible for so many quiet lads and lasses going off into the Blue for mad adventures,’ as Gandalf is when he sets Bilbo’s own trip in motion. Thorin, the leader of the dwarves that accompany Bilbo, calls Gandalf ‘our friend and counsellor, the ingenious wizard’ early in the novel, marking Gandalf as a wise adviser.⁴⁹ He guides Bilbo and the Dwarfs during the initial phases of his journey, but disappears often, leaving the smaller beings to overcome dangers and struggles on their own. It is difficult to overstate the importance of Tolkien’s Middle-Earth novels to the development of fantasy literature for children and adults in the twentieth century and beyond. Given the trilogy’s influence on the genre, it is unsurprising that so many children’s fantasy works that followed should incorporate an older male tutor figure, usually a wizard, as part of the hero’s education. These scholarly magicians seem to serve as twentieth-century avatars for Oxford School authors: powerful in their clerkly identities, and reflecting the English School’s elevation of ‘medieval’ knowledge as culturally indispensable.

Medieval literature provides prototypes for these active scholarly figures, which becomes ‘evidence’ for the legitimacy and authenticity of such characters in Oxford School works: medieval ‘pre-texts’ that legitimise the Oxford School’s promotion of its own academic experiences. Perhaps the earliest and most lasting example of the connection between heroic leadership and humanistic education comes from Alfred the Great, who reigned in the late ninth century. Alfred, the first

⁴⁷ Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, 44.

⁴⁸ Tolkien, *The Hobbit*, 19.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

ruler to style himself King of the English, is known for inspiring a sense of national unity through military achievements against Danish invaders and by actively encouraging writings and translations in the vernacular. This includes establishing the English *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* to record historical events, and having Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, among other works, translated into English. Malcolm Godden asserts that Alfred may not, in fact, have written most, if any, of the texts ascribed to him; nevertheless, whether or not the historical man was scholar, his legacy as such left a lasting impression.⁵⁰ Alfred is especially valuable as a medieval precursor to the Oxford School because of how he represents the intersection of English literary development and the 'patriotic' sense of history that the English School valued in Lewis and Tolkien's time.⁵¹

Although he did not have a single tutor, one of the men in the circle of clerics that Alfred brought to his court was Asser, a Welsh monk and thinker who wrote the biographical *Life of King Alfred*.⁵² George Cary notes three major motifs in the medieval 'advice to princes' genre, all of which apply to the influential legend surrounding Alfred's life. These elements

belong to every writer who considers his dignity as a writer, and every philosopher who wishes to advise a king. The first is the importance of a tutor [...] the second is the necessity, if the prince is to preserve his fame, that he shall surround himself with a circle of learned writers; [The third is the praise of] a learned prince, and one who encourage[s] learning in other men.⁵³

The tutor is first in this list, but the perpetuation of fame through new literary creation and the establishment of a literary culture are also essential aspects of the medieval genre that concerns itself with the development of kings. Oxford School fantasy often

⁵⁰ Malcolm Godden, 'Did King Alfred Write Anything?,' *Medium Ævum* 76 (2007): 1-23.

⁵¹ Tolkien, 'The Oxford English School,' 780.

⁵² See Simon Keynes and Michael Lapdige, eds. and trans., *Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources* (Penguin Books: Harmondsworth, 1983).

⁵³ George Cary, *The Medieval Alexander* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 106.

includes similar motifs, especially the presence of a tutor for the willing child hero and the promotion of a culture of learning.

Cary's comments do not refer to Alfred, but rather to Alexander the Great (356-323 BCE), who served as the central character in a number of medieval works and exemplars. Alexander conquered almost all of the known world during his brief reign, following an education that was popularized in the Middle Ages as guided by Aristotle. In addition to the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*, which can be found in medieval vernacular translations from Ireland, Iceland, Italy, France, and England, romances featuring the life of Alexander appeared in England from the fourteenth century onwards, many of which mention his youthful learning as a preface to his success.⁵⁴ In texts beyond the romances bearing his name, Alexander's life appeared as an example for kings in several other genres. The *Secretum Secretorum*, a fictional book of counsel from Aristotle to Alexander, influenced medieval treatises on political science; for instance, it served as one of the sources for Thomas Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes*, an advice text written for Henry V in the early fifteenth century.⁵⁵

Stories from Alexander's life also appear as exempla in late medieval texts, including in John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, another regular text in the English School curriculum between 1931-1970. Although this poem professes to be wholly about love after the prologue, G.H.V. Bunt notes that Alexander 'is referred to more often than any other famous hero, Jewish or Christian' in the work, often in the

⁵⁴ The principal Alexander romances are *Kyng Alisaunder* (c. 1300), the alliterative *Alexander and Dindimus* (or *Alexander B*) and *Alexander A* (both late fourteenth century), the *Wars of Alexander*, and *The Prose Life of Alexander* (both fifteenth century). These had forerunners in European vernacular romances from as early as the third century. See Margaret Bridges, 'Empowering the Hero: Alexander as Author in the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem* and its Medieval English Versions,' in *The Problematics of Power: Eastern and Western Representations of Alexander the Great*. (Bern: Peter Lang, 1996), 45.

⁵⁵ Cary, 21. See also Nicholas Perkins, *Hoccleve's 'Regiment of Princes': Counsel and Constraint* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), 93.

context of a tale that makes a martial or political point.⁵⁶ In a self-reflexive and illuminating move, Gower includes information about Alexander's tutors that prompts the young Amans to ask his own older male tutor, Genius, to tell him more about Aristotle's instruction of the young king. This inspires a lengthy digression in Book VII on the duties of kings, underscoring the import of tutelage to successful kingship. The medieval 'advice to princes' genre functioned to inform and educate wider audiences than just the monarch for whom the text was intended; Amans, like most of the *Confessio*'s audience, is not a prince. Gower treats Aristotle's example of teaching and mentorship as relevant to a broader readership, if especially important for future kings.

The example of good tutelage as essential to successful kingship also appears in Thomas Malory's fifteenth-century *Le Morte Darthur*. Malory's first editor, William Caxton, notes the didactic potential of the text in his Preface, but seems to recognise that this must be gleaned with intention from the body of the work's entertaining tales.⁵⁷ He states that he 'sette it in enprynte to the entente that noble men may see and lerne the noble actes of chyvalrye,' and asks the reader to '[d]oo after the good and leve the evyl,' suggesting that such selective reading and learning 'shal brynge you to good fame and renomme.'⁵⁸ His admission of 'evyl' in *Le Morte Darthur* acknowledges its mixed content as a work of entertainment focused upon the narratives of Arthur and his knights. However Karen Cherewatuk argues that *Le*

⁵⁶ G.H.V. Bunt, 'Exemplum and Tale in John Gower's "Confessio Amantis,"' in *Exemplum et Similitudo: Alexander the Great and Other Heroes as Points of Reference in Medieval Literature*, ed. W.J. Aerts and M. Gosman. (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1988), 150.

⁵⁷ On the many debates surrounding the editing of the *Morte*, see Carol M. Meale, "'The Hoole Book": Editing and the Creation of Meaning in Malory's Text," in *A Companion to Malory*, 3-17. On Lotte Hellinga's discovery that the Winchester Manuscript, considered to be a more 'authentic' edition of Malory, served as one of Caxton's copy-texts, see her article 'The Malory Manuscript and Caxton,' in *Aspects of Malory*, ed. Toshiyuki Takamiya and Derek Brewer (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981), 127-41.

⁵⁸ William Caxton, 'Caxton's Preface,' in Sir Thomas Malory, *Works* 2d ed., ed. Eugène Vinaver (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), xv.

Morte Darthur may have been intended as an understood source of learning and advice in the Middle Ages, however. She associates *Le Morte Darthur* with the ‘great books’ of chivalric exempla, and argues that it may be just such a chivalric manual, part of the rise of literature that catered to the socially climbing class of the newly wealthy in Malory’s day. Under these conditions, such works served not only to recount tales of the aristocracy, but to model noble behaviour for those that aspired to loftier social status.⁵⁹ If *Le Morte Darthur* did function in this way, then it would have been a source of important cultural capital in the Middle Ages.⁶⁰ Lewis and Tolkien’s inclusion of this work in the Oxford English curriculum reasserted the text’s position as such in the twentieth-century. King Arthur’s tutelage under Merlin in Malory exemplifies not only the kind of instruction necessary to the development of an ideal king, as in the ‘advice to princes’ genre, it also emphasises such learning as an important ingredient in the desirable chivalric universe.

In spite of the twentieth century’s depictions of Merlin as Arthur’s childhood tutor, most notably in *The Sword in the Stone*, Merlin only counsels Arthur in *Le Morte Darthur* once he is already king, helping to form the new monarch into a heroic leader before disappearing from the text. Meredith Reynolds argues that Malory especially highlights the significance of Merlin’s role in the opening book, which Caxton titles ‘Merlin.’ Reynolds notes that in ‘Merlin’

‘counsel’ and ‘advyce,’ or their orthographic variants, are used twenty-two times and eleven times respectively. To concentrate an audience’s attention on a specific idea, Malory often increases word repetition: as ‘Merlin’ focuses on Arthur’s rise to power and his development into a good king, ‘counsel’ and ‘advyce’ become directly tied to him. [...]

⁵⁹ Karen Cherewatuk, “‘Genty!’ Audiences and “‘Grete Bookes’”: Chivalric Manuals and the *Morte Darthur*,” in *Arthurian Literature XV*, eds. James P. Carley and Felicity Riddy (Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 216.

⁶⁰ Caxton’s editing may have also helped produce the emergent English ‘nation’ at this time by producing a comprehensive chronicle in which ‘the events recorded’ are ‘more or less homogeneous [linguistically], more or less equivalent in weight and emphasis.’ Laurie A. Finke and Martin B. Shichtman, *King Arthur and the Myth of History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 168.

These words mark the progress Arthur makes towards becoming a wise and powerful king[.]⁶¹

In keeping with Merlin's association with 'counsel' and 'advice,' the wizard becomes the young King Arthur's primary counsellor in the first book of *Le Morte Darthur*.

The importance of Merlin in this book, and *Le Morte Darthur*'s place in the English curriculum at Oxford, makes it a useful pre-text for the Oxford School. Merlin's aim with regard to Arthur is to impart key lessons of kingship, which privilege critical assessment and deliberate action that benefits the greater good over impetuous, self-serving bravery. This self-control and subordination of personal desires to the need of the (English) nation are the kinds of lessons that Oxford School and later fantasy tutors impart to their pupils.

In Merlin and Arthur's first interaction, the magician's concerns are focused on establishing and maintaining royal authority. He immediately sets to work defending the king's sovereignty and teaching Arthur how to rule, telling him how to subdue the eleven kings rebelling against his throne. Merlin 'bade hym fere not, but come oute boldly and speke with hem, and spare hem not, but ansuere them as their kyng and chyvetayn, "for ye shal overcome hem all, whether they wille or nylle."⁶² Merlin's first words to Arthur are instructive ('come oute boldly and speke with hem'), refer to matters of rulership and how to perform his new role as king ('ansuere them as their kyng and chyvetayn'), and come with the revelation of rare—and in this case magically divined—knowledge ('ye shal overcome hem all, whether they wille or nylle'). He proceeds to orchestrate Arthur's martial success over the kings, and advises that Arthur solicit the aid of Kings Ban and Bors, whose land holdings in France make them unlikely to be a threat to Arthur's English lands. This alliance

⁶¹ Meredith Reynolds, 'Malory's Use of "Counsel" and "Advyce" in Creating a King,' *Arthuriana* 16.2 (Summer 2006): 40. On repetition, see also Karen Cherewatuk, 'Aural and Written Reception in Sir John Paston, Malory, and Caxton,' *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 21 (2005): 126-27.

⁶² Malory, *Works*, 12.

foreshadows the heights that Arthur's Round Table will reach, for the two kings' sons—Launcelot and Bors, respectively—will become two of Arthur's most important and celebrated knights.

Merlin leaves the bloodshed and prowess on the battlefield to Arthur; the young king is, as befits romance, a gifted warrior, and during the fight he 'was so blody that by hys shyldes ther myght no man know hym, for all was blode and brayne that stake on his swerde and on hys shyldes.'⁶³ Arthur becomes concealed by blood, the warlike aspect of his heroic identity overwhelming even the crest on his shield that marks him as king. Merlin soon intervenes, bringing Arthur back to himself and counselling restraint in order to prevent the young monarch from massacring the eleven kings. 'Hast thou nat done inow?' Merlin demands, and chastises Arthur for his lack of self-control, saying, 'God ys wroth with the for thou woll never have done.'⁶⁴ The wizard recognises the political danger of Arthur's killing the potential instruments of his royal power, and Merlin uses magical knowledge to assure the young king that success will follow a prudent retreat.

In several other incidents in 'Merlin,' Merlin attempts to teach Arthur not to place too much stock in physical force and outward appearances, and never to underestimate intellectual and magical power. This privileging of more 'clerkly' skills alongside or even above military ones provides a medieval precedent for the Oxford School's reimagining of heroic attributes. Seeing three 'chorlys' chasing Merlin in the *Morte*, Arthur rides towards them and frightens them off with his knight's armour. He boasts to Merlin:

'A, Merlion!' seyde Arthure, 'here haddist thou be slayne for all thy crafftis, had nat I bene.'

⁶³ Ibid., 22.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 24.

‘Nay,’ seyde Merlyon, ‘nat so, for I cowde a saved myselffe
and I had wolde.’⁶⁵

After dismissing Arthur’s claim, Merlin displays his own power, saving Arthur from King Pellinore using an enchantment. Arthur wants to take Pellinore’s adventure from him and to fight with him, in a typical display of the hero’s desire for glory. But Merlin, who recognises that this behaviour is unfitting for a king, reveals Arthur’s identity and then casts Pellinore into a swoon to prevent him from harming the king. The wizard then repeats Arthur’s words back to him, ‘Now here had ye be slayne had I nat bene,’ as if to gently taunt the younger man.⁶⁶

Malory’s Merlin repeatedly attempts to convey to Arthur that he must use his intellect and be open to non-violent means of brokering power; most of all, he seeks to mould the young man into a king who can overcome his individual desires for adventure and fame in favour of the needs of the kingdom. Merlin teaches Arthur to appreciate the clerkly strengths of magic, knowledge, and self-restraint, and displays these strengths in his own actions. This lesson surfaces again when Merlin shows Arthur how to obtain the sword from the Lady of the Lake. Arthur tells Merlin that he prefers the sword to the scabbard, and Merlin replies, ‘[y]e ar the more unwise, for the scawberde ys worth ten of the swerde; for whyles ye have the scawberde uppon you ye shall lose no blood, be ye never so sore wounded. Therefore kepe well the scawberde allweyes with you.’⁶⁷ Merlin rebukes Arthur for placing his faith in a tool of physical might, rather than the more strategic, protective magical scabbard. In the same way, the Oxford School conveys an idea of heroism that asks the child hero to ‘kepe well’ the clerkly lessons and knowledge of their powerful tutors ‘allweyes with’ them. However the autonomous strength of the Oxford School tutor shifted to a more

⁶⁵ Ibid., 32-3.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 34.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 36.

pastoral, educational role after Lewis and Tolkien's work. T.H. White's *The Sword in the Stone* was essential to this development in children's fantasy, as I discuss below.

II. Fantasy Goes to School

Following Gandalf and Lewis's Professor Kirke the magical tutor figures of children's fantasy began to increasingly resemble schoolteachers in their careful guidance of the hero. The transformation of Merlin in the twentieth century is essential to this larger change: as Stephen Knight writes,

[w]hether Arthur is a puzzled leader attempting to guide progress or a child seeking to learn how to behave, or in many stages between the two, the essence of knowledge Merlin imparts to him will focus on the judgment and achievement of that ultimate location of modern power, the human individual: the sage's focal role will be in education.⁶⁸

The various Merlin figures of children's fantasy shift to become the educators of child heroes first, and only scholars or magicians with their own agendas secondly, if at all. This change is evident even in works by Oxford School authors, in spite of the emphasis on more independent 'learning' that Lewis suggests ought to be the foundation of the Oxford English education.

T.H. White's 'preface' to Malory, *The Sword in the Stone*, did much to influence this change, as well as to promote Arthurian material as a source for children's literature. The Cambridge-educated schoolteacher's irreverent medievalisms serve as a counterpoint for the more nostalgic fantasy of early Oxford School authors, but his imagining of Merlin as Arthur's boyhood teacher is an innovation that transformed popular notions of Arthurian legend in the twentieth century. Kevin Crossley-Holland notes that 'neither Malory nor any other medieval romance writers

⁶⁸ Knight, *Merlin*, 174.

were much interested in the psychology of childhood or the years before Arthur became king,' and contends that *The Sword in the Stone* thus 'br[oke] new ground' in Arthurian literature.⁶⁹ White's novel provided a child-focused prequel to Malory's narrative that reflects the growing interest in children's culture of the preceding centuries. His work gave rise to many more educational Merlin or Merlin-like figures in children's fantasy, including in the Oxford School. White's casual anachronisms are a tribute to his conscious project of reconsidering the Middle Ages through a contemporary lens, an approach that is implicit in Oxford School works and their successors. He recognised that Malory wrote in medievalisms, and that *The Sword in the Stone* therefore created compounded medievalisms. He wrote in a 1939 letter:

Malory and I are both dreaming. We care very little for exact days, and he says I am to tell you I am after the spirit of the Morte d'Arthur (just as he was after the spirit of those sources he collated) seen through the eyes of 1939. He looked through 1489 (was it? – can't trouble to verify) and got a lot of 1489 muddled up with the sources. I am looking *through* 1939 at 1489 itself looking *backwards*.⁷⁰

Such a self-aware approach to the reconstruction of the Middle Ages allows for a cavalier attitude towards the medieval that is missing in many Oxford School works. White intentionally juxtaposes incongruous or unlikely fragments to poke affectionate fun at romantic views of pre-Enlightenment British legends and cultural traditions. Part of this playfulness results in a Merlin who is more of an eccentric schoolteacher than a dignified don.

White read his undergraduate English degree in the 1920s at the University of Cambridge, the second-oldest university in England, and what Oxford students and dons still call 'the other place' (Cambridge students also refer to Oxford in this way, just as the House of Lords and House of Commons use the same term for each other).

⁶⁹ Kevin Crossley-Holland, 'Introduction,' in T. H. White, *The Once and Future King*, illus. John Lawrence (originally published 1965; London: Folio Society, 2003) xi.

⁷⁰ Sylvia Townsend Warner, *T.H. White: A Biography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), 134.

Cambridge shares many of the same attributes as Oxford, including a collegiate tutorial system, medieval architecture, and a history of exclusivity. But Cambridge's English Faculty followed the New Critics in its approach to literary studies and, unlike Oxford's syllabus, it 'paid little attention to literature "before the Shakespearean moment."' ⁷¹ However White wrote his undergraduate thesis on *Le Morte Darthur*, and recalls it in his description of *The Sword in the Stone* as 'a preface to Malory.' ⁷² The education of the Wart (Arthur) in *The Sword in the Stone* takes a modified tutorial format, perhaps in homage to White's Cambridge tutor and long-time friend L.J. Potts. White's numerous references to Cambridge and elite schools in this novel confirm the role of selected education in the formation of the most important member of the true 'state nobility.'

Indeed, the land in which the Wart (Arthur) lives is known as both England and 'Gramarye,' suggesting the intertwining of scholarship (especially of words), magic, and nation. The now obsolete Middle English usage of 'gramarye' applied to grammar and learning in general; its other meaning, 'occult learning, magic, necromancy,' was revived by Sir Walter Scott at the beginning of the nineteenth century. ⁷³ Rudyard Kipling calls all of England by the same name in 'Puck's Song,' the poem that opens his children's serial *Puck of Pook's Hill* (1906-1910):

She is not any common Earth,
Water or wood or air,
But Merlin's Isle of Gramarye,
Where you and I will fare. ⁷⁴

⁷¹ Brian Barbour, 'Lewis and Cambridge,' *Modern Philology* 96.4 (May 1999): 440.

⁷² François Gallix, ed., *Letters to a Friend: The Correspondence Between T.H. White and L.J. Potts* (New York: G.P Putnam's Sons, 1982), 93.

⁷³ It also has a cognate relationship to 'glamour,' which means 'magic, enchantment, or spell' and is a corrupt form of 'grammar,' also 'introduced into the literary language by Scott.' *OED Online*, s.v. 'glamour,' accessed 27 February 2010. <http://www.oed.com>.

⁷⁴ Rudyard Kipling, *Puck of Pook's Hill and Rewards and Fairies*, ed. Donald Mackenzie. (originally published 1906; Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 6.

Such a designation defines England in terms of history, legend, magic, and learning, explicitly drawing upon Arthurian lore and the idea of Merlin in particular. The chapters and poems that comprise *Puck of Pook's Hill* creatively rework British history and myth to produce a magical narrative with a clear nationalistic message. This portion of the poem also appears as the incipit to Book I of *The Once and Future King*, White's collected cycle.⁷⁵ This book is the extensively rewritten form of *The Sword in the Stone*, which still revolves around the Wart's education with Merlin (spelled Merlyn in the novel).⁷⁶ At the conclusion of *The Once and Future King*, White's Arthur shares his story with a young page named Tom Malory and charges him with writing it down for the English people.⁷⁷ Thus in naming his rewritten England 'Gramarye,' White appears to recognise and address the role of literature in the creation of a nation: in this case, the 'imagined community' that is England.⁷⁸

Merlyn's course of study for the Wart reflects a broad base of learning, suggesting the education of school-age children (as the Wart is) rather than a more focused adherence to the study of languages and literature. Objects for the teaching of this 'general' education fill Merlyn's study: while there are 'hundreds of thousands of brown books in leather bindings' in the room, it also contains a plethora of scientific objects and specimens that reveal Merlyn's fascination with natural history and foreshadows the Wart's extensive study in nature. These include, among many others, 'stuffed birds, popinjays, and maggot-pies, and kingfishers, and peacocks with all their feathers but two, and tiny birds like beetles, and a reputed phoenix which

⁷⁵ White, *The Once and Future King*, front matter.

⁷⁶ On the transformations of *The Sword in the Stone* in its various editions, see Elisabeth Brewer, *T.H. White's The Once and Future King* (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1993), 17-47.

⁷⁷ White, *The Once and Future King*, 614. In doing so, White bypasses the 'French book' that Malory repeatedly cites as his source in *Le Morte Darthur*, keeping both the creation and writing of the story within the imaginary English nation.

⁷⁸ See Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

smelt of incense and cinnamon.’⁷⁹ In one episode Merlyn turns Wart into a snake, and a grass snake asks Wart-the-snake if he has learned history. The boy replies that he knows ‘[a]bout Alexander the Great, and that,’ and the snake dismisses this king and prominent medieval exemplar as ‘[s]ome trashy modern stuff, no doubt.’ The grass snake begins to recount early *natural* history as significant knowledge instead: ‘[t]he earth cooled. The sea covered it. It was a hundred million years ago that Life came to the Great Sea, and the fishes bred within it. They were the oldest people, the Fish.’⁸⁰ White’s re-evaluation of the ancient puts human concerns in the context of science since Darwin, revealing their constructed importance and opening the space to make light of them. As the grass snake insists, ‘[I]ook at that ridiculous *H. Sapiens barbatus* [...] It was born when? Ten or twenty thousand years ago. What do the tens and twenties matter?’⁸¹ This approach conflicts with Lewis and Tolkien’s belief that deep culture can be conveyed through a canon of national literature, but may actually have roots in medieval tradition. Stephen Knight notes that White ‘was very widely read, and appears to know the tradition of wild Myrddin [from Welsh myth] and his animals, because Merlyn educates Arthur primarily through making him experience the natural world.’⁸² In the twentieth century Merlyn’s teaching also evokes stereotypes of Cambridge as a more scientific, empirical, and progressive university than Oxford, and in the idea of a wide base of knowledge as necessary for the education of young people.

Merlyn also sends the Wart to learn from a badger, in a comic representation of the kind of tutorial education that Oxford and Cambridge offer. The use of a badger for this role recalls Kenneth Grahame’s *Badger*, and Lewis’s approval of this

⁷⁹ White, *The Sword in the Stone*, 39.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 210-11.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁸² Knight, *Merlin*, 194.

figure as the embodiment of ‘humanity and of English Social History.’⁸³ White’s Badger seem to personify the quintessential British academic, and his rooms resemble a Cambridge or Oxford fellows’ common room: ‘[a]ll around the panelled walls there were ancient paintings of departed badgers, famous in their day for scholarship or godliness, lit up from above by shaded glow-worms.’⁸⁴ There are ‘stately’ leather chairs, ‘a portrait of the Founder over the fireplace,’ a tilting-board for decanters, and ‘[s]ome black gowns hung in the passage outside, and all was extremely ancient.’⁸⁵ The badger’s desire to read his ‘D.Litt.’ to the Wart (‘[h]e got so few chances of reading his treatises to anybody, that he could not bear to let this priceless opportunity slip by’) and his shyness about his work (‘[h]e immediately became completely paralysed with shyness, and sat blushing at his papers, unable to begin’) affectionately mock the figure of the don.⁸⁶ Although this episode is one of the ways in which the Wart learns, there are many others, orchestrated by Merlyn. As Merlyn tells the Wart, ‘[e]ducation is experience, and the essence of experience is self-reliance.’⁸⁷ The broad education and emphasis on physical experience does not allow for the mythologizing of White’s own text as a kind of ‘magical’ book that can impart cultural capital or replace a magical education. White writes his experience as a schoolmaster at a boys’ school into *The Sword and the Stone*, using the everyday interests of boarding school books to translate the medieval world that he creates. Lewis calls the desire to be the ‘hero of the [cricket] first eleven’ one of the dangerously mundane topics of some children’s literature, which he suggests can

⁸³ Lewis, ‘On Three Ways of Writing for Children,’ 62.

⁸⁴ White, *Sword in the Stone*, 322.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 322-23. Arthur returns to these rooms again the night before the final battle of his reign in White’s *Book of Merlyn*, a fifth addition to the *Once and Future King* group. There he meets again the animals from *The Sword in the Stone*, presumably in a dream and under the supervision of Merlyn. Like Cambridge or Oxford dons, the assembled group discuss what animals can teach about how to abolish war. See Knight, *Merlin*, 197-98.

⁸⁶ White, *Sword in the Stone*, 324-25.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 64.

leave the child reader dissatisfied and unhappy.⁸⁸ White, by contrast, puts the schoolboy's passion for cricket to use in his fantasy text.

For instance, White's description of jousting is thick with references to cricket, from the 'sweeping' motion that a jouster may choose to make to 'what wood was best for spears' (in both cases, mimicking tips on using and choosing cricket bats) to the 'green meadow, kept short' with 'pavilions' where the jousting tournaments take place (reminiscent of cricket pitches).⁸⁹ This account enables White to articulate the rules of medieval jousting to his young audience in terms of their contemporary knowledge, making his text instructional but not a source of 'mystical' knowledge. This 'schoolboy' approach also gently mocks both medieval customs and educational hierarchies. For example, White's conflation of medieval jousting and the nineteenth- and twentieth-century enthusiasm for sporting at elite public schools makes light of the glory attributed to the sporting hero within such institutions:

Merlyn grumbled a good deal about athletics, saying that nowadays people thought you were an educated man if you could knock another man off a horse and that the craze for games was the ruination of true scholarship [...] but Sir Ector, who was an old tilting blue, said that the battle of Cressy had been won upon the playing fields of Camelot. This made Merlyn so furious that he gave Sir Ector rheumatism two nights running before he relented.⁹⁰

Here White plays upon the saying attributed (probably incorrectly) to the Duke of Wellington: 'the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton,' which attributes national military power to schoolboy sports training.⁹¹ Merlyn and Sir Ector's squabbles about jousting and the purposes of education not only poke fun at the

⁸⁸ Lewis, 'On Three Ways of Writing for Children,' 64.

⁸⁹ White, *Sword in the Stone*, 101-03.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 100. A 'blue' is an award for competing in sport at the highest level at a university and some schools. This tradition originated at Oxford and Cambridge, where it continues today.

⁹¹ Elizabeth M. Knowles, *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 810.

idea of the medieval tournament (and sport in general) as heroic, but also cast Merlyn's commitment to scholarship in a humorous light.

White's conscious recombination of sources differs from the Oxford School's in that he intentionally juxtaposes incongruous or unlikely fragments to create humour. Oxford School works such as *The Hobbit*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and *The Dark Is Rising*, by contrast, often arrange their diverse sources in ways that establish unified, and therefore less contestable, fantasy universes. In spite of these key differences, White's imagining of Merlyn as a *teacher*, and as a schoolteacher in particular, had a major influence on children's fantasy expectations. Instruction joined, and later supplanted, the scholarly and heroic pursuits of the fantasy wizard-tutor in the Oxford School. Cooper, for instance, seems to read the medieval Merlin through White's educational Merlyn when she creates Merriman Lyon, the tutor figure in *The Dark Is Rising*. Merriman is Merlin in the Middle Ages and an Oxford don in the present day, implying a connection between academia and power. His dual role as Will's teacher and master suggests the integration of both Lewis and Tolkien's English School approach to learning and White's schoolteacher educationalism.

Merriman first appears in *Over Sea, Under Stone*, the first of the books in the series, as the Drew children's Great-Uncle Merry: a man 'tall, and straight, with a lot of very thick, wild, white hair.'⁹² Will's uncle later describes Merriman as an '[u]nusual guy, too. Teaches at Oxford. Brilliant brain, but I guess you'd call him kind of odd—very shy, hates meeting people.'⁹³ Merriman oversees Will's education and initiation into the knowledge of the Old Ones through a combination of books,

⁹² Susan Cooper, *Over Sea, Under Stone* (originally published 1965; New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 2000), 3.

⁹³ Susan Cooper, *Greenwitch* (originally published 1974; New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1986), 10. Although there is no sign that Merriman relinquishes his position at Oxford, in *The Dark Is Rising* he poses as a butler in the Lady's manor, in Will's village. This position emphasises Merlin's role as a dignified assistant to nobility.

lecturing, and practical experience from the second book in the series (*The Dark Is Rising*) onwards. In an extension of the English School's focus on reading ancient English texts, the climax of *Greenwitch* (1974) sees Will translating a primeval script inscribed on a grail. The influence of Lewis and Tolkien's syllabus on Cooper's conception of 'real' reading makes itself evident as Will works with Merriman and another Old One, using the language preserved upon a crumbling manuscript to aid in this translation:

Will looked now at the close, delicate engraving for the first time in his life, seeing the panels filled with vivid scenes of men running, fighting, crouching behind shields: tunic-clad, strangely-helmeted men brandishing swords and shields. The pictures woke deep memories in him of things he had forgotten he had ever known. He looked closer, at the words and letters interwoven between the figures, and at the last panel on the grail, completely filled with words in this same cipher-language that no living scholar had been able to understand. And like the other two Old Ones, he began methodically to look from the marks on the old manuscript to the marks on the grail, and gradually the interweaving became clear.

Will found himself breathing faster, as the meaning of the inscription began to take shape in his mind.⁹⁴

The acquisition of knowledge from translating an indigenous British pre-modern text serves as a moment of high drama in the novel, indicating the significance that Cooper ascribes to the act of a young person effectively reading in the original language alongside his teacher. It also conveys the possibility for translation and the more tedious aspects of philological study to serve as the exciting means to heroic action. Tolkien's notes suggest reveal his own passion for such study, and his conviction that his students should share this. 'In a scholar curiosity is not only a merit but an essential possession,' he states, and 'a scholar should feel the appeal of the past. He should desire to know what can be known about it and apprehend it with imagination, but imagination that can realise the evidence. To her feasts Philologia

⁹⁴ Cooper, *Greenwitch*, 124-25.

invites not only Literature but also History.⁹⁵ Will senses not only the ‘appeal’ of the past, but the significance of it in his present; he puts imagination and evidence to work to allow ‘the meaning of the inscription [...] to take shape in his mind,’ using ingrained ‘memories’ and recent learning to unlock the grail’s message.

However, Merriman’s primary means of imparting the knowledge that Will needs as an Old One is by providing him access to the Book of Gramarye, ‘the oldest book in the world.’⁹⁶ Merriman tells Will that it

is the book from which you will learn your place as an Old One, and there are no words to describe how precious it is. The book of hidden things, of real magic. Long ago, when magic was the only written knowledge, our business was called simply Knowing.⁹⁷

Although the significance of ‘knowing’ and the use of ancient books to achieve this knowledge suggest the practices of the English School, Will’s reading of the Book of Gramarye seems to pay homage to White because of its name, and thus to Merlyn’s approach to education. Will *experiences* the book as he reads it: although ‘[t]here were simple enough titles to each page: *Of Flying; Of Challenge; Of the Words of Power; Of Resistance; Of Time through the Doors,*’ ‘instead of presenting him with a story or instruction, the book would give simply a snatch of verse or a bright image, which somehow had him instantly in the midst of whatever experience was involved.’⁹⁸ The imaginative processes that may be involved in reading become the act and the experience of reading the Book of Gramarye:

He might read no more than one line—I have journeyed as an eagle—and he was soaring suddenly aloft as if winged, learning through feeling, feeling the way of resting on the wind and tilting round the rising columns of air, of sweeping and soaring, of looking down at patchwork-green hills capped with dark trees, and a winding, glinting river between. And he knew as he flew that the eagle was one of the

⁹⁵ See Tolkien Papers A14/1, fols. 108-109.

⁹⁶ Cooper, *The Dark is Rising*, 102.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 104.

only five birds who could see the Dark, and instantly he knew the other four, and in turn he was each of them...⁹⁹

This kind of reading merges text-based and experiential learning, and recalls Merlyn's teaching by transforming the Wart into the animals of *Gramarye* / England.

The book offers Will multiple kinds of 'gramarye' – learning, magical experience, and privileged insight into the 'truths' of England. This conflation of reading and physical encounters seems to bridge the gap between the kind of bodily learning that the Wart undergoes in *The Sword in the Stone* and the more stationary variety of study that children undertake with books, either in preparation for classes and tutorials or in reading for pleasure. It suggests that reading about the medieval past is glorious, exciting, and important knowledge for heroic action, for both Will and the reader reading *The Dark Is Rising*. Michael Drout contends that Cooper's heroes 'succeed in their quests because of their knowledge of the same cultural traditions that have been used by many other authors over many years to create a self-conscious national and racial identity in England.'¹⁰⁰ Merriman provides Will with this education through the Book of Gramarye, and Oxford School fantasy seems to offer the same benefits. However, by shifting the bulk of the learning process into a book, Cooper makes Merriman's role an even more instructional one, in which his primary role is that of the teacher who assigns educational texts for his pupil. In this scene, reading supplants the gradual acquisition of knowledge through experience, replacing lessons learned through spontaneous interactions with prescribed units on 'Flying,' 'Challenge,' 'Words of Power,' etc. Cooper retains the sense of freedom and bodily experience in her description of Will's reading, but his actual physical state –

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Drout, 'Reading the Signs of Light,' 240.

seated, with a book – suggests that it is possible to transmit fantastical knowledge through the right texts with the aid of the right teachers.

This shift towards a more educational approach to fantasy learning culminates in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, which combines British boarding school book norms with Oxford School medievalisms. The first six of the seven books in the series are set in Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, a converted castle full of rare books, stone halls, and richly furnished common rooms. The students reach this school, however, on a special school train, in the tradition of boarding school books. Harry's first view of Hogwarts closely matches that of the schoolchild approaching her new public school in Enid Blyton's work: for instance, in the *Malory Towers* series Darrell Rivers, the protagonist, sights her school: 'a big, square-looking building of soft grey stone standing high up on a hill. The hill was really a cliff that fell steeply down to the sea. At each end of the gracious building stood rounded towers.' The windows of the building 'shone,' and the narration reflects that '[i]t looked like an old-time castle' with "a flight of steps that led to the great front door.'¹⁰¹ Harry's school looks very similar, situated at 'the edge of a great black lake.' 'Perched atop a high mountain on the other side [of the lake], its windows sparkling in the starry sky, was a vast castle with many turrets and towers' and 'a flight of stone steps' leading to 'the huge, oak front door.'¹⁰²

Karl Miller contends that that 'Hogwarts is indeed like an English public school,'

with its four houses, its cult of sport (Hogwarts plays, not rugby and cricket and hockey, but Quidditch, an aerial polo requiring broomsticks and wands), its great traditions, its oil paintings of old headmasters, its air of Oxford and Cambridge, its imposing library and lavish tutorial

¹⁰¹ Enid Blyton, *First Term at Malory Towers* (originally published 1946; London: Egmont, 2006), 11-2.

¹⁰² J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (London: Bloomsbury, 1997), 83-4.

care, and the scramble to a department store at the beginning of the academic year to buy the expensive togs and equipment.¹⁰³

However, this ‘air of Oxford and Cambridge,’ preserved in its medievalisms and Hogwarts’s elite status as the only wizard school in Britain, is also essential to comprehending the power of this space. Harry’s wizarding world is based on the modern British system of government, but in Rowling’s work this democratic system gives rise to corrupt and unreliable ministers, in an extension of the Oxford School’s preference for feudalism and monarchy. Harry becomes the ‘chosen’ hero in this leaderless world, set apart by prophecy and supernatural signs (as ‘the Boy who Lived’ when attacked by the evil wizard Voldemort as a baby) to save his society from itself.¹⁰⁴ Even within the school, Harry is set apart for special and additional instruction from his teachers in an attempt to help him shoulder the burden of this status as predestined hero.

In this setting Professor Dumbledore emerges as the Merlin-like tutor figure for Harry. Dumbledore looks and dresses like Gandalf in *The Hobbit*, whom Tolkien describes as ‘an old man with a staff,’ dressed in ‘a tall pointed blue hat, a long grey cloak, a silver scarf over which his long white beard hung down below his waist, and immense black boots.’¹⁰⁵ Dumbledore is ‘tall, thin, and very old, judging by the silver of his hair and beard, which were both long enough to tuck into his belt. He was wearing long robes, a purple cloak which swept the ground and high-heeled, buckled boots.’¹⁰⁶ A learned and powerful wizard, his primary identity in the series is as the headmaster of Harry’s school and as helper and friend to Harry. In spite of his outward likeness to Gandalf Dumbledore’s occupation overseeing the education of

¹⁰³ Karl Miller, ‘Magic in the Air,’ *Changing English* 81 (2001): 31-2.

¹⁰⁴ On Rowling’s depiction of a fantasy world under contemporary western governance, in relation to Oxford School norms, see Chapter Five, pp. 247-51.

¹⁰⁵ Tolkien, *The Hobbit*, 5.

¹⁰⁶ Rowling, *Philosopher’s Stone*, 15.

children and his enthusiasm for sport (which Lewis and White's Merlyn found distracting from loftier and more important aims) recall the tradition of kindly schoolmasters such as Dr Thomas Arnold in *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857) or Enid Blyton's Miss Theobald in *The Twins at St. Clare's* (1941).¹⁰⁷ Dumbledore's hybrid character exemplifies Rowling's conflation of fantasy and boarding school book norms, bringing together genres and the kinds of desires that Lewis designates as in opposition to one another: the school story desire to be 'the hero of the first eleven' (or the star Quidditch player, in Harry's case) and the fantasy 'longing for he knows not what.'¹⁰⁸ The Harry Potter series' success may lie in its ability to address both at once, while also supporting and satisfying the idea of the children's fantasy text as a magical object in its own right.

III. Magical Books and Oxford as Simulacrum

Children's fantasy texts offer the child reader, shut out of the privileged spheres of elite, personalised education that the works invoke, the opportunity to access the kind of privileged information that young heroes glean from their wizard tutors. These novels may serve, for readers, as the magical books that they describe, and thereby offer fantasy adventure by the same means as the Book of Gramarye: through reading as experience. The fact that children's fantasy literature is often available in cheap paperback editions thus opens up the 'magical boundaries' that separate the 'chosen' few from the unchosen many through popular reading. Although child readers cannot *physically* access the magical worlds, schools, and educations

¹⁰⁷ This novel was instrumental to the foundation and development of the boarding school book genre. Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (originally published 1857; Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1993). Enid Blyton, *The Twins at St. Clare's* (originally published 1941; London: Egmont Books, 2005).

¹⁰⁸ Lewis, 'On Three Ways of Writing for Children,' 64-5.

that most Oxford School heroes enjoy, their reading allows them to gain exposure to these hidden, magical communities. Readers may therefore claim a kind of long-distance education in fantasy heroism, facilitated by children's fantasy authors, who take on the role of their distant tutors.

Books are the conduit for this transmission of 'education' and, thus, insider identity, a position supported by the pre-eminence of reading and books in children's fantasy literature. This stance towards texts is itself a medievalism: Lewis argues that '*the Middle Ages depended predominantly on books*. Though literacy was of course far rarer than now, reading was in one way a more important ingredient of total culture.'¹⁰⁹ The Oxford School demonstrates similar reverence for the written, medievalised text in the many books that appear in their works. Some are old, and some magical; some are the product of the kinds of writing and research that the English School encouraged. For instance, Frodo Baggins writes his experiences at the conclusion of *The Lord of the Rings*, in an act of authorship that may be read as a kind of chronicling. He adds his story to Bilbo's, in the same manuscript, repeating the medieval collecting of narratives in which the choice of texts compiled in a book often speaks to how each one should be read. Bilbo / Frodo's book is, like many medieval manuscripts, written out in multiple hands: it is 'a big plain book with plain red leather covers; its tall pages were now almost filled. At the beginning there were many leaves covered with Bilbo's thin wandering hand; but most of it was written in Frodo's firm flowing script.'¹¹⁰ Following Bilbo's indecisive titlings and retitlings,

¹⁰⁹ C.S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 5. Emphasis Lewis's.

¹¹⁰ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King* (originally published 1955; New York: Ballantine Books, 1965), 379.

Frodo had written:

THE DOWNFALL
OF THE
LORD OF THE RINGS
AND THE
RETURN OF THE KING

(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.¹¹¹

This book's title page reveals the combination of experience and 'the learning of the Wise' that serve as the key elements of developing Oxford School fantasy heroes.

The inclusion of Bilbo's translated lore from other authoritative sources underscores the significance of the hero *as* scholar for Tolkien, and echoes the lengthy appendices and additional publications that accompany *The Lord of the Rings*. Most significant, however, is the fact that both Bilbo's story, which is *The Hobbit*, and Frodo's heroic adventures culminate in the production of a new text, and this text is the one that the reader of *The Lord of the Rings* has been *reading*.

Like the Book of Gramarye, Tolkien's novels are their own sources of valuable knowledge. Diana Wynne Jones also encourages this view of children's literature and fantasy in *Fire and Hemlock*, which I discuss in greater depth in the next chapter. Rowling continues this tradition of naming children's texts as repositories of essential information and ways of seeing the world in the final book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, in which Hermione's apt reading

¹¹¹ Tolkien, *Return of the King*, 380.

of the *Tales of Beedle the Bard* enables Harry and his friends to discover the key to Voldemort's destruction. Professor Dumbledore leaves (assigns) this volume of children's fairy tales to Hermione, the best student of the three young people, before his death. This means of conveying knowledge is keeping with Rowling's boarding school book additions to the genre, drawing schoolwork and schoolmasters into the triangulation of 'magical' learning, wise tutor figures, and fantasy heroism in Oxford School fantasy.

Rowling's adjustments also draw contemporary consumerism into her fantasy's approach to learning and books, which reflects the status of children's fantasy novels as both 'magical' books and commodities that can be purchased. Rowling creates screaming, biting, self-writing, and otherwise interactive books in her series, and each new schoolyear seems to bring another set of paranormal volumes for the students to acquire, and with them new book lists with associated costs. In his first year, Harry must buy eight set texts with which to learn magic:

The Standard Book of Spells (Grade 1) by Miranda Goshawk
A History of Magic by Bathilda Bagshot
Magical Theory by Adalbert Waffling
A Beginner's Guide to Transfiguration by Emeric Switch
One Thousand magical Herbs and Fungi by Phyllidia Spore
Magical Drafts and Potions by Arsenius Jigger
Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them by Newt Scamander
The Dark Forces: A Guide to Self-Protection by Quentin Trimble¹¹²

Rowling's playful relation of the book titles to the names of their authors echoes White's humorous irreverence towards fantasy, and the fact that the volumes are standard textbooks speak to the merging of the fantasy and boarding school book genres. The realisation that he must purchase books, clothing, and equipment for school concerns Harry, who believes that he does not have any money. This thought 'made him feel as though the happy balloon inside him had got a puncture,' fearing

¹¹² Rowling, *Philosopher's Stone*, 76-7.

that he will not be able to attend Hogwarts – and thus have access to a magical education – if he cannot afford the necessary tools for learning.¹¹³ Rowling dismisses this problem through the revelation that Harry has an inheritance from his dead parents, but not the underlying logic that inspired this worry.

These economic realities in the magical world repeat in the real-world drama around the release and purchase of Rowling's own books, filled with the 'magical' knowledge of her fiction. Rowling produced a full version of *Tales of Beedle the Bard* to thank her associates and raise money for charity, originally in an extremely limited run of seven handmade editions. These are bound in leather, each handwritten and illustrated by Rowling, and set with silver and semiprecious stones.¹¹⁴ This work recreates the exoticism of a medieval manuscript in its cost and attention to craft, but its greatest value lies in the exclusive and 'magical' information that it contains (Rowling's invented tales), available only to those with access to these few books. Rowling's publishers later printed the *Tales* in more affordable bindings in response to pressure from fans, but its original incarnation suggests the way in which Rowling's work engages what Baudrillard calls the precession of simulacra, making the imitation of the real 'hyperreal': more real than the real.¹¹⁵ Citing the moving photographs and the immersive memory device (the Pensieve) in the novels, Natalia Cecire argues that 'Rowling's fictive media are hyperreal; rather than pointing outside themselves to a real, they point back to simulation, confusing the distinction between reality and simulation.'¹¹⁶ Rowling's books, and other children's fantasy books, thus become commodities that, when purchased, seem to offer the child the

¹¹³ Ibid., 72.

¹¹⁴ 'Autograph manuscript of The Tales of Beedle the Bard,' Artifact.com, auctioned 13 December 2007. Accessed 3 March 2010. <http://www.artifact.com/catalog/viewLot.cfm?sample=17922>.

¹¹⁵ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, transl. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 11-2.

¹¹⁶ Natalia Cecire, 'From Stone Tablet to Pensieve: Media and History in Children's Fantasy.' Talk given at MLA Conference, 26 December 2007.

same privileged knowledge and experiences that belong to the fantasy hero. The fantasy story, meanwhile, is a simulation of the heroic medieval narrative, which is itself an allegory for moral and spiritual pursuits.

I suggest that such an approach to books, learning, and the role of fantasy produces a parallel canon for child readers, which has come to substitute for the kind of reading list that Lewis and Tolkien supplied for Oxford's English undergraduates. It is a new group of set texts for another (fantasy-reading) 'elite,' which conveys a 'cultural arbitrary' about its own significance. It allows individual reader to cross the 'magical boundary' into the fantasy landscape of a medievalised England through reading, and to be part of the 'state nobility' that seeks to guard this imaginary and allegorical realm. Guillory suggests that in the development of literary curricula, 'the problem is the constitution and distribution of cultural capital, or more specifically, a problem of access to the means of literary production and consumption.'¹¹⁷ If this is the case, the establishment and furthering of an unofficial canon of cheap, widely available, and largely accessible children's fantasy literature makes fantasy authors into implicit pedagogical authorities. Although each new children's fantasy novel plays with generic expectations and draws upon different (and often non-medieval) sources, the genre's emphasis on education and 'elite' knowledge and access affirms the authority of preceding fantasy sources and implies new authors' authority as part of this tradition. It is by this same process that the medievalisms within children's fantasy texts may also become hyperreal, replacing medieval literature, scholarship, and history to become the 'authoritative' vision of Middle Ages for a popular audience.

¹¹⁷ Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, ix.

Tourism to the University of Oxford since the release of the *Harry Potter* films exemplifies this kind of replacement in the public mind. The reproduction of generic expectations that I discuss in this chapter depicts the University of Oxford as imbued with authority and magic in popular culture; the university's traditions and academic environs hover in the background of Oxford School works and, as a result, in the children's fantasy literature and other media that followed. Writing about the literary depictions of Oxford by its twentieth-century students (Oxford School authors and otherwise), Val Cunningham suggests that 'Oxonians recycling their various Oxfords in their fictions are indeed manufacturing and purveying myth.'¹¹⁸ Within the children's fantasy genre Oxford – and schools or universities that *look* like Oxford – are places with unique links to the 'medieval' universe, where young heroes learn about magic and myth. It is therefore fitting that the film adaptations of several major children's fantasy novels, including the *Harry Potter* films, are shot on location in Oxford. Since the *Harry Potter* films use a number of shooting locations in and around the University of Oxford, especially for scenes in Hogwarts, the spaces of Oxford University are now inscribed with *Harry Potter*, just as *Harry Potter*'s generic debts mean that it is inscribed with Oxford.¹¹⁹ Duke Humfrey's Library, the special collections in the old Bodleian site, serves as the Hogwarts library in the films, and the medieval manuscripts and other early books that line its shelves become the magical texts of Harry's wizarding school. In spite of the positions that Lewis and Tolkien took against overt educationalism in their fantasy works, Oxford has undergone a Baudrillardian precession of simulacra, and tourists pour into Oxford from the world over to snap photos of the medieval colleges and the Bodleian library,

¹¹⁸ Cunningham, 'Literary Culture,' 450.

¹¹⁹ See 'Harry Potter's Oxford Gallery,' *BBC Online*. Accessed 8 March 2010. http://www.bbc.co.uk/oxford/harry_potter/mainlocations.shtml.

the spaces where ‘Harry goes to school.’¹²⁰ Inspiration has become imitation; Oxford’s hyperreal existence as a location of medievalised fantasy is as real as – and inextricable from – its medieval history.

The role of selective education and magical tutor figures in Oxford School works and successive children’s fantasy asserts the importance of humanistic study, especially of literature and ancient knowledge, to the development of the hero. In this it reinforces its own project of reusing medieval narrative and projecting it into popular culture to create new myths for England. The example of Rowling indicates the influence that the Oxford School has had on the development of the children’s fantasy genre, extending beyond itself to set many of the standards for the genre. However, in the next chapter I will consider how some Oxford School authors intentionally react against certain generic expectations, and set out to rewrite them – and thus, the trajectory of the genre – in their own fantasy works. I use de Certeau’s metaphor of the walker in the city to inform my argument of how secondary Oxford School authors negotiate the influence of their predecessors, reusing the materials that they inherit to write new stories and attempt to impart their own social messages. This impulse, too, depends upon the assumption that children’s literature is didactic, and the desire to provide the ‘right’ information. I begin with Philip Pullman’s rewriting of the Oxford space in the opening chapters of *Northern Lights*: it is both a repudiation of Lewis’s *Chronicles of Narnia* and children’s fantasy norms and an homage to them, and seeks to correct the gender bias towards masculinity and male heroism in the genre.

¹²⁰ As of July 2005, tourism to Christ Church, which includes a number of locations for shooting, had gone up 40% since the release of the films.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/oxford/harry_potter/oxford_tour.shtml. Accessed 8 March 2010.

CHAPTER FOUR

Walking in the Father's City: Negotiating Influence

Together, children's literature's didactic impulse and fantasy's role as an unofficial educational authority suggest the Oxford School's potential to instruct its readers. There is an increasing distance, however, between official discourse about how to represent gender, race, class, ethnicity, and religion and the conservative tendencies that underlie the children's fantasy genre. Some authors seek to bridge this gap by creating fantasy works that reflect the changing political sensibilities of the western world, hoping to question traditional hierarchies of power and suggesting new forms for heroism and success. This chapter considers how two secondary Oxford School authors appropriate and navigate the masculine-gendered literary space of Oxford School fantasy as part of their active attempt to shift gender norms within the genre. Philip Pullman and Diana Wynne Jones use both early English canonical works and existing children's fantasy literature as source materials in the tradition of the Oxford School, but they selectively recombine them in the service of expanding heroic possibilities for female characters. Michel de Certeau provides a useful metaphor for comprehending this negotiation of texts and meanings: he likens walking in the city to speech acts and the act of writing, calling it 'a process of *appropriation* of the topological system on the part of the pedestrian,' in which the pedestrian enunciates the space but also imbues it with new meaning through her choices in movement and course.¹ Jones and Pullman 'walk' through the 'city' of influential fantasy sources and formal structures, reiterating the shape of the genre but also suggesting new narrative

¹ de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 97-8.

paths that can yield alternative outcomes for women and girls, whom they see as often marginalised and lacking in heroic opportunities in children's fantasy.

Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* (1995-2000) and Diana Wynne Jones's *Fire and Hemlock* (1985) and *Howl's Moving Castle* (1986) serve as the primary examples in this chapter because both authors have written about their concerns regarding gender inequality in fantasy, and set about to correct for them in these works. Pullman criticised Narnia and Lewis's politics in the same year as Scholastic published *Northern Lights*, the first novel in the *His Dark Materials* trilogy, decrying what he calls 'the misogyny, the racism, the sado-masochistic relish for violence that permeates' the *Chronicles of Narnia*.² Jones discusses her genre-bending intentions for the female heroes of *Fire and Hemlock* and *Howl's Moving Castle* (published one year apart) in two pieces.³ The kinds of physical movements that their heroines make within the fantasy landscape reflect the authors' differing approaches to female possibility and authorial manoeuvring. Pullman's Lyra seeks, like Pullman, to explode the system in which she finds herself, breaking rules and inserting herself into spaces that are inhospitable to women and children. She thus takes on a version of the male hero's role, travelling across and between worlds to complete her multiple quests. Jones's Polly and Sophie remain within the relative confines of their worlds (England for Polly, the fairy-tale land of Ingary for Sophie), engaging in local adventures that often play out in domestic spaces. These young women read and interpret their worlds, and imitate Jones in the way that they author narratives for themselves that allow them freedom and self-determination within the confines of patriarchal systems.

Pullman's reaction against Lewis in *His Dark Materials* is also evident in his choice of source material. The epigraph to *Northern Lights* is lines 910-19 in Book II

² Pullman, 'The Dark Side of Narnia.'

³ Diana Wynne Jones, 'The Heroic Ideal—A Personal Odyssey,' *The Lion and the Unicorn* 13, no. 1 (June 1989): 129-140, and 'Inventing the Middle Ages,' talk at Nottingham University, 1997.

of *Paradise Lost*, which contains the words from which Pullman derives his trilogy's title. By invoking Milton, Pullman chooses a set text from the Oxford curriculum that contributes both religious content and its subversive reception history to his project.⁴ Among other targets, Pullman's trilogy illuminates the gendered injustices of the masculine Oxford system – and by extension Lewis and the Oxford School – through allusions to the work of Virginia Woolf. But his reading of *Paradise Lost* through Blake and his references to the literature of Virgil, Dante, and Lewis situate him in the eminent, masculine literary tradition that was the primary concern of Lewis and Tolkien's English syllabus. Such masculine conflict between Pullman and his (male) predecessors mirrors Satan's rejection of God in *Paradise Lost* and throws into question Pullman's ability to address female identity from within his androcentric agenda.

Jones's novels do not rebel against the structures of fantasy in the same overt ways as Pullman's, but rather advocate the adjustment of perspectives about the limitations of gender and for empowering girls to articulate and actualise their life narratives. She utilises sources that provide literary and historical foundations for female fantasy heroism, choosing texts from the Middle Ages that serve these purposes. She borrows elements of the 'Tam Lin' and 'Thomas Rhymer' ballads for *Fire and Hemlock*, and fairy tale and, I argue, the aged loathly lady from 'The Wife of Bath's Tale' for *Howl's Moving Castle*. Jones's use of sources that invoke the oral tradition allows her to participate in the activities of female storytellers, whose

⁴ The first question of the English Final Honour School Examination Paper B8 (English Literature from 1400 to 1900) in 1968, the year that Pullman sat that paper, asks that the student write on either '(a) "Milton takes over conventional forms and reshapes them for his own ends." Discuss with reference to *Paradise Lost* or a selection of his other poems,' or '(b) "Metaphor and not narrative is the only way of expressing the inexpressible." Discuss *Paradise Lost* in the light of this statement.' *Oxford University Examination Papers: Trinity Term 1968. Second Public Examination: Honour School of English Language and Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), Section B, Paper 8, Question 1.

retellings facilitate their celebrations of female cunning and success within the boundaries of patriarchy. Jones carves out similar spaces for her female heroes, who use the power of authorship to transcend dire circumstances and achieve romantic unions. In *Howl's Moving Castle*, for instance, Jones elevates feminine associations (including fertility, domesticity, and the love-plot) to heroic traits, and merges masculine and feminine spaces and roles: Sophie's story is centred on the domestic space of a small castle in which she is the housekeeper, but the castle is populated by men and magically roams through the countryside. Jones's emphasis on traditional femininity in this unusual context navigates around (but does not escape) patriarchal requirements for the female protagonist.

I. Pullman: Parricidal Tendencies

It is a characteristic of the Oxford School that each new work adjusts the range of the children's fantasy genre as it produces new medievalisms. Hans Robert Jauss articulates this constant reconfiguring in terms of a generic 'horizon of expectations':

the continuous establishing and altering of horizons also determines the relationship of the individual text to the succession of texts that forms the genre. The new text evokes for the reader (listener) the horizon of expectations and rules familiar from earlier texts, which are then varied, corrected, altered, or even just reproduced. Variation and correction determine the scope, whereas alteration and reproduction determine the borders of a genre-structure.⁵

⁵ Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982), 23.

Fredric Jameson further suggests that all generic categories are ‘experimental constructs’ that are altered or discarded when they have done their work.⁶ Jameson argues that the concept of genre is most productive at such points, and that

the failure of a particular generic structure, such as epic, to reproduce itself not only encourages a search for those substitute textual formations that appear in its wake, but more particularly alerts us to the historical ground, now no longer existent, in which the original structure was meaningful.⁷

Oxford School authors that attempt such structural changes seem to suggest that the previous textual formations are – or should be – obsolete.

While the rules that govern the children’s fantasy genre are not impervious to change, new texts must negotiate these expectations. For de Certeau a *tactic* as ‘a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus [...] it must play on and with a terrain imposed upon it and organized by the law of a foreign power.’⁸ Thus innovation may stem from tactical manoeuvres by authors around existing conventions, ‘imposed upon’ them by the accumulated influences of previous texts. The successor’s relationship to his or her predecessors is at once antagonistic and indebted:

a way of using imposed systems constitutes the resistance to the historical law of a state of affairs and its dogmatic legitimations. A practice of the order constructed by others redistributes its space; it creates at least a certain play in that order, a space for manoeuvres of unequal forces and for utopian points of reference.⁹

Although these shifts and alterations assume an unequal power balance between the new work and established genre norms, they indicate a potential means of fixing a new horizon of expectations for the genre. Children’s fantasy authors may attempt to redistribute the space imposed by the structures that dominate the genre by mapping out their own paths around generic convention.

⁶ Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 145.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 146.

⁸ de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 37.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 18. Emphasis de Certeau’s.

De Certeau's metaphor of a person walking in a city describes how individuals use and create their own meanings out of the structures of power that surround them in daily life:

if it is true that a spatial order organizes an ensemble of possibilities (e.g., by a place in which one can move) and interdictions (e.g., by a wall that prevents one from going further), then the walker actualizes some of these possibilities. In that way, he makes them exist as well as emerge. But he also moves them about and he invents others, since the crossing, drifting away, or improvisation of walking privilege, transform or abandon spatial elements.¹⁰

A reader may also read across a text in the way that the walker, above, traverses the city. I argue that the Oxford School authors take a similar approach to reading across medieval sources and previous medievalised fantasy, and that this 'drifting' yields inventions that manifest in their own works. Such a relationship to existing texts is necessarily derivative, as Henry Jenkins demonstrates in his discussion of the power differentials inherent in television fan culture. Jenkins uses de Certeau's theories of reading to formulate his ideas about fan responses to their favorite shows, including the appropriative 'poaching' that fans do when they 'read' the content of corporate-produced shows and transform 'the experience of media consumption into the production of new texts.'¹¹ Although de Certeau makes the distinction that writing 'has a materiality and permanence which the poached culture of the reader is unable to match,' I suggest that his model of how 'weak' products of a powerful tradition or culture create their own meanings and identities may also be used to illustrate how Oxford School authors such as Jones and Pullman attempt to use their academic sources and the work of their fantasy predecessors.¹² Jenkins contends that '[u]nlike the readers de Certeau describes, fans get to keep what they produce from the materials they "poach" from mass culture.' Similarly, I identify the productivity and the 'pleasure in

¹⁰ Ibid., 98.

¹¹ Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers*, 46.

¹² Ibid., 44.

getting around the rules of a constrained space' that Oxford School novels can display in their reuses of fantasy convention and allusions to other texts.¹³

Gender hierarchy is part of the larger system of universal organisation that Lewis argues is the 'central thought' of 'the ancient orthodox tradition of European ethics from Aristotle to Johnson,' and to which he also subscribed. According to this tradition, 'degrees of value are objectively present in the universe. Everything except God has some natural superior; everything except unformed matter has some natural inferior.'¹⁴ He cites Aristotle for examples, including that of gender: Lewis draws upon *Politics* when he writes that '[t]he soul is the natural ruler of the body, the male of the female, reason of passion.'¹⁵ He contends that this view is essential to understanding 'nearly all literature before the revolutionary period,' an argument that suggests the kind of readings that Lewis encouraged in the English School.

Lewis reveals his personal adherence to this Aristotelian hierarchy in his gendered formulation of poetic invention. He invokes *Metaphysics* when he uses the metaphor of a parental unit to describe the creation of a poem: the poem's 'mother' is

the mass of experience, thought, and the like, inside the poet, and its father the pre-existing Form (epic, tragedy, the novel, or what not) which he meets in the public world. [...] The matter inside the poet *wants* the Form: in submitting to the Form, it becomes really original, really the origin of great work.¹⁶

This description is indicative of a number of gendered assumptions, including the confinement of the feminine to the 'inside' and the masculine's place 'in the public world,' as well as the obedience of the feminine to the masculine, and the feminine's longing and need for masculine guidance. This view echoes medieval judgments of the sexes and recalls God's injunction to Eve when he punishes her and sends her from

¹³ de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 18.

¹⁴ Lewis, *Preface to Paradise Lost*, 73.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

Eden in Genesis 3:16. In this verse, the life of ‘the woman’ is dominated by the bearing of children and the yearning for and submission to her man.¹⁷ Medieval thought assumed woman’s ‘natural’ inferiority, and aligned the fertility of women with bodily, sinful femininity, in opposition to soulful, spiritual masculinity. St. Jerome states that as ‘long as woman is for birth and children, she is as different from man as body is from soul. But when she wishes to serve Christ more than the world, then she will cease to be a woman and will be called man.’¹⁸ Chaucer’s *Wife of Bath* describes her fifth husband’s misogynist diatribe as stemming from his book of tales against women, which begins with an account of Eve. He ‘[r]edde on his book’ about ‘Eva first, that for hir wikkednesse / Was al mankynde broght to wrecchednesse, / For which that Jhesu Crist himself was slayn, / That boght us with his herte blood agayn.’¹⁹ Eve’s position as both the original woman and the cause of human suffering thus informs the misogyny of the Judeo-Christian worldview.

Unlike the *Wife of Bath*, who rebels against this view of women, Lewis uses the archetype of the evil female temptress several times in the *Chronicles*: twice in the person of the White Witch (also known as the Empress Jadis), and in the Lady of the Green Kirtle. The Witch / Jadis tempts Edmund Pevensie with Turkish Delight in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and attempts to re-enact the scene of the Fall in *The Magician’s Nephew*, playing both Eve and Satan at once. She urges the hero Digory to eat one of the ‘great silver apples’ in the Edenic walled garden of the early Narnia, or to

¹⁷ ‘To the woman he said, “I will terribly sharpen your birth pangs, in pain shall you bear children. And your man shall be your longing, and he shall rule over you.’ Robert Alter, trans., *Genesis* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1996), 13.

¹⁸ Vern L. Bullough, ‘Cross Dressing and Gender Role Change in the Middle Ages’, *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (New York and London: Garland, 1996), 227.

¹⁹ Chaucer, ‘The Wife of Bath,’ 114, ll. 714-18. However, the *Wife of Bath* rejects this book’s judgement on women, striking her husband and tearing ‘thre leves’ from it in defiance. Chaucer, ‘The Wife of Bath,’ 115. l. 790. I discuss her rebellion against misogyny in texts further below.

steal it for his sick mother.²⁰ He refuses, and Aslan heals his mother for his faithfulness.²¹ The Lady of the Green Kirtle seduces Prince Rilian of Narnia to her underground kingdom in *The Silver Chair*, in the medieval tradition of fairy queens that enchant mortal men. She later sends his rescue party, which includes the English children Eustace and Jill, towards danger from giants by charming them with her beauty and trilling voice, ‘as sweet as the sweetest bird’s song,’ and enticing them with the promise of domestic comforts.²² Later, when they arrive in her ‘Underworld’ to save Rilian, she attempts to enchant them into forgetting Narnia, Aslan, and their quest, and transforms herself into a monstrous snake to destroy them when they resist. These confluences of Eve, Satan, and (in the Lady of the Green Kirtle) the figure of the fairy queen are telling of Lewis’s willingness to use women as symbols of evil, if not of his personal ideas about real women. Lewis accepted the Biblical gender hierarchy as part of the ‘objective’ ‘degrees of value’ in the universe, but this worldview also underpins the tenets of chivalry that he admired. David C. Downing notes that most women reported positive personal experiences with Lewis, and suggests that ‘[i]f Lewis did feel patronising towards women, his attitude in person manifested itself primarily in the form of sensitivity, courtesy, generosity, and respect.’²³ The sexism in his novels is likewise tempered by the actions of inquisitive and courageous girl heroes like Lucy and Jill.

Nevertheless Pullman calls Lewis’s *Chronicles* ‘one of the most ugly and poisonous things I’ve ever read’ for its hierarchical assumptions, including its gender

²⁰ Lewis, *Magician’s Nephew*, 172.

²¹ This is the same figure that becomes Professor Kirke in other novels; on his significance see Chapter Three, pp. 137-38.

²² Lewis, *The Silver Chair*, 88. On the significance of giants to Lewis, see Chapter Two, pp. 83-4.

²³ David Downing, *Planets in Peril: A Critical Study of C.S. Lewis’s Ransom Trilogy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 151.

norms.²⁴ He comments that in the series, ‘boys are better than girls; light-coloured people are better than dark-coloured people; and so on. There is no shortage of such nauseating drivel in Narnia, if you can face it’.²⁵ *His Dark Materials* is an example of an intentional shift away from Oxford School fantasy traditions, a hybrid text that repudiates generic expectations about power relationships, including those between God and people, children and adults, elites and non-elites, and women and men. Harold Bloom suggests that this kind of reaction against the ‘intolerable presence’ of influential work(s) is the parricidal, Oedipal response of the son against the father that characterises the work of every poet.²⁶ Pullman embraces the ‘ancestor’ of ‘intellectual revisionism’ according to Bloom: heresy, both in his rejections of the early Oxford School and in the God-killing subject matter of his trilogy.²⁷ His resistance relies on self-conscious response to the texts with which his work is in tension, using them as ‘pre-texts’ that allow him to make statements by departing from them.²⁸ Pullman, who received a third class degree and ‘did not really enjoy the English course,’ positions himself as a partial outsider to the university that he attended.²⁹ Speaking in defence of public libraries, Pullman recalls that as an undergraduate ‘all the riches of the Bodleian Library, one of the greatest libraries in the world, were open to me – theoretically. In practice I didn’t dare go in. I was intimidated by all that grandeur. [...] The library I used as a student was the old public library.’³⁰ Like the avatar that he creates in Lyra, he takes pleasure in this interloper status. But it is his intimate knowledge of the

²⁴ Pullman, ‘The Dark Side of Narnia.’

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Bloom, *Poetry and Repression*, 67.

²⁷ Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, 28-9.

²⁸ Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs*, 118.

²⁹ ‘Growing Pains,’ *The Oxford Student*. Trinity Term 2006, Week 7.

³⁰ Philip Pullman, ‘This Is the Big Society, You See. It Must Be Big, to Contain so Many Volunteers,’ www.opendemocracy.net. 25 January 2011. Accessed 18 March 2011. <http://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/philip-pullman/this-is-big-society-you-see-it-must-be-big-to-contain-so-many-volunteers>. Originally given as a speech in the Oxford Town Hall, Oxford, UK. 20 January, 2011.

university and the texts of the English School that enable him to respond to masculinist Oxford School conventions, using non-medieval sources in an attempt to provide ‘outside’ perspectives on the genre’s norms. Referring to two of his most significant influences, Pullman asserts: ‘Blake said Milton was a true poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it. I am of the Devil's party and know it.’³¹ In addition to drawing on Milton read through Blake throughout the trilogy, Pullman alludes to Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* (1928) in *Northern Lights* as a means of establishing the gender inequalities inherent in the Oxford School’s masculine spaces.

The opening of *Northern Lights*, set in the fictional Jordan College, Oxford, conveys Pullman’s transgressive approach to his forefathers in Oxford School fantasy:

Lyra and her daemon moved through the darkening hall, taking care to keep to one side, out of sight of the kitchen. The three great tables that ran the length of the hall were laid already, the silver and the glass catching what little light there was, and the long benches were pulled out ready for the guests. Portraits of former Masters hung high up in the gloom along the walls. Lyra reached the dais and looked back at the open kitchen door, and, seeing no one, stepped up beside the high table. The places here were laid with gold, not silver, and the fourteen seats were not oak benches but mahogany chairs with velvet cushions.

Lyra stopped beside the Master's chair and flicked the biggest glass gently with a fingernail. The sound rang clearly through the hall.

‘You're not taking this seriously,’ whispered her daemon. ‘Behave yourself.’³²

By beginning the trilogy in the elite space of an Oxford men’s college, the ‘home’ of Pullman’s authorial forefathers, Pullman invokes the masculine tradition of the Oxford School and suggests its influence on the prevailing moral, narrative, and aesthetic structures in the children’s fantasy tradition. The ‘three great tables that ran the length of the hall’ and the ‘high table’ establish an Oxford that bears the influence of the Middle Ages, and echoes the twentieth-century university that Lewis, Tolkien, and

³¹ Helena de Bertodano, ‘I Am of the Devil’s Party,’ *The Daily Telegraph*, 29 January 2002. Accessed 26 July 2010. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/donotmigrate/3572490/I-am-of-the-Devils-party.html>

³² Philip Pullman, *Northern Lights*, in *His Dark Materials* (originally published 1995; London: Scholastic, 2005), 9.

Pullman knew.³³ He depicts a heightened, Technicolor version of Oxford for Lyra's world, including the reinstatement of some of the now-obsolete rules that restricted women's access to many Oxford spaces well into the twentieth century. Women are banned from Jordan Hall, and the Retiring Room (akin to the fellows' Senior Common Room) is a space where 'only Scholars and their guests were allowed [...] and never females.'³⁴ Lyra's Oxford University is thus a world to which Lyra is always a partial outsider. She admits this outsider status inside the Retiring Room, when she reveals her curiosity about the activities of Jordan scholars: '[e]veryone knows they get up to something secret. They have a ritual or something. And I just wanted to know what it was.'³⁵ Even as the ward of Jordan College, as a girl Lyra is aware of her peripheral position in the masculine world of Oxford University.³⁶

The mahogany and velvet chairs and gold and silver table settings in Jordan Hall at once emphasise the wealth of this enhanced Oxford college and recall Woolf's writing about the institutional exclusion of women in the fictional 'Oxbridge' university. Woolf writes of 'the kings and queens and nobles bearing sacks of gold and silver on their shoulders, which they shovelled into the earth' to found and build the Oxbridge men's colleges.³⁷ This gold and silver finances the scholarship and opulence of these colleges, which she contrasts to the austerity of the women's colleges. After a

³³ In his notes, Tolkien reflects on the hall seating of Arthur, Guinevere, and the court in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, comparing their arrangements to those in Oxford and Cambridge colleges:

'It is still common (but not universally) the place of the 'head of a house' (or his representative) at an Oxford or Cambridge high table. The chief guest is the on the right, the service begins with him, and the person on his guest's right is served last or in 'starvation corner' as we used to term it in Merton. [...] But clearly this is not the arrangement envisaged. The place of the senior (or king) had been moved to the centre, and the 'beginner of the board' has moved with him.' Tolkien Papers A12/1, fol. 7. Underlining Tolkien's.

³⁴ 'Lyra realised why they weren't going to dine in Hall: three of the guests were women.' Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 10 and 59.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

³⁶ Jordan College's name invokes the Jordan River of Judeo-Christian tradition, through which the Israelites crossed during the exodus from Egypt and in which John the Baptist and Christ were baptised. Lyra's origins in Jordan and ultimate exclusion from it for her sex suggests the uneasy place of women in Judeo-Christian society, as well as (and therefore) in the University of Oxford.

³⁷ Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (originally published 1929; San Diego, New York, and London: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1989), 19.

magnificent, inspiring lunch at a men's college, Woolf relates the disappointing return to Fernham College for women (modelled on Newnham College, Cambridge).

Following her flowing account of the walk from the men's college, she describes the Fernham dinner in terse sentences: 'Dinner was ready. Here was the soup. It was a plain gravy soup. There was nothing to stir the fancy in that.'³⁸ This meal represents the unequal lot of women in universities, and for Woolf, is an essential barrier to their creative and intellectual productivity.³⁹

Christopher Hobhouse's recollection of women and men's colleges in the early part of the twentieth century, when Lewis and Tolkien were at Oxford, confirms this distinction.

Instead of a pair of quiet rooms, guarded by an impenetrable 'oak,' upon a secluded staircase, each girl has a minute green-and-yellow bed-sitter opening off an echoing shiny corridor. Instead of deep sofas and coal fires, they have convertible divans and gas stoves. Instead of claret and port, they drink cocoa and Kia-Ora. Instead of the lordly breakfasts and lunches which a man can command in his own rooms, they are fed on warm cutlets and gravy off cold plates at a long table decked with daffodils.⁴⁰

Hobhouse's disdainful description of the spaces that these 'girl[s]' inhabit not only points out the inequalities between women and men's colleges, but also implies that this 'repellent' 'domestic background' reflects the inferiority of female students.⁴¹ By contrast, Pullman characterises the Retiring Room as a hyperbolically masculine and luxurious space. Lyra encounters 'an oval table of polished rosewood on which stood various decanters and glasses, and a silver smoking-mill with a rack of pipes. On a

³⁸ Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, 17.

³⁹ Woolf famously wrote, '[o]ne cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well. The lamp in the spine does not light on beef and prunes.' *Ibid.*, 18.

⁴⁰ Christopher Hobhouse, *Oxford: As It Was and as It Is To-day*, 4th ed. (London: B.T. Batsford, Ltd., 1948), 102.

⁴¹ He elaborates on this opinion in greater detail, calling the women of his 'modern Oxford' 'docile and literal,' disparaging the 'medieval zeal' with which they attend lectures, take notes, and 'huddle for hours on end, stooping and peering over standard text-books.' He concludes that '[m]any of the women suffer actual nervous breakdowns; others become stupid and mechanical. The great majority end up as school-teachers.' Hobhouse, *Oxford*, 101-2.

sideboard nearby there was a little chafing-dish and a basket of poppy-heads.’ She responds as Woolf might, whispering ‘They do themselves well here, don’t they, Pan?’ to her daemon.⁴² Lyra’s exclusion from the most guarded masculine spaces of her Oxford does not, however, lend her sympathy for the female Scholars in her world. When the Master of Jordan suggests that Lyra will soon ‘be a young woman, and not a child anymore,’ and need ‘female company’ and ‘guidance,’ Lyra assumes that he means to send her to a women’s college.⁴³ She ‘involuntarily made a face’ at the thought of being ‘exiled from the grandeur of Jordan, the splendour and fame of its scholarship, to a dingy brick-built boardinghouse of a college at the northern end of Oxford, with dowdy female Scholars who smelled of cabbage and mothballs.’⁴⁴ Lyra echoes Woolf in finding the ‘feminine’ spaces of Oxford unacceptable in their inferiority to the ‘masculine’ spaces of the same university. As a result, Lyra regards female Scholars that belong to these abhorrent spaces with the ‘proper Jordan disdain,’ judging that they ‘could never be taken more seriously than animals dressed up and acting in a play.’⁴⁵ This sentiment echoes the words that Shakespeare’s imaginary sister Judith hears at the door to a London theatre in *A Room of One’s Own*. The manager tells her ‘something about poodles dancing and women acting—no woman, he said, could possibly be an actress.’ Woolf cites her source for this statement: ‘Dr. Johnson’s dictum concerning a woman preacher, transposed in terms of music. “Sir, a woman’s composing is like a dog’s walking on his hind legs. It is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all.”’⁴⁶ Pullman indicates Lyra’s lack of

⁴² Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 10.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* Hobhouse also has words for the female dons of his age: ‘[s]pinsters almost to a woman, they present a terrifying caricature of the mediæval tutor. They estimate work in quantity rather than quality.’ Hobhouse, *Oxford*, 102.

⁴⁵ Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 61.

⁴⁶ Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own*, 48 and 54.

identification with scholars of her own sex by making her share this chauvinist outlook on women's intellectual and artistic abilities.

The Oxford that teaches Lyra to hold sexist views of other women mirrors the children's fantasy convention of girls and women often only holding secondary, supporting, or antagonistic roles. C.S. Lewis represents this misogynist fantasy worldview for Pullman. He argues that Lewis 'didn't like women in general, or sexuality at all, at least at the stage in his life when he wrote the Narnia books,' and bars his female characters from the sacred space of Narnia when they begin to display signs of developing into womanhood.⁴⁷ Pullman reads Susan Pevensie's exclusion from the Platonic Narnia in *The Last Battle* as punishment for her 'undergoing a transition from one phase of her life to another.' He suggests that Lewis 'was frightened and appalled at the notion of wanting to grow up' and that 'Susan, who did want to grow up, and who might have been the most interesting character in the whole cycle if she'd been allowed to, is a Cinderella in a story where the Ugly Sisters win.'⁴⁸ Lewis's barring of Susan from the Narnian heaven seems to be for her lack of belief in her Narnia experiences and what he considers to be a 'childish' repudiation of childhood.⁴⁹ The 'nylons and lipstick and invitations' that represent her entry into adulthood also suggest censure of sexualized and performative femininity.⁵⁰ Pullman's androcentric Oxford reconstructs the university as a setting suited to his interpretation of Lewis as a 'tweedy medievalist' who only values females as desexualized beings in his works, and punishes one for becoming 'a young woman, and not a child

⁴⁷ Pullman, 'The Dark Side of Narnia.'

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ 'When I became a man I put away childish things, including the fear of childishness and the desire to be very grown up.' Lewis, 'On Three Ways of Writing for Children,' 60.

⁵⁰ According to her siblings, Susan rejects that Narnia is real, treating it as a childish fantasy. Instead, she is 'interested in nothing nowadays except nylons and lipstick and invitations. She always was a jolly sight too keen on being grown-up.' Lewis, *Last Battle*, 154. In 1957 Lewis wrote in a letter to a child that although Susan 'is left alive in this world at the end [of the series], having by then turned into a rather silly, conceited young woman,' 'there is plenty of time for her to mend, and perhaps she will get to Aslan's country in the end – in her own way.' Lewis, *Letters to Children*, 67.

anymore.⁵¹ In spite of his criticism of Lewis's treatment of Susan, however, the commodities of sexualised femininity are the province of the morally dubious Mrs Coulter in *His Dark Materials*, while Lyra (and the female scholars) largely forego such self-adornments.

Nevertheless, Lyra's heroism in *His Dark Materials* depends upon a transition into adulthood, a process that begins when she leaves Oxford and embarks upon self-motivated adventures in *Northern Lights*. Like the city walker in de Certeau's metaphor, Lyra repeatedly dodges the powers that attempt to restrict or control her. After Oxford she escapes becoming the 'pet' of the effeminate and cruel Mrs. Coulter, the detection of Church-activated mechanical spies, captivity in the prisons of the *panserbjørne*, or 'armour-bears,' and the experimental station of Bolvangar in the Arctic waste. In each instance she evades one danger only to encounter the next, but her constant motion allows her to influence the shape of her story. This motion echoes the travelling of the hero in classical epic and medieval romance, making Lyra a female hero that stands in for the traditionally male protagonist.

Erich Auerbach argues that the 'very essence of the knight's ideal of manhood is called forth by adventure' in courtly romance like *Yvain*, which Auerbach uses as an exemplar in his examination of representation in medieval romance.⁵² He writes, '[t]he world of knightly proving is a world of adventure. It not only contains a practically uninterrupted series of adventures; more specifically, it contains nothing but the requisites of adventure.'⁵³ In children's fantasy this heroic facility is shifted to the child; Father Christmas's arming of Peter Pevensie as an English knight in *The Lion*,

⁵¹ Pullman, 'The Dark Side of Narnia.' Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 64.

⁵² Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask. (Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 1953), 135. This chapter is called 'The Knight Sets Forth,' emphasising the motion in heroic quest narratives.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 136.

the Witch, and the Wardrobe makes this connection explicit.⁵⁴ By creating a mobile heroine with an epic quest, Pullman reuses his predecessors' narratives but places a female in the leading role. From this role, her quest is to dismantle the Christianity that underlies Lewis and Tolkien's understanding of myth's power, and to disrupt its more hierarchical social implications. Lyra's first task, in *Northern Lights*, is to protect the child's transition from youth to adulthood by ending the Church-sanctioned 'castration' of children from their daemons before puberty. This transition is explicitly sexual, a time when 'daemons bring all sorts of troublesome thoughts and feelings.'⁵⁵ The completion of this task fulfils the expectations of the fantasy protagonist in its wide-ranging travel and chivalric action on the behalf of the oppressed, but it also reacts against the 'childhood innocence' that children's texts such as Lewis's *Chronicles* seek to preserve.⁵⁶

Lyra's task in *Northern Lights* anticipates her final heroic act in *The Amber Spyglass*: assuming the role of the 'second Eve.' To fulfil this prophecy, Lyra makes her way to an Edenic otherworld where she and her friend Will re-enact the Fall, culminating in sexual activity. Lyra instigates this by 'lift[ing] the fruit gently to his mouth' as they eat, an echo of Eve's offering of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge to Adam in Genesis 3:6-7.⁵⁷ The designation of this act as heroic seeks to strike at the roots of the Christian tradition that relegated women to inferiority in the Middle Ages. Pullman attempts to rewrite Eve's role in human history through Lyra, rejecting a view of women as the instigators of sin through their sexuality. Lyra's travelling is essential

⁵⁴ See the arming of Peter in Chapter Two, pp. 102-03.

⁵⁵ Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 235.

⁵⁶ The particulars of medieval chivalry are much more complicated than contemporary understandings of it might suggest; see, for instance, Richard Kaeuper, 'The Societal Role of Chivalry in Romance: Northwestern Europe,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, ed. Roberta Krueger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 97-114.

⁵⁷ Philip Pullman, *The Amber Spyglass*, in *His Dark Materials* (originally published 2000; London: Scholastic, 2005), 792.

to this renewal of Eve, and her descent into the Land of the Dead in *The Amber Spyglass* places her in the company of male classical and medieval literary figures such as Aeneas, Dante's pilgrim, and Sir Orfeo.⁵⁸ She and her friends rescue the shades of the dead from the colorless 'great plain' that is the underworld, in a democratised retelling of Christ's Harrowing of Hell.⁵⁹ Whereas in Dante those left behind by Christ are doomed to remain until Judgment, and Sir Orfeo rescues only his bride from the fairy land, Lyra's heroic travelling in the Land of the Dead enables each soul to pass out of it by their own power.⁶⁰ Lyra and her companions arrange for harpies to guide the shades along the treacherous journey back to the world above, in exchange for the 'true stories' of their lives. Lyra and Will cut open a portal through which the shades can pass, and at the end of their journey, the particles of the dead return to the living world as atoms. The shade of Lyra's friend Roger is the first to cross the threshold back into the world, and he 'laughed in surprise as he found himself turning into the night, the starlight, the air...then he was gone, leaving behind [...] a vivid little burst of happiness.'⁶¹ By descending to the underworld and freeing the souls within, Lyra not only matches but also surpasses the feats of heroes like Aeneas, Orfeo, and even Christ. By granting her the ability to move into and out of this space and to influence its shape and function, Pullman suggests that his girl protagonist can surpass the feats of canonical adult male heroes on their own terrain.

Thus it is significant that Lyra's journey begins inside a wardrobe, recalling Lucy's discovery of Narnia in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. During her

⁵⁸ *Sir Orfeo* is the medieval adaptation of the classical tale of Orpheus, which replaces Hades with an eerie fairy land. Dated from the thirteenth or fourteenth century, it is included in the Auchinleck MS. See Thomas J. Garbáty, ed., 'Sir Orfeo', in *Medieval English Literature* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1997), 349-64.

⁵⁹ Pullman, *Amber Spyglass*, 834.

⁶⁰ Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Inferno*, ed. and trans. Robert M. Durling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁶¹ Pullman, *Amber Spyglass*, 889.

explorations of the Retiring Room Lyra conceals herself from approaching Scholars and college staff by climbing into the wardrobe. Lucy also hides in a professor's wardrobe, but this is during a low-stakes game of hide-and-seek with her siblings in the Professor's house. Walking through rows of fur coats in the wardrobe, Lucy 'kept her arms stretched out in front of her so as to not bump her face into the back of the wardrobe. She took a step further in—then two or three steps—always expecting to feel woodwork against her fingertips. But she could not feel it.'⁶² Instead, she walks into the snowy landscape of Narnia's permanent winter. In her wardrobe, Lyra 'carefully stood up, feeling around for the clothes hangers in order not to make a noise, and found that the wardrobe was bigger than she'd thought. There were several academic robes and hoods, some with fur around them, most faced with silk.'⁶³ The unexpectedly large wardrobe and furs are an overt homage to Lewis, but Pullman's invocation of the most famous book in the *Chronicles* serves to signal his departures from, rather than agreements with, Lewis's fantasy. In de Certeau's words, this 'practice of the order constructed by others redistributes its space [...] a space for manoeuvres of unequal forces.'⁶⁴ Although Lyra does not physically move into another world through the wardrobe, the spying that she does while inside it 'brings' her to the masculine world of politics, science, religion, and money in her own universe, and initiates her adventures. Lucy's—and Lewis's—snowy otherworld is deeper 'into' the wardrobe, away from the open door, which leads back to the mundane 'real' world of wartime England. Lyra's quest develops when she turns and looks in the other direction: back into her world with 'her eye to the crack of the door,' peering in on the restricted world of men.⁶⁵

⁶² Lewis, *Lion*, 7.

⁶³ Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 13.

⁶⁴ de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 18. Emphasis de Certeau's.

⁶⁵ Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 15.

The direction of each girl's movements suggests the ultimate locations of adventure that their creators imagine for them. For Lewis, it is into the mythical space of a medievalised realm; the kind of landscape that he identifies as richer with heroic possibility than our world.⁶⁶ In opposition to this view, Pullman identifies the protagonists's own world as the place to direct energy towards change. However, he also indulges in the pleasures of traversing new worlds as training for such endeavours. After returning to her own world, Lyra states in the final pages of *His Dark Materials* that 'where we are is always the most important place' to 'build.'⁶⁷ The final line of the trilogy reveals what she intends to work towards: the 'republic of heaven,' to replace the Kingdom of Heaven that she helped to dismantle over the course of the three novels.⁶⁸ To pursue this work as an adult, however, Lyra returns to Oxford and enrolls in St Sophia's, a girls' school associated with one of the women's colleges.⁶⁹ Thus Lyra enters the very spaces that she scorned in *Northern Lights*, accepting the inequalities that she rejected before pubescence. Beyond the brief mention of fewer college servants and the loss of some silver, Oxford appears to be unchanged by the battles and upheavals of the three novels.⁷⁰ Although his recuperation of women's colleges grants them (and the women within them) institutional authority by the end of the trilogy, this return suggests that Pullman's project of female autonomy functions primarily at the service of his mutinous retelling of *Paradise Lost*. Pullman writes that his interest in Milton's epic

was most vividly caught by the meaning of the temptation-and-fall theme. Suppose that the prohibition on the knowledge of good and evil were an expression of jealous cruelty, and the gaining of such knowledge an act of virtue? Suppose the Fall should be celebrated and not deplored? As I played with it, my story resolved itself into an

⁶⁶ See Nevill Coghill's comment on Lewis's approach to medievalisms in Chapter One, p. 51.

⁶⁷ Pullman, *Amber Spyglass*, 1015.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1016.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1013.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 1010.

account of the necessity of growing up, and a refusal to lament the loss of innocence. [...] Innocence is not wise, and wisdom cannot be innocent, and if we are going to do any good in the world, we have to leave childhood behind.⁷¹

His interpretation of Milton's poem is a direct repudiation of what he considers to be Lewis's approach to childhood and growing up, as well as of Lewis's Christian worldview.

William Blake wrote that 'Miltons Messiah is call'd Satan' in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790-3), in which he also rejects the opposition of body and soul and promotes the 'Energy' of the body, customarily 'call'd Evil.'⁷² Pullman draws upon this influential reading of *Paradise Lost*, which facilitates his response to medievalism-dominated fantasy through sources that lie 'outside' the usual Oxford School pool. Although Milton had a prominent place in the English School syllabus, it is not probable that the faculty favoured Blake's interpretation, as Lewis's *Preface* demonstrates. Lewis contends that the assumption that Milton was 'a rebel against the monarchy of God and secretly of the devil's party' is 'false and argue[s] a deep misunderstanding of Milton's central thought.'⁷³ Pullman, who cites Lewis's *Preface* in his own introduction to a 2005 edition of *Paradise Lost*, persists in reading the text as a source to support his repudiation of religious and gendered hierarchy in children's fantasy. Lyra's questing and Pullman's citation of *A Room of One's Own* – a work at once canonical and feminist – suggest an attempt to draw women and children into dialogue with the western canon: to draw them into the 'masculine' arena of literary tradition.

Lyra's navigation of the Oxford space as a child, her questing across wildernesses and between worlds, and her descent into the underworld situate her story

⁷¹ Philip Pullman, 'Introduction,' in *Paradise Lost*, by John Milton (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 10.

⁷² Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, plate 5.

⁷³ Lewis, *Preface to Paradise Lost*, 73.

in relation to great works of western myth and literature. Pullman identifies fantasy's 'unlimited potential to explore all sorts of metaphysical and moral questions,' but expresses his disappointment that '[f]antasy, and fiction in general, is failing to [...] explore bigger ideas'.⁷⁴ Pullman states that 'we still need joy and delight, the promise of connection with something beyond ourselves,' and suggests that '[p]erhaps children's literature is the last forum left for such a project' of addressing these 'bigger' ideas and experiences.⁷⁵ While Pullman's contribution to the western literary tradition embraces a feminist agenda and promotes the legitimacy of children's literature, his rebellion is, like the Bloomian model of literary influence into which he fits, 'necessarily patriarchal.'⁷⁶ Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar note that 'Bloom sees Milton's fiercely masculine fallen Satan as *the* type of poet in our culture,' and Pullman plays this role in relation to Lewis, his Oxford School precursor.⁷⁷ Pullman's trilogy functions then as a Miltonian rebellion against Lewis's authority and the Christian tradition that he represents. While Pullman rejects the hierarchy of male over female, his writing reveals a masculine obsession with the 'father' – here, both the literary influence and Oxford School forerunner.

This battle between two (male) literary powers plays out against a landscape composed of the western canon, therefore a landscape crafted by predominantly male authors and scholars. Pullman repudiates the masculinist traditions of the academy but does so by pitting his own texts against the male-dominated canon, invoking the canon and making it the premise for his own departures. The 'walker' and the 'city' are thus

⁷⁴ Angelique Christafis, 'Pullman lays down moral challenge for writers,' *The Guardian*, 12 August 2002. Accessed 9 November 2010. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2002/aug/12/books.humanities>.

⁷⁵ In John Ezard, 'Fully booked,' *The Guardian*, 24 January 2002. Accessed 9 November 2010. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2002/jan/24/whitbreadprize2001.costabookaward>.

⁷⁶ Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979; London: Yale Nota Bene, 2000), 47. Citations refer to the Yale Nota Bene edition.

⁷⁷ Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 47.

both gendered masculine in this scenario, complicating even the most well-intentioned attempts to produce authentic ‘feminine’ space in the children’s fantasy genre. While Lyra is female and the ‘second Eve,’ she remains Pullman’s creation, an avatar that reacts against the motions of Lewis’s creation, Lucy. Thus Lyra’s achievements for women and girls are Pullman’s achievements, and this creates a parallel narrative in which the heroic male (author) rescues the female (as a social category), who needs and longs for him. Thus while *His Dark Materials* has the potential to draw children’s literature into the canon or in conversation with it, the authorial voice remains male even if it speaks about and cites women. Woolf’s influence and the voices of the female characters in the trilogy are all subsumed to this conflict, mitigating the strength of Pullman’s challenge to patriarchal norms. Lyra’s enrolment in St. Sophia’s hints, however, at the possibility of gradual development and change through education. Like the young Pullman, Lyra has the opportunity to build upon her Oxford education and become an author with the power to influence her world: but not yet.

II. Old Wives’ Tales

Jones, who attended St. Anne’s College, is an example of a female fantasy author that puts her Oxford women’s college education to the creation of new narratives.⁷⁸ Like her predecessors, she also draws upon canonical texts in an attempt to rewrite gender norms in children’s fantasy, but she integrates selected fragments of these with pickings from oral traditions like balladry and fairy tale. Thus Jones returns to the transcribed oral sources that represent what de Certeau calls the ‘Voice’ of

⁷⁸ Diana Wynne Jones, ‘Autobiography,’ online.

‘Culture’ or ‘orality’ in order to conflict with masculine readings of the same ‘Voice.’⁷⁹ Jones’s navigation of influences is less confrontational than Pullman’s: while she also draws upon alternative source materials to construct her fantasy works, these sources are less antagonistic towards the traditions that inform Lewis and Tolkien’s writing. By using both literary and popular sources from the Middle Ages, Jones continues to explore the narrative possibilities that medieval texts and medievalisms allow. Her integration of oral forms, in particular, embraces the kind of non-traditional authorship in which women could always participate. This approach is in keeping with de Certeau’s conception of how individuals navigate around imposing structures (in Jones’s case, the example of the early Oxford School authors) by reusing existing material for personal ends. de Certeau writes, ‘[t]he order of things is precisely what “popular” tactics turn to their own ends [...] here order is *tricked* by art.’⁸⁰ Jones’s ‘tricks’, which allow for potential literary foremothers as well as forefathers recall one of the categories of heroism that she identifies. Jones calls this ‘the foxy, tricky hero – the hero with a brain.’⁸¹ Such a hero may be male or female, questing or stationary: Jones indicates Penelope as such a hero alongside her roaming husband Odysseus.⁸²

Although Jones draws upon many of the same medieval sources as her predecessors, she chooses figures and interpretations that serve her purposes. In *Fire and Hemlock* and *Howl’s Moving Castle*, that purpose is to create a female hero and ‘a narrative structure which did not simply put a female in a male’s place.’⁸³ Rather than insert a female hero into the masculine spaces of children’s fantasy as Pullman does, Jones merges domestic space with the heroic arena in a way that enables female heroism without overthrowing the traditional associations of gendered spheres.

⁷⁹ de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 131. See also Chapter Two, pp. 78-82.

⁸⁰ de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 27.

⁸¹ Jones, ‘The Heroic Ideal’, 130.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 132.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 132 and 135.

Referring to the female knight Britomart in *The Faerie Queene*, Jones writes that she ‘longed to base something on the ballad Tam Lin, because that had a real female hero, one of the few Britomart-like heroes in folklore.’⁸⁴ But Britomart has domestic and romantic associations, as well: although she is a warrior who travels through a romance landscape, Lewis praises her for her fecundity and establishes her, through her allegorical role as Chastity, as signifying married love. To Lewis, Britomart’s triumph over Malecasta’s champions and the rescue of Amoret represents ‘the final struggle between the romance of marriage and the romance of adultery,’ in which Britomart ends ‘some five centuries of human experience [in courtly love], predominantly painful.’⁸⁵ By developing the ‘feminine’ love-plot of ‘Tam Lin’ for *Fire and Hemlock*, Jones reclaims the subject matter of love as the foundation for female heroism.

It is possible to read ‘Tam Lin’ as transmitting the values that Lewis describes; although Janet, the heroine, becomes pregnant by the knight Tam Lin before marriage, she determines that he is a Christian and rescues him from the fairy queen who keeps him as consort. His identification as a Christian man and his requests that she ‘hold me tight, and fear me not / [for] I am your bairn’s father’ suggests the possibility and intention of marriage between these two nobles.⁸⁶ However the love plot in Jones’s novel is more complex, since the Tam Lin figure, Tom, is much older than the heroine Polly and first meets her when she is a child. In this Jones’s rewriting recalls Lewis’s *Silver Chair*, which also shows evidence of rearranging the ‘Tam Lin’ ballad for children’s fantasy. Lewis shifts all sexual implications away from the Janet character, the girl Jill who aids in the prince’s rescue. Like Janet, Jill is responsible for remembering the ‘signs’ that make it possible to rescue the prince from the Lady of the

⁸⁴ Ibid., 134.

⁸⁵ Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, 340 and 341.

⁸⁶ Francis James Child, Helen Child Sargent, and George Lyman Kittredge, eds., ‘Tam Lin,’ in *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (London: Harrap, 1905), 68.

Green Kirtle, Queen of the Underland. But Jill makes no sign of having romantic feelings for Rilian, and is part of a rescue party that includes the boy Eustace and the Marsh-Wiggle Puddleglum, a Narnian character that seems to have been based on Lewis's 'gloomy' gardener Fred Paxford.⁸⁷ The 'Underland' recalls the mound-dwelling fairies of English lore and places the Lady of the Green Kirtle, who keeps Prince Rilian under an enchantment, in the role of the Fairy Queen. And yet it is Janet who wears a 'green kirtle' in the ballad; she flings it over his naked body when she claims him from the fairies.⁸⁸ Lizanne Henderson and Edward J. Cowan suggest that Janet's green dress 'was probably no accident and had counter-magical significance,' but it also identifies her symbolically with the seductive fairy queen.⁸⁹ Lewis's retelling precludes any such possible associations, and transforms the Janet character into a prepubescent girl hero who is part of a group and who performs a patriotic (rather than romantic) function. Meanwhile, the Lady of the Green Kirtle's name suggests Janet's role as a sexually desiring woman and a contender for Tam Lin's body.

The Silver Chair may be an intertext for Jones, informing the changing relationship between Polly and Tom as Polly shifts from childhood into adulthood. More explicitly, Jones quotes excerpts from both 'Tam Lin' and the related ballad 'Thomas Rymer' in the epigraphs to her chapters in *Fire and Hemlock*. 'Thomas Rymer' describes Thomas's positive romantic experiences with a fairy queen, whom he initially mistakes for the Heavenly Queen.⁹⁰ Jones thus complicates the understanding of acceptable and desirable love while using it as the basis for her fantasy heroine's narrative. By making reference to both 'Tam Lin' and 'Thomas Rhymer,' Polly may be

⁸⁷ Walter Hooper, *C. S. Lewis: A Complete Guide to His Life and Works* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2005), 95.

⁸⁸ Child, Sargent, and Kittredge, 'Tam Lin,' 66.

⁸⁹ Lizanne Henderson and Edward J. Cowan, *Scottish Fairy Belief: A History* (East Linton Scotland: Tuckwell Press, 2001), 90.

⁹⁰ Francis James Child, Helen Child Sargent, and George Lyman Kittredge, eds., 'Thomas Rymer,' in *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 63-6.

both Janet *and* the Queen; indeed, Jones discloses that the heroine Polly's name denotes the many heroic roles that the character adopts during the novel.⁹¹

Marina Warner argues that such authorial manoeuvring is typical of female fairytale-telling, in which stories not only entertain, but also serve 'to reveal possibilities, to map out a different way and a new perception of love, marriage, women's skills, thus advocating a means of escaping imposed limits and prescribed destiny.'⁹² Among her other innovations, Jones suggests the possibilities of heroism in a local or domestic (and thus traditionally feminine) sphere: 'Polly stays at home' while Tom 'ranges the world,' but remains the heroine of the novel.⁹³ *Fire and Hemlock's* metatextual plot implies that reading and retelling can offer women power in the heroic fantasy realm without the need to embark upon distant quests. Instead, Polly's adventure develops through storytelling, reading, and the experiences of growing from a creative child into an analytical adult. In their first encounter, Polly proposes an imaginary hero-narrative for Tom, naming him Tan Coul and naming herself Hero, his 'trainee-hero.'⁹⁴ As Polly ages and gains experience, her Hero/hero-identity develops through the stories that she and Tom tell each other about the adventures of their alter egos.

As their stories progress throughout Polly's childhood, Tom sends her fantasy novels, children's literature, and fairy tales that contain clues to the fairy magic that traps him. The first set of twelve books include *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* and *The Sword in the Stone*, but also children's fantasy classics that lack strong medieval influences like *The Wizard of Oz* and E. Nesbit's *The Treasure Seekers* and

⁹¹ Jones, 'The Heroic Ideal', 136.

⁹² Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers* (London: Vintage, 1995), 24.

⁹³ Jones, 'The Heroic Ideal', 136.

⁹⁴ Diana Wynne Jones, *Fire and Hemlock* (New York: HarperCollins, 1985), 20-1.

Five Children and It.⁹⁵ Polly borrows from her reading as she writes her own fantastical stories, which begin to come to life in the world around her. Tom guides this authorial development, admonishing her to value the kinds of stories that Lewis and Tolkien argued were so significant: when Polly complains about the ‘childish’ fairy tales that she receives with ‘a book about King Arthur,’ he replies that ‘[o]nly thin, weak thinkers despise fairy stories. Each one has a true, strange fact hidden in it, you know, which you can find if you look.’⁹⁶ This response also echoes Lewis’s contention that ‘the fear of childishness and the desire to be very grown up’ is itself childish, and suggests that fantastic literature for children can be a source of wisdom, learning, and rich narrative material.⁹⁷

In spite of her advocacy for borrowing from other texts, Jones rejects the unoriginality of derivative writing. After Polly reads *The Lord of the Rings*, she creates a story for Tan Coul and Hero that repeats its narrative. Thomas replies to her tale with a brief note: ‘[y]ou stole that from Tolkien. Use your own ideas.’⁹⁸ Thus Jones comments on the plethora of fantasy works that imitate Tolkien and each other, and instead promotes recombinatory reading and writing as having its own, more potent, magic. Polly’s ‘sources,’ which include Tolkien’s fantasy works, recall the parallel canon of ‘magical’ children’s texts available to readers that I discussed in the previous chapter, but also draw other kinds texts into this circle.⁹⁹ At the conclusion of *Fire and Hemlock* Polly uses her accumulated knowledge about English legends, fairy magic, and heroism to find the captured Thomas. She ‘reads’ across her diverse source texts and unique situation to improvise a viable means of saving him from the fairy queen. de Certeau writes of the reader as a ‘poacher’ who ‘produces gardens that miniaturize

⁹⁵ Ibid., 98.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 177.

⁹⁷ Lewis, ‘On Three Ways of Writing for Children,’ 60.

⁹⁸ Jones, *Fire and Hemlock*, 192-93.

⁹⁹ See Chapter Three, p. 165.

and collate a world [...]; but he too is “possessed” by his own fooling and jesting that introduces plurality and difference into the written system of a society and a text. He is thus a novelist.’¹⁰⁰ Polly is a reader and a writer, a consumer and also a creator.

Jones’s interpretive rewriting and interest in oral tradition reflects Chaucer’s authorial tactics in *The Canterbury Tales*. Chaucer recreates these tales by placing them in the mouths of the pilgrims, yielding new forms that comment upon the ones they satirize or replace. Jones describes Chaucer as ‘more subtle than Odysseus, playing with the kind of narratives I had previously enjoyed, telling them in different styles, delicately deflating the typical hero, altering the balance of the tale with sophisticated touches.’¹⁰¹ Chaucer’s playful reinterpretations of narrative was in keeping with medieval conventions about the production of story: as Helen Cooper notes, ‘[o]riginality of material was not highly valued in the Middle Ages.’ Chaucer ‘is often explicit about how different versions of the same story may undermine each other’s authority, or about the nature of his own disagreements with his sources.’¹⁰² Many of the stories in his *Canterbury Tales* have analogues in a number of other works, including classical, continental, and other English texts.¹⁰³ Chaucer’s pilgrims provide him with the opportunity to give voice to a range of characters from across the social spectrum, with many tales seeming tailored to complement their tellers.¹⁰⁴ The diversity of stories and personalities in *The Canterbury Tales* indicates Chaucer’s

¹⁰⁰ de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 173.

¹⁰¹ Jones, ‘The Heroic Ideal’, 132.

¹⁰² Helen Cooper, ‘The Classical Background’, in *Chaucer: An Oxford Guide*, ed. Steve Ellis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 255.

¹⁰³ On Chaucer’s possible sources for the structure of *The Canterbury Tales*, see the explanatory notes in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 795–97, and the following notes for each tale. For more on Chaucer’s experiences in continental Europe and how they might have influenced his use of Boccaccio, Petrarch, and other sources, see David Wallace, ‘Chaucer in Florence and Lombardy,’ in his *Chaucerian Polity: Absolutist Lineages and Associational Forms in England and Italy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 65–82. See also Robert M. Correale and Mary Hamel, eds., *Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005).

¹⁰⁴ Chaucer evidently rearranged the tales between tellers; for instance, scholars now tend to agree that ‘The Shipman’s Tale’ was originally intended for the Wife of Bath. See Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, 872.

interest in how known narratives might change in the mouths of individuals who vary according to their social backgrounds and experiences.

But the wit and sophistication that Jones identifies in *The Canterbury Tales* also undermines the heroic ideal that she admired: after reading Chaucer, she writes of being ‘left with an uneasy sense that the heroic ideal was awfully banal and naive and straightforward.’¹⁰⁵ In navigating the literary expectations for the genres that he emulated, Chaucer, Jones suggests, changed them, making it difficult to write seriously about heroism after his time. But like Pullman, Jones identifies children’s literature as a space for the preservation of unfashionable literary forms in the twentieth century, and calls children’s literature ‘the only place where the [heroic] ideal still existed.’ She attributes this in part to the dominance of narrative in writing for children and in part to the idea that ‘children do, by nature, status, and instinct, live more in the heroic mode than the rest of humanity. They naturally have the right naïve, straightforward approach.’¹⁰⁶ Jones was interested in both approaches, however, and thus *Fire and Hemlock* and *Howl’s Moving Castle* explore both Chaucerian genre commentary and Jones’s commitment to a heroic ideal for female characters.

Jones refers to Sophie, the protagonist of *Howl’s Moving Castle*, as a variation on the ‘fairy story heroine’ who ‘goes bravely to castle to rescue prince under enchantment except that in this case they rescue one another, quarrelling fiercely while they do.’¹⁰⁷ Sophie, whose name means ‘wisdom,’ discovers her querulous voice

¹⁰⁵ Jones, ‘The Heroic Ideal,’ 132. Lewis rejects this kind of reading of Chaucer, stating: ‘I am afraid that many of us now read into Chaucer all manner of ironies, slynesses, and archnesses, which are not there, and praise him for his humour where he is really writing with ‘ful devout corage.’ He omits *The Canterbury Tales* from his *Allegory of Love*, in favour of a close analysis of *Troilus and Criseyde*, which he calls ‘a wholly medieval poem’ and ‘Chaucer’s greatest.’ Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, 163-64 and 176. *Troilus* was not a set text in the English syllabus in Jones’s day, though it would be by the time that Crossley-Holland and Pullman were students, and is in the current curriculum. See Chapter One, p. 69.

¹⁰⁶ Jones, ‘The Heroic Ideal,’ 133.

¹⁰⁷ Jones, ‘Inventing the Middle Ages.’

following an enchantment that leads her to appear to be ‘about ninety’ years old.¹⁰⁸ The curse transforms Sophie into a character whose circumstances and outspokenness recall the Wife of Bath and the loathly lady of her tale. Both of these older women function outside normative domestic spaces: in the Wife of Bath’s case this is sanctioned by the pilgrimage, and a curse like Sophie’s sends the loathly lady first into the wilderness, and then into the castle of her future husband. Thus Jones borrows both tactics and material from Chaucer, and combines them with the tactics and material of the female fairytale-tellers that Warner describes. This mingling of medieval sources and fairy tale continues the Oxford School legacy of telling ‘fairy-stories,’ as Lewis and Tolkien considered their own fantasy writing to be, and allows Jones to create a female hero derived from ‘traditional’ fantasy sources, whose heroism offers a model for female autonomy and success within the genre.¹⁰⁹

Howl’s Moving Castle, published one year after *Fire and Hemlock*, is set in ‘the land of Ingary, where such things as seven-league boots and cloaks of invisibility really exist.’ In Ingary (a name which seems to play with the ‘Angle’ root of the word ‘England,’ implying parallels between these places), ‘it is quite a misfortune to be born the eldest of three. Everyone knows you are the one who will fail first, and worst, if the three of you set out to seek your fortunes.’¹¹⁰ These opening sentences of the novel address the rigidity of fairy-tale convention, and prepare the reader for the novel’s challenge to these rules. Farah Mendlesohn contends that often in Jones’s works ‘the entire point of the story is to persuade the child reader to question the value of

¹⁰⁸ Diana Wynne Jones, *Howl’s Moving Castle* (originally published 1986; London: HarperCollins, 2005), 33. *OED Online*, s.v. ‘sophy,’ accessed 18 March 2011. <http://www.oed.com>.

¹⁰⁹ Tolkien, ‘On Fairy Stories’ 113. Lewis calls ‘the fantastic type of children’s story [...] the kind I know and love best.’ Lewis, ‘On Three Ways of Writing for Children,’ 63.

¹¹⁰ Jones, *Howl’s Moving Castle*, 9.

metaphors and fairy tales as paradigms for life.’¹¹¹ But rather than reject or mock the fairy tale and fantasy genres Jones offers other genre-appropriate options for how a female hero’s story might unfold. *Howl’s Moving Castle* participates in fairy-tale narrative traditions: Sophie’s transformation recalls the young heroines of Giambattista Basile’s ‘The Bear,’ Perrault’s ‘Donkey Skin,’ and the Grimms’ ‘All Fur,’ who cloak their youth and beauty in animal skins.¹¹² In each of these tales, the women do so to avoid the incestuous advances of their fathers. Their new beastliness lends them the ability to escape and the freedom to move unmolested through the landscape. Sophie’s curse, placed upon her by the Witch of the Waste, likewise empowers her to leave her home and limited destiny in the family hat shop.

Sophie’s reading in school teaches her, the eldest of three, ‘how little chance she had of an interesting future,’ but her transformation lends her a newfound fearlessness and irreverence towards social expectation.¹¹³ ‘It was odd. As a girl, Sophie would have shrivelled with embarrassment at the way she was behaving. As an old woman, she did not mind what she did or said. She found that a great relief.’¹¹⁴ Sophie’s appearance emboldens her to take up residence in the moving castle of the Wizard Howl, who is rumoured to prey upon young women. This space is at once domestic and itinerant, and the organisation of roles within the castle allows Sophie and Howl to experiment with both traditional ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ characteristics as they develop into heroic figures. The young woman cursed into the form of an outspoken crone is also a motif in *The Wife of Bath’s Tale*, which is a variation of the medieval loathly lady legend. The loathly lady’s form as an ‘old’ woman, rather than simply ugly as in other versions of the tale, reflects upon the aging, forthright Wife of Bath. Jones’s apparent borrowing of

¹¹¹ Farah Mendlesohn, *Diana Wynne Jones: Children’s Literature and the Fantastic Tradition* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), xv.

¹¹² Zipes, *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition*, 33-8; 38-46; 47-50.

¹¹³ Jones, *Howl’s Moving Castle*, 10.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 66.

this premise for the heroine of *Howl's Moving Castle* invokes Chaucer's fascination with perspective and narrative creation alongside her interest in motion and gendered space.

The Wife of Bath voices her concern with how authorship influences reception and knowledge by referencing Aesop's fable of the lion in her Prologue. To use Mary Carruthers's paraphrasing, in the fable a lion 'complains of a picture showing a man killing a lion and suggests that if a lion had painted it the result would have been different.'¹¹⁵ The Wife draws the comparison between the lion and women: 'By God,' she says, 'if women hadde written stories, / As clerkes han withinne hire oratories, / They wolde han written of men moore wikkednesse / Than al the mark of Adam may redresse.'¹¹⁶ The adjustments that the 'Wife' makes to the loathly lady tale reveal how Chaucer imagines women might interpret it. There are several English examples of the loathly lady narrative from the later Middle Ages: in each, a hideous woman forces a knight to marry her in exchange for revealing what women most desire: sovereignty. She becomes beautiful on their wedding night, after the bridegroom demonstrates that he will give her sovereignty in their marriage. The best-known versions, outside of *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, are John Gower's *Tale of Florent* from the *Confessio Amantis* and the romances *The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnelle* and *The Marriage of Sir Gawain*.¹¹⁷ Various other medieval texts also feature loathly ladies that couple with mortal men, including the fifteenth-century romance *Thomas of Erceldoune*, in which the lady is a fairy queen.¹¹⁸ *Thomas of Erceldoune* fits into the fairy lover tradition of

¹¹⁵ Mary Carruthers, 'The Wife of Bath and the Painting of Lions', *PMLA* 94, No. 2 (March 1979): 209.

¹¹⁶ Chaucer, 'The Wife of Bath,' 114, ll. 693-96.

¹¹⁷ All in *Medieval English Literature*, ed. Thomas J. Garbáty (Waveland Press: Prospect Heights, IL, 1997). In the latter two, Gawain fulfils the marriage vow in Arthur's place. This move is reminiscent of his substitution for Arthur in the beheading game of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, which seeks to preserve the safety of the king for the good of the state. There is also a ballad version of 'The Wedding of Sir Gawain' in Child, Sargent, and Kittredge, *Popular Ballads*, 54-59.

¹¹⁸ Rather than beginning as an ugly woman, the fairy queen is initially lovely but turns into a loathly lady when Thomas insists on having intercourse with her. She warns him, 'Þat synne will for-doo all my

‘Tam Lin’ and ‘Thomas Rymer,’ and indeed Francis James Child writes in his introduction to ‘Thomas Rymer’ that Thomas of Ercildoune and Thomas Rymer are one and the same.¹¹⁹ The ballad ‘King Henry’ foregrounds the hero’s hospitality towards the loathly lady, and Francis James Child notes that it contains elements of ‘The Marriage of Sir Gawain’ and has ‘a parallel, as Scott observes, in an episode of the saga of Hrólfr Kraki.’¹²⁰ The Irish sovereignty myths also feature the young male hero’s sexual encounter with the aged and deformed incarnation of the Irish sovereignty goddess. These are often considered early analogues to the English loathly lady tales, but there is no clear evidence that the English would have known them.¹²¹

Chaucer places his version of the loathly lady legend in the explicit context of storytelling, rather than literary production. Susan Schibanoff asserts that the Wife of Bath is part of an ever-changing oral culture, and that in retelling the loathly lady tale to the other pilgrims with her own embellishments and alterations, ‘unconsciously, she alters or destroys those authorities that conflict with her values or experiences.’¹²² Schibanoff adds that ‘in order to survive, to read as a woman, she must, in fact, reread, enter old texts from new critical directions.’¹²³ So although her tale is presumably an *oral* tale told on pilgrimage that allows her the freedom to adjust and therefore realign

beaute,’ but he proceeds, promising to stay with her after the act. She becomes loathly as predicted, her hair falling lank and with ‘all hir body lyke the lede.’ The Lady brings Thomas with her to her fairy land, and regains her beauty as they approach her castle. Quotations from the Thornton MS, but equivalent lines appear in the Cotton, Landsdowne, and Cambridge MSS as well. See James A.H. Murray, ed., *The Romance and Prophecies of Thomas of Erceldoune* (London: Published for the EETS by N. Trübner & Co, 1875) 6-9.

¹¹⁹ Child, Sargent, and Kittredge, *Popular Ballads*, 63. For more on the connection between the loathly lady and *Thomas of Erceldoune* and *Thomas Rymer*, see William Price Albrecht, *The Loathly Lady in ‘Thomas of Erceldoune’* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1954).

¹²⁰ ‘King Henry’ in Child, Sargent, and Kittredge, *Popular Ballads*, 58 – 9.

¹²¹ Whitley Stokes first made this claim in 1892. For more on the Irish sovereignty goddess and her relationship to the English loathly lady tales, see S. Elizabeth Passmore, ‘Through the Counsel of a Lady: The Irish and English Loathly Lady Takes and the “Mirrors for Princes” Genre,’ in *The English ‘Loathly Lady’ Tales: Boundaries, Traditions, Motifs*, ed. S. Elizabeth Passmore and Susan Carter. (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2007) 3-4.

¹²² Susan Schibanoff, ‘“Taking the Gold Out of Egypt”: The Art of Reading as a Woman,’ in *Feminist Readings in Middle English Literature: The Wife of Bath and All Her Sect*, ed. Ruth Evans and Lesley Johnson (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 227.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 229.

the meanings of a known narrative, the reader is well aware that it is *written* in a collection, and therefore an authoritative text in its own right that contributes to the discourse on gender relations otherwise dominated by misogynist works. De Certeau argues that

[t]he verbal relics of which the story is composed, being tied to lost stories and opaque acts, are juxtaposed in a collage where their relations are not thought, and for this reason they form a symbolic whole. [...] Within the structured space of the text, they thus produce anti-texts, efforts of dissimulation and escape, possibilities of moving into other landscapes, like cellars and bushes.¹²⁴

By retelling the loathly lady narrative through female voices, both *Howl's Moving Castle* and *The Wife of Bath's Tale* create space for such anti-texts, exploring the metaphorical suppressed cellars that Bachelard describes and shadowy, feminine bushes: the greenery where fairies hide.

Chaucer's *Wife of Bath* establishes her tale as in the tradition of Arthurian romance, but is 'aware of the problems of truth that are inherent in the exemplary genre, the painting of lions and hunters' and her tale approaches these issues through her witty narrative style.¹²⁵ She sets the scene as the nostalgic, fairy-filled universe of Arthurian England, which she compares to her contemporary England. She complains that the friars have chased off the fairies, taking the place of vanished incubi and lecherously lurking '[i]n every bussh or under every tree,' thereby revealing the hypocrisy of a Christian authority that allows sexual indignities to the women it professes to guide.¹²⁶ Elaborating on this theme of sexual harassment, which is not present in the other surviving versions of the tale, the *Wife* introduces the central male character of the story as a knight who rapes a maiden. This crime is another Chaucerian innovation, and in the fairy-tale setting of *The Wife of Bath's Tale* it causes 'swich

¹²⁴ de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 107.

¹²⁵ Carruthers, 'The Wife of Bath and the Painting of Lions,' 217.

¹²⁶ Chaucer, 'The Wife of Bath', 117, l. 880.

clamour / And swich pursute unto the kyng Arthour / That dampned was this knyght
for to be deed / By cours of lawe.¹²⁷ This swift, harsh, and public punishment of
violent rape – and the subsequent court of women that forms to judge the rapist –
belongs to an unlikely world ‘fulfild of fayerye,’ suggesting that such justice could only
take place in an implausible fantasy world.¹²⁸

A court of ladies governed by Guenevere demands that the knight discover what
women most desire in order to avoid execution. The heroes in the other versions of this
tale also undertake this quest on pain of death, though none as a punishment for rape
and in no other case as a means of rehabilitation. In each of the English loathly lady
legends a loathly lady reveals to the knight that ‘[w]ommen desiren to have
sovereynetee’ in exchange for a promise of marriage.¹²⁹ In the other English tales this
horror of the loathly lady stems from her monstrous ugliness, without special emphasis
on her age, but in *The Wife of Bath’s Tale* she is ‘loothly and so oold also,’ drawing
attention to the disgust that her aged flesh arouses in the rapist knight.¹³⁰ The knights
all honour their agreements with sorrow, only to find that their brides become lovely
young women on the wedding night.

In most accounts the knight must decide whether he would prefer his wife to be
beautiful by day, when others might see her and judge him by her, or by night when
they are alone, when he must ‘pay his [marital] dette.’¹³¹ Chaucer’s narrator shifts the
terms of the wedding-night bargain between the knight and his new wife, however: in
the *Wife of Bath’s* tale the knight must choose whether he will have his wife ‘foul and

¹²⁷ Ibid., 117, ll. 889-92.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 116, l. 859.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 119, l. 1038.

¹³⁰ The knight complains that his new bride is ‘so loothly and so oold also, / And therto comen of so
lough a kynde, / That litel wonder is thogh I walwe and wynde.’ Chaucer, ‘The Wife of Bath,’ 119-20, ll.
1100-02. The loathly lady expounds on the fallacy of judging her for her old age as a part of her pillow
lecture to the knight on their wedding night.

¹³¹ Chaucer, ‘The Wife of Bath,’ 107, l. 153.

old til that [she] deye,' but faithful, or else require her to be 'yong and fair,' with the implication that she will be troublesome and unfaithful.¹³² As in the other forms of this story, the knight in *The Wife of Bath's Tale* defers to the lady's discretion, and as a result gains the outcome most desirable to himself. In the other versions, she remains beautiful both night and day, and in Chaucer's she remains beautiful and tells her husband that she will be as 'good and trewe / As evere was wyf, syn that the world was newe.'¹³³ The Wife of Bath, her loathly lady, and Chaucer all wink at these slippery lines, reminding the audience of humanity's first wife Eve, who betrayed her husband when the world was new. And yet by returning agency to the woman, both partners find peace in this arrangement; the lady willingly 'obeyed hym in every thyng / That myghte doon hym plesance or liking,' an arrangement suggestive of the triumphant 'married love' that Lewis identifies in *The Faerie Queene*.¹³⁴

The Wife's invocation of the painted lion, explicit statements about women's exclusion from literary production, and adjustments to the loathly lady story all indicate that this is a character concerned with the issue of female authority, who seeks to redress it by creating a tale. Carolyn Dinshaw posits that 'literary activity as it is represented in Chaucer is always [...] a gendered activity; it is an activity that is represented in terms of relationships between people and that expresses larger principles of social organization and social power.'¹³⁵ The Wife of Bath repeatedly returns in her Prologue and Tale to the concept of the 'glose,' or interpretation, that clerks apply to texts, and Dinshaw argues that

'[t]he Wife speaks as the literal text, insisting on the positive, significant value of the carnal letter as opposed to the spiritual gloss; moreover, in doing so she appropriates the methods of the masculine, clerkly

¹³² Ibid., 121, ll. 1220 and 1224.

¹³³ Ibid., ll. 1243-44.

¹³⁴ Ibid., ll. 1255-56. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love*, 340-41.

¹³⁵ Dinshaw, *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics*, 15.

glossators themselves, thus exposing techniques they would rather keep invisible.¹³⁶

This appropriation from the kind of authoritative academic ('clerkly') tradition that I discussed in the previous chapter is also Jones's approach to the Oxford School tradition of reusing medieval sources. Her production of heroic narratives in *Fire and Hemlock* and *Howl's Moving Castle* privileges the 'carnal letter' of storytelling, but these tales also contain interpretations and responses to source material in their adjustments to them. Jones writes of her medieval influences, '[i]t seem[s] extraordinary to me that anyone could think that one could write anything without being heavily indebted to things that had gone before – and not know it. [...]es, I do know really where I'm getting it from and it is intentional.'¹³⁷ Although Jones does not explicitly cite *The Wife of Bath's Tale* in *Howl's Moving Castle*, her husband John Burrow's essay on romance in *The Canterbury Tales*, published the same year as *Howl's Moving Castle*, opens with a discussion of the modified Arthurian landscape of *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, and 'the dominance of women in the fairy world evoked by the Wife of Bath.'¹³⁸ The parallels between Burrow's work on *The Wife of Bath's Tale* and Jones's reflections of this text in her medievalised children's fantasy do not seem coincidental. Jones's self-awareness about sources and possible engagement with her husband's medieval scholarship places her within Oxford's masculine tradition of academic criticism and creates a feminine presence there.

The Wife of Bath's encouragement of literary fecundity is compatible with the obsession in her Prologue with diversity and multiples, from God's commandment that humans 'wexe and multiplie' to the defence of numerous spouses (sequential in her case, but not in those of 'Salomon' and other Biblical forefathers that she cites), to the

¹³⁶ Ibid., 120.

¹³⁷ Jones, 'Inventing the Middle Ages.'

¹³⁸ J.A. Burrow, 'The Canterbury Tales I: Romance,' in *The Cambridge Chaucer Companion*, ed. Piero Boitani and Jill Mann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 111.

importance of variety in the home (having both vessels of ‘gold’ and ‘tree’) and in the human population (‘God clepeth folk to hym in sondry wyse’).¹³⁹ The Wife’s tale is her production, her fertile contribution to the universe (as opposed to any human offspring). Jones likewise takes up the connection between narrative productivity and women’s generative capacity in *Howl’s Moving Castle*, in Sophie’s magical ability to ‘talk life’ into objects. Before her transformation, Sophie withdraws into her work at the hat shop and redirects her frustrated capacity for self-determination into creating personalities and stories for the hats that she trims. She bestows them with qualities that will attract men: one has ‘mysterious allure’; another is ‘going to have to marry money’; yet another is ‘young as a spring leaf.’¹⁴⁰ In each case, the explicit or implicit reward of these attributes is the ability to secure a husband, especially one with ‘money’ or ‘in a high position.’ Thus, although Sophie does not engage in the heteronormative practices of feminine attraction geared towards marriage and reproduction, it is not out of disdain for this cycle. Instead, she despairs that she will ever be able to enter into it, as the ‘unlucky’ eldest daughter. However her talking is, unbeknownst to Sophie, a generative storytelling that allows the hats she charms to impart these qualities to their wearers. This ability complies with traditions of female storytelling and fertility, and is one that Sophie can practice from within a domestic space.

Sophie’s powers inspire jealous retribution from the Witch of the Waste, an older witch who keeps herself ‘carefully beautiful’ with magic.¹⁴¹ Linda R. Gannon argues that the paradigm of ‘[b]iological determinism ensures that women’s primary roles are reproductive, patriarchy ensures that these roles carry an inferior status, and

¹³⁹ Chaucer, ‘The Wife of Bath,’ 105, ll. 28, 35, 44f, and 57, and 106, ll. 100-03.

¹⁴⁰ Jones, *Howl’s Moving Castle*, 17.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 30.

androcentrism ensures that these roles are superficial and extraneous.¹⁴² Older women often punish young women in fairy tales for threatening to usurp their insecure social positions, using murder (*Snow White*), extended sleep (*Sleeping Beauty*), or reduction to a low social status (*Cinderella*) to limit the possibility of their achieving a high-status marriage. This kind of jealousy is the source of the loathly lady's loathliness in three of the primary surviving English tales, all of which fix the blame for the lady's misfortunes on an envious stepmother.¹⁴³ *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, however, includes no such malignant stepmother, and instead the Wife implies that the loathly lady has power over her own form and has *chosen* to appear as an ugly and old woman. The loathly lady first appears in *The Wife of Bath's Tale* on the 'grene,' after a circle of dancing women vanish.¹⁴⁴ This event follows the Wife's mention of fairies, and in light of the medieval folk tradition of fairy queens who can appear as loathly ladies (as in *Thomas of Erceldoune*), Chaucer's Wife of Bath seems to suggest that the loathly lady is not a victim of a curse but rather an autonomous fairy queen. This shift transforms the wilderness that is the domain of the questing hero into a feminine space, dominated by women with magical knowledge and skills.

Jones also complicates the traditional gendering of space in *Howl's Moving Castle*, in which the castle doubles as both a 'feminine' domestic space and a dynamic, moving vehicle for 'masculine' heroism. The curse of old age forces Sophie from her home and she relocates in Howl's castle as his 'cleaning lady,' trading one domestic space and set of responsibilities for another. The modest interior of the castle opens through the front door into four locations, one of which is the landscape through which

¹⁴² Linda R. Gannon, *Women and Aging: Transcending the Myths* (London: Routledge, 1999), 9.

¹⁴³ In *The Tale of Florent* the lady reveals that her 'stepmoder, for an hate / Which toward me sche hath begonne' cast the curse that transformed her into her loathly state. Likewise, Ragnell in *The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell* explains that she 'was shapen by nygramancy, / with my stepdame' and the lady in *The Marriage of Sir Gawain* blames her appearance on the 'yonge lady' that married her father. All in Garbáty, 811, 435, and 512 respectively.

¹⁴⁴ Chaucer, 'The Wife of Bath,' 118, l. 998.

the castle wanders. The castle's interior serves as both home and workplace for Howl, his fire demon Calcifer, his apprentice Michael, and Sophie. It also becomes the location of a childlike make-believe for Sophie, who pretends to be a 'normal' old woman for the benefit of her housemates. Sophie plays at 'keeping house': she 'cleaned her way remorselessly through the castle. She really enjoyed herself. Telling herself she was looking for clues,' she cleans every accessible room.¹⁴⁵ Sophie's aggressive domesticity in Howl's castle enables her adventure rather than *is* her adventure, allowing her to 'play' the gender norms that determine such activities to be women's responsibilities.¹⁴⁶ Through her housekeeping Sophie takes on the roles of child, bride, and mother: the three primary stages of a female life as assessed by a patriarchal system. Patriarchy measures femininity by masculinity, and thus Sophie's roles in the novel are inextricable from Howl's, which are also fluid throughout the novel.¹⁴⁷ Sophie plays in Howl's home and relies on his skills as a magician to finance her meals like a dependent child, but she also mothers him in response to his behaviour and needs. During one of his tantrums, Sophie demands, 'Stop it at once! You are behaving like a *baby!*', then sends him to bed and cleans up after him. In Chapter Twelve, titled 'Sophie Becomes Howl's Old Mother,' she masquerades as his biological mother in order to help him avoid a dangerous assignment.¹⁴⁸

Howl also takes on the role of the violent husband: in Sophie's town he bears the reputation of 'collecting young girls and sucking the souls from them. Or some people said he ate their hearts.' "'Bluebeard!'" said the whispers.'¹⁴⁹ This reference

¹⁴⁵ Jones, *Howl's Moving Castle*, 69.

¹⁴⁶ Sophie's cooking, sewing, cleaning, and managing of the male household recalls Wendy's mothering of Peter Pan and the Lost Boys in their Neverland home: however this zealous domesticity is Wendy's chosen adventure, in spite of her complaints. Barrie, 'Peter and Wendy,' 135.

¹⁴⁷ Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985).

¹⁴⁸ Jones, *Howl's Moving Castle*, 89. Emphasis Jones's.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 12 and 16.

names the Perrault fairy tale about a nobleman who kills each of his wives and hangs their mangled bodies in a small locked room. In the tale, Bluebeard's newest wife disobeys his orders not to enter the room and discovers the grisly collection, only just escaping with her own life.¹⁵⁰ Howl's activities are, like Bluebeard's and the knight's in *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, directed only towards young women and therefore also sexually suggestive. When Sophie moves into the castle, she assumes that her elderly form will prevent any such danger, thinking, 'Wizard Howl is not likely to want *my* soul for his collection. He takes only young girls.'¹⁵¹ Protected by the supposed immunity of old age, she takes on the role of an invincible Bluebeard's bride, 'snooping' around the castle of which she has become mistress. Sophie expects to discover signs of Howl's murderous habits, and her most suspicious findings do appear in a small, dripping room: the bathroom, where Howl spends hours preparing himself each morning. Under the pretence of cleaning it, Sophie

spent most of a day carefully going through [the packets, jars, and tubes] to see if the ones labelled SKIN, EYES and HAIR were in fact pieces of girl. As far as she could tell, they were all just creams and powders and paint. If they once had been girls, then Sophie thought Howl had used the tube FOR DECAY on them and rotted them down the washbasin too thoroughly to recall.¹⁵²

This grisly speculation suggests the real horror with which Sophie seems to appraise Howl's character. While for the Wife of Bath the knight's crime is a fact, Sophie assumes Howl's (sexual) violence based on rumour. She perceives this kind of behaviour as plausible for most young men, who she sees 'swaggering beerily to and fro' to 'accost' women during the May Day celebrations before her transformation.

¹⁵⁰ See Marina Warner's extensive discussion of the 'Bluebeard' tale in *From the Beast to the Blonde*, 241-72, and the tale in Charles Perrault, 'Bluebeard,' in *Perrault's Fairy Tales*, translated by A.E. Johnson and illustrated by Gustave Doré (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), 31-43.

¹⁵¹ Jones, *Howl's Moving Castle*, 39.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 71.

When a man, later revealed to be Howl, approaches her she cowers in a doorway and ‘tried to hide.’¹⁵³

This description of aggressive courtship recalls the Wife of Bath’s concern with how reporting impacts on accepted knowledge: who, in this scene, is painting the lion? The narrator takes on the same kind of unreliable role as the whispering townspeople who perpetuate the rumour about Howl’s bloodthirstiness, a reputation which proves to be a metaphor for his practice of wooing women and losing interest them soon after. Jones raises questions about perception and how it might ‘author’ situations, influencing not only the experience of a situation but also how it may unfold. Sophie projects her genre-bound expectations of misfortune in love and restriction to domestic spaces onto the outside world. Her fears render all amorous men outside the home as uncontrolled, violent predators. Sophie thus learns both to author and read in *Howl’s Moving Castle*: like Chaucer’s Wife of Bath, she contributes to rewriting the world through her speech, and learns to read the world as glossed with multiple meanings. When she accepts Howl as a lover at the end of the novel, it is because she no longer sees herself as doomed prey or an unwanted crone, and can see men as more than predators.

Sophie’s process of learning to create rather than accept destiny echoes what Jones already knows about authorship and negotiating generic rules, which she demonstrates in her dexterity with sources, influences, and norms throughout *Howl’s Moving Castle*. Jones explores the possibility of overlapping gendered spaces in her children’s fantasy, which enable heroism and domesticity in both female and male characters. This sharing is exemplified towards the end of the novel, when the castle’s interior literally enters and ‘settles down’ inside Sophie’s childhood home, allowing the

¹⁵³ Ibid., 21.

roving male and the static female to merge into a single shared space. ‘The castle room seemed to wriggle itself into place inside the parlour [...] until the two melted together.’¹⁵⁴ In the final scenes of *Howl’s Moving Castle* Sophie and Howl rush out of the castle into the wilderness of the Waste, each to save the other. Sophie uses the generative power of her magical speaking to return life to the ‘almost-dead black lump’ that is Howl’s missing heart. She revives it and relocates it back in his breast, commanding it to ‘[g]et in there and work!’¹⁵⁵ This act demonstrates the possibility of a female Oxford School hero that is not ‘a female in a male’s place’ – a woman whose activities agree with the structure of the magical, medievalised universes of fantasy and fairy tale but who finds space for heroism within it.¹⁵⁶

Both Sophie and Lyra rely on storytelling in their differing models of children’s fantasy heroism. Lyra’s skill at telling tales (a ‘liar,’ as her name implies) enables many of her adventures: as she states at the end of her adventures, ‘I haven’t always told the truth, and I could only *survive* in some places by telling lies and making up stories.’¹⁵⁷ Pullman and Jones suggest that authorship can offer feminine power in their children’s fantasy novels: a way to negotiate the structures that dominate their female protagonists’ worlds. This use of narrative reflects their own use of what de Certeau calls ‘the scriptural process’ to manoeuvre from within subordinate positions in the Oxford School. The influence of early authors such as Lewis and Tolkien, as well as the tradition of using medieval literature as Oxford School sources, may be put to use in new texts to produce meanings that argue with fantasy norms without exploding

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 226-27.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 297-98.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 132 and 135.

¹⁵⁷ Pullman, *Amber Spyglass*, 1011.

generic expectations. This authorial power is itself congruent with the conventions of the Oxford School, whose self-styling as clerkly authorities contribute to its place as a popular pedagogic authority.

But it is important not to overlook that Pullman, Jones, and Chaucer's restyling of genre and narrative are still, in many ways, 'male fantasy.' Dinshaw writes of the Wife of Bath's version of the loathly lady legend, 'when we consider that such desire for the reform—not the overturning—of patriarchy is represented as a woman's desire, it is even more apparent that this is a masculine dream.'¹⁵⁸ This kind of negotiation rather than explosion of the structures of patriarchy is typical of the romance genre that Chaucer's Wife of Bath utilizes in her tale, and indeed of the Mills and Boon-style genre that we now label 'romance.' Helen Cooper contends that '[t]he fullest happy endings for romances, both medieval and Renaissance, privilege young love over patriarchal direction, and focus on the woman's desire as much as, or more than, the man's.'¹⁵⁹ This focus on female desire, even patriarchy-induced desire, suggests the importance of recognising female individuality, even under a patriarchal system. Pullman and Jones's attempts to reverse or evade gender hierarchy suggest its power in the Oxford School, but also provide evidence for the alternative ways of reading and writing power relationships within the genre.

While the limited measure of freedom (or the illusion of freedom) for women that remain within the confines of the patriarchal system may be read as a 'male fantasy,' it can also reflect the kind of tactical response to dominant structures that de Certeau describes. He suggests of the 'singular and plural practices which an urbanistic system was supposed to administer or suppress' that 'one can follow the swarming activity of these procedures that, far from being regulated or eliminated by panoptic

¹⁵⁸ Dinshaw, *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics*, 117.

¹⁵⁹ Cooper, *The English Romance in Time*, 229.

administration, have reinforced themselves in proliferating illegitimacy.’¹⁶⁰ In romance, the monolith of patriarchy can serve as a structure as all-pervasive as the panoptic powers that Foucault argues govern modern existence, thus providing the necessity and opportunity for reactionary tactics.¹⁶¹ This approach acknowledges the potential for women to *enjoy* some aspects of the patriarchal system and / or the leeway within it, and to enjoy manipulating it in ways that appeal to their individual desires, constructed as though they may be by the system itself. But the ‘city’ remains: ‘[t]he city, like a proper name, [...] provides a way of conceiving and constructing space on the basis of a finite number of stable, isolatable, and interconnected properties.’¹⁶² Even if Oxford School authors navigate the space that these systems of power produce, they remain subject to it. The following chapter more closely considers the persistence of oppositions and hierarchy to the internal logic of the Oxford School and its successors, and explores the ways that contemporary authors recast and negotiate these generic expectations. I focus on the monster: the Other that wears its alterity on its body, and separates the insider from the outsider.

¹⁶⁰ de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 96.

¹⁶¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 2nd ed., trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

¹⁶² de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 94.

CHAPTER FIVE

From Home to Home: The Persistence of Generic Structure

Grendel, that liminal ‘mearcstapa,’ or stepper of borderlands, is monster and symbol in *Beowulf*: the alien Other on the outer fringes that threatens, whose incursions into the home space of Hrothgar’s hall Heorot must be stopped.¹ His dangerous mother must, in turn, be discovered and destroyed in her peripheral dwelling-place. Tolkien vitally insists on the importance of the monsters to this much-studied poem: he argues in ‘The Monsters and the Critics’ that ‘[i]t is just because the main foes in *Beowulf* are inhuman’ that the story is so ‘large’ and ‘significant.’² His essay reoriented *Beowulf* scholarship, demanding for the first time that the monsters of the poem be taken seriously and given full weight.³ This final chapter is about the monsters of the Oxford School and subsequent children’s fantasy literature: the incomprehensible enemies and marginalised signs of difference that maintain the oppositions and hierarchies of the genre. Monsters sustain these divisions even in texts that express the kinds of changing political sensibilities discussed in the previous chapter: though the line between human and monster is blurred, it remains essential to the structure of fantasy worlds. The monster serves as a reminder of the unknowable and threatening universe beyond the home community, whether far away on the edges of the world or embedded within the same landscape. It strengthens the sense of home by contrast, and the attraction of the foreign reinforces the authority of the known. Thus the children’s fantasy narratives that include monsters (either traditional races and varieties, or modern innovations) often return to the ‘home’ principles of the early

¹ Mitchell, *Beowulf*, 51, l. 103.

² Tolkien, ‘The Monsters and the Critics,’ 33.

³ On the rich history of *Beowulf* criticism and reception before Tolkien, see Tom Shippey and Andreas Haarder, eds., *Beowulf: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1998).

Oxford School, recreating the nationalistic and hierarchical conventions of the genre. This generic structure often repeats itself in spite of authors' self-conscious attempts to modernise the social messages of their works.

In his 'monster theory,' Jeffrey Jerome Cohen refers to the monster as 'difference made flesh, come to dwell among us. [... As] a dialectical Other or third-term supplement, the monster is an incorporation of the Outside, the Beyond—all of those loci that are rhetorically placed as distant and distinct but originate Within.'⁴ The monster is the strange Other, a symbolic not-Us: etymologically 'that which shows' or 'that which warns.'⁵ Monsters are transferrable onto unfamiliar spaces to indicate the alien nature of the foreign in contrast to the home, and may represent the unconquered forces of evil that lurk on the fringes of a community. But visions of these beings are often impressionistic and incomplete: Cohen argues that monster theory 'must content itself with fragments (footprints, bones, talismans, teeth, shadows, obscured glimpses—signifiers of monstrous passing that stand in for the monstrous body itself.'⁶ Grendel's arm hanging over Heorot – then later, his head – stand in for the whole monster. The monster, 'kin of Cain,' in turn represents the broad and complex challenge that the inhuman 'enemies of mankind,' the 'enemies of the one God' pose to people.⁷ This divide transmits not only Christian sentiments, but also a stark worldview in which physical difference encodes the moral hierarchies that govern the fantasy genre. This worldview allows that enemies of God may also be (at least nominally) people, as with the Saracen foes of medieval literature.

⁴ Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, 'Monster Culture (Seven Theses),' *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 7.

⁵ Cohen traces the etymology as: '[t]he English word "monster" and its cognates in the romance language derive from the Latin *monstrum*, a divine portent, usually of misfortune. Augustine followed Cicero's example in *De divinatione* (I.xlii.93) and connected the Latin noun to the verb *monstrare*, "to show, reveal" (*De civitate dei*, XXI.8). Isidore of Seville, following the example of Varo (*De lingua Latina*), derived *monstrum* from *monere*, "to warn." Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 187, note 5.

⁶ Cohen, 'Monster Culture,' 6.

⁷ Tolkien, 'The Monsters and the Critics,' 22.

Following a discussion of *Beowulf* and Tolkien's fantasy monsters, I address the representation of Saracens as monstrous, and consider Lewis's creation of the Calormenes in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. This fantasy race of Saracens suggests the attraction that underlies Lewis's rejection of the Oriental enemy. As Cohen reminds us, 'fear of the monster is really a kind of desire.'⁸ The physicality of the sensual, heretical Orient in Lewis's fantasy functions as '[t]he monster [that] awakens one to the pleasures of the body.'⁹ This voyeuristic Orientalism, like all desiring proximity to the 'monster,' reinforces the security of home: as Geraldine Heng writes,

[t]o a domestic audience, the retrieval of the world makes faraway places curiously mobile: sets in motion distant cultures, and centripetally transports them to domestic shores to allow for their inspection close-up from a vantage point of domestic fixity.¹⁰

Such viewings of the monster also condemn what it relishes, for the Saracen represents the monolithic threat of Islam and other 'heretical' religions of the East to Christian, Western dominion. Suzanne Conklin Akbari notes that it is 'only during the late fourteenth century that something like our modern notion of a European "West" appears in literature.'¹¹ Nevertheless, medievalists have been known to 'transport this duality back into their period,' and Lewis's *Chronicles* appear to reproduce such racial-religious antagonism between East and West in spite of its being historically problematic.¹²

Recent children's fantasy is less willing to designate entire races and religions (and species of magical creatures) as fundamental enemies, shying away from the vernacular sense of the 'medieval': that is, intolerance and backwardness. They

⁸ Cohen, 'Monster Culture,' 16.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁰ Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press 2003), 247.

¹¹ Suzanne Conklin Akbari, 'From Due East to True North: Orientalism and Orientation,' in *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 'From Due East to True North,' 29.

¹² Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, 'Introduction: Midcolonial,' in *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, 8.

express contemporary scepticism and moral ambiguity towards such discrimination, and instead see monsters nowhere and everywhere at once. Rowling's novels exemplify the confusion that such pervasive doubt produces in contemporary children's fantasy. In her series, paranoia about the identity and locations of terror replaces the defined monster of earlier fantasy texts. Such a state of society is inconclusive, however, and Rowling's return to conventional means of identifying and defeating enemies in the series dénouement suggests the genre's reliance on monstrous foes in spite of resistance to such hard distinctions. They enable the divisions and hierarchies that characterise the fantasy universe, and even in texts that decry prejudice they underlie the basic structures of the world.

Monsters need not always be enemies, however; I thus conclude with a consideration of Little People, descendants of the dwarf, in the *Harry Potter* books.¹³ It is permissible in contemporary popular culture to deem Little People inferiors, and they therefore take on the role of an unthreatening monstrous other that functions primarily to maintain the hierarchical dream of fantasy. This dream relies upon a tacit awareness that such a universe is in tension with the tenets of western modernity, and children's fantasy texts seem to take pleasure in this difference, even in the politically incorrect. The child's position as a 'natural' superior to Little People does nothing to explode an order in which small stature (usually the province of the child in an adult society) denotes both 'lack' and arrested development. Instead, it shifts the terms of this equation for children, allowing them to dominate and command small adults and enjoy a system that usually does not serve them. The 'monstrosity' of magical races

¹³ 'Little People' is the term of choice for people with a form of dwarfism; see, for instance, the Little People of America site (www.lpaonline.org). I use it here as a general term for people or beings of small stature, with the recognition that authors may not intend to draw direct comparisons between actual Little People and invented fantasy races.

of Little People affirms the dignity and humanity of children in the fantasy universe, in spite of their own small stature.

I. The Monsters and the Critics

Com on wanre niht / scriðan sceadugenga.
(Then the night prowler came shrithing through the shadows.)¹⁴

Grendel's approach to Heorot captures the terror of the monster, creeping from the unknown to destroy humans under the cover of darkness. *Beowulf* was, and still is, a set text in the Oxford English syllabus, and a cornerstone of the Oxford School's medieval literary education. Tolkien suggests that Beowulf's struggles against the ogre Grendel, Grendel's mother, and, in later life, the dragon that kills him are what allow the poem to convey the 'paradox of defeat inevitable yet unacknowledged' that dominated the pre-Christian Northern worldview.¹⁵ In Old Norse and Anglo-Saxon cultures, 'monsters had been the foes of the gods, the captains of men, and within Time the monsters would win.'¹⁶ With the rise of Christianity, 'monsters remained the enemies of mankind, the infantry of the old war, and became inevitably the enemies of the one God, *ece Dryhten*, the eternal Captain of the new.'¹⁷ For Tolkien, it is in its engagement with the monstrous that *Beowulf* 'glimpses the cosmic and moves with the thought of all men concerning the fate of human life and efforts; it stands amid but above the petty wars of princes, and

¹⁴ Mitchell, ed., *Beowulf*, ll. 703-04. Kevin Crossley-Holland, transl., *Beowulf* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1977), 51.

¹⁵ Tolkien, 'The Monsters and the Critics,' 18.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 22. For more on this Anglo-Saxon worldview, see Chapter Two.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* One German *Beowulf* scholar of the nineteenth century, Heinrich Leo (1799-1879), similarly contends that though the poem had 'undergone reworking by a Christian hand...the ancient heathendom still looks through everywhere, i.e. from buried poetic sources.' In Shippey and Haarder, *Beowulf*, 36. This view implies a Christian covering over an 'original' pagan core: Tolkien suggests a closer relationship, in which the pre-Christian view is an essential *part* of the Christian one.

surpasses the dates and limits of historical periods, however important.’¹⁸ Seth Lerer suggests that Tolkien’s literary criticism, especially this essay on *Beowulf*, ‘set a tone for Anglo-Saxon studies as invested in the monstrous—as if *Beowulf* had come to apotheosize fairy-tale imagination.’¹⁹ Tolkien’s work directed his field towards his interests in myth and the fantastic, and in the monsters that signal essential difference as part of the deep legacy of English literature. To identify and strive against such monsters is to partake in an ‘ancient’ struggle that unites the present with the past, and Tolkien contends that this was equally true in the *Beowulf*-poet’s time. He calls *Beowulf* ‘an echo of an echo’ that recycles ‘materials [...] preserved from a day already changing and passing, a time that has now for ever vanished.’²⁰ The enemies of God and Christian men in *Beowulf* – inherited from a pre-Christian past / un-Christian place – become, or may be read as, ‘timeless’ foes that may be reactivated in other texts to continue this ongoing war.

However, the monstrosity of these figures is also often culturally specific. For instance, the text pays special attention to Grendel and his mother’s eating of human flesh and drinking of blood, an early Christian taboo that was revived in Anglo-Saxon England. English penitentials from the seventh century warned against drinking blood, which ‘contains the life of the flesh,’ according to Leviticus 17:11 and 17:14.²¹ Mary Clayton suggests that the Eastern influence of Theodore, the Greek-born Archbishop of Canterbury from 688-690, may have been part of the renewed importance of the prohibition against consuming blood.²² Bede, Alfred, Ælfric,

¹⁸ Tolkien, ‘The Monsters and the Critics,’ 33.

¹⁹ Lerer, *Children’s Literature*, 223.

²⁰ Tolkien, ‘The Monsters and the Critics,’ 33.

²¹ For instance, on Grendel’s eating and drinking of human flesh and blood, see Mitchell, ed., *Beowulf*, 62-63, ll. 445-51; 72, ll. 739-45. On his mother’s, see 92, ll. 1331-33. See Mary Clayton, ed., ‘Letter to Brother Edward: A Student Edition,’ *Old English Newsletter* 40.3 (Spring 2007): 31-46, especially 34-35 of her Introduction. Leviticus 17:14 warns that ‘the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off.’

²² Clayton, ed., ‘Letter to Brother Edward,’ 35.

Wulfstan, and other Anglo-Saxon writers expressed what Fred Robinson calls ‘an almost obsessive concern with the Old Testament injunction against the drinking of blood.’²³ Thus Grendel’s eager consuming of it alongside Geatish flesh - ‘bat banlocan, blod edrum dranc, / synsnædum swealh’ (‘bit into his body, drank the blood / from his veins, devoured huge pieces’) – carries the double monstrosity of frightening violence and unholy breach of taboo.²⁴ Grendel’s tearing and gobbling of human flesh sets him apart from men, a sign of the monstrous difference that in turn consolidates the identity of Beowulf and his warriors in opposition. And yet monstrosity is always in close proximity to humanity, raising the question of what makes the obvious monster monstrous, and the human hero heroic.

Andy Orchard’s scholarship explores these boundaries by interrogating the poem’s relationship to the other texts in Cotton Vitellius A.xv, which are also concerned with various kinds of monstrosity.²⁵ These works are *The Passion of St. Christopher*, in which the dog-headed Christopher converts and becomes a martyr at the hands of a powerful pagan king; *The Wonders of the East*, which describes the marvels and monsters of the Orient; *The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*, which also recounts the wonders and dangers of the East; and following *Beowulf*, *Judith*, in which the Israelite woman beheads the monstrous Assyrian general Holofernes.²⁶ Orchard suggests that ‘the tension between Christian and heroic diction’ in *Beowulf* and its proximity to these other texts reveals the multiple ways of reading Beowulf’s heroism. Although he destroys ‘feond mancynnes’ (‘mankind’s foe), he is also

²³ Fred C. Robinson, ‘Lexicography and Literary Criticism: A Caveat,’ *Philological Essays: Studies in Old and Middle English Language and Literature in Honour of Herbert Dean Meritt*, ed. J.L. Rosier (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1970), 102.

²⁴ Mitchell, ed., *Beowulf*, 72, ll. 742-43. Crossley-Holland, trans., *Beowulf*, 53.

²⁵ Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf-manuscript* (Cambridge and Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 1995).

²⁶ This is the order followed in the facsimile. See Kemp Malone, ed., *The Nowell codex; British Museum Cotton Vitellius A. XV, second MS*, vol. 12, *Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1963).

characterized, Orchard argues, by the ‘overweening pagan pride’ that Holofernes and Christopher’s persecutor display in the religious poems of the manuscript.²⁷ While the heroic worldview supports Beowulf’s claim to greatness, the Christian ethos reminds that such powerful heathens are doomed to hell, and are monsters amongst men when they use their strength against Christians and Christendom. Orchard writes, ‘[i]t may well be that from a Christian perspective the doubtless heroic Beowulf, in the closing words of the poem which celebrates his mighty deeds, like Alexander and Hercules, would seem damned with feigned praise.’²⁸ The poem maintains this tension between celebration and damnation in its hybrid descriptions of both Beowulf and the monsters that he battles.²⁹ For instance, Orchard points out that because Grendel ‘wæs mara þonne ænig man oðer’ (‘was greater than any other man’), ‘[s]uch a substantial enemy requires a hero of comparable greatness.’³⁰ So Beowulf, too, is described ‘in rather similar terms’: the coast-guard reports of the Geat, ‘Næfre ic maran geseah / eorla ofer eorþan’ (‘Never have I seen a mightier noble on earth’).³¹

The narrative switching between Beowulf and the monsters’ points of view in each of the hero’s encounters with his enemies illuminates the shared humanity and monstrosity of each party. Grendel’s mother suffers the death of her son, echoing Hildeburh’s loss in the lay that the Danes sing following Grendel’s demise.³² She seeks revenge: ‘his modor þa gyt / gifre ond galgmod gegan wolde / sorhfulne sið, sunu deoð wrecan’ (‘Grendel’s mother, mournful and ravenous, resolved to go on a grievous journey to avenge her son’s death’), in an act that is at once terrifying and

²⁷ Mitchell, ed., *Beowulf*, 54, l. 164, and Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 55 and 5.

²⁸ Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 57. This closing praise comes on lines 3180-83: ‘cwædon þæt he wære wyruldcyninga / mannum mildust ond monðwærust, / leodum liðost ond lofgeomost.’ In Mitchell, ed., *Beowulf*, 161. Kevin Crossley-Holland translates them as ‘they said that of all kings on earth / he was the kindest, the most gentle, / the most just to his people, the most eager for fame.’ Crossley-Holland, trans., *Beowulf*, 123.

²⁹ For an overview of these comparisons in the poem, see Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 32-3.

³⁰ Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 32, and Mitchell, ed., *Beowulf*, 93, l. 1353.

³¹ Mitchell, ed., *Beowulf*, 56, ll. 247-48.

³² *Ibid.*, 83-6, ll. 1063–1159.

sympathetic.³³ The dragon's obsessive counting of his treasures at the end of the poem, meanwhile, is matched by Beowulf's lust for the hoard. The dragon plagues the Geats after a servant steals a cup for his master from the barrow; Beowulf rouses himself to challenge the monster, seeking not only glory and the safety of his people, but also the treasure. 'Nu sceall billes ecg / hond ond heard sweord ymb hord wigan.' ('Now the shining edge, hand and tempered sword, shall engage in battle for the treasure hoard.')³⁴ He bellows when he enters the dragon's lair, and the narration takes the monster's point of view as it recognises the sound. 'Hete wæs onhrered, hordweard oncnioþ / mannes reorde, næs ðær mara fyrst / freode to friclan.' ('The guardian of the hoard knew the voice for human; violent hatred stirred within him. Now no time remained to entreat for peace.')³⁵ Monster and hero match one another, similar in their absolute opposition.

The monsters in Tolkien's fantasy works correspond with his assessment of how the monsters of *Beowulf* function; some even seem to borrow directly from the poem. For instance, the final monster that Bilbo and his party face in *The Hobbit* is an ancient dragon, Smaug, which lives beneath the Lonely Mountain and guards treasures stolen from the Dwarfs at the height of their power. Like the servant in *Beowulf*, Bilbo steals a cup from the dragon's hoard for the Dwarfs, and the worm discovers the missing cup. As in the Old English poem, the narration shares Smaug's fury: 'Thieves! Fire! Murder! Such a thing had not happened since he first came to the mountain! His rage passes description.'³⁶ The intelligence and emotion of the dragon contributes to its monstrosity: these human characteristics indicate the capacity for

³³ Mitchell, ed., *Beowulf*, ll. 1276-78. Crossley-Holland, trans., *Beowulf*, 68.

³⁴ Mitchell, ed., *Beowulf*, ll. 2508-09. Crossley-Holland, trans., *Beowulf*, 104.

³⁵ Mitchell, ed., *Beowulf*, ll. 2554-56. Crossley-Holland, trans., *Beowulf*, 105.

³⁶ Tolkien, *The Hobbit*, 195. On the same page, the narrator instructs the child reader in dragon-lore that matches *Beowulf*'s: '[d]ragons may not have much real use for all their wealth, but they know it to an ounce as a rule, especially after long possession, and Smaug was no exception.'

evil in this ‘enem[y] of mankind.’³⁷ The destruction of Smaug thus falls not to the hobbit Bilbo but to a more worthy opponent, the ‘grim-voiced and grim-faced’ man of ‘the line of Girion, the Lord of Dale.’³⁸ His name, Bard, invokes the tradition of oral poetry that disseminated tales like *Beowulf* in the Middle Ages. Bard’s valiant slaying of the dragon and subsequent leadership of the people of Lake-town celebrates the kind of hero that Tolkien saw *Beowulf* to be: a destroyer of the ‘adversaries of God,’ battling against ‘Chaos and Unreason’ against all odds.³⁹ The antagonism between Bard and Smaug (and between Bilbo and the monsters that he encounters on his journey to the Lonely Mountain) is definitive of the oppositions that characterise the logic of Middle-Earth. This sure division between monstrous and not-monstrous (elves, dwarfs, and hobbits are not human, but are grouped with them as knowable and potential allies) maintains the stability of the fantasy realm.

In the final sentence of his essay, Tolkien claims that *Beowulf*, ‘made in this land’ (England), ‘must ever call with a profound appeal’ to ‘those who are native to that tongue and land,’ until the end of days for the English: when ‘the dragon comes.’⁴⁰ Tolkien uses the image of the dragon to invoke the destruction of humankind foretold in Northern mythology, but represents it as an English concern. This not only overlays contemporary and mythical Englands, but places the English in specific opposition to monsters. This designation opens the door to regarding other threats to English security and identity as monstrous by extension. Such potential for xenophobia is complicated, however, by the Christian ethos that insists upon accepting other Christians as part of a universal fellowship. The contents of the *Beowulf*-manuscript appear to explore this tension and the role of the monster within

³⁷ Tolkien, ‘The Monsters and the Critics,’ 22.

³⁸ Tolkien, *The Hobbit*, 224.

³⁹ Tolkien, ‘The Monsters and the Critics,’ 20-1.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 33-4.

it, placing *Beowulf* in a more global context. Although *The Passion of St. Christopher* is incomplete in Cotton Vitellius A.xv, other Anglo-Saxon accounts of this hagiography and an analogue in the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles describe Christopher as of the dog-headed race of creatures known as *cynocephali*.⁴¹ This race appears amongst the peoples and monsters in *The Wonders of the East*, also in the *Beowulf*-manuscript, by the name of *conopenae*.⁴² As John Friedman notes, '[t]here was a fairly widespread connection of Saracens and Cynocephali in the Middle Ages, in both East and West, as the Moslems were often described by Christians as a race of dogs.'⁴³ And yet Christopher becomes a martyr saint, for *cynocephali* may represent both 'the Moslem heretic who will [...] yield to the Word through Western military might, and the savage races at the edges of the world, whom the Word will convert by softening their hearts.'⁴⁴ The description of a Christian hero as one of the *cynocephali* in *The Passion of St. Christopher* obscures and complicates the meanings of slaying monsters in *Beowulf*: is Dagnus, the heathen king that persecutes Christopher, more monstrous than the dog-headed man? How might a Christian Anglo-Saxon audience measure the relative monstrosity of these two foreigners? How would this influence their reading of the pagan Beowulf's victories?

Tolkien's reading of the poem contends that Beowulf is heroic by virtue of his opposition to the monsters. I suggest that this reading can be consistent with the internal contradictions of English standards of heroism in the Christian Middle Ages, as revealed by the texts of the *Beowulf*-manuscript. If the monster is 'that which shows' and 'that which warns,' then the need to recreate and interrogate such

⁴¹ Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, 12, and John Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Syracuse N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 69.

⁴² Orchard, transl., 'The Wonders of the East,' in *Pride and Prodigies*, 188-89, and

⁴³ This was 'an epithet ultimately deriving from Western biographies of Mahomet.' Friedman, *Monstrous Races*, 67. See also Debra Strickland, *Saracens, Demons and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 159-160.

⁴⁴ Friedman, *Monstrous Races*, 69.

contradictory signs and warnings seems to stem from a desire to define what it means to be ‘Us,’ culturally and temporally, in the world.⁴⁵ John N. Ganim writes of a broad western ‘Us’ when he writes, ‘the idea of the Middle Ages as it developed from its earliest formulations in the historical self-consciousness of Western Europe is part of what we used to call an identity crisis, a deeply uncertain sense of what the West is and should be.’⁴⁶ Observing and naming the monster as such creates the space for heroism and self-identification in opposition, in spite of the commonalities between ‘Us’ and ‘Them.’ It creates categories by which to assess the world, even if individual instances provide exceptions to these rules. By looking away from home, home is strengthened: writing of medieval travel narratives, Heng suggests that ‘[t]he trajectory plotted in [a] circular route – from home, to home – suggests it is the fixity of home, or one’s native country, that orients the meaningfulness of global transversal.’⁴⁷ Comparisons of the familiar and the foreign reinforce the identity of the familiar. As the example of *cynocephali* suggests, the Saracen often takes this monstrous role in medieval literature, distinguished by physical difference that symbolises deeper divides.

II. Enemies of God: The Monstrous Saracen

Crusade romance provides a genre’s worth of models for defining Saracens as monstrous enemies. These romances pit Christian against Muslim, a division that may be now read as pitting West against East. Drawing upon Benedict Anderson’s concept of the nation as an imagined community, Heng writes,

⁴⁵ Cohen, *Of Giants*, 187 note 5.

⁴⁶ John M. Ganim, ‘Native Studies: Orientalism and Medievalism,’ in *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, 125.

⁴⁷ Heng, *Empire of Magic*, 247.

[k]ey to the notion of an imagined community, medievalist scholarship decides, is self-identification by a national grouping, especially in defining one's national community against large communities of others in oppositional confrontations over territory, political jurisdiction and dominion, and warfare.⁴⁸

Such oppositional confrontations need not span such wide geographic distances as many crusade romances do; in his *History of the Kings of Britain*, Geoffrey of Monmouth creates national unity around the figure of King Arthur, who leads the Britons on a Holy War against the pagan Saxons. Geoffrey wrote for the Norman-Angevin dynasty in the early twelfth century, and his figuration of the Saxons as a dangerous foe may have appealed to the Norman aristocracy, who were recently settled in England following the events of 1066. Thus the Saxons, as ancestors of Geoffrey's contemporary English, are depicted as 'natural' religious enemies for the benefit of the French-speaking ruling class. Geoffrey's Arthur and his Britons provide an alternative historical locus of English power, one that suppressed the Saxons in a way that the Normans might map onto their own triumph over that people.

Dubricius, Archbishop of the City of the Legions, supports Arthur's call to war against the Saxons with this speech, which argues that to die for the country while killing Saxon pagans is to become a martyr:

You who have been marked with the cross of the Christian faith, be mindful of the loyalty you owe to your fatherland and to your fellow-countrymen! If they are slaughtered as a result of this treacherous behaviour by the pagans, they will be an everlasting reproach to you, unless in the meanwhile you do your utmost to defend them! Fight for your fatherland, and if you are killed suffer death willingly for your country's sake. That in itself is victory and a cleansing of the soul. Whoever suffers death for the sake of his brothers offers himself as a living sacrifice to God and follows with firm footsteps behind Christ Himself, who did not disdain to lay down His life for His brothers. It follows that if any one of you shall suffer death in this war, that death shall be to him as a penance and an absolution for all his sins, given always that he goes to meet it unflinchingly.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Ibid., 99.

⁴⁹ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, transl. Lewis Thorpe (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), 216.

This passage exemplifies the political and cultural significance of Christianity in the British self-definition; what the enemy community's religion espouses is almost irrelevant if it is not Christian. In the words of the *Chanson de Roland*, '[p]aiens unt tort e crestiens unt dreit' ('the pagans are wrong and the Christians are right').⁵⁰ This logic is used throughout Crusade literature with reference to fighting Saracen forces, appealing to and uniting Christian Europe as a single people joined by faith and culture in spite of their diversity.

In medieval texts, the term 'Saracen' indicates a pagan outsider; the *OED* refers to Alfred's use of the word 'saraceni' in 893 as the earliest in English, and describes 'saracen' as '[a]mong the later Greeks and Romans, a name for the nomadic peoples of the Syro-Arabian desert which harassed the Syrian confines of the Empire; hence, an Arab; by extension, a Muslim, *esp.* with reference to the Crusades.' The *OED* marks the more general definition, a 'non-Christian, heathen, or pagan; an unbeliever, infidel,' as first appearing around 1250.⁵¹ Bonnie Wheeler suggests that 'Saracen' can also 'mean someone from Sarras, a numinous space variously located by Arthurian writers—eleven miles from Jerusalem, or in Wales, or Logres, or where the Saxons lived.'⁵² At times Saxons and Saracens were one and the same, as in the case of the horde that attacks the eleven kings' lands early in Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*.⁵³ Wheeler writes, '[f]ew words are as good as the unstable term "Saracen" for meaning any strictly "Other." In medieval discourse, the Saracen is a useful

⁵⁰ T. Atkinson Jenkins, ed., *La Chanson de Roland: Oxford Version* (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1924), 83, l. 1015.

⁵¹ *OED Online*, s.v. 'saracen,' accessed 15 March 2009. <http://www.oed.com>. The *MED*'s first definition for 'saracen' is '[a] Turk; also, an Arab; also, a Moslem.' *MED Online*, s.v. 'saracen,' accessed 11 Jan 2011. <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/>.

⁵² Bonnie Wheeler, 'Grief in Avalon: Sir Palomydes' Psychic Pain,' in *Grief and Gender: 700-1700*, ed. Jennifer C. Vaught (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 69-70.

⁵³ 'theyre was comyn into theyre londis people that were lawles, as well as Sarazynes a fourty thousande, and have brente and slayne all the people that they may com by withoute mercy.' Malory, *Works*, 27.

signifier of what Foucault calls the “hollowed out void, the white space by which a culture isolates itself.”⁵⁴ Like the monsters of *Beowulf*, their identity as Saracen establishes the oppositional structure that allows for the emergence of the hero.

Of Arthur and of Merlin, which is based on the early thirteenth-century Vulgate *Merlin* and appears in the Auchinleck Manuscript (1330s) with a number of other English romances, displays the tendency to define enemies as Saracens. The romance indiscriminately describes the Irish, Danish, and Saxon invaders into Arthur’s realm as ‘païen’ ‘heþen,’ and ‘Saracen.’⁵⁵ Beyond the Saracen term (which, by the time of Auchinleck, would have had Arabic connotations in its own right), Siobhain Bly Calkin notes that several of these hybrid European-Saracen armies make vows to ‘Mahoun’ and have leaders that use Arabic military and government titles like ‘amiral’ and ‘soudan.’⁵⁶ Calkin suggests that *Of Arthur and of Merlin* ‘conflates historical and textual Germanic pagans who invaded England with contemporary thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Middle Eastern Muslims.’⁵⁷ This historically improbable combination betrays the desire to cement the identity of the Christian English by contrasting them to enemies inscribed with Oriental characteristics and associations.

Such depictions often identify Saracens as actual monsters. Cohen notes:

[r]epresenting an anterior culture as monstrous justifies its displacement or extermination by rendering the act heroic. In medieval France the *chansons de geste* celebrated the crusades by transforming Muslims into demonic caricatures whose menacing lack of humanity was readable

⁵⁴ Wheeler, ‘Grief in Avalon,’ 69.

⁵⁵ The inclusion of the Irish as pagan outsiders is particularly interesting, since the Irish were historically Christian from the fourth century.

⁵⁶ Siobhain Bly Calkin, *Saracens and the Making of English Identity: The Auchinleck Manuscript* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), 172-3. The *MED* defines ‘amiral’ as a ‘prince or emir under the Sultan; any Saracen lord or chieftain; also, any heathen ruler or commander,’ noting its earliest extant appearance in around 1275 (written c. 1200) in Layamon’s *Brut*. ‘Soudan’ denotes ‘The supreme ruler of one of the medieval Moslem states, the Sultan; the Sultan of Egypt (Persia, Syria, Syria and Egypt); or a Moslem ruler, knight, or Saracen.’ (In Robert of Gloucester’s *Chronicle*, 1325). *MED Online*, s.v. ‘amiral’ and ‘soudan,’ accessed 7 February 2010. <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/>.

⁵⁷ Calkin, *Saracens*, 173.

from their bestial attributes; by culturally glossing ‘Saracens’ as ‘monstra,’ propagandists rendered rhetorically admissible the annexation of the East by the West.⁵⁸

The Crusades of the eleventh through thirteenth centuries provided an outlet for Christian Europe to perform its opposition to Islam.⁵⁹ By the time that Pope Urban’s 1095 call to rescue the Holy Land launched the First Crusade, Christians in Europe had already been in conflict with Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula for almost four centuries.⁶⁰ The French *Chanson de Roland*, which includes Roland’s unambiguous statement about pagans and Christians, is concerned with containing the Moorish conquest of Spain. As a result, this *chanson de geste*, which circulated in England, figures the Islamic Other as an immediate threat to the European homeland. Thus although English crusade romances involve journeying out of England (and, in the case of other European romances, out of Western Europe), the spectre of Islam as a monstrous threat to both the Christian religion and (in memories of the Reconquista) to Western Europe itself provide the opportunity to consolidate European cultural identity in opposition to a threatening foe.

Part of what distinguishes the Muslim Saracen as a ‘natural’ enemy of the English and other Christian Europeans is rooted in racist discourse that antedates the medieval period. Classical thought aligned the heat (‘calor’) of the South with dark skin and moral and intellectual inadequacy, a view transmitted into the Middle Ages. Akbari tracks the gradual shift in Western worldviews that aligned the West with the North (and superiority) and the East with the South (and inferiority) during the

⁵⁸ Cohen, ‘Monster Culture,’ 7-8.

⁵⁹ Ironically, the Abbasid Caliphate’s preservation and transmission of Greek texts was essential to medieval Europe’s self-identity as based on classical texts. See Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early ‘Abbāsīd Society* (New York and London: Routledge, 1998).

⁶⁰ Charles Julian Bishko, ‘The Spanish and Portuguese Reconquest, 1095-1492,’ in *A History of the Crusades*, Vol. 3: *The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, ed. Harry W. Hazard (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975), 396.

Middle Ages, a shift that influenced both the cartographic and imagined landscape of the world. Referring to the biblical division of the world between Noah's three sons after the flood, Akbari notes the association of Ham, who receives Africa, with heat, passion, and troublesome heathenism.⁶¹ Meanwhile the North, which once carried connotations of evil and of being Lucifer's land, represents moral authority and physical dominance.⁶²

Steven F. Kruger further argues that medieval depictions of Saracens were often gendered, and constructed them as 'failing to live up to "masculine" ideals in the public realm, and specifically in the realm of warfare.'⁶³ The 'association of eunuchry with "the East" – not just Islam but also the 'schismatic' Christianity of Byzantium – performed a certain hopeful emasculation of threatening forces on the borders of Western Europe,' alongside accounts of their heretical religion and black skin.⁶⁴ However, such emasculations were matched by accounts of Saracens as monstrously *hyper*-masculine, with even some Saracen noblewomen shown as wild killers, representing death and 'intent on annihilating the Franks.'⁶⁵ In addition to their unfamiliar skin tone, many literary Saracens also have supernatural features that mark them as overstepping the bounds of normalcy and knowable humanity. For instance, Jacqueline de Weever describes the Saracen king in *La Prise d'Orange* (c. 1160-1165) as 'a conventional Saracen king with red eyes.'⁶⁶ Some Black figures in medieval literature were outright demons: de Weever points to examples of Ethiopians in hagiography, in which they are enemies of Christianity, embodiments

⁶¹ Akbari, 'From Due East to True North,' 23-4.

⁶² See, for instance, Jeremiah 1:14 ('Then the LORD said unto me, Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.');

also Jeremiah 6:1 and Isaiah 14:13.

⁶³ Steven F. Kruger, 'Becoming Christian, Becoming Male?' in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1997), 22.

⁶⁴ Kruger, 'Becoming Christian' 22.

⁶⁵ These Saracen women are 'inevitably slain on the battlefield.' Jacqueline de Weever, *Sheba's Daughters: Whitening and Demonizing the Saracen Woman in Medieval French Epic* (New York: Garland, 1998), xxi-xxii. On their white counterparts, see below.

⁶⁶ de Weever, *Sheba's Daughters*, 11.

and agents of the Devil and not fully human. In the Life of Macarius, their powers invite lewd dreams, associating them with unwanted, sinful eroticism.⁶⁷ In a number of travel and wonder narratives they are sources of amazement, as in *The Wonders of the East* and later descriptions of the Orient such as the fourteenth-century *Mandeville's Travels*.⁶⁸

Such conflicting accounts of Saracens are in keeping with the construction of the enemy as an incomprehensible monster. Cohen calls monsters 'disturbing hybrids whose externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration. And so the monster is dangerous, a form suspended between forms that threatens to smash distinctions.'⁶⁹ The Saracen is, in the medieval worldview, both too effeminate to be 'normal' and too masculine; they are both uncanny in their humanity and defiantly inhuman; they are a 'mixed category, [...] demanding instead a "system" allowing polyphony, mixed response (difference in sameness, repulsion in attraction), and resistance to integration.'⁷⁰ Such demands threaten the self-identity of the European, patriarchal/heterosexual, Christian 'Us,' making the monster all the more monstrous. As with the strange and lonely Grendel, both human in his descent from Cain and inhuman, Saracens must be met and often destroyed, their potential humanity sacrificed in the project of solidifying that of Christian Europe.⁷¹

⁶⁷ 'St. Melanie the Younger (c. 383-439) argues with the Devil disguised as a young black man. Rufinus of Aquileia (345-410), who translated some of Origen's *Commentary*, in his life of Macarius (c. 300- c. 390) tells how a demon awakens the saint, who goes to the chapel and finds it filled with black Ethiopians. The Ethiopians put the brothers to sleep by rubbing their eyelids, then cause them to dream of women' in de Weever, *Sheba's Daughters*, xiv.

⁶⁸ This text describes Ethiopians as sciapods, one-legged people who sleep under their giant feet as tents. Their blackness remains a significant feature, however. M.C. Seymour, ed., *Mandeville's Travels* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 115. Kenneth Sisam includes this excerpt on Ethiopians in his *Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose*, which was required in the Oxford English School syllabus. See 'Mandeville's Travels,' in *Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose*, ed. Kenneth Sisam (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 96.

⁶⁹ Cohen, 'Monster Culture,' 6.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷¹ English crusade romances such as *Richard Coeur de Lion*, *The King of Tars*, *Morien*, *Bevis of Hampton*, *Floris and Blancheflour*, *Guy of Warwick*, and others present Saracens as threatening enemies of the Christian West, in spite of the ambiguities inherent in these descriptions.

The monstrous Saracen often appears in children's fantasy literature, which emulates the cartography – and, often, the racial-religious attitudes – of the medieval world. The imagined fantasy universe reflects the complexities of race and religious and cultural difference, just as the real world does, and both worlds need maps to envision these differences in spatial terms. Like medieval travel narrative, medieval *mappaemundi* depict a 'vast geographical imperium that is potentially the habitation of *all* Christian subjects,' but in which infidels and fabulous or monstrous beings maintain the control of far-flung areas.⁷² When the magical 'Englands' of fantasy realms have borders and neighbours, Saracens appear on the fringes of their worlds. Like Grendel, these Arab-like Saracens are 'proowler[s] of the borderlands,' and fantasy Orients tend to occupy the lower (southern) regions of the Oxford School's inevitable maps.⁷³ Although the Islamic antagonist in the crusades is largely remembered today as being Arab, it is worth remembering that 'the heroes of the counter-crusade were without exception non-Arabs. Saladin and his dynasty were Kurdish, the rest were all Turks.'⁷⁴ Nevertheless, popular reimaginings of the Crusades, including the Oriental enemies of Oxford School fantasy, frequently conflate these cultures to create a strictly non-Western enemy: 'Saracens' for the modern day. Tolkien's Haradrim and Lewis's Calormenes are Saracen-like foes who live beyond a great desert in their respective universes, and who serve as foils for the Western medievalisms of their fantasy heroes.⁷⁵ The racism of these depictions may be troubling to a contemporary reader, but they reflect what was considered

⁷² Heng, *Empire of Magic*, 270. Emphasis Heng's.

⁷³ Mitchell, ed., *Beowulf*, 51, l. 103.

⁷⁴ Bernard Lewis, *History: Remembered, Recovered, Invented* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 86-7.

⁷⁵ See Tolkien's map of Middle Earth in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, and Lewis's map of Narnia and the surrounding countries in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. For examples of more recent fantasy 'Saracens,' see Tamora Pierce, *The Woman Who Rides Like a Man* (New York: Atheneum Books, 1986; New York: Random House, 1997), and Christopher Paolini, *Eragon* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003; London: Corgi, 2005).

acceptable at the time of their publication and are thus not the primary concern of my analysis: for instance, Charles Sarland notes ‘the almost universally reactionary views on race, gender, and class, together with a political conservatism, that informed most children’s books’ up to the 1970s.’⁷⁶ The monstrosity of these fantasy Oriental enemies contributes to the construction of absolute binaries and hierarchies, but the contradictions that comprise these modern Saracens’ fragmented identities also expose the insecurities and desires of the West.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, two of the races of men that align themselves with Sauron are the Easterlings (from the East) and the Haradrim, or Southrons in the Common Speech (from the South). They are not the only humans who fall in with the enemy, but it is notable that all Easterners and Southerners do, as though evil were part of their natural disposition. In a display of their Orientalist origins, the dark-skinned Southrons fight with scimitars and ride to battle on ‘great monsters,’ elephant-like *mûmakil*.⁷⁷ Tolkien’s description of the warriors ‘out of Far Harad’ in the Battle of the Pelennor Fields recalls medieval demonisations of Saracens: they are ‘black men like half-trolls with white eyes and red tongues.’⁷⁸ The swarthy Calormenes in Lewis’s *Chronicles of Narnia* are also a threatening enemy to the heroic Narnians and their Archenlandian allies.⁷⁹ The name of these people and their land, Calormen, is composed of ‘calor’ and ‘men,’ where ‘calor’ seems to derive from the Latin word for heat (*cf.* the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English word

⁷⁶ Charles Sarland, ‘Critical and Traditional Ideological Positioning,’ in *Understanding Children’s Literature: Key Essays from the Second Edition of the International Companion Encyclopedia of Children’s Literature*, 2d ed., ed. Peter Hunt (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 34. See also Bob Dixon, *Catching them Young*, Volume 1: *Sex, Race, and Class in Children’s Fiction* (London: Pluto Press, 1977) and Robert Leeson and the Children’s Rights Workshop, *Children’s Books and Class Society: Past and Present* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1977).

⁷⁷ Tolkien, *Return of the King*, 139 and 148.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁷⁹ Although Archenland is an independent country from Narnia, Lewis does not seem to assign it any noticeably different cultural elements, and presents it as a staunch ally. As such I group it with Narnia as part of Lewis’s rewriting of a magical, medievalised England.

calor/calour, which means ‘heat, warmth’), invoking Ham and his descendents.⁸⁰ The Calormenes appear to represent medieval Muslims in the *Chronicles*; in addition to their dark skin and turbans, they worship a false god called Tash and on more than one occasion make military incursions into the white, peaceful countries of the North.

Shasta, the hero of *The Horse and His Boy* (1954), is the unhappy foster-son of a Calormene fisherman. He is unaware of his royal lineage as a prince of Archenland, but his fair skin and hair distinguishes him from other Calormenes. Shasta possesses an inexplicable love for the North, reminiscent of the sentiments of the young Jack (C.S.) Lewis: ‘[w]hen he was sitting out of doors mending the nets, all alone, he would often look eagerly to the North.’⁸¹ His foster father Arsheesh has no such interest: he takes his place amongst other Calormene commoners, ‘men with long, dirty robes, and wooden shoes turned up at the toe, and turbans on their heads, and beards, talking to one another very slowly about things that sounded dull.’⁸² Lewis establishes from the first pages of the novel not only the physical and cultural distance between Calormen and the Europeanized North, but also the relationship between dirt, oriental paraphernalia (turbans, mandatory beards, long robes, and curved shoes, etc.), and a lack of intelligence that stands in opposition to the sprightly young hero. The description of Arsheesh may also be read as a critique of adults as unexciting, and it is notable when Shasta later encounters the kings and queens of Narnia and Archenland, they are described as merry and valiant.⁸³ Thus in this sense Calormen is represented as doubly foreign to young Anglophone readers, as both an Oriental place and a place of mysterious grown-ups, while Narnia is a familiarly medievalised England, and associated with children.

⁸⁰ *OED Online*, s.v. ‘Calor, -our,’ accessed 18 June 2008. <http://www.oed.com>.

⁸¹ Lewis, *The Horse and His Boy*, 4.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 57-8.

The Calormene nobility that Shasta encounters are more compelling than commoners, but most are attractive in luxurious, dangerous ways that reinforces the association between Calormen and undesirable adulthood.⁸⁴ The appearance of the Tarkaan, a Calormene nobleman, allows Lewis to attribute a host of Orientalist stereotypes to this Saracen-like people, represented across the man's fragmented and self-contradictory body:

The spike of a helmet projected from the middle of his silken turban and he wore a shirt of chain mail. By his side hung a curving scimitar, a round shield studded with bosses of brass hung at his back, and his right hand grasped a lance. His face was dark, but this did not surprise Shasta because all the people of Calormen are like that; what did surprise him was the man's beard which was dyed crimson, and curled and gleaming with scented oil. But Arsheesh knew by the gold on the stranger's bare arm that he was a Tarkaan or great lord, and he bowed kneeling before him till his beard touched the earth and made signs for Shasta to kneel also.⁸⁵

Through these darting glimpses of the Tarkaan's armour, weapons, face, beard, and bare arm, Lewis reveals a rich, cruel culture that values power and extravagance, tinged with femininity.

These fragments are the 'signifiers of monstrous passing that stand in for the monstrous body itself,' sketching the monster because of its incomprehensible totality.⁸⁶ The noble's gold armband indicates his wealth and status, and combine with the descriptions of his 'silken' turban, 'crimson' beard 'curled and gleaming with scented oil,' and 'bare arm' to indicate a sensual luxuriousness that stands in uncomfortable contrast to the violent 'spike of a helmet,' his 'curving scimitar' and the forceful 'grasp' of his lance. The Tarkaan is not only threatening and warlike, his

⁸⁴ The sole exception to this representation of Calormene nobility is Aravis, the young noblewoman that flees to the North with Shasta in order to escape an arranged marriage. She aids Shasta in warning the Narnians against an imminent Calormene attack, and marries him after he is revealed to be the Archenlandian Prince Cor. As an Oriental woman who betrays her people and marries the Christian, European foe, Aravis fits into the crusade romance tradition of the Saracen princess-bride. See de Weever, *Sheba's Daughters*.

⁸⁵ Lewis, *The Horse and His Boy*, 5.

⁸⁶ Cohen, 'Monster Culture,' 6.

perfume, jewellery, and ostentatious beard also depict him as ‘incongruously’ effeminate. He is seductively textured, inviting readers to slide against the silk and oil on his skin at the same time as menacing them with his painful, jutting implements; at once tempting and promising punishment to those who succumb. This internal tension suggests the terms of Cohen’s monster theory: Cohen argues that ‘[t]he simultaneous repulsion and attraction at the core of the monster’s composition accounts greatly for its continued cultural popularity, for the fact is that the monster seldom can be contained in a simple, binary dialectic.’⁸⁷ It is worth noting in this context that Lewis expressed sadomasochistic desires in his youth, telling Greeves in a 1917 letter that if a young woman whose figure he admired ‘had suffered indeed half the stripes that have fallen upon her in imagination she would be well disciplined.’⁸⁸ Dark-skinned and greasy with oil, the haughty Calormene noble seems to tempt with his punishments as much as threaten. And beyond his sexualization, the loving detail with which Lewis describes the pieces of the objectified Tarkaan draws the reader into close proximity with the character, looking him over and learning his clothing, his smell, his body. The Tarkaan himself becomes an object of desire; in this case, desire for the exotic and foreign. The horror of the monster also encodes a longing to experience and touch the strange, gobbling it up in a consummation of both greedy attraction and anxious xenophobia.

Lewis’s letters confirm his intense interest in the medievalised Orient: in 1919 he wrote to Greeves that he had read Sir Walter Scott’s *The Talisman* (1825), set at the end of the Third Crusade. He proclaims the subject ‘fascinating,’ calling Saladin

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁸⁸ Lewis, *Collected Letters*, vol. 1, 283-84. Lewis seems to indulge this fantasy of the whipped young woman later in the novel through Aslan. Aslan punishes the Calormene heroine Aravis for unfairly having a slave girl beaten. He scratches her with his claws, telling her later, “‘The scratches on your back, tear for tear, throb for throb, blood for blood, were equal to the stripes laid on the back of your stepmother’s slave.’” Lewis, *The Horse and His Boy*, 201.

‘a great figure’ and asking ‘where one could read something else about the Crusaders & the Saracens.’⁸⁹ He indicates that he has also begun reading the Travels of Marco Polo, and delights in ‘the descriptions of innumerable Eastern towns.’⁹⁰ Lewis adds that this reading has ‘begun to revive my interest in the East which was swept aside by Morris and Malory about the time I first knew you.’⁹¹ This interest probably included his boyhood love for Matthew Arnold’s *Sohrab and Rustum*, which features the father-and-son champions of the Tartar and Persian armies, and which Lewis called ‘much the most important thing’ to have happened to him during his time at Campbell College in 1910.⁹² Love for the Orient is a hazard in Lewis’s fantasy texts, however, because it threatens to lure the reader into sympathy with the heretical. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Lewis depicts this kind of dangerous desire elsewhere in his children’s texts through the temptations of attractive adult women and food, suggesting both kinds of carnal desires at once and recalling the sin of Eve.⁹³ While ‘[t]he monster is continually linked to forbidden practices, in order to normalize and enforce,’ ‘[t]he monster also attracts.’⁹⁴

Lewis’s Calormenes are thus a development of the opposition that Tolkien identifies between monsters and men in his essay on *Beowulf*. The Calormenes are not only foreigners in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, they are also the enemies of the ‘Christian’ god Aslan and his followers. Writing about Italian epics as precursors to the allegorical *Faerie Queene*, Lewis contends that in these works ‘the fantastic is

⁸⁹ C.S. Lewis, *Collected Letters*, vol. 1 *Family Letters 1905-1931*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: HarperCollins, 2000), 460.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 59.

⁹³ See Chapter Four, pp. 174-75. The witch herself hails from the world of Charn, which she describes as a brutal, medievalised Orient, with ‘the cracking of the whips and the groaning of the slaves, the thunder of chariots, and the sacrificial drums beating in the temples.’ Lewis, *Magician’s Nephew*, 65.

⁹⁴ Cohen, ‘Monster Culture,’ 16.

attached at a hundred points to the real and even to the commonplace; nothing is in the air.’ He goes on to argue that

if we scratch deeper, [...] below this realism, and far below the surface of fantasy, the faint yet quite decipherable traces of the original legend—the theme of the *chansons de geste*, the old ‘world’s debate’ of cross and crescent. The presence of this theme, which the poets can suppress and revive at will, is used to supply gravity when gravity is desired.⁹⁵

For Lewis, the clash between Christianity and Islam is the ‘original’ theme, the definitive ‘Us’ vs. ‘Them’ for a western readership. He seems to have maintained this view as relevant in his own day, although he recognises that it is politically incorrect.

He wrote to his brother Warnie in 1932:

When I have tried to rule out all my prejudices I still can’t help thinking that the Christian world is (partially) ‘saved’ in a sense in which the East is not. We may be hypocrites, but there is a sort of unashamed and *reigning* iniquity of temple prostitution and infanticide and torture and political corruption and obscene imagination in the East, which really does suggest that they are off the rails – that some necessary part of the human machine, restored to us, is still missing with them.⁹⁶

Lewis thus locates the ‘human’ that opposes the monster, and which finds solace and strength in being grouped together in opposition to the monster, explicitly in the Christian world. The non-Christian East lacks this full humanity for Lewis because Christianity is what imparts it. In spite of the binary that this view appears to reflect, Lewis’s writing on Spenser suggests that he does not consider this kind of opposition ‘dualism.’ He calls dualism ‘the final heresy,’ and replaces it with the understanding of opposition in which ‘one of the opposites really contains, and is not contained by, the other. Truth and falsehood are opposed, but truth is the norm not of truth only but of falsehood also.’⁹⁷ Islam – and the Saracen that embodies it – is the monster against

⁹⁵ Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, 309.

⁹⁶ C.S. Lewis, *Collected Letters*, vol. 2 *Books, Broadcasts and War 1931-1949*, ed. Walter Hooper (London: HarperCollins, 2004), 70. Emphasis Lewis’s.

⁹⁷ Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, 314-15.

which the Christian world must strain. This struggle recognises the possibility for temptation and self-identification in the body of the monster, but demands that Christians observe the divisions between ‘monsters’ and ‘men’ that religion stipulates, and to recognise Christianity as the ‘truth’ from which Islam strays. The human element within these monsters demands even greater discipline over desire and sentiment, through adherence to doctrine and the religious obligation to defend the Christian faith.

The Calormenes’ repeated attacks on Narnia and Archenland, most notably in *The Horse and His Boy* and in *The Last Battle*, ‘suppl[ies] gravity’ to the adventures of the English children in Lewis’s fantastical universe. This Saracen aggression finds an echo in the assertions of G.K. Chesterton, an author who was ‘a great influence’ on Lewis, about the cultural battle between medievalised Islam and Christianity.⁹⁸ Chesterton’s fiction and poetry reflects his belief that in the Crusades ‘Islam that was the invasion and Christendom that was the thing invaded.’⁹⁹ This position agrees with that of Chesterton’s friend and contemporary Hilaire Belloc, who asserted that Islam ‘began as a heresy, not as a new religion. It was not a pagan contrast with the Church; it was not an alien enemy. It was a perversion of Christian doctrine.’¹⁰⁰ In this view, Islam is a monstrous distortion of truth, to be contained and overcome. Cohen notes that in the Middle Ages this concept ‘was influential among even the most informed

⁹⁸ Wilson, *C.S. Lewis*, 55. Chesterton argues that ‘Christians never knew how right they were till they went to war with Moslems.’ G.K. Chesterton, *A Short History of England* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1917), 66.

⁹⁹ G.K. Chesterton, *The New Jerusalem* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1920), 23. Examples of Chesterton’s anti-Islamic fiction include his epic poem ‘Lepanto,’ about the 1571 naval Battle of Lepanto that repulsed Ottomans invaders from advancing further into Europe, and the 1914 novel *The Flying Inn*, in which two rebellious British men evade the Islamic laws that dominate a Europe under despotic Muslim rule. See G.K. Chesterton, *Lepanto* (originally published 1911; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004) and G.K. Chesterton, *The Flying Inn* (New York: John Lane Company, 1914).

¹⁰⁰ Hilaire Belloc, ‘The Great and Enduring Heresy of Mohammed,’ in *The Great Heresies* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1938), 77. Chesterton echoes this in *A Short History of England*, 62. For more on the relationship between Belloc and Chesterton, see Jay P. Corrin, *G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc: The Battle against Modernity* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1981). Belloc also wrote poems, presumably for children. See his *Cautionary Tales and Other Verses*, illus. B.T.B. (originally published 1907; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1922).

churchmen and historians, such as Peter the Venerable, William of Malmesbury, Thomas Aquinas, and Ricoldo of Montecroce.¹⁰¹ Dante also takes this stance, placing Mohammed in the ninth bolgia of the Eighth Circle of the Inferno with the schismatics.¹⁰² The construction of Islam as the threatening, twisted offshoot of Christianity figures it in terms of Christianity. Islam becomes the fallen Satan to Christianity's God, and thus the antagonist in the story of the hero.

The Calormene attacks on the North in *The Chronicles of Narnia* confirm the ever-imminent danger that the Saracen South poses to the Christian (Aslan-following) North. This tension is complicated by the fact that Aslan's name derives from the Turkish word for lion (*aslan*): Lewis seems to recognise Christ's birthplace in what we now call the Middle East in the use of this term, but takes pains to distinguish between the region of origin (South) and the land of true believers (North). In a further distinction, Aslan's country is to the far eastern edges of the world, an idealised land that is distinct from the 'Oriental' Calormen and instead resembles Narnia in its mountains, rivers, and valleys. Lucy and her cousin Eustace seek this country with Prince Caspian and his Narnian crew in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*: such a motive for eastward travel reflects the medieval worldview, which envisaged Paradise as a location in the far eastern reaches of the earth (placed at the top of eastern-'oriented' *mappamundi*).¹⁰³ *The Chronicles of Narnia* thus maintain a distinction between a medievalised 'Orient,' with its Islamic-seeming infidels that can 'supply gravity when gravity is desired,' and the medieval idea of God's country as located to the distant east.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity, and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain: On Difficult Middles* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 283.

¹⁰² Alighieri, *Inferno*, 433-35.

¹⁰³ *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, 21, and Akbari, 'From Due East to True North,' 21.

¹⁰⁴ Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, 309.

When the Calormenes succeed in their attempts to invade the North, they bring their god Tash with them, and convince the Narnians that Aslan and Tash are the same god. The widespread acceptance of this heretical conflation presages the end of the Narnian universe, and the coming of Aslan for a Last Judgment. Lewis's description of Tash indicates the true monstrosity of the Calormene religion:

It was roughly the shape of a man but it had the head of a bird; some bird of prey with a cruel, curved beak. It had four arms which it held high above its head, stretching them out Northward as if it wanted to snatch all Narnia in its grip; and its fingers—all twenty of them—were curved like its beak and had long, pointed, bird-like claws instead of nails. It floated on the grass instead of walking, and the grass seemed to wither beneath it.¹⁰⁵

Building on multi-armed Hindu and Buddhist images and integrating sharp, curving claws that recall the Saracen scimitar, Tash is a monstrous combination of animal and human. This antagonistic, death-giving deity seems to kill the grass as it passes, and focuses its evil intent on 'stretching [...] out Northward' to capture the Narnian (Western) world in its grip. Tash also emits a 'deathly smell,'¹⁰⁶ which in Christian lore is associated with the corrupt and damned soul of a pagan.¹⁰⁷

The Calormenes are representatives of Islam and thus an inherent threat, according to the worldview that designates Islam and Christianity as at necessary odds. And yet this disavowal of even the attractions of Calormen does not damn all individual Calormenes; recognising the humanity within the monstrous, Lewis creates Calormene characters that, like the dog-headed Saint Christopher, convert and reveal the glory and mercy of the Christian religion. Race 'traitors' in the Oxford School – converts, brides, and agents of cultural change – reinforce rather than undermine the ongoing battle between 'Us' and the monstrous 'Them.' Their converting suggests

¹⁰⁵ Lewis, *Last Battle*, 92.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ See, for instance, the Saracen Sir Corsabryne's death in Malory: 'And therewithall cam a stynke of his body, whan the soule departed, that there myght nobody abyde the savoure.' In Malory, *Works*, 309.

that the deserving will find their way to European-style religion, morality, and way of life; conversely, these characters may also be read as always already European. In either case, the obliteration of their cultural difference is essential to their defection. A number of crusade romances offer medieval examples of this convention, in which noble Saracen women are born incongruously white, in what de Weever calls ‘the erasure of alterity.’¹⁰⁸ These women betray their black husbands and family members to aid the Christians, converting and marrying the Western crusaders that they assist. Lars Lönnroth also describes ‘noble heathens’ in Old Norse literature: characters that display innate allegiance to Western Christian values. Pre-Christian Norse heroes were often such noble heathens, and Lönnroth cites Þorsteinn in *Vatnsdæla saga* as ‘a sort of precursor, or herald, of Christianity, at the same time retaining enough of the pagan ethics to emphasize the difference between the old and new religion.’¹⁰⁹ The noble heathens of *The Chronicles of Narnia* similarly affirm the deviance of Calormene (Islamic) culture and religion and establish Narnia as a destination, a site of desire for the righteous pagan.

The character Emeth in *The Last Battle* is such a noble heathen: when offered the opportunity, Emeth volunteers to enter into the presence of Tash, piously professing, ‘gladly would I die a thousand deaths if I might once look once upon the face of Tash.’¹¹⁰ This act of courage and devotion secures Emeth a place in the platonic Narnian heaven at the end of the novel, although he is a heathen in the eyes of Narnians. Emeth describes his encounter with Aslan, in place of Tash:

the Glorious One bent down his golden head and touched my forehead with his tongue and said, Son, thou art welcome. But I said, Alas, Lord, I am no son of thine but the servant of Tash. He answered, Child, all the service thou hast done to Tash, I account as service done to me. [...] Not because he and I are one, but because we are opposites, I take

¹⁰⁸ de Weever, *Sheba's Daughters*, 3.

¹⁰⁹ Lars Lönnroth, ‘The Noble Heathen: A Theme in the Sagas,’ *Scandinavian Studies* 41 (1969): 2.

¹¹⁰ Lewis, *Last Battle*, 126.

to me the services which thou hast done to him. For I and he are of such different kinds that no service which is vile can be done to me, and none which is not vile can be done to him.¹¹¹

Lewis explains that this is *not* religious relativism: Aslan and Tash (and Christianity and Eastern religions) are not the same, as the Calormenes suggest. Rather, they are such extreme opposites that all good things are attributed to Aslan, and all evil to Tash.¹¹² Emeth's conception of Tash, apparently unlike those of his countrymen, fits into Narnian ideals of religious devotion and indicates his status a noble heathen, at 'home' with Narnians at the conclusion of the *Chronicles*.

Such a depiction of the individual Saracen outsider and convert recalls Malory's Sir Palomides in *Le Morte D'Arthur*, but skips over the intense psychological and cultural struggle that Palomides undergoes. I argue elsewhere that Sir Palomides's self-imposed prerequisites for conversion and unwillingness to relinquish his unsuccessful pursuit of La Beale Isode's love suggests 'a kind of resistance by which he maintains his particular masculine identity for much of *The Book of Sir Tristram de Lyones*.'¹¹³ This identity hinges on the maintenance of an inviolate wholeness of purpose, rendering him resistant to fragmentation and thus monstrosity, even at the expense of knightly honour in the Western chivalric system. Emeth's grateful acceptance of Aslan suggests no such attachment to his 'Saracen' upbringing and identity, because for Lewis such difference is not about cultural identity, but about battling monsters: 'the old "world's debate" of cross and crescent.'¹¹⁴ In this worldview the grouping and visibility of evil is important; although individuals may

¹¹¹ Ibid., 188-89.

¹¹² Emeth's deliverance depicts the theology known as individual soteriological inclusivism, which suggests that individuals from non-Christian cults may still attain salvation while maintaining that the concept of religious pluralism is heretical. See David Ray Griffin, 'Religious Pluralism: Genetic, Identist, and Deep,' in *Deep Religious Pluralism*, ed. David Ray Griffin (Westminster: John Knox Press, 2005), 35.

¹¹³ See Maria Sachiko Cecire, 'Barriers Unbroken: Sir Palomides the Saracen in "The Book of Sir Tristram,"' *Arthurian Literature* XXVIII, forthcoming 2011.

¹¹⁴ Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, 309.

change camps in the ongoing war, the conflict remains and each side retains its moral position.

This rigidity reflects the structured view that Lewis took of the ‘pre-modern’ mentality he detects and admires in Milton, in which ‘[e]verything except God has some natural superior; everything except unformed matter has some natural inferior.’¹¹⁵ Nevill Coghill describes Lewis’s entire moral system as organised according to such hierarchies:

I sense in his style an indefeasible core of Protestant certainties, the certainties of a simple, unchanging, entrenched ethic that knows how to distinguish, unarguably, between Right and Wrong, Natural and Unnatural, High and Low, Black and White, with a committed force.¹¹⁶

By contrast, Lewis saw ‘snobbery’ in modernity, and ‘[i]t delighted him that he could find no use of the word *modern* in Shakespeare that did not carry its load of contempt.’¹¹⁷ However, Coghill suggests that while Lewis’s ‘ramified and seemingly conciliatory structures of argument are invisibly based’ on this ‘entrenched ethic,’ ‘the strength that they derive from this hard core deprived him of a certain kind of sympathy and perception.’¹¹⁸ Contemporary children’s fantasy works often seek to privilege ‘sympathy and perception’ over such sharp divisions. However, as I discuss below, these divisions often return in fantasy that depicts conflict with monstrous foes, which must rely on them for the moral authority that enables heroic victory.

¹¹⁵ Lewis, *Preface to Paradise Lost*, 73.

¹¹⁶ Coghill, ‘The Approach to English’, 60.

¹¹⁷ John Lawlor, ‘The Tutor and the Scholar,’ in *Light on C.S. Lewis*, ed. Jocelyn Gibb (London: G. Bles, 1965), 80, and Nevill Coghill, ‘The Approach to English’, 60.

¹¹⁸ Coghill, ‘The Approach to English’, 60.

II. Contemporary Monsters

Contemporary children's fantasy avoids locating monstrosity in identifiable ethnic groups like the Calormenes; while the active delineation of cultural identity remains desirable, especially in the face of globalisation, our multi-polar and interconnected world disallows categorisations that promote racism and xenophobia. Such texts seem to fear being too 'medieval': that which Carolyn Dinshaw identifies as backwards, violent, and hypermasculinized (read: homophobic and sexist).¹¹⁹ She credits the 1994 film *Pulp Fiction* for the spread of the phrase 'getting medieval' in American popular culture, whereby 'medieval' bears these connotations.¹²⁰ After being rescued from sodomitical rape, Ving Rhames's character Marsellus Wallace uses the term to describe the torture that 'Mr. Rapist' will have to endure at his hands, threatening, 'I'm gonna git Medieval on your ass!'¹²¹ Contemporary authors are conscious of the multiple implications of the medieval, and navigate them in order to evoke those that continue to be desirable (and acceptable in a cosmopolitan, globalised market) while attempting to avoid or condemn those that are considered problematic. Thus the horror of the monster is often fragmented and dispersed in contemporary texts, reflecting postmodern distrust of confident binaries. In fantasy works that address large-scale conflict (as opposed to more domestic narratives, like the Jones novels that I discussed in the previous chapter), the uneasy proximity of human and monster, 'Us' and 'Them,' becomes overt overlap.

¹¹⁹ Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval*, 183-84.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 184. See also Carolyn Dinshaw, 'Getting Medieval: *Pulp Fiction*, Gawain, Foucault,' in *The Book and the Body*, ed. Dolores W. Frese and Katherine O'Brian O'Keeffe (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 116-63.

¹²¹ Quentin Tarantino, *Pulp Fiction*, DVD (1994; Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment, 1998), Film.

Kevin Crossley-Holland projects this self-aware approach to difference backwards into the Middle Ages through his inquisitive protagonist, whose reading of his life against that of the Arthurian tales in his seeing stone produces more questions than answers. Arthur questions many of the societal divisions in his thirteenth-century universe, including the dehumanising impulse against Saracens when he takes part in the disastrous Fourth Crusade. This Crusader army mustered only a third of the men that it contracted Venice to transport to Egypt, and thus was unable to pay the full amount agreed, even after impoverishing themselves to cover part of the cost. As a means of repayment, the Crusaders agreed to lay siege to Christian Zara in Dalmatia on behalf of the Venetians. Following this controversial (and successful) assault, the Crusaders were diverted to attack the Orthodox Christian city of Constantinople, again in exchange for financial support for their ‘true’ crusade. The result was a deepened divide between Greek and Roman Christendom, and the dissolution of the Crusade.¹²²

In *The King of the Middle March*, the third book in the *Arthur* trilogy, Arthur only remains on crusade until the end of the fighting in Zara, but he detects incongruities between the supposed aims of the campaign and its realities. In Venice, he watches as Norman foot soldiers attack Saracen traders without provocation. These soldiers arrive singing ‘Glory to God! There is no God but God. God of the universe!’, and Arthur comments that this ‘sounded strange, because those are the same words the Saracen traders used.’¹²³ He fights off the Normans, but the Saracen traders turn on him, thinking that he is part of their number. Arthur asks if this will be his experience of the whole crusade: ‘[d]ishonourable and lawless and vile? We’ve

¹²² See Chapter 17, ‘The Fourth Crusade: Diversion,’ in Christopher Tyerman, *God’s War: A New History of the Crusades* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006) 524-60. Arthur leaves the crusade following the attack on Zara.

¹²³ Kevin Crossley-Holland, *The King of the Middle March* (originally published 2003; London: Orion, 2004), 154.

come to fight Saracens, army against army, not to attack traders who can't defend themselves. They were just old men.'¹²⁴ Arthur's ability to recognise the Crusaders' hypocrisy and his view of the Saracens as individual 'men' confuse and scatter attempts to direct enmity at Muslims. His witnessing of the atrocities that the Crusaders commit during their assault on Christian Zara causes him to further doubt the moral categories that support the idea of the Crusade. These include the brutal killing of a small boy before combat, the rape of Zaran women, and the in-fighting between Venetians and Frenchmen in the streets.¹²⁵ He asks, '[a]re all wars unholy? When armies fight, do they always both claim that God is on their side?'¹²⁶ Arthur's experiences unfold alongside his 'readings' of the Round Table's dissolution in his seeing stone, which mirrors the moral ambiguity that Crossley-Holland attributes to both the legendary and historical Middle Ages. Arthur's return to the Marches and claiming of his deceased father's manor, Catmole, signal the abandoning of such large-scale campaigns in favour of domestic, local achievements of stewardship and love. Merlin meets him at Catmole to collect the stone, and encourages him to continue to ask 'the right questions' in his adult life.¹²⁷ The impossibility of defining and locating absolute good and evil in the *Arthur* trilogy discourages assaults on others as a path to glory. Crossley-Holland's texts suggest that the indeterminate definition of the monster renders such conflict self-destructive.

Anxiety surrounding the naming of monsters and the designation of moral absolutes characterises contemporary children's fantasy literature. The lack of a distinct religious framework enables this departure, and paranoia about the location and identity of evil takes its place in *Harry Potter*. Rowling's series emulates the

¹²⁴ Crossley-Holland, *Middle March*, 154-155.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 206, 225, and 232.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 235.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 387.

nationalistic Oxford School with its concerns about the safety of an idealised English culture and homeland, but the texts cannot commit its characters to a single, reliable set of Allies or place them under the command of a trustworthy government. Most of the Oxford School novels that I discuss in this thesis rely upon dependable powers and magical guides to aid the child heroes in their dealings with identifiable enemies.¹²⁸ But in *Harry Potter*, no character, dead or alive, is safe from suspicion of duplicity: even Professor Dumbledore, who serves as a moral anchor for the majority of the series, falls under suspicion in the final instalments.¹²⁹ Rowling designates Voldemort as *the evil* in the books, and his appearance lends him the monstrosity that expresses his internal state: in physical form he is a ‘thin man,’ ‘[w]hiter than a skull, with wide, livid scarlet eyes, and a nose that was as flat as a snakes’s, with slits for nostrils.’¹³⁰ His followers the Death Eaters, however, are the executors of this evil; the members of their ranks are difficult to recognise and locate, and thus seems to lurk everywhere at once. This decentralisation of monstrosity amplifies terror, and the fragmentation of information contributes to the panic. In the series, scattered information is influenced by emotion and tides of sentiment that are difficult to control and that stem from often-unidentifiable factions. The shift of real news from *The Daily Prophet*, the mainstream wizard media, to *The Quibbler*, a tabloid-style newspaper, is an example of the changes in sources and allegiances that characterise the later novels.¹³¹ Harry’s is a universe of doubts and surprises, awash with

¹²⁸ On the magical tutors and societies that fulfil these roles in the works of Tolkien and Cooper, see Chapter Three. Aslan and the rightful Narnian monarchs fill these positions in *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

¹²⁹ J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), 293.

¹³⁰ J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (London: Bloomsbury, 2000), 558.

¹³¹ Even this change is not permanent; Xenophilius Lovegood, the editor of *The Quibbler* and the father of Harry’s friend Luna, later betrays Harry to the Death Eaters in an attempt to save his kidnapped daughter. Rowling, *Deathly Hallows*, 341.

propaganda that misleads and confuses, with the boy hero at the centre of this storm. This poetics of paranoia is perhaps *the* postmodern affect.¹³²

Patrick O'Donnell suggests that the Red Scare-style paranoia of the Cold War did not dissipate with the supposed denouement of that conflict but was instead 'internalized, scattered, localized, and reiterated at a multitude of sites,' producing what Eric Santner considers 'a perverse nostalgia "for a paranoia in which the persecutor had a more or less recognizable face and clear geographic location."' ¹³³ Rowling's texts betray paranoia about the hidden enemy from the first novel in the series, published in 1997. Voldemort's indeterminate location and means of regaining strength is a source of anxiety for Harry: soon after learning that he is a wizard, Harry discovers that Voldemort may be 'still out there, biding his time,' or 'out there somewhere' without his former powers.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, in the earlier Harry Potter books such panic is focused on the fear of Voldemort's return, lending the persecutor 'a more or less recognizable face,' if not a geographic location. More pervasive paranoia and counter-paranoia becomes central to the plot of Rowling's series beginning with *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, published in 2003. This is the first new instalment after the simultaneous attack on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. on September 11, 2001. Emily Apter argues that 9/11 resulted in the Bush administration's attempt to return western society to a state of focused paranoia, but instead resulted in a proliferation of suspicion and

¹³² Patrick O'Donnell describes paranoia as 'the pathological condition of individuals who exhibit a host of familiar symptoms, [... which] include megalomania; a sense of impending, apocalyptic doom; racist, homophobic, or gynophobic fear and hatred of those marked out as other deployed as a means of externalizing certain internal conflicts and desires (the scapegoating of otherness thus is essential to the ongoing work of paranoia); delusions of persecution instigated by these others or their agents; feelings of being under constant observation; an obsession with order; and a fantasizing of the reviled, abjected self as at the center of intersecting social and historical plots.' in his *Latent Destinies: Cultural Paranoia and Contemporary U.S. Narrative* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000), 12.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹³⁴ Rowling, *Philosopher's Stone*, 67.

counter-suspicion about the powers that control and threaten the modern world.¹³⁵ The wizarding world is gripped with similar confusion and terror about the circumstances surrounding Voldemort's return: even as the Ministry of Magic and the mainstream media (the newspaper *The Daily Prophet*) deny the possibility of his restoration, the Order of the Phoenix, Harry's group of friends and colleagues, reads Voldemort's increasing power in the disappearances of members of the wizarding community and a group escape of his followers from Azkaban prison.

The government and media treat these accurate identifications of a larger threat as paranoid imaginings, and appoint Dolores Umbridge, a ministry employee, as a 'High Inquisitor' in the school to crush further public speculation. Umbridge, whose name suggests the word 'umbrage,' utilises torture techniques to encourage Harry to stop making these 'paranoid' connections. She forces him to write 'I must not tell lies' in his own blood, using a magical pen that carves the words into the back of his hand.¹³⁶ This punishment, and the steady flow of Ministry-sanctioned Educational Decrees that Umbridge imposes on the school for the students' 'protection,' seems a parody of the limitations on civil rights that the West experienced in the wake of 9/11, presumably for the purposes of security. Umbridge, whose love of kitschy décor and babyishly effeminate attire seems incongruous with the dark aesthetic of Voldemort's Death Eaters, is later revealed to be among their growing number. By the final novel in the series, Voldemort's followers control the magical government and media, rendering the establishment a weapon against those it is meant to serve. Rowling's narration also leaves the reader in a state of uncertainty about the trustworthiness of Harry's friends and acquaintances: out of fear for their own and loved ones' lives,

¹³⁵ Emily Apter, 'On Oneworldedness: Or Paranoia as a World System,' *American Literary History* 18, no. 2 (Summer 2006), 369. It is possible to track a similar trajectory in Rowling's later books, as I do in greater detail in my article 'Harry Potter and the Poetics of Paranoia,' *Journal of Children's Literature Studies* 5, no. 1 (2008): 88-109. This section on *Harry Potter* borrows liberally from that early article.

¹³⁶ J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), 240-41.

several assist Voldemort in his attempt to capture Harry. The paranoia that dominates the later novels reflects and magnifies the experience of its time: a desire for moral security (represented by opposition to Voldemort) and the simultaneous inability to trust those that offer it. In such an environment, the re-establishment of Lewis's polarised universe becomes a nostalgic dream of its own.

Whether because she sees no alternative end to the state of paranoia or because the generic norms of fantasy demand it, Rowling fulfils this dream in her series conclusion. A final battle between Harry and his supporters and Voldemort and the Death Eaters places 'Us' opposite 'Them,' making each side visible and numerable in fact rather than only in suspicion. The encounter takes place in Hogwarts School, which as a medieval castle and a magical British boarding school is the most symbolic and oft-contested space in the series. The fight to control its spaces represents the struggle for all of Britain, and in the final battle the very contents of the school defend against Voldemort and the Death Eaters:

all along the corridor the statues and suits of armour jumped down from their plinths, and from the echoing crashes from the floors above and below, Harry knew that their fellows throughout the castle had done the same.

'Hogwarts is threatened!' shouted Professor McGonagall. 'Man the boundaries, protect us, do your duty to our school!'¹³⁷

As if in homage to *Harry Potter's* Oxford School predecessors and their sources, these 'knights' take up arms against the invaders. The reanimated suits of armour are pure medievalism: decorative relics of the past, given new life in children's fantasy. Free from the complications of contemporary society, they instinctively distinguish enemies from allies and declare the school's (and the nation's) 'natural' allegiances.

The battle also offers Harry the opportunity to sidestep the indeterminate conclusions of postmodern conflict, and vanquish a monstrous enemy in the tradition

¹³⁷ Rowling, *Deathly Hallows*, 484.

of medieval and Oxford School heroes. Just as Pullman reuses the hero's bold descent into the underworld in *The Amber Spyglass*, Rowling recycles the crucifixion narrative as a mode of heroic action in *The Deathly Hallows*. Rowling's use of sacrifice and resurrection in the decisive battle recalls early Oxford School narratives such as Aslan's sacrifice in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* and Gandalf's descent to battle with the Balrog in *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Harry realises that he is the seventh unidentified horcrux that contains part of Voldemort's soul, and so must die in order for Voldemort to die. He thus hands himself over to Voldemort and his followers, who kill him. After this act of submissive heroism Harry rises from the dead and leads his friends to victory in battle; the sun rises as he kills Voldemort, in a symbolic triumph of the Light over the Dark.

This finale resolves the mounting anxiety of the series, and ends the state of paranoia that dominates the wizarding world. The epilogue that follows depicts a future in which all of the series' central teenage romances result in fertile, heteronormative marriages and healthy, magically gifted children. These children inherit the names of deceased family and friends, giving the dead heroes new life in the next generation of Hogwarts students. The fantasy of fantasy is thereby regained at the end of the series, with the ambiguous made certain, a heroic deed prescribed and executed, and the universe restored to predictable cycles of Oxford School tradition. Although the Harry Potter books reflect contemporary society's decentralisation and paranoia in the face of danger, Rowling resolves this tension by delivering a concrete enemy that represents absolute evil and the opportunity for her hero to slay it. Such a conclusion marks a return to the 'pre-modern' and 'mythical' divisions between Good and Evil that Lewis and Tolkien express in their fantasy

works. The final battle satisfies the nostalgic longing to discover that such clear distinctions were always already there, obscured by the confusion and paranoia.

The conflicting disdain and desire for such absolutes is also evident in *Harry Potter*'s other negotiations of alterity. Designating certain races as 'acceptably' inferior to the protagonists enables authors to subtly retain the hierarchies that fantasy desires while professing a 'progressive' politics. Rowling has stated that she regards her novels as a 'prolonged argument for tolerance,' and the multiculturalism of Hogwarts correspondingly denies prejudice in the wizarding world.¹³⁸ Several named characters of nonwhite racial backgrounds join Harry at Hogwarts, including Lee Jordan, a Black boy with dreadlocks, the presumably Chinese-named Cho Chang, and the South Asian twins Parvati and Padma Patil. Harry's generation reflects the racial makeup of contemporary British society, if not the social realities, but these characters are flat and minor. Their ethnicities are not raised, explored, or discussed in the series, nor do they impact on the children's lives or the wizarding world. The students are integrated Britons, who have assimilated by adopting cultural norms so entirely that all that remains of their ethnic difference seems to be their names, the colour of their skin, and other minor tokens such as Lee's hairstyle and the twins' clothing.¹³⁹ This kind of intentional but only skin-deep racial diversity appears to be inclusive but demands that 'satisfactory' immigrants have no impact on the cultural

¹³⁸ This statement was made in regard to her revelation, separate from any substantive evidence in the novels, that Dumbledore is gay. 'JK Rowling Outs Dumbledore as Gay,' *BBC Online*. October 22, 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7053982.stm>

¹³⁹ In *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* Parvati and Padma appear at the Yule Ball in witches' robes of 'shocking pink' and 'bright turquoise' that hint at their heritage in the intensity of the colours and the 'gold bracelets glimmering at [Parvati's] wrists.' J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (London: Bloomsbury, 2000) 358-9.

landscape. Thus the magical children of Hogwarts perform the apparent racial unity of Harry's wizarding world in their unproblematic diversity.¹⁴⁰

Meanwhile, traditional fantasy monsters often appear in Rowling's books as misunderstood animals: Harry's friend Hagrid is the school's groundskeeper and expresses affection for even the most dangerous beasts. He insists that the students adjust their view of these creatures to one of understanding and respect, in keeping with contemporary ideas of animal rights. The 'monsters' often seem to *be* modified animals; for instance, the sub-plot in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* about Norbert the Norwegian Ridgeback, a dragon, owes more to Enid Blyton's account of schoolgirls concealing a stray dog than to *Beowulf* or its ilk. Harry and his friends help Hagrid conceal the illegal baby dragon and bring it to the top of 'the tallest tower' at Hogwarts for secret conveyance to safety in Romania.¹⁴¹ In *The Twins at St. Clare's* (1941), the protagonists Pat and Isabel help their friend Kathleen secretly care for a wounded dog that she brings into their boarding school; the girls keep the dog inside a boxroom in the attic at 'the top of the school,' to prevent its discovery by authorities.¹⁴² The episode with Norbert reflects the thrill and anxiety of breaking school rules, rather than the terror of encountering a true monster, recalling the 'jolly' atmosphere of the dog episode in *St. Clare's*. Norbert's dangerous qualities are a source of comedy rather than fear in the novel, juxtaposed with Hagrid's self-appointment as the dragon's 'mummy.'¹⁴³ The dragon, as with many of the 'monsters' in *Harry Potter*, is a fantastical creature with limited reasoning abilities: its status as an animal precludes it from the kind of monstrosity that Grendel or Smaug possess.

¹⁴⁰ On multiculturalism and its relationship to in *Harry Potter*, see my article 'Medievalism, Popular Culture, and National Identity in Children's Fantasy Literature,' *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 9.3 (2009): 395-409. This chapter also draws upon writing and research from that article.

¹⁴¹ Rowling, *Philosopher's Stone*, 256-57.

¹⁴² Blyton, *The Twins at St. Clare's*, 146.

¹⁴³ Rowling, *Philosopher's Stone*, 254.

In spite of this ‘tolerant’ approach to difference, Rowling’s work continues to rely on fantasy conventions that marginalise certain kinds of alterity, producing nostalgic social hierarchies that privilege the Western child hero. Dwarfs, for instance, continue to stand in as common Others in fantasy, a position confirmed by their traditional presence in both medieval romance and early Oxford School literature, and the still-widespread estimation of Little People as comical. Cultural examples of the marginalisation of Little People facilitate this assertion of dominance, supporting the replication of this hierarchy within children’s fantasy texts. Rowling’s wide use of sources also draws more recent associations into her depictions of small races in her books, allowing for a nuanced commentary on the relationship of the child to this ‘monster’ of child-like proportions and other subalterns.¹⁴⁴ David Williams names dwarfs and giants as the two most widespread ‘monstrous forms’ in medieval representations, and contends that they

function as physical and conceptual opposites. Their monstrosity consists in contrary violations of the norm of size: the giant exceeds the norm through hypertrophy and becomes a figure of exorbitance; the pygmy, or dwarf, fails to achieve the norm through atrophy and becomes a figure of deprivation.¹⁴⁵

The dwarf’s smallness echoes that of the child, but this ‘figure of deprivation’ will never ‘achieve the norm.’ Dwarfs are common in romance as well as the kinds of Northern and Germanic myth that Lewis and Tolkien so admired, though usually they usually appear as unreliable tricksters. *Ynglingatal*, a Norwegian poem from probably around the ninth century contains the oldest Old Norse account of dwarfs. Paul Battles notes how this poem ‘already contains three motifs associated with dwarfs in Norse literature: they dwell in stones, avoid daylight, and often deceive human

¹⁴⁴ Further complicating their representation in children’s fantasy is the fact that Little People also exist in the real world.

¹⁴⁵ David Williams, *Deformed Discourse: The Function of the Monster in Mediaeval Thought and Literature* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 111.

beings.¹⁴⁶ Combinations of these qualities resonate in medieval representations of dwarfs, and in later retellings including Oxford School works.¹⁴⁷ Battles argues, '[c]onsistent with their more-than-human wisdom and skills, dwarfs in both German and Scandinavian tradition constitute a race distinct from human-kind. They are not simply small or deformed human beings.'¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, dwarfs often appear as less heroic and meritorious than humans in most English medieval texts as well as in twentieth-century children's fantasy.

In Malory, Sir Gryngamour and Lyonesse kidnap Sir Gareth's dwarf in order to discover Gareth's identity. Sir Gryngamour creeps up behind the dwarf, 'pluck[s]' him, stores him under one arm, and carries him off. The dwarf is one of Gareth's possessions, and his frustration and helplessness in this episode is probably meant to be humorous. Emily Rebekah Huber comments that 'Gareth's dwarf functions as part of the paraphernalia of chivalry, as indicated by his conspicuously absent name, and by Malory's consistent use of the possessive, for example, in Gareth's demand to the kidnappers: 'delyver me my dwarff agayne!'¹⁴⁹ Huber notes the feminization of the dwarf in this incident; on his account Gareth storms a castle in a mockery of more traditional chivalric rescues. This action emphasizes Gareth's masculinity, but does so at the expense of the dwarf, who is thrust into the role of his damsel in distress in a narrative that prizes male prowess.

¹⁴⁶ Paul Battles, 'Dwarfs in Germanic Literature: *Deutsche Mythologie* or Grimm's Myths?' in *The Shadow-Walkers: Jacob Grimm's Mythology of the Monstrous*, ed. Tom Shippey (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005), 36.

¹⁴⁷ Tolkien's favourite childhood text, Andrew Lang's 'The Tale of Sigurd,' recounts Sigurd's slaying of the dragon Fafnir from *Völsunga Saga*, and describes the dwarf Andvari's prayer that his stolen gold 'might never bring any but bad luck to all the men who might own it, for ever.' Lang, ed., 'The Story of Sigurd,' 359. On Tolkien's love for this tale, see Chapter One, p. 41. Both Tolkien and Lewis also greatly admired Wagner, whose Ring Cycle includes the dwarfs Alberich and Mime. On Lewis's obsession with Wagner as a boy, see Chapter One, p. 49 For comparisons between Tolkien's Middle-Earth fiction and Wagner's *Ring* cycle, see Stefan Arvidsson, 'Greed and the Nature of Evil: Tolkien versus Wagner,' *Journal of Religious and Popular Culture* 22, no. 2 (2010): 1-21.

¹⁴⁸ Battles, 'Dwarfs in Germanic Literature,' 78.

¹⁴⁹ Emily Rebekah Huber, "'Delyver me my dwarff!": Gareth's Dwarf and Chivalric Identity," *Arthuriana* 16, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 49-53.

There are active, combative dwarfs in romance, but most are in the employ of noble humans or giant kinsmen.¹⁵⁰ Dwarfs often maintain a second-class status in medieval romance, a norm that the Oxford School emulates. In Tolkien's fantasy they are an important and powerful race, but not of the same divine make as Men and Elves: the Vala (angelic spirit) Aulë created Dwarves while waiting for the Children of Ilúvatar the high god to arrive. The Children are Elves and Men; thus the Dwarves were created by a lower order of divinity in Tolkien's mythology.¹⁵¹ They nevertheless remain a respected race in Tolkien's works, but in the film adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* (2001-2003) Peter Jackson and his fellow screenwriters insert their own comedic dwarf-carrying into the narrative. After proudly asserting that 'nobody tosses a dwarf' in the Mines of Moria, the dwarf Gimli must later ask, to his humiliation, to be 'tossed' over a large gap at the Battle of Helm's Deep.¹⁵² The film's preoccupation with tossing Gimli is not in Tolkien's work, and in fact the director's commentary in the special extended DVD edition of *The Fellowship of the Ring* reveals that it instead refers to the bar 'sport' of dwarf-throwing, which still occurs in Jackson's native New Zealand. According to Jackson, he and his team did not realize that this form of 'entertainment,' which involves throwing a real Little Person in padded or Velcro-covered clothing onto a mattress or a Velcro-covered wall, was so little known in the United States, where it has been banned.¹⁵³ Thus Tolkien's more dignified representation of dwarfs is adjusted, in the twenty-first century, to reflect the widespread acceptability of humour at the expense of actual

¹⁵⁰ See Vernon J. Harward, Jr., *The Dwarfs of Arthurian Romance and Celtic Tradition* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1958).

¹⁵¹ Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, 37-9.

¹⁵² Peter Jackson, dir., *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*, special extended edition DVD (2002; New Line Cinema, 2003), Film.

¹⁵³ 'Florida Ban on Dwarf Tossing Must Be Upheld, Announces LPA, Inc.; Dwarf-Tossing is a Dangerous, Demoralizing Activity That Poses Specific Hazards to Persons with Dwarfism' *Business Wire*, 10 December 2001. Accessed 26 April 2010. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0EIN/is_2001_Dec_10/ai_80677114/

Little People, particularly through the degrading act of picking them up and carrying them against their will.

This act is suggestive of carrying a child, and the dynamics between the larger, stronger party and the smaller, more vulnerable party encode power structures that assume the right of the former to dominate the latter. Lynne Vallone notes that ‘[b]ig and small often function metaphorically as representations of adult and child, or the inexperienced and the innocent, or the powerful and powerless.’ She adds, however, that ‘just as often, the negotiations between the power imbalance between big and small favours the wily small.’¹⁵⁴ Children’s fantasy literature plays with these norms when child protagonists overpower or control fully-grown but smaller beings than themselves. Such scenarios relegate entire groups of people to lower rungs on the social hierarchy than the child heroes; rather than modelling the release of children from a frustrating hierarchy of power that privileges size and strength, it reinforces the existing structure and provides a new subaltern to occupy the lowest social space. The class and race connotations that some children’s fantasy authors attach to Little People in their novels also suggest that the child protagonists’ ethnic, social, and cultural privilege preserves them from the ignominious fate of dwarfs.

For instance, C.S. Lewis depicts Narnia’s Black Dwarfs as dangerously insubordinate in *The Last Battle*: these small, abrasive miners take on the connotations of the unionizing working class, Little Englanders with a repeated slogan (‘the Dwarfs are for the Dwarfs’) and an aversion to monarchy.¹⁵⁵ Their leader Gruffle announces to the young King Tirian, ‘I don’t think we want any more Kings—if you *are* Tirian, which you don’t look like him—no more than we want any Aslans.

¹⁵⁴ Lynne Vallone, ‘Ideas of Difference in Children’s Literature,’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Children’s Literature*, ed. M.O. Grenby and Andrea Immel (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 187.

¹⁵⁵ Lewis, *Last Battle*, 144.

We're going to look after ourselves from now on and touch our caps to nobody. See?'¹⁵⁶ These dwarfs reject the monarchical structure that defines the political logic of the *Chronicles* and of the fantasy genre, a possible reference to the broad socialist reforms under Clement Attlee's Labour administration in the postwar years. Gruffle's name also suggests the Welsh name Gryff, and his grammar recalls Welsh dialect in its positioning of the predicate ahead of the subject and verb and use of tag questions ('Saying your lessons, ain't you?').¹⁵⁷ These apparent references to the Welsh multiply the sense of the dwarfs as marginal, small, and socialist. In response to Gruffle, the English boy Eustace calls the dwarfs '[l]ittle beasts!', a colloquial insult that also conveys his view of their apparent monstrosity and inferiority. Their treason and subsequent punishment – the inability to access the Platonic Narnian heaven, like Susan – suggests Lewis's dislike of the political left, and models the demise of the fantasy universe when medieval social hierarchies break down.¹⁵⁸ The non-Standard English of the dwarfs suggest that they are an underclass that lack breeding and education; their use of vernacular phrases such as 'touch our caps' and 'ain't you?' and light curses such as 'blooming' identify them with a modern working class.¹⁵⁹

This undesirable intrusion of urban modernity into the chivalric Narnian universe recalls a similar mapping of working-class vernacular onto a fantasy race in *The Hobbit*. The accent and language of the man-eating trolls reveals their implied class origins: one complains, '[n]ever a blinking bit of manflesh have we had for long

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 83.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. See also David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 335.

¹⁵⁸ See Chapter Thirteen of *The Last Battle*, 'How the Dwarfs Refused to be Taken In,' 156-70. On Lewis's political leanings, see Wilson, *C.S. Lewis*, 215. By contrast to the dwarfs, the pastoral Beavers in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* serve as an example of a well-mannered underclass.

¹⁵⁹ Lewis, *Last Battle*, 83 and 82. For instance, the *OED* lists the first occurrence of the contraction 'ain't' in 1845, and the first use of 'blooming' as euphemistic slang for 'bloody' as in 1882. *OED Online*, s.v. 'ain't' and 'blooming,' accessed 2 Jan 2011. <http://www.oed.com>.

enough [...] What the ‘ell William was a-thinkin’ of to bring us into these parts at all, beats me – and the drink runnin’ short, what’s more.’¹⁶⁰ The sociolinguistic implications of such language would have been clear to Tolkien, and their names – Tom, William, and Bert, all of which were in common circulation in the twentieth century – reinforce the suggestion that the trolls’ modern working-class characteristics are part of their otherness and near-human monstrosity.¹⁶¹ The monstrosity of the trolls includes the horror of a human-like figure eating human flesh, like Grendel, but the trolls’ bumbling behaviour and language prevent them from conveying the same terror as Smaug, for example. Instead, they are laughable, easily tricked by Gandalf’s witty intervention.¹⁶² The Narnian dwarfs in *The Last Battle* play a similar role: they are distasteful and foolish (so clever as to be foolish, Lewis seems to argue), and only dangerous when unchecked by their natural superiors.

The child’s superiority to Little People in children’s fantasy reflects this hierarchy, designating the child as a born member of the ruling class and above the baser races, which include dwarfs. Even the friendly dwarfs in *The Hobbit* must eventually be chastised for their consuming greed, and Bilbo betrays them to join the humans and elves when he discovers the extent of their avarice. In *The Last Battle*, King Tirian’s pseudo-medieval language signals his dignity and rightful authority over the dwarfs, and Eustace’s friendship with Tirian demonstrates the boy’s

¹⁶⁰ Tolkien, *Hobbit*, 33.

¹⁶¹ For instance, the *OED Online* lists the first use of ‘blinking’ as a substitute for a strong expletive as occurring in 1914. *OED Online*, s.v. ‘blinking,’ accessed 2 Jan 2011. <http://www.oed.com>.

¹⁶² Once the trolls have captured Bilbo and the dwarf company, Gandalf mimics the voices and accents of the trolls, inciting them into an argument and physical fight with one another that distracts them from the approach of dawn. The sun’s rays turn them into stone. Tolkien, *Hobbit*, 38-39. Gandalf’s ability to use and replicate dialect suggests that he is, like Tolkien, an expert in many aspects of language. This points back to the discussion in Chapter Three of this thesis, which argues that the Oxford School authors write themselves and/or their educational experiences at Oxford into the wise tutor figures of their fantasy.

alignment with such nobility.¹⁶³ Eustace earns this status in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* by rising above greed, cowardice, and selfishness, and abandoning the ‘modern,’ progressive notions that appear to fuel these negative traits.¹⁶⁴ Children come into their rightful heritage as members of the fantasy universe nobility by embracing the ‘medieval’ hierarchies, norms, and technologies of the land. When children’s fantasy literature groups the child with the ‘medieval’ heroes, separate from even the races that share their small stature and secondary position in adult society, children thus participate in maintaining the existing fantasy order and take pleasure in the comforts that it affords them.

Nostalgia for the luxuries of class-based privilege in Britain continues into contemporary fantasy, and invented races of Little People appear to fulfil these desires without arousing contemporary anxieties about elitism or oppression. The physical difference and non-standard English of the cheerful, subservient house elves in *Harry Potter*, for example, make their unlikely servility seem more plausible. The majority of house elves take pleasure in serving wizards, and consider freedom and wages shameful. The elf Winky weeps at her state of unemployment after being dismissed by her master: ‘I is looking after the Crouches all my life, and my mother is doing it before me, and my grandmother is doing it before her ... oh, what is they saying if they knew Winky was freed? Oh, the shame, the shame!’¹⁶⁵ The topsy-turvy nature of this worldview and the humour associated with the house elves’ small stature and speech make them endearing and entertaining. Thus Rowling deflects

¹⁶³ For example, Tirian calls Griffle a ‘churl,’ a word with Old English roots (‘ceorl’) that came to imply a person of the lower class in Middle English, and served as a term of contempt. *OED Online*, s.v. ‘churl,’ accessed 2 Jan 2011. <http://www.oed.com>. *MED Online*, s.v. ‘cherl,’ accessed 2 Jan 2011. <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/>.

¹⁶⁴ See Eustace’s first diary entry on the ship, which complains of the ‘primitive’ state of the ship, without a ‘proper saloon, no radio, no bathrooms, no deck-chairs,’ the monarchical system, and the unfairness of giving Lucy a room to herself because ‘all that sort of thing is really lowering girls.’ Lewis, *Dawn Treader*, 30-1.

¹⁶⁵ Rowling, *Goblet of Fire*, 332-33.

serious consideration of their role as a servant class to wizarding society, and to the magical children that attend Hogwarts.¹⁶⁶ The child benefits from the existence of such a class in the fantasy world; the house elves' respect and labour contribute to the desirable experience of accessing such a realm.¹⁶⁷ Children may actively reassert the order of the fantasy universe in which they maintain power, strength, and authority over adult Little People, performing the Little People's relative alterity by overwhelming or controlling them. In a scene from *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Harry helps Ron de-gnome their family garden, a chore that involves plucking small, bald, 'leathery looking' garden gnomes out of the shrubbery and whirling them by the ankles in order to swing them over the fence.¹⁶⁸ This conceit assumes the humour and acceptability of carrying and throwing Little People, as seen in both contemporary popular culture (as in the film adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings*, discussed above) and in medieval texts like *Le Morte Darthur*. Rowling's degnoming scene also plays with the concept of the ubiquitous porcelain garden gnome: this garden or yard ornament is a symbol of middle-class domesticity and what Horst Dinkelacker calls 'a nostalgic reminder of a simpler and more wholesome world': a pre-industrial imaginary utopia.¹⁶⁹ These kitschy gnomes bear connotations of a pastoral, medievalised past, and Rowling's treatment of garden gnomes allow for a lighthearted and self-effacing means of reinforcing accepted concepts of land ownership and the displacement of inconvenient peoples. The gnomes' ability to speak English does not prevent their humiliating and aggressive deportation; they

¹⁶⁶ In *Goblet of Fire* Rowling writes of Hermione's attempts to free the house elves as an earnest but misguided effort, influenced by her twentieth-century Muggle upbringing.

¹⁶⁷ Harry discovers the trials of managing servants when he inherits his godfather's ancestral home and the bad-tempered house elf Kreacher. J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (London: Bloomsbury, 2005).

¹⁶⁸ J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (London: Bloomsbury, 1998), 37.

¹⁶⁹ Horst Dinkelacker, 'The Renaissance of the German Garden Gnome,' *Journal of Popular Culture* 30, no. 3 (Winter 1996): 29.

repeatedly cry ‘Gerroff me!’ to no avail. As with the language of Lewis’s dwarves and Rowling’s house elves, garden gnomes’ working-class-accented English serves as a marker of difference that sets them apart as non-citizens in a way that has troubling xenophobic connotations.¹⁷⁰

Beaten by their violent removal, ‘the crowd of gnomes in the field started walking away in a straggling line, their little shoulders hunched.’¹⁷¹ This image of recalls the lines of refugees from World War Two newsreels and later images of forced relocations. Rowling defends against such comparisons, even as her language suggests them, but this defence suggests other cultural intertexts: Ron tells Harry, ‘[t]hey’ll be back [... t]hey love it here...Dad’s too soft with them, he thinks they’re funny...’¹⁷² The expectation that the gnomes will creep back within the bounds of the garden and the consideration that the Weasleys are more accommodating than other families alleviates potential guilt about the gnomes’ treatment. This kind of logic reflects the processes by which citizens may accept and even advocate unequal treatment of people – such as the foreign and the poor – within their own societies. Intruders and undesirables are identifiable and controllable, reinforcing a hierarchy that places the child protagonist (and the child reader) at an advantage. But the use of ‘comical’ gnomes in this scene allows the text to playfully signal the terms of insider identity in the *Harry Potter* universe; Rowling’s depictions of Little People convey the desire to maintain the distinctions between ‘Us,’ and ‘Them’ in everyday life as well as large-scale conflict, but to do so without subjecting an extant minority group to the indignities and displacement that most have already experienced. Rowling

¹⁷⁰ Indeed, Dinkelacker notes how the garden gnome lost favour under the Third Reich (‘Der Fuhrer put his money on Siegfried rather than on Alberich’), which privileged the tall, fair hero and sought to remove this national symbol, so ‘incompatible with the image of the heroic superman.’ Dinkelacker, ‘Garden Gnome,’ 30.

¹⁷¹ Rowling, *Chamber of Secrets*, 37.

¹⁷² Ibid.

invents a new race to bear this burden, basing them on the Aryan garden gnome in an ethnic and class-based reversal that appeals to contemporary discomfort with white middle-class privilege without threatening to dislodge it.¹⁷³

Episodes like the garden de-gnoming betray Rowling's compliance with the genre's compulsion to differentiate insiders from outsiders, in which monstrous but morally ambivalent races like the garden gnomes bear the burden of fantasy's need for hierarchy and social distinctions. Although not evil like the monsters of *Beowulf* or the Saracen purveyors of Islam in crusade romance, their cultural associations aid in defining a fantasy universe with comforting structures of social dominance and submission, even in contemporary fantasy by authors outside the Oxford School. This approach to other people recalls, however, the objectionable 'medieval' of which Dinshaw writes: the intolerant, physical, and dominant. Children's fantasy literature evades even the intentions of its authors in its returns to these 'medieval' means of social organisation. This includes the suppression and humiliation of the small, 'figure[s] of deprivation' that echo the place of the child in adult society.¹⁷⁴ Even the structures that belittle or restrict actual children may be enjoyable in fictional fantasy societies, however; many children's fantasy narratives offer visions of children 'beating' this system through their inborn affinity for heroic medievalism. Children gain tacit dominance over other adults and entire races in the fantasy realm, allowing them to enjoy the advantages of the power and influence they do not have in the 'real world.'

Beyond such wishful thinking, the reproduction of fantasy's fundamental structures, many of which conflict with progressive notions, may also represent a straightforward enjoyment of these norms. Their impropriety in contemporary

¹⁷³ There may also be historical overtones to this imaginary invasion of Germanic gnomes, invoking the memory of the threat of Nazi Germany. See Chapter Two, pp. 104-05.

¹⁷⁴ Williams, *Deformed Discourse*, 111.

discourse (reading dwarfs as dwarfs, and not as children) may affirm their status as ‘medieval’ and thus at an enjoyable remove from the commonplace. The relationship of opposition and desire, disdain and reliance that binds many contemporary children’s fantasy texts to its monsters is also the relationship of these works to the idea of the medieval. Ananya Jahanara Kabir and Deanne Williams note ‘the extent to which modernity casts the medieval past as a “foreign country,” aligning it with the binaries of East and West, Europe and abroad.’¹⁷⁵ This distinction assumes a certain appeal: ‘even as the Middle Ages came to occupy the position of the “dark continent” for post-Enlightenment Europe, its alterity is capable of generating an aura that emanates especially from its material culture.’¹⁷⁶ In children’s fantasy literature this medieval ‘aura’ promises both the unknown and the well-known at the same time: on the one hand, an exotic ‘dark’ age removed from modernity and often at active odds with it; on the other, a predictable fantasy realm.

The doubling and simultaneity within the genre recalls the dualities at its roots: the canonical medieval texts of the Oxford English School reconstituted as fiction for children. The medieval and modern, academic and popular, adult- and child-focused, ‘high brow’ and ‘low brow’ intermingle in the genre that grew out of the Oxford School tradition. These fantasy medievalisms overwhelm the ‘real’ Middle Ages even as they preserve them by recreating them: the breadth of sources and influences that the Oxford School and its followers utilise blurs medieval history and literature by blending its elements and making them all available together. Thus fantasy worlds seem to fall out of time, even though they are traditionally ‘pre-modern.’ The ambiguity about *when* the ideologies and norms of children’s fantasy

¹⁷⁵ Ananya Jahanara Kabir and Deanne Williams, ‘Introduction: A Return to Wonder,’ *Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages: Translating Cultures*, ed. Ananya Jahanara Kabir and Deanne Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1.

¹⁷⁶ Kabir and Williams, ‘Introduction,’ 1.

texts are meant to apply contribute to their power, for the assumption must be ‘now’ and ‘always.’ Like the monster, the fantasy ‘medieval’ is symbolic, ‘that which shows’ or ‘that which warns’ the contemporary world about its continuing relationship to the past and its fears and desires in the present. The delineation of enemies and inferiors, the celebration of dominant paradigms, the reuse of existing material are all essential and recurring elements of Oxford School works, which assert the present’s connectedness to a united, ‘originary’ medieval English identity. The recombinations of sources and innovations within this context are just as central to the genre, however; continuing from the practices of the Oxford School, children’s fantasy literature rediscovers and remakes medieval narratives in the image of the present, ‘mashing up’ cultural references to rebuild and revitalise the medieval and give it new life in popular culture.

CODA

This thesis has demonstrated that the shared education of the Oxford School authors produced a distinct genre for children that draws upon medieval literature to articulate English cultural identity and desires. Children's fantasy does not simply convey the implicit messages of medieval literature to new generations, as if such 'messages' were concrete and transferrable across time; as Chapter Two has shown, Oxford School authors identify their own aims in medieval literature and write new narratives through their readings of these medieval texts. However, most retellings capitalize on the authority of medieval literature and, intentionally or not, suggest that the new fantasy works are also 'timeless' in nature and can speak for and to a united English people. Lewis and Tolkien were instrumental in lending medieval English texts cultural authority and patriotic associations by placing them at the centre of the Oxford English School curriculum; Chapter One of this thesis established these dons' role in canonising medieval literature, elevating texts that had previously been studied for their linguistic merits to classic works of English literature. As required reading in the English course at one of England's two oldest universities, medieval literature seems to have been assimilated into the cultural capital of English society: part of the authority of the medieval text is about the authority of an Oxford education. Chapter Three revealed the ways in which Oxford School authors often implicitly write the University of Oxford into their depictions of the medievalised fantasy universe, marking Oxford as both an academic space and a fantasy site. Oxford's influence on children's fantasy models academia's ability to guide popular culture through its curricula while reinforcing its own authority. In particular, this chapter explicated the complex relationship (often, a hyperreal confusion) between fantasy medievalisms and the 'real' Middle Ages, including the Oxford School's ability to turn medieval

works into 'pre-texts' for itself. Such interchangeability of medieval and medievalism, academic and popular allows Oxford School works to read as authoritative in their own right, as if conveying deep 'truths' about the English condition.

As Chapter Four has shown, however, Oxford School authors are not entirely free to manipulate their sources in ways that overturn the norms that their predecessors established. Although some Oxford School authors try to mitigate against the presumed social effects of fantasy's reactionary and 'medieval' (i.e. backwards, in official contemporary discourse) elements, these efforts often only reinforce the overarching structures that define the genre. Even while such 'progressive' fantasy texts raise questions about generic structure, they repeat them by either subscribing to the same underlying principles while attacking them (as in Pullman's case) or modelling manoeuvres around the existing order that allow its replication (as in Jones's). Chapter Five argued that the repeating of even unfashionable generic expectations is part of the constitution and appeal of fantasy; it enables the fixing of a 'medieval,' presumably originary, English cultural identity, even if this identity does not always align with evidence from medieval texts. This offers the child a coherent system to embrace, and depicts the child as having a 'natural' place at the top of it inside the fantasy realm.

Oxford School authors give medieval literature new life in the twentieth century through their works, and they contribute to creating the Middle Ages for modernity. If the 'medieval' is a construct that only exists in the minds of the public in any given present, the uses, reuses, dilutions, and recombinations of elements from medieval literature in popular culture define and make real what the 'medieval' is and was. As Baudrillard puts it, with such recreations '[i]t is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology) but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer

real, and thus of saving the reality principle.’¹ Oxford School texts make the Middle Ages ‘real’ by reconstructing them from ‘authentic’ sources and asserting their contemporary relevance to the child reader.

It is important to acknowledge that although the Oxford School and its successors reintroduce medieval literature and culture into wide circulation through books for children, each new work represents an intertextual web of other, non-medieval sources as well. For instance, the associations that attend Rowling’s monstrous races of Little People (described in Chapter Five) suggest the multiplicity of readings and meanings that even reconstitutions of generic norms can produce. Whether or not she intentionally invokes them, Rowling’s gnome-throwing episode in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* recalls a number of intertexts from the Middle Ages through to today. Many of these may have filtered to her through popular culture, including through Oxford School works. Rowling’s use of the ‘dwarf-throwing’ conceit, wry evocation of the decorative garden gnome, creation of gnome refugees, and other details are drawn from a variety of sources, literary and otherwise, and rearranged to complement the generic conventions of children’s fantasy literature. In so doing they create new presuppositions about the landscape of fantasy, and thus new pre-texts for themselves as well.² This playfulness within the confines of convention, even unwitting play, characterises children’s fantasy literature. The Oxford School’s use of medieval sources creates further afterlives for medieval narratives in the works that emulate them: even those fantasy works that do not draw upon medieval material do so when they repeat the conventions and structures of the Oxford School. Each rewriting brings with it a wealth of additional associations and, therefore, new meanings and directions for the genre.

¹ Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 12-3.

² Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs*, 118.

This is not to say that the norms of children's fantasy literature do not imprint themselves upon the consciousness of readers; that depicting small, physically and politically dominated peoples as laughable, for instance, does not perpetuate myths of superiority and power that designate what constitutes desirable and 'normal' members of society. Indeed, I suggest that they do, but we cannot know how readers – especially, as Peter Hunt has demonstrated, child readers – receive and make use of this information.³ Nor can we know how children 'read' or make associations with the various places and spaces that this thesis addressed – the home; the school; the gendered spaces of the explorer and the domestic worker; the place of the nation in a larger world, or the Little Person in society – although the social connotations of each space contribute to the creation of meaning. '[O]ne "reads" a landscape the way one reads a text,' de Certeau writes, but 'the story of man's travels through his own texts remains in large measure unknown,' in spite of all attempts to theorise it.⁴

From analyses that follow the activity of reading in its detours, drifts across the page, metamorphoses and anamorphoses of the text produced by the travelling eye, imaginative or meditative flights taking off from a few words, overlappings of spaces on the militarily organized surfaces of the text, it is at least clear, as a first result, that one cannot maintain the division separating the readable text (a book, image, etc.) from the act of reading. Whether it is a question of newspapers or Proust, the text has a meaning only through its readers; it changes along with them; it is ordered in accord with codes of perception that it does not control.⁵

Thus the repetition of spaces and generic structure in the Oxford School and its successors results in a wealth of intertextual possibilities, which are variously interpreted by each reader. The pleasure of this repetition in children's fantasy may, then, be double: Barthes's 'pleasure of the text,' the reader's freedom to range widely

³ See Peter Hunt, *Criticism, Theory, and Children's Literature*.

⁴ de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, 170.

⁵ *Ibid.*

and create meaning from the text, and the pleasure of the return ‘home’ to knowable and familiar conventions, even when such returns are unfashionable or problematic.⁶

This thesis opens up several new directions for research. Building upon the findings of this study, a new inquiry could profitably explore the Oxford English School curriculum’s influence on broader British literary culture in the twentieth century. Did the medieval focus and nationalistic approach of Tolkien and Lewis’s curriculum guide the development of ‘high-brow’ literature in Britain as much as they guide ‘low-brow’ children’s fantasy? The poetry of former English School students such as Geoffrey Hill, Philip Larkin, and W.H. Auden, among others, offers a logical starting-place for such an investigation.⁷ Such a study would, in combination with this one, reveal much about the interplay between elite university education and literary output across the spectrum of intended readerships, and offer insight into how authors reuse medieval sources for different audiences.

Second, the Oxford School’s medievalism raises the question of what role medievalism plays in twentieth-century children’s culture more generally, and whether there is a deeper connection between the medieval and the child than the ‘accidental’ association that Lewis and Tolkien claim.⁸ Seth Lerer’s musings on the status of both childhood and the Middle Ages as immature stages in individual and western social development, respectively, invites questions about the infantilisation of the medieval and the possible medievalisation of the child.⁹ James Simpson argues that ‘English writers from the mid-sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries

⁶ Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*.

⁷ For instance, Hill read English at Keble College, Oxford, matriculating in 1950 and graduating in 1953; his celebrated *Mercian Hymns* blends and juxtaposes images from his working-class youth in the West Midlands with those of Mercia during the reign of Offa (757-796). In June of 2010 Hill was elected Oxford Professor of Poetry through a process that invites the votes of all current and graduated members of the university. Oxford, Oxford University Degree Conferrals Office Archive. Geoffrey Hill, *Mercian Hymns* (London: André Deutsch, 1971).

⁸ Tolkien, ‘On Fairy-Stories,’ 130. Lewis, ‘On Three Ways,’ 61.

⁹ Lerer, *Children’s Literature*, 13.

understood the later Middle Ages as an age wholly subject to, and dangerously infantilised by, the rule of the imagination'; this alignment provides an important bridge between the idea of the Middle Ages and the Romantics' designation of the child as the natural audience for legends and magical tales, often set in medievalised worlds.¹⁰ Kathleen Davis's *Periodization and Sovereignty* would contribute to such a study, providing groundwork that establishes how the vision of a global 'medieval' past 'anchors th[e] homogenisation of cultural forms.'¹¹ These forms may include colonialist and Euro-centred visions of childhood that look nostalgically back to an imaginative Middle Ages. An in-depth examination of this topic could take into account the role of medievalisms and medieval narrative structures (Lerer names allegory, moral fable, romance, and symbolism) in children's literature and the broad material culture of childhood.¹²

Such a project would also have bearing on a third possible avenue of study arising from this thesis. Reversing the direction of influence and authority that govern this thesis, such a study would consider how children's fantasy literature intervenes in new readings of and scholarship about *medieval* literature. Such a project would ask if the academic study of medieval literature is separable from the cultural imaginings of medievalised fantasy literature. How does popular childhood reading influence new generations of scholarship? To what extent is childhood at the heart of medieval studies? In the introductory essay of the new journal *postmedieval*, Eileen A. Joy and Craig Dionne challenge academics to rethink their approach to time and history in their research, writing:

¹⁰ James Simpson, 'The Rule of Medieval Imagination,' in *Images, Idolatry, and Iconoclasm in Late Medieval England: Textuality and the Visual Image*, ed. Jeremy Dimmick, James Simpson, and Nicolette Zeeman (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 4.

¹¹ Kathleen Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty: How Ideas of Feudalism and Secularization Govern the Politics of Time* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 5.

¹² Lerer, *Children's Literature*, 14.

Since one of the greatest insights of post/humanist scholarship has been to demonstrate how the human functions, not as an autonomous self, but as part of a distributed system (and further, how the entire world is one system in which everyone and everything is connected), how can our longer histories be sequestered from contemporary life and thought?¹³

The artificial sequestering of children's literature as separate from and irrelevant to 'adult,' 'literary' texts in academic studies perpetuates the myth of meaningful intellectual work as the exclusive domain of adult reading and cognition. By interrogating how the medievalisms of childhood and popular culture inform readings of medieval literature, such a study may be able to offer a more complete view of how and why we produce official knowledge about the Middle Ages.

This thesis took the first step in this direction by making the connection between medieval English literature, academia, and children's fantasy explicit. By naming the Oxford School of children's fantasy literature it identified the power of educational institutions to influence popular culture, and demonstrated the capacity for individuals to guide the production of culture through such institutions. As boys, Tolkien and Lewis experienced profound 'Joy' in their encounters with medievalism and myth. Their scholarship and fantasy writing gave rise to an entire genre of children's literature built upon their relationship to the 'medieval,' which in turn informs new generations of readers' understandings of the Middle Ages.

As Barthes reminds us, however, 'a text is not a line of words releasing a single "theological" meaning'; even children's fantasy, which constantly repeats generic structures, must be 'a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash.'¹⁴ Through its continuities, Oxford School fantasy offers a proliferation of possible meanings with each new reimagining of the

¹³ Eileen A. Joy and Craig Dionne, 'Before the trains of thought have been laid down so firmly: The premodern post/human,' *postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies* 1 (2010), 7.

¹⁴ Barthes, 'The Death of the Author,' 146.

medieval, and each new interaction between reader and text. Umberto Eco writes, ‘[t]he Middle Ages preserved in its way the heritage of the past but not through hibernation, rather through a constant retranslation and reuse; it was an immense work of bricolage, balanced among nostalgia, hope, and despair.’¹⁵ Modernity does the same work in its constant retranslation of the past, especially, Eco suggests, in its retranslations of the Middle Ages. As this thesis has shown, such a bricolage approach to recycling medieval literature is the defining feature of the Oxford School, which preserves the idea of the medieval in the modern English imagination while always remaking it anew.

¹⁵ Eco, *Faith in Fakes*, 84.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

Oxford, Bodleian Library Tolkien Papers. All materials cited from these unpublished manuscripts are copyright of the Tolkien Trust.

Oxford, Oxford University Archives, DC 9/1/2 and 10/4/1.

Oxford, Oxford University Archives, English Faculty Board Minutes 1926-1958, FA 4/5/1/1-2.

Oxford, Oxford University Archives, English Faculty Board Reports I-III, FA 4/5/2/1-3.

Oxford, Oxford University Degree Conferrals Office Archive.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Alighieri, Dante. *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Inferno*. Edited and translated by Robert M. Durling. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Alter, Robert, trans. *Genesis*. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1996.

Andrew, Malcom and Ronald Waldron, eds. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. In *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript*, fifth edition, 207-300. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2007.

Barrie, J.M. *Peter and Wendy*. In *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens and Peter and Wendy*, edited by Peter Hollindale, 67-226. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. First published 1911 by Hodder & Stoughton.

Bell, W., ed. *Poetry from Oxford in Wartime*. London: The Fortune Press, 1945.

Belloc, Hilaire. *Cautionary Tales and Other Verses*. Illustrated by B.T.B. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1922. First published 1907.

Blake, William. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. 1790. Reproduction with an introduction and commentary by Sir Geoffrey Kenyes. London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Blyton, Enid. *First Term at Malory Towers*. London: Egmont, 2006. First published 1946.

- . *The Twins at St. Clare's*. London: Egmont, 2005. First published 1941.
- Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Riverside Chaucer*, third edition. Edited by Larry D. Benson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. Paperback edition.
- Chesterton, G.K. *The Flying Inn*. New York: John Lane Company, 1914.
- . *Lepanto*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004. First published 1911.
- Child, Francis James, Helen Child Sargent, and George Lyman Kittredge, eds. *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. London: Harrap, 1905.
- Cooper, Susan. *The Dark is Rising*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1986. First published 1973 by Chatto and Windus.
- . *Greenwitch*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1986. First published 1974 by Atheneum.
- . *Over Sea, Under Stone*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 2000. First published 1965 by Jonathan Cape.
- Crossley-Holland, Kevin. *At the Crossing-Places*. 2001. Reprint, London: Orion, 2007. Paperback edition.
- , trans. 'The Ruin.' In *The Battle of Maldon, and Other Old English Poems*, edited by Bruce Mitchell, 69-70. London: Macmillan, 1965.
- , trans. *Beowulf*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1977.
- . trans. *The Exeter Book of Riddles*. London and Chester Springs, PA: Enitharmon Press, 2008. First published 1978 by the Folio Society.
- . *The King of the Middle March*. 2003. London: Orion, 2004. Paperback edition.
- . *The Seeing Stone*. 2000. Reprint, London: Orion, 2001. Paperback edition.
- Dickens, Charles. 'A Christmas Carol.' In *A Christmas Carol and Other Christmas Writings*. Introduction and notes by Michael Slater. London: Penguin Books, 2003. Published 1843 by Chapman and Hall as *A Christmas Carol in Prose*.
- Foote, Peter, ed. *The Saga of Grettir the Strong*. Translated by G.A. Hight. London: Dent, 1972.
- Garbáty, Thomas J., ed. *Medieval English Literature*. Waveland Press: Prospect Heights, IL, 1997.
- Guerber, H.A. *Myths of the Norsemen: From the Eddas and Sagas*. London: Harrap, 1909. Reprint, New York: Dover, 1992.

- Herzman, Ronald B., Graham Drake, and Eve Salisbury, eds. *Four Romances of England*. Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1999.
- Hill, Geoffrey. *Mercian Hymns*. London: André Deutsch, 1971.
- Hughes, Thomas. *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. 1857. Reprint, Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1993.
- Jackson, Peter, dir. *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*. Special extended edition DVD. 2002; New Line Cinema, 2003. Film.
- Jenkins, T. Atkinson, ed. *La Chanson de Roland: Oxford Version*. Boston: D.C. Heath, 1924.
- Jones, Diana Wynne. *Fire and Hemlock*. New York: HarperCollins, 1985. First published by Greenwillow.
- . *Howl's Moving Castle*. London: Methuen, 1986. Reprint, London: HarperCollins, 2005.
- Keynes, Simon and Michael Lapdige, eds. and trans. *Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources*. Penguin Books: Harmondsworth, 1983.
- Kipling, Rudyard. *Puck of Pook's Hill and Rewards and Fairies*. Edited by Donald Mackenzie. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. *Puck of Pook's Hill* originally published 1906 by Doubleday, Page, and Co.
- Klinck, Anne, ed. 'The Ruin.' In *The Old English Elegies: A Critical Edition and Genre Study*, 103-05. Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992.
- Lang, Andrew, ed. 'The Tale of Sigurd.' In *The Red Fairy Book*, illustrated by H.J. Ford and Lancelot Speed, 357-67. London and New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1890.
- Langland, William. *The Vision of Piers Plowman, B-text*. Edited by A.V.C. Schmidt. London: Dent Everyman, 1995.
- Lewis, C.S. *The Horse and His Boy*. Illustrated by Pauline Baynes. New York: HarperCollins, 1994. First published 1954 by Geoffrey Bles.
- . *The Last Battle*. Illustrated by Pauline Baynes. New York: HarperCollins, 1994. First published 1956 by the Bodley Head.
- . *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Illustrated by Pauline Baynes. New York: Scholastic, 1995. First published 1950 by Geoffrey Bles.

- . *The Magician's Nephew*. Illustrated by Pauline Baynes. New York: HarperCollins, 1994. First published 1955 by the Bodley Head.
- . *The Silver Chair*. Illustrated by Pauline Baynes. New York: HarperCollins, 1994. First published 1953 by Geoffrey Bles.
- . *Prince Caspian*. Illustrated by Pauline Baynes. New York: HarperCollins, 1994. First published 1951 by Geoffrey Bles.
- . *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Illustrated by Pauline Baynes. New York and London: HarperCollins, 1994. First published 1952 by Geoffrey Bles.
- Malone, Kemp, ed. *The Nowell Codex; British Museum Cotton Vitellius A. XV, second MS*, vol. 12, Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile. Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1963.
- Malory, Sir Thomas. *Works*, 2nd ed. Edited by Eugène Vinaver. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971. Paperback edition.
- Mills, Maldwyn, ed. *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild*. Heidelberg: C. Winter Universitätsverlag, 1988.
- Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Mitchell, Bruce, ed. *Beowulf: An Edition with Relevant Shorter Texts*. Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998.
- Monmouth, Geoffrey of. *The History of the Kings of Britain*. Translated by Lewis Thorpe. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966.
- Morris, William. *The Story of Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs*. London: Ellis and White, 1877.
- . *Early Romances in Prose and Verse*. Edited by Peter Faulkner. London: Dent, 1973.
- Murray, James A.H., ed. *The Romance and Prophecies of Thomas of Erceldoune*. London: Published for the EETS by N. Trübner & Co, 1875.
- Newbery, John. *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book*. Edited by M.F. Thwaite. Facsimile edition, London: Oxford University Press, 1966. Originally published 1744.
- Paolini, Christopher. *Eragon*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003. British edition, London: Corgi, 2005.
- Perrault, Charles. 'Bluebeard.' In *Perrault's Fairy Tales*. Translated by A.E. Johnson and illustrated by Gustave Doré, 31-43. New York: Dover Publications, 1969.
- Pierce, Tamora. *The Woman Who Rides Like a Man*. New York: Atheneum, 1986. Reprint, New York: Random House, 1997.

- Potter, Beatrix. *The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin*. London: Frederick Warne & Co., 1903.
- Pullman, Philip. *His Dark Materials*. London: Scholastic, 2005.
- . *Northern Lights*. In *His Dark Materials*, 1-325. London: Scholastic, 2005. First published 1995 by Scholastic.
- . *The Amber Spyglass*. In *His Dark Materials*, 591-1016. London: Scholastic, 2005. First published 2000 by Scholastic.
- Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. London: Bloomsbury, 1998.
- . *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. London: Bloomsbury, 2007.
- . *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. London: Bloomsbury, 2000.
- . *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. London: Bloomsbury, 2005.
- . *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. London: Bloomsbury, 2003.
- . *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. London: Bloomsbury, 1997.
- Sedgefield, Walter John, ed. 'The Wanderer.' In *An Anglo-Saxon Verse-Book*, 28-31. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1922.
- Seymour, M.C., ed. *Mandeville's Travels*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967.
- Sisam, Kenneth, ed. *Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose*. London: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Speed, Diane, ed. 'Sir Cleges.' In *Medieval English Romances* 1. Sydney: University of Sydney, 1987.
- Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene*. Edited by Thomas P. Roche and C. Patrick O'Donnell. Harmondsworth and New York: Penguin, 1978.
- Tarantino, Quentin, dir. *Pulp Fiction*. DVD. 1994; Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment, 1998. Film.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit: Or There and Back Again*. London: HarperCollins, 1996. First published 1937 by George Allen and Unwin.
- . *The Fellowship of the Ring*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1965. First published 1954 by George Allen and Unwin.
- . *The Return of the King*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1965. First published 1955 by George Allen and Unwin.

- . *The Silmarillion*. London: HarperCollins, 1999. First published 1977 by George Allen and Unwin.
- . *The Two Towers*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1965. First published 1954 by George Allen and Unwin.
- Treharne, Elaine, ed. 'Deor.' In *Old and Middle English c.890-c.1400: An Anthology*, 2nd edn, 60-63. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Walsh, Elizabeth, ed. *The Tale of Ralph the Collier: An Alliterative Romance*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1989.
- White, T.H. *The Sword in the Stone*. London: Collins Modern Classics, 1998. First published 1938 by Collins.
- . *The Once and Future King*. Printed with an introduction by Kevin Crossley-Holland and illustrated by John Lawrence. London: Folio Society, 2003. First published in one volume in 1965 by G.P. Putnam Sons.
- Wordsworth, William. *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*. New Haven: Peck & Newton, 1836.
- . *The Prelude, 1799, 1805, 1850: Authoritative Texts, Context and Reception, Recent Critical Essays*. Edited by Jonathan Wordsworth, M.H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill. New York: Norton, 1979.

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Akbari, Suzanne Conklin. 'From Due East to True North: Orientalism and Orientation.' In *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, edited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, 19-34. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000.
- Albrecht, William Price. *The Loathly Lady in 'Thomas of Erceldoune.'* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1954.
- Alexander, Michael. *Medievalism: The Middle Ages in Modern England*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London and New York: Verso, 2006.
- Apter, Emily. 'On Oneworldedness: Or Paranoia as a World System.' *American Literary History* 18, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 365-89.

- Archibald, Elizabeth. 'Beginnings: *The Tale of King Arthur* and *King Arthur and the Emperor Lucius*.' In *A Companion to Malory*, edited by Elizabeth Archibald and A.S.G. Edwards, 133-151. Woodbridge and Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 1997.
- Armitstead, Claire. 'Arthur Reborn.' *The Guardian Online*. 29 September 2001. Accessed 26 July 2010.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2001/sep/29/guardianchildrensfictionprize2001.guardianchildrensfictionprize>.
- Arnold, Martin. "'Lord and Protector of the Earth and Its Inhabitants": Poetry, Philology, Politics, and Thor in Denmark and Germany, 1751-1864.' In *Constructing Nations, Reconstructing Myth: Essays in Honour of T.A. Shippey*, edited by Andrew Wawn, 27-52. Turnhout: Brepols, 2007.
- Arvidsson, Stefan. 'Greed and the Nature of Evil: Tolkien versus Wagner.' *Journal of Religious and Popular Culture* 22, no. 2 (2010): 1-21.
- Attebery, Brian. *Strategies of Fantasy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.
- Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Translated by Willard R. Trask. Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 1953. Originally published 1946 in German by A. Francke Ltd. Co.
- 'Autograph manuscript of The Tales of Beedle the Bard.' *Artifact.com*. Auctioned 13 December 2007. Accessed 3 March 2010.
<http://www.artifact.com/catalog/viewLot.cfm?sample=17922>.
- Avery, Gillian and Margaret Kinnell. 'Morality and Levity: 1780-1820.' In *Children's Literature: An Illustrated History*, edited by Peter Hunt, 46-76. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*. Translated by Maria Jolas. Boston: Beacon Press, 1994. Originally published 1958 in French by Presses Universitaires de France as *La poétique de l'espace*. Translation first published 1964 by The Orion Press.
- Banham, Joanna. 'William Morris and the Middle Ages.' In *William Morris and the Middle Ages: A Collection of Essays, Together with a Catalogue of Works Exhibited at the Whitworth Art Gallery, 28 September-8 December 1984*, edited by Joanna Banham and Jennifer Harris, 1-16. Manchester and Dover, NH: Manchester University Press, 1984.
- Barber, Richard. 'Chivalry and the *Morte Darthur*.' In *A Companion to Malory*, edited by Elizabeth Archibald and A.S.G. Edwards, 19-35. Woodbridge and Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 1997.
- Barbour, Brian. 'Lewis and Cambridge.' *Modern Philology* 96, no. 4 (May 1999): 439-484.

- Barczewski, Stephanie. *Myth and National Identity in Nineteenth-century Britain: The Legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Barfield, Owen. *Poetic Diction: A Study in Meaning*. London: Faber & Gwyer, 1928.
- Barron, W.R.J. ed. *The Arthur of the English: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval English Life and Literature*, 1999. Rev. ed., with an additional postscript, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001.
- Barthes, Roland. 'The Death of the Author.' In *Image/Music/Text*. Translated by Stephen Heath, 142-48. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977. Originally published 1967 in *Aspen*, no. 5-6.
- . *The Pleasure of the Text*. Translated by Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang, 1975. Originally published 1973 in French by Éditions du Seuil as *Le Plaisir du texte*.
- . *S/Z*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1974. Originally published 1970 in French by Éditions du Seuil as *S/Z*.
- . *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*. Translated by Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang, 1974. Originally published 1971 in French by Éditions du Seuil as *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*.
- Batt, Catherine and Rosalind Field. 'The Romance Tradition.' In *The Arthur of the English: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval English Life and Literature*, edited by W.R.J. Barron, 59-70. 1999. Rev. ed., with an additional postscript, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001.
- Battles, Paul. 'Dwarfs in Germanic Literature: *Deutsche Mythologie* or Grimm's Myths?' In *The Shadow-Walkers: Jacob Grimm's Mythology of the Monstrous*, edited by Tom Shippey, 29-82. Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005.
- Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation*. Translated by Sheila Faria Glaser. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994. Originally published 1981 in French by Éditions Galilée as *Simulacres et Simulation*.
- Belloc, Hilaire. *The Great Heresies*. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1938.
- Bishko, Charles Julian. 'The Spanish and Portuguese Reconquest, 1095-1492.' In *A History of the Crusades, Vol. 3: The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, edited by Harry W. Hazard, 396-456. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975.
- Bloom, Harold. *The Anxiety of Influence*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.
- . *Poetry and Repression: Revisionism from Blake to Stevens*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975.

- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Homo Academicus*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988. Originally published 1984 in French by Les Editions de Minuit.
- . *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*. Translated by Laretta C. Clough. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996. Originally published 1989 in French by Les Editions de Minuit as *La Noblesse d'état: grandes écoles et esprit*.
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Jean-Claude Passeron. *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, 2nd ed. Translated by Richard Nice. London: Sage Publications, 1990.
- Branch, M.A. 'Introduction.' In *Kalevala: The Land of the Heroes*, edited by M.A. Branch and translated by W.F. Kirby, xi-xxxiv. London and Dover, NH: Athlone Press, 1985.
- Brewer, Derek. 'The Colour Green.' In *A Companion to the Gawain-Poet*, edited by Derek Brewer and Jonathan Gibson, 181-190. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997.
- Brewer, Elisabeth. *T.H. White's The Once and Future King*. Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1993.
- Bridges, Margaret. 'Empowering the Hero: Alexander as Author in the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem* and its Medieval English Versions.' In *The Problematics of Power: Eastern and Western Representations of Alexander the Great*, edited by Margaret Bridges and J. Christoph Bürgel, 45-59. Bern: Peter Lang, 1996.
- Bruckner, Matilda Tomaryn. 'The Shape of Romance in Medieval France.' In *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, edited by Roberta Krueger, 13-29. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Bullough, Vern L. 'Cross Dressing and Gender Role Change in the Middle Ages.' In *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, edited by Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage, 223-242. New York and London: Garland, 1996.
- Bunt, G.H.V. 'Exemplum and Tale in John Gower's "Confessio Amantis."' In *Exemplum et Similitudo: Alexander the Great and Other Heroes as Points of Reference in Medieval Literature*, edited by W.J. Aerts and M. Gosman, 145-57. Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1988.
- Burrow, J.A. 'The Canterbury Tales I: Romance.' In *The Cambridge Chaucer Companion*, edited by Piero Boitani and Jill Mann, 109-24. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Butler, Charles. *Four British Fantasists: Place and Culture in the Children's Fantasies of Penelope Lively, Alan Garner, Diana Wynne Jones, and Susan Cooper*. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2006.
- Calkin, Siobhain Bly. *Saracens and the Making of English Identity: The Auchinleck Manuscript*. New York and London: Routledge, 2005.

- Cantor, Norman. *Inventing the Middle Ages: The Lives, Works and Ideas of the Great Medievalists of the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Lutterworth, 1992.
- Carpenter, Humphrey. *The Inklings: C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles Williams and their Friends*. London: HarperCollins, 2006.
- . *J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography*. London: HarperCollins, 2002.
- Carruthers, Mary. 'The Wife of Bath and the Painting of Lions.' *PMLA* 94, no. 2 (March 1979): 209-22.
- Cary, George. *The Medieval Alexander*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956.
- Caselli, Daniela. *Beckett's Dantes: Intertextuality in the Fiction and Criticism*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2005.
- Caxton, William. 'Caxton's Preface.' In Sir Thomas Malory, *Works*, 2nd ed., edited by Eugène Vinaver, xiii-xv. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- Cecire, Maria Sachiko. 'Ban Welondes: Wayland Smith in Popular Culture.' In *Anglo-Saxon Culture and the Modern Imagination*, edited by David Clark and Nicholas Perkins, 201-217. Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2010.
- . 'Barriers Unbroken: Sir Palomides the Saracen in "The Book of Sir Tristram."' *Arthurian Literature XVIII*, forthcoming 2011.
- . 'Harry Potter and the Poetics of Paranoia.' *Journal of Children's Literature Studies* 5, no. 1 (2008): 88-109.
- . 'Medievalism, Popular Culture, and National Identity in Children's Fantasy Literature.' *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 9, no. 3 (2009): 395-409.
- Cecire, Natalia. 'From Stone Tablet to Pensieve: Media and History in Children's Fantasy.' Talk given at MLA Convention, Chicago, IL, 26 December 2007.
- Chance, Jane, ed. *Tolkien the Medievalist*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Cherewatuk, Karen. 'Aural and Written Reception in Sir John Paston, Malory, and Caxton.' *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 21 (2005): 123-31.
- . "'Gentyll' Audiences and "Greate Bookes": Chivalric Manuals and the *Morte Darthur*.' In *Arthurian Literature XV*, edited by James P. Carley and Felicity Riddy, 205-216. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997.
- Chesterton, G.K. *The New Jerusalem*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1920.
- . *A Short History of England*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1917.

- Chism, Christine. 'Middle-earth, the Middle Ages, and the Aryan Nation: Myth and History in World War II.' In *Tolkien the Medievalist*, edited by Jane Chance, 63-92. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Christafis, Angelique. 'Pullman lays down moral challenge for writers.' *The Guardian*. 12 August 2002. Accessed 9 November 2010. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2002/aug/12/books.humanities>.
- Clark, David and Nicholas Perkins, eds. *Anglo-Saxon Culture and the Modern Imagination*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2010.
- Clayton, Mary, ed. 'Letter to Brother Edward: A Student Edition.' *Old English Newsletter* 40, no. 3 (Spring 2007): 31-46.
- Coghill, Nevill. 'The Approach to English.' In *Light on C.S. Lewis*, edited by Jocelyn Gibb, 51-66. London: G. Bles, 1965.
- Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome. *Hybridity, Identity, and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain: On Difficult Middles*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
- . 'Introduction: Midcolonial.' In *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, edited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, 1-17. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000.
- . 'Monster Culture (Seven Theses).' In *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, edited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, 3-25. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.
- . ed. *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.
- . *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters, and the Middle Ages*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.
- , ed. *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000.
- Cooper, Helen. 'The Classical Background.' In *Chaucer: An Oxford Guide*, edited by Steve Ellis, 255-271. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- . *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Cooper, Susan. 'Interview with Susan Cooper.' Interview conducted by Raymond H. Thompson. Cambridge, MA, 2 July 1989. Available online at <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/intrvws/cooper.htm>
- . 'Biography.' Susan Cooper official website. Accessed 26 July 2010. Available online at <http://www.thelostland.com/biography.htm>.
- Connelly, Mark. *Christmas: A Social History*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1999.

- Correale, Robert M. and Mary Hamel, eds. *Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer 2005.
- Corrin, Jay P. *G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc: The Battle against Modernity*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1981.
- Crossley-Holland, Kevin. 'Introduction.' In *The Once and Future King*, by T. H. White. Printed with an introduction by Kevin Crossley-Holland and illustrated by John Lawrence. London: Folio Society, 2003. Originally printed in one volume 1965 by G.P. Putnam Sons.
- Crossley-Holland, Kevin. 'Translation.' At www.kevincrossley-holland.com. Accessed 26 July 2010. <http://www.kevincrossley-holland.com/translation.html>
- Crystal, David. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*, 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Culler, Jonathan. *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction*. London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981.
- Cunningham, Val. 'Literary Culture.' In *The History of the University of Oxford*, vol 8, edited by Brian Harrison, 413-450. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Currie, Robert. 'The Arts and Social Studies, 1914-1939.' In *The History of the University of Oxford*, vol 8, edited by Brian Harrison, 109-216. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Davis, Kathleen. *Periodization and Sovereignty: How Ideas of Feudalism and Secularization Govern the Politics of Time*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.
- Dawson, W.F. *Christmas, its Origins and Associations*. London: Eliot Stock, 1902.
- de Bertodano, Helena. 'I Am of the Devil's Party.' *The Daily Telegraph*. 29 January 2002. Accessed 26 July 2010. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/donotmigrate/3572490/I-am-of-the-Devils-party.html>
- de Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Steven Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988. First published 1984. Originally published 1980 in French as *L'invention du quotidien vol. 1, Arts de faire*.
- de Weever, Jacqueline. *Sheba's Daughters: Whitening and Demonizing the Saracen Woman in Medieval French Epic*. New York: Garland, 1998.
- Dinkelacker, Horst. 'The Renaissance of the German Garden Gnome.' *Journal of Popular Culture* 30, no. 3 (Winter 1996): 27-33.

- Dinshaw, Carolyn. *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989.
- . 'Getting Medieval: *Pulp Fiction*, Gawain, Foucault.' In *The Book and the Body*, edited by Dolores W. Frese and Katherine O'Brian O'Keefe, 116-63. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997.
- . *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Postmodern*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999.
- Dixon, Bob. *Catching them Young, Volume 1: Sex, Race, and Class in Children's Fiction*. London: Pluto Press, 1977.
- Downing, David. *Planets in Peril: A Critical Study of C.S. Lewis's Ransom Trilogy*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992.
- Drout, Michael D. C. 'Reading the Signs of Light: Anglo Saxonism, Education, and Obedience in Susan Cooper's *The Dark Is Rising*.' *The Lion and the Unicorn* 21, no. 2 (1997): 230-50.
- Eco, Umberto. *Faith in Fakes: Travels in Hyperreality*. Translated by William Weaver. London: Vintage, 1998. Originally published 1973 in Italian by Bompiani as *Il costume di casa: evidenze e misteri dell'ideologia italiana*.
- Evans, Ruth and Lesley Johnson, eds. *Feminist Readings in Middle English Literature: The Wife of Bath and All Her Sect*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Ezard, John. 'Fully booked.' *The Guardian*. 24 January 2002. Accessed 9 November 2010.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2002/jan/24/whitbreadprize2001.costabookaward>.
- Finke, Laurie A. and Martin B. Shichtman. *King Arthur and the Myth of History*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004.
- Fisher, Sheila. 'Leaving Morgan Aside: Women, History, and Revisionism in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.' In *Arthurian Women: A Casebook*, edited by Thelma Fenster, 77-95. New York: Garland Pub., 1996.
- 'Florida Ban on Dwarf Tossing Must Be Upheld, Announces LPA, Inc.; Dwarf-Tossing is a Dangerous, Demoralizing Activity That Poses Specific Hazards to Persons with Dwarfism.' *Business Wire*. 10 December 2001. Accessed 26 April 2010.
http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0EIN/is_2001_Dec_10/ai_80677114/
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, second edition. Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1995. First published 1975 in French by Gallimard as *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la Prison*.

- . ‘Space, Knowledge, and Power.’ Interview with Paul Rabinow in *The Foucault Reader*, edited by Paul Rabinow, 239-56. New York: Pantheon, 1984.
- Franks, Alan. ‘Philip Pullman Faces his Daemons.’ *The Times Online*. 17 March 2009. Accessed 26 July 2010.
http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/stage/theatre/article5919020.ece
- Friedman, John. *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*. Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000.
- Frith, Richard. “‘The Worship of Courage’: William Morris’s *Sigurd the Volsung* and Victorian Medievalism.’ In *Beyond Arthurian Romances: The Reach of Victorian Medievalism*, edited by Jennifer A. Palmgren and Loretta M. Holloway, 117-32. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.
- Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1957. Reprinted with a new foreword by Harold Bloom, 2000.
- . *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976.
- Gallix, François, ed. *Letters to a Friend: The Correspondence Between T.H. White and L.J. Potts*. New York: G.P Putnam’s Sons, 1982.
- Ganim, John M., ‘The Experience of Modernity in Late Medieval Literature: Urbanism, Experience and Rhetoric in some Early Descriptions of London.’ In *The Performance of Middle English Culture: Essays on Chaucer and the Drama in Honor of Martin Stevens*, edited by James J. Paxson, Lawrence M. Clopper, and Sylvia Tomasch, 77-96. Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1998.
- . ‘Native Studies: Orientalism and Medievalism.’ In *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, edited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, 123-134. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000.
- Gannon, Linda R. *Women and Aging: Transcending the Myths*. London: Routledge, 1999.
- Gibb, Jocelyn. Ed. *Light on C.S. Lewis*. London: G. Bles, 1965.
- Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, second edition. London: Yale Nota Bene, 2000.
- Girouard, Mark. *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman*. New Haven and London, 1981.
- Godden, Malcolm. ‘Did King Alfred Write Anything?’ *Medium Ævum* 76 (2007): 1-23.

- Grenby, M.O. 'The Origins of Children's Literature.' In *The Cambridge Companion to Children's Literature*, edited by M.O. Grenby and Andrea Immel, 3-18. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Griffin, David Ray. 'Religious Pluralism: Genetic, Identist, and Deep.' In *Deep Religious Pluralism*, edited by David Ray Griffin, 3-38. Westminster: John Knox Press, 2005.
- Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm. 'Preface to the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen gesammelt durch die Brüder Grimm* (1819).' Translated by Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and Jeffrey T. Schnapp. In *Medievalism and the Modernist Temper*, edited by R. Howard Bloch and Stephen G. Nichols, 481-492. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- 'Growing Pains.' *The Oxford Student*. Trinity Term 2006, Week 7.
- Gruner, Elisabeth Rose. 'Teach the Children: Education and Knowledge in Recent Children's Fantasy.' *Children's Literature* 37 (2009): 216-235.
- Guerin, M. Victoria. *The Fall of Kings and Princes Structure and Destruction in Arthurian Tragedy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.
- Guillory, John. *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.
- Gutas, Dimitri. *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbāsid Society*. New York and London: Routledge, 1998.
- Hanna, Ralph. 'Unlocking What's Locked: Gawain's Green Girdle.' *Viator* 14 (1983): 289-302.
- Harris, Jose. 'The Arts and Social Sciences, 1939-1970.' In *The History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 8, edited by Brian Harrison, 217-249. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- 'Harry Potter's Oxford Gallery.' *BBC Online*. Accessed 8 March 2010. http://www.bbc.co.uk/oxford/harry_potter/mainlocations.shtml.
- Harward, Vernon J., Jr., *The Dwarfs of Arthurian Romance and Celtic Tradition*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1958.
- Hellinga, Lotte. 'The Malory Manuscript and Caxton.' In *Aspects of Malory*, edited by Toshiyuki Takamiya and Derek Brewer, 127-141. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1981.
- Heng, Geraldine. *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

- Hobhouse, Christopher. *Oxford: As It Was and as It Is To-day*, fourth edition. London: B.T. Batsford, Ltd., 1948.
- Hooper, Walter. *C. S. Lewis: A Complete Guide to His Life and Works*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2005.
- Huber, Emily Rebekah. "“Delyver me my dwarff!”: Gareth's Dwarf and Chivalric Identity.”” *Arthuriana* 16, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 49-53.
- Hunt, Peter, ed. *Children's Literature: An Illustrated History*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- . *Criticism, Theory, and Children's Literature*. Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991.
- . ‘Instruction and Delight.’ In *Children's Literature: Approaches and Territories*, edited by Janet Maybin and Nicola J. Watson, 12-26. Houndmills, NY, and Milton Keynes: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- , ed. *An Introduction to Children's Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- . ‘Retreatism and Advance (1914-45).’ In *Children's Literature: An Illustrated History*, edited by Peter Hunt, 192-224. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- . *Understanding Children's Literature: Key Essays from the Second Edition of the International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*, second edition. London and New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Ingham, Patricia Clare. *Sovereign Fantasies: Arthurian Romance and the Making of Britain*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.
- Irigaray, Luce. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. Translated by Catherine Porter. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985. Originally published 1977 in French by Editions de Minuit as *Ce Sexe qui n'en est pas un*.
- Irwin, William. ‘Against Intertextuality.’ *Philosophy and Literature* 28 (2004): 227–242.
- Jameson, Fredric. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981.
- Jauss, Hans Robert. *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*. Translated by Timothy Bahti. Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982.
- Jenkins, Henry. *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*. New York and London: Routledge, 1992.

- 'J.K. Rowling Outs Dumbledore as Gay,' *BBC Online*. October 22, 2007.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7053982.stm>
- Jones, Diana Wynne. 'Autobiography.' Diana Wynne Jones official website.
 Accessed 26 July 2010. <http://www.leemac.freeseerve.co.uk/autobiog.htm>.
- . 'The Heroic Ideal—A Personal Odyssey.' *The Lion and the Unicorn* 13, no. 1
 (June 1989): 129-140.
- . 'Inventing the Middle Ages.' Talk presented at Nottingham University, 1997.
 Accessed 26 July 2010. <http://www.leemac.freeseerve.co.uk/medieval.htm>.
- Kabir, Ananya Jahanara and Deanne Williams. 'Introduction: A Return to Wonder.'
 In *Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages: Translating
 Cultures*, edited by Ananya Jahanara Kabir and Deanne Williams, 1-22.
 Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Kaeuper, Richard. 'The Societal Role of Chivalry in Romance: Northwestern
 Europe.' In *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, edited by
 Roberta Krueger, 97-114. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University
 Press, 2000.
- Keynes, Simon. 'The Cult of King Alfred the Great.' *Anglo-Saxon England* 28
 (1999): 225–356.
- Kirk, Elizabeth D. "'Wel Bycommes Such Craft upon Cristmasse": The Festive and
 the Hermeneutic in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.' *Arthuriana* 4, no. 2
 (1994 Summer): 93-137.
- Kline, Daniel, ed. *Medieval Literature for Children*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Knight, Stephen. *Merlin: Knowledge and Power through the Ages*. Ithaca, NY:
 Cornell University Press, 2009.
- Knoepfmacher, U. C. *Ventures into Childland: Victorians, Fairy Tales, and
 Femininity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Knowles, Elizabeth M. *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. New York: Oxford
 University Press, 1999.
- Krueger, Roberta, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*. Cambridge
 and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Kruger, Steven F. 'Becoming Christian, Becoming Male?' In *Becoming Male in the
 Middle Ages*, edited by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler, 21-41. New
 York and London: Garland Publishing, 1997.
- Kynaston, David. *Austerity Britain, 1945-51*. London: Bloomsbury, 2007.

- Lambert, Mark. *Malory: Style and Vision in Le Morte Darthur*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975.
- Larrington, Carolyne. 'The Enchantress, the Knight and the Cleric: Authorial Surrogates in Arthurian Romance.' In *Arthurian Literature XXV*, edited by Elizabeth Archibald and David F. Johnson, 43-65. Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008.
- Lawlor, John. 'The Tutor and the Scholar.' In *Light on C.S. Lewis*, edited by Jocelyn Gibb, 67-85. London: G. Bles, 1965.
- Lee, Stuart. "J.R.R. Tolkien and The Wanderer: From Edition to Application," *Tolkien Studies* 6 (2009): 189-211.
- Leeson, Robert and the Children's Rights Workshop. *Children's Books and Class Society: Past and Present*. London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1977.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991. Originally published 1974 in French by Anthropos as *La production de l'espace*.
- Lewis, Bernard. *History: Remembered, Recovered, Invented*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975.
- Lewis, C.S. *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition*. London: Oxford University Press, 1946.
- . *Collected Letters*, vol. 1 *Family Letters 1905-1931*. Edited by Walter Hooper. London: HarperCollins, 2000.
- . *Collected Letters*, vol. 2 *Books, Broadcasts and War 1931-1949*. Edited by Walter Hooper. London: HarperCollins, 2004.
- . *C.S. Lewis: His Letters to Children*. Edited by Lyle W. Dorsett and Marjorie Lamp Mead. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995.
- . *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967.
- , ed. *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*. London: Oxford University Press, 1947.
- . 'High and Low Brows.' In *C.S. Lewis: Selected Literary Essays*, edited by Walter Hooper, 266-79. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969.
- . 'The Idea of an "English School."' In *Rehabilitations and Other Essays*, edited by C.S. Lewis, 59-77. London: Oxford University Press, 1939.

- . ‘Introduction.’ In *Phantastes and Lilith*, by George MacDonald, 7-12. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1962.
- . *Letters of C.S. Lewis*. Edited by W.H. Lewis. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1966.
- . ‘On Juvenile Tastes.’ In *Of This and Other Worlds*, edited by Walter Hooper, 70-8. London: Collins, 1982.
- . ‘On Stories.’ In *Of This and Other Worlds*, edited by Walter Hooper, 25-45. London: Collins, 1982.
- . ‘On Three Ways of Writing for Children.’ In *Of This and Other Worlds*, edited by Walter Hooper, 56-71. London: Collins, 1982.
- . ‘Our English Syllabus.’ In *Rehabilitations and Other Essays*, 81-93. London: Oxford University Press, 1939.
- . *A Preface to Paradise Lost*. London: Oxford University Press, 1969.
- , ed. *Rehabilitations and Other Essays*. London: Oxford University Press, 1939.
- . *Surprised by Joy*. London: HarperCollins, 2002.
- Lerer, Seth. *Children’s Literature: A Reader’s History from Aesop to Harry Potter*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- Lesnik-Oberstein, Karín. ‘The Psychopathology of Everyday Children’s Literature Criticism.’ *Cultural Critique* 45 (Spring 2000): 222-42.
- Lindahl, Carl. ‘Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and Myth in Its Time.’ In *Telling Tales: Medieval Narratives and the Folk Tradition*, edited by Francesca Canadé Sautman Diana Conchado and Guiseppe Carlo Di Scipio, 249-67. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998.
- Locke, John. *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. London: A. and J. Churchill, 1695. Early English Books Online. Accessed 4 January 2010. http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2097/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:101033.
- Lönnrot, Elias. *The Kalevala: An Epic Poem after Oral Tradition*. Translated by Keith Bosley. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. Originally published 1866 in Finnish by Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran kirjapainossa.
- Lönnroth, Lars. ‘The Noble Heathen: A Theme in the Sagas.’ *Scandinavian Studies* 41 (1969): 1-29.
- Lundt, Bea. *Melusine und Merlin im Mittelalter: Entwürfe und Modelle weiblicher Existenz im Beziehungs-Diskurs der Geschlechter*. Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1991.

- Madsen, Catherine. "“Light from an Invisible Lamp: Natural Religion in *The Lord of the Rings*.” In *Tolkien and the Invention of Myth: A Reader*, edited by Jane Chance, 35-47. Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky.
- Magoun, Francis Peabody, Jr. 'The Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry.' *Speculum* 28 (1953): 446-67.
- McGavran, James. *Romanticism and Children's Literature in Nineteenth-century England*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991.
- Meale, Carol M. "“The Hoole Book”": Editing and the Creation of Meaning in Malory's Text." In *A Companion to Malory*, edited by Elizabeth Archibald and A.S.G. Edwards, 3-17. Woodbridge and Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 1997.
- Mendlesohn, Farah. *Diana Wynne Jones: Children's Literature and the Fantastic Tradition*. New York and London: Routledge, 2005.
- Miles, Clement. *Christmas Customs and Traditions, their History and Significance*. New York: Dover Publications, 1976. Originally published 1912 as *Christmas in Ritual and Tradition, Christian and Pagan*, by T. Fisher Unwin.
- Miller, Karl. 'Magic in the Air.' *Changing English* 8, no. 1 (2001): 29-34.
- Morris, William. *The Collected Letters of William Morris, 1848-1880*, edited by Norman Kelvin. Princeton NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1984.
- Murrin, Michael. 'The Multiple Worlds of the Narnia Stories.' In *Word and Story in C.S. Lewis*, edited by Peter Schakel, 232-55. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1991. 232-55.
- Gergely Nagy, 'Orality.' In *J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopedia: Scholarship and Critical Assessment*, edited by Michael D. C. Drout, 486-87. New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Nodelman, Perry. *The Hidden Adult: Defining Children's Literature*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008.
- . 'The Other: Orientalism, Colonialism, and Children's Literature.' *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 29-35.
- David D. Oberhelman, 'Oral Tradition.' In *J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopedia: Scholarship and Critical Assessment*, edited by Michael D. C. Drout, 484-86. New York: Routledge, 2007.
- O'Donnell, Patrick. *Latent Destinies: Cultural Paranoia and Contemporary U.S. Narrative*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000.
- Opie, Iona and Moira Tatem, eds. *A Dictionary of Superstitions*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

- Orchard, Andy. 'Oral Tradition.' In *Reading Old English Texts*, edited by Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, 101-23. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- . *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf-manuscript*. Cambridge and Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 1995.
- Oxford University Examination Papers: Trinity Term 1956. Second Public Examination: Honour School of English Language and Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956.
- Oxford University Examination Papers: Trinity Term 1968. Second Public Examination: Honour School of English Language and Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.
- Palmer, D.J. *The Rise of English Studies: An Account of the Study of the English Language and Literature from Its Origins to the Making of the Oxford English School*. London: Published for the University of Hull by the Oxford University Press, 1965.
- Palmgren, Jennifer A. and Loretta M. Holloway, eds. *Beyond Arthurian Romances: The Reach of Victorian Medievalism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.
- Passmore, S. Elizabeth and Susan Carter, eds. *The English 'Loathly Lady' Tales: Boundaries, Traditions, Motifs*. Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2007.
- Passmore, S. Elizabeth. 'Through the Counsel of a Lady: The Irish and English Loathly Lady Takes and the 'Mirrors for Princes' Genre.' In *The English 'Loathly Lady' Tales: Boundaries, Traditions, Motifs*, edited by S. Elizabeth Passmore and Susan Carter, 3-41. Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2007.
- Pennington, John. 'From Elfland to Hogwarts, or the Aesthetic Trouble with Harry Potter.' *The Lion and the Unicorn* 26, no.1 (2002): 78-97.
- Perkins, Nicholas. *Hoccleve's 'Regiment of Princes': Counsel and Constraint*. Woodbridge and Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 2001.
- Philips, Philip Edward. 'King Alfred the Great and the Victorian Translations of his Anglo-Saxon *Boethius*.' In *Global Perspectives on Medieval English Literature, Language, and Culture*, edited by Noel Harold Kaylor, Jr. and Richard Scott Nokes, 155-173. Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2007.
- Piehler, Paul. *The Visionary Landscape: A Study in Medieval Allegory*. London: Edward Arnold, 1971.
- Prickett, Stephen. *Victorian Fantasy*, 2nd ed. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005.

- Pullman, Philip. 'The Dark Side of Narnia.' *The Guardian*. 1 October 1998. Accessed 26 July 2010. <http://www.crlamppost.org/darkside.htm>.
- . 'Introduction.' In *Paradise Lost*, by John Milton, 1-10. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- . 'This Is the Big Society, You See. It Must Be Big, to Contain so Many Volunteers.' *www.opendemocracy.net*. 25 January 2011. Accessed 18 March 2011. <http://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/philip-pullman/this-is-big-society-you-see-it-must-be-big-to-contain-so-many-volunteers>. Originally given as a speech in the Oxford Town Hall, Oxford, UK. 20 January, 2011.
- Purkiss, Diane. *At the Bottom of the Garden: a Dark History of Fairies, Hobgoblins, and other Troublesome Things*. New York: New York University Press, 2000.
- Reynolds, Meredith. 'Malory's Use of "Counsel" and "Advyce" in Creating a King.' *Arthuriana* 16.2 (Summer 2006): 40-4.
- Robinson, Fred C. 'Lexicography and Literary Criticism: A Caveat.' In *Philological Essays: Studies in Old and Middle English Language and Literature in Honour of Herbert Dean Meritt*, edited by J.L. Rosier, 99-110. The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1970.
- Rose, Jacqueline. *The Case of Peter Pan, or, The Impossibility of Children's Fiction*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Emile*. Translated by Barbara Foxley. London: J.M. Dent, 1996. Originally published 1762 in French as *Émile, ou de l'Éducation*.
- Sarland, Charles. 'Critical and Traditional Ideological Positioning.' In *Understanding Children's Literature: Key Essays from the Second Edition of the International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*, second edition, edited by Peter Hunt, 30-49. London and New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Schibanoff, Susan. "'Taking the Gold Out of Egypt": The Art of Reading as a Woman.' In *Feminist Readings in Middle English Literature*, edited by Ruth Evans and Lesley Johnson, 221-245. Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge, 1994.
- Schmolke-Hasselmann, Beate. *The Evolution of Arthurian Romance: The Verse Tradition from Chrétien to Froissart*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Schwab, Sandra Martina. 'What Is a Man?: Refuting the Chivalric Ideal at the Turn of the Century.' In *Beyond Arthurian Romances: The Reach of Victorian Medievalism*, edited by Jennifer A. Palmgren and Loretta M. Holloway, 217-31. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.
- Shippey, Tom and Andreas Haarder, eds. *Beowulf: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge, 1998.

- Shippey, Tom. *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002.
- . *The Road to Middle-Earth*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983.
- Simmons, Clare A. 'Introduction.' In *Medievalism and the Quest for the 'Real' Middle Ages*, edited by Clare A. Simmons, 1-28. London: F. Cass, 2001.
- . *Reversing the Conquest: History and Myth in Nineteenth-Century British Literature*. New Brunswick and London, 1990.
- Simpson, James. 'The Rule of Medieval Imagination.' In *Images, Idolatry, and Iconoclasm in Late Medieval England: Textuality and the Visual Image*, edited by Jeremy Dimmick, James Simpson, and Nicolette Zeeman, 4-24. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Simpson, Roger. *Camelot Regained: The Arthurian Revival and Tennyson, 1800-1849*. Cambridge and Wolfeboro, N.H.: D.S. Brewer, 1990.
- Slater, Michael. 'Introduction.' In *A Christmas Carol and Other Christmas Writings*. By Charles Dickens, xi-xxxii. London: Penguin Books, 2003.
- Smith, Thomas W. 'Tolkien's Catholic Imagination: Mediation and Tradition.' *Religion & Literature*, 38.2 (Summer 2006): 73-100.
- Spearing, A.C. *The Gawain-Poet: A Critical Study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.
- Spence, Sarah. 'Felix Casus: The Dares and Dictys Legends of Aeneas.' In *A Companion to Vergil's Aeneid and its Tradition*, edited by Joseph Farrell and Michael C. Putnam, 133-146. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
- Squires, Claire. 'Marketing at the Millenium.' In *Children's Literature: Approaches and Territories*, edited by Janet Maybin and Nicola J. Watson, 183-198. Houndmills, NY and Milton Keynes: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Stock, Brian. *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.
- Strickland, Debra. *Saracens, Demons and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003.
- Norman Talbot, 'William Morris and the Bear: Theme, Magic, and Totem in the Romances.' In *William Morris: Centenary Essays*, edited by Peter Faulkner, 94-106. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. 'Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics.' In *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*, edited by Christopher Tolkien, 5-48. London: HarperCollins, 2006.

- . *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien: A Selection*. Edited by Humphrey Carpenter and Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981. Page references are to the Houghton Mifflin edition.
- . ‘On Fairy Stories.’ In *The Monsters and the Critics and other Essays*, edited by Christopher Tolkien, 109-161. London: Harper Collins, 2006.
- . ‘The Oxford English School.’ *The Oxford Magazine*. May 29, 1930, 778-81.
- . ‘Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.’ In *The Monsters and the Critics and other Essays*, edited by Christopher Tolkien, 72-108. London: Harper Collins, 2006.
- Tyerman, Christopher. *God’s War: A New History of the Crusades*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- University of Oxford Examination Statutes*, revised to the end of 1955. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 1955.
- University of Oxford Examination Statutes*, revised to the end of 1961. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 1961.
- University of Oxford Examination Statutes*, revised to the end of 1967. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 1967.
- University of Oxford Examination Decrees*, revised to the end of 1970. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 1970.
- University of Oxford Examination Statutes*, together with the Regulations of the Boards for the Academic Year 1932-1933. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 1932.
- Utz, Richard J. and Tom Shippey. ‘Medievalism in the Modern World: Introductory Perspectives.’ In *Medievalism in the Modern World: Essays in Honour of Leslie J. Workman*, edited by Richard J. Utz and Tom Shippey, 1-13. Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 1998.
- Vallone, Lynne. ‘Ideas of Difference in Children’s Literature.’ In *The Cambridge Companion to Children’s Literature*, edited by M.O. Grenby and Andrea Immel, 174-89. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Waithe, Marcus. *William Morris’s Utopia of Strangers: Victorian Medievalism and the Ideal of Hospitality*. Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006.
- Wallace, David. *Chaucerian Polity: Absolutist Lineages and Associational Forms in England and Italy*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997.
- Warner, Marina. *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers*. London: Vintage, 1995.

- Warner, Sylvia Townsend. *T.H. White: A Biography*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1967.
- Waters, Chris. 'Marxism, Medievalism, and Popular Culture.' In *History and Community: Essays in Victorian Medievalism*, edited by Florence S. Boos, 137-68. New York: Garland Publishers, 1992.
- Wawn, Andrew. *The Vikings and the Victorians: Inventing the Old North in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. Cambridge and Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 2000.
- Wheeler, Bonnie. 'Grief in Avalon: Sir Palomydes' Psychic Pain.' In *Grief and Gender: 700-1700*, edited by Jennifer C. Vaught, 65-77. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Whetter, Kevin Sean. *Understanding Genre and Medieval Romance*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.
- Williams, David. *Deformed Discourse: The Function of the Monster in Mediaeval Thought and Literature*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996.
- Wilson, A.N. *C.S. Lewis: A Biography*. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Co., 2002. Paperback edition.
- Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1989. First published in 1929.
- Wullschläger, Jackie. *Inventing Wonderland: The Lives and Fantasies of Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, J.M. Barrie, Kenneth Grahame and A.A. Milne*. London: Methuen, 1995.
- Zipes, Jack. *The Brothers Grimm: From Enchanted Forests to the Modern World*. Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.
- , ed. *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2001.
- . *Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children's Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter*. New York: Routledge, 2001.