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**Master of Doom**  
The Hero in the Classical Epics, Tolkien, and Zelensky

MASTER DISSERTATION

**Ronaldo Caires Soares**  
MASTER IN CULTURAL MANAGEMENT



UNIVERSIDADE da MADEIRA

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**Abstract:**

Heroes never die! They are kept alive through times by tales forged from the conflict of fate and character. Wherein their actions are upheld by people not due to their perfection but as examples of virtuous acts to follow and as warnings of those ill acts to avoid.

It is the aim of this dissertation to look at the archetype of the hero in three different spheres: Classical Epic; John R. R. Tolkien's fiction; and modern rhetoric, namely in Volodymyr Zelensky's speeches on the war in Ukraine, in order to analyse the evolution of the concept of heroism and its validity within modern culture.

A more focussed view will be given to the role of fate, which can fall anywhere along a spectrum between determinism and free will, in order to define if the main features of a hero – whether he is a mythological, a literary, or a political character – are identical or not. To this end, we will consider the main heroic characters of Classical Epics (Achilles, Hektor, Aeneas, and Turnus), the heroes in two books by Tolkien *The Silmarillion*, and *The Children of Húrin*), and the notion of heroism in Zelensky's speeches on war between February and March 2022. We expect to show how some of these characters' features constitute what we still expect of the conduct of some high standing individuals. Nevertheless, as we can see, for instance in the "Roman" Aeneas, the hero has at times moments of weakness and despair. This reminds us that the perception of heroism is more complex than it may seem and subject to cultural and moral contexts.

**Keywords:**

Heroism; Fate; Classical Epic Heroes; Tolkien's Heroes; Zelensky; Cultural Identity.

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## 1. Introduction

The concepts approached in this dissertation are heroes and heroism, fate and doom, and good vs evil. Of these, the central concept is the hero, which means that all other concepts are approached in view of how they relate to the hero. Besides this, we will also look at how heroes interact with their community, when it comes to their agency, responsibility, and legitimacy.

All of these concepts are considerably debated. Heroes can be understood as an exclusive term, given only to specific individuals, or as a more inclusive term when it is applied to entire professions and roles within a community, such as first responders or healthcare workers.<sup>1</sup> Even between these different applications there's a spectrum on the reverence given to heroic figures, with one end declaring them as above others, which can also lead to considering them as immaculate, while the other side seeks to bring them to an equal level, perhaps even declassifying them as heroes.

This dissertation does not seek to lean in any particular way when it comes to defining the concept of heroes by its exclusivity. Although the focus on individual figures means it will inevitably focus on the hero as an individual, it does not seek to ignore the advantages in the application of the label of hero to groups.

As to the aspect of intrinsic heroism, the dissertation does not look at individuals as intrinsically heroic, but it does look at a hero as a unique individual through the combination of his heritage, his personality traits, and his actions. Frisk (2019) highlights the Great men perspective on heroes, saying that it shares the thought of the hero holding a "supernatural" charisma that is unachievable by others is conducive to the thought that to be a hero one must also command recognition, since that even those that contribute to the community can go unrecognised. One of the goals of this dissertation is to show that heroes do not necessarily have to be immaculate to be heroes and can have shortcomings alongside strengths.

A podcast is also part of this dissertation. It will allow us to present to a less academic audience some of the conclusions to which our research has led us.

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<sup>1</sup> Frisk (2019) claims that within a perspective of theories on heroism, which he classifies as Hero institutions, there is the belief that certain heroes are different in the level from which they come in a community and their exclusivity, between heroic jobs and heroic historical figures, or the hero as being a consistent timeless symbol against the entropy of death. The author also uses the US military as an example of heroism being focussed across the larger group of individuals over specific ones and how heroes are dependent on a network of roles, bonds, and culture.

## 1.1 Selected Works

For this dissertation, the choice was made to focus on three domains:

1.) The Classical Epic sphere, through Homer's *Iliad*, and through Vergil's *Aeneid*. These texts were chosen due to their longstanding cultural mark on Western culture, as well as to the integral role that heroes and the notion of heroism plays in the text. Within these poems the concept of *arete* is important to understand the Greek heroic ideal, which calls for the hero to always strive or hold for a certain degree of excellence. This in turn makes them inspiring guides for others who wish to fully realise their potential. Heroes are also portrayed with a set of traits that can at times be strengths but are at other times flaws that are best avoided or subdued, because of their disastrous ends.

The fact that heroes are not wholly perfect and do not always adhere to the standards of conduct expected from them is important to understand them and in turn to present them in a way that does not overturn their heroic status but upholds it while appropriately showcasing their strengths and flaws.

Other relevant aspects of the Classical Epics are the role of fate and doom, and the influence of the supernatural over the actions of the heroes, which can be seen as a more fantastical way of treating forces of nature and the natural randomness of the universe. The topic of good vs evil is not very clear in the Classical Epics, with order vs *ataxia* being more identifiable, at least in the *Aeneid*. Finally, the question on the relevancy of heroes in the modern day: despite the Classical Epics being hundreds and thousands of years old, they are still important to modern thought and discussion, still framing the understanding we have of what makes a hero especially in the case of conflict.

2.) The Modern Fiction sphere, through some works by John R. R. Tolkien, namely, *The Silmarillion*, *Beren and Lúthien*, and *The Children of Húrin*. These texts are a part of a mythology inspired by various pagan mythologies and by the Christian corpus. Much like the Classical Epics, Tolkien's works share the portrayal of heroes that are at times responsible for good outcomes and at times responsible for terrible consequences. This creates a challenge in how we perceive these heroes, but they can serve as inspirations and warnings through the combination of their traits and their impact.

Part of this mythology are themes such as:

2.1.) The struggle between the forces of good and evil, a concept frequently associated with conflict and entwined with heroes and heroism;

2.2.) The concepts of fate and doom and how these seemingly supernatural elements can hold such weight as to affect key choices made by heroes, and in turn change their lasting legacy;

2.3.) The topic of community and its relationship with heroic figures. *The Children of Húrin* showcases different interactions between the community and the central heroic figure, which are influenced by his popularity or infamy, as well as his actions.

3.) As for the last sphere, the choice was to analyse the concept of heroism deployed in the rhetoric of Volodymyr Zelensky, namely in a selection of his first speeches after Russia invaded Ukraine, published in *Volodymyr Zelensky War Speeches I: February-March 2022*.<sup>2</sup>

The choice of Zelensky's rhetoric was made due to its relevancy, with the war being ongoing during the drafting of the dissertation's proposal and the development of the dissertation itself, but also due to the close connection of warfare with heroes and heroism. Volodymyr Zelensky was chosen due to his leadership position as President of Ukraine, the connection of his fate and legacy with that of his country and his rising fame across the world, being chosen as *Time* magazine's Person of the Year in 2022. The goal is not to declare whether Zelensky is a hero or not, but rather to see how his rhetoric treats the concept of hero within the context of the Ukrainian-Russian war; to present the concept of hero as still relevant in the modern age; and how the concept of good vs evil finds purchase in Zelensky's speeches. This particular aspect is noticeable in the Russo-Ukrainian war, wherein many heroes and villains have been proclaimed, with many Ukrainian Forces nicknaming the Russian forces "Orcs."<sup>3</sup>

## 1.2 Strengths or Flaws

Frisk (2019) presents a varied and well researched view into the wide spanning body of literature dealing with the concept of hero. "Fragmented body of literature that covers different subject areas, distinct societies, and various disciplines."(Frisk, 2019, p.87). The author goes on to comment that "there is little consensus about the precise definition of the heroic," which further reinforces how the concept of heroes and heroism is constantly in debate and subject to various theories in differing levels of compatibility.

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<sup>2</sup> Zelensky, V. (2022) War Speeches I: February – March 2022 (Imverlag eds).

<sup>3</sup> A Twitter post on the Ukrainian National Guard account, refers to Kadyrov soldiers as orcs. (Ukrainian National Guard, 2022).

The lack of consensus becomes apparent in the author's division of the literature across "four dominant perspectives" (great men, hero stories, acts of heroism, hero institutions), this is done because the chosen authors all hold theories divergent from others. The author calls Hero stories a perspective on the hero, wherein the concept from the narrative phenomenon, in the sense of heroes being created through their "canonisation" in literature, which features a wide variety and repeated numbers of structures and tropes. In this perspective the hero is used to deal with conflicts between the changing elements of a culture.

This dissertation looks to heroes and upholds that they are characterised by a set of traits that can be strengths or flaws depending on their intensity and context. Heroes do not need to be immaculate to be considered heroes and can proceed through their tale with great victories and great failures. Moments of weakness and despair are natural, same as rash acts based on anger or pride. Every single hero across the works analysed is deliberately shown as facing difficulties and making wrong choices being in no way excellent across every aspect of their character. It is through this oscillation between strengths and shortcomings, that heroes can be upheld as symbols to which strive by, and not strictly adhere to. Frisk (2019) classifies a perspective of theories on heroism under the name hero institutions, through this he sets them apart as theories that hold the hero as an ideational tool for communities, where the hero is seen as representative of the community, or a tool to maintain its values and ideals. Their flaws serve to the benefit of the community by showcasing the positive and negative aspects in an individual and often the inner battle he fights with himself. Throughout the hero's journey, one can glance at the variety of circumstances that force him to make decisions. These circumstances are different from one hero to the next, determined by their personality and the interaction between their triumphs and failings. Even good traits can sometimes be shown as excessive, such as Túrin's or perhaps even Húrin's confidence in the face of Melkor, which can be seen as a measure of their pride.

Naturally, the perception of heroes is subject to cultural and moral contexts, with some characteristics being perceived differently by a different culture. Ancient heroes were more martially prone while Christian heroes had a noticeable focus on their morality; meanwhile contemporary heroes are also characterised by their expertise of skill and are not as tied to Christian morality as before. Even in the case of the Greek and Roman epic hero there seems to be a difference in the heroic ideals upheld, between a more martial and glory seeking ideal and a more community minded ideal. In the *Aeneid*

both of these ideals are represented. Aeneas is solely focussed on his struggle and the fight against the Greek invaders during his time at Troy, then subsumed by the need to protect his family and community, which causes him to abandon the fighting and lead the Trojans away from the city.

### 1.3 What Makes a Hero

The personality traits of a hero are crucial to set themselves apart from other heroes, these in combination with concepts such as *arete* or *virtus*, as well as their actions and choices are what make each hero unique.

Within the Classical Epics all of the heroes within the epics are heroes at the start of the story for they are all somewhat accomplished. They are noticeably separated from the common soldiery by their attitude, their position as leaders, and their actions within the epic. In the case of the works of Tolkien, all of the heroes become heroes due to periods of strife, since it places these individuals in conspicuous roles, particularly that of leaders of their community. Within Zelensky's speeches heroes tend to be those who contribute to the Ukrainian effort, whether in the battlefield, through humanitarian aid, or even through civilian resistance.

All heroes display a disposition towards heroic action and the reasons for this tend to arise from the heroic ideals that they follow. Heroes are expected to embody aspects such as courage, bravery, and strength, even when facing overwhelming challenges that place them in direct mortal danger. Although they are not represented as infallible, frequently their actions are kept in check by their peers, for example in the *Iliad*, where different heroes rally others that begin faltering during particularly hard moments of fighting.

### 1.4 The Hero and Community

Heroes play a profound and important role in their communities, although it is arguable at times how beneficial that role is. Within the *Iliad*, the heroes are leaders and officers of an army and are therefore entrusted with safeguarding their troops for the success and then benefit of the entire troop. In the *Aeneid*, Aeneas is the leader of a homeless people and is seeking out a new homeland. In *The Silmarillion* and *The Children of Húrin*, not every action done by heroes is of benefit to the communities they are a part

of or even to the world at large, but these actions are nevertheless defining moments in the history of the world.

All of these heroes have been elevated by their community to beacons or symbols, since whatever choice the heroes make, the community follows through in support and once their time has ended, they are then upheld as heroic and inspirational symbols. Though this is not noticeable within *The Silmarillion* itself, within *The Lord of the Rings*, various heroes from *The Silmarillion* are mentioned in a positive and inspiring light.

As the cultures of the modern-day progress through their changes, this will also lead to the concept of hero to adapt accordingly. This is already noticeable through the democratisation of the concept of hero, with it being applied across professions. During the Covid-19 pandemic, several roles were regarded as being critical and as such being heroic. Nevertheless, there are still roles and functions that are placed in highly noticeable positions during times of strife and will inevitably lead to some individuals being regarded as heroes, in one way or another, given that they work to the betterment of all in a society and will in turn receive recognition from their community.

## **1.5 Fate and Doom**

Fate, destiny, and doom are very adaptable within narrative with the scale balancing between total pre-determined actions and complete freedom in every choice. No choice exists in a vacuum, they are all dependent on previously made choices; furthermore, not every choice is likely to be considered by the hero given his personality and ideals.

In order to narrow the scope of fate and doom, we will consider whether the overall idea of fate can be observed as being entirely within the control of the hero, entirely outside of his control or a combination of both. Doom evokes a more negative connotation, but it can be understood the same way as fate, at least in how it represents that which will come to pass upon a hero. Often fate is what places the hero in the path to becoming a hero, and without it he would also be removed of his heroic status. The fate of a hero is exclusive to the hero, as it is everything that has led him to becoming a hero and is then everything that is outside of his grasp and places on his path the various obstacles that he must deal with.

A hero is usually described as self-aware and capable, and if placed within a context without the existence of supernatural phenomena and beings, could very well act

on his own intuition and judgement. This aspect is important, so that when taking into account the context of supernatural elements such as gods, fate, and magic, we can understand that heroes are not necessarily in a state of pre-ordained actions. When Achilles first becomes angry at Agamemnon, he thinks of what his action would be and decides to strike him down but is then kept back by Athena. In this case, we have a moment when the hero chooses the course of his action, or comes close to, but is then assuaged by a higher power. This opens up discussion around the concept of fate and doom, given that not every single action within the Classical Epics is determined by direct godly intervention, perhaps, because this is not seen as necessary. Fate and doom are not always relegated to the power of gods, with oaths and curses playing critical roles in the development of fate, sometimes foreshadowing or perhaps being the direct cause of a hero's or his companion's death. This highlights the importance and ambiguity of free will.

Many moments across Tolkien's works suggest that fate can be altered, such as in the case of Fëanor's fate and Túrin's fate, although it can be altered through their own choice and not through an outside force. In the case of Túrin, his fate is to have his choices turn to ill fortune, so perhaps he does have free will but is nevertheless doomed, that is, pre-ordained to an outcome. In the case of the Classical Epics, Achilles is famous for his choice of fate, whether to live a short but glorious life, or a long and forgotten one.

Even if this dissertation is unlikely to come to a conclusion in the question of predeterminism or complete free will when it comes to fate, it still considers valid to understand heroes as being influenced by a fate that is determined by the good and bad things that happen around a hero, and at times create obstacles or boons to them. How much of a hero's life is directly under his control? Within the Classical Epics, it is obvious that fate is far more tangible a concept, with gods dedicated to its crafting and being incapable of altering it on a whim, as can be seen in the case of Zeus and Sarpedon (16.431-461).

As to the importance of fate to heroes, it is often seen during single critical moments, when a hero's shortcomings and strengths define his story. This is then taken as being the fate of the hero and leaves others to wonder of possible alternatives, which in turn allows for a "teachable moment" in understanding how a hero's personality traits can develop their fate.

## 1.6 The Hero and the Moral Distinction Between Good and Evil.

No hero approached within this dissertation can be considered evil, yet not all of them can be considered wholly good. Heroes seem to be foremost a safeguard against that which is considered bad to the community, namely its destruction, although often this means that they are placed at odds with other communities and can come to represent their destruction, as is the case of Aeneas, who is trying to establish his people in a new homeland but becomes embroiled in war with Turnus and the Latins.

Within the works of Tolkien, the topic of good vs. evil is prevalent, with The Dark Lord Morgoth representing the evil that seeks to destroy and twist everything to its image. The application of evil in this case is not a debatable label, because the forces of evil deliberately cause harm and proliferate misery and death.

Good and evil can be a point of contention that is frequently dismissed as unrealistic by the mantra “the world is not black and white.” Despite the world not being morally black and white, the use of the terms good and evil is commonplace as there are acts that are not taken as morally grey but simply good or evil. Through the dichotomous nature of good and evil we can understand the struggles of a hero as he strives to fight against forces of evil even as his actions are not always good. Even within the works of Tolkien, there are many heroes that act in ways that might be considered wicked by others, such as during the Kinslayings. However, the heroes are good for they stand against the single all-powerful evil, alongside the larger pantheon of deities and the god creator Eru Ilúvatar.

The Russo-Ukrainian war has led to the rise of many heroes, and to the use of the rhetorical opposition between good and evil, with the Western world mostly considering Ukraine as good and Russia as evil.<sup>4</sup> During such a conflict, it is inevitable that one side be considered heroic and good, especially one closely aligned with the democratic values of the West, while the other side, which escalated to such brutal violence be considered evil.

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<sup>4</sup> This is not unexpected since Russia has been a long-term aggressor of Ukraine, ever since and even before the invasion of Crimea.

## 1.7 Agency, Responsibility, and Legitimacy

It is not undeniable that all heroes act to a fate much larger than themselves. At the very least those approached within this dissertation are all tied to their communities and cultures. Communities and cultures have come to create rituals and symbols to honour and designate heroes, such as sacred rituals, statues and iconographic representations, national medals, and awards. These decorations serve as recognition of their efforts to the betterment of all or of a particular group. By remembering heroes, communities ensure future generations have icons to follow and they create a more or less coherent tradition about communal values and beliefs.

Frequently heroes are those in leadership positions, and as such they hold a social responsibility to their group. Yet their heroic status comes from a higher form of dedication, which frequently means self-denial for the good of the community. Within the heroes here analysed Aeneas is the most exemplary in self-denial as he seems to be repeatedly acting out for the good of his community over his self-interest.<sup>5</sup> He frequently withholds his emotions in order to propagate positive feelings and messages to his fellow Trojans, so as to keep their morale up.<sup>6</sup> Agamemnon serves as an example of a lack of self-denial in his taking of Briseis, an act which is selfish and unwarranted and also breaks rules within the community, since Briseis was the prize of Achilles.

Frequently the status of hero begets glory and standing: although not all heroes achieve a large measure of power and prestige, many do. Within the *Iliad*, none of the heroes attempt to raise their own political stands, but do raise themselves by their martial victory, which further upholds their status and power.

Heritage is closely related to the concept of hero, with heroes being frequently identified by their lineage. At times, their personality can be seen as the product of this lineage whether it be godly or mortal. Their upbringing is also important for many of the same reasons. This heritage imparts upon them customs in accordance with its peculiarities and affects how the hero is perceived and treated by other figures. Túrin is a prime example as his pride is seen to originate in his mother, while his upbringing by the Elves is noticed and responded to by others in his tale. Many leaders throughout time

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<sup>5</sup> Frisk (2019) classifies a perspective on the hero as Acts of Heroism, within which heroism and altruism are considered to be different with heroism coming from outside the individual and stemming from a special or unique characteristic from heroic figures.

<sup>6</sup> *Aeneid* (1.198-209).

have upheld themselves as sons or reincarnations of bygone heroes, or descendants of their bloodline. This was the case of the *Aeneid*, which sought to tie the fate of Aeneas and Troy to Rome, and in turn tie this legacy with that of Augustus. Frequently this is used to symbolise a return to past glories and the permanence and value of tradition.

### **1.8 Cultural Management and Heroes**

Heroes, without exception, are tied to their community, and the world around it. Therefore, the presentation of a hero by a cultural institution requires appropriate contextualisation, which falls onto the duty of the cultural institution itself to educate its audience and ease the understanding that the heroic legacy demands. The Classical Epics are a good example, as they hold a wealth of cultural conventions, values, and meanings, which can easily be overlooked, lost, or misunderstood, and can negatively affect the perceptions of an audience, that can also harbour misconceptions of the classical work and the heroes within.

Cultural institutions hold the power in how to bring forward the past. They naturally must do so in an objective and ethical way but can also purposefully exploit the past in order to contribute to agendas and pre-defined notions which go against an ethical treatment of history and truth. Heroes in particular are a frequent target to whom tyrants or organisations, such as neo-Nazi parties, attempt to associate themselves. These groups attempt to raise their members as heroes, or even twist past heroes to suit their own ideology, meanwhile ignoring any proof that might go against them, or actively threatening violence to any attempt at truthful exposition.

By treating the past with objectivity and withholding any attempts to colour it to modern perceptions or agendas, cultural institutions can appropriately pay respects to heritage, without necessarily condoning cultural practices which are condemnable in today's societies, such as slavery, torture, among others. By tackling the past and all its issues faithfully, this will lead to a better understanding by modern audiences of the changes that occur over history. Our values, which are rooted in these ancient civilisations, have changed drastically, yet they still hold some similar conventions and ideals.

Given the prevalence of heroes across cultures, and the difficulty that arises in approaching their legacy, deeper knowledge of their origins and variety allows for a broader understanding of the heroic archetype. Subsequent forays into historical figures

and their context will become easier and help modern audiences question the past and accept the variations that exist within cultural concepts such as heroism. Through the variety of comparable patterns that occur throughout heroic tales, or even history as a whole, the diffusion of historical information becomes easier, and the many common traps in historical interpretation become more discernible.

Perhaps further benefits might come from this understanding to the discussion and enjoyment by the public of popular culture, given that literature, cinema, and many other aspects of culture look towards the past for inspiration. The inclusion of Tolkien in this dissertation points to this, with works heavily influenced and founded on historical research. It might not be far-fetched to say that cultural institutions benefit with the relation between the audience and their enjoyment of fiction, by a deeper belief in the secondary world. And the escapism, gained from this separation between the real and the fictional world, does not preclude someone from still learning and better understanding the real world and the nuances of concepts such as heroism.

## 2. The Classical Epic Hero

In this chapter we will explore the features of a selection of heroes from *The Iliad* and the *Aeneid* alongside a diverse collection of actions and emotions that these personalities express as well as the way that the texts treat these elements. The various motifs, tropes and personalities contained within these works provided a treasure of inspiration for future literary works and constitute an invaluable milestone that for centuries and even millennia shaped Western culture. Pinheiro (2006, p.52), for instance, affirms that after two thousand years of existence the Vergilian epic is still relevant now as it was back then.<sup>7</sup>

Between the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* there are noticeable differences and similarities in the treatment of heroes which stems from the cultural differences between the Greek and the Roman world. It is generally acknowledged that the influence that the Homeric poems had on Vergil's *Aeneid* was massive. Hexter (2010, p.27) defines it as an emulative and imitative relationship. We are then faced with two epic conceptions that, far from independent, are intertwined and dependent on each other.

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<sup>7</sup> Beye (1993, p.115 & p.125) equates the plot of *The Iliad* to sports films where the main character returns to help win the "big game" and believes the popularity of these works stems from their elemental qualities.

## 1. What is a Hero?

### 1.1 *Iliad*.

The martial nature of the Homeric hero stems from the specific context of his cultural origin as well as the *Iliad*'s setting being the siege of Troy.

Beye (1993, p.123) categorises the Homeric society as ruthlessly competitive, denoting the seemingly narcissistic and selfish mentality of the Homeric heroes.<sup>8</sup> He supports this claim by pointing out that heroes never praise each other for socially positive and humanly ethical behaviour such as generosity, kindness, or benevolence. To Beye, the Homeric hero only treats kindly inconsequential figures such as their womenfolk, who Beye equates as property. Contrary to this view are the frequent cases across the *Iliad* where heroes come together to support one another, such as Teukros being protected by Aias with his shield. If Beye's understanding were the case, then we would sooner see Aias dismiss Teukros and seek out his own glory foremost. As to the lack of praise there is a great deal of praise between the heroes unless Beye has narrowed the scope of socially positive and ethical behaviour as to exclude instances such as Diomedes and Glaukos' exchange (6.119-236), or Patroklos' healing of Eurypylos' wounds (11.808-847). There are many more examples that disprove of Beye's classification, and what should be understood from Homeric heroes is that although they do compete with each other they are not so ruthlessly competitive as to impede or denigrate each other, rather this competition should be seen in such a way as to further each other's accomplishment.

#### 1.1.1 Achilles

The *Iliad* can be referred to as the story of Achilles' wrath. Achilles' *menis* is so significant to the story that it literally begins with this Greek word for wrath. It is well known that the *Iliad* is above all the story of Achilles' *menis* (wrath) and its consequences. Achilles' anger was indeed intense and sometimes lethal: we see it first against the

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<sup>8</sup> Beye (1993, p.123) refers to Homer's similes of lions rampaging against sheep as an example of the individual focus of the heroes' battles.

overreach of Agamemnon's in his decision to take Briseis away from Achilles; later against Hektor's killing of Patroklos whom Achilles loved deeply as a partner.<sup>9</sup>

Patroklos is noticeably worried for Achilles and the Achaeans to the point of volunteering to fight the Trojans in place of Achilles. When Achilles sends Patroklos to check up on the wounded Achaeans, the narrator indicates that it was the beginning of Patroklos' evil (11.598-616). This can be understood as the start of the path to his doom much like what happens to Túrin, as we will see in chapter 3. Seemingly insignificant moments can be marked as the beginning of the path of fate.

Achilles can be perceived as narcissistic and selfish because of his disposition to throw, what some would call, a tantrum and let his fellow compatriots die rather than to be deprived of the slave he received as a war prize. Furthermore, his heroism can be seen as stemming exclusively from his capacity for murder, but this would be a misguided and limited view.

Briseis is Achilles' prize (*geras*) and was received from the division of spoils that occur from a mutual agreement and reward of effort, she is Achilles' share from the Achaean effort.<sup>10</sup> Agamemnon, the highest king and leader, threatened not only Achilles but also Odysseus and Aias when demanding restitution for Chryseis.<sup>11</sup> Because of Achilles' short temper he immediately voices his outrage with Agamemnon becoming the target of the king's threat.<sup>12</sup> Besides his outburst, Achilles offers his protection to Kalchas who feared Agamemnon's retribution. This places Achilles distinctively in the role of resisting Agamemnon's tyranny. We may wonder how the *Iliad* would develop had Achilles not placed himself directly under Agamemnon's crosshairs, since Achilles wasn't the only one who could have been targeted by Agamemnon's intentions.

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<sup>9</sup> According to Schein (1997, p.355) Patroklos' death serves as a way to represent Achilles' terrible isolation and self-reproach at his comrade's fall as well as to evoke that Achilles' own death comes with the death of Patroklos. "By having Achilles 'die' while he is still alive, the poem can be taken to suggest how far beyond normal human limits his dislocation, isolation and suffering extend." Schein (1997, p.357). Although Schein should perhaps refer to Achilles' death at the death of Patroklos as a metaphorical death, his analysis is entirely observable in how upset and desperate Achilles was.

<sup>10</sup> *Geras* are the gifted spoils of a hero that come from a consensus from the army in its bestowal. This means that through the consensus of Achilles' warrior peers his contribution is acknowledged and given literal worth as well as the symbolic worth of honour. On this subject, see Raaflaub (1997, p.635).

<sup>11</sup> Considering the significance of *geras* and how it stands as the symbol of a hero's honour in conjunction with the dubitable right of a king's right to remove the *geras* of another. Agamemnon's decision can be understood as trampling norms that the Achaeans hold in high regard. Agamemnon makes no attempt at hiding his disregard for his fellow allies because he first demands restitution for his lost *geras* and then subsequently declares his intention to acquire restitution regardless of consensus.

<sup>12</sup> According to Adkins (1997, p.704) a hero's honour (*time*) must be defended by his *arete*.

When Phoenix meets with Achilles in Book IX, he makes it clear that Achilles is justified in his anger but because of Agamemnon's gifts he should make peace. Achilles' grievance is so deep that he refuses the embassy that comes to him in Book IX. According to Adkins (1997, p.703), Phoenix attempts to convince him to take the gifts Agamemnon has offered to mend the divide which denotes the material sense of honour, where the prizes and objects that a hero wins are a part of his record. However, it is perhaps better to understand it as a measure of losing the "fight" wherein accepting the gifts now he is undoubtedly the victor, but if he were forced to fight despite his statement it would have meant that his entire endeavour would have been for nought.

Achilles' wrath charged *aristeia* between Books XX and XXII showcase both his martial skill as well as his personal temper. It is in the peak of both of these aspects that we witness Achilles' fearsome reputation as he kills swathes of Trojans and seemingly single-handedly causes the Trojan army to route. There is surprisingly in the middle of this an allusion to a time of a more merciful Achilles. When Lykaon begs for mercy, this seems an irrational action in that moment, given the Greek preference to kill any and all Trojans; yet this plea is rooted in Achilles' prior conduct in capturing Lykaon and latter selling him as a slave (21.34-135). It is in episodes such as this where we see that there is more to a hero than meets the eye. Heroes are not moulds that cast repeated actions or even act consistently in each circumstance. Achilles, who once said that the Trojans did not do anything against him personally (1.152-167), is now after the death of Patroklos willing to kill any Trojan. During Priam's visit Achilles changes his behaviour again by taking care of Priam and counselling him to eat. The warrior lets go of his earlier rage against the Trojans. This is a moment of human compassion that shows how even in the context of a bloody war by brutal heroes there is space for sympathy and care.

Achilles' leadership qualities were demonstrated during Patroklos' funeral games when he exhibited diplomacy and moderation by assuaging the tempers of the different competitors.<sup>13</sup> Achilles' leadership is also rooted in a seemingly familial bond to many of the heroes in his warband. He is not an isolated leader that holds himself above them but rather one that shares in comradeship and close emotional ties as shown by his relationship with Patroklos and how the Myrmidons share in his grief.

The climax of the *Iliad* is the duel between Hektor and Achilles, both coming to blows by the culmination of their own actions and circumstances as well as by the careful

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<sup>13</sup> According to Beye (1993, p.116) Achilles's relationship with the rest of the troops returns to normal.

manipulation of the gods. The duel occurs after much anticipation but not necessarily inevitability. Achilles' decision to stay in Troy is consolidated by the death of Patroklos and given Hektor's own hand in the act, it becomes inevitable that Achilles must seek out revenge. The duel is rooted in the humanity of both heroes: Achilles endeavouring to avenge his fallen companion and Hektor trying to avoid the shame of forgoing Poulydamas' advice which Hektor believes caused the Trojan loss. Hektor's duty to the defence of Troy is apparent in the duel, but he primarily wishes to avoid Poulydamas' criticism. This is why he ignores his own army's rout and the calls from his lord and father Priam to retreat behind the city walls.

The duel does not exist to determine the strength of each hero. Achilles is very clearly the superior fighter, and it is nevertheless interfered by Pallas Athene (22.446). Hainsworth (1991, p.103) associates the intervention of gods in heroic battles to serving a system whereby a hero can lose and not be considered a failure or shameful. This theory runs somewhat counter to Martin (2011, pp.18-19) and even Glaukos' own understanding of the heroic conduct where honour is a commodity that is won and yielded. There is no mention of shame in the act of loss and death and many of the heroes slain in the *Iliad* still elicit respect even after their deaths. The intervention of the gods is a well-accepted aspect of Greek mythology with outcomes being derived from their whims. Farron (1978, p.48) believes that this godly interference can be used to deprive a hero of glory for storytelling purposes such as, in this case, creating a divide between Hektor's reputation and his performance. It does seem that Zeus' empowerment of Hektor creates a divide between the Trojans' successes and their losses which in turn paints a fragility onto Hektor, incapable to match the strongest of the Greek heroes and therefore incapable of winning without Zeus' favour.

Achilles is not strictly defined by any single one of his facets or actions, he is a hero capable of astonishing brutality, such as his continuous desecration of Hektor's corpse, as well as incredible empathy, such as his treatment of Priam in Book XXIV.<sup>14</sup>

### 1.1.2 Hektor

Hektor is the leader of the Trojan forces against the Achaean invasion. While the *Iliad* has a host of characters on the Achaean side that share a great deal of the narrator's

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<sup>14</sup> According to Putnam (1995, p.153), we see Achilles' embrace of Priam as a semblance of humanity by his pity towards Priam during their shared meal.

attention, the Trojan narrative is mostly focussed on Hektor with a few minor heroic characters, such as Aeneas, Glaukos and Sarpedon taking the focus at times. Hektor is one of the most important characters in the *Iliad*. Farron (1978, p. 39) references the belief held by certain scholars that Hektor is the most sympathetic and interesting character. The author points to his presence – or to references to him – in every single book of the *Iliad*, in contrast to Achilles, who is not mentioned across several books.

Through Hektor we can witness the significance of a hero to the community as well as the weight placed onto him by the way he feels about saving that same community. The trials of Hektor are justifiably a step above the common soldiery and his accompanying heroes.

He is extremely significant to the Trojans, and they hold him in high esteem, same as the Greeks. Additionally, he refers to himself as pre-eminent among the Trojans (6.476-481), while Priam refers to him as the best of his sons (24.239-246).<sup>15</sup> When Hektor is slain, a great tumult takes over Troy that ends with Priam crossing onto the Greek camp in order to ransom his son's corpse (22.405-411).<sup>16</sup>

Much like the other heroes Hektor is not depicted as a strict blueprint or archetype of a hero. He is depicted very much as a human being in Book VI, in one of the most touching scenes of the *Iliad*.<sup>17</sup> It offers the only authentic moment of peaceful family life across the entire work and upholds not only Hektor's but the entire Trojan army's *raison d'être*, that of the defence of their families, homeland, and allies.

Farron (1978, pp.40-41) refers to Hektor as a peaceful, unwarlike, home-loving, gentle family man who was forced and trapped into the role of heroic defender, incapable of fulfilling that role despite his desperate attempts. Lyne (1987, pp.190-191) believes that Hektor feels the compulsion of honour and the responsibility to protect his city and for this he sets aside the emotional pull of his wife and child. This choice is to Lyne a sacrifice that heroes make for their heroic single-mindedness and heroic commitment. It does not seem necessary to elevate Hektor's appreciation for Troy or his family against one another. The coercive effect of shame does play a role, yet he very clearly values his family highly and in order to protect them he must take up arms against the Achaeans. To

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<sup>15</sup> Farron (1978, p.52) describes Hektor and Achilles as the best of their sides.

<sup>16</sup> No other son of Priam elicits such a response in their death. The city's lamentation shows the great deal of love that the Trojans hold for Hektor. And his father risks death just to see his son's body taken care of.

<sup>17</sup> According to Beye (1993, p.119) book VI was called "The Get-Together of Hector and Andromache." by the ancients. This loving and humane chapter was deeply impactful in the ancient world and even today according to Farron (1978, p.41) Book VI is one of the most memorable episodes of the entire *Iliad*.

call Hektor peaceful and unwarlike is perhaps an exaggeration given that he belongs to a warrior class and is just as boisterous as all the other warriors on the field.

Farron (1978, pp.40, 48) believes that Hektor's performance in battle is intentionally shown by Homer as mediocre and cowardly in order to garner sympathy for Hektor. This same author uses Patroklos' death as an example by root of the three perpetrators of his death: Apollo, Euphorbos, and finally Hektor (16.788-815).<sup>18</sup>

Hektor does however provide quite a great deal of competent and exemplary performances in battle such as the numerous times he rallies the Trojans during battle, (8.172-178; 11.284-298). Hektor also succeeds in his subsequent advance towards the Greek ships which end with fire being set on them. It should be noted that many of Hektor's successes are done by aid of Zeus (8.75-77). Farron is correct in pointing out that Hektor is not capable of facing other major Greek heroes in singular combat and winning outright. This is exemplified by his duel with Aias (7.170-312) which is prefaced by a fear from the Greeks in facing Hektor or in his various confrontations with Diomedes (9.347-360).

As to the discrepancy between Hektor's reputation and his performance across the *Iliad*, Farron (1978, pp.54-55) seems to lean towards there being an overinflation of Hektor's actual capabilities; nevertheless, contrary to this, it could be argued that Hektor is well framed by his reputation but like the other Greek heroes is incapable of sustaining his performance. Every single Greek hero finds himself in predicaments that could well have cost him his live or reputation, but these episodes are relatively restricted if compared to how much attention Hektor is given and to what he actually represents.

Of all the encounters between Trojan heroes and Achilles, Hektor's is the least inspiring: Aeneas (20.158-291) stands and fights Achilles before being rescued by Poseidon; Asteropaeus (21.144-183) draws blood from Achilles before dying; Agenor (21.545-598) readies himself to fight Achilles before being spirited away by Apollo who then tricks and draws Achilles away. Hektor runs away from Achilles and only faces him when he is tricked into thinking he has a companion that will help him face Achilles. This serves to illustrate that Hektor is very much fit to his role as a doomed hero and that despite his high status to the Trojans he is almost just capable of dealing with the Greek

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<sup>18</sup> Farron (1978, p.40) also points to a theory that Euphorbos' death at the hands of Menelaus serves to attenuate the relationship between the Atreides and Achilles. This is helpful to indicate the mutual benefit and aid that heroes provide each other as none of their actions is done in isolation but in action to the web of relationships that heroes have.

heroes and barely capable of facing off against the greatest of them. Farron (1978, p.52) also highlights that far more is expected of Hektor in his confrontation with Achilles than of all the other heroes that faced Achilles. This underlines the burden placed onto the heroes in pre-eminent positions as they are fitted with more responsibility and expectation.

During his time in the city, we are placed in the context of the civilized life he defends, a life much the same as the Greeks in peaceful times, which serves to endear the reader to Trojans and bring out the sense of sorrow of the war between two very similar peoples which will end in the complete destruction of one of them. The Trojans and the Greeks participate in similar religious rituals and hold temples to shared gods. Troy is the home to Hektor's family, his wife and son, and the place where all the moments of life with family occur, from eating to laughter and affection. However, this peace and calm is painfully perceived as temporary since Hektor is a soldier on duty and all the homeliness is tempered with a tension of foreign invaders at the gates. Not every soldier is a hero but in the *Iliad* every hero is a soldier. Taking Hektor as example: he is a soldier in the Trojan army and is for all purposes the leader of the militia of Troy but in this episode in Book VI, we see the facets of his life which are frequently outside of his soldier role, that of a father or organizer of religious ritual. Perhaps it is from his son's fearful unrecognition of his helmeted face that we can grasp at the separation of the violent acts of a soldier, and the loving acts that each hero is capable of. While across the *Iliad* the many deaths of heroes are frequently marked by reminders of their family, fathers, mothers, and wives, Hektor is the only hero whose familial reality is held up to the reader, confronting him with the cost of war and its abundant losses.

Much to the sorrow of many, this is the first and only time that Hektor speaks to his family and the last time Andromache sees him alive before his body is dragged by Achilles's chariots and Priam returns with it. The *Iliad* ends with the funeral of Hektor where we are faced with the love and respect that his family held for him.

Hektor is in part defined by his relationship to his family which are endeared to him and gravely affected by his death to the point of his father risking his life to save his corpse. Even Helen remarks on his gentleness and kindness (12.760-776).<sup>19</sup> Another part of Hektor is his martial prowess which is never quite up to par with many of the major Greek heroes. His leadership skills are far more pronounced given that when Hektor is wounded, no other hero is quite as crucial to the cohesion of their army, exemplified by

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<sup>19</sup> According to Farron (1978, p.54) Hektor's family loved and respected him for his non-military virtues.

his near death at the hands of Aias (14.402-420), his subsequent healing (15.262) and return (15.328-351). Hektor's leadership is also shown not to be faultless such as when he ignores Poulydamas' warning. Hektor's status as Priam's heir is also an important aspect of Hektor as it designates him as heir of Troy as well as the best of all the sons, who are either shown to be disagreeable in character, such as Paris, or as chaff to be slaughtered by the Greeks.

Hektor is the hero with the most important position in the Trojan army and is therefore fitted with more responsibility and expectation which, in his case, are very clearly impossible to live up to, given Hektor's opposition of renowned Greek heroes as well as the machinations of the gods and fate which will see him, and Troy destroyed. The hope of Troy's survival rests upon Hektor, were it not, as Beye (1993, p.116) puts it, a doomed city, a doomed people, and a doomed civilisation.

## 1.2 *Aeneid*.

The *Aeneid* was authored during a time of upheaval in the Roman world. There is an intrinsic link between the characters, their decisions, events and references within the work and the context of its creation. Battles such as Actium and historical figures such as Caesar Augustus are blatantly referenced within the *Aeneid*. According to Galinsky (1996, p.250) it is hard to imagine that the *Aeneid* could have been written in any other time except Augustus'. The *Aeneid* is a product of its time, therefore with every element concerning Aeneas we are subject to views, criticism, allusions, and allegory to Augustus himself and to other elements of Roman culture.<sup>20</sup> Augustus is a figure with a great deal of significance to History as the forger of a new political regime and in some ways his legacy directly affects us today. Because of this legacy and his relation to the *Aeneid* there is wealth of analysis that looks at the relationship between Aeneas and Augustus. But as this dissertation is primarily focussed on heroes it will refrain from looking too deeply into this connection.

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<sup>20</sup> According to Connolly (2010, p.406) Aeneas' history and character in the early stages of the epic strain against the necessity of Junonian violence for the foundation of Rome. Connolly adds that Aeneas is in parts isolated, melancholic, confused and enraged and inaugurates the historical cycle of violence as well as invite a critical response to it, being neither a republican exemplum nor a kingly or imperial one. To Connolly, Aeneas is a figure of disconnected and resistant sensibility whose acts and words call into question the logic of exemplarity itself. The academic discourse revolving the *Aeneid* is long and storied and far more than this dissertation is capable of tackling.

The meanings of *pietas* are very complex and long to be discussed in its entirety within this dissertation without leaving out significant information. Pinheiro (2003, pp.461-462) refers to the difficulty in translating the word to Portuguese, which is also an issue in English and in any other language, due to the divergence in meaning with modern descendent words, such as piety, which hold a more religious meaning. Pinheiro (2003, p.462) compares this with Cicero's definition of *pietas* by three parts: first, justice in regard to the gods; second, accomplishing the duty to the fatherland, and, third, to those who are united by blood ties; as such, *pietas* can be understood as a debt to those connected by blood ties and to the fatherland and to the gods by a zealous care and benevolent duty.

### 1.2.1 Aeneas

We are introduced to Aeneas during one of the lowest points in his journey, after Hera attempts to put an end to it by wrecking his fleet off the coast of Libya. Aeneas' reaction is to pray to the gods and express regret that he did not die in Troy by the hand of Diomedes (1.93-101) over an ignoble end at sea.<sup>21</sup> This might appear as a shocking introduction to a heroic character especially in contrast to the Homeric heroes who are introduced in commonplace situation, but it very quickly establishes the context the Trojans are in, as weary refugees, and Aeneas at a deep level of despair. Vergil contrasts Aeneas during Troy and after by portraying Aeneas with the attitudes of a typical Homeric hero during Aeneas' recollection of the siege of Troy and Vergil's own conception of a hero during the later parts of the *Aeneid*.

After coming ashore, he is weighed down by sorrow and dreading the fate of his missing people from the lost Trojan ships. Galinsky (1996, p.238) points to Aeneas' speech after his shipwreck off the coast of Africa, accentuating the appeal of the *Aeneid* in its writing and Aeneas' positive outlook in his second speech which outwardly presents a confident leader by prioritizing the morale of his people (1.198-209).<sup>22</sup> This

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<sup>21</sup> Connolly (2010, pp.408-409) pairs up Aeneas' first speech (1.94-101) with Juno's first speech (1.37-38) and states that neither wants Rome to be founded but in Aeneas' case he wants to obey Jupiter's mission.

<sup>22</sup> Panoussi (2010, p.54) calls Aeneas' speech extraordinary and effective despite his despondent spirit. While Connolly (2010, p.412) argues that Aeneas is wilfully distancing himself from his fate in his speech with any talk of goals and fulfilment being merely strategic rhetoric. Connolly seems to argue the opposite of many of the cited authors and seems to see Aeneas as a radically pragmatic personality where his own ignorance and confusion about his fated mission are calculated. This understanding of Aeneas seems to hold the idea that figures of the past did not believe the values of their culture and that these were simply used by them for their own benefit. Aeneas' speech is very well framed in a time of incredible doubt and

prioritisation of his community over himself is frequent as the story progresses; however, it carries with it a weight. Lyne (1987, pp.190-191) refers to this as a heroic single-mindedness or heroic commitment.<sup>23</sup> According to Feeney (1990, p.183) Aeneas is distant from his men, moving in solitude through a world which yields him no intimacy or comfort. Feeney points to his stifled and unconsummated conversations which denotes a painful part of his heroic journey. However, this does not alienate him from his own companions as shown when Ilioneus speaks highly of Aeneas to Dido (1.520-560).

According to Bowra (1990 [1933], p.369), Aeneas' confidence fails numerous times: such as when he worries over the death of his people after the shipwreck; or when he despairs over the burning of his ships by the Trojan women which causes him to falter in his unquestioned purpose. This requires an intervention from his father in order to reinvigorate Aeneas' spirit. Panoussi (2010, p.54) reinforces the thought of Aeneas' doubts and weaknesses in stating that Aeneas only becomes leader of his community when he executes private religious duties and sponsors an athletic festival which is subsequently tested by the burning of the Trojan ships.<sup>24</sup> The athletic festival, much like Patroklos' funeral games in the *Iliad*, is meant to provide a ground where, in this case, Aeneas' leadership qualities are displayed.<sup>25</sup>

These episodes in which Aeneas experiences a lack of confidence are examples of the humanity of his character since sorrow in the face of loss is a well-known emotion and although it might be seen as a flaw or an undesirable feature in a leader it is nevertheless common in any individual. Despite his own feelings Aeneas makes sure to keep an outward face that does not harm his group, and this constitutes, indeed, a characteristic that differentiates Aeneas' heroism.

Aeneas' role is multifaceted in his community: not only is he the leader and general but he also carries the duty of performing rituals. This, according to Panoussi (2010, p.54), is meant to make Aeneas resemble Rome's latest *pater*, Augustus. Panoussi further states that Aeneas' standard of leadership falls short of Roman expectations in his

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perhaps the lowest point of the voyage of the Trojans where they are worried at the prospect that nearly half of them perished beneath the waves. Furthermore, Aeneas's doubts to his mission are clearly related to his previous errors in deciphering the god's prophecies.

<sup>23</sup> Lyne (1987, pp.190-191) believes that this single-mindedness is a key factor in the capacity of heroes to appear noble and inspire admiration, which is a sacrifice their path involves.

<sup>24</sup> Both Horsfall (1995, pp.120-140) and Panoussi (2010, p.56) hold up Anchises as a temporary leader that is meant to allow Aeneas to form into the leader of the Trojans.

<sup>25</sup> Panoussi (2010, pp.56, 58). The funeral rites and the funeral games serve as a means to forge communal bonds. The funeral games also allow Aeneas to display expert ability to ease tensions and diffuse potential violence amongst his men.

uncertainties and doubts.<sup>26</sup> Aeneas' role as a leader also implies his involvement in diplomacy (11.100-138) and speech giving, since as leader he is the representative of his community, where those within and without it look to him as the one responsible for the welfare of the group and as the authority.<sup>27</sup>

According to Galinsky (1996, p.238) it is his inner qualities, his dilemmas, and his complex moral choices that are at the heart of the *Aeneid*. The transcendent aspect of his heroism is internal and mostly deals with the need for self-control and self-discipline. This is seen through his surpassing of obstacles. As is the opinion of Bowra (1990 [1933], p.365), Aeneas is made to face tests and trials that come from the gods. These tests are indispensable to Aeneas' moral development and are often failed by him, but this failure is not an impediment but a progression. Cairns (1989, p.31) supports this by saying that it is through Aeneas' toils that he exercises his royal virtue, and his qualities are shown. Finally, Bowra claims that in surpassing his moral weakness Aeneas is allowed the visions of the destined glories of Rome.<sup>28</sup>

Bowra (1990 [1933], p.370) asserts that in Book VI Aeneas becomes a changed man with confidence in his destiny and his despair is replaced by anxiety over the details of action. He no longer relapses into old weakness and as such during the events in Italy he is no longer his worst enemy and the only thing that stands between him and his fate is Turnus and the Latin alliance.

According to Panoussi (2010, pp.58-59) Aeneas also offers another aspect of the hero and leader of the community in his duties to performing religious functions which showcase his understanding of omens and rituals and therefore his readiness to lead as both sacral and political/military authority. An example of his capability is when he recognizes the prophecy of Celaeno (7.107-127).

Galinsky (1996, p.89) considers that Aeneas is not only pre-eminent for his *pietas* but that he distinguished himself also by his arms; therefore, it must be noted that his ability of war is very much a part of his character. Bowra (1990 [1933], p.370) states something similar when he claims that Aeneas is not morally perfect, but he is brave in the Homeric sense and embodies the roman concept of *pietas*. In this observation we can

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<sup>26</sup> Despite this "Aeneas' military and political authority over his men is never in question in the epic." (Panoussi 2010, p.55)

<sup>27</sup> Connolly (2010, p.413) holds speech as crucial to Aeneas' acts as the founder of a new community as well as to the Roman community.

<sup>28</sup> Pinheiro (2006, p.53) highlights the effort, the suffering, and the price that Aeneas pays as the theme of the *Aeneid*.

then see how certain aspects of heroes remain unchanged and are carried on from one specific context to another. Strength in arms and martial prowess are still important to Vergil's depiction of a Roman hero, but this strength and prowess must first prioritize the group over the hero's own glory.

Even in regard to his other qualities Aeneas is not depicted as undefeatable or perfect, as Panoussi (2010, p.56) points out. His aborted effort to settle in Thrace displays his lack of expertise and general *naïveté* regarding his duties. Vergil does not display a perfect ideation of a hero, purposefully exhibiting his failures to present his own observations and criticisms. The debate around Aeneas' killing of Turnus is where this aspect is most apparent, as we will see below. Aeneas as a hero is hard to summarise. He is very much an evolving and complex figure throughout the *Aeneid*. Nevertheless, we can state with some confidence that he is a hero that struggles to achieve the mission imposed on him by fate. For this he must change and adapt to the circumstances. In Aeneas' own words to Ascanius before battle we have an insight into his image of himself: courage (*virtus*) and toil (*labor*) are the features he has to transmit to his son as a heritage, and not fortune.

“Learn courage and true toil from me, my boy  
 And Fortune's ways from others. I'll protect you  
 This time, and lead you where the great rewards are.  
 Do keep in mind, as you mature, the models  
 From your own stock: be driven by Aeneas  
 Your father, and your uncle Hector too.” (12.435-440)

### 1.2.2 Turnus.

Turnus is entirely encompassed by conflict within the *Aeneid* and as such we experience him much in the same way as a Homeric hero. In the juxtaposition of Turnus to Aeneas we are faced with the differences between each other's martial spirit and their conduct of war. This interaction allows us to see those qualities that the Romans value in their heroes and understand how they are equal or different to those values the Homeric heroes uphold.

According to Hainsworth (1991, p.104), Turnus is the paradigm of all that Aeneas is not. Aeneas's previous weakness of lack of self-control are readily apparent in Turnus as he is frequently taken by *furor* (frenzy). Cairns (1989, p.67) has a similar outlook

indicating that Turnus is the second major foil to Aeneas with strengths and weakness that complement and sometimes echo those of the protagonist with *furor* and *ira* as his most prominent vices. Putnam (1995, p.180) states that Turnus can be viewed as a paradigm for the prideful and when he is brought low it fulfils half of Anchises' paradigm making *clementia* (clemency) possible for Aeneas. The author places Turnus' perspective into the forefront; to Turnus Aeneas is guilty of continued *odium* (hatred) which he should forswear.<sup>29</sup>

Hainsworth (1991, p.103) considers that Vergil as a poet of a rational and civilized age he could not hold up the Homeric hero as a paradigm to admire and therefore he uses similes that brand Turnus as irrational and barbaric. As such Vergil's hero must show virtues of a more cooperative kind. This view takes on a limited perspective which seems apparent later in this chapter. Suffice to say Vergil seems to balance both Turnus and Aeneas in a way that makes the reader question whether Aeneas is a civilizing force.

Cairns (1989, p.68) primarily looks at Turnus and Aeneas through the lens of kingship and routinely classifies the Rutulian as a bad king. Cairns roots this assessment in Vergil's abstention from referring to Turnus as king, justified by how Turnus' vices exceed his virtues, until the reference to his kingship is applied in misleading and ambivalent contexts which are damaging to Turnus namely during the Latins embassy to Diomedes. Such as when the embassy is falsely presented as originating jointly from King Turnus and King Latinus when in fact it comes solely from Turnus and is a failure as Diomedes emphasizes peace which is strictly against Turnus' wishes.

According to Cairns (1989, pp.69, 72) some of Turnus' actions which point to his poor kingship are: his treatment of Calybe, a nymph whose sacral status and role as divine messenger demands respect; his harbouring of Mezentius who is characterised as a tyrannical and impious king and Turnus' indignation to being whisked away by the gods during battle, as well as his desire for Evander to have witnessed his slaying of his son, a situation which earlier in the *Aeneid* evoked a curse from Priam to Neoptolemus.

When Vergil describes the Rutulians being inspired by Turnus' kingly qualities, Cairns (1989, p.70) refers to this as an ironic use of the kingship stereotype pointing to the conflict between Turnus' violence and royal self-control. This is a somewhat odd situation when Turnus is appropriately embodying the values of a Homeric hero yet

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<sup>29</sup> Putnam (1995, p.180) then puts into question whether Turnus's view should be the readers view as Aeneas prepares to kill his foe.

because he is a character within Vergil's *Aeneid* these values are subject to scrutiny and fault.<sup>30</sup>

In Book VI, the Sybil identifies Turnus as the second Achilles. Achilles in the *Iliad* is criticised as a lover of strife by Agamemnon which in turn resembles Zeus's criticism towards Ares. Cairns (1989, p.70) goes on to point out that this relation indicates that Turnus' moral qualities are moderate and mixed when compared to when Vergil first calls him king. However, Turnus' vices, *ira* and *furor*, are then transmitted to his Rutulian subjects. Interestingly this points to the thought that the rulers and heroes shape their community in their actions. This can be very well seen in Aeneas as he is purposefully attempting to travel to a new destiny for his people as well as his subsequent marriage to Lavinia.

Despite all of Turnus's fury there is still a story in his perspective as victim of a broken bond of betrothal and as a warrior against what the Latins see as a foreign incursion or invasion. The Trojans migration could have led to the Latin culture disappearing, had Zeus not promised Hera against. There is also an underlying feeling of pity towards someone who strives against fate which according to Hainsworth (1991, p.105) is his primary madness. Despite this, contrary to Dido and much like Juno, he is the only other character in the work that assents to fate and lets go of his *furor* thereby accepting his own and the Trojans' fate.

Hainsworth (1991, p.113) views this as Vergil's seductive narrative which seduces readers to historical fallacy and treats Turnus with too much reality and in turn sympathy. This view is arguable since Vergil clearly committed a great deal for this reality to shine through in order to humanize his characters and create deeper meaning in their actions. Without a sympathetic Turnus the arguments around the competing interpretations to the *Aeneid* would be diminished.<sup>31</sup> As Pinheiro (2006, p.52) asserts, in the *Aeneid* we have compassion for the weak and beaten which in contrast to its scenes of warrior value gives it a humane face that turns the Vergilian epic into something unlike other epics. Hainsworth (1991, p.113) admits to people's general enjoyment of men of spirit which

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<sup>30</sup> Connolly (2010, p.412) says that Aeneas is not the figure of community in the *Aeneid* but rather Turnus, who Connolly refers to as a man utterly defined by his connections and obligations.

<sup>31</sup> Putnam (1999, p.222) explicitly states that Vergil turns the readers sympathy towards Turnus persuading the reader to not only feel compassion but actually become his equivalent. In the dream simile of Turnus's (12.908-13) there is an allusion to the dream simile of Hector fleeing Achilles, (22.199-201) which according to Thomas (1998, pp.290-201) is when Turnus becomes one of us a very human creature that realizes that the cosmic order is against him, aligning Vergil, Turnus and the reader in the point of view of the victim.

he attributes to Turnus referring to the zest of his *furor*. *Furor* is then not an entirely negative trait for its charismatic qualities, however it's because of his *furor* that he is blinded to the possibility of opening the Trojan camps doors and in turn failing to destroy the Trojans.

Drances is a prominent contrarian to Turnus. Ruden (2021<sup>2</sup>, p.291) refers to Drances as a scheming politician meant as a foil to Turnus by Vergil. In his goading of Turnus to duel Aeneas, he is attempting to place Turnus in a highly uncertain and dangerous situation compared to the more manageable scenario of a battlefield. Strangely, Cairns (1989, p.75) refers to Drances' advice as good while simultaneously understanding that Turnus's reaction to him could be partially excusable. Considering that to a Homeric hero the choices are to either resign completely in defeat, which is not an option, or continue the struggle against the Trojans, which is something that the Rutulians and perhaps some of the Latins would be more than willing to do.

However, this is where Vergil brilliantly exhibits Diomedes as a Homeric hero that had no love of war and values peace above all, representing a path that Turnus could have taken and perhaps not lose face seeing how Diomedes was a greater man. Latinus also stands as another voice of reason as he advises Turnus to not duel Aeneas.

While the duel is being prepared the spark of battle is ignited, and here there is a telling difference in the response of Aeneas and that of Turnus. Aeneas tries his best to stop the fighting and only after being cowardly attacked does he drop any pretence and fights furiously.<sup>32</sup> Turnus is immediately taken to bloodlust and goes back into battle, without care to stop it even if Aeneas is his prized target.

To Cairns (1989, p.76), Turnus' *amor* (love) for Lavinia places him in symmetry with Dido, as well as softens his image, as the foils to Aeneas who are both driven by passion.

### 1.2.3 Competing Interpretations of the *Aeneid*

The purpose and outlook of the *Aeneid* is widely debated. There are two main trends of thought, whether it is a piece of pro-Augustan propaganda or as a piece of criticism. The duel between Aeneas and Turnus and the latter's subsequent death is one

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<sup>32</sup> Putnam (1999, p.215) compares Aeneas attempt to stop the fighting to Neptune's intervention against the winds (1.151) and highlights the *pietas* in both characters.

of the primary points of contention towards Vergil's intention.<sup>33</sup> Braund (2008, pp.xxiii-xxvi) summarises the competing interpretations of the *Aeneid* with one side considering the killing of Turnus as an act of necessity, duty or both, and the other as an unnecessary act stemming from emotional passion and cruelty. What can be said is that without the character of Aeneas with his personality built from strengths and faults and shortcomings, this degree of nuance, complexity, and ambiguity wouldn't exist, because this is probably the core of it all. We owe Vergil for his creation of a morally ambivalent hero, and we should understand other heroes in the same way, that is, not stripping their status as heroes because of a lack of conformity to our own standards or ideals, but choosing to understand them in their own context.

Hainsworth (1991, p.104) points to the idea that *pietas* requires one to be stern and the concept of a duty imposed vengeance, yet he makes no mention of the relation between Turnus' death and Anchises' presentation of the Roman crafts in Book VI, that assumes the sparing of the conquered.<sup>34</sup> Hainsworth (1991, p.114) states that Vergil does not make resolute moral stances, rather taking a reserved approach. However, if too much can be taken by his reticence, then it is no more a fallacy to understand Turnus' death as pitiable than to understand his death as just.

Bowra (1990 [1933], p.372) claims that the concept of legitimate passion, in this case revenge, is well attested by Augustus revenge of Caesar's death, but the death of Turnus is not excusable in these grounds since Aeneas' anger is one of uncontrollable fury. The author characterises Aeneas' pursuit of Turnus as driven by hatred and wrath. Panoussi (2010, p.62) refers to Aeneas' subsequent killings at the death of Pallas as a rampage and as a distortion to the norms of supplication and to the rituals as a distortion of burial rites.<sup>35</sup>

Lowrie (2010, p.399) states that Vergil makes it clear that there is no need for Turnus to be killed to establish the Roman race in Latium and that Aeneas' choice was to either show virtue of the sovereign in the ability to suspend law and grant reprieve, or the choice to exact revenge. Lowrie says Aeneas' violence in killing Turnus exceeds the legal realm and the reach of reason. Lyne (1987, p.175) divides Turnus' final appeal to Aeneas

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<sup>33</sup> "Vergil's language should arouse the deepest suspicions about the ethical quality of his hero's final deed." Putnam (1995, p.194)

<sup>34</sup> Connolly (2010, p.415) points out that Aeneas' killing of Turnus can be interpreted as transgressive of Anchises' dictum that "Rome should spare the defeated and beat down the proud" in Book VI.

<sup>35</sup> Panoussi (2010, p.62) refers to the Roman ritual of eight men carrying the body upon the bier.

into emotion directed at pity and reason, wherein he is defeated and therefore his death is now unnecessary.

Bowra (1990 [1933], p.375) describes Turnus as a barbarian fighting for his own glory and advantage with standards of the heroic which are inadequate in the Augustan age. The thought of men outliving their age is a known epic motif although perhaps not strictly referenced in the *Aeneid*, and perhaps it is more apt to look at the concept of warring for peace.

## 2. Ambiguity in Heroes

Heroes symbolize not only inspirational qualities as leaders and saviours of their community, but they are also frightening conquerors to their foes. Heroes supposedly champion a great deal of good while dealing with war and death.

According to Beye (1993, p.139), the *Iliad* glamorizes the battlefield.<sup>36</sup> This may seem a surprising opinion especially when faced with the multitude of passages that portray the war as a sorrowful affair alongside consistent reminders in every heroes' death of a father or a wife left alone to mourn.<sup>37</sup> The depiction of gore in the *Iliad* is not done in the same vein as a modern slasher film, rather the pain and suffering in the extinguishing of young men's lives is very often portrayed with shocking realism and sorrowful words. This view is akin to that of Hainsworth (1991, p.30):

“What is it that we see when we view the sport of war? The triumph of victory, naturally, but also for those with eyes to see, the pathos of defeat. Pathos appears repeatedly in the anecdotes that embellish the fates of minor figures; the high hopes with which they came, the fears of parents, the horrors of widowhood and bereavement. The truest reaction, truest to the intention of the poet if it is possible to divine it, is a kind of horrified.”

The Trojan war could have been avoided by the return of Helen. The driving force of the *Iliad* are the heroes fighting for core tenets and rules of their society with the

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<sup>36</sup> Naturally, as a poetic work *The Iliad* has undoubtedly brought a great deal of enjoyment to its readers which in a way means they are being entertained by the slaughter and destruction of the Trojan war. Yet Beye (1993, p.139) seems to assume the reaction of ancient peoples and mistake its value as entertainment for the reason of its creation.

<sup>37</sup> Hainsworth (1991, p.30) points to the unfavourable comments on the war by old men, queens, and princesses.

kidnapping of Helen standing as a gross breach of the rules of hospitality. There are plenty of opportunities for her return during the span of *The Iliad*. The theme of altercation and compromise is resounded in Book XXIII during Patroklos' funeral games, where despite tempers flaring all of the heroes are capable of putting down emotion for mutual fraternity.

Beye (1993, p.112) claims that the essential quality of heroism, *arete*, is real enough but so is the brutality in the *Iliad* which garners different responses from the twentieth century to the twenty-first century reader.<sup>38</sup>

In the *Aeneid*'s case the Trojans find their roles flipped as besiegers of the Latins' city for a similar reason of a broken treaty, and with many attempts at reconciliation and peace by Aeneas.<sup>39</sup>

As mentioned previously, the double *aristeia* of Turnus and Aeneas (12.500-547) seems to arrange Turnus and Aeneas as equals. Later on, as Thomas (1998, p.275) puts it, Turnus becomes what Aeneas had been, isolated and facing death. Turnus moves "from light and tranquillity to darkness, as he confronts death, hostile gods, and loss of betrothed to his enemy."<sup>40</sup> This culminates in a simile where Aeneas is described as a destructive storm (12.450-455), ready to destroy the Latin farmers.<sup>41</sup> Putnam (1999, pp.217-219) connects this to Vergil's *Georgics* wherein the role of man as farmer is to bring order to the world. Therefore, in the attack upon Latium Aeneas is far from the bringer of civilization that he seems to be.<sup>42</sup> This is an example on the ambiguity of heroes wherein they are meant to bring order and protection yet at the same time they can be just as destructive and chaotic.<sup>43</sup>

Lyne (1987, pp.111-112) and Thomas (1998, pp.280-281) both indicate that Aeneas – and not Turnus – becomes more like the Achilles that the Sibyl prophesied,

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<sup>38</sup> Beye (1993, p.112) utilises Dolon's death at the hands of Diomedes and the narrator's attempt to reduce Dolon to an undesirable wretch as an example of brutality (10.314-464).

<sup>39</sup> Putnam (1999, p.218) and Ruden (2021<sup>2</sup>, p.336) highlight how Vergil's compares Aeneas' men to Greeks and Aeneas himself to Pyrrhus. This signals how the Trojans stand now as invaders.

<sup>40</sup> Putnam (1999, 215) highlights the description "undone with cold" which is used when Aeneas is about to beg the gods (1.92-94) in the first book and by Turnus as he dies (12.951), creating thus a connection between Aeneas' beginning and Turnus' ending.

<sup>41</sup> From this simile Lyne (1987, pp.10-12) believes that Vergil seeks to associate Aeneas with Ajax insinuating that there is some of Ajax's honour-obsessed and doomed qualities in Aeneas. While Thomas (1998, pp.295-296) refers to it as a moment where Aeneas becomes like Jupiter as he fights against Turnus who recognizes Jupiter as his foe in his final moments.

<sup>42</sup> The attack is inspired by Venus, which to West (1998 p.315) is meant to attenuate the fault of Aeneas and to Lyne (1987, p.74) it is Vergil allowing us to choose our point in the sliding scale of fault.

<sup>43</sup> Lyne (1987, pp.5-8) states that Aeneas threatens of those who have the potential to embody essential qualities of peace and morality.

with Pallas representing Aeneas' Patroklos, while the Trojan's intention to war down the proud for peace subsides for vengeful anger.<sup>44</sup>

Aeneas' need to safeguard his people and to obey the gods' commands forces upon him the need to besiege and fight the Latins. Diomedes is also used as a foil to Turnus' warmongering speaking of the siege of Troy with sorrow and distaste for the war.

Lyne (1987, p.180) considers that heroes such as Aeneas must take sacrifices because of a harsh world that gives little time for men of history who must then focus on "more important" things such as the care for their people which in turns overshadow the individual and affective relationships. Lyne (1987, p.189) states that Vergil shows this attitude of Aeneas as unnecessary and that when tender emotions are displaced it causes suffering, such as happens in the encounter with Creusa's ghost, in Book II.

Hainsworth (1991, p.104) points to his escape from Carthage, where the ambiguity to the virtue of duty causes Aeneas to desert Dido and take on a heartless role. Following Vergil's narration of the episode we are told of Aeneas's hardship in acting in such a way and the pain he suffers in making such a sacrifice.

We can understand this ambiguity as the conflict between a personal duty of the hero to another individual and the personal duty to the community which in this case are mutually exclusive. It might be wrong to criticise Aeneas for his treatment of Dido, and instead be preferable to criticise his meandering in Carthage. Aeneas should have kept his focus on the people that depended on him and left as soon as possible.

### 3. Humanity in Heroes

Although heroes represent a great deal to the values and norms of a culture and community, it is important not to reduce their complexity, treating them strictly as archetypes or ideations created by a specific author in a specific culture. Even a fictional hero is, in some way, meant to equate to a real-life human being, as he is portrayed with the full wealth of personality traits and relationships that anyone can have in life.<sup>45</sup> Given that the journey of the hero is critical in shaping him, many characters become heroes

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<sup>44</sup> Putnam (1999, p.225) refers to the climatic deed of Aeneas as containing a Junonian irrationality. Putnam refers Juno as the Trojan's archenemy.

<sup>45</sup> Lyne (1987, p.148) says that Vergil avoids individual characterization, not having the desire or being unable. To Lyne it can be said that the *Aeneid* is concerned with moral dilemmas first and with the people living and demonstrating those dilemmas second—in consequence of the fact that they demonstrate them, with the quality of the *Aeneid* not deriving from the clash of personalities like the Greek Tragedies.

gradually along their journey. The hero's dreams and desires are introduced alongside his fears, and very often regrets are faced with their personality traits impacting their actions for good or ill. There is merit in the idea of heroes serving as epistemological or pedagogical tools, but this should not be held as the primary way of understanding them.

According to Bowra (1990 [1933], p.376) when Aeneas is in his battle fury, we are faced with him doing actions which, if partaken by other heroes such as Achilles, we would look past.<sup>46</sup> Pinheiro (2006, p.68) points to Aeneas' killing of Turnus as the perhaps most flagrant demonstration of the Trojan's humanity as a victim of the war between the Trojans and the Latins who in turn felt the need to show his resentment towards the difficulties he was made to face and the losses he has suffered.<sup>47</sup>

Panoussi (2010, p.65) claims that Vergil shows Aeneas as an eminently qualified leader yet also with fragility that shows the impossible quandaries that the various burdensome aspects of leadership pose to Aeneas or any human being. In the same vein, Farron (1978, p.52) highlights the audience's interest and sympathy towards Hektor as coming from his gentle, domestic, and family loving nature which is contrasted with his later entrapment to his role and reputation as a great hero and defender which he is ultimately unable to fulfil. There is then an intrinsic quality to each hero which sets him apart from other heroes and contributes to how we perceive him. This perception is naturally shaped by cultural sensibilities and therefore signifies the frequency and variety of the use of heroes in all forms of media and across time.

In both the *Aeneid* and the *Iliad*, we are faced with heroes showing fragility by crying, something which would be considered a weakness in other times, and even today to some, yet in fragility and doubt we are shown the inner emotions of heroes and can come to understand and empathise with their burden.<sup>48</sup> We can behold heroes as imperfect individuals that continue to strive for excellence with the best that they can muster.

Achilles' senseless attempts to desecrate the body of Hektor are distasteful to the gods; Aeneas is weighed by doubt and shows bursts of emotion and thoughtlessness. In their fallibility there is no fantasy even when they are sons of gods. As such, Galinsky (1996, p.248) is right when he states that: "[t]he hero of the literary epic is not merely an

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<sup>46</sup> Putnam (1995, p.150) claims Aeneas's irrationality is shown in his "shunting off" the inspiration for his action onto Pallas. Which could be seen as Aeneas's throwing off responsibility for his act or at the very least attempting to justify his action, although this is clearly not entirely convincing.

<sup>47</sup> Putnam (1999, p.225) refers to Aeneas's action as a savage gesture of self-expression.

<sup>48</sup> According to Putnam (1995, p.163), Vergil's acknowledging such a human weakness enhances the universal stature of the *Aeneid* as a masterpiece.

icon, but a flesh-and-blood human being who is capable of great emotions. Often, he controls them, even though they run deep.” Galinsky’s opinion is that in Aeneas we have Vergil’s presentation of not merely of a personification of Roman virtues and allusions to literary predecessors, but also a believable human character with a whole range of expressions. For this reason, we can see Aeneas’ hesitation after Turnus’ request for mercy as an extraordinary moment of humanity.

It is then entirely necessary to see what might seem the strengths and faults of heroes as integral to them much like could happen with any human character since heroes are not elevated inhuman entities such as gods nor flawless reference points meant as archetypes. They stand as humans with a full range of emotions and all that it entails.

Putnam (1995, pp.158-159) postulates that there exist two different *pietates* that Aeneas could adhere to: one towards Anchises and the other towards Evander and Pallas.<sup>49</sup> Yet what might have occurred in the final scene is a hesitation by Aeneas in pondering Anchises’ dictum which is quickly overtaken by an emotional anger in reaction to Pallas’ belt hanging from Turnus.<sup>50</sup>

Emotional, passionate reactions are a frequent occurrence in heroic figures but from them stems a great deal of discussion and doubt, particularly when we question if killing an enemy or a monster in an emotional state is exemplary or best to be avoided. Putnam (1995, p.188) thinks that Hercules is characterised with a slew of traits that are also used in negative circumstances and in monsters.<sup>51</sup> To this author, Hercules is shown to be much like Cacus, Dido and Turnus as individuals who act irrationally, who themselves become monsters under the pressures of *furiae* (furies).<sup>52</sup> Therefore, Aeneas at the epic’s conclusion must be classed no differently. Cairns (1989, p.84) on the other

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<sup>49</sup> In the case of *pietas* towards Evander and Pallas it would have led to Turnus’ death without hesitation. Lyne (1987, p.178) points out how; Aeneas is moved by Evander’s gesture when he offers him the martial services of his son (8.515-520). Putnam (1995, p.162) asserts that the belt of Pallas represents a tangible reminder of Aeneas’ devotion to his protégé which drives the hero’s fury to its highest pitch.

<sup>50</sup> “They (Virgil’s description and Aeneas’s words point) to a man seized by passion to the point of irrationality not to someone soberly weighing alternative responses to *pietas* before performing the climatic action of his career – and of Virgil’s epic” Putnam (1995, p.159).

<sup>51</sup> Characteristics such as “gnashing his teeth” which Vergil gives to the monstrous Polyphemus and to the arch-villain Mezentius.

<sup>52</sup> Lyne (1987, pp.34-35) believes Evander is simple and naive in Hercules as a benefactor to the Arcadians and points out that Hercules did destroy their monstrous enemy but did so under the sway of fierce emotion. It is not wrong to point out that Hercules’ actions come out of self service and perhaps Lyne might be right that Evander holds Hercules in too high regard. However, some regard is merited given that Hercules provided a great service to the Arcadians and has become a hero to them. Lyne applies this logic to Aeneas removing a public enemy in killing Turnus, but I believe that Mezentius is far more like Cacus, specifically to the Etruscans to whom they would owe a debt even if it were done as an addendum for Aeneas’ goals.

hand characterises Hercules' and Aeneas' *furiae* (furies) as virtuous since to Cairns both of these heroes destroy a 'monster' threatening the peace of Italy.<sup>53</sup>

Putnam (1995, pp. 188-192) evokes several instances (4.692; 10.898-899) where Vergil utilizes light in relation to fury whereby the light clears up the blinding aspect of fury. The most striking instance of this opposition between light and rage is when Venus clears away Aeneas' mind from its hatred and rage towards Helen (2.588-591) which is, in the opinion of Putnam, one of three instances where the reader is confronted with Aeneas' anger.<sup>54</sup> There is similarity between Aeneas in his rage towards Helen in Book II of the *Aeneid* and Achilles in his rage toward Agamemnon, in the *Iliad*, in that both needed to be stopped by a deity.<sup>55</sup> The situation is far darker in Aeneas' case given that his rage, if followed through, would imply him murdering an unarmed woman. Despite the frequent discussion and debate as to her culpability for the war, if compared to Turnus' death, there likely wouldn't exist much debate in criticising the morality of Aeneas' decision.

According to Putnam (1995, p. 191), from Aeneas' imperception from his blinding anger, we can interpret what stands for a whole series of moments that we call a human life. Putnam cites a passage of Anchises' discussion (7.730-734) which illustrates the source of the emotionality that is inherent in everyone, where our souls aspire to an elevated path and to fulfil its consistency but are inhibited by the earthly vessel which to Anchises is a dark dungeon.<sup>56</sup> Without this struggle between what a human strives to do and what he does there would be no need for heroes. Anyone would be able to act to the best of their ability whether morally, physically, or psychologically. It is then from heroes where we demand the highest degree of consistency to their heaven-bent, fiery and ethereal nature of their soul. Heroes in their humanity are therefore incapable of reaching such a state, which means that they should never be looked to as failures for never reaching this state and should instead be held up for how close they reached or how much they accomplished.

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<sup>53</sup> Cairns (1989, p.80) describes Aeneas rousing his martial rage at 12.107 as morally justifiable, which would imply his fury is morally justifiable in other points of the *Aeneid* such as during the sack of Troy or even in his slaying of Turnus.

<sup>54</sup> According to Putnam (1995, pp. 184), from Venus' calming speech comes Vergil's most essential thoughts about human nature. Venus tells Aeneas should let go of his hatred towards Helen and wicked Paris "since it is the gods Who are so cruel and topple wealthy Troy." (2.601-603)

<sup>55</sup> Athene stops Achilles while Venus stops Aeneas.

<sup>56</sup> Putnam (1995, p. 193) states it is rage that demeans heroic accomplishment since it equates the hero with his inglorious opponent, rather than differentiating one from the other.

Without this human element it would greatly impede the unravelling of the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* and prevent these works from inviting its readers to work through its various aspects as the focus on Aeneas and Turnus, and Hektor and Achilles are the focus on their humanity.

#### 4. Strengths and Shortcomings

Leadership is a role held by all of the discussed heroes and all of them strive to act as good leaders. In the context of the *Iliad* Aeneas, Hektor and Achilles strive for *arete*, an excellence of craft, while Aeneas strives for *pietas* in the *Aeneid*, self-sacrifice or to uphold, family, gods, and the community above oneself.

The epic classic hero is not without limits. In the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* we do not witness a heroic figure as representative of the best in all aspects of a hero except for perhaps Diomedes whom both Beye (1993, p.119) and Cairns (1989, p.76) reference as exemplary.<sup>57</sup>

Achilles is distinctively the best of the Achaeans when it comes to warfare and its martial pursuit, while Hektor is, as previously mentioned, arguably the best of the Trojans. As heir to Priam, he presents a more pronounced leadership position when compared to Achilles.’ Odysseus on the other hand is unrivalled in his advice. Poulydamas fills the role of adviser in the Trojan side yet is lambasted for sound advice which happen to be the best choices that go unheeded.

In the relationship between Poulydamas and Hektor we are faced with perhaps Hektor’s greatest errors in his routine disparaging of Poulydamas’ advice in moments where it was the wisest course of action, such as when he refuses to enter Troy and preferred to face Achilles (18.285-309).<sup>58</sup> The shame of facing Poulydamas is part of the reason why he chooses to stay outside the walls of Troy. In this case, shame becomes one of the ways to police the actions of heroes. In his mistake in not heeding Poulydamas his punishment would then be the shame imparted onto him from his community.

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<sup>57</sup> According to Beye (1993, p.119), Homer utilises Diomedes as the exemplary hero compared to Achilles pointing to his interactions with Agamemnon in which he has an ability to say “nothing too much”, that is to say he is capable of reaching the limits of his ability and not pursuing further such as when he forfeits his pursuit of deities in the battlefield.

<sup>58</sup> Beye (1993, p.132) refers to Poulydamas as the alter ego of Hektor, pointing to their birth on the same night. However there arises an issue when referencing Hektor’s shame at returning to Troy and facing Poulydamas. If Poulydamas were simply an alter ego, there would be a lesser impact compared to the public lambasting.

Unfortunately, it causes Hektor's downfall as he stands outside of Troy to avoid embarrassment, ignoring even the appeals from his parents to retreat. To Farron (1978, p.52) this is another instance of Hektor's closer ties to family over comrades in arms. It is unlikely that Hektor would have been dethroned from the high esteem in which the Trojans held him had he retreated, and Farron (1978, p.53) refers to this situation as presenting Hektor's nearly insane desperation.

The despair felt by Hektor further shows the humane qualities of heroes who are not beyond feeling dread and loss against overwhelming challenges, which validates these challenges as actually significant over inconvenient steps.

According to Adkins (1997, p.713) the individualistic aspect of *arete* produces effects other than the aimed goal, such as Hektor avoiding criticism and staying outside of Troy to fight Achilles. These problems are therefore caused by heroic values themselves.

Even as he strives for perfection, no hero within the *Iliad* is a bastion of excellence but he rather shows a mixture of qualities ranging from warfare skills to rational thinking.

According to Cairns (1989, p.38), Vergil generally approves of Aeneas and his mission despite him not being faultless. Any treatment of heroic figures should be in line with this sentiment that a hero with faults such as Aeneas can develop morally through his experience and impart positive moral values.

In the shortcomings and strengths of heroes we can see a mixed model of that idealised excellence in their strengths while seeing their shortcomings as those elements to be wary and worked through.

A common point in discussion on the *Aeneid* is that Aeneas becomes more in control of his emotions in order to better serve his people. Through the growth of his strengths and shortcomings he provides others with an ideal, even though he arguably makes such missteps as killing Turnus. There is still the wide divide between Aeneas's character during the fall of Troy where his self-control and plans bear ill, to his constant prioritisation of his people during the war in Latium. According to Cairns (1989, p.70) Aeneas acts with *furor* and a desire for death in battle during the destruction of Troy, which is more in line with Homeric heroes than his later conduct of prioritising his family and community's wellbeing.<sup>59</sup> Lyne (1987, p.189) and Pinheiro (2003, p.464) point out

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<sup>59</sup> Lyne (1987, pp.184-185) highlights how we see that Aeneas can forget everything from duty to fate to the call of his family when in the grip of great heroic passion. His prioritisation of his family comes when

the symbolism in Aeneas carrying his father on his back and holding his son's hand which represents his family's lineage and the visual representation of carrying the past on his back and holding the future by the hand.<sup>60</sup>

In regard to the humanity of the hero, according to Pinheiro (2006, p.53) Aeneas' moments of crying and wishing death are important to this humanity which grants it lasting appeal.

Characteristics that, in some cases, can be considered weaknesses or flaws can also be seen as strengths or virtues in others, but those same strengths and virtues can be bad.<sup>61</sup> Although Aeneas' act of falling in love with Dido is frequently considered a weakness, his subsequent capacity to power through his abandonment of her is a showing of strength and it shows how failures can open the way to subsequent victories.<sup>62</sup> Pinheiro (2006, p.58) mentions the advantage and stability that would come from Aeneas' and Dido's matrimony, that might have been particularly beneficial given the Trojan's state of flight.

Turnus in his consistent bravery and warring against the Trojans represents a strength that inevitably leads to the loss on the Latin and Rutulian side and therefore it could be argued that his bravery is such that it is flawed.

## 5. Arms and Heroes.

The design of a hero's equipment is deeply shaped by culture. Instruments of war, like swords, spears, breastplates, shields, helms, and other such items are usually an integral part of the Heroic tale. Armaments tend to conform to the local community's access to resources and the way that they engage in warfare, but the cultural elements of a weapon or panoply go beyond their basic shape. Throughout the vast quantities of

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his father responds to the idea of a dynastic Julius and therefore it is a prioritisation of the *pietas* duty to the country and not to his wife's emotional appeal of her and her son.

<sup>60</sup> Lyne further adds that Aeneas does not fully understand the burden he is taking on, but knowingly and piously accepts this historic burden.

<sup>61</sup> Panoussi (2010, p.55) uses Aeneas' choice to stay and fight in Troy, even after Hektor's ghost (2.289-291) warns him to leave the city, as an example of the questionable status of his military and political authority despite Vergil's underlying intention to use Aeneas' actions in Troy as examples to be avoided. Aeneas only leaves after witnessing much suffering and at the intervention of Venus (2.590-633).

<sup>62</sup> Lyne (1987, p.166) refers to Aeneas as having exercised moral strength to a dutiful and painful conclusion.

historical arms visual flourishes and engravings were imbedded to the weapons which offer a window to the aesthetic expression and mythological beliefs of past cultures.<sup>63</sup>

The design of these commonplace items turns them from mundane objects into unique artistic pieces which further the status and wealth of the hero that owns them. In mythological tales they are further elevated or outright created through godly blessings with imbue them with otherworldly properties. These pieces then become heirlooms passed down from one hero to the next and stand as symbols of heroic lineages and in the case of divinely attributed arms they represent the deity's support of a heroic lineage or proof of divine blood. Much like heraldry their arms identify the individual and their status and become as part of their legacy as of their own personality.

Without these objects many heroes would be incapable of overcoming the challenges of their fate or at times they are said to be at fault for the development of their fate.<sup>64</sup> Throughout the *Iliad* heroes on both the Trojan and the Greek side routinely strip the armour from their slain opponents, adding these spoils to a growing hoard that serves as both a testament to their achievements and their wealth. From this practice several plot points develop such as: Hektor's taking Patroklos' armour which in turn leads to Achilles receiving a new set of armour by his mother, freshly forged by Hephaistos. The unique character of these arms is especially stressed by Thetis when she says: "Accept rather from me the glorious arms of Hephaistos, so splendid, and such as no man has ever worn on his shoulders." (*Iliad*, 19.10-11). This extraordinary gift expresses the deity's support of Achilles further exalting his status as the best of the Greeks since he is given the greatest crafted arms in the entire *Iliad*. Achilles' new weapons inspire fear not only to the Trojans but even to the Myrmidons.<sup>65</sup>

Achilles' spear can be seen as an objectification of his fighting power and strength by virtue of the spear being above the reach of all men much like Achilles' own martial prowess. Patroklos forgoes the spear for this very reason:

"He took up two powerful spears that fitted his hand's grip only he did not take the spear of blameless Aiakides, huge, heavy, thick, which no one else of all the

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<sup>63</sup> The Augustus of Prima Porta is a marble statue of Augustus Caesar which features a cuirass that alludes to a variety of Roman mythological and historical events. Outside of the classical period there is the Sutton Hoo helmet, an Anglo-Saxon helm composed out of a variety of precious metals which feature a variety of motifs and detailed patterns.

<sup>64</sup> There are many examples of this such as: The arms placed by Ulmo in Vinyamar and claimed by Tuor; Anglachel later reforged as Gurthang by Túrin; Hephaistos forged arms given to Achilles by Thetis.

<sup>65</sup> The Myrmidons' reaction might appear odd given that their leader is receiving a highly prestigious gift, yet it serves to further emphasise the status of Achilles. He is the only one capable of looking directly at the god crafted arms which are of a higher power or beauty than anything crafted by humans.

Achaean could handle, but Achilles alone knew how to wield it:" (*Iliad*, 16.139-143)

As for the shield of Achilles, we can observe it as the panoply of humanity, within which many aspects of life are incorporated, ranging from the day-to-day life of agriculture to the conflict of war, from marriage to law disputes. The aegis features a depiction of the civilisation that the hero belongs to and represents. Both in peace when the crops are harvested and counted and in war when men are raised and counted the hero represents all the good and bad in both. Therefore, we witness Achilles carrying what amounts to all the strife and comradeship in humanity, we are witnessing in him personify those same moments of good and bad.

The shield of Aeneas on the other hand does not illicit much emotion in Aeneas as he does not recognize the motifs it holds, essentially meaning that he does not quite grasp the legacy of his and his descendants' accomplishments. Still the shield is a reminder of the promises of the gods to the Trojans and a testament to the achievements of their descendants, especially to the much-celebrated victory of Augustus over Antony and Cleopatra in Actium.

To the Romans the shield is a symbol of their past as a reminder of the struggles they faced throughout history in order to raise Rome to the expanse that it held alongside a promise to the end of crisis and the coming of prosperity. It nonetheless creates a mixed and problematic image of order vs. chaos, of victory over defeat.<sup>66</sup>

Turnus' helmet has a depiction of a chimaera (7.785-787). Thomas (1998, p.287) points out that some authors focus on the chimaera as indicative of his destructive and evil personality, disregarding the representation of Io in his shield, which Thomas understands as a metaphor for his sister Juturna, who was also taken by Jupiter against her will. Therefore, Io depiction in Turnus' shield represents his suffering at the hands of Jupiter and Juno.<sup>67</sup> If, therefore, we compare the complexity and even the ambivalence of Aeneas' shield to the straightforwardness and monstrosity of the chimaera in Turnus' helmet, the civilizing role of the Trojan ancestry of Rome comes out very clearly. But the

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<sup>66</sup> Lyne (1987, pp.27-31) believes, however, that Aeneas' helmet description of vomiting flames (8.620) and the light coming from Augustus' temples in the centre of Aeneas' shield alludes to a connection with Cacus and his monstrous force. For an analysis of Aeneas' shield, see Gurval (1998, pp.209-248).

<sup>67</sup> Gale (1997, p.176) believes that both pieces suggest competing interpretations of the character and fate of Turnus, one as victim of the gods and the other as an enemy of order and peace, yet Io can stand for both the victim as well as the brutalizing power of *furor*.

aspect of oppression whereby someone acts against the wishes of others is also clearly displayed.

## 6. Fate, Mission, and Divine action.

Before approaching the concept of fate and godly intervention, it is useful to see how the mission of a hero can be understood in the *Iliad* through Sarpedon's rhetorical questions to Glaukos:

“Glaukos, why is it you and I are honoured before others with pride of place, the choice meats and the filled wine cups in Lykia, and all men look on us as if we were immortals, and we are appointed a great piece of land by the banks of Xanthos, good land, orchard and vineyard, and ploughland for the planting of wheat?” (12.310-314)

Sarpedon believes that the privileges that they are afforded by their communities is warranted by their duty to take to the forefront of battle in order to deserve their gifts and fame.<sup>68</sup> As stated by Martin (2011, pp.18-19), the ideology of the Homeric hero is rooted on the ephemeral nature of human life where glory gains value by a short existence and death gives value to renown. Furthermore, this author refers to glory as a commodity exchanged by victories and defeats and points to its scarcity. Lastly, he states that these heroes risk death on behalf of the community which in turn honours them with special privileges, grants of land and feasts, all of which are visible marks of honour that determine their status between fellow heroes.

Fate and divine intervention are very closely linked to many heroic stories. In the case of the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* they are both wrought from fate that is known not only to the gods but also at times to the heroes within.<sup>69</sup>

Lyne (1987, pp.71-4) holds Jupiter's plan as pointing to a guiding sense of fate in the *Aeneid* connected to Jupiter himself which is a Stoic or quasi-Stoic notion. Fate within

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<sup>68</sup> Privileges are perhaps sooner associated with nobility and its undemocratic tendencies. This aspect is nor particularly noticeable in the *Iliad* except for perhaps Agamemnon's attempt at stealing Achilles' *geras*, Beye (1993, p.128) points to Odysseus' mistreatment of Thersites as representative of the common soldiery that dares to step out of line. However, he is characterised as abusive towards Odysseus and Achilles and therefore seems more as a rabble rouser than a representative of the common soldiery.

<sup>69</sup> Thomas (1998, p.285) believes that any interpretation of an act within the *Aeneid* that has the external aspect of divine intervention must not ignore it, otherwise it will not be sufficient. This comment comes in regard to Allecto's visit to Turnus.

the *Iliad* is separate from Zeus but in the *Aeneid*, there is a divinity directing the world which is identifiable with Jupiter and his will.<sup>70</sup> Despite the connection between Jupiter and Fate, the *Aeneid* shows us still a polytheistic system and the other gods do not necessarily contribute, are part of or approve of his plan.<sup>71</sup> At times they even work in opposition to the designated fate.<sup>72</sup>

The intervention of the deities is therefore a complicated topic, given that they at times act in ways that seem contrary, such as Juno's opposition throughout the epic narrative or Poseidon, who constructed the walls of Troy only to later destroy them when Troy falls (2.608). Lyne (1987, p.61) holds the deities within the *Aeneid* as separate beings with their own separate wishes and capacities.<sup>73</sup> They are believable beings who are unpredictable, partial, powerful, and frightening.

West (1998, p. 315) attributes to the deities in epic five functions: 1) the political, in which prophecies and decisions attribute divine authority to contemporary phenomena; 2) the super-plot of a sublime view of human events; 3) the sub-plot of an extra dimension of personal relationships which show more emotional divine behaviours; 4) as stand in for natural forces or human impulses, which the author argues is used to assuage Aeneas' fault in his attack on the city; 5) the divine element and its relationship between irresistible fate, omnipotent deity and human will remind us of the unknowable, of the frailty and brevity of man in a vast, callous, and incomprehensible universe.

The issue in attempting to rationalize these myths in the *Iliad* is that the work is integrally mythological with frequent and diverse methods of intervention ranging from physical actions to mental manipulation.<sup>74</sup> There are many faultless choices made by heroes that because of the machinations of deities are twisted into producing unexpected results to those unaware of the gods' influence.

Turnus for example is frequently incorrect in his interpretations of divine signs and only near the end of his life does he realize that the cosmic order is against him.<sup>75</sup> In

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<sup>70</sup> Zeus' plan in the *Iliad* is as described by Lyne (1987, p.74) mysterious that seems to widen with compass and darken in purpose as the poem progresses.

<sup>71</sup> This discussion between Juno and Jupiter also exhibits no input from mortal, as West (1998, p. 314) puts it, gods discuss decisions which to mortals are momentous since they confer untold blessings or pitiless destruction.

<sup>72</sup> West (1998, p. 303) points out that Juno has no knowledge of the Trojans' fate besides hearsay and when she finally relents, she is lied to over the future of Carthage (10.12-13).

<sup>73</sup> Lyne (1987, pp.64-65) holds that the *Illiad's* and the *Odyssey's* gods are similar in nature and relations.

<sup>74</sup> According to Lowrie (2010, 399), divine violence is unknowable and should perhaps be understood as beyond our own capabilities to understand.

<sup>75</sup> Thomas (1998, p.292) point to this isolation of Turnus as well as to the lack of divine help which is critical in the journey of heroic figures.

his retort to Aeneas (12.894-895), he further shows a quality of his of a continued bravery towards Aeneas but, at last, he fully comprehends the gods' will.<sup>76</sup>

It is uncertain how strictly gods are tied to fate. In the case of Zeus and his desire to rescue Sarpedon it might be that Zeus is actually capable of changing Sarpedon's destiny. Nonetheless, according to Zeus and Hera, he is doomed to death under the hand of Patroklos, but preventing his fate, as Hera thinks, would lead to disapproval and resentment from the other gods, who also wish to save their sons.

Zeus does routinely empower Hektor in his fight against the Greeks in order to later bring glory to Achilles. This could indicate that not all of godly intervention is in direct interference with fate and is perhaps meant to aid in its development. Zeus situation might parallel Achilles' who is the only hero with a choice in his destiny: whether to live a long but ignoble life or a short but renowned one. According to Hainsworth (1991), Achilles' choices hardly amount to a choice in the heroic world. In a way Achilles' fate is pre-determined because of the values of his society instead of some kind of supernatural aspect, while Zeus' decision is curtailed by the reaction of the other gods.

Beye (1993, p.121) states that despite Achille's refusals, he edges closer to staying in Troy and to his eventual submission to death, and thus to the immanent truth of human life. Beye (1993, p.37) goes on saying that Paris, Helen, and Hektor are made to their acknowledgement of their tragic fate, which like amber becomes fixed to all eternity.<sup>77</sup> From the Trojan perspective there is a noticeable fear to the premonition of their fall. Beye points to Paris' reply to Hektor, which is also imbued with a certain surrender to divine plans. "Never to be cast away are the gifts of the gods (...)" (3.64).

Helen remarks that this "vile destiny" or perhaps doom might have been set upon Paris and her so that they would be the subject of songs for later generations, a doom set off by when Paris decided to kidnap her. As such, fate and fame seem to have a fundamental relationship in creating the values of a heroic world that is passed down from generation to generation.

Most heroes do not have a choice in the same way as Achilles. Hektor, Aeneas and Turnus all move through their destiny without being presented with a clear-cut choice that shapes their entire fate one way or another. On the contrary, they are frequently presented

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<sup>76</sup> We should not forget that Turnus recognizes and accepts Iris' message to the call to arms (9.16-22).

<sup>77</sup> Farron (1978, p.39) also refers to Hektor's knowledge of his defence of a doomed cause. The author believes that Homer meant to incorporate a tragic irony by such moments as his prayer to his son (6.479-481) which is incompatible with Hektor's certainty of Troy's fall.

with obstacles and choices that they must face and whose consequences they must endure. To Lyne (1987, pp.74-75) the *Aeneid* does not uphold determinism, therefore although humans are vulnerable to divine interference, they also have some measure of freedom and free will. When Aeneas takes on his task, the task is his and despite all the help he gets from divine messages and Jupiter's knowledge of his eventual fulfilment, the readers of the *Aeneid* still perceive his difficulties and pains and can sympathize with them.

Although this apparent lack of choice by heroes, Lyne (1987, p.68) believes that the deities play on emotions already present on susceptible humans. Lyne believes that in what he dubs the Vergilian system there is a sliding scale on the apportioning of responsibility in the interdependence of divine plans and moral inclinations, falling then upon the reader to make his own assessment.

Harrison E. (1990, p.49) points out the godly accord of Aeneas' mission which is first referenced in the *Iliad* and by Poseidon who despite working against the Trojans saves Aeneas (20.293-341).<sup>78</sup> Poseidon's prophecy is according to Casali (2010, p.42) vague and open to interpretation, which stands as a common element across the Greek gods. The blessing of Venus which allows Aeneas to see the gods as they rampage across Troy in Book II unveils the prominence of divine intervention.<sup>79</sup>

According to Cairns (1989, p.36) Aeneas is submissive to fate much like Heracles as both have deities repeatedly intervene in their journey which heavily defines venture to such an extent where their choices and path are always in accordance with the gods. According to Hainsworth (1991, p.113) Vergil's characters seem like pieces in a game to the gods. Lyne (1987, p.39) also highlights the unfairness of Aeneas' situation where he is committed to morality, earnestness and glory by gods that act immorally and inglorious.

In Aeneas' fighting in Troy even as the city is collapsing, he rallies his companions and stands up to the rampaging Greeks. In this we know his thoughts are not first to flight but rather to continue strife. To give up would be an end and his heroic status demands that he follows but so does his *pietas* and his fate. We are faced with a hero whose fate and heroism are strangely at odds, since to war in a last stand would be a glorious and

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<sup>78</sup> Casali (2010, pp.40-41) looks into the Prophecy of Poseidon and references how the romans saw themselves as the subjects in this prophecy and how Vergil connects the Trojans to Italy through Dardanus (3.160-171).

<sup>79</sup> Harrison E. (1990, p.48) points to the use of shrines by Vergil in order to indicate the gods taking the Greek side, such as the snakes that kill Laocoön and then slither to Minerva's temple. Given how shrines were commonplace it is not unexpected to witness such frequent intervention by the gods as cult and religion were an integral part of ancient cultures.

heroic end, yet to gather those few remaining Trojans and set off to a new life is his fated heroic journey.

According to Thomas (1998, p.282) the scene where Jupiter holds up the two scales with equal balance (12.725-727) defer to a superficial appearance of duality, since the scales refer not to the fates of the two but to the doom. The author refers to doom strictly by the meaning of terrible ending or death. Hereby Vergil according to Thomas does not stand strictly to the idea of the “Augustan view” otherwise he would muddy the view. “Nobody wins at the end of this poem, certainly not Turnus.” Thomas (1998, p.283).<sup>80</sup>

What we draw from the classical heroes is the moral complexity that they illicit. These are not figures taken to acting towards a singular good versus a singular evil but rather warriors and kings that have fought against other warriors and kings. In these wars we can feel the sorrow of loss and come to a bitter understanding and perhaps acceptance of the details that have escalated to these episodes of bloodshed.

Within the characterization of the classical hero lie the concepts of mission, fate and free will which frequently serve as a motivator or cause for conflict within the epic narratives. There seems to be space to understand some of the actions of heroes as part of their free will with the overlying context being at the whims of deities. In some cases, such as Hektor’s choice to fight, we can understand that their choice is their own but also that it is heavily influenced by their duty to the community while his success and eventual demise is entirely pre-planned by Zeus.

These heroic figures have all come about through the context of their respective communities which imprints upon them a code of conduct and behaviour. Through the hardship of conflict, they come to deserve and give merit to their position, but they also suffer pain, loss, regret in order to eventually triumph.

### **3. The Heroes in Tolkien**

The selected works of Tolkien analysed within this chapter are *The Silmarillion* (*Sil*) and *The Children of Húrin* (*CoH*). Across many of Tolkien’s works the heroic figure plays a fundamental role. These heroes are drawn from a wealth of influences: from

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<sup>80</sup> Lyne (1987, p.136) links the death of Turnus with Patroklos and Hector (16.857; 22.363) and asserts that it enhances the sadder aspect of Aeneas’s victory as it recalls by allusion the most sympathetic heroes on the Greek and Trojan side.

Anglo-Saxon works that Tolkien studied in his academic profession<sup>81</sup> to the Finnish epic *Kalevala*, where the main character Kullervo inspired much of what happens to Túrin.<sup>82</sup> Tolkien's own Christian faith has played an important role in the thematic elements across his works.<sup>83</sup> Lastly the ancient classical works are maybe the least discussed influence, but which were inevitably an influence given their importance in Western academia and popular culture and Tolkien's education.

An element of Christian influence is identified by Huttar (2008, p.5) as he separates Tolkien's motif of the Golden Age myth from the one represented by Greek and Roman authors. Tolkien's version of the motif is closer to the one represented by the Christian world, notably by the unchanging elements of good and evil, temptation, the roles played by ambition and greed, the tendency of power to corrupt, or the tension between submission to divine will and the lust to aggrandise one's own identity in terms of opposition to divine will.<sup>84</sup> This building block invariably affects the character of his heroic figures which as Huttar (2008, p.5) notes stand to resist temptation with the intent of a paradigmatic peace and prosperity; a peace and prosperity maintained by a good king for a time but doomed by the existence of wicked and foolish kings, where the power to be good or wicked lays with us, humans, according to moral laws.

Throughout History, Christian authors have made way in adapting pre-Christian works and heroic figures to Christian values and themes.<sup>85</sup> Clark (2008, pp.43-45) describes an incompatibility between Tolkien's Christian ideals and those of Germanic literature.<sup>86</sup> The author claims this incongruity led to Tolkien stylizing his heroes according to his moral and religious ideals as well as his desire for the glorious heroes of old.<sup>87</sup> Clark (2008, pp.44-45) lays out various elements of Germanic heroic society such as its heroic world prizing prowess, courage, and material success, while heroic oaths,

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<sup>81</sup> Honegger (2020, p.3), for instance, compares Túrin to Beorhtnoth, an Anglo-Saxon leader, as both temporarily disregard the wider devastating social consequences of their deeds. This is a case of ofermod which can be understood as overconfidence.

<sup>82</sup> Letter 131 (*Letters*, p.150).

<sup>83</sup> In Letter 142 (*Letters*, p.142), Tolkien refers to *The Lord of the Rings* as a fundamentally religious and catholic work.

<sup>84</sup> The last example of Huttar's is perhaps only applicable to Melkor and Fëanor, where Melkor rejects and struggles to overtake the music of the Ainur and Fëanor who simply rejects the Valar's request to give them the Silmarils.

<sup>85</sup> Clark (2008, p.44) asserts that Tolkien held the poet of *Beowulf* as a Christian who re-created a heroic world and story in an implicitly Christian universe. Clark states that Tolkien saw the poet of *Beowulf* as a version of himself, in that Tolkien also took influence in Beowulf's and some of the Old Icelandic sagas' aversion to anachronistic references to Christianity while positively utilising monotheism.

<sup>86</sup> Swain (2007, p.270) agrees to the issue in taking in the Germanic past alongside the Christian faith.

<sup>87</sup> Clark (2008, p.43) wrote that in Tolkien's critical studies of *Beowulf* and *Maldon* he rewrites heroic literature and the hero as critiques of heroic society, its values, and heroes.

vows and promises were meant to keep heroes on course.<sup>88</sup> Clark refers to wealth as mortal and fame as the spur and the hero's hope of immortality.<sup>89</sup> A roughly identical ideal to that of the Homeric hero. Shame culture is also well present within northern and the early Christian era, where the reputation of a hero defines their worth. Revenge for the members of one's group (by blood or association) was an element which Clark acknowledges as a moral value but refers to it as dark by modern imagination. Lastly Clark indicates the coexistence of fierce competition for honour alongside solidarity and the ideal of mutual loyalty between leaders and followers.

The heroes chosen for this dissertation are far more Germanic in temper and culture but the underlying elements that define them as heroes crafted by Tolkien are apparent. Heroes are not solely employed in battle. As Honegger (2020, p.1) points out there are moments of courtly manners and ceremony in works such as *Beowulf* where the hero displays a harmonious fusion of physical strength, valour, courage, and courtliness.

Some of the heroes in Tolkien are of noble birth or belong to an upper class being driven by duty, honour, sacrifice or an urge for discovery and exploration. Heroes range from reigning kings such as Fëanor, and Fingolfin, to exiled kings or lords such as Aragorn, and Túrin, to seemingly insignificant but well-off heroes such as Frodo, Merry and Pippin, and finally common folk such as Samwise.<sup>90</sup> The attributes and skills of the heroes are also varied; from martial heroes which display more than single mindedness, to the good advisers, the intellectually minded and well read that also nestled in country life. In terms of morality and personality there are moral characters as well as characters whose obsessions or pride overtake their action.<sup>91</sup>

There is a great deal of variety in the many heroes that Tolkien has created. This variety in turns stems from the turmoil between his ideals and his dedication to the heroes of old. Thus, without these historical works he would not be able to put to page the conflict between the Christian and the so-called Pagan heroic ideal.

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<sup>88</sup> Evans (2007, p.543) describes how Germanic heroic literature valued boasts of prowess but to be over boisterous was a character flaw.

<sup>89</sup> Clark indicates that given the harm that heroes faced, oaths frequently admitted to the possibility of failure and death in their path to keep the promise. These were not boasts or exaggerated statements about past deeds.

<sup>90</sup> Swain (2007, p.346) states that both Aeneas and Aragorn have similar qualities that fall within *pietas*.

<sup>91</sup> Pinsent (2014, p.451) states that Tolkien's experience in the First World War, when ordinary people performed heroic deeds, as being an influence over his portrayal of the hobbits as capable of great feats despite their overlooked existence.

## 1. What Defines a Hero in Tolkien?

### 1.1 Good vs. Evil & Right vs. Wrong.

Tolkien has been the subject of frequent criticism over his supposed depiction of a black and white morality, but he was more than aware of the lack of homogeneity between right and wrong.<sup>92</sup> In *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien* (from now on *Letters*) Letter 183 (pp.242-243), Tolkien discusses that the good of one side of the conflict comes from the values and beliefs above and independent of that particular conflict. It is possible for good actions to be taken by those on the wrong side, but that does not justify their cause, nor can the evil acts taken by those blinded by the rightness of their cause be justified and should instead be grieved. Tolkien says that he is more impressed by the right side than the underlying motives, private purposes, and individual actions. This emphasis on the conflict between good and evil over the individual points to the importance of Christian ethics in Tolkien. He speaks generally of overall causes and not of individual morality. This is apparent in *The Silmarillion* where the Elves who are undoubtedly on the side of good are still as Rosebury (2007, p.250) describes full of pride, cupidity, and internecine violence. In Letter 131 (*Letters*, p.148), Tolkien states that the Elves accomplish heroic deeds, but their evil acts dog them. In this he advocates that one must seek and keep accomplishing good, since it is those evil acts that undo “all victories.”<sup>93</sup> Even as Tolkien acknowledges the evil acts of the Elves, he does not disregard their heroic deeds, since their heroic deeds are themselves commendable and should be acknowledged.

Tolkien’s vision as described by Fliieger (2008, p.164) is that Men amid the turmoil of the world stray often and don’t use their gifts in harmony, further adding that good intentions are not enough and in the case of Túrin Turambar often lead to bad outcomes. But in Túrin’s case it is clear his own traits of pride and anger harm his success not that he seeks to act in good intention to an impossible and blinded outcome.

Garbowski (2014, pp.419-424) argues that Tolkien believed in the need for force to resist evil, with strength representing the willingness to give up, instead of an exercise of power. This author holds that the Great War influenced Tolkien’s view of heroism as

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<sup>92</sup> Buck (2007, p.699) indicates that Tolkien did not seek to romanticize and mythologize war by relying on pre-war paradigm of romantic and chivalry heroism. Tolkien compares different versions of heroism in *The Lord of the Rings*, as perceptible in Clark’s (2008, pp.50-53) application of Anglo-Saxon heroic ethos to Sam.

<sup>93</sup> *Letters* (p.148).

well as his view and depiction of evil, and he evokes Garth's statement (2003, pp.299-300) that Tolkien did not see Germans and British as inherently evil, only that there is cruelty and courage on both sides.

Alongside Clark's thoughts on Tolkien's analysis of Beowulf, and Maldon we can interpret the perspective that Tolkien carried on by critiquing the heroic society. But these criticisms can be applied to Humankind as a whole. Tolkien's recognition that cruelty and courage existed on both sides of the First World War applies to every person on earth as such it is apparent when observing his heroic figures that they carry both cruelty and courage. In Letter 165 (*Letters*, p.221), Tolkien remarks he is grieved by Gollum's failure to repent because of the interruption by Sam that serves to show that even instruments of good stumble.

Of course, within his works both sides are not comparable to the First World War, since the forces of Morgoth and Sauron are far more uniform in their evil, while on the side of good the perspective is readily apparent. This serves its own purpose, according to Garbowski (2014, p.421) Tolkien recognized, within *The Lord of the Rings* at least, that the monster a hero faces is an externalized version of the hero's internal struggle.<sup>94</sup> A hero must realize he himself can be a monster before he can become a true hero. Consequently, if a hero can be a monster that means that any one person can as well, as such it imparts upon us the need to be considerate in the treatment of a hero's memory and actions. Since a hero that missteps or acts at times in evil is not unworthy of being referred to as a hero. Huttar (2008, p.11) presents that Tolkien locates evil not in art or knowledge or their product but in the inordinate assertion of individual in coercing other's wills and the laws of the Creator.

## **2. The Hero; Fate, Doom and Free Will**

Doom is indissociable from the Hero. Clark (2008, p.45) exposes the ideas of fate and luck as a prominent part of the heroic worldview that rules over the hero's destiny, but differing in that luck is erratic. Material success is tied to luck or fate, but fame also blesses those doomed to die or perhaps especially favours them. The death of a hero seems to magnify his fame. Would Achilles be as famous had he not died the way he died? Achilles chooses to die because he prefers renown. Clark points out that this fatalism is

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<sup>94</sup> Garbowski (2014, p.421) continues with the idea that the monsters in Tolkien are symbolic of the ultimate unknowability of evil in rational terms.

not strictly “pagan” as it survives into the Christian era. Desire for renown and immortality is not as obvious a driving force in the heroes in Tolkien, yet mortality and doom are crucial. In turn the relationship between fate and free will is at the forefront in the explanation for the hero’s actions as well as their struggle against doom.

According to Croft (2011, p.155) Tolkien’s work is fractal with fate and free will being one of the many themes in Tolkien that repeat across various levels with the same structures and motifs, reinforced through repetition and variation. However, it is difficult to find a definitive answer to the relationship between fate and free will within Tolkien’s works. Croft views the theme as the ultimate hopeless futility of fighting one’s fate and the fate of the world in contrast to the virtues of willingly working in harmony with the destiny of the wider universe. According to Moore (2021, p.2) there is a lack of clear consensus in Tolkien scholarship when it comes to the theme of fate and free will, with authors leaning one way or another, while to Timmons (2007, p.221) Tolkien’s view of the concept of free will reflects the Judeo-Christian tradition. Man has the ability to shape his destiny albeit bounded within cosmic order.<sup>95</sup>

## **2.1 The Forces in Eä.**

The Pantheon that operates in Middle-earth is similar to the Greek and Roman Pantheon but unlike it when it comes to hierarchy, and their relationship with fate. In terms of hierarchy Eru Ilúvatar stands at the top with a plan that is outside the control of the Lords Valar and the Maiar. Pezzini (2021, pp.81, 83) states that the Valar are comparable to the classical gods in characterisation, the attitude of the gods is generally respectful and there is a lack of excess in their behaviours when compared to Zeus and Hera’s exploits and schemes, and, in having an associated natural domain, such as Ulmo who is known for having mastery of the sea much like Poseidon. The Valar’s interaction with elvish and human narratives contrasts Scandinavian mythology where interaction between gods and Humans is minimal. They are concerned and deliberate on the fates of Elves and Humans, capable of showing affection and dedicating themselves to teaching the Children of Ilúvatar. The Valar are the ones who guide the Elves to Valinor which is an overstep of the Valar’s authority. They exile Fëanor and later Ulmo guides Tuor on his

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<sup>95</sup> Moore (2021, p.1) refers to this balance as difficult.

journey. Pezzini (2021, p.84) highlights how these theophanies are restricted to the eldest times or to exceptional characters.

It would be unthinkable to the Olympic gods to choose as Valar did in not forcing Fëanor in giving them the Silmarils after the Valar's request. While the Valar believed that would make themselves no better than Melkor, to the Olympians it is common to enforce their will.

Flieger (2008, p.124) highlights the differences between Tolkien's and the Christian depiction of the supreme godhead. In contrast to the Judaic and Christian God, Eru Ilúvatar is a remote and inactive figure who very rarely intervenes in the world. In fact, the Valar only have partial comprehension of the world they helped make create and are just as tied to fate as the mortals.<sup>96</sup>

Clark (2008, p.45) focusses on how fate in Germanic myth rules in matters larger than life and death of individual mortals since the gods themselves are doomed, as evidence in what he claims are Old Norse survivals of Germanic paganism where the gods themselves must die in a battle against the forces of Darkness.<sup>97</sup>

The only power within Eä that seems to hold control over fate, or at the very least an understanding of the designs of cosmic order is Eru Ilúvatar. Eru declares that no matter what Melkor does, he is always in line with Eru's plan (*Sil*, pp.5-6). Timmons (2007, p.221) refers to Melkor's rebellion against the harmony as an exercise of Free Will, however Melkor's exercise of free will does not impart upon him the ability to control the fate of others.

The only moment that seems to incur a defining intervention that changes fate is in the Downfall of Númenor, when Eru intervenes directly. Tolkien describes this as having caused a change in the "previous scheme" or part of the plan.<sup>98</sup> Other interventions by Eru are subtle and mostly alluded to rather than directly referenced. Garbowski (2014, p.426) refers to providence within *The Silmarillion* and points to its subtlety within *The Lord of the Rings* as detectable only in hindsight. The moral and dramatic significance of it is that the human effort is underscored under this incomprehensible design, such that one must press on to do one's duty in the fight against evil. That is to say that with our limited understanding of the world the only thing we can do is whatever is in our power, whereas to the hero in Tolkien the choice is to fight against evil never knowing if some

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<sup>96</sup> Dickerson (2007, p.690) & Andelin (2007, p.544).

<sup>97</sup> "Man's fate, the god's fate, the world's fate was defeat and death." (Clark 2008, p.45).

<sup>98</sup> *The Nature of Middle-earth* (2021, p.346).

unknown deity is helping, or if the effort is meant to fail or succeed, or whatever its lasting consequences will be.

Free will as applied to the mortal beings seems to be different from that applied to the Spirits, Elves, and Dwarves.<sup>99</sup> In *The Silmarillion* (pp. 35-36), Ilúvatar calls it a gift when referring to the fate of Men, which Tolkien refers to as doom in Letter 131 (*Letters*, p.147). But to the Elves it opens the question as to the extent of their free will. Flieger (2008, p.164) explains that the Gift of Men does not preclude the Elves from having free will and argues that Ilúvatar's statement is deliberately ill-defined.<sup>100</sup>

Elvish understanding of fate according to Tolkien (*The Nature of Middle-earth*, pp. 345-346) is that fate could position an individual within a scenario but the outcome of said scenario was up to the individual. Although the overall destiny of Arda was beyond their powers to alter.<sup>101</sup>

In Letter 131, Tolkien presents the doom of the Elves, which clearly permits the existence of a larger unchanging fate alongside the existence of free will.

“The doom of the Elves is to be immortal, to love the beauty of the world, to bring it to full flower with their gifts of delicacy and perfection, to last while it lasts, never leaving it even when 'slain', but returning – and yet, when the Followers come, to teach them, and make way for them, to 'fade' as the Followers grow and absorb the life from which both proceed.” (*Letters*, p.147)

Flieger (2009, p.165) argues that Tolkien means to depict our response to circumstances and how these separate actions from separate different people affect one another and the world.

## 2.2 Morgoth/Melkor

Melkor dubbed Morgoth by the Elves is the antagonist to the Valar and to the many heroes in *The Silmarillion*. There is a deal of debate and ambiguity as to the influence Morgoth has on fate, particularly the fates of Húrin and his children. He is the most active of all the Spirits in exercising his influence to further his goals.

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<sup>99</sup> Flieger (2009, p.163) notes that Men have license to free will, not that they always have it.

<sup>100</sup> Flieger (2009, pp.165-166) states that Tolkien did not expressly define the relations of fate and free will, so as to show the confusing complex interaction of these forces.

<sup>101</sup> This view is somewhat an assumption on Elvish perception that itself was not anthropocentric since *The Silmarillion* is meant to be seen through Elvish minds.

Unlike the Greek deities, Morgoth exerts this influence over other beings without the use of disguises or direct applications of supernatural power such as directly changing the moods or wisdom of individuals. His ability to guide others through persuasion, charisma, intimidation, and strength, is far more powerful than many in Arda. This makes Morgoth the equivalent of a powerful lord or king in his application of powers. On a greater scale, Morgoth's supernatural powers are readily apparent in the physical changes that he has inflicted onto the world, such as the creation of his two fortresses, *Anbbgand* and *Utumno*, or the Battle of Sudden Flame, *Dagor Bragollach*. A more indirect portrayal of his powers is the creation of the Orcs, the dragons and the balrogs. These creations cost Morgoth a part of his power which in one way diminishes him yet, in another way, empowers him in the field through his armies and agents. This diffusion of his power creates an ambiguity to his influence over fate as to whether he holds control (or guiding) power over an individual or whether Morgoth like any general sends out forces to accomplish objectives.<sup>102</sup> Contrary to the idea that Morgoth has no or limited control over fate, Christopher Tolkien (2007, pp.14-16) describes Morgoth as a being of immense power that inevitably holds some control over fate.<sup>103</sup> But does this entail that Morgoth is capable of changing the fate of a man ruled by the gift of men? One of these powers is certainly higher than the other. Morgoth is described as being scared of the power of Túrin's doom in that his curse would become void, allowing Túrin to escape the doom that Morgoth designed for him (*CoH*, p.147). Mitchel (2010, p.112) describes the curse as one of malevolent sentiment, not of binding covenant, since if it were the latter Morgoth would have no reason to fear Túrin. Mitchel continues by indicating how Morgoth's curse entails a life of sustained misery and not the death that Túrin succumbs to by his own hands. Mitchel refers to the parameters of the curse as specious, but the curse is not unsuccessful in as much that Morgoth's commitment to bring evil onto Túrin is successful through Glaurung and the Orcs.<sup>104</sup>

The curse of Morgoth is not incompatible with the existence of free will, but it does render it meaningless. It seems to imply that independently of the free will of its victims their words and actions, and even their presence, bring about malice. We could

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<sup>102</sup> Moore (2021, p.1) looks at Morgoth's curse through its effects on Túrin's social interactions and the ramifications that these interactions have, particularly the ensuing stigma and social discrimination.

<sup>103</sup> Mitchel (2010, p.110) describes Morgoth as not all-powerful, indicating a lack of control over fate.

<sup>104</sup> Mitchel (2010, p.112) compares Morgoth's curse with Mím's, stating that Morgoth's curse is less powerful and does not accomplish the intended result, being little more than expression of spite. This view is equal to Lyne's (1987, p.68) sliding scale on the apportioning of responsibility to classical heroes.

then understand that Morgoth's curse has no impact on free will and that all of Túrin's choices were his own but were all doomed to a poor outcome.

Why then are doom, fate, and free will important when it comes to the treatment of heroes? The need for fate and free will is as Flieger (2009, p.177) puts it to give and justify order and spontaneity, keeping the reader's awareness to the Music and the task, and allowing the reader to understand the great theme of the Music and its corruption by Melkor and subsequently view Men fix it. Flieger believes Tolkien considered the world as flawed and faulty and that mankind must lead themselves to take the world out of the error and into light. From this we can consider that the heroic figures within Tolkien should be seen, even in their errors, as striving to make their own contribution to a better world.

Additionally, Moore (2021, p.2) raises the idea that Túrin's culpability is altered according to the sliding scale of free will or fate, which respectively makes him either responsible or a victim.<sup>105</sup> Fëanor's culpability for his fate is also just as well affected as Túrin's.

### **3. The Silmarillion**

#### **3.1 Fëanor.**

The Exile of the Noldor stems from Fëanor's actions and his conduct which can be described as resolute to a wrathful extent. His actions are steeped in controversy from his drawing a sword against his half-brother to the First Kinslaying and the burning of the ships of the Teleri. Fëanor decides to forge weapons and lead the Noldor away from Valinor. Having heard rumours that Fingolfin meant to usurp Finwë, their father, by the leave of the Valar who sought the Silmarils. These rumours set forth by Melkor spark the beginning of the divide between the Noldor, as Fëanor's exile and subsequent choice as well as Melkor's burglary and murder of Finwë set off the flight of the Noldor.

Fëanor has the choice to give the Silmarils to the Valar so that they may break the jewels and restore the Two Trees of Valinor. This is similar to Achilles' choice since both of these characters have a choice in how their fate and legacy will be shaped, but, unlike

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<sup>105</sup> "Resolved or not, though, Túrin's culpability remains a central issue to the tension between fate and free will in his narrative." (Moore 2021, p.2).

Achilles, Fëanor's choice is likely not to lead to a different journey, and a different death and legacy, only a different outlook from those who observe it. Fëanor's choice is presented in a way that supports the idea that if Fëanor had chosen to give away his most prized accomplishment, the Silmarils, then his fate and voyage to Middle-earth would be seen in a more positive light.

Fëanor is incapable of easily delivering the Silmarils to the Valar because Melkor murders Fëanor's father and steals the jewels while Fëanor is being presented with the choice. If Fëanor were to attempt to retrieve them he would have to sail to Middle-earth and wage war against Melkor and given his temperament and actual observed choice in *The Silmarillion* this is the most likely response. There is also nothing that indicates that the Valar would consent to letting him sail to Middle-earth or that the Teleri wouldn't try to stop the Noldor from setting off to Middle-earth or even that Fëanor would choose not to set fire to the ships of the Teleri, since that decision is rooted in his dislike for his half-brothers as well as the desire to cut off any possibility of retreating back to Valinor. If all this were to happen then Fëanor's death would occur the same way as it does in *The Silmarillion*, at the hands of Gothmog, the Lord of the Balrogs, during a fury driven onslaught against the forces of Morgoth. The Oath of Fëanor on the other hand would have occurred in the same way since it is in itself dedicated to the recovery of the Silmarils. Perhaps one could argue that the Oath's mention of delivering death onto friends and bright Vala that take on a Silmaril wouldn't be uttered. As for the Doom of Mandos that is dependent on the attitude of the Valar but in the scenario that Fëanor goes on to commit the same acts as he does in *The Silmarillion* then it is very likely that the Doom of Mandos would still have been decreed. In this scenario the choice becomes peculiar in its relation to fate, as it does not alter the journey and the ending of the hero but changes the framing of his legacy. This decision, according to Flieger (2008, pp.167-168), settles the choice of Fëanor as the point that determines Fëanor's motive.

Croft (2011, p.160) states that had Fëanor willingly acquiesced, he would be in a less defiant, more generous, and lucid frame of mind. If he were to then go on his fruitless pursuit of Morgoth he would have taken this quest with a clear conscience and pure motive and not have done the criminally disastrous things he did. Flieger (2009, pp.166-167) believes Tolkien makes a point that Fëanor was fated to lose the Silmarils but in Fëanor's choice to give or not to give the Silmarils there is a lasting effect in his subsequent acts. Flieger (2008, p.167) states that the problem of Fëanor's other choice is unsolvable. The author also asserts how *dòm*, the word that doom derives from, has a rare

usage that means “Will, free will, choice, option.” Thereby in an act of free will he brings the subsequent Doom of the Noldor; although it is spoken by Mandor, it is brought on by the Noldor.

Fëanor’s rejection is not unexpected given that pride is shown to be central to his character and the Silmarils are of great significance to him, so important in fact that their destruction would weigh on him in some way. Huttar (2008, p.11) points out that Fëanor’s fall is an example of Tolkien’s theme that sub-creation becomes a temptation, Fëanor shows himself to be possessive and dominating over the Silmarils. Fëanor’s rejection could be understood as hubris because he does not recognise the Valar’s right to the Silmarils even though these were created through the light of the Trees of Valinor which were themselves created by the Valar.

These events can be seen through the lens of a hero that seeks out something that is for the better of all the communities. Fëanor believed that the Valar meant to keep the Noldor in ignorance and subservience and his rebellion can be understood as his way of escaping the Valar’s influence. He also has great love and care for his father whom he misguidedly sought to protect from the children of Indis. His vengeful passion is plainly understood as the driving force for his actions, not only to recover the Silmarils but also to avenge his father. In the end it is undeniable that Fëanor frequently acts at his own concern. He is not shown in a context that binds him to a heroes’ code of honour nor is he surrounded by a community that guides his choice. Kleinman (2007, p.321) speaks of Fëanor’s unwillingness to make personal sacrifices for the sake of the Elves’s unity and the resulting exile of the Noldor and his demise, contrasting Fëanor to Fingolfin whom he says takes the responsibility for the Elves’s unity and upon this unity being broken, is driven to despair and challenges Morgoth in single combat.

### **3.2 Fingolfin.**

Much can be discussed over Fingolfin’s character. He marches through Araman rather than turn back to Valinor in shame, preferring to seek out his brother in bitterness. The Noldor that followed him were not innocent of the First Kinslaying, which makes his decision not one of a strong-armed leader but one most likely of one aware of his followers’ wishes. Fingolfin is not wholly without fault in his treatment of Fëanor up until Fëanor’s armed threat, given that he sought to speak against Fëanor rather than seek unity.

Fingolfin's most interesting act is that of his duel against Morgoth, which comes after the emotional loss of his son which prompted him to attempt the impossible, and almost succeed. Fingolfin's duel with Morgoth can be taken as a wrongful decision based more on rash emotion than patient forethought. The outcome of the duel results in the Noldor left without Fingolfin's leadership as he is slain after severely wounding Morgoth. Morgoth's injuries are not unimportant as they serve to illustrate how close Fingolfin came to victory, which in itself is a bolstering thought for it shows that Morgoth is as fragile as any living thing. However, it leaves the question as to whether Fingolfin's continued contribution to his community would have been a more productive outcome than his seemingly pointless battle with Morgoth. Fingolfin is open to praise and criticism in his action but whether it was wrong or the right decision it was certainly a heroic act to attempt to put an end to the continuous conflict that would cause more suffering to the Elves.<sup>106</sup>

#### 4. The Children of Húrin

*Narn I Chîn Húrin* the original sindarin name of *The Children of Húrin* which is directly translated as "The Tale of the Children of Húrin."<sup>107</sup> This tale deals with Morgoth's curse over Húrin's children. According to Christopher Tolkien this complex conception is so essential in the story that his father proposed the alternative title *Narn e'rach Morgoth* which translates to "The Tale of the Curse of Morgoth." (C. Tolkien, 2007, p.18)

When Túrin is integrated into a community he also adopts a different name or receives one from the community. Túrin's given name can be understood as he who desires mastery, a poetically apt name given how in his journey he seeks to triumph over Morgoth and his curse. Croft (2011, p.156) considers names as important signifiers of character, plot, social position, and relative power and in Túrin's case fate. This author points to name-giving, name-changing, and polyonymy and namelessness as meaningful in medieval and folkloric literature. In Túrin's name we see the naming-pattern of his tribe, as Túrin's name is derivative of his father's name in order to indicate a familial relationship and possibly his first-born status, an element commonly seen in the Norse

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<sup>106</sup> It seems to somewhat mirror Paris' duel with Menelaus which could have ended the war but because of Paris' absence it caused further harm on his community.

<sup>107</sup> Mitchel (2010, p.100) believes it is meant to be read as tragic.

and Germanic cultures and comparable to the use of patronyms in the *Iliad* and *Aeneid*.<sup>108</sup> The relationship between a hero and his father is an important bond since it imparts upon others his heritage which serves as a source of information, in what concerns his temperament, education, skills, and knowledge.<sup>109</sup> Fisher (2007, p.189) points to the gulf between Fëanor and Fingolfin through their family tree as indicative of how a family tree can emphasize the significance of familial relations.

#### 4.1 Melkor's Eyes

*The Children of Húrin* conjures a degree of unreliability, by cause of seeing Túrin's story through the eyes of a mischievous being such as Melkor. Christopher Tolkien (2007, pp.16-17) speaks of his father's explanation of what it meant to see through Morgoth's eyes as "a compellingly credible picture of events, distorted by Morgoth's bottomless malice". Christopher Tolkien explains Húrin's choice to look through the eyes of Melkor by his love of kin and anxiety to learn all he could of them as well as by his pride in believing he could resist Morgoth because of Húrin's victory in debate. Húrin believed he could retain critical reason and distinguish between fact and malice.

Morgoth's deception is confirmed by the narrator when the narrator describes that Húrin knew everything that came from Morgoth's malice and everything that was good was hidden and distorted while lies were mingled with the truth.<sup>110</sup>

Even considering the deception weaved into Morgoth's perspective and the possibility that *The Children of Húrin* is derived from Húrin's experience, there is no clear indication that Morgoth subtly weaves Túrin's doom. Most of the misgivings that Túrin suffers come from Morgoth's minions, particularly Glaurung and there is no doubt that Glaurung is not in control of Túrin's fate with the dragon's scheme arising seemingly more from coincidence and luck than foresight.

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<sup>108</sup> Icelandic sagas make use of extensive genealogical background. Fisher (2007, p.188) points to their importance in keeping track of relationships in Tolkien's Family Trees. Similarly in the *Iliad* Atreides means son of Atreus and is meant to tie Menelaus and Agamemnon to their father, much like the use of the suffix -son in Norse and Germanic cultures to form patronymic surnames.

<sup>109</sup> Túrin's temperament comes from his mother, as stated in *The Children of Húrin* (p. 39).

<sup>110</sup> Not in *The Children of Húrin* but in *The Silmarillion* in Chapter 22, Of the Ruins of Doriath.

The likely effect incurred by the deceit wrought by the eyes of Morgoth is the subsequent hatred that Húrin holds against those that Túrin dealt with in his journey, such as Thingol.

## 4.2 Húrin

After Túrin's and Nienor's death, Morgoth feigns pity and releases Húrin in order to further Morgoth's hatred. Húrin goes on to achieve the first evil stemming from his freedom by giving away the location of Gondolin after shouting in anger at being ignored by Turgon. Húrin then visits his children's graves and stays with his wife until her death and buries her, and then, filled with a desire to seek vengeance for his wrongs and the wrongs of his kin, continues on his journey. Húrin goes to Nargothrond and kills Mîm, as he begs for mercy, because of his betrayal of Túrin and the outlaws.<sup>111</sup> Húrin then takes the necklace Nauglamír and gifts it to Thingol in sarcastic payment for the protection given to his wife and children. This incites criticism from Melian, who says: "With the voice of Morgoth thou dost now upbraid thy friends" (*CoH*, p.278). Húrin comes to understand his manipulation and regifts the necklace with a clear mind:

"Receive now, lord, the Necklace of the Dwarves, as a gift from one who has nothing, and as a memorial of Húrin of Dor-lómin. For now, my fate is fulfilled, and the purpose of Morgoth achieved; but I am his thrall no longer." (*Sil*, p.278)

With his fate fulfilled Húrin wanders to the western sea where he throws himself. Strangely enough his gifting of the Necklace of the Dwarves seems to be an act with much portent but is regifted after Melian's warning, and after Húrin having admitted that Morgoth's purpose is achieved. This purpose could very well stay at the partial reveal of the location of Gondolin, but the necklace Nauglamír goes on to play a role in the murder of Thingol and in a war between the Elves and the Dwarves. This furthers the question whether that was itself a design of Morgoth, or whether it is an unfortunate incident where Morgoth's original plan for Húrin's anger to cause Thingol's death fails, yet a seed is still planted for Thingol to die.

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<sup>111</sup> There are two versions of Mîm's betrayal, one where he intentionally betrays the group because of his hatred of Beleg and Andróg, although he does it under the promise that Túrin would not be harmed. And another version where he does so because the Orcs kidnap his son. This can be understood as one of the moments where Morgoth's deception is apparent.

By describing his fate as fulfilled Húrin implies that his purpose in life has come to its end, and that he has no more part to play in the unravelling of the world. Yet rather than remain in Doriath he goes on to his death without intervention from the Elves but given his state of mind it is not unexpected that they would let him go.

Doom is described as the force that is moving and guiding Húrin from the moment he leaves his family's grave. Through this it is understood that he still has a role to play in the world and the Shadow following him hints at a dark outcome. The Shadow in this case can be understood as Morgoth, as both he and Sauron are frequently associated with shadows and darkness and Morgoth wishes to discover where Gondolin is located so it is in his best interest to pursue Húrin. During his travels Húrin's decisions are his own but they are clearly influenced by his grief and anger. Morgoth's Shadow does not control Húrin but only follows him for the sake of espionage.

Húrin is a figure of notable importance in the world of Middle-earth; he displays fierce strength in his last stand against Morgoth's forces; he also shows his stalwart will when he denies Morgoth, a being of far higher power. Húrin is very clearly a hero when this is taken into account, but we also observe Húrin in his anger inadvertently setting off the end to two of the kingdoms of the Elves. Despite this horrible outcome, his heroic deeds are never questioned nor is he considered a villain. This is in part because of his capture by Melkor which created a separation between Húrin's free heroic days, and his subsequent grief filled journey. This grief is itself another element that allows us to empathise with Húrin, understanding why he acts so scornfully towards Thingol. His subsequent apology also assuages our view on his transgressions.

According to Christopher Tolkien (2007, p.18) his father regarded the Curse of Morgoth as "the worst of the works of Morgoth among Men in the ancient world." It is an act rooted in petty hatred. This is not a grand evil scheme that is somewhat disassociated from the specifics of its widespread destruction, it is a pointed and utterly aware goal of the torture and destruction of a single family, in punishment to the acts of defiance from one mortal.

### 4.3 Túrin

Túrin is a hero of both Elves and Men. Even if Tolkien himself refers to Túrin as a hero in Letter 131 (*Letters*, p.150) some could argue that he is not actually a hero because his tale leads to the loss of several Elven and Mannish realms, but this is

problematic. Túrin's fate and culpability are a point of contention and, even if we understand the choices within the tale as being subject to free will, the spell by Glaurung manipulates one of Túrin's most important decisions, which in itself was a hard one with no apparent right or wrong choice. Túrin has the need to rescue Finduilas, whom he loves but also the need to rescue his own family. Had Túrin gone after Finduilas it would be against much of the effort he put in clearing a way to Dor-lómin, but he would stand as another symbol of the unity between Elves and Men, same as Beren and Lúthien and Tuor and Idril.

It is simplistic to blame Túrin's pride as the cause of all the evil in his journey. Túrin's pride is an integral part of his personality. It stems from his mother's pride which is not an exclusively negative trait. Morwen's pride is what leads her to choose Doriath as the place for Túrin's exile this decision in turn prompts Húrin remark "Ever your aim is high," said Húrin" (*CoH*, 2007, p.9).<sup>112</sup> Even in Túrin's pride and hubris there is a respectable quality, apparent in his speech at Nargothrond which convinces the Elves to follow him in battle against Morgoth.

Túrin's shortcomings stem from a variety of his traits such as impatience, pride, and anger. Most frequently he is counselled to the benefit of patience and criticised for his lack of it, such as when Melian advises him patience when Thingol gives him his heirlooms (*CoH*, p.85) or when Aerin chastises him for acting rashly as befits a child (*CoH*, p.189). Túrin is not defined only by his flaws. He holds many virtuous aspects such as treating people with respect. Túrin's conscience weighs over the murder of Mîm's son as well as over Beleg's death.

Mitchel (2010, p.93) believes Túrin is depicted as invariably fiery, passionate, and heroic, bigger than the life around him. He has a strength of will alongside humanity, gentleness and chivalry which defines him as a sympathetic character, in spite of his frequent belligerence.

Even good traits when in excess can be bad. Túrin's courage in the face of Morgoth is responsible for his desire for open combat in Nargothrond; were he not as courageous it might not have led to the disastrous battle that ended Nargothrond.<sup>113</sup> Mitchel (2010, pp.91, 93, 97) holds that Túrin's hubris is aimed at the forces of evil and Morgoth, whom he believes are the highest power in Middle-earth. Mitchel criticises Túrin's single mindedness, but according to his presentation of Tolkien's heroes these are driven by the

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<sup>112</sup> Upon Morwen's death Húrin says she's unconquered.

<sup>113</sup> A trait that reminds of Turnus in his continuous fight against an overwhelming force.

principle of fighting against evil, with other motivations placed second and their heroism is based on action and the refusal to tolerate evil as opposed to motive or personality.<sup>114</sup> It seems that Mitchel's better criticism is that Túrin believes that his personal gauge of right and wrong and his model of good and evil are correct.<sup>115</sup> Mitchel attributes Túrin's indignation towards Thingol to this attitude. But Mitchel also states that Túrin is only on the side of good because of his actions and not his morality or philosophy. This seems contrary to the fact that he is shown to be morally good, such as when he addresses Gwindor and Sador with respect despite their wounds. The only moment that can be interpreted as morally wrong is when he strikes first and cuts down Brodda. Túrin's attitude towards the embassy in Nargothrond is not morally wrong but simply irascible.

Mitchel (2010, pp.92, 101) believes that Túrin is fanatically devoted to family and that the emancipation of his family and of his homeland is his main *raison d'être*, with it first being subsumed by – then subsumes – the war against Angband. Nevertheless, it is my opinion that it seems odd to consider Túrin as fanatically devoted to family because he makes no zealous action in a march towards Dor-lómin, such as when he had the outlaws on his side. This seems to align Túrin with Tolkien's attitude that a hero must hold the battle against evil as primary. It doesn't seem to be the case that Tolkien believed that a hero must dedicate himself completely to the fight, as explored earlier on his thoughts on the sides of right and wrong. Túrin is dedicated to battling against Angband up until the loss of Nargothrond with no agenda to liberate his family and fief. After the loss of Nargothrond, he is left without a community and must fend for himself, and his choices are to either seek out his family or Finduilas. To follow after Finduilas would have been a matter of the heart and of loyalty to a friend but to go after his family is a matter of equal or arguably higher regard.

Mitchel (2010, p.93) states that Túrin follows no advice but his own line of reason, has no friends but those who bend to his will, and gives no consideration to any designs but his personal vendetta against Morgoth.<sup>116</sup> This is somewhat an extreme view given that Túrin does seek out his family after Nargothrond, but overall, it is not unwarranted criticism. Túrin does indeed follow his own path and gives small leniency to friends.

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<sup>114</sup> Mitchel (2010, p.97) seems to hold Túrin's hatred against Morgoth's actions upon his family as an example of Túrin's flaws, despite Túrin's actions and thoughts not indicating an overvalued sense of indignation, but rather a hasty desire for decisive action.

<sup>115</sup> Mitchel (2010, p.97).

<sup>116</sup> Mitchel (2010, p.93) says Túrin is forever unwilling to waver in his priorities, expecting others to waver in theirs. He realizes his past faults but his vengeful purpose he refuses to set aside. Contrary to this Túrin seems to be ready to set aside any supposed vengeful purpose upon his marriage with Níniel.

West (2007, p.680) reads Túrin as part of Tolkien's examinations of how an excess of boldness can be highly dangerous, requiring tempering by humane values such as patience, and moderation.<sup>117</sup> West however utilizes some dubious events as indicative of Túrin's flaws, such as the destruction of the outlaws of Dor-Cúarthol. Yet, Túrin had turned their purpose into the fight against Morgoth rather than their original criminal acts. Their destruction is a consequence of his dedication to a group he felt a connection to. West also points to Túrin's accidental murder of Beleg, but this is clearly not a conscious decision by Túrin but rather one rooted in sudden panic and the slip of Beleg's blade.<sup>118</sup>

As much as nuance is necessary in the understanding of personality, the choice to take a different view and understand the decisions of a hero should not become so much as to ignore the intentions behind it. For all the positive aspects of Túrin's character including those that stem from his pride, it is clear that his pride is best surpassed in key moments or delayed in its initiative. Túrin's prideful decision to never return to Doriath is questionable and makes one wonder what could have been. While his advocacy for open battle in Nargothrond can be understood as an example of pride, Honegger (2020, p.5) claims that it can be interpreted as founded on military human wisdom. What is an example of the shortcomings of Túrin's pride is his treatment of Círdan's embassy which is very harsh.

According to Honegger (2020, p.5) Túrin is capable of learning from his mistakes. This is seen in his strategy to kill Glaurung. Mitchel (2010, p.92) states that he amends his ways to avoid past mistakes but learns everything the hard way. Perhaps his constant strife against the forces of Morgoth might point to a desire to make up for past mistakes, but they are more likely a continuation of his state of resistance against the forces of evil. Túrin naturally expects loss but this doesn't stop him from hampering his efforts.

Honegger (2020, p.5) points out that divine intervention makes a difference in the quality of a hero's career, with this influence being critical to the success of the heroes. Honegger points to the interventions that Old Norse deities take in the tales of heroes such as the Germanic hero Sigurd which is comparable to the helpful interventions of Greek and Roman deities mentioned previously. The role of wise counsellors is not limited to

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<sup>117</sup> Melian advises Túrin to fear both the heat and the cold of his heart, and to strive for patience (*CoH*, p.278). Rosebury (2007, p.250) points out that patience alone is not a sufficient response as evil must be resisted, even at the risk of committing harmful deeds such as Beregon's killing of a porter in *The Lord of the Rings*.

<sup>118</sup> Mitchel (2010, p.101) asserts Túrin showed an innate bloodlust at Beleg's death. This is an exaggerated description as Túrin was very obviously confused and traumatised.

deities but can also be taken by mentors or even peers. Heroes are not a bastion onto themselves and rely on others for success, from foundational elements such as education to life deciding moments.

Beleg's relationship with Túrin can be seen as fulfilling the need for the role of a counsellor in Túrin.<sup>119</sup> As well as someone to confide in, Moore (2021, p.11) describes Beleg as intimately familiar with Túrin's identity and history, and as sympathetic towards his plight. Despite Beleg's influence over Túrin he is incapable of guiding Túrin back to Doriath and his death leaves Túrin without any counsellor. After Beleg's death Túrin becomes inconsolable, mute, and unresponsive for months showing a deep care for his friend. This is an example of Túrin's humanity, even as a man of outstanding strength and force of will. Túrin is nearly broken by the death of Beleg had not Gwindor helped him and guided him onto waters that were protected from defilement by Ulmo.

Croft (2011, p.155) characterises Túrin as hot-tempered and hubristic with a self-centred ego pointing to an unawareness of the love of Nellas and Finduilas.<sup>120</sup> Mitchel (2010, 110) on the other hand points to his relationship with women as the few times when Túrin's endearing and redeemable traits are drawn out.

There is a comparison to be made between Túrin and Odysseus: both are recognized solely by an old servant in their return to their home; both unleash slaughter onto a group that has taken over; but this is where the similarities end. While Odysseus successfully kills the suitors, as well as unfaithful maids, and retakes his kingdom, Túrin has no way to leverage his act into the liberation of Dor-lómin and the restoration of his fief. Honegger (2020, p.3) makes this same comparison but does not follow through with the consequences of Odysseus' action. Much like Túrin Odysseus' slaughter invites retaliation by the kinsmen of the suitors. Although the narration states that Odysseus would be capable of killing them all, the bloodshed is stopped by Athene and Zeus. This comparison showcases how divine intervention can prove critical in the success of the hero, Túrin has no deity that will swoop down and stop the Easterlings from avenging Broda and so he is forced to flee away from Dor-lómin.

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<sup>119</sup> According to Moore (2021, p.11) Beleg belongs to "the wise" who are persons sympathetic and privy to the life of those stigmatized but also acceptance within the wider Doriath Society.

<sup>120</sup> Croft (2011, p.155) makes no mention of the texts' explanation of Túrin's parting with Nellas, which stems from the differences in maturity between Elves and men. And to blame Túrin for his forgetting of Nellas is to blame an entirely human occurrence. Furthermore, Croft also states that the death of Saeros is a betrayal of Thingol's trust, given that Saeros was a trusted advisor, but it is clear that Túrin did not cause Saero's death on purpose. Thingol clearly does not favour Saeros above Saero's own mischief.

### 4.3.1 Túrin's Fate and Doom

In *The Children of Húrin* fate and free will seem to have more presence in the story's progress.<sup>121</sup> The ambiguity and debate over the role of fate and free will in the choices of Túrin affect, as previously mentioned, the reader's perception of his culpability. Furthermore, in what concerns the source of Túrin's doom it is perhaps impossible to determine whether it comes from the Curse of Morgoth or from a cosmic power. Moore (2021, p.1) ponders that the question of fate and free will in Tolkien remains to be solved, perhaps will never be solved, and perhaps shouldn't be solved.

Possibly one of the reasons why Morgoth feared Túrin's doom was his lineage as a combination of two great households which Mitchel (2010, p.91) believes anticipates both greatness and tragedy. Túrin is a culmination of his lineage, title, and upbringing as well as the tragic events in his life which give him the possibility of a certain noteworthy fate. In Túrin's parentage Mitchel (2010, p.91) sees a genetical pre-established personality, an amalgam of matrilineal coldness and patrilineal aggression, which forebodes Túrin's eventual solitude and incorrigibility. This could be the power that Morgoth feared.

There are certainly events outside of Túrin's control such as Urwen's (Lailath) death which have a profound impact on his personality.<sup>122</sup> But such events are nothing like those that he blames on his curse. In his travel to Dor-lómin it is his decision to cut down Brodda that causes the death of Sador. His marriage to his sister in Brethil is an example of how even though it is brought on by his own actions, by his hand in the fall of Nargothrond and refusal to go to Doriath, it is also brought on by actions he had no way of affecting, such as Nienor's decision to go in search of him. Túrin's fate can never be the exact product of his free will since it will always interact with changes and choices made by others.

Croft (2011, p.155) compares Túrin to Aragorn in their attitudes towards fate: Aragorn accepts his fate as king while Túrin attempts to escape Morgoth's curse.<sup>123</sup> Contrary to this belief is Túrin's speech in Nargothrond which seems to imply that he

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<sup>121</sup> Mitchel (2010, p.110) believes Túrin holds Autonomy of Will, therefore choice in his actions.

<sup>122</sup> Croft (2011, p.156) emphasizes the power of polyonomy. "Urwen is dead, and laughter is stilled in this house" (*CoH*, p.40).

<sup>123</sup> Croft (2011, p.155) examines Aragorn's and Túrin's similarities: both are heirs to a great House of Men, both are fostered by Elven-lords of hidden kingdoms, both hold a named sword that is reforged and renamed, and both are loved by elf-women.

seeks to hasten his fate. Throughout the story Túrin renames himself in order to reinforce his perspective on the events of his life, which Croft (2011, p.161) refers to as *logizomai*, the giving of a name in order to change the recipient to match.<sup>124</sup> Túrin utilizes these names as a way to control his identity and fate, yet the narrator indicates that Túrin's temper does not change.<sup>125</sup> Croft (2011, p.158) draws attention to how some of Túrin's names are never used by the narrator in place of his real name. Croft classifies these as pseudonyms believing that they do not indicate a change of his inner identity.

In conclusion Túrin's use of names serves as a way for him to control his fate by protecting himself from reactions that he presumes certain communities will have of him as well as by keeping himself hidden from his curse and therefore Morgoth. This is not a foolproof plan since his own behaviour and renown follow him independently of the names that he adopts. Túrin is incapable of changing himself, only when he joins the Men of Brethil does he choose to stop fighting but, even then, he is unable to do so for long because he has an obligation to the community and must fight to preserve it. We can say that Túrin must do the heroic thing and protect his community.

The names that Túrin chooses for himself are frequently indicative of how he views himself in the aftermath of whatever last affected him or what he means to do in the future. This means that Túrin's self-given names help in understanding his mood and attitude towards these events. On the other hand, we have the names that Túrin receives from others which demonstrate the perspectives of others towards him. Lastly there is his birth name which independently of all the names that he gives himself and receives lasts as that which identifies him throughout his life and journey. It is entirely impossible for him to hide his name even when he tries to, and it is impossible for us to speak of him without it.

#### 4.3.2 Túrin's Names and Community

Túrin progresses through several communities along his journey: the people of Hador to which he is heir and whom he later harms through reckless acts;<sup>126</sup> the Elves of

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<sup>124</sup> *Logizomai* means to consider, reflect, think. Cf. Montanari (2018, s. v. “λογίζομαι”).

<sup>125</sup> Mitchel (2010, p.104) points to Túrin's need to re-invent and re-create himself in his own conception of himself, allowing him to start a new.

<sup>126</sup> Mitchel (2010, p.109) believes that so long as Túrin lives, Dor-lómin survives, given that he is the incarnate representation of Dor-lómin.

Doriath,<sup>127</sup> as foster son of Thingol, the King; the *Gaurwaith*,<sup>128</sup> also known as the Wolf-men, first as a member and shortly after as leader; the Realm of Nargothrond where he became a Orodreth's chief counsellor;<sup>129</sup> the House of Haleth where he became a guardian.<sup>130</sup> The great diversity between these communities stand as testament to Túrin's ability to integrate himself into them; the outlaws are a rough and criminal community, while the Elven communities are greatly prestigious and desirable. Túrin's Elven education is partially responsible for this capability, it gives him the ability to express himself in his ideals and impress onto others his power.

Moore (2021, p.1) chooses to look at the difficult balance between fate and free will in the tale through the lens of disability and stigma, with doom being analysed from the perspective of the stigma it causes or seems to cause. Stigma in this case is directly related to the attitude of the community towards Túrin.

Moore (2021, p.9) analyses Túrin's death and thereby his doom as being resultant of Túrin, community and Morgoth.<sup>131</sup> By looking at fate's social function as a stigma the author defends that the tragedy of Túrin's tale must reside in every actor in the story and not be solely the result of Túrin's actions or Morgoth's curse.<sup>132</sup> This neither exonerates nor accuses Túrin but deepens our understanding of society's role in the tragedy of *The Children of Húrin*. Moore (2021, p.11) concludes that although there seems to be dark doom following Túrin wherever he goes there is no certainty, but despite this there is a clear stigma related to his fate haunting him.

Not every aspect of Túrin's story is contextualised by his relationship with society. There are those aspects of incontrollable chance such as when Túrin in his attempt to scout the Orcs that carried off the Woodmen is discovered, and his companion is killed.

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<sup>127</sup> Moore (2021, pp.5, 7) classifies Doriath as a civil space which is a location where stigmatized individuals are treated as if they belong and presumably do not need to hide stigmas, though this may be different in practice and in conception. The author designates Doriath as a back space and later as a forbidden space.

<sup>128</sup> Moore (2021, p.6) considers all of the places that Túrin inhabits alongside the Outlaws is a back place which is a location where there is no need for an individual to mask their stigma or conform to a different way of being.

<sup>129</sup> Moore (2021, p.6) categorizes Nargothrond as a back space which Túrin treats as a back space or even a forbidden space, where forbidden spaces are places where stigma is not allowed and the discovery of stigma results in expulsion.

<sup>130</sup> Moore (2021, p.6) groups Brethil as a back space.

<sup>131</sup> Mitchel (2010, p.104) refers to Túrin's death as deliberate, not premeditated, and caused by the singularly maddening unbearability of circumstance.

<sup>132</sup> In Mitchel's (2010, p.91) opinion the tragedy of Túrin is not concerned with what happens to him but rather on his deliberate actions and his perception of the nature of Morgoth's curse.

This occurrence is justified by the narration as a result of the intense paranoia of the Orcs in regard to the Elves of Nargothrond.

#### 4.3.2.1 *Doriath*

Moore (2021, p.4) argues that the curse's taint causes the separation of Túrin and his family from other people. Moore's theory seems inadequate when applied to Saeros, as the author argues that Saeros's hatred for Túrin stems from the curse; Saeros's animosity towards Túrin and his fate is rationalized through the latter's race and connection to Beren. However, there is no indication that Saeros is aware of Túrin's fate at any point and the distaste of Men by Elves is noted in Thingol's treatment of Beren, so it is not farfetched to presume that Saeros is bigoted towards humans.

There isn't much information as to Túrin's treatment within the Elvish community. Although bigotry towards Men is known and Túrin is harassed by Saeros, he is also friends with Beleg, and Thingol adopts him and develops deep feelings and respect for him, which is an unprecedented event (C. Tolkien, 2007, p.77).<sup>133</sup>

Moore (2021, p.5) considers Saeros treated Túrin according to his own resolve and Túrin responded of his own volition. In both of their actions there is no evidence of outside influence such as a force that causes them to alter or incentivise their behaviour. We could then blame Túrin for the death of Saeros but he certainly did not intend to cause it. He drove Saeros forwards in mockery, but Saeros's attempt to leap over a river to his death shows that a hero is incapable of controlling someone else's actions.<sup>134</sup> Moore believes Túrin's incidents with Saeros affects the way he responds to the society of Doriath and his loss of trust in Thingol leads to Túrin leaving Doriath. To Moore (2021, p.9), by rejecting Thingol and placing himself beyond the reach of the king and his law, Túrin withdraws from the normal social space. This author understands this as done in direct response to Túrin's own perception of his treatment, whereby Túrin confirms his self-imposed identity. This is later proven to be unwise as Túrin is exonerated through the testimony of Nellas, yet he continues to reject the idea of returning to Doriath, an attitude not unlike Achilles in a way. Both Túrin and Achilles are shown to be stubborn,

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<sup>133</sup> Moore (2021, p.5) believes that Túrin's adoption should impart a deal of acceptance and intimate belonging by the society of Doriath.

<sup>134</sup> Moore (2021, p.5) refers to this as the complex interplay between Saeros's actions, Túrin's response and Morgoth's curse itself. Mitchel (2010, p.92) on the other hand blames this on Túrin's irascibility and short temper at cost of his innocence.

Achilles in his rejection of Agamemnon's attempts at assuaging grievances and Túrin in the act of returning to Doriath. Moore (2021, p.9) understands Túrin's fate as being founded on the reactions by the community towards Túrin and Túrin's own choices.

#### 4.3.2.2 *Gaurwaith*

After his exile Túrin is accepted by the *Gaurwaith* as one of their own. They do not inquire much into his past since like Túrin they are all outlaws driven out for evil deeds or desperate men lead astray (*CoH*, 2007 p.98). Moore (2021, p.5) states that their crimes appear to be known and accepted by the group and assumes that Túrin's own crime would be accepted if they knew his identity.

This is where Túrin's use of alternate names begins first with Neithan, the Wronged. Croft (2011, p.157) points out that this meaning positions him as guiltless, sympathetic to fellow outlaws and affected by circumstance rather than choice. Beleg believes that Neithan is unfit for Túrin given that he is pardoned. This name betrays Túrin's distrust of the Wolf-men according to Moore (2021, p.6), but it is very likely that the group would not care for Túrin's crimes one way or another. However, they could perhaps take interest in Túrin's relationship with Thingol thereby endangering Túrin. Túrin's interaction with the group is noticeably tense and only after Beleg run in with the outlaws and their migration to *Amon Rúdh*, renamed *Bar-en-Danwedh*, can we say that he has a firm grasp on the group as leader.<sup>135</sup>

Mitchel (2010, p.94) criticises Túrin's connection to the outlaws, as these are a hodgepodge of companions with whom he makes no attempt to consolidate them under a common ideology.<sup>136</sup> This lack of union means he can't depend on their commitment, integrity, or motivation, and it is this state that Mitchel blames for Mîm's betrayal.<sup>137</sup>

As claimed by Moore (2021, p.10) after creating his own identity apart from society Túrin also creates his own community that shares in being stigmatized, for differing reasons. This shared aspect binds Túrin to his group and becomes one of the reasons why Túrin does not leave them for Doriath since he believes Thingol would not

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<sup>135</sup> Mitchel (2010, p.95) agrees with a critical tone that only after Beleg joins them during their fugitive idleness does Túrin start to see it as his duty to lead them.

<sup>136</sup> Mitchel (2010, p.93) seems to relate the lack of union to the distaste Túrin has for a prescriptive and dogmatic rule with a structure akin to Doriath.

<sup>137</sup> Moore (2021, p.7) points out the difficulty in classifying *Bar-en-Danwedh* as a back or forbidden space given Tolkien's use of footnotes and his manuscript tradition whereby the different versions of the story can't completely exclude the other.

receive the outlaws.<sup>138</sup> To Moore (2021, p.11) this moment reveals Túrin's strongest sense of belonging, more so than his time with the people of Haleth because his ties with them are not as strong as the kinship with the outlaws.<sup>139</sup>

Túrin's thoughts of creating a "lordship of his own" (*CoH*, p.106) from a band of outlaws is reminiscent of Romulus and the foundation of Rome.<sup>140</sup> He temporarily succeeds and names a country Dor-Cúarthol creating various camps and forts while keeping Echad i Sedryn in Amon Rûdh a secret even to newcomers.<sup>141</sup> There is space to wonder where other such statelets existed by human or elven warlords but whose existence is unknown because no figure of repute or impact arose. This in turns means that the statelet's existence and interest is enhanced by Túrin's renown.<sup>142</sup>

#### 4.3.2.3 *Nargothrond*

Moore (2021, pp.9-10) points to Neithan and Agarwaen son of Úmarth as names that reflect Túrin's new readings of his own history,<sup>143</sup> and singles out Agarwaen son of Úmarth as reflecting an internalization of his "stigma", and therefore his doom. Taking into account the idea of *logizomai* Túrin is defining himself by his ill fortune and the slaying of Beleg. Túrin kills Forweg without noticing who it was, same as Beleg. But it turns out for the best. It is perhaps one of the few unfortunate outcomes that help Túrin at least in the short run.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> The outlaws were composed of men of Hador and of Haleth (*CoH*, p.116).

<sup>139</sup> Mitchel (2010, p.94) oversteps in his criticism to Túrin, stating he knows no loyalty but temporary convenience and safety, characterising the relationship with the outlaws as a means to an end he has no clear vision of. Yet Mitchel (2010, p.109) states that Túrin always strives for the success of a community.

<sup>140</sup> Mitchel (2010, p.95) calls Beleg's persuasion of Túrin into protecting the lands from the forces of Morgoth through the presentation of the Helm of Dor-lóminas manipulation through indulging Túrin in his hereditary vanity. Given the nature of Elves and of Beleg in particular, it seems wrong to say that he would attempt to manipulate Túrin. He simply applied appropriate rhetorical argument in order to help Túrin see through his point of view.

<sup>141</sup> Mitchel (2010, p.95) compares this to a regimented military unit.

<sup>142</sup> This special attention is not unlike the focus that many places receive by their association with historical figures. But it is important not to lose the contribution of others in the myth of the individual. Túrin's efforts are accomplished by the contribution of the entire band and not only himself.

<sup>143</sup> Croft (2011, pp.158-159) refers to Agarwaen, the son of Úmarth as a guilt-name, as an admission of guilt.

<sup>144</sup> Mitchel (2010, pp. 101, 109) holds that Túrin like a Byronic hero dwells in the past, as shown by his care for his heirlooms, family, and land, as well as his naming reflecting the recent past. Although Mitchel seems to lend too high consideration onto Túrin's actions being driven by wrongs of the past, given that every context in which he adopts a new name, he moves on to new acts, rather than retreading to his old ground. The author informs that guilt is a hallmark of the Byronic hero, sympathetic in spite of his crimes.

Moore (2021, p.10) lays some responsibility for Túrin's need to control the truth and his stigma, through his continuous decision to remake himself, onto the society that stigmatizes him. In Nargothrond Túrin obfuscates his identity much like when he first joined the outlaws. Given Nargothrond's elven identity it is a reasonable choice. But this is when the decision to not draw the attention of Morgoth is first taken into account and afterwards is repeated in Brethil.

Túrin garners a good reception and two names bestowed by others. Firstly Adanedhel, the elf-man, because of his elvish looks and bearing which show the community's view of him. Finduilas in love with Túrin gives him the name Thurin, meaning secret, which is eerily similar to his true name. Gwindor reveals Túrin's identity to Finduilas but this does not impede her love and causes Túrin to confront him in anger. Gwindor tells him that Túrin's doom lies in himself and not in his name, which might seem to suggest that this is an inherent doom outside of Morgoth's curse, but this follows Gwindor's belief in the rumour of the Curse, which levies doubt at the meaning of the words, given that Gwindor doesn't explicitly state that Túrin's doom is driven by the curse. At the very least he believed Morgoth would pursue him with woe. Gwindor's attitude towards Túrin is very marked by the concept of doom and the shadow that follows Túrin. Túrin makes sure to address Gwindor with respect and care, and states that his disagreements are not done in ill and that his debt to Gwindor will not be forgotten. This shows that Túrin argues for a genuine belief over any desire to overtake Gwindor as well as reveals how Túrin's anger doesn't rise from simple disagreements and how he places special importance in the help he receives from others.

There are also Túrin's *noms de guerre* such as Gorthog, Dread Helm, because of the Dragon Helm, and Mormegil, meaning Black Sword because of Gurthang. These synecdoches present the defining connection between a hero's arms and his identity or renown. According to Moore (2021, p.8), the Elves of Nargothrond overlook Túrin's harsh personality because of his military prowess.

Croft (2011, pp.159, 168, 169) points out that Túrin reaches the peak of his name changing at Nargothrond and asks the question if Túrin has strayed too far from himself, further characterising Túrin as fragmented, shattered, and chaotic and as a collection of mismatched roles and unrelated aliases that Túrin seems to never accept as part of himself. It is apt to say that Túrin's own struggle with his identity and fate is what makes his heroic journey unique, even though he shares similarities with others. Even in this comparison to Aragorn, it does not make Túrin any less worthy of being called a hero as Aragorn. It

does seem that Túrin's self-naming is meant to be taken in passing and perhaps we should read into this as being indicative of a fractured self is misunderstanding Túrin's desired effect, that he simply believes these names are applicable to him in the moment and not necessarily indicative of his inner being. Aragorn's names are in contrast names with long heritage and meaning and are meant to be used for their obvious contexts. Aragorn is also seen as adopting his manner of speech and posture depending on whom he talks, while Túrin remains the same throughout.

Moore (2021, p.5) assumes that Túrin's identity becomes well known to the Elves of Nargothrond by the time that the emissaries identify him before Orodreth's court which has no discernible effect on Túrin's standings with the Elves,<sup>145</sup> revealing perhaps a pointlessness to the use of different names given that he is still accepted within Nargothrond. The same author (2021, p.10) highlights that Túrin's angered response is notable for his attitude in responding to societies in which he resides. The embassy was prepared to deal peacefully with Túrin, and his response is rooted in his history of trouble and danger.<sup>146</sup>

What Croft calls *logizomai* can be negative as shown by Glaurung's use of a variety of epithets that are meant to reduce Túrin's life to a series of crimes, building on his innate tendency to hopelessness and despair in order to bring him to self-loathing. Croft (2011, p.159) notes that Túrin's given name is never used, which he believes indicates a subtle denial of Túrin's existence outside of the net of his ancestry and his deeds.

Túrin's names are not the only aspect of his character subject to change. Anglachel his sword is reforged into Gurthang, signifying a rebirth whereby the sword that struck down Beleg is turned to a new purpose and life. Burke & Burdge (2007, p.704) hold that the reforging of weapons is meant to transfer its historical significance to newer generations and give new purpose to the bearer and lift the hardship of the previous owner. Anglachel is a far more brutal object in that its meaning is essentially a physical component of Túrin's doom and Beleg's doom. It is an item that bears a shadow that could be equated to the Greek concept of *miasma* because the blade contains a dark power that spreads to those that wield it.<sup>147</sup> Anglachel was forged by a man whose darkness was

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<sup>145</sup> Moore (2021, p.8) refers to Túrin as Orodreth's right-hand man.

<sup>146</sup> Mitchel (2010, p.93) categorises Túrin as a hero that won't adjust to society, preferring to die in glorious struggle or commit his life to transforming the world.

<sup>147</sup> Burke & Burdge (2007, pp.703-704) relate Tolkien's weapon naming to the tradition in Germanic Myth and how these weapons serve to indicate a connection to past myths.

made part of the weapon. Beleg was given a warning when he received it that alluded to its past creator. Sadly, the blade much like Túrin seems to be unable to move past its darkness as when it speaks to Túrin the sword still carries the weight of Beleg's blood in its thoughts.

The giving of the Helm of Hador by Thingol to Túrin is an event that demonstrates the importance of a hero's equipment. The Helm of Hador is a reminder of Túrin's inheritance as heir to the People of Hador and the lands of Dor-lómin made obvious by its alternate name The Dragon-helm of Dor-lómin.<sup>148</sup> The helm is later returned to Túrin by Beleg in order to remind Túrin of this heritage and convince him to return to Doriath. The Helm is not the only object associated with Túrin, there is also the black sword Gurthang. Both of these arms in their close association to Túrin become synonymous with his presence and therefore become not only symbols around which communities of Elves and Men rally but also a beacon of Túrin's presence to the forces of evil as it strikes fear into Morgoth's Orcs.

To the people of Hador the Dragon-Helm of Dor-lómin is a symbol of their past as well as their future. Bestowed to Hador by the Elves alongside the fiefdom of Dor-Lómin it became a physical representation of their friendship with the Elves alongside a symbol of their ruling House and their homeland. After the fall of Dor-lómin the helm became a token of their occupied homeland and by virtue of Túrin's inheritance it stands as a reminder of his goal to overthrow the occupiers and restore Dor-lómin to the people and the house of Hador.

#### **4.3.2.5 *Dor-lómin***

Honegger (2020, p.2) states that Túrin's behaviour has a major problem and creates social consequences for the people of Dor-lómin rather than for Túrin himself. Túrin does not have to contend with the wrath of the Easterlings but he does suffer other outcomes; he is troubled by his actions in Dor-lómin and in conjunction with Finduilas' death he begins to believe that his Doom is insurmountable.

Asgon criticises Túrin while praising Lady Aerin; Asgon considers that Aerin's patience and quiet, which is misread by men of war, is capable of good for the people of

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<sup>148</sup> Its bestowal by Thingol is a moment of solemnity and is used in part as a blessing to Túrin in his passage to actively combating Morgoth and in part as a recognition of his heritage and fate.

Hador. To him this attitude is subtle in its power and cost, but it betrays her strength. Asgon leaves Túrin with the thought to not return unless he has strength to deliver them. Asgon's words are not hostile to Túrin, but they are tinged with a stern reminder and a lesson of his deeds. Honegger (2020) believes this drives the message that "Heroes do have a social obligation and are not free to go about and do (presumably) heroic deeds as they please" (p.3). If I may, I would perhaps rephrase Honegger's thoughts. Túrin acted rashly without thinking of the consequences, but Asgon doesn't seem to elevate the social obligation of heroes, only the need for thoughtful action, although Túrin's social obligation to Dor-lómin is implied. Lady Aerin's patience is easily misunderstood, much like other traits that can be a flaw in some contexts while a strength in others.

In Moore's opinion (2021, p.7) Túrin's reaction at the outcome of killing Brodda showcases the connection Túrin creates between, on the one hand, his actions, and their outcomes, and, on the other hand, his fate and stigma. Thereby Túrin believes that society will treat him a certain way because they believe that his doom is real and develop a stigma to it. However, the reaction from the people of Dor-lómin seems to be entirely rooted on his actions against Brodda and its outcome instead of their knowledge of Túrin's doom. This author sees this as the development of Túrin's instinctual reaction to society and his internalization of the stigma itself. Setting aside Moore's use of stigma, we can assume that Túrin starts to take his doom as ever present to the point of driving him into irrational deeds, with his action in Brodda's hall being the result of a lack of self-control and aggression or perhaps even wrath.

Honegger (2020, p.1) analyses Túrin's characterisation in relation to the problematic nature of heroism and the heroes that represent it. The author speaks to the need to contain the aggressive forms of military prowess when the employment of these is unneeded. The author believes that later developments of heroic and chivalric ideals occur because of this need. We can see a level of policing of actions by elements of shame and taboo such as in Greek and Roman societies.

#### **4.3.2.6 *Brethil***

Despite Túrin's attempt to disguise himself under the name Wildman of the Woods, he is identified as Mormegil through Gurthang. This is proof of the lasting impact of names and of the identification power of heirlooms. Because of Túrin's renown, he is remembered by others he never had any interaction with. The only name created by Túrin

that the narrator uses to refer to Túrin is Turambar, which means master of doom, adopted in order to put his shadow behind him and to protect those he loves and stay at peace.<sup>149</sup> By taking on this name Túrin takes on the ultimatum to surmount his doom. Mitchel (2010, p.105) points out that Turambar, is the only name that reflects a consideration of the future, whereas previous names reflected his view of past events. Croft (2011, p.162) calls this proleptic naming, for it is emphasising something Túrin hopes for. This change in Túrin's self-naming is accompanied by a change in attitude; Túrin's reaction to his identity being discovered by Dorlas is gentle and limited to the request that Túrin's past deeds not be announced. This is different when compared to the anger Túrin leveraged against Gwindor when he revealed Túrin's name to Finduilas.

According to Honegger (2020, pp.4-5) Túrin is re-integrated into society through his marriage to Níniel, with his heroic energy channelled and restrained.<sup>150</sup> This energy is then called upon by Dorlas who insists upon Túrin's desire to become a member of the community which in turn makes the community's problems his own. Honegger pays close attention to Túrin's plan to confront Glaurung, denoting his desire to avoid repeating the mistake at Nargothrond. This author considers that the preparation to kill Glaurung shows signs of strategic circumspection and social responsibility, choosing subterfuge over a pitched battle. Túrin informs those who do not participate to stay put and flee if the plan is unsuccessful, hopefully avoiding their capture: Furthermore, he brings two companions in order to increase the chances of success and lift some of his burden. Honegger refers to this as a communal effort as he incorporates representatives from the different groups of the Men of Brethil.<sup>151</sup>

Túrin and Niënor's identities and their relationship seem to introduce a stigma according to Moore (2021, pp.8-9), because this author points to Túrin's social standing taking a hit from this revelation and that of his suicide, but also refers to the people of Haleth's confusion at the time which comes immediately after the slaying of Glaurung, a great service that Túrin accomplishes. He states that this complicates the culpability of Túrin in his own tragic end given Morgoth's intervention, thereby marking Túrin's legacy

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<sup>149</sup> Turambar comes from the Sindarin *túr* (mastery) and *ambar* (fate, doom).

<sup>150</sup> Mitchel (2010, p.102) believes that Túrin is pummelled into acknowledging that he can't achieve anything substantial on his own. The author calls him a volatile war monger and attributes to Túrin the realisation that he can't single handedly re-create a world that can't be remade. Mitchel seems to counter his claims of Tolkien's believes that a hero must fight evil as his primary motivation. Furthermore, his characterisation of Túrin as a war monger seems odd in a world engulfed in war and although the desire to lay hid by the Elves seems like the best choice given our knowledge of the world, it is not one so easily argued from the perspective of those living within Beleriand.

<sup>151</sup> I assume that Honegger refers to the group that dislikes Brandir and the one who is supportive of him.

as that of a hero but also as that of an incestual suicide and murderer.<sup>152</sup> Mitchel (2010, p.102) marks Brandir's murder as the moment where Túrin reverts to his former self, unable to control his wrath leading to an innocent death.<sup>153</sup>

According to Mitchel (2010, pp.103-106) the changing of names indicates he misunderstands his own potential to overcome the curse upon his family. Therefore, Turambar is literal in its truth, but depends on Túrin's self-control. Subsequently, he believes the name Turambar is fulfilled when Túrin takes his own life, whereby he literally takes control of his doom by destroying himself. The author states that Túrin's only control over his life is deciding the manner in which it will end, entertaining the idea that Túrin's death is an act where only he could be the executioner, because he is privy to his follies and mistakes, and he has nowhere else to turn to. This is highly debatable as it can be argued that he has control over several decisions in his life and not just his death. Túrin's agency and power to decide to change his life are remarkable as he is more than a victim of his fate.

Mitchel (2010, p.112) denigrates Morgoth's curse by claiming that it is less effective than Mím's because the petty-dwarf's curse is accomplished, and that if it were real then Morgoth would have nothing to fear from Túrin. The author believes that the curse should result in a life of prolonged misery for Húrin's children but many of the aspects in the curse can be understood as having taken effect, such as their words bringing ill counsel and evil arising wherever they go.

There is merit in understanding Túrin's suicide as a result of his free will and as proof that he takes control of his doom, instead of the result of his doom and Morgoth's curse. But in either case Túrin's death is a moment of sadness because Morgoth's evil is without doubt partially responsible for it even if the curse itself has no real effect. Morgoth specifically targeted Túrin (*CoH* p.107) during his stay with the outlaws and Glaurung acts in his will when he specifically goes after Túrin's and his sister in the wurm's manipulations. In any case it is clear that Túrin's death is to the satisfaction of Morgoth since it sends Húrin into despair which in turn furthers the Dark Lord's goals.

Of course, this tale is not meant to stand as a monument to Morgoth's victory. As Túrin says in Nargothrond the deeds of all the heroes can't be unwritten by Morgoth. The only place that is spared the destruction of Beleriand is the grave of Túrin, Morwen, and

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<sup>152</sup> Moore (2021, p.7) states that the incest is a result of his decision to keep his identity hidden but that decision is in turn based on past social experiences.

<sup>153</sup> Croft (2011, p.163) refers to Túrin's killing of Brandir as a rash deed.

Nienor. Therefore, their memory lives on and Túrin is remembered as an Elf-friend by Elrond (*The Lord of the Rings*, p.355) and not, as Moore suggests (2021, pp.8-9), as an incestual suicide and murderer; it might be more accurate to say that those aspects are a part of his journey but not of the legacy that others choose to remember him by.

The sentence that most represents Túrin is spoken by Nienor. *A Túrin Turambar turún' ambartanen*. Túrin Turambar, Master of Doom by Doom Mastered. Túrin was buried near Finduilas' grave, and on his tombstone, the Haladin wrote: TÚRIN TURAMBAR DAGNIR GLAURUNGA. (Túrin, Conqueror of Fate, Slayer of Glaurung). Nienor Níniel is also included below Túrin's own engraving.

### 4.3.3 Túrin's Heroism

Moore (2021, p.8) points out that Túrin increases in social standings throughout the time he spends across the various places, but he never returns to his highest social position as heir to the House of Hador (by this the author means mean acting heir instead of exile).<sup>154</sup> Given that this mobility comes from Túrin's own influence and that of the communities acceptance of him, Moore (2021, p.8) say that this suggests a "free will" interpretation of Túrin's stigma.<sup>155</sup> According to Moore (2021, p.8) any downslide that Túrin suffers in the social hierarchy from his stigma coming to light comes from Morgoth and not the community. But as frequently shown, this comes from Morgoth's agents as opposed to his own magical intervention that directly alters the physiology or psychology of others. Morgoth requires knowledge of Túrin's whereabouts to dispatch his agents.

Mitchel (2010, pp.91, 99) divides Tolkien's heroes between those with a Christian ethos, who live by principles of enduring hope, and heroes with a pagan ethos that have no hope and are preoccupied with aspirations of immediate *lof* and *dom* (good report and fame), placing Túrin in the latter. Mitchel frames Túrin as a hero whose triumph ultimately doesn't matter, but because of his active resistance against rampant wickedness it ends up vindicating him. Mitchel ends by saying that the only avenue that promises a glimmer of success demands patience which is opposite of what Túrin's lifetime can

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<sup>154</sup> Moore (2021, p.8) points out that this goes against the trend of stigmatized individuals suffering downward mobility in the social hierarchy.

<sup>155</sup> Moore (2021, p.8) does point to Túrin's status above Brethil as stemming from Túrin's invisible stigma compared to Brandir's visible disability of his lameness.

afford. The tragedy being that Túrin's toil cannot meet with ultimate success even though he expects it in some level.<sup>156</sup>

Part of why it is hard to discern Túrin's legacy, is that he does not have a set goal from the moment he departs from Doriath. His attitude and methods change in accordance with the community he is integrated into although his resistance against Morgoth is ever present.

Tolkien is capable of creating heroic figures and placing them on the side of good against evil. This might appear as very simplistic batch of components, but Tolkien expands this by presenting to us heroic figures that are psychologically complex, because they are presented as flawed and challenging. Despite these seemingly negative aspects we choose to support them in the fight against something that is completely malevolent, even as we have problems with their conduct. Fate and free will serve to contribute to the question of whether we should commend or blame the actions of these heroes or whether we should give them leeway since not everything is in their power to control.

#### 4. Zelensky's Concept of Hero and Heroism

Within this chapter I will examine a set of speeches delivered by the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky in the opening weeks of the Russian invasion. I will analyse the type, and style of these speeches and the modes of persuasion, broadly following the Aristotelian rhetorical triangle: *Logos*, identifying the main themes, and the formulation of the most important arguments; *Ethos*, exploring the way that President Zelensky presents himself and what is the image of himself he wants to convey; *Pathos*, through the identification of the values and emotions that are appealed to and the way that Zelensky does so. I am specifically examining the speeches to identify the notion of hero and heroism assumed and developed by Zelensky and whether that notion can be applied to Zelensky himself.

The chosen speeches, analysed in the English version edited by the publisher LMVerlag,<sup>157</sup> are as follows: Speech 1, *Ukrainians are a symbol of invincibility*

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<sup>156</sup> In this fading world Huttar (2008, p.12) separates mutability and the rejection of hope for despair, looking at characters in *The Lord of the Rings* which exhibit despair but overcome it as best as they can. Tolkien's writings always bring a substance of hope as seen in Huttar's examples of happiness from the fading and irreparable loss: such as the garden grown from Isengard. But within *The Children of Húrin* it is very clear that hope is scarce.

<sup>157</sup> The translator is not identified in the book.

(henceforth abbreviated as “Invincibility”; pp.49-52); Speech 2, *For us, this is a patriotic war, and we know how such wars end for the invaders* (henceforth “Patriotic War”; pp.52-56); Speech 3, *We continue to fight, we will protect our state and liberate our land thanks to our heroes* (henceforth “Our heroes”; pp.62-66); Speech 4, *Today, everyone is gaining glory for Ukraine in his or her place* (henceforth “Glory for Ukraine”; pp.123-129); Speech 5, *The state is doing everything to help Mariupol* (henceforth “Mariupol”; pp.109-115); Speech 6, *Address to Ukrainians and the nations of the world* (henceforth “Ukrainians and the world”; pp.241-246); Speech 7, *Glory to our army! Glory to Ukraine!* (“Glory”; pp.29-31); Speech 8 *Address by President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky to the US Congress* (henceforth “Address to the US Congress”; pp.167-172).<sup>158</sup>

Zelensky’s speeches are political in nature and fall under the epideictic and deliberative branches of Aristotle’s rhetoric genres, since they aim to respectively praise or censor, and persuade or dissuade the audience, which range from Ukrainians, the Russian state, Russian citizens, the European Union, NATO, and even the Jewish community among other.<sup>159</sup> This is accomplished through direct and indirect appeals, or allusions as well as arguments based on facts as well as emotions.

The style of rhetoric can be classified as the Grand style given his themes that tackle values and principles that he frames as a core part of human life.<sup>160</sup> Zelensky makes repeated appeals to the emotions of the audience and calls to action, which is achieved through arguments based on common opinions, shared principles, shared values, as well as authority on competency, experience, and witness. Furthermore, there is use of a larger-than-life speech, as he deals with principles and values of human existence, through rhetorical devices such as metaphors, repetition, anaphora, synecdoche, hyperbole, among others.

The overall rhythm of the speeches can be characterised as short and frequent, given that they are normally only a handful paragraphs long and multiple speeches are delivered on a given day.<sup>161</sup> Sentences are usually short and repetitive, creating an atmosphere of urgency. In content these speeches are simple in their delivery not being based on long theoretical or philosophical arguments, instead quite frequently arguments

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<sup>158</sup> Some references to other speeches are introduced in order to highlight some specific points.

<sup>159</sup> Hesk (2009, pp.145-161) details the differences between Aristotle’s three types of rhetoric, deliberative, forensic, and epideictic.

<sup>160</sup> Steel (2009, p.89) details Cicero’s three rhetorical styles, simple, middle, and elevated or grand.

<sup>161</sup> As listed by Plazas-Olmedo & López-Rabadán (2023, pp.190, 197) Zelensky’s official Instagram posted an average of 10.6 posts per day, between February 24 to March 9, 2022, with a length not much more than 5 minutes.

seem to present simple instances of cause an effect.<sup>162</sup> The delivery of these speeches is done in a variety of places and ways from intimate hand-held recordings to more formal presentation. This in turn helps with maintaining the frequency of speeches but also can be understood as showing a quality of Zelensky's ethos whereby he cares more about speaking to his people than about the intricacies of decoration. Plazas-Olmedo & López-Rabadán (2023, p.193) list the staging on Zelensky's Instagram as being 79.17% following institutional standards of formal speeches, 15.28% of an amateur nature, and 1.39% as being of a strategic spontaneity in which the elements are planned in detail even though the video appears to be spontaneous. The same authors then highlight how formal and amateur staging became balanced in use at 35%.

Zelensky uses of notions connected to heroes and heroism range from applying them to specific individuals that have accomplished a heroic feat and are being granted a medal, to certain groups such as those committed to humanitarian aid, and even to entire cities, which seems more to be related to the city's community, to Ukraine as a whole, and even to all those who defend Ukraine.<sup>163</sup> Zelensky never exclusively raises up an individual hero above others. It can also be said that heroism is not a major explicit theme but is frequently referenced and implied, although never expanded upon. As a word, it is mostly used as an adjective or noun in reference to individuals or groups.

## 1. Zelensky's *Ethos*

Zelensky prior to becoming president was an actor and producer. According to Plazas-Olmedo & López-Rabadán (2023, p.190), his television experience alongside his rhetorical and staging skills fit his campaigns' focus on the digital sphere which has become his primary channel of communication since the war began.<sup>164</sup> The immediacy and reach of social networks are precious tools in Zelensky's rhetoric. Zelensky is ubiquitous. His speeches have been delivered frequently since the beginning of the war

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<sup>162</sup> Examples of this are in speech 3 "Our Heroes", Zelensky speaks of the lack of a NATO no fly zone leading to more dead Ukrainians, and in speech 4 "Glory for Ukraine" in which he asserts that the Ukrainian forces will fight harder the more suffering Russia causes.

<sup>163</sup> Some examples include: "Glory to all those who defend Ukraine today! You are heroes!" Zelensky (2022, p.34). "Everyone is where they should be. I am in Kyiv. My team is with me. The territorial defence is on the ground. The servicemen are in positions. Our heroes! Doctors, rescuers, transporters, diplomats, journalists." (Zelensky, 2022, p.84). "Every Ukrainian man and woman who protested against the invaders yesterday, today and will protest tomorrow are heroes." (Zelensky, 2022, p.84).

<sup>164</sup> Dyczok (2022, p.147) refers to Zelensky's use of social media as invaluable to dispelling Russian propaganda.

across a wide variety of places, from Ukraine itself to parliaments across the world, even in film festivals, and other venues. There are also interviews and the constant news coverage of the war to take into account. This wide stage has made him into an omnipresent figure, clearly imprinting himself in the minds of many but doing so alongside the Ukrainian war.<sup>165</sup> Zelensky shows himself and is perceived as not acting out of a self-gratifying narcissism, but as one of many Ukrainians doing their best to save their country from Russia.<sup>166</sup> Even in speeches directed at his own people we observe how he seldom makes use of imperative commands, as he does not seek to place himself above them, he only asks of the Ukrainian people to keep doing the things that he praises them for.<sup>167</sup>

In speech 5 “Mariupol” Zelensky utilizes the personal pronoun “I” alongside a tricolon to associate the people of Ukraine, himself, and the country. The use of the first-person singular pronoun seems to express here the speaker’s personal involvement with his audience. He also mentions here his being a father of two children when stating that no chemical or weapons of mass destruction are developed on his land.<sup>168</sup> This is an argument that seems to present this issue as a personal one perhaps not only to himself but to every Ukrainian. Calling Ukraine his land does not imply that Ukraine is personally his but that he has a personal connection with the country.<sup>169</sup> This is in line with how he shows himself as a president of a country in hardship by being empathetic to the adversities of his people in his addresses. He repeatedly uses the pronoun “we,” and the

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<sup>165</sup> Plazas-Olmedo & López-Rabadán (2023, p.197) highlight how Zelensky is almost always without company, this is done in the form of individualization and not privatization. Zelensky does not intent to make the message his, but simply present himself as the president, his own personal life does not take over as his political activity is at centre stage.

<sup>166</sup> Plazas-Olmedo & López-Rabadán (2023, pp.192-3) classify Zelensky’s personalization as a protective statesman, because of his social media emphasizes his role as a statesman foremost until it altered as the war went on to also underline his role as a protective or compassionate character.

<sup>167</sup> An example is in his asking Ukrainians to take care of their loved ones in speech 1 “Invincibility”. He also says he and the whole world admires Ukrainians. Following Luthfiyati & Hamidah (2022, 182-185) classifications, his use of the pronoun I expresses his personal thoughts, as well as his position as president. While his use of the pronoun You which is done as an anaphora for emphasis, is used to address Ukrainians in general.

<sup>168</sup> Luthfiyati & Hamidah (2022, pp.182-183, 184-185) argue that Zelensky uses the pronoun I to represent himself in a positive manner and to emphasize his personal attributes. In this case it is used as a demonstration of his good nature as a father and guarantee the non-existence of chemical weapons in Ukraine. The authors also highlight how the pronoun I can be used to express the user’s personal thoughts as is the case here but done so with authority rather than the stating of opinion.

<sup>169</sup> This argument speaks of the Ukrainian pathos and even Zelensky’s own ethos that they are an honest people and in the case of Zelensky a family man that has not thought of creating weapons that can cause massive destruction.

determiner “our” when referring to Ukrainian struggles and accomplishments, thereby associating himself with their pain and their achievements.<sup>170</sup>

Surprisingly though he also shows himself empathetic to the pains of the Russian people, not blaming them on the war, but rather the Russian state. In his appeals to the Russian people, he always argues as an authority on how they can better protect themselves from further loss, or from their own state’s repression and how they should also fight for the truth. By dissociating the Russian people from the Russian politicians, he can present himself as a sympathetic and compassionate human being, in order to ensure the audience’s support.

Zelensky carries the appearance of someone that doesn’t care for platitudes and is more focussed on the serious implications that the war brings and on being a protector to his people. He does so through sometimes blunt statements, such as in speech 3 “Our heroes” when he claims that NATO gives green light for bombings of Ukrainian cities by refusing to make a no-fly zone.<sup>171</sup> At other times he directly references the rhetorical concept of pathos, such as in speech 4 when he states that him saying, the Armed Forces of Ukraine will respond to every minute of their people’s suffering, is not pathos, or in speech 3 when he says that his metaphor, that Ukrainians are warriors of light is not spoken for the sake of pathos, just a statement of reality. This further works to establish himself as assertive and resolute, by clearly emphasising his words, such as when he uses repeatedly the word “united” in speech 1 “Invincibility”, and by referring himself in the first person, when speaking about Ukrainian unity.<sup>172</sup>

Zelensky seems to be more dedicated to the emotional and moral aspects of his speeches, since he places the reason for Russians being unable to capture Ukraine in days or a couple of weeks, on the Ukrainian people’s ability to resist. This seems to imply that he cares about the qualitative aspect of spirit and the morale of his people over any quantitative aspect of munitions, and fuel. Nevertheless, this does not mean that he does not use quantification in his speech as his emphasis on the number of days that the

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<sup>170</sup> Luthfiyati & Hamidah (2022, 182, 184-187) present Zelensky’s use of We as being done in both inclusive and exclusive cases, with his uses of the inclusive we meant to underline his personal dedication, to the country and its people. In this case it is clearly inclusive as Zelensky includes himself and the audience he addresses.

<sup>171</sup> “Today, the Alliance's leadership gave the green light for further bombing of Ukrainian cities by refusing to make a no-fly zone.” (Zelensky, 2022, p.65)

<sup>172</sup> We can understand this as a case of Zelensky expressing his personal belief and expressing his authority, following Luthfiyati & Hamidah (2022, 182-185) analysis.

Ukrainians have held out is an example of this. Furthermore, he frequently lists the cities and places that are or can be subject to attacks.<sup>173</sup>

Zelensky also frequently utilizes historical events for his arguments, either to embolden Ukrainians, or to persuade support from specific audiences by correlating what is known to have armed them in the past to what is occurring in Ukraine at the moment, or in the case of his address to the US Congress by referencing renowned speeches, such as Martin Luther King's *I have a Dream*. His address to the US Congress on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2022, is a good example of his use of the past and the way he appeals to the pathos through mutual values. In calling back to the speech *I have a Dream*, Zelensky places the significance of his request at the same level of Martin Luther King Jr's, a request based on the same desires of a better, more peaceful world. In calling back to the past Zelensky makes this historic speech, of a figure many would call a hero, into something actionable, calling onto others to make this historic speech into something actionable and acting on it in the same way as Martin Luther King Jr. would. If we were to look at how the past is called to in the *Iliad* by Nestor (7.123-160), the warrior uses it to praise the heroes of the past raising them higher than the heroes of the present, perhaps even denigrating these. Although Nestor always elevates himself to the level of these past heroes in a boastful manner, the actual use of the past can be seen as a challenge to other heroes to their need to increase their efforts.

He is also comfortable with using wit in mockery of Russia, such as in speech 5 "Mariupol" when against the accusations of Ukraine having chemical weapons, he claims Russia seeks to de-chemicalize Ukraine, and uses the examples of ammonia and phosphorus which are meant ironically, since ammonia is not used in warfare and although phosphorus can be used in warfare it is, like ammonia, also used in farming. He does so not to make light of a serious issue, but to point out its absurdity.

Another way through which Zelensky conveys this appearance is through his wardrobe, having completely abstained from the use of suits which are mainstay fashion for politicians across the world. Zelensky uses what seem to be green t-shirts from the Ukrainian military, or otherwise very simple clothes usually military green. His wardrobe therefore becomes as unique to his presentation as the equipment of Achilles or the helm and blade of Túrin, where its use carries on a message much like the speeches themselves.

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<sup>173</sup> "Last night and tonight they continued to bomb our cities. Bombs. Missiles. Artillery. Machine guns. Targeting peaceful people. Again. Targeting residential areas. Again. Mariupol, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Zhytomyr and other cities and towns of Ukraine." (Zelensky, 2022, p.50)

Furthermore, the evolution of his facial hair from clean shaven to bearded contributes to the image of someone that has been changed, from a tidy and relaxed image to an austere image of a practical man who has no time to take care of his appearance. Dyczok (2022, p.149) describes it as a non-verbal message that makes him out as one of the team. It should perhaps also be noticed that in his military simple visual aspect he aims at pointing to the hardship of the war and to his role as military leader.

Zelensky's own character has become the subject of discussion and has so far led to some calling him a hero.<sup>174</sup> This is well expected as Zelensky has presented himself as the president of a country facing a terrible event, but his words are not the only thing that matters as his actions have also made an impact.<sup>175</sup>

Unlike the heroes of Homer, Vergil, and Tolkien, Zelensky is not a figure with an easily identifiable set of flaws or of heroic actions that have brought about negative consequences to himself or his own community. He also does not have an extensive list of heroic deeds comparable to the great list of admittedly mostly martial accomplishments of many heroes. His decision to remain in Kyiv at the beginning of the invasion is what we could perhaps call a heroic act, but in the corpus analysed there are many characters with similar actions that are not referred to as heroes. Zelensky does present himself as committed to his people, as a hero would, in the way that he connects himself to their emotions. Aeneas is the hero with whom Zelensky is most similar in this aspect, as Aeneas is weighed down by the hardships that his people face, but in spite of that presents a positive face.

As stated, Zelensky never calls himself a hero in his speeches, but he can still be a hero by his own words. His use of heroism is frequently done in broad strokes and the word "hero" is only used when granting awards, and even then, he relates the achievements of the award recipients to the Ukrainian people. Therefore, in order to call Zelensky a hero by his own words it would be done so only because he is himself Ukrainian and is much like the Ukrainian people contributing to the protection of Ukrainians and the fight against the Russians. He would be a hero because the Ukrainian people are heroes and not because he has accomplished a glorious feat. Nevertheless, history will certainly make its judgement...

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<sup>174</sup> Plazas-Olmedo & López-Rabadán (2023, p.193) analysis of Zelensky's official Instagram account, denote those posts presenting him as a hero ranged between 11.59% and 8.33%.

<sup>175</sup> Zelensky's constantly brings up Ukrainian suffering as well as empathising with this suffering and appealing to the international community, with arguments based on emotion, to help stop it.

### 1.1 Zelensky's Choice to Remain

In the beginning of the conflict Zelensky chose to take a stand and remain in Kyiv as the Russian troops streamed in through its streets. It was a commendable and perhaps heroic choice, but not one that can't be questioned or debated. In hindsight it was the best decision he could have made since the Russians were incapable of taking over the capital or reaching the president. The outcome was entirely positive, Zelensky remained alive, and he showed himself to be a steadfast and exemplary leader. Ukrainians know that when they are asked to place their lives on the line for the future of their country, they do so under the leadership of someone that has done the same. An example of this is in speech 3 "Our heroes" within which Zelensky' appeals to the Ukrainian pathos wherein he, using the pronoun I, empathises with how difficult a decision it is to stand up and resist, this can be made out to be an argument of authority of experience, since he made the decision to remain in Kyiv.<sup>176</sup> His choice to stay bolstered the image of Ukraine as defiant against the invasion which is characteristic of the overall Ukrainian effort. Staying in Kyiv allowed him to present himself as a true example of Ukrainian resistance, as a model to be followed.

Furthermore, Zelensky made sure to demonstrate his defiant decision to remain in Kyiv by filming himself on the streets and routinely making addresses in the city. This is an instance where the rhythm of his speeches carries a great impact. The repeating pattern of speech after speech day after day served as a rallying point for the resistance of Ukraine. To the Ukrainians it showed that their president was as dedicated as they were in fighting, and to the world it shows that Ukraine was not beaten. Plazas-Olmedo & López-Rabadán (2023, pp.194-195) detail how 91.67% of Zelensky's Instagram videos were recorded in official places and 8.33% were filmed in public places, such as the street. This spread has changed to include around 9.5% more videos in public places and 11.27% in private places.

Analysing Zelensky's choice within the purview of fate and free will, his choice to remain in Kyiv can be taken as him deciding to take part in the fate of Ukraine whether towards its loss or its victory. He could have very well chosen to escape to west Ukraine

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<sup>176</sup> Zelensky's use of the pronoun "I" can be understood through Luthfiyati & Hamidah (2022, 182-185) as being used in the function of experience. This is the case because of Zelensky's own difficult choice whereby he chose to remain in Kyiv and put his life in danger for the sake of his country.

or to another country and set up a government in exile. This decision is naturally not bereft of outside influence and context because all of the benefits and doubts that stem from it naturally were weighed by Zelensky and his counsellors. Achilles' decision was framed in regard to his legacy and although Zelensky's decision can be seen in regard to his own legacy as the President of Ukraine during the Russian invasion it is also seen in the context of Ukraine as a whole. A hero in essence tells of his community by his ideals and his actions, what the hero believes in then the community will likely also believe.<sup>177</sup> If we were then to picture a classic or a Tolkien hero their choice would be much the same as Zelensky's for they would carry the desire of their community to take a stand and resist the invasion. The choice of fleeing would be far from their mind since it is only done when the battle is certifiably lost, as is the case with Troy and Aeneas, or the case with Dor-lómin and Túrin. Therefore, their choices would be limited as they would align with the will of the community and could then be called fated.

## 2. How to Become a Hero?

Zelensky's speeches frequently end with information about the bestowal of the title of Hero of Ukraine, or other awards and accolades. These exist as recognition and rewarding of effort and are in themselves inspirational. At the same time, they allow us to identify what kind of heroic actions are being valued and publicly praised.

It is noteworthy, though, that in speech 2 "Patriotic War" when Zelensky awards the Hero of Ukraine to fifteen heroes he states that all 40 million, that is the population of Ukraine, are like the fifteen heroes that are receiving the order. Through this he frames the accomplishments of the few as being indicative of the many. Despite Zelensky awarding the accomplishments to individuals, identified by name, military rank, and by the heroic acts recognized, he associates these awards to Ukraine as a whole, these heroes now serving as examples to the quality of Ukrainians everywhere. We can understand this as Zelensky utilizing a more democratized concept of heroism. This does not devalue the fifteen heroes, mentioned in the speech, but it binds them to the Ukrainian community, making their heroism a result of the country and people of Ukraine. In the same speech

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<sup>177</sup> We can observe this in *The Children of Húrin* where in Nargothrond Túrin persuades the Elves to fight openly against Morgoth. He in that moment better embodied their desires than Gwindor's strategy of stealth.

Zelensky calls heroes those who help organize the green corridors to rescue and ferry humanitarian aid, but he highlights how they must put up with Russian terror.

No better example exists of Zelensky's broad application of the term heroes as his address to the British Parliament, wherein he states "Ukrainians became heroes. Hundreds of thousands of people. Entire cities. Children, adults – all." (Zelensky, 2022, p.94). This very clearly makes all Ukrainians out as heroes, which does fall under the notions of heroism such as dedication to the community, the accomplishment of heroic deeds, and the fight against a foe that puts their community in danger. Doing away with the supernatural aspects of fate and doom we can attempt to understand its influence over the average hero in Ukraine. None of them chose for the war to occur, but they all chose to stay and fight against Russia, much like Zelensky, when they could have chosen to flee. This is a clear case of free will. Of course, each individual has personal motivations and pressures from the community influencing them. We naturally have no knowledge of personal motivations but through Zelensky we can observe some of the community's pressures. Zelensky very clearly frames each hero as someone that is there to protect Ukraine and its people, he does not present the option for a hero to not fight, although as seen the corpus analysed that would mean they would not be a hero to begin with.<sup>178</sup> In a broad generalized view every Ukrainians have free choice but to become a hero they must choose to fight and contribute to Ukraine, which could mean that for a hero there is no actual free choice as the option to not fight is not to be considered.<sup>179</sup> An aspect that is important to Zelensky's argument but not explicitly stated is honour, when he requests the return of those who fled the country he appeals to their honour, for them to abide with oaths that they swore to their country, or even to abide by their home. When considering the military of any country, they all act similarly to a heroic code of honour, whereby any soldier swears to stand and defend their country and in turn also defend those that stand beside them.

The Hero of Ukraine decoration is not only bestowed to soldiers, warriors, or leaders, it is also granted to scientists, athletes, and musicians. The aspect that defines all

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<sup>178</sup> "And now I want to address not those who stayed with Ukraine and in Ukraine, but those who left it at the most crucial moment. Your strength is not in your money and planes, but in the civic position you can show. Return to your people and the country due to which you got your factories and wealth. Today, everyone passes a real test for a citizen of Ukraine. Pass it with dignity. Let everyone understand for whom Ukraine is really the Homeland, and for whom it is just a platform for money making." (Zelensky, 2022, p.13)

<sup>179</sup> We can understand this decision to be one similar to Achilles', although the heroic ideals are certainly different, the choice for a hero to fight and to not seem to be no choice at all.

recipients is their contribution to Ukraine, through their efforts in their respective fields. These accomplishments although personal also speak of the quality of the Ukrainian community. In the case of those recipients such as athletes of individual sports, their dedication is most likely to come from their personal desire to achieve a high level in the sport than to fight for or contribute to Ukraine, that is in cases when they are not standing as representatives of Ukraine such as in the Olympics. In this case it might be perhaps more apt to think of them as heroes like those of the *Iliad* as they through their own personal glory contribute to the group.

The format in which Zelensky awards promotions varies; it is normally done by indicating what promotion is being given, then calling out the rank and which individual is receiving the promotion, if the individual is deceased then its posthumous status is specified and finally the position of the receiver in the military is stated; frequently, although not always the case, the act that earned them the award is stated and, if the award is posthumous, the way in which the individual died is stated at the end. The concise manner in which these awards are given leaves no place to exalt the individual character of each soldier, rather the awards are placed in the context of their sacrifice and contribution to Ukraine, with a note of sorrow in those given posthumously.

Zelensky has also awarded ten cities within Ukraine with the award Hero City of Ukraine. The origin of this award comes from the Soviet Union which granted it to cities after the Second World War. This award is given to cities that faced significant battles, such as Mariupol which fell to Russia after a nearly three-month siege, or Hostomel which being in the outskirts of Ukraine featured heavy fighting in the first month of the war. This award recognizes the hardship that each city faced during the war, serving to award the local community for their resolve, whether in surviving through the hardship or actively fighting against the enemy.

These awards are all examples of public recognition of each hero's effort, naturally it will come with its own set of respect by others and any such boons, but since the war still rages their efforts will not cease until its end. There will be many heroes whose names or achievements will go forgotten in their specifics, but across many countries the tomb of the unknown soldier exists in order to pay respects to them.

### 3. Zelensky's Themes

We can find similarities in Zelensky's rhetoric with how the classical heroes treat their peers. A hero will chastise those who run away or are not fighting hard enough in order to cause them to put more effort into the fighting, but the hero will also praise their contributions in order to incentive them and keep the momentum on their side. Now there is clearly a lack of personal contribution to the battle, as a hero both leads through speeches as well as example. Zelensky being president can't simply take to the battlefield and actively participate as a soldier and so he is limited to his rhetoric.

The beginnings of Zelensky's speeches don't have a strict pattern, but they clearly transmit a feeling of action and progress on the part of the Ukrainian effort.<sup>180</sup> At times they stress the theme of Russia being evil and committing atrocities, other times when addressing foreign nations, it is appropriated to that audience by thanking the heads and the peoples, for example in his address in the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, Zelensky calls the Polish people brothers and sisters and speaks of the relationship between both nations prior to the war, while in his address to the British parliament he brings up the Battle of Britain to explain the Ukrainian resilience. In any case he always emphasizes the Ukrainian struggle. Perhaps the most notable introductions are those in which Zelensky elevates the Ukrainian accomplishments, focussing on the positive notes of success alongside Russian acts which serve to further stress Ukrainian determination.

In an overwhelming majority of his speeches Zelensky ends with the cry "glory to Ukraine," effectively ending his speeches with an assertive conclusion that shows his resolve to Ukraine as well as bolster the resolve of the Ukrainian people. This is especially emphasised when Zelensky brings up the military or the memory of those who died. This manner of conclusion is then changed at times to adequate it to the specific message of the speech, such as when he includes glory to Europe, or Great Britain in the cry for glory, showing Ukrainian praise to allies. This is not something that he repeats constantly as he will frame the cry for glory as being necessary for peace or simply thanking the country that he is addressing directly, demonstrating his capacity to adapt his conclusion to the particularities of the addressed audience.

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<sup>180</sup> For example, in Speech 5 "Mariupol" where Zelensky begins by speaking of the organization of humanitarian corridors. "Sumy, Trostyanets, Krasnopillya, Irpin, Bucha, Hostomel, Izyum. Almost 40,000 people have already been evacuated this day. They were given safety at last. In Poltava, Kyiv, Cherkasy, Zaporizhzhia, Dnipro, Lviv." (Zelensky, 2022, p.109).

Considering how Zelensky calls Ukrainians heroes, as well as how he elevates the lasting legacy of the Ukrainians, these calls to glory seem to in essence be similar to how heroes of the past valued glory and fame. Although the Ukrainians very clearly do not do so for wealth and primarily do so for survival, the heroic immortality achieved through legacy is very well achievable. We can then perceive these calls to glory as calls for a long lasting and impressive legacy, as calls to the world to pay attention to Ukraine, and, taking into consideration how he calls out eternal memory to everyone who died for Ukraine, Zelensky strives to immortalize them.<sup>181</sup>

Zelensky's speeches carry a set of repeated themes that include: 1) Russia is a modern equivalent to Nazi Germany, or a terrorist state; 2) Russia is generally against values shared by the free world; 3) Russia is a country that hurts its citizens and isolates itself from the world; 4) Ukraine is united and strong and inspires the world; 5) Ukraine is a bastion of the values and principles of the free world; 6) the world and its communities should support Ukraine, with delays in support being shameful and responsible for further Ukrainian deaths; 7) Ukraine is European and belongs in the European Union; 7) distancing Ukraine from its shared history with Russia.<sup>182</sup>

### **3.1 Balancing His Portrayal of Russia**

The themes presented by Zelensky are naturally meant to fit together, but we can give special attention to a select few which complement each other to create a balanced portrayal of the Russian forces. On one side Zelensky undermines Russian strength, by describing them as incompetent and bringing up examples of their failings, which serves to uplift Ukrainian morale by presenting the Russians as an opponent that can be beaten and show to the international community that they are not a lost cause and deserve support.<sup>183</sup> This is complemented by his praises of the Ukrainian military and its

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<sup>181</sup> Zelensky's reference to loss is often done to turn what could perhaps be demoralising or saddening into one that is empowering and uplifting. A good example is in speech 3 "Our heroes" where he cries eternal memory to everyone who died for Ukraine. Instead on dwelling on sorrow over the loss of those who died, he calls on to remember them for their sacrifice and their legacy.

<sup>182</sup> Dyczok (2022, p.149) describes Zelensky's goals as establishing the Ukrainian narrative; dispel Russia's falsehoods; galvanize Ukrainians; secure international support. This is done through messages such as: Russia's invasion is a violation of international law; Ukraine is strong and will be successful in repel the aggressors; Ukraine needs help from other democracies.

<sup>183</sup> Morale is a crucial component to war or any such tenuous moments. The destruction of the Trojan ships by the Trojan women set fire to their own ships can be understood as an example of what disagreement and poor morale can lead to.

successes. On the other side he presents Russia as a dangerous foe, many times larger and with a far larger arsenal than Ukraine, which helps persuade the international community that Ukraine desperately needs aid and military supplies. Other topic that complements this balance is that Russia is an evil state, emphasizing how Russia is in the wrong and the international community must respond with sanctions on Russia, and aid to Ukraine. Additionally, he often addresses the idea that Ukraine is a bastion of values that are important to the international community. To the western community in particular these values are those of democracy, freedom, liberty. This last theme serves to posit that the international community must support Ukraine lest they allow these values to be snuffed out and in turn make them vulnerable to further erosion. The arguments that Zelensky uses to make these points are often based on authority, reframing reality, and appealing to common values and opinions.

Frequently at the start of his speeches Zelensky references the length of time since the war began alongside the idea that Russia meant for the war to last only a couple of days or weeks at most. By doing so he makes an argument of authority on the competency of Ukrainians while denigrating Russian military competency. Ukraine's resistance is also exhibited through non-violent efforts, such as in speech 5 "Mariupol" about distribution of humanitarian aid, when Zelensky argues that the will and determination of Ukraine is equal whether in combat or in aid work. Zelensky even turns to the Paralympics in speech 4 "Glory for Ukraine", upholding it as another source of Ukrainian glory and strength, and associating the skills of sports shooting and the battlefield.<sup>184</sup> He associates how the war won't end in days like the Olympic, subsequently uplifting the Ukrainian pathos to the idea that victory in the war is more valuable than gold, silver, or bronze.

As for the Russian military Zelensky frames them as inadequate by bringing up their terrible morale in speech 4 "Glory for Ukraine", which is contrasted by Ukrainian success. He highlights how Ukrainian camps for prisoners of war can't properly sustain the number of Russians surrendering, in turn appealing to Russians to simply desert the war and go home. Zelensky frequently lists the number of Russian losses.<sup>185</sup> This serves

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<sup>184</sup> This could all be very well reminiscent of the attitude of the *Iliad* and *Aeneid* towards sports where in both works the heroes compete for glory and prizes, but there is a grave change where in the classical world these sports were a way to exercise the skills of war but in the modern age they exist as a reason in and of themselves.

<sup>185</sup> "The number of killed Russian servicemen on the territory of Ukraine already exceeds 12 thousand people. 12 thousand! The number of wounded invaders is many times bigger. We did not invite any of them here." (Zelensky, 2022, p.126)

to present the Ukrainian military as a force to be reckoned with. When placed together with his emphasis of the emotional aspect of these losses, he makes an argument to dissuade the Russian rank and file from its participation in the war.<sup>186</sup> But these appeals to the *pathos* of the Russian soldier are complemented by appeals to their family that leverage the emotion of the loss of loved ones to present a need to stop the soldiers from going to war. Zelensky underlines how short the lives of the fallen soldiers are, thereby presenting the Russian soldiers as people that are in danger and must be saved. This is extremely significant to Zelensky's construction of himself as a human being with pity and mercy for the enemy, even if they are capable of atrocious acts.

Zelensky presents the Ukrainians and himself as not enjoying the need for self-defence, understanding the killing as a burden, and thereby attempting to persuade the Russians that Ukraine must, against their own desire, kill those who do not want to be there or even kill those that have loved ones that oppose the war. Zelensky both directly states and indirectly alludes, across his speeches, that Ukraine is not the one to blame for the death of loved ones, since it only cared for peace and now must seek victory, placing the blame on Russia. This is a very important argumentative strategy in Zelensky's rhetoric, as he sustains an idea of Ukraine as a peaceful country under attack, forced to enter in war. The contrast between Russians and Ukrainians is, therefore, evident.

### 3.2 Russia is Evil

Zelensky's very clearly utilizes the dichotomy between good and evil in his rhetoric. With the Russian state framed as evil and Ukraine as good it also effects the perception of the hero; it is true that in a war there are heroes on both sides such as in the *Iliad*, but when it comes to the war between good and evil there are no evil heroes. So, from Zelensky's rhetoric it seems that Ukraine is the country of heroes while the Russia government and its military being evil draws the audience away from the idea that there are Russian heroes, at least among those Russians that support and participate in the invasion.

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<sup>186</sup> This can be taken at face value and said to be an impossible request, but Zelensky is again giving attention to the common person, in this case soldier, essentially saying that their will should be heard. While the ancient heroes never exhibit such an attention to the average individual in their community, even Aeneas leads and takes care of the Trojans as a uniform group with his appeals to individuals not being nearly as frequent proportionally speaking.

An example of Zelensky framing Russia as evil comes in speech 3 “Our heroes” as he describes the first nine days of the war as darkness, and evil, that have been endured by Ukraine.<sup>187</sup> This is a metaphor as he intends to associate this darkness and evil to Russia with, slighting Russia by stating that it is three times longer than expected.<sup>188</sup> In contrast to this darkness stand the Ukrainians whom Zelensky calls warriors of light.

Zelensky calling on these grand principles mythologizes the war as this great battlefield wherein humanity is shaped, or where the constant struggle between good and evil is once more being fought. Taking into account the hero’s principle of the need to fight against evil, in framing Russia as evil it becomes the duty of any hero to fight against it and therefore Ukraine’s duty as a country of heroes is to fight. Ukraine becoming perhaps crusaders that fight for all the values and principles that humans value.

Presenting Russia as a villain is done through arguments of dissociation placing it against those values that Ukraine shares alongside the international community.<sup>189</sup> In speech 4 “Glory for Ukraine” Zelensky claims that Russia changed strategy from one reliant on non-existent collaborators into one of suppression and terror of the representatives of local Ukrainian authorities, such as Ivan Fedorov, mayor of Melitopol, captured and tortured by the Russians. According to Zelensky Russia is a state that has no pity for people in distress and wilfully commits atrocities. He also underlines that Russia does not respect the efforts made by international humanitarian associations and purposefully places them in danger.

Zelensky’s association of Russia with Nazi Germany is multifaceted and very frequent; in speech 1 “Invincibility” he attempts to persuade the Jewish community by direct appeals to the shared principles of resisting Nazism and preserving historical sites such as Babyn Yar and Uman;<sup>190</sup> By bringing up Russia’s attack on Babyn Yar he compares their action to the Nazis, as a second murder of Holocaust victims. Furthermore, in Zelensky’s belief that Russia seeks to erase the Ukrainian people, he frames Ukrainians as being in the same position that the Jewish people were during the Holocaust.<sup>191</sup> In fact,

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<sup>187</sup> This leans on the concept of Good and Evil, Light and Darkness. This is also observed in the Silmarillion with the Dark Lord Morgoth constantly attempting to snuff out light, whether of the Lamps, or the Two Trees or, the Sun and Moon. It is the depiction of a bipolar world.

<sup>188</sup> Alongside his metaphor Zelensky also employs an anaphora by repeating the number nine.

<sup>189</sup> An interesting aspect is that even if Russia were not a powerful foe, the depiction of Russia as evil serves to set them up as a dangerous foe that must be stopped as fast as possible lest innocents suffer.

<sup>190</sup> Babyn Yar is the site of massacres carried out by Nazi Germany during the Second World War in which tens of thousands of Jewish, Ukrainians, Soviet and other peoples were killed.

<sup>191</sup> Following Luthfiyati & Hamidah (2022, 182-185) study of Zelensky’s use of pronouns, in speech 1 “Invincibility” he does so in order to directly target Russia with his accusations.

it could be argued that this argument is aimed not only at victims of the Holocaust but at any victim of genocide, especially when considering Zelensky's use of the expression "never again" which is widespread in its use.

In speech 5 "Mariupol" Zelensky deduces that other holy sites will be attacked, emphasising the absurdity of it by associating these sites with military bases, or NATO bases, in what he understands is the Russian mentality of acting on false reciprocity. Zelensky's framing of the Russian mentality is observed when he accuses Russian propaganda of attempting to disguise their crimes and create distractions through false accusations of Ukraine harbouring biological weapons and preparing chemical attacks. Zelensky frames Russia as hypocrites based on arguments of causality where he states that to know Russia's plans one should look at what Russia accuses others of. Utilizing an anaphora, he emphasizes Russian guilt and points to its victims Moldova and Abkhazia who both suffer from breakaway states held up by Russia. The argument of reciprocity leans on the idea that if Russia threatens Ukraine, then it is Russia that intends to use these chemical weapons.<sup>192</sup> Leaning on the emotional imagery of a chemical attack, Zelensky lists targets that could fall victim to chemical attacks, maternity hospitals, children's hospitals, and churches.<sup>193</sup> This is a strategy to emphasize Russia's cruelty and lack of humanity. By characterising his enemy as devoid of any respect for mankind and as capable of the cruellest acts, Zelensky magnifies Ukraine's resilience and value, with which the international community must sympathise.

### **3.3 Russia Hurts its Citizens and Isolates Itself from the World**

Zelensky deduces that Russia has harmed itself. In speech 4 "Glory for Ukraine" he places the blame solely on the Russian government for what he in a tricolon calls self-closure, self-humiliation, and self-destruction.<sup>194</sup> Russia's self-harm takes shape in more ways than one; in speech 1 "Invincibility", Zelensky brings up the fact that countries that were close to Russia also joined the anti-war coalition, so that Russia has isolated itself from the international community; in speech 4 "Glory for Ukraine", he mentions it

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<sup>192</sup> Before the war Russia conducted a false flag operation accusing Ukraine of planning to bomb buildings.

<sup>193</sup> Zelensky also emphasizes the global knowledge of this fact as well as Russia own knowledge. That if Russia uses chemical attacks knowing that Ukraine has none it will receive severe sanctions.

<sup>194</sup> "Leading international companies are already leaving the Russian market. The Russian government has put its country outside the global world by starting a war against us. By starting this invasion. This is self-closure. Self-humiliation. Self-destruction." (Zelensky, 2022, p.125)

has brought on a great set of costs to the ordinary Russian institutions, and citizens, evoking the emotion of mothers losing their children in a foreign country.<sup>195</sup> This in turn evokes pity for Russian mothers in their loss framing them as victims while also rousing wrath against the Russian government. Alongside this critique he declares that Russia's goal is impossible and that it will result in an international tribunal for the war.<sup>196</sup>

In speech 6 “Ukrainians and the world”, Zelensky appeals to the pathos of the common Russian as if they were part of those he looks out for, by warning and advising on how to avoid repression, presenting himself as an authority, essentially replacing the Russian government in its role of caretaker of the people. The classic heroes analysed in this dissertation are all dedicated to their community, harbouring no desire to help a community outside of their own. The only heroes that care for a community outside of their initial one are the heroes in Tolkien and even then, only some of the heroes, such as Túrin. But in the case of Túrin he protects other communities that are all also dedicated to resisting against Morgoth and his evil, which is not unlike what Zelensky does. Through framing Russia as evil he places the Russian people on the side of good in the fight against good and evil, and therefore the Russian people must also be helped and must also contribute to the victory of the Ukrainians in the war.

He praises those who spoke out against the invasion on the streets in earlier speeches but in speech 6 “Ukrainians and the world” he simply calls on them to tell the truth of the war and to leave Russia if they are able, to avoid giving taxes to the war. In the same speech Zelensky also taps into the emotions of frustration and call on feelings of injustice in the Russian citizens, seeking to invigorate their own resistance against their state by framing it as one that cares more about tricking, controlling, the Russian people by wasting their money on propaganda than actually helping them.

The Russian treatment of its own citizens, alongside its characterisation as a country that has anti-Ukrainian and anti-humanity values, in a way serves as a warning to the world that what is happening to Ukraine can as well happen to any country in the world. And according to Zelensky, this also serves as a reason for why Ukrainians are so resolute.

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<sup>195</sup> The loss of a son is a great emotional pain. We can take a moment to remember how Euryalus's mother is so heartbroken by his death that she ran into the battle and wailed and tore her hair (*Aen.* 9.474-500). On this episode, see Pinheiro, 2012, pp.237-252.

<sup>196</sup> As of March 2023, the International Criminal Court has issued an arrest warrant for Vladimir Putin. (International Criminal Court, 2022).

### 3.4 Balancing Praise & Criticism of the International Community

Much like his treatment of Russia, Zelensky attempts to balance his rhetoric towards the international community, on one side he praises it, in order to acknowledge the support that Ukraine is given and have it continue as well as bring about sanctions on Russia, on the other side he criticises the international community, in order to dissuade inaction and persuade it to help Ukraine.<sup>197</sup>

Zelensky brings up specific countries and foreign leaders such as US President Biden and Poland, to herald how Ukraine is not alone in the world and has countries that seek to protect common values and help lessen Russian violence through sanctions. He also praises the overwhelming support for the UN resolution *ES-11/4*, a resolution that condemned the invasion as well as demanded the full withdrawal of the Russian forces from Ukraine.

The mentions of foreign support serve not only to recognize support in order for more support to occur but also demonstrate to the common Ukrainian that Ukraine has allies and therefore is not fighting an ignoble war helping prove that there might be some path to balancing the scales between Ukrainian strength and Russian strength.

In speech 6 “Ukrainians and the world”, Zelensky’s persuasion occurs with appeals to the common person of the world, he asks of them to show their support from that day forward. To go to the squares, streets with Ukrainian symbols in the name of peace and to support freedom and life and show how much it matters and how much Ukraine matters. Through this he seeks to maintain public consciousness on the war; pressure foreign states and politicians, through their own public, to support Ukraine, Zelensky in fact directly appeals to politicians to support mutual values by framing them as the ones that their own people support; bolster internal Ukrainian morale; and demonstrate a world where support for Ukraine is held by the majority. An example of this is in speech 5 “Mariupol” in which Zelensky brings up the EU discussions on the future of Ukraine. He calls it the final exam for Europe stating that it must pass it and to do so it must accept Ukraine. He does not frame it as a request or as an attempt to persuade the EU, but rather dissuade it from making a mistake. Zelensky argues that Ukraine has

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<sup>197</sup> Out of the chosen speeches is the one that deals with the most communities which shows how in today’s age there is a far more global sense of relationships. While in the *Iliad* we can attest to the different tribes and people taking part in the war, they are all part of a rather small geographic region. Nowadays what is to some just one of many wars in Europe actually stands for a war of precedence that will shape global politics for years to come.

done enough to be welcomed and invited into the EU. He appeals to democratic values, highlighting the sentiment of the common person whom he argues already accept Ukrainian membership to such a degree that the Ukrainians people are already in the European Union. This is intended as pressure towards politicians since Zelensky states that he hopes politicians will adjust to that reality and do so preferably fast. All of these are examples of Zelensky's recurrent use of common values.

This could be understood as Zelensky attempting to draw out recognition of Ukraine and the heroism of its people. Although it is apt to say that a hero can be a hero without recognition, in order to garner support for further heroism as well as be appropriately remembered, there must be some need to draw out this support from their community or in this case from the international community. The community's is freely given to those that share common values, in the case of Western and European values these are Liberty, independence, and the democratically expressed will of the people, all values which Zelensky explores in his speeches.

In speech 1 "Invincibility" he tries to persuade other countries by arguing that they have no reason to remain neutral, instead they should support Ukraine, much like neutral Switzerland. The emphasizes on the epithet neutral leans on the fame of the country's historical policy of neutrality. We can relate this to his saying that that life is defended by unity and Freedom must be armed which implies the need for action. This can be understood as an analogical argument as it uses Switzerland as an example.

Zelensky also raises a set of warnings which serve to deter Russian influence and further align Ukraine with the international community, in speech 6 "Ukrainians and the world" he speaks of the need for a mutual effort to prevent Russia from gaining influence on a member of NATO, EU or G7. With Russia presented as subversive force, in speech he also warns of how this war might lead to the spread of more violence, to the European union this highlights how without Ukraine they will border an expansionistic authoritarian country, a clear issue to Europe's strategic interests.<sup>198</sup> Speech 7 "Glory" is most indicative of this, as Zelensky utilizing an anaphora based on the words against and Europe, emphasizes how the invasion is against more than just Ukraine but Europe and its values.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> "Ukraine is the gateway to Europe for Russian troops. They want to break in. But barbarism must not pass. "(Zelensky, 2022, p.204)

<sup>199</sup> This can be classified as a deductive argument of reciprocity, as Russia fights against these values and will do so again.

In speech 1 “Invincibility” Zelensky deduces that European unity comes from Ukraine because it united the European Union at the level of the ordinary person which he further frames as being the highest level of unity possible. This is a direct appeal to the *pathos* of the ordinary European in which he praises them as responsible for the European Union’s support of Ukraine. Placing the responsibility of European unity on Ukraine, allows Zelensky to further praise and uplift his own constituents through an indirect appeal to their *pathos*.

Zelensky in his framing of Ukraine as the gateway to Europe and protector of mutual values against the Russian evil and with Ukraine being the reason for European Unity seems to present Ukraine as the clear hero of Europe, deserving of its ascension into the union. We can understand Ukraine as the hero that fights for the European community with his criticism towards NATO serving to further raise Ukraine in this role. This can be comprehended as a higher application of the concept of hero where the world or a group of communities can be protected by a single one.

On the topic of criticism, this is mostly levied at countries and organisations that to Zelensky are indecisive and use vague rhetoric or unsatisfactory actions. The use of censure and shame is a strategy reminiscent of classical heroes when they chastise fellow heroes for running away or not fighting hard enough. Much like those heroes Zelensky does so in order to illicit action by part of the target in order to benefit the Ukrainian cause. This frequently causes a deal of irritation by the receiving hero but in the case of Zelensky his target are groups consisting of various countries and therefore this criticism is never directed at any specific country, making it easier to garner support from those that wish to do more.

### **3.5 Ukrainian Effort & Ukrainian Identity**

Zelensky’s presentation of Ukraine and of Ukrainian identity is aimed not only at Ukrainian people but also to the international community, with whom he intends to establish mutual values in order to illicit support.

Ukrainian identity to Zelensky is built on its European identity and the values it shares with the European Union. He distances this identity from the Russian identity by criticising the Russian idea that Ukraine is a part of Russia, framing Russia as a country

that has no understanding or conception of Ukrainian freedom, or the value of freedom as a whole.<sup>200</sup>

On the subject of the divide between the Russian ethnicity in Ukraine and ethnic Ukrainians, Zelensky argues that any such divide has been surpassed, using Kherson as an example of how Ukrainians and Russian Ukrainians in Kherson show pride and respect in their country.<sup>201</sup> It should be noted that Zelensky only alludes to the Russian ethnicity which speaks as much to Zelensky's own opinion that those citizens of Russian ethnicity in Ukraine are Ukrainians as he won't even set them apart.<sup>202</sup> In speech 1 "Invincibility" he highlights how the people in Kherson show their pride despite the difficulty of this decision, aggravated as Russia tries to beat them into submission through the deprivation of basic life necessities.

Zelensky uses the expression "patriotic war" to create an argument of association between the present war and the patriotic wars of the past.<sup>203</sup> The expression digs into nationalist emotions and emphasizes the urgency and significance of the war, as Zelensky makes the war out to be what decides the fate of the Ukrainian identity.<sup>204</sup> Zelensky does not limit himself to ideals or sentiment, as the term carries the notion that the entire country is mobilized across every single facet of society in order to contribute to the war. He proves this by listing the efforts of the military as well as the common citizen, calling the collective effort heroic.<sup>205</sup>

One of Zelensky's most emotionally powerful praises comes from his use of the symbolism of invincibility. The specificity of the invincibility can be understood as Zelensky appealing to the emotional euphoria that arises when something thought unachievable has occurred. In this case it would be the Ukrainian survival against the initial Russian invasion, an aspect that Zelensky repeatedly brings up while emphasizing that its reason stems from the capacity and will of the Ukrainian people. The most blatant example is in speech 4 "Glory for Ukraine" when Zelensky uses the epithet "Strong people of the steel country" to explain why Russia has not captured Ukraine in four days.

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<sup>200</sup> This argument can be classified as an argument of authority.

<sup>201</sup> Russian propaganda has repeatedly insisted on a division within the Ukrainian community between ethnic Ukrainians and Russian Ukrainians a division that served as a smoke screen for the Donbass War and the Crimean annexation.

<sup>202</sup> Kherson being a city with roughly half Ukrainian and half Russian Ukrainian.

<sup>203</sup> This term originated during the French invasion of the Russian Empire by Napoleon. It was used again during the First World War but its use during the Second World War by the Soviet Union is its most famous application.

<sup>204</sup> The sentiment exposed in the previous speech where Zelensky claims that the Russians have an order to erase all of the Ukrainians, is also felt in this speech given that he frames any resistance as salvation.

<sup>205</sup> Another case of an anaphora is present wherein Zelensky states that the invaders free back to Russia.

Other ways that Zelensky tries to embolden the Ukrainian spirit is by reminding them that the world admires Ukraine. In speech 1 “Invincibility”, he emphasizes Hollywood stars and politicians in order to exalt the fact that this class has placed the Ukrainian people above themselves in admiration. If we consider the Ukrainian people as heroes in accordance with Zelensky’s perspective, then we can understand the admiration that they receive from the world as validation of their status as heroes, because they have accomplished heroic deeds that inspire others.<sup>206</sup> Since it would be expected that a hero can’t decide for himself that he is a hero, some kind of external validation is always required.

On the subject of history and the future Zelensky utilizes both in his appeals. Zelensky’s use of the future and the image he creates of it constitutes an achievable goal for Ukraine and its heroes. In speeches 3 “Our heroes” and 6 “Ukrainians and the world” he appeals to the Ukrainian people by empathising with the present struggle as well as framing a desirable future that will come after victory, one where Ukraine will rebuild its many cities and bring justice to those that damaged them when victory is achieved. But he also speaks of legacy and how Ukrainians intend on showing from themselves something that the history of Europe and their own children will know about forever, such as he implies in speech 3. He lists the names of individual cities in a show of rhetorical repetition, emphasising how these cities have survived the worst invasion since the Second World War, elevating the current war as one of great significance. In combining both legacy and the community’s future, Zelensky brings up the two lasting effects of a hero, in fighting for both the community’s future, without which the hero’s legacy could be understood as pointless or even be forgotten, as well as for the lasting legacy of his actions.

Zelensky follows a modern conception of hero that is applied far more broadly to the many individuals fighting for Ukraine against the Russian invasion. It is very unlikely that we can fit Zelensky’s conception of hero exactly to Homer’s or Vergil’s. But the Vergilian hero’s foremost dedication to the community is without a doubt that which has come to most identify the hero of today. Zelensky does herald many individuals as heroes, particularly when he is awarding orders and medals, but his promotion of all Ukrainians as heroes is most indicative of his conception of a collective hero, their efforts being seen

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<sup>206</sup> “Dear Ukrainians! Our heroes! The world has always loved those who fight against evil. It was our resistance, the courage of all our people that inspired the world. Millions of people in different countries.” (Zelensky, 2022, p.141)

in light of the Ukrainian community's welfare and survival. Zelensky utilizes hero at several levels, at the individual level as the hero protecting the community, at the group level where the group protects the community but also at a higher level where a country in and of itself protects a larger community that it is part of, that is, humankind.

In his speeches Zelensky shows himself capable of drawing great use from the concept of hero, not only does he utilize it to bolster and praise his own people, but he also uses it to garner support from the international community. He utilizes the theme of good against evil in order to further the image of his people as fighting heroically against an evil state, but to this he associates the real worth of protecting values which Ukraine and the international community share. From this application of good against evil we can understand that it has uses in the real world when alongside the concept of hero. His use of the words, hero, heroic, and heroism carry meaning in and of themselves, as he has no need to elaborate on his uses, which implies that this concept remains relevant in its application. Zelensky's use of the hero in a more democratized form, in turn makes individual personality difficult, what we are left with is a hero that stands entirely as a symbol of good, without any questions as to whether their flaws hamper their heroic title. Finally, the answer to the question of whether Zelensky himself is a hero or not, depends on whether we utilize his own conception of hero in its more democratized form. Whether he should be declared a hero or not, time will tell.

## **5. Conclusion**

The concept of hero has remained recognizable to this day, even as it exhibits evident changes. The connections analysed between the hero and community, and between the hero and fate and doom, have exposed how these concepts seem to be inseparable from the construction of the hero as such, and, although the conflict between good and evil seems not to be as crucial, conflict itself is.

It seemed important to publicize some of the contents of this dissertation in a podcast in order to reach a wider and less specialized audience. The podcast summarises some of the main themes presented in the dissertation by delving into some excerpts from the selected works and making a small analysis.

[Master of Doom The Hero in the Classical Epics, Tolkien, and Zelensky Podcast 1.wav](#)

Community is an aspect from which no hero can escape. One notable difference between the Homeric heroes and the heroes of Vergil is that of Aeneas, who chooses to

place the community above his desire to self-realise his martial indulgence and achieve a heroic end. Across the various figures analysed we can observe that every hero is intrinsically connected to his community, whether through sheer commitment, such as Aeneas, or through actions that radically define the community, such as Fëanor. Even those heroes that seem to not be connected to a community, such as Achilles, are on the contrary connected to a community as his actions impact his fellow Achaeans and his choice of fate determines his lasting legacy and memory. This relationship explains the practical importance of the hero when looking at Zelensky's speeches which are greatly attentive to the topic of community, whether the internal Ukrainian one or the international one.

The community itself responds to the hero and his actions positively if the hero's actions are favourable, giving praise to the hero along with benefits, a higher standing, and wealth. These serve as a validation of the hero's efforts and can incentivise the hero to continue doing good for the community. At the same time, the community can give more responsibilities to the hero, strengthening itself and perhaps revealing the community's beliefs and preferences, such as when Túrin becomes a close counsellor to the king of Nargothrond because the Elves prefer to follow his way of open battle over secrecy. As the hero rises in prominence, gaining more power over the community and its actions, the consequences of his actions are more dire, as observed when Nargothrond is destroyed after following Túrin's advice.

The community controls actions seen as unfavourable or wrong by imposing shame and taboo. In the Classical Epics retreating heroes and those heroes who are thought of as not fighting hard enough are shamed. In Tolkien Túrin is shamed by Aerin after he endangers the People of Hador by killing Brodda. This relationship between hero and community means that the hero cannot act entirely as he pleases. Although shame is not leveraged by Zelensky towards his own heroes it is very much in play towards the international community and the Russian Armed Forces. Praise is instead used by Zelensky to incentivise the Ukrainian heroes.

Legacy is an aspect often associated with heroes and a lens through which their actions are understood as ways of furthering it. Legacy can be understood as something tied strictly to the individual. This individualism is observed through the Classical Epics and into Tolkien. But the legacy of the community is an aspect just as important or perhaps even more important than the hero's own legacy. This much is apparent in the *Aeneid*, where Aeneas acts not for the sake of the Trojans in the present but also for the

legacy of Rome; this can also be somewhat observed in Túrin's speech in Nargothrond in which he attempts to persuade the community to fight with glory in mind; but it is definitely present in Fëanor's desire to lead his people into Middle-earth; and finally in Zelensky's speeches where the hero is portrayed as fighting and striving for the legacy of the community, to such a degree that their own personal legacy is in service of the community. Regardless of the way history will judge Zelensky he has some traits in common with the classic hero and with Tolkien's heroes; namely in his use of shame to incentivize help for Ukraine; in his persistent attitude as a stalwart leader that does not display weakness or weariness, akin to Aeneas; in his single minded resolve to fight and defeat evil and in his division of the world into a space of good against evil, akin to Tolkien's heroes; in the role of free will and fate in regard to his choice of staying or fleeing Kyiv; and finally in his complete dedication to his community.

When considering the corpus analysed, it is clear that the concept of hero has broadened to include the community itself. The focus of the concept seems to have shifted from the individual to the group he belongs to. This is observable from the Classical Epics to Tolkien and Zelensky: where it was once applied exclusively to individuals in the Classical Epics and Tolkien, in Zelensky's speeches the term is used to refer to groups and even the Ukrainian community itself. A common and very coherent aspect is that the heroes protect the community to which they belong to, even when considering Ukrainians as a group of heroes, in Zelensky's speeches they are portrayed as protecting the European and the international communities. In line with this broader application is the change from martial, high standing, and noble, heroes to heroes of a more common and less martial background, such as humanitarian aid workers or even civilians.

As for the hero as an individual, we observe that each has a unique set of personality traits that define them, such as pride, wrath, and courage. These traits govern their conduct and attitude which change depending on the context, and act as sources of power and success as well as fallibility. With the hero's choices being made based on these elements, these traits in turn profoundly affect the hero and his relationship with fate and free will. The hero's doom is frequently the result of the hero being incapable of surpassing the fallible aspects of his traits that result in negative consequences across many of his deeds. Not all heroes behave consistently throughout their story as many of them have noticeable changes in their demeanour between the beginning of their story and the end, such as Aeneas, who becomes more confident and surer of his duty, and Húrin who goes on to inadvertently help Morgoth destroy Gondolin, and Doriath after

becoming disillusioned and bitter at the death of his family. Therefore, a hero is capable of understanding his fallibility and attempt to better himself to avoid repeating the same mistakes he made in the past, as is the case with Túrin, with his more reserved and stealthy approach to slaying Glaurung. But not always is he capable of surpassing his doom. The question of whether the hero is fully bound to fate or has free will and the ability to change it seems elusive and perhaps impossible to answer. It is clear that many factors outside of the supernatural affect the choices of the hero and at times restrict the options at hand. But it seems that the relation between the hero's free will and his fate is always shrouded with uncertainty, but even then, there always exists some kind of choice, or perhaps the illusion of one, that can change their end and most certainly changes the way we perceive their legacy.

An element present in the corpus is the existence of a foe that actively opposes the hero. The negative portrayal of this foe can stem from the necessity of having a conflict between good and evil, but this foe can also be another hero in a conflict between two different communities. The hero's desire to defeat his foe is frequently rooted in his desire to protect his community but can also be rooted in personal reasons. In the case of the Classical Epics where two heroes are at odds it can lead to situations such as the final conflict between Achilles and Hektor, where the former fights for the personal reason of revenge, and the latter fights for his community. There is also the case of Aeneas and Turnus, in which both fight to protect their community. The foe's power, strength, and skills in comparison to the hero's differ, but there is always some level of imbalance. In the Classical Epics, one hero tends to be favoured by the gods more than another, while in Tolkien, evil seems unstoppable. In the case of Zelensky, the portrayal of Russia varies depending on the rhetorical objectives of the speech, but it is evident that Russia is a more powerful state. This imbalance lends a sense of inevitability since the more powerful side tends to be victorious, and frequently causes greater empathy, or pity for the losing side. This imbalance forces the hero to acknowledge it and find some way to surpass it, although it can overtake the hero's mind or be so disparate that the hero is entirely incapable of resisting.

As for the theme of good vs evil, we have observed that Zelensky uses this divide much like Tolkien, with the hero being situated on the side of good in the fight against evil. Despite how the Ukrainian war is fought between ordinary humans that are as fallible as one another, and not one where beings such as orcs and dragons fight under the banner

of a Dark Lord.<sup>207</sup> It could be expected that Zelensky portrayal of the hero would follow closer to the Classical Epics where neither side can be said to be good or evil and where there exist heroes on both sides and their deaths are sorrowful on either side. Zelensky does differentiate between Russians who are against the war and wish for its end and those who do not, but still, he adheres to a world of where good must resist evil. We could perhaps say that the Classical Epics are a more realistic depiction of heroism, although the Ukrainian war is occurring in real life. The analysis of the topic of good vs evil allows us to affirm that it is not a theme that should be limited to fiction and fantasy, but that it has actual relevance in the rhetoric of a real war and is therefore a suitable method through which to understand and portray the hero figure.

The concept of hero has remained relevant to this day and its components are as recognizable today as they were millennia ago, even as heroic ideals shift from community to community and through time. The significance and weight of the term hero is so well known in today's world that in Zelensky's use of the term, he does not need to elaborate on its meaning and the intention behind his use is plainly clear.

From these conclusions we should consider that for a cultural institution to appropriately portray a hero it must take into account all of the aspects that affect the hero and present them without reservation. To be in support of the idea that heroes need not be perfect in order to be considered heroes does not in turn signify encouragement that heroes are above reproach or criticism. It is through appropriate understanding and evaluation of the hero that criticism becomes better developed and adequate in its application. To criticise Achilles, Turnus, Aeneas, Fëanor one must respectively understand: the relationship between a king and the rules of his community, as well as the hero's commitment to his companions; the inevitability of fate; the conflicting beliefs of heroic ideals, and honour to different groups; the role of choice in a hero's legacy and the opacity of mistrust. Much more could be said for the other figures analysed in this dissertation. Nevertheless, the attitude towards a hero should not disparage his significance, but rather clearly hold up that which is heroic in them while permitting to understand why there are points of contention. It is impossible to separate the actions of a hero that have positive consequences from those that have negative ones since all of them come from the same source of personality traits, responsibilities, and heritage. Besides the need for rigorous and ethical standards in the portrayal of heroes, we must

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<sup>207</sup> It should be said that humans fight other humans in Tolkien's works, but some are certifiably evil because they fight for the Dark Lord Morgoth.

also consider the more emotional aspect of heroes. Heroes continue to motivate and inspire us, even if or especially because they are not infallible or perfect characters. In their hesitations and wrong choices, they constitute a mirror of humanness.

Even then there must be a clear understanding as for the importance of what we could consider unattractive aspects of past heroes and past times. As Tolkien (1939, pp.41-49) states many of these aspects could just as well be unattractive to certain periods of preservers or writers that still chose to keep these aspects. The reason for this is because they instinctively or consciously felt its literary significance and the effect of these elements is not harmful but are a part of what Tolkien calls the unanalysable effect. Although Tolkien speaks on fairy stories his outlook on period texts can be very well applied to the epics which allow someone to step into another time. Even as those same wars take place again and again in our world.

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