BROODING ON THE VAST ABYSS: THE HISTORY, THEORY, AND CONSEQUENCE OF
ALTERNATIVE FICTIONAL WORLD-BUILDING

By

David A. Watson

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ABSTRACT

BROODING ON THE VAST ABYSS: THE HISTORY, THEORY, AND CONSEQUENCES
OF ALTERNATIVE FICTIONAL WORLD-BUILDING

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Contrary to Darko Suvin's claim that science fiction contains revolutionary political
potential, while fantasy literature does not, this dissertation will argue that fantasy literature—
particularly its power to create alternative worlds between which the consciousness of the reader
may move—is of fundamental importance to the creation of what I call "apocalyptic
consciousness," the ability to break from the conventional understanding of the world and
provides a clean slate to imagine alternative political formulations.

This dissertation develops its argument across three chapters. In the first, I trace the
historical developments, beginning with the formation of the Bank of England in 1695, that
opened up, for the first time, the possibility of creating alternative fictional worlds on a mass
cultural scale. These developments, financial, political, aesthetic, and scientific, created fissures
in the stable understanding of the world and, in some cases for the first time, offered the
possibility that the world may be one way, or another. This "or another" is the foundation by
which alternative worlds begin to emerge. These trends accelerated until the mid-nineteenth
century, at which point a critical mass was reached and the first fully conceived alternative
worlds began to appear in British fiction.

In the second chapter, the mechanism by which movement between worlds—what I call
"symbolic entanglement"—is placed in the context of the historical development of
hermeneutics. Tracing the understanding of the role of symbols in the creation of inhabitable

cognitive spaces through Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, Gadamer, and Ricoeur, I argue that symbolic entanglement is the next logical step in understanding the power of the hermeneutic process. Rather than merely being an experiential side product of the process of reading, I argue, the feeling of movement between worlds while engaging with a text is the result of an evolutionary shift in consciousness achieved through the hermeneutic process.

The third chapter describes this shift in consciousness through the rhetorical language of apocalypse. Borrowing from Derrida the notion that any one death shatters the unity of the world, and therefore necessitates that a new world be created in its aftermath, I apply the same reasoning to the process of transworld peregrinations. When we acknowledge alternative fictional worlds, through what Michael Saler calls "ironic imagination," we acknowledge a cognitive space outside of the primary world. When we move to that space, it allows us to begin the process of world construction from the ground up. Finally, this chapter reads Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* in the context of an alternative model of European nationalism borrowed from Dominique Reill's *The Nationalists Who Feared the Nation*, and argue that Tolkien provides, for the first time, a foundational myth for a different, less toxic, model of 20th century European nationalism.

This dissertation is dedicated to Carly.
Your love and support are indispensable.

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INTRODUCTION

…Thou from the first

Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread

Dove-like satst brooding on the vast Abyss

And mad'st it pregnant…

-Paradise Lost, Book I

In the second half of the 1970s a battle was fought to determine what mode of inquiry would come to dominate the critical study of science fiction. In *New Worlds for Old* (1974), David Ketterer argued for science fiction as an "apocalyptic literature." For Ketterer, apocalyptic literature "is concerned with the creation of other worlds...thereby causing a metaphorical destruction of that "real" world in the reader's head" (13). At the same time, Darko Suvin was arguing for his own model based around cognition and estrangement. The battle is metaphorical. Suvin and Ketterer were friends—in fact, Suvin provided Ketterer edits for *New Worlds* before it went to press. Metaphorical though it may be, it proved decisive. Every student of science fiction is familiar with Suvin's arguments for the radical potential of science fiction. Ketterer has faded into near total obscurity.

This dissertation was, in fact, entirely written before I learned of the existence of Ketterer's book. Because it has faded so far from the sight of contemporary scholarship, I would

likely never have found it, and this unintentionally reproduced his central idea as my own had I not stumbled upon the title of his book in the footnote of an unrelated article. What he calls the apocalyptic imagination, I was calling "apocalyptic consciousness." And what he was describing as apocalyptic literature, I was calling alternative fictional worlds. Now, rather than advancing a new idea, this dissertation, in its final form, will attempt to resuscitate a good idea that failed to take hold in its original moment.

I will, of course, be taking a different tack. Ketterer was interested in American science fiction, and I am focused on British fantasy literature. The geographical distinction between the fields, in this case, is less important than the distinction of genre. While Ketterer's ideas can be applied to science fiction, they are less fruitful for explaining the revolutionary power of the genre than Suvin's. The reason for this Ketterer seems to sense, if not fully understand. In science fiction, Suvin argues "the rational extrapolative and analogical technique…does not allow for the presentation of a mystical realm" (Ketterer 44). Ketterer disagrees. He desires to maintain in his understanding of science fiction the full range of the mystical, eliding over the traditional genre distinction between science fiction and fantasy. In doing so, he weakens his argument. For those core texts that are indisputably science fiction, Suvin's ideas work better. For those texts on the margin, it is far easier to make the argument that they are not proper science fiction; that they are, to borrow Suvin's phrase from *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, "private pseudo-myths" (39).

This inferior ability to describe the core texts of science fiction, and the grant of legitimacy to ignore the marginal tests is the principle reason that Ketterer has faded from popular awareness. But his idea was not without value. As it happens, apocalyptic consciousness is generated by dealing with particular kinds of texts, and does carry with it, as Ketterer suggests,

the ability to induce a "transformation…whereby man's horizons…are abruptly expanded" (16). That genre is not, however, science fiction. It is fantasy, the genre most deeply enmeshed with the concept of alternative world-building. Ketterer fails to make this connection. Instead he argues that the "escapist" worlds of fantasy literature, because they do not impinge on the real world, can never induce the apocalyptic destruction of the primary world. This is Ketterer's great failure. At a fundamental level he is convinced that the apocalyptic imagination is driven by the *content* of a text, rather than by the *process* that reading certain texts forces the reader to undergo.

By focusing precisely on the process, rather than the content, I find that the work I have already done fills in gaps in Ketterer's work that he had no way of predicting. When he wrote *New Worlds for Old* there was no scholarly discourse dedicated to the question of fictional worlds. Ketterer simply accepts them as something that exists and argues that they play a role in the formulation of apocalyptic imagination—even the term he uses "imagination" indicates a misplaced priority on the content of the texts. With the materials available to him at the time there is no way he could have done otherwise. However, it is possible now to trace how the necessary elements of the worlds that he took for granted and the conditions under which such worlds might form, to understand how it is that a reader moves from one world to another— which Ketterer takes it as a complete given, not even attempting to explain how it occurs, and to ask what it is about these alternative worlds that produce the effect that Ketterer describes[i].

This dissertation began as an attempt to answer a straightforward question: why are alternative fictional worlds important? Ketterer posits an answer to this question, but aside from a single line of mid-introduction exposition in his book, the question remains unanswered, in any meaningful sense, in the three decades since Thomas Pavel first published his *Fictional Worlds*

(1986). This is particularly surprising when one considers the caliber of narratologists who have weighed in, to one degree or another, on some aspect of the study of alternative fictional worlds. And yet, it remains that for all of the words written describing fictional worlds, their typology, the ingredients and methods necessary for their creation, and so on and so forth, the central question of why the field is worthy of exploration and scholarship has been ignored. Catherine Gallagher, in "The Rise of Fictionality," describes the study of alternative fictional worlds inaugurated by Pavel as a practical and theoretical dead-end. "Although theoretically convenient for a philosophical tradition bent on reference," Gallagher writes, "the possible-worlds account of fictionality has now been superceded" (355). It was this opening maneuver of the early fictional world theorists, inspired by the work of Saul Kripke, whose "Semantical Considerations on Modal Logic" (1963) first raised the question of the ontological validity of referentially distinct what-ifs, that set the agenda for alternative fictional worlds. As it turned out, reference proved of limited long-term interest to scholars, and, consequently, helped to usher in the demise of the study of alternative worlds. The question of fictional worlds has, but for a small handful of popular press collections of dubious value, and an occasional article in the mould established by Pavel and Lubimír Doležel, all but vanished from the larger field of literary inquiry.

Hindsight makes it clear that the original sin of the early theorists of relying on Kripke as the foundation for their work doomed the enterprise from the start. Kripke's medium, symbolic logic, is mathematical and so is subject to a variation on Kurt Gödel's second incompleteness theorum[ii]. Gödel demonstrated that while systems of mathematics that rely on an underlying arithmetic can be demonstrated to be internally and axiomatically consistent, they cannot demonstrate their own external validity. Applied to Kripke, one could rephrase the formulation to say that while "Semantical Considerations on Modal Logic" demonstrates, in the

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mathematical terms of symbolic logic, the need to formally recognize the modality of alternative fictional worlds, those same mathematical terms makes it impossible to demonstrate the significance of this accomplishment to a literary theorist attempting to make a powerful claim about the properties of fiction. Quite simply, the ontological status of Tolkien's Middle Earth as a logical proposition does nothing to explain why Middle Earth is important. The failure of the prevailing approach to account for the intuitive importance of alternative fictional worlds suggests that the reason they are important is not bound up in either their ontological status, nor in the taxonomic features that such worlds display. I propose that we have misidentified the crucial aspect of the matter. To recycle an old bromide, it's not the destination, it's the journey. It is not the alternative fictional world itself, but the possibility of movement between worlds— what I will call trans-world peregrination—that matters. The question: why are fictional worlds important, can better be formulated by asking: why is it important that human beings are capable of moving their consciousness from one world to another, and back again, through the act of reading? With this overarching question in mind, I will organize this dissertation around three subsidiary questions that are necessary in order to establish the importance of trans-world peregrination. These three questions will form the basis of the dissertation's three chapters, each building progressively upon the last. The questions are: under what circumstances are alternative fictional worlds possible; by what mechanism one moves from one world to another; and what happens to one who repeatedly undergoes the process of crossing from one world to another.

Thinking Worlds

Mark J.P. Wolf, in *Building Imaginary Worlds: the Theory and History of Subcreation* (2013), suggests that world-building as an activity is a process as old as human consciousness. While that is certainly true in one sense, world-building is a necessary precursor to all manner of human activities from religion and mythmaking to the formation of communities and collectives—the word *world* derives from the Old English *weorold*, which roughly translates "the age of man"—any attempt to infer from the early presence of world-building activities a deliberate attempt to fashion *alternative* worlds, or suggest that such worlds were successfully created prior to the nineteenth century, will confront an alarming dearth of evidence. Alternative world-building is a distinctly modern phenomenon.

As often happens, the concept pre-dates the execution. While I will argue that alternative fictional worlds do not begin to emerge until the second half of the nineteenth century, the idea that worlds can be created by the activities of human consciousness is significantly older. Shakespeare's Hamlet alludes to the idea at the beginning of the seventeenth century when he says, after reflecting that disposition and state of mind do much to determine perception, that "I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself king of infinite space." It is a brief aside, but it is in keeping with Stephen Greenblatt's suggestion that the early modern period is characterized by an ethos of self-fashioning, and takes the concept one step further; we do not merely fashion ourselves, but through our perception, cognition, and imagination we are able to fashion the world around ourselves.

It is in the same century that we get the first text to make an explicit claim to be engaged in the process of world-building, Margaret Cavendish's 1666 novel *The Description of a New*

World, Called the Blazing World. In her epilogue to the second edition of the novel, published in 1668, Cavendish writes that "…my ambition is not onely to be Empress, but Authoress of a whole World, and that the Worlds I have made, both the Blazing- and the other Philosophical World, mentioned in the first part of this Description, are framed and composed of the most pure, that is, the Rational parts of Matter, which are the parts of my Mind…" Cavendish's claim that she has made herself not merely the "Empress," but, in fact, the "Authoress of a whole World" is an exceptional claim, virtually without precedent in Western thought up until this point[iii]. Nor, is Cavendish alone in making this claim. To the same edition, her husband Duke William of Newcastle contributed a poem that the publisher, Maxwell of London, included in the prefatory material:

> Our Elder World, with all their Skill and Arts,
>
> Could but divide the World into three Parts:
>
> Columbus, then for Navigation fam'd,
>
> Found a new World, America 'tis nam'd;
>
> Now this new World was found, it was not made,
>
> Onely discovered, lying in Time's shade.
>
>
> Then what are You, having no Chaos found
>
> To make a World, or any such least ground?
>
> But your Creating Fancy, thought it fit
>
> To make your World of Nothing, but pure Wit.
>
> Your Blazing-World, beyond the Stars mounts higher,
>
> Enlightens all with a Cœlestial Fier.

In the second stanza we see another direct claim to world creation. As opposed to the "discovery" of the New World, Cavendish creates from "fancy," her imagination, a totally new reality. Echoing Edmund Spenser's claim (from the *Hymne in Honour of Love*, composed in 1596) that love stilled the primordial chaos, the Duke of Newcastle instead suggests that it is not divine love, but human intelligence that squares the circle of natural chaos to produce a livable world. "Pure wit," as it were, is the source of the celestial fire of creation that enlightens all.

To solidify her claim Cavendish links the process of world-creation through the imagination to the activity of early science to make a world through reason. While the first edition of *The Blazing World*, published in 1666, was free standing, the 1668 edition (which included both her husband's poem and her epilogue) was published jointly with Cavendish's *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy* (also originally written in 1666). The particular virtues or defects of the *Observations* as a work of natural philosophy are less relevant than two other factors: first, that Cavendish was representing a vision of experimental natural philosophy (whatever defects it might contain), and even more importantly, that she viewed natural philosophy not through the language of world description, as her near contemporary Francis Bacon's *Novum Organum Scientiarum* (1620) would, but rather through the language of world *creation*. If the Blazing-World is the product of her fancy, or wit, the Philosophical world of the *Observations* is the direct progeny of her reason. In both instances it is how the information is organized that matters, the material reality is manifestly secondary.

While Cavendish understands world-building as a cognitive human concept, her contribution is extremely early in the process of understanding worlds as subjective cognitive constructs. The concept of world-building enters into the modern philosophical discourse with the Cartesian *cogito* (1644), but it is not until the Immanuel Kant's 1781 *Critique of Pure Reason*

that the mutually constructive relationship of thought and perception forms into something like the concept of world creation. For Kant "thoughts without content are void; intuitions without conceptions, blind" (116). Kant's argument for the necessity of synthetic *a prioris*, systems of thought with the ability to form coherent meaning out of sensory inputs, calls into question the idea that the world is a space of objective, empirical observation. Rather, Kant suggests (in the "Preface to the Second Edition" of the *Critique of Pure Reason*) that it is "only the principles of reason which can give to concordant phenomena the validity of laws" because "these objects, as phenomena, conform to our mode of representation." For Kant objective world is unreachable and unknowable. It is accessible only through an act of cognitive mediation.

This idea is taken a step further by Franz Brentano's *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (1874). For Brentano sensory phenomena is subjected to intense scrutiny, while mental phenomena—acts of consciousness—are the sites of the production of truth. Brentano is an intellectual ancestor of Martin Heidegger[iv], who extends this line of reasoning in "The Age of World Picture" (1938). Heidegger argues that the modernity is characterized by the emergence of human beings as hermeneutic creatures, whose relationship to the world is fundamentally interpretive. In "The Origin of the Work of Art" Heidegger illustrates the concept of world formation through the image of the Greek Temple at Paestum, "it is the temple-work that first joins together and simultaneously gathers around itself the unity of those paths and relations in which birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline obtain the form of destiny for human being. …The temple first gives to things their look and to humanity their outlook on themselves" (PLT 42-3). Works of art function to clarify the perception of phenomena, historical and natural, into a discrete schematics that make it possible, as Hubert Dreyfus and Charles Spinosa argue to "open coherent, distinct contexts or worlds in

which we perceive, feel, act, and think" (265). This process, which Heidegger dubs "world disclosure" is an innate part of what it means to be Dasein since it is the context within which the question of being can be meaningfully engaged. As Stephen Mulhall argues in *Heidegger and Being and Time* "the world is not a possible object of knowledge—because it is not an object at all, not an entity or set of entities. It is that within which entities appear, a field or horizon…" (96). What emerges from this development is a vision of a world whose mediating cognition is dependent on language—the apparatus of cognition. It is this thread of discourse that Doležel picks up when, in *Heterocosmica* he describes worlds as "modal system[s] of knowledge, ignorance, and belief" (126). Language as a model for generating order becomes self-contained, and the fashioning of narrative—the fascia that binds together thought and sensory input— becomes the mechanism for the generation of meaning.

This idea of a world mediated by language takes on a new significance as language comes to be understood as something besides a system of reference and referent. The response to the analytic tradition of philosophers like Gottlob Frege, Wittgenstein, and Bertrand Russell, whose position on this question can be summarized in Wittgenstein's argument that the testing of all propositions "takes place already within a system. And this system is not a more or less arbitrary and doubtful point of departure for all our arguments: no, it belongs to the essence of what we call an argument... as the element in which arguments have their life" (107), in Saussure's relocation of language along a signifier/signified axis serves to relocate the ability to conceptualize the world into an abstracted intellectual space that is not tethered to a corresponding sensory world. Michel Foucault, in *The Order of Things*, argues that this shift in the role of language functions as an historical pivot point, the transition between the *ratio* of the Enlightenment and the epistemological relativity of modernity. Language as a model for

generating order becomes self-contained, and the fashioning of narrative—the fascia that binds together thought and sensory input—becomes the mechanism for the generation of meaning.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

I will not, in any final sense, be taking a intricately detailed position on the precise philosophical nature of what it is that makes up a world. The broad strokes defined by the tradition that I have outlined are serviceable for the purpose to hand. From that perspective a world is a unified cognitive construct, generated through the synthesizing powers of language, capable of being inhabited by consciousness. It is this relationship, between consciousness and world that these broad strokes establish become, to a certain extend irreducible.

As one defines world more and more precisely, the definition of consciousness becomes increasingly vague. The inverse is also true. As one defines consciousness more precisely, what it means to think of the "world" begins to slip away. One tends towards a kind of fixed structuralism, the other towards a kind of entrenched idealism, the mutual presence of both makes both indefinable, because it is the inability to offer cohesive definitions of each term that leaves perpetually open the fissure into the realm of external possibility, the Void space where, Tolkien says, resides the Sacred Fire that is the root of all creative enterprise. It is the mutual indefinability that drives both the exploration of the creative arts and the hard sciences, the fundamental incompleteness of everything. Thought of along the Derridian line of arche-writing, the original linguistic intervention that first attempts to translate subjectivity into something that can be communicated, the divide between world and consciousness emerges out of this initial process of language that cleaves what I will call the "retro-linguistic self" which had the Heideggerian, Nietzschian, Dilthey-an quality of the coherent consciousness-world relationship[v].

One could analogize this initial breach in post-lapsarian terms, or in the initial transformation from energy to matter of the Big Bang. In some sense all world creation is acting out the continuing expansion of the potential that exists in the incomplete expressive power of language. Worlds are, to the field of possibilities generated by that incompleteness, what diamonds were to the speakers of Sanskrit, or amber to the Ancient Greeks, the accretion, respectively, of thunder and sunlight. Worlds are what happen when the creative energy of the field of possibilities[vi] condenses, accretes, solidifies, consolidates, or actualizes.

Alternative fictional worlds are not merely texts, as Rosemary Jackson argues in *Fantasy: the Literature of Subversion* (1981), that are "produced within, and determined by, [their] social context" (3). They are also, what Michael Saler calls, in *As If* (2012), *virtual realities*. For Saler, virtual realities are places which have the capacity to be inhabited by the consciousness of the reader, and which the reader is capable of residing in, through the power of *ironic imagination* even when not directly engaged with the text itself. While these realities are generated at specific moments in history—with the full range of social contexts that such generation entails—they take on a power of their own, external to the context of their creation: the power to reshape consciousness by altering our understanding of world, and the reshape the world by altering our consciousness. It is this power that the dissertation will explore, first by describing the conditions of the nineteenth-century that allowed, for the first time, for alternative fictional worlds to be created, and then by arguing, in the third chapter that the process of moving between worlds (which is described in the second chapter) results in the formation of what I am calling "apocalyptic consciousness," the potential to radically reform the consciousness through the perpetual creation and destruction of worlds.

Conditions for World-Building

Returning, briefly, to Cavendish and *The Blazing-World*, I must note that while the text is the earliest text to explicitly describe world-building in the philosophical terms that would become central to the understanding of the question over the next three hundred years, the text itself does not succeed in accomplishing what it set out to do: namely, creating a cognitively inhabitable narrative world. *The Blazing-World* bears far more resemblance to the previously established tradition of allegorical geographies/societies than it does to the immersive worlds whose development would follow the rise of fictionality. The denizens of the Blazing-World seem to exist for the sole function of expounding on Cavendish's political and philosophical ideas. In this, they are more closely related to the characters of the utopian fiction of Thomas More. This similarity is understandable when one considers that while Cavendish views herself as engaged in a new artistic practice (there is no indication that More believed himself to be involved in world creation, and in fact situates his isle of Utopia in the still not totally explored confines of the New World), but that the range of possibilities available to that practice are, at the moment of her writing, not yet fully developed.

The first chapter of this dissertation will argue that alternative world-building did not become possible until the middle of the nineteenth century. This argument cuts against the grain of the common approach to the study of alternative fictional worlds. Pavel, Doležel, and Wolf, all, with only minor exceptions, make the assumption that because world-building is an ancient practice of human culture that alternative world-building must be similarly ancient. This is not so. It takes only the most cursory examination of the earliest world-building texts fall into the category of what Doležel calls "world-imaging texts" rather than "world-constructing texts" (24). These world-imaging texts take, as a given, the singularity of the phenomenological world, and

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instead of re-creating that world in their own, instead offering etiological explanations for why the one world is the way that it is. Even if we were to consider those texts that offer depictions of the world after death (the Hellenic epics, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Dante's *Comedia*, etc.) we would see that these under or over worlds were merely facets of a larger, unified reality. The same is true of the Fae realms of the medieval romances. Faerie is not an alternative world. Rather, it is an aspect of the spiritual realm, and is often positioned in a kind of mystic geography, between Heaven and Hell, and serves an analogic or metaphorical function in the tales where it appears. Similarly, the worlds of Spenser, More, and the other allegorists are not alternative worlds. They are intellectual constructs designed to make an argument, or else are inclusions in the yet unexplored geography of the world, or, in some cases, both. All of these take, as an underlying principle, that there is a single unified world which art, in this case literary art, is attempting to illuminate.

It is precisely this unity that prevents the development of alternative worlds. If we take Dante's geographies of Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven literally (rather than as complex metaphors for the spiritual and political issues of his day), they demonstrate the problem neatly. Get lost in the right wood, find the right cave, have the appropriate mandate and Dante is able to walk through all of these fantastic landscapes. Gain the ability to go forwards and backwards in time and one may find themselves in the world of Wells' Time Traveler. The spaces they describe are an integral part of our reality. To paraphrase C.S. Lewis on the matter, no matter how far away someplace is (in space, time, or spiritual dimension) if you can walk to it, it is not in its own world. Distinct worlds are places one could never get to, no matter how far one traveled.

To begin to create alternative fictional worlds it is necessary that the stable unity of the primary world be called into question. The opinion of Silvan Schweber, in "Demons, Angels,

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and Probability" (1982), that nineteenth-century British thought viewed the world through the prism of Isaac Newton, governed by fundamental forces and inimical to chaos. This view was present not only in the pre-*Origin* thinking of Darwin but had expanded beyond the realm of natural philosophy into the sphere of history, as the discipline took on its own scientific bent both in England and on the continent. New authors who work in this area, like Anthony Camara, have generally taken the position that the general perception in the nineteenth-century was of a somewhat static material universe governed by laws, and that instances where this thinking was challenged (in Camara's case in weird fiction) cut against the prevailing grain of thought. As I will argue, however, this prevailing understanding is caught up in a kind of *ex post facto* fallacy. In the hindsight of those living in the age of quantum uncertainty, the mechanical nature of, for example, Darwin's theory of evolution seems almost timid in its reliance on a clearly articulated cause and effect. It is, therefore, somewhat natural to read Darwin's *Origin* as a fairly conservative text. By contemporary standards it is exactly that. But this ignores the historical facts of the moment of its inception the question of whether species were capable of change at all, much less speciation through evolution, was not a settled question. The revolutionary nature of Darwin's observations should not merely be measured against the superior knowledge of the stochastic features of a sub-atomic universe. They should also be measured against the prevailing religious opinion that the world of the nineteenth-century still existed as created by God approximately 6,000 years before. In a world this tightly structured there exists very little potential space in which one can begin the process of alternative world creation. Something has to give. It is my argument that throughout the nineteenth-century that give is already beginning to manifest itself. The stable unity of the world was being challenged along multiple vectors: religious, economic, scientific, historical, and aesthetic. Through the cracks developments in

these areas created in the walls of the world it was possible for the first time for the fancy of artistic minds to slip out into a space of unparalleled potential and begin the process of creating alternative worlds.

There were moments of intellectual, social, religious, and aesthetic revolution prior to the mid nineteenth century, of course. The economic reconfiguration of Europe in the aftermath of the Black Death, the Protestant reformation, the "discovery" of the Americas by Europeans, are just a small number of a much larger pool of such revolutions in specific areas that occurred prior to the timeline that I am specifying. There are, I believe, three reasons why these prior historical moments did not produce the possibility for alternative fictional worlds to emerge.

First, such revolutions are mutually self-reinforcing. The potential of any one such event to result in a wholesale change in the general understanding of the stable unity of the world is limited when the energy behind such revolutions is allowed to dissipate with time. A concentration of such changes, as occurred in the mid nineteenth century results in a self-reinforcing system of change. As Paul Fayter writes, in "Strange New Worlds of Space and Time: Late Victorian Science and Science Fiction," "professional scientists not only helped to shape science fiction, in many cases their work was shaped by it" (Lightman 257). We see similar intersections of these revolutions in other areas. One example is the British historian Thomas Henry Buckle, who, in his *History of Civilization in England* (1857), adopted the evidence-based approach of Leopold von Ranke, and went even further than von Ranke in declaring that the practice of history could be made into a science. As Bernard Lightman writes, this broader set of interactions was likely to have been perceived "as part of a single, seamless web" (9). All of this, according to neo-Marxist historian Robert Young, constitutes "[a fight]

over the best ways of rationalizing the same set of assumptions about the existing order…and the fundamental assumption of the uniformity of nature" (qtd. in Lightman 191).

Second, the mid nineteenth-century was the first period when the mechanisms of distribution reached sufficient advancement to allow for the development of a geographically diffuse popular culture. As Adrian Desmond points out in *The Politics of Evolution* (1989) the spread of Darwin's ideas was significant enough that it allowed for "lower-class evolutionists," who "existed outside, and in opposition to, the elite establishment" (Lightman 7). This was made possible, according to Gillian Beer, because "during the Victorian period there existed a shared discourse, which allowed ideas, metaphors, myths, and narrative patterns" (Lightman 9) that enabled the spread. Even if the ideas of previous revolutions were as powerful as the revolutions of the nineteenth-century, the absence of broad networks of production and exchange prevented them from spreading. The expansion of railroads, steam-powered transportation, the rotary printing press, and countless other features radically expanded the scope of any idea. It is not just the Darwin was the first natural philosopher to strike upon the importance of natural selection, it was that Darwin struck upon his idea when it was possible for that idea to become culturally diffuse.

Finally, the development of alternative fictional worlds requires a concept of fiction and fictionality that simply did not exist prior to the late-eighteenth century. The present moment is often subject to a pervasive and anachronistic tendency to read its own ideas into the past. The more taken for granted an idea is, the more insidious the tendency, and few ideas are as taken for granted as the existence of fiction as an ontological concept. But the concept of fiction required invention, as Catherine Gallagher writes in "The Rise of Fictionality," and it is the creation of

fiction as an ontological category that provides authors the ability, for the first time, to divorce their creation from the primary world and manifest them in the realm of speculation.

Moving Between Worlds

The second chapter of the dissertation deals with the question of movement between worlds. How is consciousness able to travel between one world and another? In the body of literature that springs from the initial work of Pavel and Doležel, this question is entirely unexplored. In his works on modal semantics, Kripke describes the relationship between worlds as a kind of similarity score. The more common elements that worlds share the easier it is to move back and forth between them. Kripke calls this similarity score an "R-value." But Kripke is dealing with "possible worlds," a line of philosophical inquiry into counterfactuals, and the question of alternative fictional worlds relies on a different premise. For Kripke, the question is about alternative possible versions of the same world, and how accessible they are to the imagination. But alternative fictional worlds will, but their nature have a lower R-value than the kind of worlds Kripke is describing.

Nevertheless, Kripke's model can shine some light onto the question of trans-world peregrination between the primary world and alternative fictional worlds. Because these alternative fictional worlds are texts it stands to reason that they are accessed like all texts, through the process of the interpretation of symbols. The second chapter of my dissertation reads the history of hermeneutics from Schleiermacher to Ricoeur as a development in understanding how worlds are formed and how passage between them is achieved. Ultimately, I will argue that it is through "symbolic entanglement," a coinage based on the language of quantum mechanics,

that the consciousness of the reader is able to leave the primary world and enter the world of the text. Once the mechanism is established, I will trace how various levels of symbol deployed by C.S. Lewis in *The Chronicles of Narnia* facilitate movement between the primary world and Narnia.

Apocalypse

In the third chapter, I return to the idea that lies at the root of Ketterer's work. As I previously said, Ketterer's idea is simultaneously of tremendous value for establishing the stakes of alternative world-building, however, in its original formulation it was woefully misapplied. Rather than functioning as an alternative model to Suvin's notion of cognitive estrangement for understanding the revolutionary potential of science fiction, it is better utilized as a companion piece, providing the retort to Suvin's claim that fantasy literature is politically retrograde and of minimal revolutionary value. It is in application to fantasy literature, rather than science fiction, that Ketterer's ideas work best.

Ketterer's revolutionary idea was to take the general thesis of Frank Kermode that in a "teleological sense all literature is apocalyptic" (12) and particularize it to certain modes of literary expression. For Ketterer it is not all literature that is apocalyptic, such a category is too broad to have any meaning at all (11). Rather, literature which places into dialectic the "real" world and the world of the text force a kind of cognitive destruction of the primary world, creating, as it were, an apocalypse in miniature.

Doing so bridges the gap between the two prominent bodies of literature that deal with the question of apocalypse. On the one hand you can find the work of hundreds of authors of

articles in all manner of literary fields who are content to point out the occurrence of apocalyptic themes in prose, poetry, visual art, etc. On the other you have the work of thinkers like Thomas Altizer, the radical theologian, who argued that apocalypse represents a clearing of the board, a reconfiguration of the foundations of power that allow for the possibility of radical change. The first never bothers to explain how these representations accomplish anything besides a reference, and the later makes no argument for how the clearing of the board is to be practically accomplished. Ketterer takes the first steps towards a solution by arguing that engaging with certain kinds of texts functionally induces a personal apocalypse.

I had previously mentioned that Ketterer's mistake is to focus primarily on the content of the texts that he addresses (Ketterer 17-18). For Ketterer it is through representations of the future (ex. *The Time Machine*), the unsettling influence of new technology (the robot stories of Asimov or Dick), or change in the status of the human through contact with an absolute unknown (ex. Lem's *Solaris*) that produces the apocalyptic effect. Here Ketterer and I disagree. While speculative, none of these examples take place in another world at all. Wells' Time Traveler moves from our own world's present (from Wells' perspective, at least) into its future; robots are real, and becoming more like the robots of golden age science fiction every year; and our growing comprehension of the vastness of space should cause all but the most naïve of us to understand that in such a universe there will be that which stands in such radical opposition to our nature as to be incomprehensible. Rather than "impinging" on the real world, the content of the fiction that Ketterer examines seems more and more familiar with each passing year. Rather, it is on the margins, in the area of the mystical, the magical, the occult, the weird, the fantastic that genuine impingement takes place. But these worlds exist in "incredible" relationship to the

real world (13), and it is by crossing the incredulous gap between these worlds and the real world

that a new consciousness is formed.

ⁱ As will become clear in the third chapter, I disagree slightly with Ketterer on the mechanism by which the change
brought about by interaction with alternative worlds is induced.

ii Gödel's second incompleteness theorem was first published in his paper "On Formally Undecidable Propositions of *Principia Mathmatica* and Related Systems" (1931), which appeared in *Monatshefte für Mathmatik*.

iii Prince Hamlet's claim, though it does suggest that the contours of the world are subject to the mediation of perspective and consciousness, does not actually make a claim for the creation of some new space. He says that he *could*, not that he *had*. Likewise, Thomas More's isle of Utopia, and Francis Bacon's New Atlantis, are not new worlds, in and of themselves, but are inclusions in the pre-existing speculative space of the "New World."

ivHusserl was one of Brentano's students.

v One can begin to imagine what this consciousness-world coherence may have been like when one considers the question: what are "worlds" and what is "consciousness"? Worlds are simply that which can be inhabited by consciousness. Consciousness is, simply, presence in a/the/several world(s).

vi I've borrowed, at least in my internal thoughts on the matter, the phrase from Collodi's *Pinocchio* "*campo del miracoli*"—field of miracles

CHAPTER ONE: The Emergence of Alternative Fictional Worlds

That which is now a horse, even with a thought

the rack dislimns, and makes it indistinct.

As water is in water.

–Antony and Cleopatra, Act 4 scene 14

It is a wonderful place – vast, strange, new and impossible to describe. Its grandeur does not

consist in one thing, but in the unique assemblage of all things.

–Charlotte Bronte's account of the Great Exhibition of 1851

Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century there was a rapid increase in the

number of alternative fictional worlds created by authors, and simultaneously a rapid increase in

the complexity and scope of those worlds. While the question of alternative fictional worlds has

garnered a measure of critical attention (most notably in the work of narratologists, like Thomas

Pavel and Lubimir Dolezel, or historians of ideas, like Michael Saler), there has been no

significant writing on the conditions which made the creation of alternative fictional worlds

possible. This is, I believe, in part because by the time scholarly attention turned to the question

those scholars whose interest lay in alternative fictional worlds had accepted their existence as a

fiat accompli. Pavel and Dolezel, for instance, never question the necessary conditions for the

creation of the worlds whose literary structure they are examining. Such worlds had already

existed for more than a century and are simply taken as a given. For those few scholars, most

notably Michael Saler, whose book *As If: Modern Enchantment and the Literary PreHistory of Virtual Reality* is the most important book on the subject yet written, the question of why the second half of the nineteenth century sees the birth of a new mode of popular literary activity, namely imaginary world building, and why the early twentieth century sees such a massive acceleration in the production of new works based in imaginary worlds defies easy answer.

Saler suggests that "by the late nineteenth century individuals found greater freedom to indulge their imaginations" (75), that prior to the mid-late nineteenth century imagination was looked on as a precarious pastime at best, and as a vice at worst. Like the poet Robert Southey suggests to a young Charlotte Brontë in a letter responding to a packet of her poems that she had sent to him for consideration, "the day dreams in which you habitually indulge are likely to induce a distempered state of mind; and, in proportion as all the ordinary uses of the world seem to you flat and unprofitable, you will be unfitted for them" (qtd. in Saler 50). By the end of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century the imagination had been liberated and was free to create and inhabit imaginary worlds. This answer is, for the most part, demonstrable. Saler is adept at finding examples in the period leading up to the mid-nineteenth century of the imagination being spoken of as a vehicle of delusion, distracting otherwise able individuals from materially grounded and profitable enterprise. As the world moves towards the period of high modernity the elimination from our understanding of the world of myth and magic, replaced by science and empirical rationality, results in a stripping away of previously accepted numinous aspects of the human experience producing what Saler calls a kind of "disenchantment." But, Saler maintains, enchantment is a human psychological need and so, at a certain point, the process reverses and a surge in what Saler terms the "ironic imagination" begins to re-infuse enchantment into Western life.

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However, this answer is too neat in its reading of the imaginative state of nineteenth century modernity to serve as an answer to the fundamental question; since, as Karl Bell points out in *The Magical Imagination: Magic and Modernity in Urban England, 1780-1914* (2012), nineteenth-century England was run through with a "reinforcing warp and weft" of magical imagination (1). Bell is careful to differentiate his "magical imagination" from the vision of the ironic imagination proposed by Saler. For Bell, the magical imagination need not have with it the explicit self-consciousness that defines Saler's system. Bell also differentiates his magical imagination from the simultaneous rise in the interest in "technically produced magic of conjuring shows and special effects" (1) outlined by Simon During in *Modern Enchantments* (2002), though a fascination with the power to produce illusion is one small part of the *bricolage* of the magical imagination that he outlines. If Bell's thesis is correct, however, that there was "the potential plurality of magical and rational mentalities…in which people were capable of maintaining seemingly contradictory but concurrent modes of thought" (6), then one cannot accept Saler's contention that the rise of alternative fictional worlds was driven predominantly by a dearth of enchantment. But if the rise of alternative fictional worlds is not a response to the disenchantments of modernity, how can we explain why it was that these worlds first begin to appear in a specific moment in time?

A fuller answer to the question of why literary worlds begin to appear and why they enjoyed, and continue to enjoy, such immense prosperity, requires a broader scope. This chapter will argue that in mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain was undergoing seismic change in the economic, scientific, historiographic, and aesthetic sectors[vii]. Rather than being stolid, unimaginative, and grounded in a sturdy materialism (as Saler, and other figures like Anthony Camara, maintain), Britain during this period was rife with uncertainty, alteration, and

potential. It is this precisely this uncertainty that, in the second half of the nineteenth century, made possible the successful creation of alternative fictional worlds—by suggesting that previously held assumptions about the fixed nature of material life and reality were less stable than originally conceived. As Victor and Edith Turner argue "…throughout actual history, when sharp divisions begin to appear between the root paradigms which have guided social action over long tracts of time…we tend to find the prolific generation of new experimental models among which reality-testing will result…to make intelligible, and give form to, the new contents of social relations. (3)." In this case, the development in question is fictional world building. Furthermore, I will argue that once such worlds were made possible it was market energy, a driving desire to monetize the new worlds that were formed in the gaps, rather than a deep seeded psychological bereavement for enchantment, that served as the primary[viii]factor motivating the rapid expansion of world building as a literary mode.

Shifting Economies: Banking, Farming, Industry, and Intranational Trade

The search for historical cause and effect can produce a kind of infinite repetition of inquiry, as each potential antecedent is itself the consequence of chains of events stretching back so far that the matter at hand is altogether lost. Accounting for the radically change to the economic life of the nineteenth century is no exception. Finding the appropriate place to begin the accounting is difficult. One cannot easily cite, for instance, the invention of the mechanized loom or the overhead water mill as these events themselves are shaped by the larger forces of industrialization and imperial expansion (and, more to the point, they are shaped in such a way that to ignore their antecedents leaves crucial information out of the picture). It is necessary to

think of the processes of industrialization as beginning at least as far back as the founding of the

Bank of England in 1694. Without this larger view of the process, and the changes that it

inaugurated for British life, the advent of rotary printing might have served as a mere curiosity.

Following the Battle of Beachy Head in 1690, the government of William III (who had

come to power two years before during the Revolution of 1688) decided that a massive

investment in British naval power was going to be necessary in order to compete with France.

The government, however, was cash poor and unable to secure the credit necessary. As Richard

Price points out in his *British Society 1680-1880: Dynamism, Containment, and Change*, that

potential remedies to the cash shortage were suggested including: "proposals for various

lotteries," and, from parliamentary Tories "a Land Bank which would use the security of land to

raise money" (67). But, of course, no lottery would be generate sufficient revenue to fund

military expansion, and the notion of a Land Bank ran immediately into a problem of liquidity.

The result, settled upon after long debate and a period of significant financial unrest, was the

passage of the Tonnage Act of 1694, which authorized the formulation of a joint-stock

corporation with the ability to lend the government the necessary 1.2 million pounds at an

interest rate of 8%, the founding of the Bank of England. The Tonnage Act allowed the bank to

print banknotes, attract outside investors, and created a series of taxes on beer, ale, and vinegar

whose proceeds went towards paying interest on the national debt. The reliability of the bank,

secured after the crisis of the South Sea Bubble—the first recorded instance of the term "bubble"

to describe financial or trading value in dangerous excess of intrinsic value—in the early part of

the eighteenth century and the dissolution of the South Sea Company (Price 67), the

development of the legal theory of limited liability incorporation, and concentrations of capital

brought about by the emergence of a functioning stock market that traded in Colonial products

throughout the 1690s and into the eighteenth century created a stable base of liquid capital large enough to sustain the military and imperial ambitions of England (Price 68), while also providing a source of relatively low interest credit necessary for private citizens and newly developed limited liability corporations to cover the significant costs of overhead associated with industrialization.

At the same time, new agricultural practices, stemming from enclosure and the private ownership of land, were making it possible to feed far more people with far less labor. Soil improvement practices stemming from the utilization of clover increased the fixed nitrogen supply of the soil (and served as fodder for animals that produced both fertilizing manure and meat), and the 1701 invention of the seed drill—a device designed to ensure an even distribution and consistent depth of seeding—as well as continual advances in plow technology all served to radically increase the available food supply, enabling a substantially larger population to be provided for out of the same acreage, though, as Price points out "agriculture yielded up the necessary labor supply for manufacturing reluctantly, partially and in a protracted manner. It took over a century for manufacturing employment to outweigh agricultural occupations in the labor market" (24). The reason for this delay is, in large part, a failure to conceptualize economic opportunity as something apart from the value of land ownership, "as late as the 1870s basic textbooks of political economy were still operating on the assumption that available land was the ultimate arbiter of growth" even as the agriculture ceased to be the largest single sector of employment by 1851 (ibid), and in part is driven by a desire for stasis. Perhaps the most famous example of this desire for working conditions to remain as they were prior to industrial manufacture was the movement of Luddism, which rose in response to new innovations in weaving technology in the first part of the nineteenth century; weavers furious at the loss of their

employment as a result of technological innovation destroyed workshops and vandalized finished textile product (Sale 188)[ix]. But if the understanding of the power of newly industrialized capital was not yet fully understood, its effects were already being felt. The result of these agricultural advances can be seen in the increasing population of London. Between 1600 and 1881 the population of London grew from around 200,000 to 4.5 million, an increase of twenty-two times.

Massive population increase was possible not only because of the agricultural revolution, but because of its significant network of roadways which allowed for the easy transport of those agricultural goods to market. England, as Jerrold Seigel points out in *Modernity and Bourgeois Life*, was unique among western nations at the time because its small size, network of navigable waterways, developed road system, and high percentage of the total population living in London. Seigel writes that "by 1681 London had road links to eighty-eight other towns, a number that rose to 180 by 1705, even before the great age of turnpike building" (57). Seigel goes on to argue that "England's political and geographic integration, reinforced by the central role London played in it, gave a compactness and concentration to its national life matched nowhere else" (57). Combined with the flow of materials and goods into and out of London, and other major ports, and part of Britain's imperial interests, this blend of domestic commerce and methods of transportation created vast network of exchange across the face of England. By the middle of the eighteenth century "statistics drawn from the records of the excise tax suggest that consumption was growing twice as fast as population," a strong economic indicator of an integrated national market (63), and by the beginning of the nineteenth century goods and materials flowed in and out of London not just from the English countryside, but from all over the world. This emerging market can be tracked by looking at production indicators. While textile manufacture is the economic engine driving London during the period, the more reliable way to track the rate of

national growth and integration is by looking at the rates of iron and horsepower production. According to Seigel "between 1800 and 1852 annual pig iron output in Britain increased nearly tenfold, to 2.7 million tons; in the same period the capacity of steam engines went from around 10,000 horsepower to well over a million, three quarters of it in locomotives on the railways whose future impact was already evident" (67). These railroads would serve as the connective tissue that would allow for goods manufactured in London, or imported from the imperial periphery, to be sold throughout the national market, replacing water borne travel as the most effective way to transport finished goods and raw materials between market points.

They also formed the basis of what would become commuter culture, as passenger trains allowed manufacturing workers who worked in London to live outside of the city. In 1863, the Metropolitan Railway offered commuter service from the communities of Middlesex, and continued expanding its range outward until it reached Buckinghamshire (Edwards and Pigram 32)[x].

These developments shed additional light on the significance of the 1843 invention, by Richard Hoe, of the rotary press, which dramatically reduced the cost of production of texts (Meggs 147). The decrease in the cost of production, coupled with the need for an educated workforce in an era of increased industrialization (Aldiss 12), and the increase in leisure time (including the development of commuter culture) that accompanies the rise of an industrial middle class dramatically increased the market for literature (Seigel 43-44). The existing networks of exchange, designed to accommodate the diffusion of commercial goods, transported literature printed in London all across the country. In *The English Common Reader* (1957), the first major history produced on the subject of readership in nineteenth century Britain, Richard D. Altick tracks the growth of organizations and structures designed during the period to

facilitate reading including the advent of public lending libraries, the rapidly expanding book trade, and increase in the number of newspapers and periodicals, universal education, and, importantly, the captive free time generated by the advent of commuter rail. For the first time, these innovations in the number and sophistication of readers, the number of texts produced, and the infrastructure necessary to distribute printed materials quickly and efficiently throughout the nation reached a critical mass necessary to generate, in accordance with Russell Nye's claim in *The Unembarrassed Muse*, a nationally diffuse popular culture (47).

These changes came with a new sense of anxiety, and in some cases the distress of these changes was palpable. Perhaps nowhere more manifest than in an "event"[xi] described in a Norwich street ballad called "The Humbugg of the World at an End." Karl Bell summarizes the event thusly:

> Early in 1844 two men, recently returned from the United States, attracted the
> attention of the old women of western Norfolk with their prophecy of a
> forthcoming apocalypse. This, they proclaimed, was due to the people's
> sinfulness, their Sabbath breaking and alcoholism. Those who flocked to hear
> them became afraid. The prophets were soon arrested and taken to Walsingham
> bridewell. However, the prediction spread, causing farmers to forsake their
> ploughing. After news of the prophecy reached Norwich the devil's supposed
> appearance on the city's castle apparently confirmed the prophets' prediction.
> Sermons and ballads attest that a sense of fatalism overwhelmed the people of
> Norfolk in March 1844 as they prepared for the apocalypse. The ballad, 'The
> Humbugg of the World at an End', indicates some people were so struck by a
> sense of resignation they abandoned work and repairs to clothes or shoes. A

contemporary sermon noted how a poor woman excused herself from sending her

child to the National School, 'because in the case of the world's dissolution this

spring, she would have spent her money to no purpose; and "of what use would

the child's *larning* be to her then?" ("Humbugg" 454)

While the ballad is a source of dubious historical value, Bell notes that there is in 1844 a notable

increase in parish sermons dedicated to the subject of the end of days. He goes on to trace the

origin of the prophecy that reportedly caused so much consternation to a pair of wandering

American Millerites (individuals inspired by the numerological writings of the American

William Miller). Bell goes on to argue that the regional shift from agricultural to urban was the

source of this millenarian anxiety.

Nor were these anxieties and the awareness of change lost on the newly emerging popular

culture. People were well aware of the changes in traditional life that the new technologies and

social organizations had induced. In 1890, when William Morris composed his socialist utopian

account of the distant future *News from Nowhere*, in which the narrator falls asleep following a

socialist meeting and wakes up in the distant future, the first thing he notices is that the changes

wrought by industrialization have been erased:

I was going to say, "But is this the Thames?" but held my peace in my wonder,

and turned my bewildered eyes eastward to look at the bridge again, and thence to

the shores of the London river; and surely there was enough to astonish me. For

though there was a bridge across the stream and houses on its banks, how all was

changed from last night! The soap-works with their smoke-vomiting chimneys

were gone; the engineer's works gone; the lead-works gone; and no sound of

rivetting and hammering came down the west wind from Thorneycroft's. Then

the bridge! I had perhaps dreamed of such a bridge, but never seen such an one

out of an illuminated manuscript; for not even the Ponte Vecchio at Florence

came anywhere near it. It was of stone arches, splendidly solid, and as graceful as

they were strong; high enough also to let ordinary river traffic through easily.

Over the parapet showed quaint and fanciful little buildings, which I supposed to

be booths or shops, beset with painted and gilded vanes and spirelets. The stone

was a little weathered, but showed no marks of the grimy sootiness which I was

used to on every London building more than a year old. In short, to me a wonder

of a bridge. (Morris 8)

For Morris industrialization is conceived not in economic terms but aesthetic terms. It is

sooty, smoke-vomiting, and loud (a far cry from the "quaint and fanciful" world of un-alienated

labor). This attempt to undo, in literary form, the economic and technical progress of

industrialization is a frequently recurring trope in what the critic Michael Moorcock would call

the conservative arm of fantasy literature (of which Morris and J.R.R. Tolkien are principle

examples). Morris' vision of the future as comprised of romanticized medieval hamlets provided

something of model for Tolkien in his own production of the Shire (a place where labor is

fruitful and fulfilling). The word "work" (or one of its forms) appears in Morris' text 328 times,

and in nearly all of those instances it is connected to some aspect of personal growth or

expression. Work, for Morris, in the socialist utopia of the dreamworld is juxtaposed with his

vision of life under industrialization:

It is clear from all that we hear and read, that in the last age of civilisation men

had got into a vicious circle in the matter of production of wares. They had

reached a wonderful facility of production, and in order to make the most of that

facility they had gradually created (or allowed to grow, rather) a most elaborate

system of buying and selling, which has been called the World-Market; and that

World-Market, once set a-going, forced them to go on making more and more of

these wares, whether they needed them or not. So that while (of course) they

could not free themselves from the toil of making real necessaries, they created in

a never-ending series sham or artificial necessaries, which became, under the iron

rule of the aforesaid World-Market, of equal importance to them with the real

necessaries which supported life. By all this they burdened themselves with a

prodigious mass of work merely for the sake of keeping their wretched system

going. (Morris 24)

There is no greater challenge to the romanticized medievalism of his future (itself Morris'

interpretation of a bygone time) than the formation of the "World-Market." There are ways to

track the degree to which the British economy was increasingly dependent on access to foreign

(mostly colonial) markets, but the most straightforward is simply to examine the expansion of

raw tonnage that passed through the London docks between 1802, when the West India

Company opened the first private shipping docks, and 1899. During this period the total tonnage

processed through the docks increased from approximately 680,000 tons to 9,245,000 tons by

1899 (White 183). In the same way that Luddism proved ultimately incapable of stemming the

tide of mechanization, no amount of socialist protectionism, of the kind envisioned by Morris,

would be able to prevent the commercial transformation of British society, nor the fundamental

alterations to the British way of life that were part and parcel of such economic change. What

Morris encapsulates here a sense of dissatisfaction with the way that previously static ways of

life, over the course of the two centuries since the formation of the Bank of England, have become essentially unrecognizable. That the text found an audience (first in the pages of *Commonweal*, a socialist newspaper previously edited by Morris, and then in multiple printed editions) indicates that there was a general awareness of, and discontent in, the changes wrought by industrialization. It is this awareness and discontent that formed the basis of what would become the market for literature of alternative worlds.

Scientific Revolution

In *Dark Matter: British Weird Fiction and the Substance of Horror, 1880-1927*, Anthony Christopher Camara suggests that the notion of an "alleged solidity and consistency of matter" (5) was the general orthodoxy of nineteenth century thought. What Bernard Lightman called "a pre-Darwinian arena of divine design" (199). However, Camara's understanding of the nature of matter as "reassuring [in its] weight, solidity, and rigidity" (7) is bound up in an anachronistic tendency to view the scientific advances of the nineteenth century through the lens of the stability that their empirical and evidence-based approach to natural science enjoys today. Rather than viewing the advances of Charles Darwin, for example, as an example of "reductionist[xii] scientific accounts of biological life, nature, and the cosmos that were circulating in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century" (10), it is far more instructive to view Darwin and other nineteenth century naturalists against the backdrop of the religious orthodoxy that formed the basis of British culture. Instead of focusing on Darwin's theory of evolution via natural section as an example of the mechanistic and dependable structure of the universe, one should view him as breaking with the religious, and commonly held, notion that species are immutably fixed. The

emphasis should not be on the stability of the mechanism by which species change, rather it should be on the fact that they change at all—and that this change does not require the intervention of a creator. It is only from this perspective that the magnitude of the change can be properly understood. As Barbara Gates writes, in "Ordering Nature: Revisioning Victorian Science Culture," "changes in perceptions of the natural order shook Victorian culture to its core. Nature…now seemed mutable in ways unforeseen" (179).

To understand how the Darwinian revolution played a role in creating the circumstances necessary for the creation of alternative fictional worlds, it is necessary to view his work not as a one-off event, but as the culmination of a developing history of evolutionary thought. Charles Darwin was not the first naturalist to suggest the possibility of evolution, and his most significant contribution, the concept of evolution via natural selection, would not be possible without a series of developments dating from the eighteenth century that began to break down the prevailing orthodoxy that species were immutably fixed.

This process begins more than a century before the *Origin*. Benoît de Maillet published his *Telliamed* in 1748, in which he proposed that the Earth was far older than James Ussher, the Irish prelate whose *Annalium pars postierior* of 1654 calculated the creation of the Earth from dates derived in the Old Testament as occurring in 4004 b.c.e. Maillet proposed an age of the Earth of about two billion years, and suggested that in this vastly expanded frame of time it would be possible for life to develop slowly, over the course of countless iterations. While it would take too long to provide a comprehensive literature review for the development of theories of evolution in the hundred and eleven years between Maillet and Darwin, I will touch briefly[xiii] on a few highlights that demonstrate the extent to which this idea moved along its network.

In 1793, a German naturalist named Carl Friedrich Kielmeyer published *On the Relationships of the Organic Forces* in which he suggested that in addition to being able to explain the presence of acquired traits in individual organisms, evolution was also responsible for the generation of species. In 1817, Georges Cuvier, docent at France's National Museum of Natural History, published *The Animal Kingdom*, in which he argued that catastrophic changes to environment could explain the extinction of species over time. Between 1802 and 1822, Jean-Baptiste Lamarck published three texts in which he expounded upon his view of evolution through acquired characteristics (though, vitally, maintained that this process was in line with the concept of deism), and it was Darwin's own grandfather Erasmus Darwin in *The Temple of Nature* and *Zoonomia* who brought the idea of evolution into the consciousness of the literary and scientific community in England. None of these texts achieved the level of cultural significance of the *Origin,* however, because they lacked the range of distribution made possible by advances in printing technology. The *Origin*, published after the invention of the rotary press, benefited from the new technology and became the seminal text for the advancement of evolutionary ideas, the first ever piece of what today might be called popular science.

Darwin's contribution to this growing network of evolutionary was the evidenced injection into the discourse, in the fourth chapter of the *Origin*, of the idea that one of the mechanisms of evolution could be natural selection. While this idea has become commonly accepted as the mechanism of evolution today, it was not so readily accepted in its own time because of its removal of the necessity of divine intervention. While Lamarck argued that his vision of evolution was driven by the action of a deity and grounded that argument (if somewhat speciously) in the claim that characteristics acquired by an organism in a particular environment were only acquired because God, or a god, put them there, Darwin maintained that it was

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conscious or unconscious self-selection that fueled the process of evolution. No god was

required. To accept Darwin meant to take a step outside of one established world (theological)

and into a distinctly different world (scientific). The degree to which the question pushes one

from one world into another can be seen from debate between Thomas Huxley and the Bishop of

Oxford on June 30, 1860 on the subject of Darwinian evolution (Irvine 5). The underlying

question at play in the debate was of the nature of the world that human beings inhabit. Is it

divinely ordered, or not? Taking to mind Kripke's theory of alternative worlds, we can see that

this debate is, in fact a question of the primacy of two distinct worlds—that those who attended

the debate viewed the outcome to be a draw (7), seems to indicate that both worlds existed, in

some measure, at precisely the same time, and in the same locale. Which world one occupied,

was a cognitive question, rather than a referential question—as each side made reference to a

particular model of determining truth. The process of any individual considering the question and

changing their mind, demonstrates a kind of stepping out of one world (say one constructed by a

god) into another world governed by randomness.

The lengths that many Victorian popularizers of science to cast the developments of

Darwinian evolution into a new teleological framework can illustrate the degree to which these

same advancements were destabilizing. Figures as diverse in their methods as Margaret Gatty,

Eliza Brightwen, and Richard Anthony Proctor all endeavored to place science within a distinctly

teleological frame. Proctor, Lightman notes "saw himself as leading his readers to God through

the lessons of astronomy" (200). Ultimately, however, what emerges from the scientific

revolutions of the mid-nineteenth century is what the American Dr. Draper, in his opening

remarks before the debate between Huxley and the Bishop called "a fortuitous concourse of

atoms" (Irvine 5).

The developments of Darwin, and the debate between the scientific and religious views of speciation, manifest themselves in the popular literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. Perhaps the best examples of this counterpoint play out in H.G. Wells's *Time Machine* (1895), and Tolkien's *Two Towers* (1954). Wells adopts the Darwinian position. When his Time Traveler reaches the future and finds that the human species as he understands it has vanished, replaced by two sub-species the Eloi and the Morlocks. As a man of science the Time Traveler forms a hypothesis:

> I felt pretty sure now that my second hypothesis was all wrong. The Upperworld
> people might once have been the favoured aristocracy, and the Morlocks their
> mechanical servants: but that had long since passed away. The two species that
> had resulted from the evolution of man were sliding down towards, or had already
> arrived at, an altogether new relationship. The Eloi, like the Carlovignan kings,
> had decayed to a mere beautiful futility. They still possessed the earth on
> sufferance: since the Morlocks, subterranean for innumerable generations, had
> come at last to find the daylit surface intolerable. (51)

Nor is the deviation between Eloi and Morlocks the extent of the operation of evolution in *The Time Machine*. As the Time Traveler ventures further and further into the future, human beings as such cease to exist. In the final phase of his journey into the future the Time Traveler sees:

> …a thing like a huge white butterfly go slanting and fluttering up into the sky and,
> circling, disappear over some low hillocks beyond. The sound of its voice was so
> dismal that I shivered and seated myself more firmly upon the machine. Looking
> round me again, I saw that, quite near, what I had taken to be a reddish mass of

rock was moving slowly towards me. Then I saw the thing was really a monstrous

crab-like creature. Can you imagine a crab as large as yonder table, with its many

legs moving slowly and uncertainly, its big claws swaying, its long antennæ, like

carters' whips, waving and feeling, and its stalked eyes gleaming at you on either

side of its metallic front? Its back was corrugated and ornamented with ungainly

bosses, and a greenish incrustation blotched it here and there. I could see the

many palps of its complicated mouth flickering and feeling as it moved. (69)

The force of evolution for Wells becomes a metaphor for the effects of labor and capital, but it is a metaphor that has sufficient popular currency to serve as the foundation of a popular text.

If Wells's *Time Machine* is an indicator of how far the ideas of Darwin had integrated themselves into popular culture by the end of the nineteenth century, Tolkien's work on the subject of species indicates that there was still a degree of pushback. *The Silmarillion*, which contains Tolkien's account of the creation of his world, contains multiple moments of what theologians would term "special creation." Elves, dwarves, and men do not evolve. Each is created with a decreed nature. While human beings become Eloi and Morlocks in the writing of Wells, species remains fixed in Tolkien's writing unless an external force directly intervenes. For Tolkien, orcs are elves that have been twisted and broken by the tortures of the Dark Lord, and in *The Two Towers* the great abomination of Saruman is to breed through force an orc goblin hybrid called the Uruk-hai. This act is depicted as a monstrous de-naturing, and an all but incomprehensible crime meant to illustrate the permanence of Saruman's corruption.

If the revolutions of the late eighteen and nineteenth centuries worked to break down the prevailing orthodoxies about the immutably fixed nature of physical reality, the emergence of

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special relativity in the early twentieth century works to demonstrate the transition away from the necessary prioritization of the phenomenological world. Published in 1903, Einstein's paper on the electro-dynamics of moving bodies—which resolved the asymmetries produced by motion on Maxwell's description of the formation of electric and magnetic fields—offered new insights into the interaction of epistemologically distinct worlds by defining motion, and its physical consequences, as being by definition relative to a fixed point in space. The impact of the theory of relativity was profound, though it still took time for it to cross the necessary disciplinary boundaries to be fully incorporated into our understanding of epistemology. It successfully, however, begins the formulation of a defense of the ontology of fictional narrative worlds against Bertrand Russell's stark and platonic moralizing in the 1905 paper, *On Denoting*.

Einstein's paper corresponds, in its underlying logic, to Kripke's later claim that "we deal…with a *system of alternative sets* of tableaux; in each set, one tableau is singled out as the main tableau, while the others are *auxiliary*." The implication here is that our understanding the phenomenological world as primary is not inevitable. It is simply a matter of the phenomenological world as being the first field of reference that we experience; thereby gaining an intuitive preference. But if we consider worlds as merely propositional we begin to understand how it is possible to relocate our understanding of the "actual" world into an alternative "fictional" world. For Kripke "the set K [where the K denotes the full range of possible worlds] of the universal model structure is denumberable; and hence it contains continuously many propositions" (94). By delinking our understanding of "world" from the phenomenological, we have the opportunity to examine how narrative worlds play a role in the formulation and propagation of modes of ideology—and the ways that an alethic ontology might work to counter-act that very formulation and propagation.

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Historiographic Developments

As the economic developments discussed above were creating a break between what had long been the traditional mode of life and life under industrialization, and new developments in the natural sciences were reframing understanding of the mutability of matter, a new understanding of history and historiography was developing in Western Europe. In the same way that developments in industrialization radically altered the contours of domestic and social life, and developments in the sciences altered perceptions of the nature of the physical world, the nineteenth century saw a series of changes to the understanding of history and historiography. The consequence of these changes was shift in understanding the narratives of the past as fixed. History ceased to be understood as a record of previous event, and gradually took on a new narrative modality.

As with the other changes, this shift was a process beginning in the early nineteenth century and continuing through to present. The four major developments that began to take shape in the field through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth can be called: professionalization, scientific objectivism, hermeneutics, and, ultimately, the post-modern implication of "grand" or historical "meta"-narrative[xiv], and as a complete explanation of the relationships between these factors would require a full dissertation in its own right. I will focus on a close reading of a single primary text, Herbert Butterfield's "The Present State of Historical Scholarship: an Inaugural Lecture," delivered in 1963 to faculty and graduate students following his appointment as the Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, and published in 1965, and place that text within its appropriate context as it relates to developing theories of

history across the time period in question. I have selected Butterfield's text for this purpose for two reasons. First, his appointment as Regius Professor serves as a recognition of his role as the pre-eminent historiographer of his moment. The inaugural lectures of the Regius chair have tended to be some of the most important statements on the condition of historiography in their respective moments. Second, Butterfield uses his opportunity to turn his attention to the development of historiography across the nineteenth century, from the perspective of a historian still very much working in the direct consequences of these developments and foreseeing the advent of others. Butterfield's lecture is addressing an historical faculty on what he perceives to be the best practices of the profession. This is a practical, rather than theoretical lecture. To supplement Butterfield, where necessary, I will refer to the work of other, later, historians, but my primary interest is how these developments were perceived in a moment when they were still very much active questions.

The first professional shift that Butterfield notes is the shift towards a professionalization grounded in community standards for the practice of history. This movement towards professionalization can be traced to the publication of Leopold von Ranke's *History of the Romanic and Germanic Peoples from 1494 to 1514* (1824), and specifically in Ranke's claim in the methodological appendix to the book that historical study must be grounded in the analysis of primary sources to be valid[xv]. When, the following year, Ranke joined the faculty of the University of Berlin, his hiring was an indication of a burgeoning trend towards the formation of professionalized faculties. The pursuant evolution of historiographical thought was not instantaneous. Georg Iggers identifies 1848, and the aftermath of the Prussian constitutional crisis, as the pivotal year in the development of German faculty professionalization, and it is not until 1859 (the same year that Darwin published his *Origins*) that the first significant

professional journal, *Historische Zeitschrift*, is published (24). These innovations in historical

scholarship reach the British academy decades later, with professional faculties of history

developed at Oxford and Cambridge only during the 1870s (Burrow 457), and the establishment

of the first British historical journal the *English Historical Review* in 1886 (Iggers 24). In the

prospectus to the *Cambridge Modern History*, published in 1902, Lord Acton (the volume's

editor) "emphasized a shift *towards* objectivity and professionalism" (Burrow 457, emphasis

mine) that indicates that these standards are not yet realized. The process of professionalization

in the British academy was gradual, still largely active in the early 1960s when Butterfield was

making his remarks.

It is possible to observe the degree to which these alterations in the practice of history

were integrated into the popular literature of the late nineteenth century. Perhaps the best

example can be found in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). Between the dedication and the start of

the first chapter, Stoker includes the following note:

> How these papers have been placed in sequence will be made manifest in the
>
> reading of them. All needless matters have been eliminated, so that a history
>
> almost at variance with the possibilities of later-day belief may stand forth as
>
> simple fact. There is throughout no statement of past things wherein memory may
>
> err, for all the records chosen are exactly contemporary, given from the
>
> standpoints and within the range of knowledge of those who made them.

Two things immediately stand out. The first is that Stoker, following in the vein of Ranke, bases

his "history" on contemporary documentation with the express goal of eliminating the

intervention of memory in the construction of his account. Memory, Stoker says "may err," and,

particularly in matters of fantastic aspect, cannot be trusted to properly differentiate between fact and fiction. The second is the almost paradoxical, and simultaneous, insistence on the necessary role of direct testimony. That these matters are "within the range of knowledge of those who made them." The express goal of these twinned impulses is to provide to the fantastic material of the novel a sense of "simple fact" derived from contemporary testimony and a researched documentary (evidence-based) record[xvi].

This reliance on primary documents as a mode of gaining understanding is not merely present in *Dracula* on the meta-textual level of the introduction. The characters themselves repeatedly attempt to gain understanding of new and/or mysterious places. At the outset of the first chapter, Jonathan Harker notes that prior to his departure for Transylvania he:

> …had visited the British Museum, and made search among the books and maps in the library regarding Transylvania; it had struck me that some foreknowledge of the country could hardly fail to have some importance in dealing with a nobleman of that country. I find that the district he named is in the extreme east of the country, just on the borders of three states, Transylvania, Moldavia and Bukovina, in the midst of the Carpathian mountains; one of the wildest and least known portions of Europe. I was not able to light on any map or work giving the exact locality of the Castle Dracula, as there are no maps of this country as yet to compare with our own Ordnance Survey maps; but I found that Bistritz, the post town named by Count Dracula, is a fairly well-known place. I shall enter here some of my notes, as they may refresh my memory when I talk over my travels with Mina. (3)

What follows is a geographic and ethnographic survey of the region condensed into a single paragraph. The library of the British Museum, what became, after *The British Library Act of 1972*, The British Library, was at the time of the composition of *Dracula* (and still remains) the world's largest research library—a symbol of the organizing power of primary source documentation. Nor is Harker the only character who attempts to gain understanding through this method. Dracula himself, in the library at Castle Dracula, collected, amongst other things:

> …a vast number of English books…bound volumes of magazines and newspapers…history, geography, politics, political economy, botony, geology, law—all relating to England and English life and customs and manners. There were even such books of reference as the London Directory, the "Red" and "Blue" books, Whitaker's Almanac, the Army and Navy Lists, and—it somehow gladdened my heart to see it—the Law List. (20)

While the simultaneous move towards an objective or scientific approach to history is distinct from professionalization, with its emphasis on the development of faculties of history and journals with standards of review that formalized disciplinary practice, the two developments are often in concert. Distinguishing themselves from the literary tradition of history, historians beginning with Ranke shifted their emphasis to the description of history whose strict reliance on primary sources (in theory) minimized the role of the historian as the creator of the narrative. They borrowed the language of science, which was beginning to cross disciplinary lines within the academy not only in Britain, but on the continent and in America as well. There are a number of potential reasons for the spread of scientific discourse including, but not limited to, the rise of industrial engineering and its attendant developments in steam powered travel (both by rail and by water), the expansion of debates in naturalism related to the age of the

Earth (and the popular public debates between naturalists and religious figures on this question), increased fossil evidence for evolution and the attendant debates about evolution by acquired traits of continuous use versus evolution by natural selection (including Darwin's *Origin*), as well as advances in anatomy and chemistry that substantially improved the quality of medical care.

Whatever the cause, or causes, the language of science provided a framework for the construction of this new kind of historical narrative such that "the rhetoric for expressing this in the period was, of course, that of "science": history, properly practiced, was an objective and cumulative form of knowledge, the accumulation of results of the industry of many dedicated professionals" (Burrow 458). This shift can be seen in the way that certain kinds of texts that serve as the precursors to fantastic literature, namely folk and fairy tales, developed during the period.

The German-speaking world had the philologist Brothers Grimm collecting folktales at the beginning of the nineteenth-century. In the preface to the second edition of their tales, the Grimms include an aside that demonstrates the degree to which their operation of collecting the folktales of their native region had been influenced by their academic training. The Grimms write that "where [different versions of particular tales] complemented each other and no contradictions were there to be eliminated, we combined several tales into one. If there were discrepancies in the different versions, we selected the best and preserved the others in the notes" (Grimm).

It was not until the late nineteenth-century that Andrew Lang, the Scots writer and critic, began the project that would become his series of *"Coloured" Fairy Books*. Beginning with *The*

Blue Fairy Book in (1889), Lang collected twenty volumes of folk and fairy tales from around the world into collections. Less academically rigorous than the Grimms, Lang adopted the approach of an anthropological comparativist, practicing what Ulrika Wolf-Knuts called "a universalistic comparison." She also notes that Lang, states in "The Method of Folklore" that "comparison is *the* way of doing folklore research" (Wolf-Knuts). Lang's method is made clear in his preface to *The Orange Fairy Book* (1906) where he writes:

> The old puzzle remains a puzzle; why do the stories [vii] of the remotest people so closely resemble each other? Of course, in the immeasurable past, they have been carried about by conquering races, and learned by conquering races from vanquished peoples. Slaves carried far from home brought their stories with them into captivity. Wanderers, travellers, shipwrecked men, merchants, and wives stolen from alien tribes have diffused the stories; gipsies and Jews have peddled them about; Roman soldiers of many different races, moved here and there about the Empire, have trafficked in them. From the remotest days men have been wanderers, and wherever they went their stories accompanied them. The slave trade might take a Greek to Persia, a Persian to Greece; an Egyptian woman to Phoenicia; a Babylonian to Egypt; a Scandinavian child might be carried with the amber from the Baltic to the Adriatic; or a Sidonian to Ophir, wherever Ophir may have been; while the Portuguese may have borne their tales to South Africa, or to Asia, and thence brought back other tales to Egypt. The stories wandered wherever the Buddhist missionaries went, and the earliest French voyageurs told them to the Red Indians. These facts help to account for the sameness of the

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stories everywhere; and the uniformity of human fancy in early societies must be the cause of many other resemblances. (Lang iv)

While there is good reason to question the methodology of comparitivism, it is clear is that Lang is attempting to engage with folklore by the professional standards of his era. Lang is not attempting to study these tales as a student of literature, or even from what would, in the second half of the twentieth-century, become the Ray Browne model of pop culture studies. Rather, Lang is working along the not yet fully distinct lines of history and cultural anthropology. In either case, the formalization of academic practice throughout the nineteenth-century is begins to set into motion an alteration in the way that texts with fantastic elements are presented, an impact that will be felt even in the way such seminal fantastic texts as Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* will be prepared and presented.

Despite the directionality of these shifts, the previous literary model of history was not immediately extinguished. Even during the push for scientific professionalization, writers such as Winston Churchill were actively producing popular histories under the auspices of the literary model emblemized in the figure of Edward Gibbon[xvii]. Churchill wrote, in his *Early Life*, that "[he] set out upon…Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and was immediately dominated both by the story and the style…I devoured Gibbon. I rode triumphantly through it from end to end and enjoyed it all" (111). Churchill's four volume *History of the English Speaking Peoples* (1956-8), in particular, owes a heavy debt to the narrative and rhetorical style of Gibbon. Churchill recounts the history of England and its peoples from the departure of the Roman legions from the island in the 5th century until the advent of the First World War. In the four volumes that encompass that narrative, he rarely cites a single source. On the rare occasions that he does so, he provides no bibliographic information and no footnote. The point is not to

impress the reader with the quality of the primary evidence, it is to further the story he is telling.

It is, however, worth noting that even on the level of ideology historians operating in the mode of scientific objectivism shared several foundational assumptions with their literary precursors that included a belief in a "correspondence theory of truth holding that history portrays people who really existed and actions that really took place…that actions mirror the intentions of actors…[and] a one-dimensional, diachronical conception of time" (Iggers 3), that caused the writings of historians like Ranke and Acton to be closer cousins to Gibbon and Churchill than to Butterfield and his students.

In fact, by the time the British academy began the process of professionalization there were already serious challenges being raised about the very possibility of scientific history. The first major challenge comes from Nietzsche who argues in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) and again in *Of the Usefulness and Disadvantage of History for Life* (1874) that no objective history was either possible or useful since all histories were the construction of particular minds, and that subjective claims to objective reality were fictive and therefore valueless. Nietzsche, along with his Danish contemporary Soren Kierkegaarde, were steadfast in their rejection of any epistemology that is not fundamentally grounded in subjectivity. Similarly, Ferdinand de Saussure in his *Course in General Linguistics* (1916) posits that all narrative constructs, including history, are the subject of a mediating linguistic field that renders them necessarily subjective. Between Nietzsche and Saussure, and one of the factors that both connects their ideas and renders them more palatable to the scientifically minded, was the dual advent, around the turn of the century, of quantum mechanics, ushered in by the discover in 1898 of radium by Pierre and Marie Curie, and of Einstein's 1903 theory of special relativity. These scientific insights called into question the previously objective nature of scientific knowledge. In the case

of radium, by suggesting the existence of quanta (the observable energy released from radioactive objects), and in the case of relativity by grounding even scientific observation within the field of standpoint subjectivity. These developments provided further support for philosophical subjectivists and were at least partially responsible for the resulting formation of the third significant movement, and the one into which Butterfield's own historical work most neatly fits, hermeneutics.

Though it is not until 1960 that Hans Georg Gadamer writes *Truth and Method*, a text that functions as the compendium of ideas of the philosophical hermeneutists, the core principles that he draws upon are active in the philosophical discourse by at least 1927, the year of the publication of Heidegger's *Being and Time*. The historical hermeneutists reconfigure the idea of history away from the idea of diachronic time, with its emphasis on causal narrative, and instead focus on their attention on what Gadamer called "historically effected consciousness" (350), or a consciousness bounded by certain "horizons" determined by the historical moment of the subject. The process of historiography, rather than being the assembly of a narrative that connects one moment in time to another, can be rethought in terms of the crossing of historical horizons.

This emphasis on peregrination across hermeneutic horizons created a shift in the structure of history and its composition. The effects of this shift are visible in the work of historians like Fernand Braudel and, later, of Carlo Ginzburg (though Braudel and Ginzburg approach the problem of the advent of horizon differently they are grappling with the same issue). Braudel's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (1949), perhaps the definitive text of the Annales School historians[xviii], represented the Mediterranean as being a network of seas, rather than a singular body. This shifted focus

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demonstrated a turn "from a narrative history that followed a sequence of events to one that examined conditions in a specific time period" (Iggers 7). While Braudel's approach to the problem took the long historical perspective, what Jean-Francois Lyotard would, in 1979, call a meta-narratve, the work of Ginzburg came to embody a shift away from large scale narratives towards what came to be called micro-history. As opposed to the Annales School, which focused on large scale cultural changes, micro-history adopted a hyper-focus on the small scale matters of history focusing on the lives and work of specific individuals, the stuff of historical *lacunae*.

Tolkien, in his presentation of the events of the end of the Third Age of Middle Earth adopts both methods of historical recounting. In the main text of the trilogy, Tolkien focuses on the lives and experience of the individual characters. The trilogy itself is presented as a translation of a micro-history, *The Red Book of Westmarch*, begun by Bilbo Baggins and later completed by, in turn, Frodo and Sam. The resulting text is later "translated" by Tolkien into English. Bilbo's "history" utilizes Close third person narration follows Frodo and Sam, Merry and Pippin, Legolas, Gimli, and Aragorn focusing in intense detail on their activities, conversations, and actions. They are a part of large historical events, but those events are viewed only through the lens of their individual experiences. By contrast, *The Silmarillion* (which comes to us as Bilbo Baggins's *Translations from the Elvish*) adopts a historiographic perspective that would make much more sense as the product of an Annales School historian (as it is a history composed by immortal elves, the difference in method is intuitive). The title of the fifth section of *The Silmarillion* covers, in relatively few pages, describes the history "Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age" (378). In each instance, however, Tolkien places the text within the context of his own professionalized academic role. The texts are presented as translations of historical

documents, made available for public consumption through the diligence of a professional historian and philologist.

Though micro-history, in the formalized academic sense, would not emerge until well after Butterfield's lecture, it is already possible to see in Butterfield's commentary on the development of historiography the shift away from the history of the Annales School historians. He writes of the historian's need to "step out of himself" (11) and to transverse "the limits to the range of imaginative understanding" which are imposed by "the organization of [the] profession" (12). The bulk of Butterfield's historiographic work, centered as it is around what he calls the "Whig interpretation" of history—the belief in the progressive property of history that ensures continual social and scientific advancement across time—is dedicated to both the rejection of period spanning narratives and the principle of "the whig interpretation of history that it studies the past with reference to the present" (Whig Interpretation 8). In Butterfield's description of the whig interpretation, one can see a similar anxiety to those popularizers of science who attempted to compensate for the new volatility in Victorian science by attempting to conform the new science to a teleological frame. The danger, as Butterfield sees it, of the whig interpretation, or any anachronistic reading of history, is that it subjects the past to bearing the burden of the politics of the present. The vast teleological claims of Hitler, for instance, of the destiny of the German people, demonstrate the extreme version of this danger. The less extreme version, and the one Butterfield seems most concerned with in the British academy is a kind of apathetic confidence in the superiority of oneself as a resident of the primary moment, and the belief that temporal superiority entitles one to judgment of the past. This is the historiographical equivalent of the teleological approach to science, the attempt to limit the significance of change and uncertainty, Butterfield frames this impulse as a moral concern, and one that is particularly

relevant given Butterfield's historical moment. While the Holocaust did not do away with racism or ideas of racial/cultural/ethnic superiority, it did render their public expression taboo (at the least for a time), or subject to ethical rejection altogether.

The shift towards an historical hermeneutic did not, however, defuse the ideological conflict between practitioners of professional and popular histories. Churchill and Gibbon continued, if the sale of books can serve as an indication, to outstrip the professional historians in the public consciousness. This can, perhaps, help to explain the fear, in at least some members of the British academy, of popularity. Butterfield goes so far as to allude to the fears expressed by one of his predecessors in the Modern History chair, Harold Temperley, who argued in his own inaugural lecture in 1930 that "for history as a whole this [recent trend of] popularization is unlikely to be good, to research it may actually be fatal" (4). Butterfield argues that there is no way to put the genie back into the bottle, and that far from destroying the integrity of the discipline, the increased popularity of history (spurred along by, among other factors, the aftermath of the First World War and the increasing investment of governments in historical and archival work) had made it so broad that "the attempt to survey the condition of historical scholarship… [became] much less feasible than it used to be" ("Present State" 3). The increasing range of historical subjects created a situation where "the History of Ideas, for example, tending to turn into a profession of its own" (4). The increasing range of subjects covered under the aegis of history as a discipline, coupled with the high standards for scholarly expertise in a given field meant that there was "a serious diminution in the individual historian's effective range of interests" (4). In a lecture introducing himself as the holder of a chair in "modern history," Butterfield was making the claim that such a broad field could no longer be considered the province of a single scholar. This serves as a practical reason to reject a mode of history

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dedicated to the construction of grand narratives, no individual historian could possibly have the resources to make definitive claims about the nature of the arc of history. For Butterfield, the scholarly standards of the discipline required individual historians to engage in synchronous analysis of specific moments in time, and partitions of space.

This specificity of attention carries with it certain risks. Butterfield warns that this partitioning of interest results in a "historiography still coloured by nationality" (11), and that scholars will "sometimes reach a point at which they are held up by an intellectual hurdle that is never quite surmounted" (12). The result Butterfield fears is an "insular approach to history" (13) that binds individual historians into the composition of limited national histories. This structure reproduces the 19th century situation in which "German history [in the work of Ranke's pupils Heinrich von Sybel and Heinrich von Treitschke] came to be seen teleologically (as English liberals saw the history of their parliament), with the Prussian ruling dynasty, the Hohenzollern, as the predestined instrument of unification" (Burrow 459). Having seen the result of this model of teleological nationalism in the previous decades, Butterfield calls upon his audience to rethink the scholarly boundaries of the discipline in order to fashion a new understanding of the role of historians.

It is precisely at this point that he transitions his remarks away from his audience as scholars engaged in research, and towards his audience as teachers. "So far as undergraduate work is concerned," Butterfield says, "[we] ought to go further than [we] do in presenting history as not only international in its subject-matter but also habitually and normally involving multi-national or international scholarship" (13). International attention serves as a process through which "blood-transfusions" (14) of social awareness enters the discourse. That this line of thought is reserved for undergraduates is particularly telling. The increased public interest in

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history, represented in the figure of university students whose emphasis of study may or may not be historical, must be accounted for and steered in certain directions. Butterfield's call for internationalism in the classroom is not merely a pedagogical preference, understood in the context of the consequences of nationalism in the preceding decades it is a moral imperative.

That this imperative creates a double bind for historians is not lost on Butterfield. He understands that it requires a sacrifice in the standards that the profession has implemented. Rather than back down from his moral claim, Butterfield attempts to transform it into a net gain for the discipline. If the combination of high standards of scholarly rigor and number of potential areas of study have created a confining set of limits on any individual historian, Butterfield's call for international histories serves as a call for a reinvigoration of the "historical imagination" (21) that redefines the parameters of the possible within the discipline, nor is the call to expand the reach of history limited to a push for internationalism in the classroom. Speaking to his audience in their capacity of researchers he also points out the need to develop a sense of historicity within other disciplines. "The natural scientists," he wrote, "have sometimes shown considerable interest in the history and philosophy of science" (4), and they were not alone. Nearly every discipline, by 1963, was beginning the process of producing its own history. Rather than a field of its own, Butterfield seems to suggest, the historical discipline would be well served by developing applicable methodologies that could be deployed in any discipline as it compiled its own history. This call makes sense within the context of Butterfield's career. He is the author of a major work, *The Origins of Modern Science* (1949), dealing with the development of the scientific disciplines. This interdisciplinary action, with historians engaging actively with both the hard and the human sciences, was another way that Butterfield hoped that the next generation

of historians would be more active in their pursuit of historical imagination and provide a way for history to increase its relevance in the academy outside of its own limited sphere.

In Butterfield's call for an imagination that transgresses the boundaries of the discipline, it is possible to hear the nascent voice of post-modern historiography. Post-modernity, understood in the register of Lyotard's rejection of grand narratives,

> …demonstrated that the notion of a unitary history was not tenable, that history was marked not only by continuity but also by ruptures. The critics rightly point to the ideological assumptions that have been embedded in the dominant discourse of professional historical scholarship… They thus eliminate not only the admittedly fluid border that lies between historical discourse, which always involves fictional elements, and fiction… (Iggers 13)

Butterfield's call for the deployment of imagination is a direct response to the recognition that historical narrative is a linguistic and narrative construct. As opposed to Ranke, who contended that "it was the historian, and he alone, who could discern the hand of God in the unique historical configurations of events and forces" (Burrow 462), Butterfield assumes that any historical discourse will necessarily contain gaps into which the historian must make interventions. The resulting narrative, though it refers to actualities, cannot make a claim to its exclusive actuality. It is subject to contingency, and, therefore cannot be viewed in the mode of scientific objectivity that was prevalent throughout the nineteenth century.

It is precisely at this point that there is a pivot back towards the legacy of literary history that the scientific objectivists attempted to distance themselves from in the professionalization of the discipline. There is a "point of departure an increasing number of historians in recent decades

arrived at the conviction that history is connected more closely to literature than to science"
(Iggers 9). Butterfield does not go quite as far down this path as he could. He seems, rather, to
come to rest in agreement with Lord Acton's claim that "Modern History is a subject to which
neither beginning nor end can be assigned…because history made and history making are
scientifically inseparable and separately unmeaning" (2). His concluding remarks point both to
this inseparability, when he says that "it must have been effectively a small handful of men, who,
because they had faith in what they were doing, produced in 1917 what within thirty years had
come to appear as one of the greatest landslides in human history" (24). On this final point
Butterfield's conservatism shows itself. While it is possible, from the vantage point of the
present, to see his rejection of whiggishness as nothing but an early post-modern gesture against
grand narratives, Butterfield himself preferred the ascription of agency to the active few. He was,
in that sense, a proponent of the great man theory of history, and part of his objection to the whig
interpretation was that this interpretation placed individual events within a mechanistic "line of
causation" ("Whig Interpretation" 12) that diminished the influence of individual actors.

In giving this lecture Butterfield is assuming a position as perhaps the most important
historian in Britain. The attention he pays, in his inaugural lecture, and his emphasis on the
importance of a hermeneutic, international, interdisciplinary, and horizontal/synchronous
approach to history are particularly important because they summarize a more than century long
shift in the understanding and mass consumption of historical narrative. History, by 1963, had
undergone several seismic shifts in the way that it conceptualized the past, and was emerging as
a discipline interested in the transgressing of borders and boundaries. The process was begun in
the early nineteenth century and was still not complete by 1963. However, complete or not, it
had radically shifted the understanding of what history *was* and could be. In doing so, it drove

another wedge into the broader understanding of the world as fundamentally fixed. It was another gap through which one might escape the confines of the world, another point of access to the realm of alternative fictional worlds. While the notion of history as a "science" had faded, the legacy of an evidence-based history practiced in professional faculties remained, and as the selections above indicate, was incorporated into world-building on a popular level.

Aesthetic Revolution: The Rise of Fictionality and Subjective Worlds

And yet, none of the other revolutions I have described would have been sufficient to induce the creation of alternative worlds without the essential final ingredient. That ingredient is the advent of the understanding of fictionality, and fiction as a concept. According the Catherine Gallagher in "The Rise of Fictionality" the shift in the understanding of the ontology of fiction began in 1719 with the publication of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.

Crusoe's realistic depiction of events and frame narrative caused a crisis of fictionality. When it was discovered that the events depicted in the novel had never occurred Defoe was denounced as a liar. This charge was serious enough that Defoe felt compelled to offer himself cover, by claiming that the events were *in fact* true, and that he had changed the names of those involved for the sake of decency (Gallagher 339). To Gallagher's mind two things were missing "(1) *a conceptual category* of fiction, and (2) believable stories that did not solicit belief" (340, emphasis in the original). There is something about this claim that is difficult to unpack in the present moment. Fictionality, as a concept, is deeply engrained in our understanding. However, Gallagher points out that "fictionality only became visible when it became credible, because it only needed conceptualizing as the difference between fictions and lies became less obvious … As the novel distinguished itself through fictionality, its fictionality also differentiated itself from

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previous incredible forms" (340). From the early eighteenth century on, fiction as a concept enjoyed a status approximating the one that Proust granted to memory in *Time Regained*, of being "real, but not actual." This ability, to determine that fictions are real, but not actual, is the germ of Saler's concept of the ironic imagination, the "flexible mental state" that Gallagher refers to as "the sine qua non of modern subjectivity" (346).

Gallagher's work provides an essential insight for considering the historical development of alternative fictional worlds: namely, by detailing the emergence of ironic engagement[xix] as a strategy of reading that stems naturally from the advent of realistic fictions she provides an explanation for why the various kinds of world creation in earlier periods (Thomas More's *Utopia* or the Faerie realm in the various chivalric romances, for example) failed to consolidate into cognitively inhabitable worlds. For, "as the example of *Don Quixote* demonstrates, there were novels before the eighteenth century, and as the citations of Aristotle and Sir Philip Sidney indicate, the components for an understanding of fictionality were also available. And yet, these did not get into either a common knowledge of the concept or a sustained a durable novelistic practice until they coincided in the eighteenth-century English novel" (Gallagher 345). To return to the example I used in the introduction, in 1666 Margaret Cavendish had the intellectual tools to understand that worlds are formed by the faculties of reason and imagination, but she did not yet have access to the tools of world creation that would be formulated by the rise of realistic fiction, and the development of an understanding of fictionality. Consequently, her Blazing-World is relegated to the task of other Utopian fictions, to serve merely as a philosophical mouthpiece. Had she written a hundred years later, her text might have drawn more attention for its contribution to the understanding of world creation. She was, intriguingly, thinking beyond the confines of her own time.

Conclusion: Fissures in 'Reality,' New Market Spaces, and Genre

The developments described above generated fissures at key levels of interaction between human beings and the world: individual, societal, scientific, and ontological. Economic and industrial developments changed the lives of common people, breaking with traditional modes of production and offering opportunities that were unprecedented. In ways positive and negative, the life of a British individual born into the late nineteenth or early twentieth century was different from the life of such an individual in any previous period. Moreover, these same advances generated printing technology so that changes in historiography and historical practice could alter, in both popular and academic history, the meta-narrative at the foundation of the society in ways that no previous change in the practice of history had been able to accomplish. The same was true in the hard sciences, where the understanding of the rigid solidity of the material world was called into question. Darwin's *Origin*, with its secular mechanism to explain the problem of species, and other texts of the period were able to gain integration into cultural awareness in ways that a generation before had been altogether unthinkable. Rather than demonstrating, as Michael Saler and Anthony Camara have argued, that the period was everywhere buttressed by rational stability, all of these developments instead show a world with a greater degree of uncertainty and propensity for change than had ever been previously thought possible. At the same time, the rise of fictionality as an ontological concept generated the ability, through ironic engagement, to understand the possibility that something could exist as simultaneously real and not actual and provided the tools for authors of fiction to inject themselves into the spaces of possibility created by the developments of the period. It is in these spaces that alternative fictional worlds as fully formed, inhabitable spaces, became possible for the first time.

All worlds, including the primary world which we habitually occupy, are formed through a process of epistemic condensation that slots a vast array of potentialities into a space that is comprehensible to those who inhabit the world. As a result, within all worlds there is a problem of uncertainty driven by incompleteness[xx]. Consider, for example, Kurt Gödel's second incompleteness theorem, first posited in "*Über formal unentscheidbare Sätze der Principia Mathematica und verwandter Systeme I*" (1931), which argues that no system of mathematical axioms which relies on an arithmetic can demonstrate its own internal consistency. What this means is that arithmetic can demonstrate the internal validity of axioms but cannot demonstrate its own validity. All mathematical systems, which we habitually think of as describing nature in an empirical way, are, by nature of their own structures, incapable of demonstrating the truthfulness of their claims. This resembles the problem encountered in the study of worlds. As axiomatic structures that order and describe the world they are capable of accounting for those things that are present within the world. They are not, however, capable of responding to that being which exists beyond the confines of the structure.

This well-known problem in mathematics, for Gödel's theorem is the most famous and perennial challenge the truth claims of the field, has given rise to the philosophical discourse that has come to be called fictionalism. As Mark Eli Kalderon writes in the introduction to *Fictionalism in Metaphysics* (2005) "modern fictionalism emerged in 1980 with the publication of Hartry Field's *Science Without Numbers* and Bas van Fraassen's *The Scientific Image*" (1). Both papers, in large part, are attempting directly to respond to the problems that arise from Gödel's theorem. Field desires to demonstrate that mathematics does not require access to truth claims to have intellectual value, while Fraassen argues that it is not the job of mathematically oriented science to be true, merely useful. Both these papers, then, shift our understanding of

world-building devices (in this case pure mathematics and empirical science) from a model of at least theoretical completeness to a model of presumed incompleteness. As Kalderon writes "thus Field and Fraassen each, in their own way, suggests that the aim of inquiry need not be the true representation of a putative domain of fact and that the acceptance of a theory need not involve belief in its content" (2). What all of this means is that there has been a philosophical reconfiguration, since 1980, in mathematics and the sciences away from the idea that we are attempting to describing an objective world possessed of being. This world, we must concede, is beyond the power of description in the language of mathematics, and therefore can only be approached through useful descriptive abstractions. These abstractions cannot describe those things that *are* in their totality but aspire to describe them in terms that are useful enough to allow us to get by. Because the comprehension of human beings is not absolute there is a fundamental incompleteness in all world-building schema.

There are two components that together comprise the gap between the subject of comprehension (being) and the condensed schematic object (world) which human consciousness is able to comprehend. Two limits, in other words, on the constitutive power of language to construct a world within the field of being and possibility, which can be conceptualized in terms of what Jacques Derrida calls "arche-writing."

As described by Derrida in *Of Grammatology* arche-writing describes the inaugural breach that is inevitably created by language between what it wishes to convey and what is possible to convey. No language can fully communicate all that the speaker or writer desires to communicate. There is, inevitably, some decay to the meaning that is intended. Being cannot be conveyed perfectly through language. It is, in its essence, retro-linguistic, existing before the terms used to describe it, and outside of those terms once they had been imposed. In this being is

like the "inscrutable thing" that Melville's Ahab believes lurks behind the pasteboard mask of all existence, or the source of emanating being in the philosophy of Plotinus which is filtered through the *Nous* and is thus not comprehensible in its complete nature to human beings. Because world and consciousness cannot be fully captured by language, and because language gives shape and structure to our ability to conceptualize, there is always a remainder, a deferral, an epistemic gap, between what is and what is described. This gap precedes any attempt to give utterance to perception. It is not a consequence of interpersonal communication, rather it is intrapersonal, the gap between the schematic world and the being which that world attempts to categorize.

Together, these limits apply to any attempt to express the nature of being in language—intrapersonally on the level of conception, and interpersonally on the level of expression. Nor is the particularity of the language itself relevant. The language of mathematics is no better suited for the process than English, French, or Latin. Nor is the tool kit of an apophatic (negative) epistemology more useful to us than the tool kit of a cataphanic (positive) epistemology. For as much as we are unable to make positive statements describing the nature of being beyond the schematic confines of the world, we are equally unable to make negative statements that are more helpful than "it is not nothing," and, "it is not the world."

No more can be said of it than that it existed before language gave structure to our consciousness, and that it continues to exist outside of the world. A field of being and possibility that is immune to intellectual description, which defies our attempts to impose upon it an all encompassing form. This incompleteness has been known since the first systematic attempts to interrogate the nature of the world. Attempts to understand this schematic problem of human consciousness include the *tehom* (abyss) of the Semetic creation myths, the upper and lower

worlds of Plato, Christ's proposed "kingdom of heaven," and innumerable other examples are instances of the attempt to reconcile the meta-awareness of the incompleteness of world with that reality which exists beyond the organizing schema. This is the language, borrowed from Mircea Eliade, of hierophanies and miracles. It is the foundation of Rudolf Otto's description of the holy as "*mysterium tremendum*." It is the space where new worlds are created. As Ricoeur argues, symbolic language creates world, but in creating world through language it separates world from the retro-linguistic field of possibilities.

This emergence of new worlds within the field of possibilities, through language, can be described by a phrase coined by Tolkien in a 1939 lecture titled "On Fairie Stories," "sub-creation." For Tolkien, sub-creation is the process of forming worlds that diverge from the Primary World. Because Tolkien is not a literary theorist and is speaking broadly of fairy tales, he does not attempt to rigorously define what he means by sub-creation or sub-creative art beyond a few simple adjectives or concepts. For the purposes of this dissertation, and because it is simply more accurate, I will limit use of the term sub-creation to that manner of world-building that meets the standard set out in the introduction, namely that they be capable of supporting inhabitation by the consciousness of a reader.

Sub-creation is depicted at two separate points in Tolkien's *Silmarillion*. First in the "Ainulindalë:"

> But when they were come into the Void, Ilúvatar said to them: 'Behold your
> Music!' And he showed to them a vision, giving to them sight where before was
> only hearing; arid they saw a new World made visible before them, and it was
> globed amid the Void, and it was sustained therein, but was not of it. And as they

looked and wondered this World began to unfold its history, and it seemed to

them that it lived and grew. And when the Ainur had gazed for a while and were

silent, Ilúvatar said again: 'Behold your Music! This is your minstrelsy; and each

of you shall find contained herein, amid the design that I set before you, all those

things which it may seem that he himself devised or added. (*Silmarillion* 5)

And in the "Valaquenta:"

In the beginning Eru, the One, who in the Elvish tongue is named Ilúvatar, made

the Ainur of his thought; and they made a great Music before him. In this Music

the World was begun; for Ilúvatar made visible the song of the Ainur, and they

beheld it as a light in the darkness. And many among them became enamoured of

its beauty, and of its history which they saw beginning and unfolding as in a

vision. Therefore Ilúvatar gave to their vision Being, and set it amid the Void, and

the Secret Fire was sent to burn at the heart of the World; and it was called Eä.

(20)

For Tolkien world is created through language. At the outset of the "Ainulindale," the

creation of the Ainur are described as "the offspring of [God's] thought," and the creation of the

physical universe is described through the language of "the music [that] went out into the Void,

and it was not void" (1-2). The description of the music that ultimately takes form as the world

is described as theme, discord, and resolution; in other words, it is described as a narrative. This

music serves as the parallel to the creation of the Elvish languages which formed the initial

impetus to the creation of Middle Earth. Nor does Tolkien limit the lingual involvement in the

creation of the world to the music of the Ainur, or the thoughts of his supreme deity. The name

of the world itself, Eä, is not merely a nominal designator, it is a performative. As Tolkien writes:

> Ilúvatar called to them, and said: 'I know the desire of your minds that what ye have seen should verily be, not only in your thought, but even as ye yourselves are, and yet other. Therefore I say: *Eä!* Let these things Be! And I will send forth into the Void the Flame Imperishable, and it shall be at the heart of the World, and the World shall Be; and those of you that will may go down into it. And suddenly the Ainur saw afar off a light, as it were a cloud with a living heart of flame; and they knew that this was no vision only, but that Ilúvatar had made a new thing: Eä, the World that Is. (23)

This emergence of Eä through language, mirrors the origin of Tolkien's work began as an exercise in language creation, rather than as an explicit exercise in world-building. As early as March 2, 1916 when Tolkien was training with the 13th reserve battalion at Rugeley Camp, he wrote to Edith Bratt (the woman who would become his wife) that he had "done some touches to my nonsense fairy language" (*Letters* 8). This language would ultimately form the basis for the stories, which originated as tales he told his children utilizing his "nonsense fairy language." The tales grew along with his children and throughout his letters to them while they were at school, at military training, or on active service, there are frequent references to the unfolding world of hobbits, wizards, and the one ring.

As Tolkien wrote in a letter to the Houghton Mifflin Company in 1955 "the invention of the languages is the foundation. The 'stories' were made rather to provide a world for the languages than the reverse" (*Letters* 219). In this Tolkien is anticipating the claim that would be

made, seventeen years later, by Paul Ricoeur who argues, in the closing paragraphs of his essay "Metaphor and the Problem of Hermeneutics" that, "the creations of language would be devoid of sense unless they served the general project of letting new worlds emerge by means of poetry…" (*Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* 181). In the both descriptions of the creation of Middle Earth it is the music which precedes the actualization of the world itself. Ilúvatar commands his angelic subordinates to "Behold your music," and the world itself is described explicitly in terms of the song "made visible."

The world creation Tolkien describes is in two phases, the world is "globed amid the Void," while at the same time, in the both the language devised by Tolkien (the non-diagetic creation of the Elvish tongue that inspired the creation of the stories) and the language of the music that the "World began to unfold its history." The englobing of the World, the primal creative action, here mimics the Derridian description of arche-writing, the formation of the discrete boundaries within the Void, "but not of it." This is the break between the schematic world thing and the full field of possibilities that surrounds it. Once that process has been initiated, by the imposition onto the raw substance of the Void of linguistic and narrative features, history begins. History here functions as both a description of the larger narrative that Tolkien would tell throughout *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings*, and it also serves as a synecdoche for the entire process of narrative world-building. Tolkien's use of the word "unfolding" is essential. Though the world is formed by the inaugural imposition of language, it takes on significance, and gains connections to other worlds through the embedding of entangled symbols, through a progressive process. No world comes to us as a finished piece, if we are, as Heidegger suggests, thrown into worlds, we do not apprehend the worlds into which we are thrown all at once. Rather, as Heidegger notes in *The Question Concerning Technology*

(1954)[xxi], we experience them in a process of unfolding, as we interact with them over time. It is only after a newly created world reaches a critical mass of symbolic significance that it becomes fully inhabitable.

The creative energy required for this act of sub-creation is tremendous. For Tolkien that energy takes the form of "the Secret Fire" that gives being to the content of the thoughts of God and the angels. In C.S. Lewis's account of the creation of Narnia, this energy is demonstrated in a different way. When Digory, Polly, Uncle Andrew, and company are brought into what will become Narnia, they too find themselves present in a void space. "This is an empty world," the witch says, "this is Nothing" (*Magician's Nephew* 98). Lewis goes on to say that:

> And really it was uncommonly like Nothing. There were no stars. It was so dark that they couldn't see one another at all and it made no difference whether you kept your eyes shut or opened. Under their feet there was a cool, flat something which might have been earth, and was certainly not grass or wood. The air was cold and dry and there was no wind.

The silence of the place is broken when, somewhere in the darkness:

> A voice had begun to sing. It was very far away and Digory found it hard to decide from what direction it was coming. Sometimes it seemed to come from all directions at once. Sometimes he almost thought it was coming out of the earth beneath them. Its lower notes were deep enough to be the voice of the earth herself. There were no words. There was hardly even a tune. But it was, beyond comparison, the most beautiful noise he had ever heard. It was so beautiful he could hardly bear it. (100)

Like Tolkien, Lewis's creation account relies on music. But unlike Tolkien, Lewis provides a less abstracted vision of creation. The travelers from Earth watch as Aslan sings into existence all of Narnia (following the outlay pattern from *The Book of Genesis* that begins with light and so on and so forth all the way through the creation of talking animals). During this process, however, the Witch, who hates Aslan and his song (because she is Evil), hurls a bar of iron that she tore from a lamppost at the lion. It bounces off of his forehead, and where it falls onto the ground it begins to take root and grow. Lewis writes that "it was a perfect little model of a lamp-post, about three feet high but lengthening, and thickening in proportion, as they watched it; in fact growing just as the trees had grown" (106). It is in this that we begin to understand the power that goes into the process of sub-creation. The growth of new worlds has the capacity to resolve the paradox of living metal. As we shall see, this is the least of the paradoxes that can be resolved by and understanding of what happens through world-building. For it is the travel between these worlds, through the vast fields of total possibility, that renders the creation of what I will call the apocalyptic consciousness.

These fissures also served to offer new spaces for market expansion and served as the basis for a new theorization of the formulation of distinct literary genres. As the market for realistic fiction began to reach the point of saturation, the literary market needed new spaces into which it could expand. While Saler argues, vigorously, that alternative fictional worlds developed out of a psychological need for psychic enchantment in response to the staid realism of nineteenth century realism. It seems far more likely that the need for new material led the marketplace to capitalize on the fissures of possibility which the seismic changes that economic, historiographic, and scientific advances had opened. According to the National Bibliographic Service of The British Library, in the period between 1880 and 1950 there were 10,787 issues of

"popular fiction magazines" published in Great Britain[xxii]. If taken as a uniform average this would mean that a new popular fiction magazine was available every other day for seventy years. These speculative spaces offered new opportunities for narrative development and offered the reading public something different. While there is something romantic and tempting about an explanation of the development of genre that favors a deeply human psychic need, an examination of the periodicals of the period suggest that the process was less dramatic than Saler's narrative suggests, and more in keeping with a gradual process of market saturation leading to the gradual expansion into the new spaces of possibility, and ultimately the formation of niche genres. In the mid-nineteenth century stories of different types (realistic fiction, early science fiction, etc.) would frequently appear in the same publication. *The All-Story*, for instance, which debuted in 1905, featured the stories that would eventually become Burroughs's Barsoom novels, but also mystery stories by authors like Mary Roberts Rinehart, westerns by Max Brand, and horror and fantasy stories. *The All-Story* itself was a cousin to *Argosy* (both magazines were run by Frank Munsey and are both also related to *Munsey's*) where stories by Upton Sinclair, Zane Grey, and Francis Stevens were all published despite what a contemporary audience would call obvious genre differences. As pulp historian Mike Ashley[xxiii] notes, however, by the mid-twentieth century the market had clustered itself into distinctive genre publications. Ashley writes that "until the First World War the pulps ran the whole range of fiction, seeking to appeal to a wide audience, but from 1915 onwards a new generation of specialist pulps emerged" (Ashley). As the split took hold mysteries, westerns, romance, and science fiction all had publications devoted especially to their stories. And, within the broader field of science fiction were "…the weird fiction and fantasy pulps. The grandfather of these is *Weird Tales* (Mar. 1923-Sept. 1954) which published the best stories of both H.P. Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard,

including Howard's Conan series. Other notable titles include Bernard Macfadden's *Ghost Stories* (Jul. 1926-Dec. 1931) and Street & Smith's *Unknown* (Mar. 1939-Oct. 1943), a highly regarded companion to *Astounding*.while *Weird Tales* and *Strange Tales* were among those which specialized in fantasy" (Ashley).

While, according to Ashley, the market for pulps in general was beginning to fade by the 1930s, "the newsstands were saturated with pulp magazines, but already their domination was being challenged by comic books and paperbacks, whilst women readers were lured away by the big slicks." Even as the change of medium was leading to a decline in the pulps, publications dedicated to science fiction and fantasy continued to thrive in other forms. Comic books, slicks, digests, and novels from imprints devoted to science fiction and fantasy (including Ballentine, Ace, and others). Once the market for alternative world fiction had formalized itself, with publications and presses devoted to fictions that created new spaces to inhabit, the number of such texts would exponentially increase, transforming speculative and alternative world fiction into a dominant market force[xxiv].

[vii] In all of these sectors the change was the initiation of an ongoing process that continues even now. While I will talk about these ideas at the moment of their inception, I will also follow them along as they continue to be relevant to the question of alternative fictional worlds.

viii This is not to say that such a bereavement did not exist, or that Saler's claim is wrong. Merely, that it is a secondary factor rather than a primary factor. Saler will address some of the same developments I am discussing here, but when he does so it is usually too brief and entangled in his primary thesis to simply refer to his interpretation of events. So, while we will traverse some of the same terrain, our maps will substantially differ. What he deems a foothill, I often see as a mountain, and vice versa.

ix Sale, Kirkpatrick. *Rebels against the future: the Luddites and their war on the Industrial Revolution: lessons for the computer age*. Basic Books. 1996.

x Edwards, Dennis; Pigram, Ron. *The Golden Years of the Metropolitan Railway and the Metro-land Dream*. Bloomsbury. 1988.

xi Bell notes that: a) one does not find contemporaneous accounts in, for instance, the Norfolk newspapers to confirm these events, and b) "as evidence of actual events, street ballads are notoriously unsound" (455).

xiiCamara uses the term reductionist to denote "naturalistic and materialistic philosophies" (10), rather than "simplistic."

xiii A full explanation of the development of this idea across time would require a literature review dealing with the physics of astronomy (the work of Pierre LaPlace, for instance, or Lord Kelvin's calculations as to the age of the Sun), Geology (Charles Lyell), and various strands of English and continental theology. All of which, unless I am advised otherwise, likely fall outside the particular scope of this dissertation.

xiv Though the term is coined in Jean-Francois Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979), the concept of the master narrative, and the move against it, are present in historiographies pre-dating the coinage.

xv von Ranke's vision for the appropriate methodological model for constructing history spills over into popular culture. H. Rider Haggard's *She: A History of Adventure*, one of the most popular texts of the period 1886-1887 clearly has the historiography of von Ranke in mind. The text frequently refers to other documents, primary sources, etc. in order to create a sense of narrative verisimilitude. The title of the novel itself indicates that the question of history was at the forefront of the novel's composition.

xvi It is worth noting, naturally, that Stoker also explicitly notes his role in organizing and selecting the materials that go into the novel. The result is that even as he claims a thrust towards objectivity, he is forced into a tacit admission of the subjective role of the historian in shaping history.

xvii Gibbon's autobiography recounting of the moment he decided to embark on the composition of a history of the decline and fall of Rome highlights the degree to which his endeavor was literary rather than "historical" in the professionalized sense. Gibbon writes, "it was at Rome, on the fifteenth of of October 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted fryars were singing Vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the City first started to my mind." (Murphy 302).

xviii Figures like Lucien Febvre, Henri Hauser, Marc Bloch, Georges Duby, Pierre Goubert and others.

xix The use of ironic engagement in Gallagher's reading of the rise of fictionality suggests that Saler's notion of the ironic imagination as a component of residing within "virtual realities" may, in fact, be a feature of all fiction reading—or suggest that all fiction reading is engaged to a certain extend with the question of virtual realities.

xx One of the great errors of Dolezal in *Heterocosmica* is his postulate that incompleteness is a feature distinct to fictional worlds, but not to the primary world. Here he has erred in granting a status to the primary world which no world is capable of enjoying.

xxi Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology,* trans. by William Lovitt. New York: Harper and Row. 1977.

[xxii] https://www.webcitation.org/5o5rEC06f

[xxiii] https://www.pulpmags.org/contexts/essays/golden-age-of-pulps.html

[xxiv] A full accounting of the history and sales of popular fiction in the period and question would, and has, filled many monographs. Among the most significant are Frank M. Robinson's *Pulp Culture* (1998), Robert Sampson's *Yesterday's Faces* (published in six volumes between 1983 and 1993), Tom Cottrill's *Bookery Fantasy's Ultimate Guide to the Pulps* (2001), and *N.W. Ayer and Sons Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals, 1894-1951*.

CHAPTER TWO: Transworld Peregrination and the Mechanism by which it Occurs

Language is not a tool at man's disposal, but that primal event which disposes of the highest possibility of man's being.

-Martin Heidegger *Holderlin and the Essence of Poetry*

We live by symbols and we cannot too often recall them.

-Felix Frankfurter, in a letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt

Alternative fictional worlds expanded rapidly in number and complexity beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century. They did not, as argued by Michael Saler and Rosemary Jackson, arise in response to some deeply embedded psychological bereavement brought about by modernism, nor as a way to express sublimated desires[xxv]. They emerged, rather, from a confluence of radical shifts in how the world was understood, as Altick argues in *The English Common Reader* (1957), amongst the increasingly literate working and commuter classes that emerged from early nineteenth century industrialization. These shifts in understanding occurred in economics (including the rise of universal primary education and application of industrial means of production to literary texts), the sciences, history, and the literary arts, and helped to inform the historical development of narrative genre (fantasy, science fiction, realism, etc)—as opposed to genres of form (poetry, drama, epic, novel, etc). The rapid expansion of alternative

fictional worlds also raises the question that this chapter will answer: how does the consciousness of a reader moves between the primary world and the alternative fictional world?

Conscious movement between worlds is an experience common to readers of fantasy literature. While the experience is common, it is far rarer to find a cogent explanation for *how* these transworld peregrinations occur. The most cogent explanation, advanced by Michael Saler and by Catherine Gallagher, is that the inhabitation of fictional worlds is made possible through what Saler calls "the ironic imagination," and what Gallagher calls "ironic engagement." That is, once the consciousness of the reader is injected into the fictional world it is the continual awareness that one is both inside the world of the text and simultaneously engaged in the process of reading that enables that reader's consciousness to safely remain within the alternative fictional world. This layer of ironic engagement insulates the reader and differentiates the experience of reading oneself into a fictional world from, for instance, the delusion of a schizophrenic who believes that they are living in Narnia. As an explanation for how it is that continual inhabitation of a fictional world is possible, this theory answers quite well. Unfortunately, however, it is not complete. Both Saler and Gallagher treat fictional texts, in a certain sense, like dreams. One does not remember how one finds oneself in the scenario of a dream, and neither Saler nor Gallagher offer any explanation whatever for how the consciousness of the reader is able to move from the primary world into the world of the text. They are concerned with how the process is sustained, not how it is initiated.

To fill this gap in the literature, I will argue that transworld peregrinations are possible because points of symbolic correspondence between worlds create what I have chosen to call— borrowing from the vocabulary of quantum mechanics— "symbolic entanglement." The process of interpretation brought about by engaging with entangled symbols transports the consciousness

of the reader across the barrier between worlds. The more symbolically rich an alternative

fictional world is, the more entangled it is, and the more easily it can be accessed. To understand

how this process of entanglement functions, I will offer an interpretation of the relationship

between hermeneutics and world-building that grows out of the tradition of, principally, Martin

Heidegger, Han-Georg Gadamer, and Paul Ricoeur. Each of these thinkers offers vital

components necessary to understanding the process of moving between worlds. Once the

hermeneutic aspect of the process is understood, and in order to complete the explanation of how

it is that the consciousness of the reader successfully moves from one world to another, I will

connect these ideas to Saul Kripke's writing on the logic of possibility, which has formed the

basis of all of the major examinations of alternative worlds since Thomas Pavel's *Fictional

Worlds* (1986). When the theoretical framework of the apparatus of transworld peregrinations is

complete, I will demonstrate how it functions through a series of close readings drawn from C.S.

Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*.

The Role of Hermeneutics in the Creation of Worlds

Symbolic entanglement allows the consciousness of the reader to move between worlds.

Viewing the development of hermeneutic thought across the contributions of the five major

hermeneutic thinkers, from Friedrich Schleiermacher in the early nineteenth century to Paul

Ricoeur in the mid-late twentieth, one observes a progression towards understanding the role of

symbols that culminates in Paul Ricoeur's argument for the role of symbols in the creation of

worlds. However, Ricoeur, as well as the alternative fictional world theorists, have been content

to leave this progression of the hermeneutic argument stalled. The concept of trans-world

peregrination through symbolic entanglement advances the development of hermeneutic thought to a point where it becomes possible, for the first time, to describe the political and social consequences of the hermeneutic process. This chapter will focus on the hermeneutics, and then next will focus on the social and political consequences.

The early hermeneutic theorists[xxvi] were concerned, as one might expect, with the interpretation of texts, either by understanding individual textual pronouncements within the context of the organization of the text as a whole (as Schleiermacher would have it), or by situating texts (per Wilhelm Dilthey) in their appropriate historical context. In either case, the text was understood to be the proper subject of hermeneutic inquiry. This understanding begins to shift in the early twentieth century, when Martin Heidegger, expanding on Schleiermacher's concept of the hermeneutic circle, argues that the function of art, and art's symbolic structure, is to allow for world creation. As such, the function of language, particularly poetic language, extends beyond mere denotation correspondence. As he writes in the essay "Holderlin and the Essence of Poetry:"

> The poet names the gods and names all things with respect to what they are. This naming does not merely come about when something already previously known is furnished with a name; rather, by speaking the essential word, the poet's naming first nominates the beings as what they are. Thus they become known *as* beings. Poetry is the founding of being in the world. (992)

Poetry is the mechanism through which natural forces are converted into symbolic forms. Heidegger wanted to draw out a distinction between the Earth and the world. The planet is a phenomenological object. It has mass, dimension, durability, and can be perceived by the senses.

The world, but contrast, is the system of symbols and ideas that allows one to take all of the diverse phenomena of the earth and turn them into a coherent, stable system. Consequently, for Heidegger, hermeneutics was less about interpreting a text, and more about forming the structure that would give birth to a coherent world.

The example Heidegger famously uses in "The Origin of the Work of Art" is the Greek temple, describing how the process of its construction and its features produce a mutually reinforcing circle of production that reconfigures the phenomenological earth into a socially determined world. This world disclosure, to borrow Heidegger's phrase, is made possible because:

> The work…is not the reproduction of some particular entity that happens to be present at any given time; it is, on the contrary, the reproduction of the thing's general essence. But then where and how is this general essence, so that art works are able to agree with it? With what nature of what thing should a Greek temple agree? Who could maintain the impossible view that the Idea of Temple is represented in the building? And yet, truth is set to work in such a work, if it is a work. ("Origin" 36)

Art then, whether literary, architectural, visual, musical, etc., is not simply a reproduction of the phenomenological fact (neither as Hamlet says to "hold a mirror up to nature," nor in Bertrand Russell's famous formulations on the nature of language in "On Denoting"). Art conveys a different kind of knowledge, an essential knowledge, through a process of "deconcealing" (38). As with his description of the emergence of the gods by the speaking of their names, the meaning of the world is both referenced and created in the moment of its articulation through art. One

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might be forgiven for finding, in this formulation of the function of art, a rehearsal and expansion of Viktor Shklovsky's concept of "defamiliarization" in his 1917 essay "Art as Device." For Shklovsky, poetic language's power derives from casting the familiar world in unfamiliar terms to reveal its strangeness and power, and Heidegger expands this power beyond an aesthetic property of poetic language into an epistemological observation that allows one to separate objects from perception and interpretive schema. This line of thinking, though Heidegger does not phrase it as such, is the incipient moment of world-building as an artistic, and specifically literary, enterprise.

Where Heidegger fails to grasp the full implication of revelatory power of art is in his insistence on differentiating between the ontological status of fictions and the primary world. While fictions have the ability to reveal aspects of the world, they have no firm ontological basis of their own. "Poetry is like a dream," he writes, "not reality; a play with words, not the seriousness of action" ("Holderlin" 997). Ultimately, Heidegger is unable to disconnect himself from his intellectual roots in phenomenology, and it prevents him from following his ideas through to their logical conclusion.

Giovanni Vattimo, in *Beyond Interpretation*, suggests that Heidegger's thoughts on hermeneutics forms one node of a pole the other end of which is represented in the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer. As Vattimo writes:

> …in spite of all the emphasis Heidegger places on language, especially in the later phase of his thought, he regards interpretation primarily from the point of view of the meaning of Being: in spite of all the emphasis that Gadamer places on

ontology, interpretation is thought primarily from the point of view of language."

(3)

For Gadamer, the principle snare of language is that language is bound up inexorably with tradition. It is the problem of how to engage with that tradition that leads him to the concept of historical horizons of understanding. As Gadamer explains:

> Every finite present has its limitations. We define the concept of "situation" by saying that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision. Hence essential to the concept of situation is the concept of "*horizon*." The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point... A person who has no horizon is a man who does not see far enough and hence overvalues what is nearest to him. On the other hand, "to have an horizon" means not being limited to what is nearby, but to being able to see beyond it...Working out of the hermeneutical situation means the achievement of the right horizon of inquiry for the questions evoked by the encounter with tradition. (*Truth and Method*, 302).

This is the same problem that Dilthey identified more than a generation before, that every utterance is located within the confines of a particular historical moment, and understanding that utterance is impossible without first accounting for its historical location. However, the problem of Dilthey's nascent historicism lay in its inability to conceive of the act of interpretation also being enmeshed in history. The result is that Dilthey is constantly answering to "a need for something firm" (239), a firmness that can only come about through the abandonment of philosophical doubt and is "invulnerable to all the objections of philosophy" (236). So, how is

one to proceed in the attempt to resolve the problem of history in hermeneutics? For Gadamer the answer lies in the fusion of horizons.

Horizon, as Gadamer uses the term, arises from phenomenology, where it designates the context of an action or utterance. How such an action is situated relative to tradition and its own historical moment. Interpretation is necessary whenever communication is forced to cross from the horizon of one individual into another. The more dislocated from one another the horizons are, the more difficult the process. The fusion of these horizons comes through a process Gadamer calls "transposition," which "always involves rising to a higher universality that overcomes not only our own particularity but also that of the other" (305). Thus, the acquisition of more historical knowledge or context allows one to rise up, expanding their hermeneutic horizon in the same way that an individual's visual horizon expands as they ascend a tower.

In the same way the Heidegger's argument for the world revealing power of art was the first step towards an understanding of the role of hermeneutics in world-building, Gadamer's understanding of the fusion of horizon's is a zygotic form of the role that symbols play in trans-world peregrination. As the hermeneutic process moves between historical horizons and allows those horizons to fuse into a new, more complete understanding, so it will prove to be not merely between historical horizons, but between distinct worlds.

Though he begins down the path towards trans-world peregrination with his theory of the fusion of horizons through elevation, Gadamer remains insistent that "when our historical consciousness transposes itself into historical horizons, this does not entail passing into alien worlds unconnected in any way from our own; instead, they together constitute the one great

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horizon…" (304). As David E. Linge writes in his introduction to Gadamer's *Philosophical Hermeneutics* (1976) that for Gadamer "the hermeneutical has to do with bridging the gap between the familiar world in which we stand and the strange meaning that resists assimilation into the horizons of our world" (xii). Nevertheless, Gadamer remains ontologically constrained. Horizons, for him, are limited in their ability by the fact that they can speak only to one "great horizon," and cannot, therefore, account for alternative worlds.

For both Heidegger and Gadamer, the phenomenological world retains an intuitive primacy. In this way, whether intentionally or not, both hold with Bertrand Russell's notion that "there is only one world, the 'real' world .... It is the very essence of fiction that only the thoughts, feelings, etc., in Shakespeare and his readers are real, and that there is not, additional to them, an objective Hamlet" (Dolezal 2). In this mode of thinking, fiction can contain conceptual meaning, but no ontological actuality. As Dolezal writes:

> Since names of fictional particulars are empty terms, both 'Emma Bovary committed suicide' and 'Emma Bovary died of tuberculosis' have one and the same truth-value-false. No decisions about individuating properties of fictional particulars can be made, no descriptions of their appearance or activity can be offered. Russell tried to bypass these implausible consequences by claiming that only concepts enter propositions and, on this level, we can make a distinction between unicorn and sea-serpent: 'I met a unicorn' or 'I met a sea-serpent' is a perfectly significant assertion, if we know what it would be to be a unicorn or a sea-serpent, i.e., what is the definition of these fabulous monsters .... Since it is significant (though false) to say 'I met a unicorn,' it is clear that this proposition,

rightly analyzed, does not contain a constituent 'a unicorn,' though it does contain the concept 'unicorn.' (3)

If the hermeneutics of Heidegger and Gadamer assume a single, actual, world, then by 1972, when Paul Ricoeur wrote his essay "Metaphor and the Problem of Hermeneutics," the assumptions of Russell and phenomenology had shifted somewhat. Ricoeur was both able and willing to recognize "the *power of a work* to project a world of its own" (171). The question is: what has changed between the decade of the 1950s, when Gadamer was writing *Truth and Method* and 1972? The best answer is that in the intervening years Saul Kripke's essays on modal semantics altered the terrain of the philosophical discourse on the question of ontology.

Modal semantics, the area of formal logic designated to questions of necessity and possibility, were outlined by Kripke in "Semantical Considerations on Modal Logic" and "Semantical Analysis of Modal Logic," both of which appeared in 1963. Kripke's central argument is that there are a functionally denumerable number of ontologically valid (and distinct) possible worlds (94). As Kripke writes:

> Given a model structure (G, K, R)[xxvii] we define a *proposition* (or perhaps more accurately, *modal value of a proposition*), as a mapping whose domain is K and whose range is the set {T,F}. (Intuitively, a proposition is something that can be *true* or *false* in each world; and, for our present purposes, we identify propositions that are *strictly equivalent*, i.e., have the same truth-value in each world…Notice that each proposition determines a unique set of worlds (the set of all worlds mapped into T), and that conversely each set of worlds determines a proposition (its "characteristic function"). (92)

For Kripke, the more elements two worlds within the set of all possible worlds have in common the easier it is to access such worlds conceptually. Commonality can be assessed by the degree to which to which given propositions are true or false in each respective world. The higher the degree of correspondence in propositions, the easier it is to imagine accessibility between one world and the next. This accessibility value Kripke represents as an R-value. Ultimately, I will take minor issue with some aspects of Kripke's description of R-value accessibility. But for now it is enough to know that Kripke's work provides the tools for conceptualizing reality not as an ontologically fixed plane of existence, but as a kind of superposition, or, to borrow the language of quantum mechanics, a probability collapse. But, there is no reason to suppose that the one "actual" reality that we inhabit is ontologically superior to any of the other possibilities. As Kripke writes "we deal at each stage of the construction with a *system of alternative sets* of tableaux; in each set, one tableau is singled out as the main tableau, while the others are *auxiliary*" (72, emphasis in original). Or, in other words, the designation of the "actual" world as "actual" is not intrinsically correct, but the result of a kind of prioritization of physical phenomena. This prioritization, however, is, so some degree, arbitrary.

Kripke's argument provided the intellectual framework to augment our understanding of a diverse number of lines of intellectual inquiry. As Dolezal writes:

> Viewing possible worlds as human constructs brings the concept down from the metaphysical pedestal and makes it a potential tool of empirical theorizing. For various cognitive aims various kinds of possible worlds can be stipulated. Possible worlds of logical semantics are *interpretive models* providing the domain of reference necessary for the semantic interpretation of counterfactual statements, modal formulas, intensional contexts, and so on. Possible worlds of

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philosophy are *coherent cosmologies* derived from some axioms or presuppositions. The scope of possible worlds of religion is equally ambitious, but they are constructs of communal beliefs and usually given the form of *cosmological narratives*. Possible worlds of natural science are *alternative designs of the universe* constructed by varying the basic physical constants (see Rees 1989). Possible worlds of historiography are *counterfactual scenarios* that help us to understand actual-world history. (14)

Kripke is not, however, and should not be understood to be, describing a new feature of life when his essays are being composed. As the last chapter demonstrates space for possible worlds (including along the lines that Dolezal emphasizes above) emerged out of the developments of the nineteenth century. Kripke is not forming from nothing the idea of ontologically distinct alternative possible worlds. Rather, he is providing, in mathematical terms, the rational basis for the acceptance of a phenomenon already significantly underway and bridging the gap between the intuitive primacy of the phenomenological world and worlds of the mind that previous generations of hermeneuts like Heidegger and Gadamer had found impossible to fully surmount.

Against this backdrop it is easier to understand the magnitude of Paul Ricoeur's leap forward in understanding the interaction between symbols and world creation. In outlining the relationship between symbol and world, Ricoeur starts with a recapitulation of Schleiermacher's understanding of the hermeneutic circle. "From one point of view, the understanding of a metaphor," Ricoeur writes "can serve as a guide to the understanding of longer texts, such as a literary work…From another point of view, the understanding of a work taken as a whole gives the key to metaphor" (171). Extending from the logic generated by Heidegger and Gadamer, Ricoeur expands the parameters of the circle; the process of interpretation develops from "the

intentional orientation towards a world and a reflexive orientation towards a self" (171). This too

functions as a kind of hermeneutic orthodoxy; intentional orientation outward and reflexive

orientation inward work as easy ways to describe Vattimo's observation, cited above, about the

focal points of the hermeneutics of Heidegger and Gadamer. But Ricoeur takes the logic one step

further, and it is here that the influence of Kripke is most acutely felt:

> …we can reserve interpretation for the sort of inquiry concerned with the *power*
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> *of a work* to project a world of its own and to set in motion the hermeneutical
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> circle, which encompasses in its spiral both the apprehension of projected worlds
>
> and the advance of self-understanding in the presence of these new worlds. (171)

This line of reasoning is not entirely new. In 1925, almost 50 years before Ricoeur, in *Langauge*

and Myth, Ernst Cassirer began down this same intellectual path. Cassirer, writing in response to

Max Müller's claim that all mythology emerges from lexigraphical confusion, that it "is an

inherent necessity of language if we recognize in language the outward form and manifestation

of thought; it is in fact the dark shadow which language throws upon thought and can never

disappear till language becomes entirely commensurate with thought, which it never will"[xxviii]

(qtd. Cassirer 5), argued for the world producing power of symbols. Cassirer writes that:

> [Symbols are] not in the sense of mere figures which refer to some given reality
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> by means of suggestion and allegorical renderings, but in the sense of forces each
>
> of which produces and posits a world of its own. In these realms the spirit exhibits
>
> itself in that inwardly determined dialectic by virtue of which alone there is any
>
> reality, any organized and definite Being at all. Thus the special symbolic forms
>
> are not imitations, but *organs* of reality, since it is solely by their agency that

anything real becomes an object for intellectual apprehension, and as such is

made visible to us. (8)

Though Cassirer clearly apprehends the role of symbols in the creation of worlds there are two

features of his thought which render him incapable of filling the intellectual role that Ricoeur

would fill. First, and most obviously, by transitioning his investigation of the role of symbol in

creating worlds into the realm of anthropological investigation, his inquiry culminates in a

cultural vision not of distinct worlds, but of distinct worldviews, thereby rendering the difference

one of perspective and not of ontological independence. Second, Cassirer's idealism rendered

him incapable of accepting the proposition that such symbolically constructed worlds could exist

outside of human consciousness and therefore unthinkable that consciousness could move

amongst such worlds or inhabit multiple worlds simultaneously. For the philosophical idealist in

order to be actualized such worlds must exist, in sum total, within the apprehension of the

thinker, rendering the possibility of movement between worlds quite impossible. Consequently,

despite the fact that the notion that symbols are the vital component in the process of world

creation was articulated a full decade before Heidegger, the issue lay fallow for nearly fifty years

until Ricoeur revitalized it by recasting it as the next step in the development of the hermeneutic

process.

Read in this way, we can see the development of hermeneutic thought through the five

major hermeneutic thinkers: Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, Gadamer, and Ricoeur as an

evolutionary progression in the understanding of the role of hermeneutics (and the hermeneutic

circle they all recognize) in the creation of worlds. Schleiermacher describes the circle formed

between the text and its constituent parts. Dilthey describes the circle formed by the text and its

historical context. Heidegger describes the circle formed as the text reveals the world, which in

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turn reveals the text. Gadamer proposes the methods of transposition and elevation as the keys to bridging the diverse contexts of texts. Finally, Ricoeur goes furthest of all to suggest that these contexts are independent worlds anchored in their ability to share symbols (describing, though not in explicit terms, Kripke's notion of the R factor). It is here, in the aftermath of Ricoeur, that we would expect those theorists dedicated to the understanding of alternative fictional worlds, most notably Thomas Pavel in his *Fictional Worlds* (1986) and Lubimir Dolezel in *Heterocosmica* (1997), to take the next leap forward in theorizing how, once the concept of alternative worlds was established, the consciousness of an individual is able to move between one world and another. What we find instead is silence.

Symbolic Entanglement, Spooky Action, and Transworld Peregrination

If we accept Ricoeur's argument, or, for that matter, the nascent argument of Cassirer, that symbols are the building blocks of worlds then two concepts should logically follow. First, that once symbols with an established meaning have been used to anchor into place the foundations of a new world, their interactions within the newly created world would generate a new set of meanings, even a completely new symbolic economy, within the horizon of the created world. In doing so they would form the engine for what Ricoeur calls the most difficult creative task, the creation of new symbolic meanings. I will return to this idea in the next chapter at greater length. The second notion that should flow from Ricoeur's argument is that the search for the process by which the consciousness of an individual moves from one world to another should begin by examining how symbols interact between worlds. Does an object or concept that serves a symbolic function in one world retain that symbolic function when it is implanted into a

distinct world, and can the process of implanting symbols into distinct worlds create new symbolic resonances? I believe so, and I believe that the best way to describe this action is through the vocabulary of quantum entanglement.

Entanglement describes the propensity of certain particles to behave such that their quantum state cannot be ascertained independent of their mates, no matter how much distance separates them. Put more simply it describes particles who behave synchronously, no matter how far away they are from one another. Albert Einstein, describing the phenomenon as part of the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen Paradox[xxix], famously dubbed this synchronicity "spooky action at a distance." This spooky action forms the basis of the modern experimental technology called quantum computing and provides a paradigm to understand how symbolic economies function across the boundaries of ontologically distinct worlds. If a symbolic concept or object in an alternative fictional world has a symbolic resonance for a reader in the primary world, if the symbolic economies align, a contact point is created and the consciousness of the reader is able to generate purchase in the alternative fictional world of the text. We might call this action "symbolic entanglement." No amount of distance between such entangled symbols can reduce their ability to serve as points of access. The more such points of access an alternative fictional world possesses, the greater the likelihood that the consciousness of the reader will be able to gain access to the world of the text.

We can see this concept of symbolic entanglement play out the in the sixth book of C.S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Magician's Nephew*. Digory, the story's protagonist, has retrieved an apple from the Narnian equivalent of the Tree of Life in order to heal his mother, who is slowly dying of an unspecified ailment (some form of cancer seems most likely). After

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she has eaten the apple, and been miraculously healed, Digory plants the core of the apple in the garden. Lewis writes:

> It was like this. The tree which sprang from the Apple that Digory planted in the back garden, lived and grew into a fine tree. Growing in the soil of our world, far out of the sound of Aslan's voice and far from the young air of Narnia, it did not bear apples that would revive a dying woman as Digory's Mother had been revived, though it did bear apples more beautiful than any others in England, and they were extremely good for you, though not fully magical. But inside itself, in the very sap of it, the tree (so to speak) never forgot that other tree in Narnia to which it belonged. Sometimes it would move mysteriously when there was no wind blowing: I think that when this happened there were high winds in Narnia and the English tree quivered because, at that moment, the Narnian tree was rocking and swaying in a strong western gale. (185)

The movement of the English tree in response to Narnian winds is, to borrow Einstein's phrase, spooky action at a distance. The Tree of Life, itself a potent symbol which appears not only in the writing of Lewis, but also in *The Silmarillion* of J.R.R. Tolkien, functions not only within the confines of our world with its long mythic tradition, but, when transplanted into Narnia creates a point of contact capable of generating spooky action. This action works across boundaries of worlds that are more significant in their separation than any degree of physical distance. As Digory's Uncle Andrew describes, at the outset of the text, the space between Narnia and Earth cannot even be called space at all:

I don't mean another planet, you know; they're part of our world and you could

get to them if you went far enough—but a really other world—another Nature—

another universe—somewhere you could never reach even if you travelled

through the space of this universe for ever and ever—a world that could be

reached only by Magic…(21)

The entangled symbol, here the tree, creates a kind of tunnel that runs from one world into

another. This tunnel mirrors the description that Ricoeur gives for the hermeneutic process.

Ricoeur begins by defining a symbol as "*any structure of signification in which a direct,*

primary, literal meaning designates, in addition, another meaning which is indirect, secondary,

and figurative and which can be apprehended only through the apprehension of the first"[xxx]

("Existence and Hermeneutics" 12, emphasis present in source). He goes on to define the process

of hermeneutics as "*the work of thought which consists in deciphering the hidden meaning in the*

apparent meaning, in unfolding the levels of meaning implied in the literal meaning" (13,

emphasis present in source). What we see emerge from these two definitions is similar kind of

entangled tunneling. To work through a symbol, one must move through the primary layer of its

meaning into its secondary layer. For symbols that occupy the same world, this process takes the

form of Gadamer's notion of elevation, drawing the interpreter into a new horizon by unfolding

new levels of meaning along a single trajectory. If these symbols do not exist in the same world,

however, we are not merely dealing with one trajectory of symbolic meaning, or one symbolic

economy. In the case of alternative worlds, the process of pushing through the primary meaning

to the secondary meaning, forces the interpreter through the liminal space between worlds, to

engage simultaneously with the symbolic resonances both in the primary world, but also the

resonances that are present in the second world. In this moment the interpreter has become

entangled, has peregrinated the boundary between worlds and is able to enter into the status of ironic imagination that Saler and Gallagher argue is necessary to solidify their presence in both the primary and fictional worlds.

Lewis recognizes the transportational power of symbols in movement between worlds. long before (if one can speak of 'long befores' in a book of 186 pages) his discussion of the spooky action of the English tree moving in response to Narnian wind, Lewis sets the stage for understanding movement between worlds with the instructive metaphor of the crawlspace that runs between all the units in the townhouse where Digory lives. The crawl space, called the "smuggler's cave" or, merely, "the Cave," is an in between place that opens out into the attics of each house in the row (5-6). When, in the third chapter, Polly and Digory find themselves in "The Wood Between the Worlds," Lewis's imaginary representation of the space that exists between all of the worlds of his multiverse—a sleepy wood where nothing ever happens and where all action, unless intensely focused upon, fades into a genial torpor, this is explained through the metaphor of the smuggler's cave:

> Polly looked puzzled. "Don't you see?" said Digory. "No, do listen. Think of our tunnel under the slates at home. It isn't a room in any of the houses. In a way, it isn't really part of any of the houses. But once you're in the tunnel you can go along it and come out into any of the houses in the row. Mightn't this wood be the same?—a place that isn't in any of the worlds, but once you've found that place you can get into them all." (34)

To utilize the Platonic metaphor that Lewis frequently uses throughout the *Chronicles* (which he is directly referencing in his decision to render Cave as a proper noun), the physical

manifestation of the smuggler's cave teaches Digory and Polly the form of liminal transworld space. Unlike the Cave, however, which can be accessed by any industrious child looking for a hideaway, the Wood Between the Worlds can only be accessed through interaction with objects steeped in symbolic significance: specifically, rings made of fairy dust, stored in a box engraved with the script of Atlantis. Even though Digory and Polly have the metaphorical understanding of how it is that the Wood functions as an intermediate space between worlds, the pools which direct travelers from one world to another are not operative without the rings that Digory's Uncle Andrew has made from the fairy dust:

> Neither of them much liked the idea of jumping into that pool, but neither said so to the other. They took hands and said "One—Two—Three—Go" and jumped. There was a great splash and of course they closed their eyes. But when they opened them again they found they were still standing, hand in hand, in that green wood and hardly up to their ankles in water. The pool was apparently only a couple of inches deep. (33)

The magical ring, already a potent symbol in modern fantasy literature by the time Lewis wrote *The Magician's Nephew* (having appeared in, a different form, in Tolkien's *Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings*), allows access to the liminal space. According to Victor and Edith Turner's description of the liminal in *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (1978), it is where the subject "becomes ambiguous, he passes through a realm or dimension that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state, he is betwixt and between all familiar lines of classification" (2). For the Turners, writing in the context of rites of passage, the relevant symbols to access the liminal are the ritualized processes the subject undergoes in order to pass from one stage into another. For a reader, moving into liminal spaces is accomplished through

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the process of interpretation. Pushing through one layer of meaning into a second (or multiple) subsequent layers forces the interpreter into the space between meanings, and it is there that symbols find their transporting power, their spooky action.

Returning then to the symbol of the tree, which, as I have already described is engaged in a relationship of spooky action with its Narnian counterpart, Lewis promptly relates this action to transworld peregrination. He writes of the tree that:

> It was proved later that there was still magic in [the wood of the tree]. For when Digory was quite middle aged (and he was a famous learned man, a Professor, and a great traveler by that time) and the Ketterley's old house belonged to him, there was a great storm all over the south of England which blew the tree down. He couldn't bear to have it simply chopped up for firewood, so he had part of the timber made into a wardrobe, which he put in his big house in the country. And though he himself did not discover the magic properties of that wardrobe, someone else did. That was the beginning of all the comings and going between Narnia and our world, which you can read of in other books. (184)

By making contact with the symbolic object in the primary world (the wardrobe), Lucy Pevensie (in *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*) is brought across the border between worlds. In the case of the wardrobe, with its connection to the tree, the symbol and how it functions are laid bare to even the most surface level reading. However, the process does not merely work on the surface level, and two questions should be readily apparent: are there particular kinds of symbols that do or do not function as world bridging, while other kinds do not, on what levels is it

possible to gain this kind of symbolic entanglement, and, how are the symbols that function to bridge the liminal space between worlds formed?

The answer to the first question is relatively straight forward. Not all symbols are entangled, and therefore not all symbols serve as points of passage between worlds. How does this work? If we hearken back to Ricoeur it is clear that once a world is formed it inaugurates its own internal hermeneutic circle. Objects can take on symbolic meaning within the confines of that world, but these objects do not necessarily correspond to symbolic meanings in other worlds. The best example of this is taken from Tolkien's *Fellowship of the Ring*. Frodo, Merry, Pippen, and Sam are making their initial escape from the Shire towards Elrond's redoubt at Rivendell. Along the way they encounter a group of elves on their way to the Grey Havens to depart from Middle Earth. The elves are singing a hymn to Elbereth, an alias of Varda, "Lady of the Stars, who knows all the regions of Eä. Too great is her beauty to be declared in the words of Men or of Elves; for the light of Ilúvatar lives still in her face" (*Silmarillion* 26). At the time that *The Fellowship* is written, however, there is no published material available for a reader to gain insight into the origin or nature of Elbereth. Rather, she exists in the initial encounter only as a name that identifies the elves singing her hymn, and who invokes a sense of awe. "These are High Elves! They spoke the name of Elbereth! said Frodo in amazement…" (115). Throughout the text Elbereth's name continues to function symbolically. Frodo invokes the name at various moments of peril precisely because of its symbolic content. However, without a fuller understanding of who Elbereth is there is no corresponding symbol outside of the world that Tolkien has created[xxxi]. There are many such examples throughout *The Lord of the Rings*, but the one example serves to demonstrate the point—not all symbols work this way[xxxii].

The second question, on what levels can this symbolic entanglement function, proves more interesting because it suggests that the engagement with a fictional world is not static from one reading to the next, but progressive across multiple readings. The underlying theory, however, remains straight forward enough. "The literary work," Ricoeur reminds us, recalling Schleiermacher, "cannot be reduced to a sequence of sentences which are individually intelligible; rather, it is an architecture of themes and purposes which can be constructed in several ways. *The relation of part to whole is ineluctably circular*" (Ricoeur 1981 175). On a practical level, this means that one cannot have a view of the text "as a totality" (ibid.) without first having a knowledge of the text as a totality. The implication is that that while it is possible for the entanglement of certain symbols to carry the reader across the liminal space between worlds on the initial reading, there are other symbolic structures which become clear only when the text is able to be considered holistically on the level of themes and architecture. I will return to this point shortly, when considering how symbolic entanglement at the level of structure is brought about.

This leads us to the last of the three immediate questions that I listed above. Specifically, how are these symbols, regardless of what level they are operating on, formed? While the answers to the last two questions have been, somewhat, obvious, here the answer requires deeper reflection.

Creating Symbolic Entanglements

To understand the process by which the symbols that bind worlds together are created it is helpful to start by examining those symbols which are available to serve this function for a

reader on the first reading. As a result, I will attempt to answer this question beginning with an object—Susan's horn— that specifically facilitates movement between Earth and Narnia in *Prince Caspian*, and then, once the principle has been established, expand out to discuss symbols that operate on the levels of narrative and structure within the same text. If all goes well, the result of this investigation will be a demonstration of how three levels of symbolic entanglement function simultaneously within *Caspian*, which can then serve as a model for how these same levels function in other texts which generate alternative worlds.

The horn is initially given to Susan in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by Father Christmas, who tells her that "when you put this horn to your lips and blow it, then, wherever you are, I think help of some kind will come to you" (104). After the events of the first novel, the horn is lost for several hundred years until it is recovered by Prince Caspian, who blows it at a moment of dire need, and by so doing summons the Pevensie children, who have become legendary figures, from England into Narnia. If the horn is an entangled symbol that allows for transworld peregrination, with what is it entangled?

There is a rich tradition across a variety of medieval sources for horns of magic power or significance. In Norris J. Lacy's *The New Arthurian Encyclopedia*, a compendium of medieval sources related, as the title suggests, to Arthur, there are thirty-two references to horns or olifants (a short horn of elephant ivory). These horns carry a variety of connotations: they divine the fidelity of the wives of knights gone off to war, they identify particular soldiers as valiant or cowardly, and, as is the case of Susan's horn, to call for aid in times of dire crisis. Nor are the appearances of such horns limited to Arthurian literature. Perhaps the most famous horn in world literature is the olifant of Roland, the principle retainer of Charlemagne, and the hero of (among

other epics) *La Chanson de Roland*. In the eighty-fifth verse of the poem, Oliver, Roland's

friend, says, "*Cumpainz Rollant, sunez vostre olifan, / Si l'orrat Carles, ki est as porz passant.*

/ Je vos pelvis, ja returnerunt Franc"[1] (lines 1070-1072). Here the horn takes on meaning similar

to that of Susan's horn. If Roland sounds it, the main body of the Army, just ahead in the pass,

will be able to return and either prevent the battle through significant show of force, or prevent

the battle from becoming a catastrophe, "*fust i li reis, n'i oüssum damage*"[2] (1101). Roland's

refusal, "*ne placet Deu*"[3] (line1073), is indicative of the pride which will ultimately precipitate

Roland's own death. The horn, then, and Roland's refusal to utilize it encapsulates the central

drama of the *Chanson*. As a medievalist, Lewis, as Ward writes, was something of a "self-

proclaimed dinosaur who read as a 'native' texts that his students had to read as foreigners"

(229). Barring for a moment whether it is possible for any man in the early twentieth century to

read medieval texts as a 'native' (it is not), the important aspect of Lewis's familiarity with an

utilization of medieval texts, themes, tropes, etc. was to "infuse its quality into some other thing

which we can get inside" (229). It is precisely this infusion, to borrow Lewis's word, which

allows transworld peregrination. Lewis, here, is on the right track, but had the directionality of

the movement reversed. It is not the new fairy tale with a hunting horn that allows the reader to

gain access to the narrative tradition of magic horns that includes the *Chanson*. It is the tradition

of magic horns in the epic and fantastic tradition of Western Europe, the persistence of magic

horns as objects of cultural awareness that allows the horn to function in *Prince Caspian*. This

persistence extends beyond the writing of C.S. Lewis. In no particular order, examples of this

---

[1] Roland, my brother, please blow the horn just once. If Charles hears it, ahead in the pass, I'm sure he'll turn the army back. (all translations mine)

[2] If the King were here, we would not fear defeat.

[3] Never, by God.

persistence include: the Horn of Gondor, which J.R.R. Tolkien's character Boromir carries with him and blows at the moment of the dissolution of the Fellowship (a reference to *yet another* mythic horn, the Gjallarhorn of Heimdall which sounds to signal Ragnarok), the slug-horn of Robert Browning's *Childe Roland*, the horn of Mars in Alfred Lord Tennyson's "Testament of Cresseid," the magic flute that appears in Jean Terrasson's 1731 fantasy novel *Life of Sethos, Taken from Private Memoirs of the Ancient Egyptians* (and perhaps the first meta-textual fantasy novel), *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, the collection of Germanic folktales assembled by Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano (not to mention the song cycle based on these tales by Gustav Mahler that were among the most popular in Europe), and the list could conceivably go on, and on, and on without even branching into the realms of fairie instruments (as appear in Hope Mirrlees's 1926 novel *Lud-in-the-Mist*), the Hebrew Shofar, and the like.

This long and assorted tradition has infused the horn, as a textual object, with myriad symbolic facets. The more of the history of horns in epic and fantastic literature one is aware of, the more facets are available, and the more facets are available the more entangled the symbolic object becomes. There are more lines along which the consciousness can flow from the original point of entry into the world of the text. There is potential for this kind of symbolic infusion any time an object is produced textually. I have taken to calling this process the Menard Mechanism, named for Jorge Luis Borges's short story "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*" (1939). Menard, the titular character, is endeavoring to author *Don Quixote* in the twentieth century. Not to merely reproduce the established text, but to arrive at it through genuine composition of his own. "Menard's fragmentary Quixote is more subtle than Cervantes'," the narrator explains, "Cervantes crudely juxtaposes the humble provincial reality of his country against the fantasies of romance, while Menard chooses as his "reality" the land of Carmen during the century that

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saw the Battle of Lepanto and the plays of Lope de Vega" (38). Borges's argument here is that

by re-composing the text four centuries after it originally appeared, Menard has brought to bear a

greater wealth of symbolic meanings. While Cervantes only had the hermeneutic horizon of the

late 16th and early 17th centuries available to him at the time of his composition, Menard had four

centuries of history and cultural development to inform his choices. Though the words they

produce is mirror identical, the texts they produce are radically different; as Borges illustrates:

> It is a revelation to compare the *Don Quixote* of Pierre Menard with that of
>
> Miguel de Cervantes. Cervantes, for example wrote the following (Part I, Chapter
>
> IX):
>
> …truth, whose mother is history, rival of time, depository of deeds,
>
> witness of the past, exemplar and adviser to the present, and the future's
>
> counselor.
>
> This catalog of attributes, written in the seventeenth century, and written by the
>
> "ingenious layman" Miguel de Cervantes, is mere rhetorical praise of history.
>
> Menard, on the other hand, writes:
>
> …truth, whose mother is history, rival of time, depository of deeds,
>
> witness of the past, exemplar and adviser to the present, and the future's
>
> counselor.
>
> History, the *mother* of truth!—the idea is staggering. Menard, a
>
> contemporary of William James, defines history not as a *delving into* reality but as
>
> the very *fount* of reality. Historical truth, for Menard, is not "what happened"; it is
>
> what we *believe* happened…(39)

The precise same effect takes place as meaning is infused into textual objects. An olifant is a horn. But as the object, and objects like it, are used in various narratives the object is infused with meaning derived from the context in which it appears and functions in those narratives. When the horn is used in a new narrative, it carries with it those symbolic correspondences which are not explicitly eliminated from consideration by the context of the text. Those correspondences, that entanglement, connect the two worlds. Lewis points to this directly, by making the horn the vehicle by which the Pevensie children are drawn back into Narnia. Caspian, the gravity of his own military situation mirroring Roland's, chooses to summon the help that Roland rejected. Lewis writes: "Great Scott," said Peter. "So it was the horn—your own horn, Su—that dragged us all off that seat on the platform yesterday morning! I can hardly believe it; yet it fits right in" (96).

Upon realizing that the horn has drawn them back to Narnia, and that they are standing in the ruins of their own castle—Edmund having reminded Peter that time in Narnia flows differently than time on Earth, Peter immediately analogizes the situation:

> In that sense it really was hundreds of years ago that we lived in Cair Paravel. And now we're coming back to Narnia just as if we were Crusaders or Anglo Saxons or Ancient Britons or someone coming back to modern England! (28)

The allusion, though Peter does not name it in explicit terms, is to Arthur. The Pevensie children are not just any Ancient Britons returned to Narnia, they are the High Kings and Queens of Narnia's golden age. In *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, Lewis goes further:

> …if you went back to Narnia after spending a week here, you might find that a thousand Narnian years had passed, or only a day, or no time at all. You never

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know till you got there. Consequently, when the Pevensie children had returned to

Narnia last time for their second visit, it was (for the Narnians) as if King Arthur

came back to Britain as some people say he will. (10)

This positioning of the Pevensie children as Arthurian analogs renders them symbolic as

characters. Beginning in the 1930s, after the rise of Hitler to power in Germany, and running

through to the period in which *Prince Caspian* is set, the year after The London Blitz from 1940-

1941, the matter of Arthur was taken up by Britain's three pre-eminent fantasists. Tolkien wrote

"The Fall of Arthur," which recounts Arthur's battle against the Germanic Saxons. T.H. White

wrote the first three of his Arthurian novels (*The Sword in the Stone* (1938), *The Queen of Air

and Darkness* (1939), and *The Ill-Made Knight* (1940)), which treat with the rise of Arthur and

his battles prior to Camlann. Lewis, himself, in his science fiction trilogy, written during the

same period, deals directly with Arthur (who, in Lewis's version, was conducted to Venus to

await the day of judgment with the other undyings after his injury at the Battle of Camlann). The

story of Arthur, centered as it is on a British hero resisting a tide of Germanic invaders, had

special resonance to fantasists who feared that their experiences in The Great War would be

repeated as Germany began to remilitarize. For them, Arthur's Britain represents a civilizational

bulwark against, as T.H. White wrote in *The Book of Merlyn* "the bloody mind of man" (14). We

find echoes of the eschatological elements of Arthurian narratives are pervasive in the face of a

mounting Nazi menace. After the evacuation of Dunkirk, in the speech that has come to be

known by its most famous line, Winston Churchill utilized this same Arthurian narrative when

he said:

I expect that the Battle of Britain is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the

survival of Christian civilization. Upon it depends our own British life, and the

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long continuity of our institutions and our Empire. The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us. Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this Island or lose the war. If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be free and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands. But if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science. Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, "This was their finest hour."

The Pevensie's presence in Narnia in *Caspian* as symbolic Arthurs clarifies the stakes of the contest in which they are engaged. Miraz and the Telmarines become an existential threat to Narnia on the order of the Saxons, or of the Nazis. Peter's monomachial combat with Miraz at the climax of the novel is not just a contest between combatants; it is a clash of civilizations. But it does more than merely clarify stakes. The Arthur symbolism makes it easy for any reader who is familiar with Arthur (and amongst English children at this time that number is high) to enter into the world of the text. Nor is Arthur the only narrative symbolism that *Caspian* employs. References to the Biblical account of Adam and Eve, position the text within the narrative symbolism of the Bible, and the positioning of Miraz as a usurpatious fratricide with strong undertones of Claudius allow readers familiar with *Hamlet* a point of symbolic purchase as well. If my language of narrative symbol seems a lot like Gadamer's notion of tradition that allows for the fusion of horizons, that is because on a certain level the concepts are the same. But because Gadamer is orienting his focus towards the merging of discrete historical moments the language

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of horizons makes sense. Between discrete worlds, however, the concept of the horizon breaks down. Here we must instead speak about passage between worlds, and for that the language of symbol is the most operative.

The third symbolic level on which the text operates is, as described above, structural. While object and narrative symbols function on the initial reading, structural symbols are only visible when the work is visible in its totality (and in the case of the Narnia heptalogy visible only when the set of seven books can be considered at once). As a result, object and narrative symbols, serve, for the purposes of transworld peregrination, a primary function. Structural symbols serve a secondary, or auxiliary function.

Perhaps the best explanation of structural symbols in *The Chronicles of Narnia* can be found in Michael Ward's *Planet Narnia* (2008). Ward's text begins with what, at the time of his writing, was a longstanding problem in Lewis scholarship: what to make of the mishmash of elements in the texts. "Why," Ward asks, "is the series not uniformly allegorical" (4). As he points out "three of the books seem to be clearly based on biblical source material…[but there is also] Father Christmas from popularised hagiography, a Snow Queen out of Hans Anderson, English children fresh from E. Nesbit, and 'high style' diction reminiscent of Sir Thomas Malory" (ibid.) and this is a very compacted list. Dressed animals, ruined castles, hags, fauns, nymphs, werewolves, and the list goes on and on of factors culled and compiled out of a vast wealth of traditions. How is one, Ward wonders, to account for the presence of this confused jumble? Ward's answer is to read the Narnian heptalogy through the structure of the medieval cosmology of the heavenly spheres, with each of the seven books of the heptalogy corresponding in its particular flavor to one of the spheres. In this reading *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* encapsulates the character of Jupiter. Joviality is the order of the text (thereby

explaining, for Ward, the appearance of Father Christmas). *Prince Caspian*, the story of a

Narnian civil war to overthrow a usurping monarch, encapsulates the character of Mars. *The*

Voyage of the Dawn Treader encapsulates the character of Sol. And so on and so forth. Ward

dubs the symbolic "flavour" of each of the *Chronicles* "donegality" (for the tremendously

particular sense of place in the region of Donegal). What is distinctive about Ward's reading,

beyond its ability to explain the otherwise apparent hodgepodge of symbols on the Narnia books,

is that he draws attention to a symbolism that operates on the level of structure.

In *Caspian*, the donegal spirit is that of Mars. Ward lays out his argument in significant

detail, and a full rehearsal of the considerable body of evidence that he marshals would take far

too long, and be far too repetitive. Instead, I will focus on one particular scene that Ward argues

combines the two aspects of the character of Mars: the martial and the sylvan. It is just after the

conclusion of Miraz and Peter's single combat. Miraz, injured by Peter, is killed by two of his

own retainers who claim treachery and prompt the onset of a full-blown battle. As the battle

commences, the living trees of Narnia join the battle on the side of Caspian and the Pevensies.

Lewis writes:

> Have you ever stood at the edge of a great wood on a high ridge when a wild
>
> south-wester broke over it in full fury on an autumn evening? Imagine that sound.
>
> And then imagine that the wood, instead of being fixed to one place, was rushing
>
> *at* you; and was no longer trees but huge people; yet still like trees because their
>
> long arms waved like branches and their heads tossed and leaves fell round them
>
> in showers. It was like that for the Telmarines. (191)

This is what Ward calls the fusion of "Mars Gradivus" and "Mars Silvanus" (91), "for Mars is not only a fighting machine: he has a more pacific, life-giving dimension, too" (90). Nor is Lewis the only fantasist to recognize the connection of martial character with the natural order. In Tolkien's Middle Earth, Aragorn, the warrior-king, is a Ranger whose primary duty is to patrol the forests near the borders of Mordor, and at the siege of Isengard it is the Ents (tree-creatures of precisely the kind that Lewis describes in *Caspian*) who destroy the war factories of Saruman. In White's Arthur novels, Arthur learns the theory and practice of war from the creatures of the woodland. The larger point here is that there is a difference between the representation of violence and even warfare in a text, and the creation of a text that is symbolic of Mars. In order to recognize a text that falls into such a structurally symbolic category, however, it is necessary to be able to consider it in totality. The result is a supplemental entanglement that facilitates transition into the fictional world, but only after the text has been engaged with in its entirety.

If symbols can exist on levels where we recognize them when we encounter them on the first reading (including symbolic objects like: the Tree, Peter's sword and shield, Lucy's restorative potion, the ship Dawn Treader, the Magician's magic book, and, of course, Aslan himself; as well as narrative symbols like Arthur, Genesis, *Hamlet*, etc.), and if symbols can also exist on the level of structure such that they cannot be fully apprehended until the heptalogy is complete, this seems to confirm the, perhaps, obvious observation that the more intimately familiar we are with a text, the more layers of symbolic entanglement become available to us. This explains the familiar sensation that all readers have experienced of easily sliding back into a familiar world on the occasion of re-reading a well-loved text. The ability for multiple symbolic layers to perform their effect simultaneously suggests that this easy transition back into familiar

worlds is not a) accidental, nor b) merely a consequence of retreading familiar prose, but is, in fact, the result of an expansion in the number of nodes in the network of entangled symbols that allow the consciousness of the reader to move into the alternative fictional world.

Potential Objections

An astute reader might find several ways to object to the argument that I have made above. Might the fact that similar trends exist in Lewis and Tolkien be a product of their shared religious and educational backgrounds? Both are, after all, Christian medievalists. Or, might the patterns that I have described apply only to those texts that Farah Mendlesohn has, in *Rhetorics of Fantasy*, called "portal fantasies"? Might these processes work differently, or not at all, in fantasy literature that does not focus on children being magically summoned from Earth to Narnia (Mendlesohn would also argue that *The Lord of the Rings* falls into the same category of portal fantasy)? These are worthy objections and deserve a response.

In answer to the first objection, these levels do not appear to be bound in any particular way to Tolkien and Lewis' shared religion or profession. They are also present, for instance, in the Elric of Melniboné stories of Michael Moorcock. In an interview with the zine series *Mythmakers and Lawbreakers: Anarchist Writers on Fiction* (2009) Moorcock described himself as "an anarchist and a pragmatist. My moral/philosophical position is that of an anarchist" (4), and it is conventionally held that his approach to fantasy as a genre is as something of an anti-Tolkien, a writer who endeavors to upend the traditions and clichés of high fantasy. And yet, the Elric stories contain symbolic objects, like his black rune inscribed sword Stormbringer. They follow narrative patterns embedded in symbolic traditions: Elric is an emperor with a conniving

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kinsman who aims to displace him, a summoner trapped in pacts with dark powers, and a

king/hero whose actions are doomed to destroy his loved ones (recalling, among others, the

traditions of the Roman emperors, Faust, and Hercules). The Elric stories are also deeply

embedded structurally with the balance between fate and chance, and law and freedom. In this,

they owe a structural debt to, among others, Lord Dunsany, whose work *The Gods of Pegana*

(1905), begins:

> In the mists before THE BEGINNING, Fate and Chance cast lots to decide whose
>
> the Game should be; and he that won strode through the mists to MANA-YOOD-
>
> SUSHAI and said: "Now make gods for Me, for I have won the cast and the
>
> Game is to be Mine." Who it was that won the cast, and whether it was Fate or
>
> whether Chance that went through the mists before THE BEGINNING to
>
> MANA-YOOD-SUSHAI—*none knoweth.* (Preface)

This ambiguity plays out throughout *Pegana*, and indeed, throughout all of the works of Lord

Dunsany. This deliberate ambiguity between destiny and choice that is the essential structural

ingredient in Moorcock's worlds is as old as the *Oedipus* of Sophocles.

There are, of course, texts that do not contain symbols that function on these three levels.

These are texts that fall into the category that Dolezal calls, in *Heterocosmica* "world-imaging"

texts. An imaging text, but does not build, a world is far more closely related to the realism of

Flaubert than to the alternative world texts of authors like Tolkien, Lewis, or Moorcock. In the

first chapter of this work, I mentioned what is perhaps the best example of a world-imaging text,

the Blazing-World of Margaret Cavendish, as an attempt at world creation that failed because the

world that she created was not inhabitable by the consciousness of the reader. It fails for

precisely this reason, Cavendish makes no attempt at all to generate a symbolic economy within her text, and as such there is nothing for the reader to use to ground any kind of movement into the Blazing-World.

Nor are does the mechanism of symbolic entanglement work only in what the literary taxonomist Farah Mendlesohn has called portal fantasies. Portal fantasies follow the basic fairy tale narrative structure in which residents of a mundane environment enter into a fantastical environment for adventure and return to the mundane world at the conclusion of the text. Tolkien, for instance, explicitly deals in that structure in *The Hobbit*, whose full title is *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again.* This is the same structure employed in six of the seven Narnia books, the lone exception being *The Horse and His Boy*. But this structure holds in taxonomic groups that extend beyond the portal fantasty.

Before continuing, however, a caveat is necessary. Not all fantasy texts are engaged explicitly in world building. This is most explicitly a feature of two categories of fantastic texts that Mendlesohn calls portal fantasies and immersive fantasies. I will discuss the other two categories of fantasies that Mendlesohn identifies, intrusion fantasies and liminal fantasies, in the Coda to this text, for while they certainly raise interesting questions related to the nature of fictional worlds they do so in other ways that worthy of their own consideration. With that in mind the question becomes, do these three levels of symbolic entanglement hold up when applied not to portal fantasies, but to immersive fantasies?

Because Mendlesohn identifies it a strong example of the form, I will engage this question through Tolkien's *Silmarillion*. The precursor text to *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, *The Silmarillion* tells of the creation of the world that contains Middle Earth, of the

creation of life, of the initial wars against Morgath (Melkor) the first Dark Lord, and set the stage

for the events that will follow through Tolkien's hobbit centered novels. Unlike both *The Hobbit*

and *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Silmarillion* does not follow the fairy tale formula that draws

characters out of a small, mundane, and familiar world. Rather it takes the world entirely for

granted; as Mendlesohn writes "it is *The Silmarillion*, the book told from within the world, about

people who know their world, that is the immersive fantasy" (2-3).

The Silmarillion* operates symbolically on all three levels that I have described. It is so

filled with symbolic objects (the trees of light in Valinor, the Silmarils, redoubts and fortresses,

named swords, etc.) that one could fill an entire chapter with an encyclopedic enumeration of all

of them. It is also grounded in narrative traditions that carry symbolic weight: the creation of Eä

disharmony of Melkor, the sinking of Numinor into the sea, the love of Beren and Luthien, and

the constellizing of Eärendil are entangled, respectively, with the account of *Genesis*, the fall of

Satan, Atlantis, Tristan and Isolde (but with a Faerie twist), and any number of constellation

myths. Finally, the entire "Valaquenta" which opens the text and describes the creation of the

world, through the music of Eru, God, is structurally indebted to the Pythagorean concept of

celestial harmonies that tie together the natural world. As explained by S.K. Heninger, in

Touches of Sweet Harmony: Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics (1974), the

cosmology of Pythagoras "had revealed a dependable relationship between the finite and the

infinite, some manageable way of dealing with the infinite through knowledge of the finite"

(Heninger 100). For Pythagoras "the celestial harmony permeates the universe…modulating the

items of nature and binding them together" (101). This cosmic structure is hierarchal, divinely

ordered out of chaos (163), and relies on the understanding of the metaphorical correspondence

between micro and macrocosm (335). Because the cosmos are designed with this metaphorical

correspondence between high and low things it is possible to establish an informational

"exchange" between the supernatural and the natural by means of salient metaphors (337).

Among these metaphors the most salient is music.

Conclusion

So, if, as I have argued, it is true that the opening of fissures of possibility in the

previously staid conception of the world precipitated by the four revolutions discussed in chapter

one opened up the space of possibility for alternative fictional worlds to be created, and if it is

true, as this chapter has argued, that these worlds are reached by engaging with entangled

symbols on three distinct levels (object, narrative, and structure), then one question remains.

Why does any of this matter? It is to this question that the next chapter will turn.

[xxv] The work of Bell, referenced in the previous chapter, does a significant amount to dispel the notion advanced by both Saler and Jackson (though in slightly different forms) that fantasy literature arises out of a sense of disenchantment propagated by the conditions of industrial capital and the sexual morays of the Victorian and Edwardian periods. This problem is aggravated because neither Saler nor Jackson attempt to think fantasy literature through the lens of "world," and as a result do not end up asking the right question: i.e. "under what conditions is it possible for the first time to begin "thinking" alternative worlds?"

xxvi Which I will consider as beginning with the expansion of hermeneutics beyond sacred and juridical texts, and, for the purposes of ease of dating, will place with Friedrich Schleiermacher, acceding to Richard E. Palmer's claim that Schleiermacher "is properly regarded as the father of modern hermeneutics" (97).

xxvii In the set problem Kripke is describing here G = actual world, K = set of all possible worlds, and R = the accessibility relation that exists between worlds (for instance the expression $w R v$ would mean that world w was accessible from world v, such w & v are possible iterations of one another).

xxviii Much more could be said about this particular vision about the formation of mythology, particularly if one remembers from basic mathematics that there exist infinitely more imaginary numbers than rational ones. External and incommunicable reality has a way of trying to inject itself into human cognition.

xxix In the article titled "Can Quantum-Mechanical Description of Physical Reality Be Considered Complete?"

xxxThough Ricoeur goes out of his way to specify that he is adopting a narrower interpretation of symbol than does Cassirer, the process of interpretation as he describes it does not hinge on his narrower interpretation.

xxxiOf course it is possible, armed with *The Silmarillion* to suggest that Elbereth is a Venus figure, a goddess of light and stars. However, such a correspondence is impossible for ant reader until 1977, and remains opaque to most readers of Tolkien who eschew *The Silmarillion* altogether. Consequently, the name functions symbolically, for most readers, only within the world of the text.

xxxii There is, of course, another kind of symbol that fails to create points of access. What the theologian Paul Tillich in *The Theology of Culture* (1964) called a "dead symbol." For Tillich, symbols are operative as long as their content is culturally active and relevant. When that content ceases to be active (either because the culture in question has moved on from the symbol, or has vanished altogether) the symbol becomes vacated of its power.

CHAPTER THREE: How Apocalyptic Consciousness is Formed

It is the theory that decides what we can observe.

-Albert Einstein

This chapter will turn its focus to the question of the stakes of this whole enterprise. Why is it important that human beings engage, through their interactions with texts, in the process of trans-world peregrination? What does it matter that the consciousness of a reader, through symbolic entanglement, leaves one world behind and passes into another? These questions drive to the heart of the significance of the reading of fiction itself, and, the answer to these questions is bound up inextricably from the question of what it is that we gain when we read, tell, and listen to stories. This is the question towards which the argument of this dissertation has been building: chapter one described the conditions that were necessary for alternative fictional worlds to emerge out of the space opened up by the revolutions of economy, natural philosophy, historiography, and aesthetics; chapter two described the nature of symbolic entanglement and how it is through the application of the hermeneutic process to entangled symbols that the consciousness of the reader moves from one world into another; now, in this chapter, I will argue that the process of moving from one world into another creates what I will call a moment of "apocalyptic consciousness," an absolute breaking apart of the world that the consciousness of the reader currently occupies. But an apocalypse is not just an ending. It is also a revelation, an unveiling of a new, previously unimagined, sphere of possibilities and potential, and, I will argue, the process of trans-world peregrination, each time it occurs, exposes the consciousness of the traveler to this radical potential.

This chapter will divide the argument into two sections. The first section will show, with help from Hope Mirrlees' *Lud-in-the-Mist*, how movement through the liminal space between worlds constitutes a total-destruction of the pre-existing notion of world, analogous to Derrida's description of Death in the seminars, and how the arrival in each new world visited results in a radical restructuring of the reader's world. The second section will take a turn towards practical application, and explains how this restructuring can shape our understanding of problems both political and Political, first by examining how trans-world peregrination works to confront issues of colonial erasure in the individual consciousness in *Lud-in-the Mist*, and then by looking at the question of narrative and nationalism, and argue that Tolkien's Middle-earth makes it possible for the reader to imagine a non-statist figuration of nationalism of the type that was prevalent amongst the thinkers of the Adriatic in the years before the First World War.

Before delving deeper into the question of how it is that apocalyptic consciousness if formed it is necessary to confront the claim made by Darko Suvin that science fiction is a literature of radical political potential, while fantasy literature is not. Suvin writes, in "Cognition and Estrangement," that:

> Even less congenial to SF is the *fantasy* (ghost, horror, Gothic, weird) tale, a genre committed to the interposition of anti-cognitive laws into the empirical environment. Where the folktale is indifferent, the fantasy is inimical to the empirical world and its laws. The thesis could be defended that the fantasy is significant insofar as it is impure and fails to establish a superordinated maleficent world of its own, causing a grotesque tension between arbitrary supernatural phenomena and the empirical norms they infiltrate. Gogol's Nose is significant because it is walking down the Nevski Prospect, with a certain rank in the civil

service, and so on; if the Nose were in a completely fantastic world—say H. P. Lovecraft's—it would be just another ghoulish thrill. When fantasy does not make for such a tension between the supernatural and the author's empirical environment, its monotonous reduction of all possible horizons to Death makes of it just a subliterature of mystification. Commercial lumping of it into the same category as SF is thus a grave disservice and rampantly sociopathological phenomenon.

The claim that Suvin is making here, that fantasy is an inherently conservative literature, is a common one. Michael Moorcock, famously, advances the same argument. Rosemary Jackson, who argues for fantasy's potential as a literature of subversion, is reduced to making the psychoanalytic argument that the genre serves to express and expel subversive desires on the level of the unconscious. As a defense of the political value of fantasy as a genre, Jackson's argument is somewhat lacking. Brian Attebury, in *Strategies of Fantasy*, limits his argument to the power of fantasy to call into question other forms of narrative by injecting them with fantastic elements, but goes no further towards establishing a politics of fantasy. Far more has been written to describe the features of fantasy literature, to taxonomize it, than has been written describing its potential for revolutionary power.

As I argued in the introduction, the political power of fantasy literature lies in the creation of alternative worlds, and in the formation of apocalyptic consciousness that is the consequence of regular movement between such worlds. Apocalyptic consciousness is a consciousness that is formed by the continual process of the destruction and reforming of the world of the reader. To understand how this consciousness forms, it is necessary to first examine Derrida's writing on

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the relationship between death and the end of the world. In "Rams: Uninterrupted Dialogue—Between Two Infinites," Derrida writes that:

> For each time, and each time singularly, each time irreplaceably, each time infinitely, death is nothing less than an end of the world. Not only one end among others, the end of someone or of something in the world, the end of a life or of a living being. Death puts an end neither to someone in the world nor to one world among others. Death marks each time, each time in defiance of arithmetic, the absolute end of the one and only world, of that which opens as a one and only world, the end of the unique world, the end of the totality of what is or can be presented as the origin of the world for any unique living being, be it human or not. (qtd. Gaston 104)

If we understand world as a condensation of the field of being into a unified whole that is perceptible to consciousness, then Derrida's point becomes clear. Death, in each and every instance, cracks the façade of the world and removes some element. This removal breaks up the unity that is the principle feature of the world as a schematic object. Derrida's reference to a "defiance of arithmetic" drives this point home. Here arithmetic stands as a synecdoche of all world-building languages. If we remember Gödel's second theorem, discussion of which opened the chapter, we find that arithmetic as a form of representing the world is not externally valid, but only functions within itself, so it is with all worlds. Derrida's vision of Death, then, reminds us of Karl Barth's formulation of evil as *das nichtege* (the nothingness), that steals into the world through human choice and negates its unity.

The important question, then, is whether Death is the only thing that is capable of so entering the world and disrupting its unity? Is this disruption always a negation? Here Derrida's claim that each individual death is the total-destruction of the world requires a second step. If the world, as a unity, is destroyed in each individual instance of death, how is it that there are worlds at all? In order to understand how this could be true, or how Derrida's reasoning could be anything other than philosophical hyperbole, we must conceptualize Death not as a force purely of negation, but rather, as one of several apocalyptic forces. Apocalypse, as Thomas J.J. Altizer points out in "Apocalypticism and Modern Thinking," ought not be interpreted only "the ending of an old world." The world itself means "unveiling," and when we forget the connotation of apocalypse as "an advent ushering in a wholly new world" (4) we deprive ourselves of half of the picture. While the event itself may, and often is, "violent and disruptive" (McCullough xx), the event itself "constitutes an absolute beginning" (xxiv). Apocalypse, then, is a clearing of the field, a reissuing of the world with the capacity to redefine the terms. In short, in the apocalypse, lies the fullness of revolutionary potential. As Ketterer argues, literature dealing with alternative worlds has the power to create "a metaphorical destruction of that "real" world in the reader's head" (13). However, it is not merely sufficient to say that the existence of two worlds simultaneously results in the destruction of one. As Charles Spinoza and Hubert L. Dreyfus's claim, in "Two Kinds of Antiessentialism and Their Consequences" (1996), it is possible to simultaneously dwell in "weakly commensurate worlds" (748). The very existence of Gallagher's "flexible mental state" (346) or Saler's "ironic imagination" demonstrate this simultaneity. To realize apocalyptic effect, it is not enough to have two worlds. It is necessary to understand how consciousness moves from one world into another, a process I call trans-world peregrination.

Like Death, trans-world peregrination has apocalyptic consequences. Through symbolic entanglement, as described in the second chapter, the consciousness of the reader leaves the primary world, moves through the intermediate liminal realm, and emerges into the alternative world of the text. This process mirrors the aesthetic workings of Apocalypse as described by Stephen D. O'Leary in *Arguing the Apocalypse* (1994). O'Leary writes that "the aesthetic experience of [apocalypse] collapses sacred time into the present through a vivid evocation of emotionally charges symbolism" (202). This collapsing of scared time into the present through the application of symbol, mirrors the process that I have described whereby symbol connects, through entanglement, two distinct worlds.

If Death, in Derrida's reading, is read as the destruction *of* the world on account of its breaking of the illusion of unity imposed by the world-building schematics of the consciousness, as a denial of the notion of *wholeness*, then the process of leaving behind the world as it is understood to pass through liminal space into a differently schematized sphere, a world with its own laws and rules, must accomplish the same fracturing of the unified oneness of the world. We can see an example of this fracturing of the world in Hope Mirrlees' *Lud-in-the-Mist* (1926). The novel begins:

> The Free State of Dorimare was a very small country…bounded on the south by the sea and on the north and east by mountains, while its center consisted of a rich plain…Indeed, towards the west, in striking contrast with the pastoral sobriety of the central plain, the aspect of the country became, if not tropical, at any rate distinctly exotic. Nor was this to be wondered at, perhaps; for beyond the Debatable Hills (the boundary of Dorimare in the west) lay Fairyland. There had, however, been no intercourse between the two countries for many centuries. (4).

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While Dorimare is an imaginary place the main features of the "Free State" are somewhat recognizably English. The "pastoral sobriety" of the central plain, which is described as watered by two rivers (Thames and Severn spring to mind), is directly contrasted with the "exotic" environment that is equated with the tropics. This tropical zone is the first part of a two-tiered zone of liminality, which extends into the region called the "Debatable Hills," that separates Dorimare from Fairyland. The notion of discourse present in the idea of debate is constricted by the lack of intercourse between the countries. This tension, between what should be spoken and what is left in silence, provides the major thrust of the plot of the novel, for "in the eye of the law Fairyland did not exist" (11).

The existence of Dorimare is structured around the explicit legal rejection of the presence of Fairyland (with the predictable limits on speech that are highlighted by the lack of open discourse or debate), and the power of Fairyland to enthrall citizens of the supposed free state, and the implicit, disciplinary, understanding that contact with Fairyland transforms even respectable residents of Lud-in-the-Mist (the major city of Dorimare) into aliens in their own country. Mirrlees represents this alienating effect early in the novel. Master Chanticleer, the novel's main character, hears a note struck on a lute that an ancestor had brought back from Fairyland and is profoundly altered. Mirrlees writes:

> He was never again the same man. For years that note was the apex of his nightly dreams; the point towards which, by their circuitous and seemingly senseless windings, they had all the time been converging. It was as if the note were a living substance, and subject to the law of chemical changes - that is to say, as that law works in dreams…Before he had heard the note he had caused his father some uneasiness by his impatience of routine and his hankering after travel and

adventure…But after he had heard the Note a more stay-at-home and steady young man could not have been found in Lud-in-the-Mist. For it had generated in him what one can only call a wistful yearning after the prosaic things he already possessed. It was as if he thought he had already lost what he was actually holding in his hands. (7).

The alienating, and enthralling, influence of Fairyland works on something like the level of chemical change. And it is this description that is important, because any chemical change renders return to the initial state impossible. Even in a minor chemical transition, ice to water, for instance, there is a loss to entropy of some of the material present in the initial phase. The more drastic the reaction, the more impossible it is to reverse it back towards its previous state of equilibrium, and the change in Master Chanticleer is significant enough that it haunts his dreams and stays constantly in the back of his mind. "His life was poisoned," Mirrlees writes "at its springs by a small nameless fear, a fear not always active, for during considerable periods it would lie almost dormant / *almost*, but not entirely" (5). The change to Chanticleer is the same as the change to one who has, for Derrida, survived the witnessing of the death of another. Derrida writes that "the survivor, then, remains alone. Beyond the world of the other, he is also in some fashion beyond or before the world itself. In the world outside the world and deprived of the world" (106). Nor if one, in their meditation on the nature of Chanticleer's problem, were reminded of Paul Ricoeur's claim, in *Memory, History, Forgetting* (2004), that "it is a primordial attribute of affections to survive, to persist, to remain, to endure, while keeping the mark of absence and of distance" (427) they would, perhaps, not be much amiss. For that which is intimately bound to the affections can never be fully forgotten. And because they cannot forget,

they can never fully eliminate the danger brought about by the intrusion into Dorimare of objects of Fairyland.

This is, in no small part, because Fairyland is a powerfully transformative place, and the major action of the novel is concerned with the import of fruit from Fairyland that upsets the equilibrium of Lud-in-the-Mist (13).Through the consequences of this fruit, which moves amongst the people of Lud-in-the-Mist like a drug, Mirrlees suggests that even in instances where there is a conscious and deliberate attempt to diminish or eliminate awareness of Fairyland it is impossible. The encounter with Fairyland operates like a rite of passage. By his contact with the fairy lute, Master Chanticleer has become, as Victor and Edith Turner write, "ambiguous, he passes through a realm or dimension that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state, he is betwixt and between all familiar lines of classification" (2). The result is that, by contact with a world outside his own, Chanticleer is indelibly changed. His world, as he previously understood it is shattered, and requires reconfiguration. As it is with Chanticleer, so it is with the reader. Ricoeur uses the language of forgetfulness and says that such an encounter cannot be forgotten. I prefer to think of what happens analogically in relation to Roland Barthes claim in "Leaving the Movie Theater," where he makes the argument that in the confines of the theater he becomes hypnotically glued to the screen. To leave the theater, then, he must unglue himself from the screen—or, for our purposes, to pass back from the fictional world into the primary world. However, as anyone who has ever attempted to remove the price sticker from a book has experienced the process of removing the adhesive leaves behind a remnant. Unlike the adhesive of a sticker, however, there is no solvent that can scrub away the remnant of the alternative world that remains with the reader (Barthes 345-349).

This remnant is integrated into the new world that the reader is forced to establish, the previous world they inhabited having been irretrievably broken. Understood in this way, we return to Spinoza and Dreyfus's claim that it is possible to simultaneously dwell in "weakly commensurate worlds" (748) does not go nearly far enough. Inhabiting multiple worlds is not merely an activity that is *possible* between vaguely related worlds. It is the *inevitable* result of moving between worlds. It is not a position we can *choose* to adopt, so long as and provided that the conditions of the second world are intelligible within the construct of the primary world of our habitation. It is an *apocalyptic* reordering, wherein the primary world is *shattered* into pieces and *reassembled* with pieces of the alternative world filling in the gaps created when the shattering occurred. That Spinosa and Dreyfus do not venture out this far is understandable. They are not concerned with fiction, and the worlds that it produces, and their vision of what constitutes a world is somewhat more limited. Be that as it may, they go further than any other theorists in terms of discussing the action and consequence of living between worlds, yet it is necessary to go further still to understand the full power of transworld peregrination as a consciousness configuring force.

This apocalyptic reconfiguration is, as the Turners argue, the principle consequence of passing through the liminal space. When such passage occurs "we tend to find the prolific generation of new experimental models—utopias, new philosophical systems, scientific hypotheses, political programs, art forms, and the like—among which reality-testing will result…to make intelligible, and give form to, the new contents of social relations" (3). In the case of *Lud-in-the-Mist* the consequences of Chanticleer's interaction with Fairyland calls into question certain aspects of the epistemological status quo related to the state of British imperialism.

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When *Lud-in-the-Mist* was originally published in 1926, there was very little doubt of the

political health of the British empire (at least from the perspective of the British themselves). As

a result of this stability, and the lack of any realistic fear that the empire was on the verge of

disintegration, there is an interesting tension between two modes of understanding the action of

imperialism as it relates to the public consciousness in England from the mid-nineteenth century

up until the results of the Second World War make it clear that the empire, as previously

constituted, has become untenable. The first is Gayatri Spivak's argument that it "should not be

possible to read nineteenth-century British literature without remembering that

imperialism…was a crucial part of the cultural representation of England to the English" (243),

and the second comes from Bernard Porter's *Absentminded Imperialists*, where Porter argues

precisely the opposite. For Porter, numerous factors (he includes the dominance of Whig

historians in the academy as one of these factors), resulted in a kind of "whitewashing" of

imperial history (8-9). The result of this whitewashing was that the empire, though essentially

integrated into the material life of the England in the period, was conspicuously absent from the

day to day thinking of the people. His book, which focuses largely on questions of curriculum

and other places where the 'official' line contexts with public awareness, argues that such factors

were consciously designed to exclude mention of imperial holdings. There are a number of

places where one can reasonably disagree with Porter's characterization (he acknowledges his

role as a historian and not as a cultural theorist, and so engages less—and less critically—with

the kind of texts that Said and Spivak use to formulate their claims), but it is much harder to

contest his claim that there was a vested interest in the eyes of the government in reducing

awareness of action within imperial holdings to the general public.

Within the context of this tension, Hope Mirrlees' *Lud-in-the-Mist* (1926), published after

World War I, and the high-water mark of British imperial power, but before the final

disintegration of England's colonial holdings, provides an excellent example of how the

networks of exchange present in the Empire manifested themselves in a fantastic text. The

existence of Dorimare is structured around the explicit legal rejection of the presence of

Fairyland (with the predictable limits on speech that are highlighted by the lack of open

discourse or debate), and the power of Fairyland to enthrall citizens of the supposed free state,

and the implicit, disciplinary, understanding that contact with Fairyland transforms even

respectable residents of Lud-in-the-Mist (the major city of Dorimare) into aliens in their own

country. The same anxiety was present in England. Porter writes that "colonial issues rarely

aroused any great interest in parliament, unless they involved major wars. The machinery of

government was not affected [by the loss of the empire], though some contemporaries feared it

might be, by authoritarian habits acquired in places like India seeping back home" (2-3). The

structure of Law in England, embodied in parliament, avoids mention of the fact of empire, and

addresses it only when there is some measure of fear that contact with the subjects of empire will

lead to the adoption of authoritarian practices in the homeland, doing away with the sense of

liberty that had come to define the domestic ethos. Mirrlees's text suggests that even in instances

where there is a conscious and deliberate attempt to diminish awareness of empire, to create

"absentminded imperialists" as the title of Porter's book suggests, that it is impossible to excise

empire from the structure of English life. Through the interactions between Chanticleer and the

fairy lute, and the youth of Dorimare and the fairy fruit Mirrlees argues for a need to reconfigure

the degree to which colonial issues are overlooked in the metropole. For readers, it is, as Michael

Saler describes in *As If:Modern Enchantment and the Literary Prehistory of Virtual Reality*

(2012), "[that] those issues that generated tensions with their primary beliefs could be the most fruitful ones, forcing them to question their own tacitly held convictions" (184).

If trans-world peregrination has an effect on politics at the level of the personal, directing the reader the need to expand their awareness of the social conditions surrounding them in the primary world, is it possible that through trans-world peregrination it is possible to deal with larger scale political questions? Does trans-world peregrination offer us the chance to reconfigure our understanding of the world on the level of national consciousness? As the next section of this chapter will argue, world-building and transworld peregrination creates the space wherein it is possible to challenge those forms and manifestations of power that we have taken as historical givens. Nowhere is this more evident than in the question of alternative formulations of nationalism.

"What is a Nation?"

To understand what is meant by alternative nationalisms, however, it is necessary to begin with the question of nation itself. In *Nationalists Who Feared the Nation* (2012)[xxxiii], Dominique Reill quotes at length an 1882 lecture by Ernest Renan that is "considered to this day a seminal work for understanding the promises and limitations of nationhood" (33). Renan's lecture was titled "What is a Nation?" (*Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*), and in it he asks:

> How is it that France continues to be a nation, when the principle that created it
>
> [feudalism] has disappeared? How is it that Switzerland, which has three
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> languages, two religions, and three or four races, is a nation, when Tuscany,
>
> which is so homogeneous, is not one? Why is Austria a state and not a nation? In

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what ways does the principle of nationality differ from that of races? These are

points that a thoughtful person would wish to have settled, in order to put his

mind at rest. (33)

Reill goes on to remark that:

Readers today, exposed to history courses and text books that offer a teleology of

nationalism from Rousseau to Herder, Burke to Fichte, Mazzini to Renan, have

imagined the nineteenth and early twentieth century political campaigns to have

created nation-states as clear compromises between intellectual plans and

pragmatic realities. This seeming clarity, however, is unfounded. Renan wrote his

meditations on nationhood because even outside the compromises necessary to

actually make a nation-state, no clear plan or definition existed in the 1880s,

much less in the 1830s and earlier. (33)

What Renan's question and Reill's analysis lays plain is that while there exists a tendency to

think of the development of the notion of nation as being in some way pre-determined or the

necessary consequence of political or social configurations prevalent in Europe throughout the

nineteenth century, it did not appear that way to those who were living in the moments when the

concept of the nation was beginning to take form. Post factual "clarity" on the question, Reill

argues, does not align itself with the facts on the ground. So, if the process of development of

nineteenth and twentieth century nationalisms were not deterministic, how can we understand the

emergence of the particular form that nationalism took in during this period?

In *Imagined Communities* (1983), Benedict Anderson argues that the formation of

national consciousness resulted from "the development of print-as-commodity," (37) combined

with a rise in the expansion of the marketplace for printed materials from the Latin of the late medieval period to the vernacular languages of Europe (38-40). Anderson cites other factors as well, including the expansion of vernacular languages in local administration, etc., but these additional factors are subordinate to the expansion of vernacular printing and the establishment of vernacular based print markets. Geographic factors also play a role. As Reill writes "according to [Giuseppe] Mazzini, the Alps and the 'immeasurable' Mediterranean Sea defined the Italian nation…unity in language was the product of this seemingly impenetrable alpine and marine frontier" (35), which offers some level of understand as to how Alpine Austria, though a German speaking state, remained outside of the developing German nation. But these geographic factors play a role insofar as they prevent the establishment of the mass culture that Anderson claims is essential for the creation of a nation. Within this context, one can say that Anderson's reading of nation is as a mass or popular culture phenomenon, not at all unlike the formation of literary communities that Saler describes forming around the works of authors whose fictions have become the foundation for the formation of virtual realities (Conan Doyle, Lovecraft, and Tolkien are the examples he cites).

When nations are understood as mass cultural objects first, and political configurations second, the power of transworld peregrination to reconfigure the political world becomes apparent. As Saler writes:

> In [Tolkien's] 1945 story "The Notion Club Papers," a character explained that myths derive their "daimonic force" and persistence "from the multiplication of them in many minds." Tolkien certainly got his wish. Beginning in the mid-1960s, Middle-earth went from being an imaginary world redolent of Tolkien's sense of Englishness to a virtual world distinguished by its cosmopolitanism, the

site of lively debates among people from different nations, cultures, and religions.

(180)

Two things about this passage are deserving of further attention. The first is the way Tolkien explains the power and persistence of myth as a mass cultural phenomenon. The second is the cosmopolitan aspect of Tolkien's Middle-earth. If we understand how myth and nation, as mass cultural objects are mutually self-propagating, than it becomes possible to understand how, in the aftermath of an apocalyptic foreclosure of the world as it is previously understood and the formation of a new consciousness into which has been grafted new kinds of stories, and if these stories have a wide enough reach that they can take on what Tolkien calls the daimonic force of myth, then the power of certain kinds of literature to facilitate the possibility of radical political change will be understood, and the stakes of literature as an enterprise will be more fully understood.

Rather than rehearse the full history of the development of national myths, a literature deep enough to accommodate numerous dissertations, I will instead focus on a salient example and how it was appropriated into violent national discourses: the Germanic myths according to Richard Wagner. With a compositional life that ran from the end of the late 1820s through to 1882 (the performance at the Bayreuth Festival of the complete *Parsifal*), Wagner's career paralleled the rise of German nationalism. As Richard J. Evans argues, in *The Coming of the Third Reich* (2004), the Bayreuth Festival, in the years following the consolidation of Germany under Otto von Bismarck, became increasingly associated with the rise of far right wing German nationalism, whose proponents valued Wagner's work, particularly *The Ring* and *Parsifal*, as the national mythology around which they could consolidate their vision of what it meant to be German (32-33). The nationalistic sentiments in Wagner and their potential dangers were not

merely apprehended *ex post facto*. Writing in 1876, after the first performance of the full *Ring* at the inaugural Festival, Friedrich Nietzsche, writing in "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth," noted his misgivings about the powerfully nationalistic bent of the operatic cycle.

By the early twentieth century Wagner's music, as well as his late essays, had become central to the identity of German nationalism. The most famous composer of his day, Wagner's inaugural Festival was attended by royalty and dignitaries not just from the German states, but from all over the world, as well as the most famous composers, conductors, and intellectuals of the period, Wagner enjoyed a mass cultural awareness within the German speaking world that rivaled the ubiquity of English artists on the order of Milton or Shakespeare. Wagner was *popular*. It was this popularity that gave his mythos, as Tolkien would say, its dynamism. It was this dynamism (along with its nationalism and anti-Semitism) that made Wagner's work attractive to the rising National Socialist Party, the darling of the Militant League for German Culture (later the National Socialist Culture Community), many of whose members sat on the Festival's equivalent of a board of directors, and ultimately under the Reich the Festival became an explicit apparatus of the State.

While it would be facile to say that Wagner and his music dramas were directly responsible for the rise of the Nazi Party (if for no other reason than that such causality would be impossible to document), there can be no doubt that the status of Wagner's work in the German played a role in establishing what Anderson would call the German national consciousness, and that this national consciousness, empowered by and referring to Wagner's music dramas and essays, ultimately found itself both susceptible and useful to the cultural claims of Nazism. The cognitive psychologists Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, in their field defining paper "Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases" (1974), offer a clue to the connection

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between the power of narrative and the effect it has on the formation of national consciousness. Tversky and Kahneman identify a heuristic fallacy called "representativeness." The representative heuristic states that people view as more likely events which fit an underlying narrative that precipitates an "*insensitivity to prior probability of outcomes*…If people evaluate probability by representativenesss, therefore, prior probabilities will be neglected" (1124). This effect compounds with iterations. The more we see of a particular pattern, the more likely that pattern seems to us. This is true even if the pattern is arbitrary. In the case of nationalism, the representativeness heuristic can be seen in the sense of inevitability that has grown up around the particularly statist form that European nationalism took in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But German nationalism was not the only model of nationalism that was developing during this period.

In the Adriatic there was a different conception of what nation and nationalism could be, but it was a vision that lacked, in its inaugural historical moment, a myth that would give it dynamic force (or, in cognitive terms, establish it as equally representative of nationalism with the German model). It was only after the fact, in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, that this model of nationalism was provided with a mythic structure of its own. It is to Tolkien's cosmopolitanism that we must turn, and to the model of Adriatic nationalism that Tolkien's work has the opportunity to empower.

Alternative Nationalisms

In *Nationalists Who Feared the Nation*, Dominique Reill focuses on six writers, Niccolò Tommaseo, Francesco Dall'Ongaro, Pacifico Valussi, Medo Pucić, Ivan August Kaznačić, and

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Stipan Ivičević, who "sought a pluralistic alternative to nationalism and encouraged those in their homelands [Dalmatia, Trieste, and Venice] to do the same" (19). As Reill writes:

> These fearful nationalists did not think pluralistic societies were unnatural [as, for instance, was common in the burgeoning German nationalism]. Nor did they consider themselves an accident of history. Indeed, for them, the fact that the Adriatic Sea served as the shource of their societies' national *variety* (the word they used to indicate pluralism or diversity) was *providential*. As one of [them] put it, the Adriatic was "a promiscuous, middle, neutral territory, an open field to the commerce of all the Nations of this gulf, which nature pushed inside the land not to divide the Peoples, but unite them." This vision of the Adriatic…was a distinctly modern phenomenon. (21)

What bound the writing of these six men together was a shared belief in the non-zero-sum nature of national development. As Reill notes, these six Adriatic nationalists did not adopt Fichte's claim that nations should be left alone to develop according to their national character. They believed the opposite, that "nations needed to be formed *in tandem*. This would forestall xenophobia, ease trade, and promote comprehension and peaceful cohabitation" (21). Previous attempts to historically describe nineteenth century nationalism have, in "following the models of Miroslav Hroch, Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, and Anthony Smith" (22) tended to place each of these six writers into prefabricated national baskets (Italian, Croation/Yugoslav, etc.). But, Reill notes, the Adriatic forms a unique case that is distinct from the rest of the Mediterranean region, and these authors, rather than belonging to the linguistic national sets where they might otherwise be placed without due consideration, actually form a group amongst themselves defined by their pluralism, their Adriatic multi-nationalism. Describing Adriatic

multi-nationalism, Reill writes that "the choice to characterize this endeavor as multi-nationalism, instead of internationalism, bi-nationalism, or co-nationalism is deliberate" (28).

The pluralistic multi-nationalism of these Adriatic writers has been lost to what Reill calls an "ahistorical treatment" (22). Reill is specifically referring to the geographic and linguistic bunching described above, but there is another ahistorical treatment at work here also. In the lecture by Ernest Renan that I referenced at the start of this section, Renan remarks that "forgetfulness, and I would even say, historical error, are essential in the creation of a nation" (qtd. Reill 8). After the eventual success of the German model of nationalism, with its emphasis on the formation of the nation-state, the Adriatic multi-nationalists were subjected to historical revisionism. "Their pluralist arguments," Reill writes "have either been deemed irrelevant or been dismissed as examples of idealistic confusion, bouts of denationalization, or wily political maneuvering" (22), the result is, by and large, that their arguments about the possible alternative formulation of "nation" as a non-zero-sum cite of open exchange has been erased from most contemporary understanding of the history of nationalism. It is far more common, in the contemporary discourse on the rise of the nationalistic states of Europe, to adopt an almost fatalistic attitude towards the development of nationalism. Merely the title of Christopher Clark's 2012 history of the First World War, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*, is enough to drive home the point. Yet, Reill notes, there was nothing necessarily pre-determined about the trajectory of European nationalism. As a matter of historical occurrence it could have broken either way. What the Germanic model had, that the Adriatic model lacked, was Wagner—a mass cultural dynamism upon which German nationalism could anchor its claims. Without a similar infrastructure, the Adriatic model was revised out of historical understanding. Without its own mythology, it was lost. It was not until the mid-twentieth century that the

mythology that Adriatic multi-nationalism needed finally appeared. When it did, it was in the alternative fictional world of J.R.R. Tolkien.

Tolkien, Multi-Nationalism, and Political Possibility

Tolkien was a nationalist. Moreover, *The Lord of the Rings* was an explicitly nationalist text. In a 1951 letter to Milton Waldman, an editor at Collins, Tolkien wrote that:

> I was from early days grieved by the poverty of my own beloved country: it had no stories of its own (bound up with its tongue and soil), not of the quality that I sought, and found (as an ingredient) in legends of other lands. There was Greek, and Celtic, and Romance, Germanic, Scandinavian, and Finnish (which greatly affected me); but nothing in English, save impoverished chap-book stuff…
>
> I had a mind to make a body of more or less connected legend, ranging from the large and cosmogonic, to the level of the romantic fairy-story—the larger founded on the lesser in contact with the earth, the lesser drawing splendor from the vast backcloths—which I could dedicate simply to: to England; to my country. (*Letters* 144)

Because the narrative of nationalism has for so long been read through the lens of the Germanic nationalism of the late nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth centuries, it has become fairly common to simply remark on Tolkien's nationalism without any particular nuance. Even as astute a reader of Tolkien as Michael Saler, when remarking on the question offers only that "Tolkien's nationalism had never been as explicitly, or persistently, racist as that of Lovecraft.

Tolkien most often linked Englishness to language, climate, and geography rather than race"
(202). But, of course, a mode of nationalism does not need to be explicitly racist (as Lovecraft's
is) to fall into the competitive trap of zero-sum formulations. Despite the modest attempt at
hedging the negative aspects of Tolkien's nationalism cited above, Saler still remarks that
"during and after World War I, and following World War II his nationalist views only intensified
in light of Britain's relative geopolitical and economic decline" (187), and "Tolkien feared that
his beloved Little England might be uprooted by the flood-tides of globalization. His increasing
apprehension of cosmopolitanism could be seen in minor matters, such as his unexpected
rejection of Esperanto after the Second World War" (199).

This language is reminiscent of that used to describe the rise German nationalism, whose
governing principle of power. To conflate Tolkien's nationalism with the nationalism of Rochau
and Bismarck, or even the nationalism of Wagner's music dramas, is to radically misread
Tolkien. Tolkien was not *that* type of nationalist. Rather, Tolkien's nationalism bears a strong
resemblance to the nationalism of the Adriatic writers discussed above.

There are several features of Tolkien's nationalism, both in his life and in his text, that
differentiate it from the German model, and align it with the Adriatic model.

The first is that Tolkien's nationalism is virulently opposed to the conceptual merger of
nation and state. In several 1943 letters to his son, Christopher (who would become the editor
and publisher of Tolkien's posthumous works, and who was, at the time, undergoing training in
the Royal Air Force training in Manchester), he wrote that "I would arrest anyone who uses the
word State" (*Letters* 63), and "I love England (not Great Britain and certainly not the British
Commonwealth (grr!))" (*Letters* 65). In *The Lord of the Rings* it is a continual theme that when

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nation is bonded with state the result is catastrophic. It is the attempt to bond cultural wisdom

and lore with political power into a militarized and industrialized state (with its seat at Isengard)

that drives Saruman the White to betray his order and his friends. It is the regent of Gondor, in

his capacity as the leaders of the state, who attempt to withdraw Gondor's forces into their

various fortresses, the result of a zero-sum calculation about the power of isolationism. This

situation is only set right by the presence of Aragorn as the true king—though only in his

capacity as a national symbol, he wields no political authority until after the main events of the

narrative have transpired and a new age of the world is ushered in.

For Tolkien, statism is an unambiguously destructive force, while nationalism is healthy

and vibrant[xxxiv]. Sauron's Mordor is itself the full embodiment of the evil of statism. There is no

national culture of any kind represented in Mordor, but state control is so intense that the figure

called "the Mouth of Sauron" has lost all identity outside of his role as the intermediary for his

master.

Even in the excerpts from his letters that are quoted above, Tolkien's vision of his nation,

England, is divorced from the State. He was skeptical of, and after the war rejected, an American

led corporatist global cosmopolitanism, not because he thought that the English way of life was

superior (though he did prefer it), but because this brand of globalism threatened to extinguish

those features of national difference that he prized most highly. His vision of nationalism

preferred that nations retain their distinctive timbre, flavor, etc., in much the same way that the

Adriatic nationalists did. For Tolkien the good of one national model does not foreclose on the

good of others. Look to the litany of national legends that he cites in his complaint about a lack

of English mythology, he views them as a kind of rich resource, something to be valued and

preserved. One of the great sub-plots of *The Lord of the Rings* is the dissolution of racial and

national animosity between Legolas and Gimli, an elf and a dwarf, who at the outset of the journey find themselves at odds. By the end of the book they are brothers, not because they have abandoned their own national identities, but because their national identities do not pit them into a zero-sum conflict.

What we see in the forces that oppose Mordor is a process that begins as internationalism, defined by Reill as "the relation between separate nations (cultural or otherwise) operating together out of common interest" (27), but which culminates in the formation of a true multi-national *communitas*. The representatives of the various nations who constitute the titular Fellowship of the Ring (wizard, hobbit, man, elf, and dwarf) retain their national identities as they work in common cause towards the final destruction of the threat posed by the Ring. However, through the fracturing of this internationalist enterprise, beginning with the death of Gandalf and culminating in the dissolution of the Fellowship, a new multi-nationalism, defined by Reill as the belief "that nations did not exist separately and therefore that they had no choice but to develop mutually" (27), is formed.

The fellowship had been established at Rivendale with Gandalf as the explicit leader. After his death in Moria the remaining members are locked into a state of inaction. Maurice Blanchot, in *The Unavowable Community*, argues that it is not the consciousness of, or meditation upon, one's own death that pushes one out into liminality, but that it is witnessing the death of another. For Blanchot "to remain present in the proximity of another who by dying removes himself definitively…this is the only separation that can open me, in its very impossibility, to the Openness of community" (9). The death of Gandalf has created, for the survivors, a new communal formation. They have a headless community, what Bataille called an

"acephale" (Blanchot 13). In such a community one must "*give oneself wholly to limitless abandonment*" (15).

It is Aragorn finally, who breaks them out of their stunned inaction and forces them into motion. "What hope have we without [Gandalf]," he asks, and then answers his own question with a statement that drives to the heart of the Anglo-Saxon *ethos* that I have described, "we must do without hope" (373). In a state of emotional, and physical, disarray the Fellowship proceeds to enter into a physical space whose liminality mirrors that emotional change they are undergoing. Aragorn says to Boromir, who has heard that few who enter the Woods of Lothlorien emerge unscathed, "say not *unscathed*, but if you say *unchanged*, then maybe you will speak the truth" (*Fellowship* 379), and this change effects the fundamental nature of their relations to one another. Already troubling signs are beginning to appear in Boromir, whose rivalry with Aragorn has been active since his introduction, and in the tenth chapter, aptly titled "The Breaking of the Fellowship," Boromir's mind breaks and he attempts to steal the ring from Frodo by force and dies. In the immediate aftermath of Boromir's betrayal Frodo and Sam set off on their own towards Mordor, Merry and Pippin are captured by Orcs, and Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli are left on their own (444-458).

This moment reveals the extent to which the Fellowship had been a teleological formation, what Blanchot calls a "social cell," which exists in order to perform particular types of work (11). The Fellowship existed only to transport the ring to Mount Doom. That was its work. It is only in the breaking of the Fellowship that a new kind of relation can be established, a true *communitas*. The deaths of Gandalf and Boromir, and the departure of Frodo, change the stakes of association. The extent of this change is clearly manifest in the decision of Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli to chase after the Orcs who have kidnapped Merry and Pippin, rather than

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attempt to pursue Frodo and Sam. A true community serves no direct purpose "unless it would be to make present the service of others unto/in death, so that the other does not get lost all alone" (11). What hope has the Fellowship without Gandalf? None. But the *communitas* that is formed in the wake of the breaking of the Fellowship is strong enough to do without.

Conclusion

And so it is time to ask the final question. A reader who has entered Middle-earth has created, through the process of transworld peregrination, the conditions necessary for the establishment of apocalyptic consciousness—the foreclosure of the world as it was and the opportunity to re-write the structure of the world itself. This reader, in *The Lord of the Rings* is presented with a model of international cooperation, the Fellowship of the Ring. This model of international cooperation breaks down, and out of its wreckage a new model of nationalism emerges. This model is not internatialist, as the Fellowship was. Rather it is multi-national, pluralistic, a true community formed out of the common experience of death. It works, and it is beautiful. The reader returns to the primary world, leaving the world of the text behind, and in assembling a new world brings to bear pieces of what was experienced in the alternative world of the fiction. What has been accomplished?

Reill reminds us that, ultimately:

> The predominance of the 'one nation, one state' model was not the result of blind faith or a narrowness of original options. It resulted from the failure of other projects and aspirations…the racism, legalized chauvinism, genocides, and forced population transfers that have been enacted under the banner of nationalism are

not the inescapable results of nationalism's first stirrings. They are the legacies of

choices and circumstances in the decades that followed. (31)

One of the reasons that these early stirrings of multi-nationalism failed is that, as Anderson

reminds us, "nation" is a mass cultural phenomenon. What the "one nation, one state" model had

at its disposal was a mass cultural myth that gave its central ideas a dynamism that the Adriatic

multi-nationalists were unable to counter. There was no multi-national myth in the early

twentieth century. But now there is. Tolkien wrote one. And the process of moving between

worlds, the apocalyptic clearing of the ground that is part and parcel of the process of moving

between worlds provides the mechanism by which this other model of nationalism can be

integrated into our understanding in the primary world. The possibilities of a different kind of

national understanding that were once lost to that revisionist mantra that the rise of the nation-

state was inevitable and could be avoided are reactivated, and the stage is set for the world to be

reconfigured once again.

[xxxiii] This book is, to my mind, the most important book of European history produced so far this century.

[xxxiv] This differentiation between the nation and the apparatus of the state is not unique among the Inklings to Tolkien. In *That Hideous Strength* (1945) C.S. Lewis argues for a differentiation between the idealized bucolic spiritualism and culturally constituted nation "Logres" (from the Welsh "Lloegyr" a region of southeast Britain with strong Arthurian associations), and the nightmarish "England" a technocratic horror where progressivism has run totally amok and bureaucratic cogs jostle with one another for the right to take orders from a reanimated head cut from a criminal's corpse.

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