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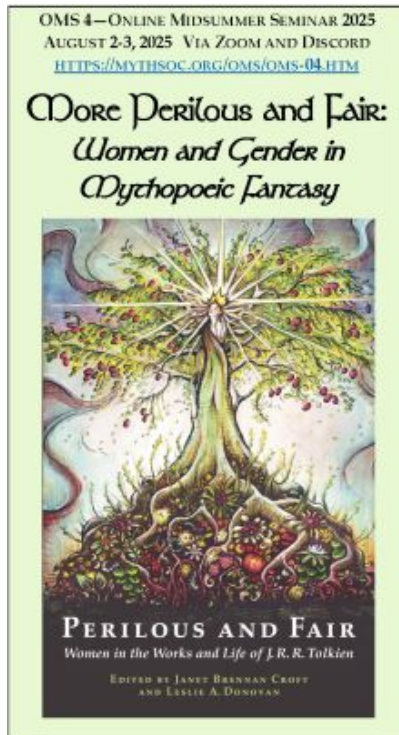
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Abstract

Explores how various tales of the earlier legendarium (*History of Middle-earth*, vol. 1-5) influence *The Lord of the Rings*'s development. The connection stretches beyond the obvious adoption of previously composed myths to self-borrowing of settings and characters. In particular, analyzes the character of Galadriel, who often seems to parallel Melian, another "Lady of the Wood." Though potentially a composite of many influences, Galadriel was written quickly as if its author followed an already fixed model. But her story contains what Christopher Tolkien called "severe inconsistencies" suggesting that this model was not fully aligned with the narrative, i.e. originated in a different character such as Melian.

Additional Keywords

Self-borrowing; History of Middle-earth; Galadriel; Melian

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The **I**NCONSISTENCIES OF GALADRIEL: THE INFLUENCE OF EARLIER LEGENDARIUM IN *THE LORD OF THE RINGS*

ALEXANDER RETAKH

The popularity of Tolkien's characters often waxes and wanes. Decades ago relatively little attention was paid to Galadriel (Johnson 11) but she has become more prominent recently, perhaps out of greater interest in female characters or because of the popularity of Peter Jackson's movies. The films' portrayal is famously different from the original in *The Lord of the Rings*, but even there, Galadriel is presented as timeless and mysterious. She is a net-weaver and a sorcerer in the eyes of Men (*LotR* III.2.432) but also "a living vision of that which has already passed far down the streams of time" (*Treason of Isengard* [Treason] 281).

The Galadriel of *The Lord of the Rings* is unusually powerful, sometimes contradicting the hierarchy of Middle-earth. She is an Elf who could famously thwart a (fallen) Maia: "I perceive the Dark Lord and know his mind [...]. And he gropes ever to see me and my thought. But still the door is closed!" (II.7.364-5). She acts as a divine being,¹ commanding the Eagles of Manwë (III.5.502) or interceding with the Valar directly (Appendix.A.1081). As her people fade in Middle-earth, Galadriel's power remains equal to that of the greatest Elves of the First Age such as Lúthien.² What could prompt Tolkien to endow his "Lady of the Wood" with such strength?

The succession of drafts collected in *Treason of Isengard* indicates that her character developed very quickly when Tolkien was writing the Lórien chapters. Unlike other parts of the *Lord of the Rings* narrative, they were never significantly modified, once complete. Galadriel seems to emerge whole and, in contrast with many other Tolkien's characters, her tale does not change in subsequent drafts. Rather, it is the story around her that changes, e.g. it leads to

¹ Although the word "divine" is not used in *The Lord of the Rings*, it is common in the early legendarium and refers to the Ainur and some other beings of Valinor (e.g. Oromë's horse). Tolkien used it in his later correspondence, for example, stating in a letter that "Galadriel's power is not divine" (*Letters* 299, #156).

² No other Elf except Lúthien successfully confronted a Maia (though, admittedly, Finwë or Fingolfin faced a greater challenge). "No less than the challenge of Fingolfin is it accounted, and may be greater, save that she was half-divine" (*Shaping of Middle-earth* [Shaping] 112).

reconsidering the role of Elven rings during the composition of Lórien chapters. The Galadriel of *The Lord of the Rings* starts as a fully formed character; however, her backstory will occupy Tolkien for decades. It seems that he was quite certain what Galadriel should be but was not sure how she got there.

Galadriel is the embodiment of the power necessary to counteract Sauron (the Dark Lord vs. the White Lady) and appears in the narrative just in time, when the “Quest stands upon the edge of a knife” (*LotR* II.7.357), her origins to be worked out later. According to Guy Gavriel Kay, Tolkien “felt the need to [...] expand [Galadriel’s] stature in the First Age of Middle Earth to account for her stature in the Third Age” (qtd. in R. Thompson). The word “expand” is too polite: it should be “invent.” Tolkien’s creation of Galadriel in *Lord of the Rings* forced him to introduce her into the First Age,³ and the many versions of her story from departing with Fëanor in *The Annals of Aman* (*Morgoth* 112) to remaining “unstained” in his rebellion (*Letters* 604, #353) testify to the difficulty of the process. She became a full character of the earlier ages but the need to “account for her stature in the Third Age” was still present. The narrative in *LotR* needed a backstory that was almost impossible to construct. Tolkien’s model or models of the original Galadriel could not be easily worked into the plot.

The character did not just spring from his imagination. She has many precursors in traditional mythology, medieval romances, and Victorian literature, to name a few potential sources, and is often analyzed in comparison to other literary or historical figures.⁴ Looking at the ‘sources’ of Tolkien’s characters and setting may seem perverse because, as Tom Shippey notes, “Tolkien himself did not approve of the academic search for ‘sources’. He thought it tended to distract attention from the work of art itself” (343). However, an analysis of Tolkien, the writer, need not be based on the position of Tolkien, the philologist. For comparison, his near contemporary Mikhail Bakhtin declares in his study of Rabelais and the folk humor culture that “while using Rabelais’ work for the understanding of this culture, [...] we are convinced that only thanks to this method of research can we discover the true Rabelais” (58). That is, studying a novel with its ‘sources’ enriches our understanding of both.

Earlier tales of the legendarium should also be considered among the sources. Christopher Tolkien describes Idril as “the prototype of Galadriel” (*Shaping* 195). This prototype is mostly visual (“tall, ‘well nigh of warrior’s

³ A technique that Tolkien described as “re-writing backwards” (*Letters* 373, #199) or “upside-down or backwards” (*Letters* 362, #191).

⁴ For example, see Fenwick (for connections to Greek mythology), Donovan (Germanic), Burns and Moore (Celtic), Beal and Maher (Christian), Carter and Downey (medieval romance), Colvin (pre-Raphaelites). See Beal (5-6) and Moore (201-2) for further references.

stature', with golden hair") but in other cases, the resemblance is deeper. Just as Galadriel, several of Tolkien's early characters are female Elven rulers with similar features.⁵ The most developed of them, Melian, resembles Galadriel closely (Burns 122). The relationship between the two, expanded in *The Silmarillion*, already existed in an early draft of *LotR* (*Treason* 265). However, their connection appears deeper and is likely a case of Tolkien's self-borrowing when one character served as a model for another.⁶ The "divine" elements may be remnants of the original model.

The character of Galadriel was directly linked to and influenced by the Melian of earlier tales collected in the first five volumes of *The History of Middle-earth* [*HoMe*] and, unlike other potential influences, their association may explain the paradoxes of Galadriel's unusual power. To demonstrate this, we need to focus primarily on Tolkien's composition process rather than on the analysis of characters in the completed parts of the narrative.

METHODOLOGY: INCONSISTENCIES AND REFASHIONINGS

In the first paragraph of this essay I paired quotes from *Lord of the Rings* and one of its drafts. Some may object to mixing the two. Conversely, collections of drafts such as *Unfinished Tales* [UT] are often seen as 'canonical,' despite their unfinished form. This raises an obvious question: if we are to study Tolkien's narrative, should we not at first agree what this narrative is? Most look at the totality of Tolkien's writings, including every scrap of paper from his archives—i.e. the legendarium. Christopher Tolkien described the latter as the mythology of the "independently-existing reality which the author 'reports' (in his 'persona' as translator and redactor)" (UT 3). But the author himself noted that such reports are based on "traditions [...] handed on by Men [...] blended and confused with their own Mannish [...] ideas" (*Morgoth's Ring* [*Morgoth*] 373, emphasis in original). The legendarium is thus no different from any other mythology, where stories may have several equally valid versions, or where different stories may share narrative elements.⁷ All Middle-earth tales, whether

⁵ Already in *The Book of Lost Tales*, Tolkien introduces several characters who resemble Galadriel. Vairë, together with her somewhat less imposing husband, welcomes strangers to their home and help them on their journey. Meril-i-Turingui, an ancient, forever beautiful queen of the elves, lives among the trees, surrounded by servants of lesser stature (noted in Garth 228).

⁶ In another such case, the Necromancer of the early drafts of *The Hobbit* is self-borrowed from Thû (Rateliff 20). For further discussion of source studies, see *Tolkien and the Study of His Sources*, especially contributions by Fisher, Ridsen, and Shippey, though some of their arguments cannot apply to self-borrowing.

⁷ Cf. multiple Helgi Lays in *The Poetic Edda* and the similarities between the tales of, on the one hand, Helgi and Sigrun, and on the other, Sigurth and Brynhild.

from *Lord of the Rings* or in the drafts collected within *History of Middle-earth*, belong to the same mythological corpus.

The opposite method analyzes only what Tolkien published himself. Either approach is perhaps too radical, yet a choice always remains: are we reading a legendarium or self-selected publications by a single author? Does Middle-earth with its mythology exist independently—not necessarily as a real place but as a locus of a mythological corpus—or is it a byproduct of Tolkien’s imagination?⁸ (Similarly, Michael Drouot distinguishes Middle-earth studies and Tolkien studies [15-16].)

Galadriel is often considered within the legendarium approach.⁹ Christopher Tolkien famously wrote:

There is no part of the history of Middle-earth more full of problems than the story of Galadriel and Celeborn, and it must be admitted that there are severe inconsistencies ‘embedded in the traditions’; or, to look at the matter from another point of view, that the role and importance of Galadriel only emerged slowly, and that her story underwent continual refashionings. (*UT* 228)

(Note that this statement covers both the mythology and the single-author approaches.)

Existence of multiple versions is natural for a mythology. The “inconsistencies” of Galadriel, such as her reasons for staying in Middle-earth, can be easily dismissed within this approach as mere corruptions in Men’s retelling.

However, this presents a problem with the Third Age story, which admits only one version of the published *LotR*. It should, accordingly, have no internal inconsistencies with every backstory naturally agreeing with this last chapter. Yet, as I discuss below, this is not the case when taking into account the early legendarium—which is inconsistent in itself because Galadriel is absent in this “early Silmarillion.” Why would some Mannish bards remove her from their myths? Galadriel as a character of the complete legendarium is inherently problematic. (This does not preclude her analysis within *LotR* as a complete narrative or even *LotR* along with *Silm*. The problem arises only when combining all versions and variations from *HoMe*, *UT*, etc.)

Christopher Tolkien’s “another point of view” is to forego the mythological nature of the narrative and study the texts in the order of their

⁸ Tolkien himself might not have given a definitive answer to this question (Flieger, “But what did he really mean?” 155-7).

⁹ See e.g. Johnson or Lakowski for scholarly studies of the character; LaSala for a popular approach.

composition. ‘Continual refashionings’ thus arrive post-*LotR* (obviously not in the legendarium timeline).¹⁰ They do not affect Galadriel’s emergence in *LotR*; rather we should consult earlier stories for additional insights.¹¹ Accordingly, I will analyze the character of Galadriel assuming a developmental continuity of the early legendarium of the first five volumes of *HoMe* and *LotR* but will concentrate on Tolkien’s writing process and his drafts, as opposed to the analysis of his mythology from within. The focus will be on the “inconsistencies” and what their presence says about the character’s composition.

THE POWERS OF GALADRIEL

In *LotR* Galadriel occasionally exhibits unusual powers, such as in Gandalf’s story of his rescue by Gwaihir:

“Do not let me fall!” I gasped, for I felt life in me again. “Bear me to Lothlórien!”

“That indeed is the command of the Lady Galadriel who sent me to look for you,” he answered” (III.5.502).

The startling “command” is not an editing slip. In *Chronology of the Lord of the Rings*, Galadriel “orders the Eagles to watch” for Gandalf (44). Clearly, they obey her commands.

In *LotR* and the legendarium in general, only two kinds of characters “command.” These may be beings endowed with magical powers, e.g. Gandalf lighting a fire “with a word of command” (*LotR* II.3.290) or the Ringwraiths forcing Frodo to put on the Ring because “he obeyed not his own desire but the commanding wish of his enemies” (I.12.199). Such commands are binding, as long as the power is sufficient; Gandalf himself compares them to bonds or chains (III.10.583). The other kind are figures of authority, such as military or civilian superiors. After Gandalf, the undisputed leader of the Company, falls in Moria, the remaining party must still “obey his last command” (II.5.331). When Théoden recovers his strength—and thus authority—his guards lay swords at their feet and cry “Command us” (III.6.517). Haldir halts the Company at the border of Lórien in a “commanding tone” (II.6.342); he is a military leader guarding his own land. Denethor commands Pippin to tell his “full tale” but

¹⁰ The slow emergence of “the role and importance of Galadriel” refers to their growth after the composition of the Lórien chapters (*Treason* XIII–XIV).

¹¹ Later “refashionings” are irrelevant: when composing *LotR* Tolkien had only these early versions of the First Age story. They are true literary precursors of *LotR* unlike *Silm* or *UT*. Tales in *LotR* referencing the First Age are often refashionings of these earlier stories, sometimes quoted directly. See e.g. Aragorn’s song on Weathertop quoting *The Lay of the Children of Húrin* (*Lays of Beleriand* [Lays] 124).

only after accepting his oath of service (V.1.756). Similarly, Frodo can—and does—command Sméagol but only after the latter swears an oath by the Ring, while lying on the ground and “pawing” his master (IV.1.618) imitating a feudal oath of homage and fealty.¹² Frodo himself, after giving his word to be the Ring-bearer, is “commanded to go to the land of Mordor” (IV.3.638). Though voluntarily, he is bound.

Commanding implies a relationship of superiority, often established formally by an oath or a word. In earlier texts the word “command” is rarer than in *LotR*. For example, in *The Quenta* and the earliest *Annals of Beleriand* only two characters command or order, Manwë and Morgoth (*Shaping* 102, 303) and in *Book of Lost Tales [BoLT]* I, the verbs apply only to the Valar. When Elves command, as they do only twice in *BoLT* II, it is either a King (Turgon) commanding his vassals, the lords of Gondothlim (186), or a father commanding his daughter (Thingol and Lúthien) (32); in both cases the right to command is obvious.

That Galadriel appears to either hold magic sway or have authority over Gwaihir, one of (or a descendant of) the Eagles of Manwë, is remarkable. Even Gandalf, transformed in his post-Celebdil incarnation (*Letters* 298, #156), does not “command” the great Eagles. Rather, when asking them to fly to the rescue of Frodo and Sam, he adds “if you are willing” (*LotR* VI.4.949). The Eagles are courteous with their allies¹³ and indeed aid them willingly but very few “command” them, certainly not Elves. In the only other instance when the Eagles are said to be commanded, the order comes from Manwë himself (*Shaping* 102).¹⁴ The description of Galadriel’s charge to Gwaihir is unique and contradicts the established hierarchy of Tolkien’s world.

Another unquestionable demonstration of Galadriel’s stature is her pleading to allow the non-Elves to sail West. *The Lord of the Rings* attributes such powers to her with a certain reservation: “it is said that Gimli went also out of desire to see again the beauty of Galadriel; and it may be that she, being mighty among the Eldar, obtained this grace for him” (Appendix.A.1081).

¹² The oath bound the vassal and the lord together. To quote a description that Tolkien could encounter in his undergraduate days (by Oxford medievalist H.W.C. Davis): “These personal and indefinite ties should not be renounced, on either side, without some very serious reason” (89). The ability to command is not easily acquired.

For a discussion of Sméagol’s feudal-like relationship with Frodo, see Donnelly (23-25).

¹³ “Radagast [...] had many friends of old. And the Eagles of the Mountains went far and wide” (*LotR* II.2.261); “Turgon [...] sent to the eagles to seek for Húrin” (*Silm* 228).

¹⁴ Melian, another divine, also “summons” the Eagles (*Shaping* 115) but the verb is not as definitive here.

Of course, others obtain the special grace in *LotR*. Concerning Frodo, who maybe “shalt find Valimar” (*LotR* II.8.378), Tolkien very specifically writes in a footnote to a letter that “[Galadriel] concludes her lament with a wish or prayer that Frodo may as a special grace be granted a purgatorial (but not penal) sojourn in *Eressea* [...]. Her prayer was granted” (*Letters* 544, #297).

Though written after the original publication, this letter is essentially a comment, clarifying the purpose and the effect of Galadriel’s second song, and it goes further than the story of Gimli’s departure. Tolkien considered another explanation for Frodo’s passage in a letter: “certain ‘mortals’, who have played some great part in Elvish affairs, may pass with the Elves to Elvenhome” (*Letters* 294, #154). This argument was abandoned, perhaps for an obvious reason: the permission to pass could not rest with the Elves. Another interpretation of Frodo’s departure centers on Arwen, who lets Frodo to “pass into the West” (*LotR* VI.6.975). However, in a draft she advises him to “take with you the Phial of Galadriel and Círdan will not refuse you” (*Sauron Defeated* [*Sauron*] 67). This suggests that Arwen provides Frodo with the means of passage but not the actual entry into the West; the latter does not rest with her. Her gem, worn “in memory” of their meeting (*LotR* IV.6.975), is not a token; he goes in her stead but not because of her. Even with Arwen’s involvement, Frodo enters Eressëa after Galadriel’s intercession (and perhaps her phial that captured the light of the Silmaril), as does Gimli. Galadriel is the only Elf who can ask for such favors from the Valar.

Other atypical journeys to Aman, e.g. Eärendil’s, require divine help. The *Quenta Silmarillion* contains another such story: “For it has long been said that Lúthien failed and faded swiftly and vanished from the earth, though some songs say that Melian summoned Thorndor, and he bore her living unto Valinor” (*Shaping* 115). (A draft of the *Quenta* adds “claiming that she had a part in the divine race of the Gods” [*The Lost Road* [*Lost*] 303].) Here either divine Melian’s intercession or Lúthien’s personal divinity bends the rules. (In the *Sketch of Mythology* (*Shaping*), Lúthien travels through the Grinding Ice with Melian’s aid. Regardless of details, Melian helps her daughter reach Valinor by an unusual route.¹⁵) That non-divine Galadriel’s pleas have a similar effect is another testament to her unique but problematically large stature in Middle-earth.

Galadriel’s intercessory powers have long been noticed and interpreted within appropriate frameworks. This, in part, led to her comparisons with Catholic saints, especially the Virgin Mary. For example, Jane Beal, while acknowledging that the two are “distinctly different” (1), states that “Galadriel is Marian in her virtue, humility, beauty, intercessory role” (8) in the sense that

¹⁵ Later the story changes and Lúthien comes to Mandos through fading (*Silm* 186-7).

all female saints were expected to have Marian qualities.¹⁶ However, in this specific instance characterizing Galadriel as a sacral, saint-like, figure that eases the crossing to the divine realm contradicts her unique status. The traditional medieval concept of sainthood postulated a multitude of intercessors, dead and living, men and women (Moreira 145-8). The influence of “Christian and Catholic teaching and imagination about Mary” (*Letters* 572, #320) on the development of Galadriel’s character is well attested.¹⁷ However, if her pleas with the Valar for Frodo and Gimli parallel the Catholic rituals of intercession, their success should be attributed to a Middle-earth analog of holiness that others may—and occasionally will—attain through purification and other rituals (Moreira 148). Grace cannot be restricted to just one individual, nor can it be internal to her nature, thus the singularity of Elven intercessions in *LotR* argues against the prevalence of Christian/Marian influence.

Other literary sources for Galadriel’s intercessory power have been proposed. Sarah Downey suggested that another potential medieval influence on the character of Galadriel could be the female figures in allegorical dream-visions such as the *Purgatorio* or *Pearl*. Just as Dante’s love for Beatrice brings him to Heaven, so Gimli’s adoration of the Lady of Lórien may bring him to Aman (Downey 109). The holiness of a Christian intercessor is replaced here with a more intricate idea of courtly love. However, this late medieval concept has no analog in Middle-earth, and Galadriel, alive and magically powerful, is very different from Beatrice or the Pearl-maiden. Tolkien could be inspired by these figures, but the intercession for a Hobbit and a Dwarf who are not supposed, in principle, to enter Aman, is in a different category from a soul’s release from Purgatory.¹⁸

Turning to another source of inspiration for Tolkien, Germanic mythology, Leslie Donovan describes several female characters in *LotR* as “valkyrie-indebted” (225), noting in particular that valkyries intercede with Odin on behalf of exceptional heroes, thus setting a clear parallel with Galadriel. However, unlike Elves, all valkyries are divine and have intercessory powers, as do other Maiar besides Melian. Bilbo’s departure to Aman is “a completion of the plan due to Gandalf himself” (*Letters* 463, #246). Gandalf’s ability to intercede for a Hobbit may be due to his enhanced powers, i.e. “sanctity” (*Letters* 300,

¹⁶ Beal mostly discusses intercessory power as Galadriel’s ability to aid the Company on their later journey, but certainly direct appeals to the Valar on behalf of its members fall into the same category.

¹⁷ See Maher for a further discussion of how particular attributions of the Virgin may have influenced Tolkien.

¹⁸ While the Catholic intercession speeds up the soul’s release from the Purgatory, the Middle-earth version allowed the mortals a temporary stay in Valinor (*Letters* 576, #325).

#156).¹⁹ However, such powers should never belong to an Elf, potentially banned from Valinor, and “not divine” (*Letters* 299, #156). Yet in her intercession Galadriel, uniquely among the Elves, approaches the divine status of the Maiar. There is no additional category such as a “saint” or a “celestial lady” — to which only she belongs — in the mythology of Middle-earth.

The most visible manifestation of Galadriel’s powers comes from the *LotR* Appendix B: “They took Dol Guldur, and Galadriel threw down its walls and laid bare its pits, and the forest was cleansed” (B.1095). The description echoes a similar feat from the First Age:

There wide her arms did Lúthien throw,
[...]
The hill trembled; the citadel
crumbled, and all its towers fell;
the rocks yawned and the bridge broke.
(*Lays, The Lay of Leithian*, ll. 2793-2803)

The walls are those of Thû’s stronghold, an obvious First Age analog of Dol Guldur.²⁰ As Lúthien stands before the walls, she is described as “daughter of Melian,” though she is more often called “daughter of Thingol and Melian.” In evolving versions of the Beren and Lúthien story in volumes 2–5 of *History of Middle-earth*, she is usually the “daughter of” both parents or just Thingol, except when her magic or singing — which also has magical qualities — is invoked. “Tinúviel daughter of Gwendeling was not ignorant of magics or of spells” (*BoLT* II 19); “the beauty of her singing in the twilight beneath the trees; for she was the daughter of Melian” (*Shaping* 109); etc. Lúthien’s exceptional power naturally comes from her mother; it is Melian’s teachings that enhanced her daughter’s twin crafts of magic and song:

Melian’s daughter of deep lore
knew many things, yea, magics more
than then or now know elven-maids.
(*Lays, The Lay of Leithian*, ll. 1426-8)

Galadriel’s destructive powers match Lúthien’s. Her connection with Melian has been established early (*Treason* 265), so she and Lúthien shared a teacher. On the other hand, in Angband, “Lúthien dared the most dreadful and

¹⁹ Verlyn Flieger cautions that Tolkien’s statements about and related to Christianity, such as *Letter* #156, should be treated carefully (“But what...” 150-4). However, the assertion of enhanced power is unambiguous. Whatever is meant by “sanctity” implies a greater connection to a higher power, thus, a greater potential to plead for others.

²⁰ The language of this scene in *Silm* is closer to *LotR* but, of course, it was written later.

most valiant deed that any of the women of the Elves have ever dared; no less than the challenge of Fingolfin is it accounted, and may be greater, save that she was half-divine" (*Shaping* 112).

Not just Melian's teachings but her origins define Lúthien's magic. The inheritance is, to use a modern term, genetic: "Of [Melian] a strain of the immortal race of the Gods came among both Elves and Men" (*Lost* 220). Unlike Lúthien, Galadriel, even with the White Ring, is still a "woman of the Elves"/"elven-maid" and not "half-divine," yet the power she wields again approaches that of the Maiar.

Paradoxically, none of the above demonstrations of unusual power is essential. Galadriel could be asking the Eagles, instead of commanding; the destruction of Dol Guldur could be accomplished by less magical means; and even the intercession for Gimli and Frodo could proceed differently. In fact, Gimli's removal to Aman is an unnecessary detail: it is mentioned only in the Appendices and was a later addition to the narrative (*Sauron* 116). Frodo's departure does not need to be linked to Galadriel at all and may be treated instead like Bilbo's or Sam's, with only a reference to his status of a Ring-bearer and, perhaps, Gandalf's involvement. Several times in *LotR* Galadriel wields exceptional—'divine'—power, similar to those of Melian and Lúthien, but always without a clear narrative reason. This persistent inconsistency is never explained.

INDEFINITE EXTENSIONS

Within the novel it may be reasoned that Galadriel's Maia-like abilities derive from her Ring.²¹ She explains to Frodo that "the rings give power according to the measure of each possessor" (*LotR* II.7.366); naturally, hers is enhanced considerably. This is "the secret power [in Lórien] that holds evil from the land" (*LotR* II.6.338). (Elrond, carrying another Elven ring, may have notable powers too but, significantly, they are never described fully.)

However, in developing Galadriel's character Tolkien started with a different premise. Lórien was set up as a "golden wood" (*Treason* 222) before the first mention of the Lord and Lady of the Galadrim. These characters were still not realized; one note, quickly rejected, reads "Lord? If Galadriel is alone and is wife of Elrond" (*Treason* 236). The Lady of Lórien was always supposed to be magically powerful and the reference to Elrond only emphasizes the point. The three Elven rings were already introduced in the early version of the council of Elrond chapter (*Return of the Shadow* [*Return*] XXIII) but, sullied by Sauron, they could not be used against him (*Return* 404). According to Christopher Tolkien, the story begins to change only after the introduction of Galadriel. The first

²¹ First the Ring of Earth (*Treason* XIII), then Adamant (*LotR* II.7), then Water (*Silm* 343).

statement ever that the three rings were never touched by the Enemy (and thus could be used for defense) appears on an isolated page that also contains a draft of Galadriel's refusal of the One Ring (*Treason* 254). Before the Lórien chapters, there was no reason to specify how Elves used their enhanced powers because none was explicit in the story. Yet with Galadriel, Tolkien needed to establish the basis for her ability to counteract Sauron.

Having already determined that "from [the rings] the Elvenkings have derived much power" (*Treason* 112, 156, 254), it was natural to revise their origin story and thus provide the basis for Galadriel's magic. This was similar to how other radical changes in the narrative often arose: an initially insignificant detail would later assume a greater meaning and thus will need to be "written backwards." Christopher Tolkien commented on another such change in *Return*: "The 'event' (one might say) was fixed, but its meaning capable of indefinite extension; and this is seen, over and over again, as a prime mark of my father's writing" (71). The story of the Elven rings was corrected to reflect their new role but their existence was already "fixed," when Tolkien needed to provide Galadriel with a power matching or even exceeding Sauron's. The technical solution was to introduce the enhancing and protective powers of the White Ring but, considering how the narrative elements were developed and "indefinitely extended," it is more correct to say that the need to justify Galadriel's extraordinary power produced the definitive version of the Elven rings. The rings were the indefinite extensions of Galadriel.

The shift to three rings actively deterring Evil is one of several instances where the existence of a powerful Lady of Lórien either forced or prompted Tolkien to "write backwards." The introduction of Arwen may be another. Elrond's daughter, first named Finduilas, was a late addition to the story. Her first mention comes with the description of Aragorn's banner at the battle of Pelennor fields: "stars [...] were wrought of gems by Finduilas Elrond's daughter" (*War of the Ring* [WotR] 370, cf. *LotR* V.6.847). Two subsequent notes may explain why Tolkien introduced a new Elven character. The first appears in a later outline of future chapters: "Long sojourn of rest in Minas Tirith and coming of Finduilas? [*written above*: and Galadriel]" (WotR 386). The second is only a partly readable note: "Galadriel must give her ring to Aragorn (..... to wed Finduilas?). Hence his sudden access of power [?that won't work. It will leave] Lórien defenceless also Lord of the Ring will be too ..." (WotR 425). Aragorn's enhanced powers aside, this is the first mention of the wedding, indeed the whole connection, of Aragorn to Finduilas/Arwen and the likely reason for her coming to Minas Tirith. However, the link between Arwen and Galadriel appears simultaneously²² and is thus equally important. Aragorn's

²² Remaining unresolved: Celebrian will be introduced later.

wedding could serve many narrative purposes but the fixed presence of the Lady of Lórien strongly suggests an association between the restored monarchy and the old, Elven, power. That Tolkien could even contemplate Galadriel giving her ring to Aragorn only underlines her personal importance to the transition from Elves to Men. The “long sojourn” suggests that Arwen/Finduilas and Galadriel were to come to Minas Tirith before the army set out for the Black Gate and the ultimate victory. Yet Arwen could be accompanied by Elrond (with his ring) while Galadriel remained in—and defended—Lórien. Her presence, before or after the victory, is unnecessary unless we accept that she, more than any other Elf including Elrond, symbolizes the old power that must bless the new one. Arwen did not have to be related to Galadriel but King Elessar would be stronger if he were to become her kinsman.²³ Hence the most powerful Elf in Middle-earth acquired a granddaughter.

Another example of Galadriel’s power affecting the narrative is the development of Frodo’s entry into Mordor. The original plan was straightforward:

Gollum gets spiders to put spell of sleep on Frodo. Sam drives them off. But cannot wake him. He then gets idea of taking Ring. [...] Gollum betrays Frodo to the Orc-guard. They are overwhelmed and Sam knocked silly with a club. He puts on Ring and follows Frodo. (*Treason* 209)

Later Sam puts on Orcish clothes, frees Frodo, gives the Ring back, and both enter Mordor.

Tolkien began to flesh out the story after the Lórien chapters were written. It contained no magic: when Sam sang *O Elbereth*, the Elven hymn served only as a shibboleth; Frodo’s response helped to reveal his cell. Reunited, the Hobbits were to slip into Mordor through sheer luck and cunning. However, Tolkien quickly became disillusioned with the approach: “Minas Morgul must be made more horrible. The usual ‘goblin’ stuff is not good enough here” (*Treason* 340).²⁴ Immediately, he introduced the sentinels at the gates (future Watchers of Cirith Ungol). To escape Minas Morgul, Sam and Frodo needed to evade greater terrors now; cunning would not be enough. Thus, “the grey cloaks of Lothlórien must be made more magical and efficacious” (*Treason* 343). Non-magical originally, they only marked their wearers as “friends of the Galadrim” (*Treason* 279); however, when required, their properties had to change. Similarly,

²³ In the final text the focus shifts to parallels between Aragorn and Arwen and, on the other hand, Beren and Lúthien. But a Lúthien needs a Melian, and Galadriel is the only available choice.

²⁴ Nicholas Birns sees such changes in the narrative as a move from the “shallow” *Hobbit* to deeper *LotR* parts (119).

at first the phial of Galadriel is only used to drive out “dark and despair” (*Treason* 438) but, as the story develops further, it acquires a more active, more magic, role (*WotR* VIII). In the narrative, the “more horrible” the Hobbits’ journey becomes, the more they rely on gifts from Lórien. Once again, considering the narrative’s development, the process works backwards: the more terrors are introduced, the more powerful the gifts grow. In this sense, the terrors of Shelob’s lair and Cirith Ungol are “indefinite extensions” of the gift-giving scene, undergirded with Galadriel’s magic.

Her power allowed Tolkien to intensify the trials of Sam and Frodo and, conversely, the products of this power could be extended when necessary. It seems to have no natural limit, an almost *deus ex machina* constricted only by the author’s prudence. It will help to move the plot along or adjust it, generate other powerful elements of the story and justify them. What remains unexplained is this power itself.

GALADRIEL AND MELIAN

Galadriel’s association with Melian, though clarified only after the completion of *LotR*, has been established early. She explained to the Company: “I passed over the seas with Melian of Valinor” (*Treason* 265). The phrase appears in only one draft but this does not mean that the connection to Melian was itself abandoned temporarily. Tolkien, as was his custom, could simply decide to omit background details while preserving them in his mythology.

Similarities between Melian and Galadriel have been noted often. Marjorie Burns put down perhaps the most comprehensive list:

Both Melian and Galadriel originate in Valinor [and are] drawn to Middle-earth, where each creates and protects an isolated, tree-filled realm. Both are healers and preservers. Both have great wisdom and foresight. Both allow *lembas* to be dispensed to strangers. Both, at moments, are seen as divine or nearly divine. Each marries and remains more influential and more intriguing than her husband. Each husband has silver hair. Melian’s daughter, Tinúviel, and Galadriel’s granddaughter, Arwen, both love mortal men against the wishes of their fathers. Where Melian is ‘Queen Melian,’ Galadriel is ‘like a queen’ and now and then openly called a queen. Where Melian hopes ‘to avert the evil that was prepared in the thought of Morgoth’ [...] and comprehends the danger and lure of the Silmarils, Galadriel (who earlier opposed Morgoth) is an adversary of Sauron in *The Lord of the Rings* and is quick to recognize the dangers and attraction inherent in the One Ring. Both at last leave their protected realms in Middle-earth to return to the West, and each does so without her husband’s company. (122)

Burns connects both Melian and Galadriel to H. Rider Haggard's Ayesha, noting that Melian's affinity to her is ever greater (123). Both characters can be considered as composites of various influences. However, it may be impossible to distinguish between direct influences on Galadriel and influence on her composition through early legendarium precursors such as Idril, Melian, etc.

Melian was reworked and rethought over time. What began as a beguiling sprite "lying in a bed of leaves" (*BoLT* II 8) evolved into a more dignified figure, now meeting Thingol when "the light of Valinor was in her face" (*Lost* 220). Conversely, Galadriel emerged relatively quickly in *LotR*; Tolkien adjusted her image and tone over several drafts only marginally. This is less common in his writing process. For example, in the Lórien chapters alone, several details of Aragorn's story transform critically: different names were tried and abandoned and, more importantly, Elfstone/Elessar (both the gem and the associated name) appeared for the first time. The famous gift to Gimli, that would later be 'written backwards' into the First Age (*UT* 230), also emerges through a complicated drafting process.²⁵ As discussed already, the story of the Elven rings also develops fully in the same chapters. Tolkien often reworked stories over multiple drafts, yet every essential aspect of Galadriel is set from the very beginning. (Perhaps the only exception is the color of her hair.) Somehow, when writing a powerful Elven Lady/Queen,²⁶ Tolkien had very precise ideas of the character, even though her history was still undeveloped.

Some parallels between Galadriel and Melian can be simply accidental or stem from the same sources. Elven queens are often powerful, live in woods, welcome human strangers, etc. On the other hand, certain elements of Galadriel's story are both unusual and close to Melian's to suggest potential self-borrowing. Moreover, sometimes they appear in the narrative with no internal justification and are likely remnants of the original character's traits.

From the beginning, Galadriel is consistently associated with the color white: she is "clad wholly in white," has a "white form," "white arms,"²⁷ and wears a white ring (*LotR*.II.7-8). The first note concerning the Lord and the Lady

²⁵ Gimli at first requests nothing and receives a green gem—later called the Elfstone—as a token of goodwill; only in the next draft this gift is transferred to Aragorn (*Treason* XIV).

²⁶ Lady in *LotR* but "queen of the woodland Elves" in *Silm* (298). "The Elven-queen Galadriel" (*Letters* 205, #131) but "'Galadriel . . . an Elvenqueen.'" (She is not in fact one.)" (*Letters* 274, #210)—another inconsistency.

²⁷ Goldberry and Arwen also have "white arms." Nancy Martsch convincingly finds the immediate source of this image in Victorian book illustrations. White or white-clothed fairies is a traditional motif (S. Thompson F233.6, F236.1.3; see also various references to a "white lady" in Grimm's *Teutonic Mythology*). Several other female characters, e.g. Éowyn, are also clad in white, so this characteristic is not exclusively Galadriel's. What is perhaps unique to her is the repetition of whiteness in her imagery.

of Lothlórien already pictures them as “clad in white, with white hair” (*Treason* 233). Her hair changes to golden²⁸ only in subsequent drafts (*Treason* 233). Whiteness is further emphasized throughout the later text. Her ring, though its names change, always remains white. Other Elves do not conform to such strict color patterns and their clothing is rarely described (see e.g. Elrond’s first appearance in *LotR.II.2*).

In some interpretations, Galadriel’s color is associated with saintliness (Beal 8), while Leslie Donovan notes similarities to Valkyrie description in Eddic literature (231). More generally, this is a common color for Elves of the early legendarium: the color of their cities (Kôr, Tirion, Gondolin), ships, and sometimes armor. On the other hand, for Tolkien, the white is firmly linked to the Moon,²⁹ which may support the general notion that “the Elves were all for moon and stars” (*LotR* II.6.351). The white Moon, a vessel carrying the last flower of the White/Silver Tree, appears very early in the *Tale of the Sun and Moon* (*BoLT* I). The White Tree, in turn, is connected with Vala Lórien, who names it and arranges for its care (*BoLT* I 73). In this context of early legendarium mythology, the strong relation of Galadriel with the color white is puzzling: the connection between Vala Lórien and Lórien of Middle-earth is unrelated to the color and there is no direct affinity with the Moon. Galadriel has a strong connection to twilight, the time of her Mirror magic (when the Evening Star rises) and intercession for Frodo (when the sun is westering)—but none of these events is moonlit.

Melian has an almost opposite color pattern but the associations are similar and this time, compelling: she belongs to the twilight, her birds are nightingales, her hair is dark, and her garments are gray (*Lays, The Lay of Leithian*, ll. 410-4) or “of the hue of night, jet-spangled and girt with silver” (*BoLT* II 42) or even “lovely yet of black” (*BoLT* II 8). Greyness or blackness, are of course, different from darkness, synonymous with evil in the legendarium (cf. Gandalf the Gray or the black flag of Gondor); the association is rather with the twilight and the night, while Melian is a fay/sprite/divine maiden/Maia of

²⁸ The change could be aesthetic. In early texts Elves commonly have golden hair: “golden hair like to the glory of bright flowers shaken at dawn” (*BoLT* II 288). Glorfindel is originally golden-haired (*BoLT* II 192), so are Finduilas (*Lays, The Lay of the Children of Húrin*, l. 2257), and, inexplicably, Lúthien (*Lays* 159). The association of golden hair with the house of Finarfin appears first only in *LotR*, Appendix F, after the Galadriel chapters were written. For significance of the imagery of golden hair, see Collins and Darvell.

²⁹ The visible side of the moon is white even in *Roverandom*, a story separate from the legendarium. The color white has other symbolic meanings for Tolkien, cf Flieger’s discussion of the White Light and, more generally, whiteness as a sometimes symbol of light, in *Splintered Light*. However, for Galadriel the relation to light, via the phial and its role in Frodo’s journey, will be introduced later in the writing process (*Treason* XXV).

Lórien, “who loveth twilights and flittering shadows, [...] who is the lord of dreams” (*BoLT* I 71). She is “Melian Mablui, the moonlit queen” (*Lays* 34). Another of her colors is silver, a color of the Moon, just as Galadriel’s white. Both Ladies are of the twilight and carry colors of the Moon but the connection is more forceful and insistent in Galadriel’s case.

One of the most important Galadriel scenes is gift-giving in *LotR*.II.8. Many have noted that “the gifts of Galadriel correspond to stories preserved in English and Scandinavian family traditions” (Shippey 60n).³⁰ The same traditions have also influenced the stories of the earlier legendarium; thus it makes sense to trace the development of gift-giving within the legendarium and consider how these early stories may have affected the composition of *LotR*.

Despite its importance in potential Tolkien sources and early medieval culture in general, surprisingly few gift-giving scenes appear in the first five volumes of *History of Middle-earth*. Sometimes, rulers give gifts to their followers such as when Turgon provided “a suit of armour for Tuor as a great gift” (*BoLT* II 164) or Oromë gave Huan to Celegorn (*Lays, The Lay of Lethian*, ll. 2266-9). Gifts may be given to a ruler in gratitude or in expectation of a favor. Morwin honors Thingol’s messengers in the *Lay of Children of Húrin* (*Lays*, ll. 294-5) and Húrin (then Úrin) brings gifts from Nargothrond to Thingol (then Tinwelint) (*BoLT* II 114-5). However, Celeborn and Galadriel’s gifts neither require the Company to perform a particular service nor try to placate them. The only similar story is of the initial gift to Morwen. Its details vary and the messengers change from Men (*Lays*) to Elves (*Lost*) but the core remains: they bring “rich gifts from Melian, and a message bidding her return with Thingol’s folk to Doriath” (*Lost* 318).

In the drafts of the last Lórien chapter, the gift-giving scene emerged in essentially two stages. The original outline has the unnamed Elves provisioning the travelers. Then Tolkien added other gifts, conferred by Galadriel, with each member of the Company receiving an object appropriate to their station or vocation (sword sheath for Aragorn, a gem for Gimli, etc) (*Treason* XIV). As explained above, some gifts will change but, otherwise, the scene is set. Galadriel’s involvement in the process seems superfluous before the gift of hair is introduced. Elfstone is at first described as “the gift of Keleborn” (*Treason* 276), while “elves give travellers special food and grey cloaks and hoods” (*Treason* 269), as intended in the outline, would suffice for the original gifts. The Lady of Lórien need not get involved. Speculating about the authorial process is always dangerous but since the combination of gift-giving and departure in the first five volumes of *HoMe* points to Melian as the giver, it is possible that their well-

³⁰ For Galadriel’s gifts in the context of such traditions, see e.g. Gallant for the early English (19-21) and Donovan for the Scandinavian and Germanic connections (233-6).

established connection thrust Galadriel into the same role. Further developments of the scene were just “indefinite extensions.”

We are on firmer grounds when it comes to Galadriel’s ‘magic.’ In *Letter* #131, Tolkien wrote that he has “not used ‘magic’ consistently” (205) (probably referring to his use of the word in the letter as compared to *LotR*). In *LotR* and later writings (see volumes 10 and 11 of *HoMe*, *Silm*, and *UT*) ‘magic’ is used by Men or Hobbits to refer to powers they do not understand (not necessarily Elven): “this art they have developed until to Men it may seem magical” (*LotR* Prologue.1); “they whispered among themselves, saying that she was perilous, and a witch skilled in magic” (*Silm* 198); etc.³¹ However, in earlier texts (*HoMe* vol. 1-4), the word is more common: Elves are called “makers of the magic and immortal gems” (*Lays* 96) and “magic minstrels” (*Lays* 73); Felagund and Lúthien use magic (*Shaping* 110, 112-3); there are magic objects such as Túrin’s helm (*Shaping* 118) and magic places like “the Land of Willows” (*BoLT* II 154). The Sun and Moon are magic (*Shaping* 98). The Valar, in particular, Melian³² use magic (*Shaping* 23). By the time of later tales collected in *Lost*, the word is rarer. It was erased in the latest instance of “Magic Sun” (*Lost* 244) and only survives in reference to the Valar. That is, when *LotR* was composed, ‘magic’ was associated with ‘divine.’

The only ‘magic’ objects in *LotR* are rings³³ (and maybe Gandalf’s toys). Early drafts also refer to the Gandalf-made flood at the Ford of Bruinen as magical (*Return* 207) but once its making is passed to Elrond, the word disappears (*LotR*.II.1). Magic is reserved for the Valar/Ainur. However, in the Lórien chapters (*LotR* II.7-8) Sam and Frodo start talking about “Elf-magic” and Galadriel and other Elves have to “remonstrate” (*Letters* 205, #131) with them about the improper use of the word. This may simply be Hobbits’ reaction to Lórien, wonderful but not magical. And yet, Galadriel hedges her remonstration: “this is what your folk would call magic, I believe; though I do not understand clearly what they mean [...]. But this, if you will, is the magic of Galadriel” (*LotR* II.7.362). Not consistent, indeed! Galadriel is the only Elf who concedes to the Hobbits’ misuse, perhaps because in a throwback to the first four volumes of *HoMe*, one act of her ‘magic’ cannot be recast as ‘art’: the Mirror, showing “things that yet may be” (*LotR* II.7.362).

³¹ Tolkien also uses ‘magic’ as a shorthand in his notes, (making cloaks “more magical,”) but not in the actual text.

³² “Melian was a fay, of the race of the Valar” (*Lost* 220). The word refers to all divine beings as it would in *LotR*.

³³ Made by “Sauron the Magician” (*Return* 215). Gandalf calls even the Elven-rings “magic” but only to the Hobbits (*LotR* I.1.33, I.2.47).

Galadriel has the power of foresight and prophesy. The ability, if not magical, is rare; only a few characters in *LotR* possess it³⁴ but Galadriel is unique in dispensing multiple prophecies. She foretells the future not just to Aragorn, Gimli, and Legolas (III.5.503) but to Saruman (VI.6.983) and Treebeard (VI.6.981). The encounter with the latter demonstrates Galadriel's powers fully: where an Ent guesses "I do not think we shall meet again" and another Elf (Celeborn) replies with an uncertain "I do not know, Eldest," she affirms "Not in Middle-earth."

Some characters in the early legendarium have the gift of prophecy occasionally: "Huan bold/ the end of weird of yore foretold" (*Lays, The Lay of Lethian*, ll. 3172-3) and "Lúthien foretells that all their lives will be forfeit" (*Lays* 273). Yet even for Huan and Lúthien, despite their partially divine origins, such glimpses of the future are rare. Just as magic, regular visions of the future are reserved only for the Valar (cf. prophecies of Mandos and Ulmo) and, in particular, Melian, who "foresaw dimly what might be" (*BoLT* II 96) and, later in the legendarium, "foresaw many things that were hidden from the Elves" (*Lost* 299). Galadriel, singular among the Elves, possesses similar powers. In this she resembles traditional characters such as prophetesses of medieval literature or their literary descendants³⁵ but relation to such sources (or even an origin in them) does not justify her unique abilities within the narrative. Accepting the influence of other mythologies on Tolkien's, it is even more appropriate to claim the internal influence of the early legendarium. It already had a magic seer at the heart of an enchanted wood. Transferred to Lórien, she retained all her powers, even those otherwise denied to an Elf. What is natural and acceptable for Melian becomes inconsistent for Galadriel.

LÓRIEN AND DORIATH; CELEBORN AND THINGOL

Galadriel's connection to Melian is reinforced by connections between their husbands and realms.³⁶ Just like Thingol, Celeborn is of lesser stature than his wife, perhaps even a Moriquende. Though not initially, by the time Appendix B was written, Celeborn already becomes a "kinsman of Thingol" (*LotR* B.1082). On the one hand, this is just another of Tolkien's throwbacks to earlier history,

³⁴ See a detailed discussion in Tredray (251-5).

³⁵ For prophetesses, see discussions in Burns (107-8) and Donovan (235-7). In the English literary tradition, they most famously transform into Macbeth's witches, also a potential influence on Galadriel, see Croft (222).

³⁶ Kinship with Thingol further justifies Galadriel's stay in Doriath in later *Quenta Silmarillion*, an "indefinite extension" of Celeborn's connection to Thingol composed earlier.

his “impression[s] of depth” (“*Beowulf*: The Monsters and the Critics” 27).³⁷ On the other, a diligent reader can find enough information about Thingol in *LotR* to paint a coherent picture: Thingol’s wife was of “the people of the Valar” (App.A.1034), who are “the Guardians of the World” (1035). Their daughter was Lúthien and they ruled in Doriath, a “hidden kingdom” (I.11.193) of “woven wood” (192). The deliberate similarities to Lórien and its rulers are inescapable, and so is Galadriel’s similarity to one of “the people of the Valar.” She is the only Elf in *LotR* with such an enhanced status, confirming that the connection with Melian was already present.

The relationship between the two rulers reinforces the connection between the two kingdoms. It extends further back in history, to the original gardens of Lórien, from which Melian came (though this is not made explicit in *LotR*). Later, expanding the story of Galadriel, Tolkien wrote that she herself named her woods Lórien and that “the resemblance cannot be accidental. She had endeavoured to make Lórien a refuge and an island of peace and beauty, a memorial of ancient days” (*UT* 253).

However, the myths do not say if Galadriel ever saw the original Lórien, a land of dreams and rest.³⁸ By the time the above passage was written it has been already established as the “the fairest of all places in the world” (*Shaping* 79), so the name indeed invokes the beauty of Valinor before its darkening. Yet Doriath is described in similar terms: “the visions of Melian, images of the wonder and beauty of Valinor beyond the Sea” (*Silm* 93). Is the land that Galadriel tends a memorial to just the original Lórien or to the kingdom of her mentor that was also built in memory of it? The legendarium sidesteps this question but indirectly, it relates Galadriel’s Lórien to Melian’s Doriath. The two kingdoms are much alike, beyond the similarities and personal connections of their rules. Lórien seems to be guarded by the same magic (except, of course, Elves have no magic). There is no Girdle of Galadriel, no mazes or shadows surrounding Lórien, yet of that land “it is said few come out who once go in; and of that few none have escaped unscathed” (*LotR* II.6.338). Doriath is “the safest from the raids of the Orcs” (*Shaping* 23), where the Moriquendi “come near to match the Elves of” Valinor (100). Lórien is “the heart of Elvendom on earth” (*LotR* II.6.352), on which there is “no stain” (II.6.351). Both woods are idealized Elven spaces. Crucially, the unique nature of Doriath

³⁷ That is, “a sense that the author knew more than he was telling, that behind his immediate story there was a coherent, consistent, deeply fascinating world” (Shippey 229). See Shippey for further discussion and examples of this technique in *LotR*.

³⁸ The only Elves who are said to come into the gardens are Míriel, who enters it in search of a cure from weariness, and Finwë, who visits her and sits beside her body. Beautiful Lórien may be but it does not give the impression of a place that an Elf enters willingly.

is fully explained while Lórien's is simply postulated, similar to Galadriel's powers. What at first appears as a resemblance begins to look more like copying.

Both lands are alike in their governance with the male ruler at least nominally in charge. Clearly, Melian is the greatest "power" in Doriath but the King leads the army and judges³⁹ his subjects, as would be typical in a medieval society (Davis 51). The same is true of Lórien, Galadriel, and Celeborn. No other territory, Elven or not, exhibits such a duality of power. Tolkien considered briefly to provide Lórien with just one ruler but quickly reverted back to the Doriath-like power structure.

In joint appearances Melian often seems reticent. In *The Lay of Lethian (Lays)*, she remains "silent, unamazed" (l.953), when Thingol decides to grant Beren an audience. When Beren enters, the King begins to question him but the Queen does not speak. However, her gaze "sought his face" (l.1016). Thingol begins to anger at the mortal Man's intransigence and only then Melian gives her counsel, but in whisper. She does not try to stop him and speaks loudly just once, after Beren leaves. The last word still belongs to Thingol; Melian only smiles in response with "far knowledge in her eyes" (l.1204).

The scene has striking parallels to Frodo's appearances before Celeborn and Galadriel in *LotR* II.7.354 *et seq*: "the Lord welcomed him in his own tongue. The Lady Galadriel said no word but looked long upon his face." At first, she only speaks to correct her husband twice ("There was no change of counsel;" "He would be rash indeed who said such things") and lets him proceed to question the Company. When she finally addresses them, she immediately explains that "the Lord of the Galadhrim is accounted the wisest of the Elves of Middle-earth," practically an aporia. If Celeborn is the wisest, then what is Galadriel? Perhaps appearances must be preserved and the King/Lord must be declared the greatest of all in his domain. (The phrase, with its emphasis on Elves, sounds more like something that Melian would say, unless "Elves of Middle-earth" does not refer to the Noldor.) Whatever the intended meaning, with this one phrase, just as Melian often does, Galadriel cedes preeminence back to her husband. Thingol decides the fates of Beren and Túrin, while Melian offers him "murmured counsel" (*Lays, The Lay of the Children of Húrin*, 2nd version, l.580). If she sways him, she does so quietly. Similarly, Celeborn advises what path the Company should follow after leaving Lórien and supplies the boats, while Galadriel performs the more ceremonial roles of filling the cups and conferring joint gifts. When Gimli requests her hair, Celeborn is shocked and Galadriel quietly takes charge but, as the ceremony of parting continues, Celeborn re-assumes authority and takes the Company to the landing. In their

³⁹ For Thingol's judgment, see *Children of Húrin*, Ch. 5, also *The Lay of the Children of Húrin (Lays)*.

public appearances Melian and Galadriel look on, encourage, and admonish but let their husbands lead.

Such restraint is typical for Melian, who always remains the power behind the throne. On the other hand, Galadriel—not Celeborn—summons the White Council, tests the Company, and despite her claims not to counsel to “do this or do that,” convinces Sam to go “by the long road with Mr. Frodo” (*LotR* II.7.363). Later she will send the Eagles to look for Gandalf (III.5.502) and offer Saruman “a last chance” (VI.6.983). In matters concerning all of Middle-earth, Celeborn remains silent. He plays no significant part outside of Lórien, except for the counterattack on Dol Guldur (and even there, he is accompanied by Galadriel). Conversely, Thingol negotiates with other powers in Beleriand and decides that the armies of Doriath should never march out (perhaps “because of the wisdom of Melian” [*Shaping* 26]). Thingol and Celeborn may be similar but the former has greater consistency as a ruler and may indeed be the wisest of all the Elves of Middle-earth. Similarly, Melian is always the wise consort as is often Galadriel but, inconsistently, the outsiders see her as the sole ruler of Lórien, “the Lady of the Wood” (never mentioning a Lord). Galadriel at court, as well as in several other settings, closely resembles Melian but this behavior is not compatible with the rest of her character.

The two Ladies/Queens are partly composed along the same lines with the later character acquiring the traits and narrative elements of the earlier, yet Galadriel’s Melian-like abilities never fully agree with the larger story. Such partial similarities, consistent only within separate episodes, indicate an extension of the original model rather than a differently handled common source, i.e. potential self-borrowing. Other such indications are the ‘divine’ powers of Galadriel—natural for a Maia but irregular and narratively unnecessary for an Elf—discussed in previous sections.

CONCLUSION

Galadriel has perhaps the longest arc in the combined Tolkien’s narrative. Originally introduced in *LotR*, her story was then extended in multiple versions into the chronologically earlier parts of the legendarium. In Christopher Tolkien’s words, there are obvious “inconsistencies” in these backstories but the larger paradox of Galadriel is the presence of unresolvable inconsistencies within *LotR* itself. Repeatedly, she exhibits powers of an almost ‘divine’ being. She commands the Eagles of Manwë, intercedes with the Valar, and magically pulls down the walls of an evil stronghold—deeds beyond the powers of other Elves, yet performed by divine Melian and half-divine Lúthien. The strength of her ‘magic’ almost suggests an additional presence outside of Elfdom.

The *Lord of the Rings* drafts collected in volumes 6-9 of *History of Middle-earth* indicate that, unlike many other characters, Galadriel was composed

quickly and never altered. Once written, she either forced the story to evolve, as in the case of the origins and powers of Elven rings, or provided sufficient basis for such evolutions, as in the story of the crossing of Ephel Dúath or emergence of Arwen. Galadriel, with her atypically strong powers, remained unchanged, while serving as a catalyst for changes around her.

This does not necessarily imply that in creating Galadriel her author followed an already developed model. As many other Tolkien's characters, she is a composite of many influences, transformed and enhanced by his powerful imagination. However, the absence of significant rewrites, typical for Tolkien, and the existence of multiple inconsistencies suggest basing Galadriel on one or several key prototypes whose alteration was barely sufficient to fit the story of *LotR*. Of all the possible candidates, Melian, the non-Elven queen of the hidden realm of Doriath, looms large. The resemblance between this character of the early legendarium and Galadriel is deep and touches on multiple points such as personal powers and relations with others. Furthermore, most of Galadriel's Melian-like traits receive little to no justification (unlike in the original case). The author could not fail to see the similarities, i.e. they are more than just accidents. Whether Tolkien consciously modeled Galadriel on Melian from the very beginning or noticed and deepened their connection while working out the story is irrelevant. The association, once established, only grew and enhanced the narrative with further self-borrowed details, occasionally inconsistent. Once the generic "Lady of the Wood" took on the familiar shape of Melian, the story began to change around her and turn towards its well-known, final, form.

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