GEORGIA REGENTS UNIVERSITY AUGUSTA HONORS PROGRAM
THESIS ACCEPTANCE FORM

Completion of this form indicates that the thesis writer has successfully completed his or her Honors thesis. This form must be completed and submitted before the thesis writer can receive credit for HONR 4000XX.

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Donald Jacob Baggett
Titled The Defamiliarization of Reality: Redefining Fantasy through a Stationary & Expansionary Model
Complies with and meets the standards of the Georgia Regents University Augusta Honors Program.

Signed by the Thesis Panel:

[Signatures and dates]

Approved by:

[Signatures and dates]
GEORGIA REGENTS UNIVERSITY AUGUSTA

HONORS THESIS

"The Defamiliarization of Reality: Redefining Fantasy through a Stationary and Expansionary Model"

Submitted by:

Jacob Baggett

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Christina Heckman

Major Field: English and Foreign Languages

Semester of Completion: Spring 2015

Honors Program Director Approval
Abstract

J.R.R Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* set the standard for what is now called fantasy literature in an essay entitled “On Fairy Stories.” Tolkien defines fantasy as occurring entirely in a separate “secondary world”. Contemporary fantasy, however, has evolved beyond the scope of Tolkien’s theory by including stories in which the secondary world and the primary world, the world in which we live, are more thoroughly connected. This occurs through a sense of defamiliarization: readers live in the primary world, but as the plot unfolds, they realize that a secondary fantasy world is all around them, previously unfamiliar and unseen. This thesis articulates a new theory of Stationary and Expansionary Fantasy, providing a more inclusive definition of fantasy and integrating the defamiliarization that has become integral to contemporary fantasy. I compare two traditional examples of fantasy, Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* and Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*, as well as one contemporary example, Susan Cooper’s *The Dark is Rising*, in order to test the theory and demonstrate its operation in fantasy literature.

The Defamiliarization of Reality: Redefining Fantasy through a Stationary and Expansionary Model

Introduction

While fantasy literature has existed for centuries, the genre has only very recently been discussed and theorized under the name of Fantasy. J.R.R Tolkien first discussed a theory of fantasy in 1939 in a lecture later published as “On Fairy Stories.” Recent authors, however, have diverged from Tolkien’s theory of fantasy in an attempt to redefine the genre. Traditionally, fantasy occurred in a separate world to which readers escape and at which they marvel. More
often, however, contemporary fantasy is often set in the readers’ own world, but it is a world in which everyday existence is made unfamiliar and created anew\(^1\). For example, J.K. Rowling defamiliarizes the ordinary world, or the “Muggle” world, in her *Harry Potter* series. Readers enter into what is seemingly our world, but we discover that Rowling’s world is not the world familiar to us. In her world, wizards are the dominant race, but they live mostly outside of human perception. Muggles, Rowling’s term for non-magical humans, lack the ability to perceive magic and are thus kept in the dark, barring a select few. Wizards even discriminate against Muggles, and yet the reader never questions the validity of the world. The readers view themselves as wizards and witches because Rowling creates a more desirable, appealing world within our own rather than completely separating from it. While ordinary humans are incapable of entering into the magical world, there is still a sense that the magical world and our human world are one in the same; the human world is simply different from what we imagined, full of magical possibilities that we never noticed before. Through defamiliarization Rowling generates a world much like our own, but the reader comes to realize that despite similarities it is not in fact our world. Readers then desire and long for the new world because it is altogether different from our own. They delight in pretending to be members of another world and for a time forget the troubles of their own world.

Such familiarization transforms our understanding of the world, but we must ask ourselves how defamiliarizaton affects fantasy. According to traditional definitions of fantasy, like Tolkien’s, Rowling’s fantasy world might not be considered fantasy, but contemporary definitions allow for the art of defamiliarization, which transforms our own world into a fantasy world, replacing our own experience and forcing us to contemplate it with a fresh perspective,

---

\(^1\) Our world is the world of perception in which we exist—its ‘reality’ can be related.
one of humility and wonder. Contemporary fantasy has developed this new definition of fantasy, but the only established theories of fantasy rely upon a more traditional model. I seek to create a new model that emphasizes the power of defamiliarization and incorporates two types of fantasy, Stationary and Expansionary. This model defines fantasy more broadly by acknowledging the legitimate place of contemporary fantasy.

**Tolkienian Theory**

Fantasy authors, by definition, create a world separate from the laws of our universe. However, bookstores and publishing agencies struggle to define the difference between science fiction and fantasy. Science fiction is usually set in our universe, or some area of it, and fantasy is usually connected to a world outside of our own. This difference seems obvious, but fantasy often eludes our attempts to classify it, because no clear-cut theory of fantasy is generally accepted. J.R.R Tolkien, author of *The Lord of the Rings*, proposed a theory of fantasy, but his theory poses a host of problems for a sub-classification of contemporary fantasy novels. Namely, his theory seems to support the classification of “High Fantasy”, a story set entirely inside a fantasy world, while excluding “Low Fantasy”, or fantasy with direct references to places in our world, which Tolkien calls the “primary world”. This is because Tolkien views any direct reference to our world as self-referential and potentially egotistical fiction rather than fantasy. He would prefer that fantasy remain pure or ideal in a neo-platonic sense.

While Tolkien never explicitly states his ideas as a theory, his essay, “On Fairy Stories” (“OFS”) defines what has become accepted as the definitive theory of fantasy. Understanding the purpose of “OFS” clarifies some of the common misconceptions about Tolkien’s theory. For
Tolkien there is no distinction between High and Low Fantasy: there is fantasy and then there is fiction with fantastical elements.

Tolkien’s theory describes a fantasy that is entirely established in a secondary world, or what others have come to call “High Fantasy”. Tolkien believes references to the primary world, the world in which the reader lives, disrupt the fantasy. In his essay, “On Fairy Stories”, Tolkien proposes a theory of fantasy with four basic tenets. These include: (1) Fantasy is defined by the world itself, not its characters; (2) fantasy may include elements from any narrative so long as it concerns the secondary world; (3) a fantasy draws the reader out of the primary world and immerses the reader in the secondary world; and (4) magic can never be used to justify occurrences within the secondary world. These four tenets are foundational elements of Tolkien’s theory.

The first tenet establishes that a fantasy must be about “the Perilous Realm itself” and not “depend on any definition or historical account of elf or fairy” (“OFS” 38). Tolkien desires that a fantasy be world-driven rather than character-driven. The plot can be about the characters, but the fantasy needs to be driven by the power of the world and not by the nature of the characters inhabiting it. Therefore, Tolkien’s second tenet emphasizes the idea that fantasy writing can concern any topic or genre so long as it concerns the secondary world. Tolkien claims that a fantasy “…touches on or uses Faerie, whatever its own main purpose may be: satire, adventure, morality, fantasy” (“OFS” 39), as long as it remains about the secondary world. The term “Faerie” can be used to describe the citizens of a fantasy, often referred to as the Fae, or it can be used to describe the fantasy world itself, the citizens of which are humans, elves, dwarves, goblins, orcs, hobbits, etc.
Tolkien’s third tenet is that fantasy must be believable and possess the ability to draw the reader into the secondary world and out of the primary world, separating the reader from reality and offering “recovery”, “escape”, and “consolation” ("OFS" 75) to the reader through a believable fantasy. Fantasy allows the reader to recover from the primary world by escaping into a secondary world and viewing the events of that world through a fresh lens, as a silent observer. Fantasy also gives the reader a sense of consolation. Tolkien describes this as a “Eucatastrophe” or a “good catastrophe” where the story concludes happily with an open ending (“OFS” 85), allowing the reader to draw his/her own conclusion on how the story ends. Tolkien indicates this when he refers to “The consolation of fairy-stories, the joy of the happy ending: or more correctly of the good catastrophe, the sudden joyous ‘turn’ (for there is no true end to any fairy-tale)” (“OFS” 85-86). An example of a sudden “happy turn” can be found in Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*. Shortly after the destruction of the Ring, Frodo and the other Hobbits are praised during the coronation ceremony for their involvement in the quest. However, when they return home they are treated as both leaders and outcasts. They are Hobbits who left the Shire for adventure, and do not necessarily fit in with the other Hobbits. The adventurers experienced the horrors of the world first hand whereas other Hobbits only know of these horrors from stories. This separation is more pronounced for Frodo, because he bore the weight of the Ring longer than most and it affected him more than others. There is a happy ending, the destruction of Sauron, but Tolkien leaves the story open through his portrayal of the Hobbits’ reaction to Frodo and his friends, asking the reader to question whether the story is truly at an end.

According to Tolkien, belief is essential in fantasy. Tolkien discusses the idea of literary belief in a section in “On Fairy Stories” on children and their connection to fairy-stories or fantasies. Literary belief serves as the foundation for Tolkien’s belief in “escape”, “recovery”,
and “consolation”, which requires that the reader willingly suspend all disbelief. Tolkien says, “Children are capable, of course, of literary belief...That state of mind has been called the ‘willing state of disbelief.’ But this does not seem to me a good description of what happens. What really happens is that the story-maker becomes a successful ‘sub-creator’. He makes a Secondary World which your mind can enter” (“OFS” 60). The fantasy reader enters a state of belief as he/she reads the fantasy. If disbelief occurs then the story ceases to be fantasy. But how does one construct believability in a story about another world? Readers enter knowing that the story contains falsehoods and fantasies; they know that they will encounter creations of fancy and myth that cannot possibly exist in our world. This is where the power of an author’s language allows the reader to believe. Think of the fantasy as a story written in another language. The author is the translator, and he writes the story so that we as humans can understand it. He has to use objects of our world to describe everything new and strange. The secondary world has to be believable enough for primary world subjects to understand it. The grass can be pale blue, but there has to be a reason for its strange coloration. Perhaps the author offers some scientific reason for this occurrence, but as a translator, he has to use our language to do so. If the author uses our primary world language to allow us to enter the story, then it is easier for us to accept and fully enter the secondary world. Tolkien believes that the author serves as a “sub-creator” (“OFS” 49). Tolkien believes authors “sub-create” because they themselves were created and want to exemplify the creator. Tolkien claims, “[The fantasy author] makes a Secondary World which your mind can enter. Inside of it, what [the author] relates is ‘true’...You therefore believe it...The moment disbelief arises, the spell is broken...You are then out in the Primary World again...” (“OFS” 60,). A sub-creator creates a new world independent from the “primary world” in which we live; the “secondary world” can resemble the primary, but it can never be the same.
The final requirement for Tolkien’s theory of fantasy is that magic cannot be used as a tool of justification. Anything can be possible in a fantasy, but magic can never be the reason for the occurrence. Tolkien rejects magic as “reserved for the operations of the Magician” (“OFS” 73), preferring enchantment, or “Art…the human process that produces…Secondary Belief. Art of the same sort, if more skilled and effortless, the elves can use…but the more potent and specially elvish craft I will, for lack of a less debatable word, call Enchantment” (“OFS” 73). Magic concerns the tricks and traps magicians use to entertain while “enchantment” possesses true power. For example, Hobbits possess the ability to move unseen by all except the most alert. This is a natural ability that all Hobbits possess, but it is not an example of enchantment because it is an ancestral trait. However, Galadriel bestows cloaks upon the party that allow them to go unseen. This is a manifestation of enchantment bestowed upon the cloaks rather than an inherent representation of enchantment in a person. Enchantment concerns more of a craft than a magic. Tolkien refers to it as an “Art” that is crafted and perfected (“OFS” 73).

**Todorovian Theory**

While Tolkien relies upon a neo-platonic consideration of fantasy, other scholars desire to discuss fantasy from other viewpoints. Tzveten Todorov articulates a Freudian and Structuralist perspective on fantasy in his book, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*. Todorov claims that, “psychoanalysis has replaced (and thereby has made useless) the literature of the fantastic” (160), viewing the fantasy as a psychological byproduct of the human imagination or a distortion of reality. Greg Bechtel states, “Todorov’s work…is deeply rooted in Freudian psychoanalysis, and this reliance manifests most explicitly in his exploration of fantasy themes,” (143). In contrast to Tolkien, Todorov seeks to define fantasy
based on the primary world. Todorov claims that, “In a world which is indeed our world…there occurs an event which cannot be explained by the laws of this same familiar world. The person who experiences the event must opt for one of two possible solutions: either he is the victim of an illusion of the senses, of a product of the imagination…or else the event has indeed taken place…” (25). However, he develops his definition assuming that the fantasy is an illusion of reality. Todorov believes the illusion is a psychological byproduct of the human imagination, while Tolkien celebrates fantasy as its own form of reality, essentially negating the Todorovian perspective. Bechtel writes, “On the surface, the reason for the Todorovian critics’ dismissal of Tolkien seems self-evident: Tolkien doesn’t fit the Todorovian definition of ‘fantasy’…” (146).

The Todorovian approach seeks to define reality by proving the fantasy as byproducts of that reality, whereas Tolkien argues that the fantasy creates its own reality.

Todorov’s theory of fantasy explains fantasy away as the workings of the subconscious. His theory attempts to discredit the fantasy from the very beginning, creating disbelief in the fantasy simply because he believes it is a figment of the imagination. The defamiliarization aspect of fantasy allows the reader to believe our world is in fact the fantasy world. The willing suspension of disbelief allows us to firmly place ourselves amongst the fantasy and we want to believe it—we wish it were real. Todorov seeks to do the opposite and establishes the idea that the defamiliarization causes the reader to believe the fantasy is a delusion of reality.

While Tolkien’s theory and Todorov’s theory of fantasy are the most notable, other scholars do explore the themes of the fantastic in both genre and narrative form. For example, Benjamin Saxton explores Tolkien’s discussion of sub-creation, or that authors create because they were themselves created: “In part because he is regarded as a fantasist,…far removed from the realm of literary theory, and also because Tolkien has been described (and self-described) as
a writer who consciously eschewed modern literary conventions, there have been few attempts to situate Tolkien’s understanding of ‘sub-creation’ in relation to contemporary theories of authorship,” (47). Saxton argues for a Tolkienian perspective on existing theories of authorship based on Tolkien’s ideas of “sub-creation.” For example, Tolkien demonstrates this in his mythology when Aulë chooses to create the dwarves because he wanted to imitate his creator (“Quenta Silmarrilion” 31-32). Aulë in Tolkien’s mythology is a master craftsman and minor deity who creates the dwarves as his own creation. Sub-creation argues that authors use the inspiration of being created in order to make their own creations.

Some scholars choose to focus on the inclusion of fantasy in other forms, such as Robert J. Cardullo’s commentary on fantasy in film. He writes that, “[Todrovian theory] was not a matter of taking off the imaginary ideological mask and unveiling the truth. On the contrary, fantasy has a truth of its own that one has to deal with: the way in which it responds to the void of our intimate desires through its own inconsistencies” (38). Todorov and his followers aim to strip fantasy down in order to uncover the reality behind the ‘illogical’ aspects of fantasy. In contrast, Tolkien discusses fantasy as a soup (“OFS” 47). The soup has many layers and parts to it, and one cannot consider any one ingredient to be more important than the other. Our human emotions and experiences with the fantasy may be a part of the soup, but they are not the most important ingredient. The author concocts the soup, but readers help to fill it with their desires. Readers are likely to overlook consistencies because the soup satisfies them in ways that reality cannot.

While Tolkien’s and Todorov’s theories fare well when applied to literature that fits their theories, when applied outside those lenses the theories eliminate many contemporary fantasies from the genre. This is the main reason to generate a new theory of fantasy that applies more
accurately to both traditional and contemporary fantasy. My intent here is to discuss
defamiliarization and its uses in the Stationary and Expansionary Theory of Fantasy, after which
I will explore my theory of fantasy in two traditional examples, Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*
and Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*, and one contemporary example, Susan Cooper’s *The Dark is Rising.*

**Stationary Fantasy**

Fantasy that remains constant and stable within the plane of a secondary realm is thus
called Stationary Fantasy because it lacks an expansionary element. Stationary Fantasy follows
many of the rules and tenets that Tolkien’s theory establishes. A Stationary Fantasy must have a
secondary world-driven focus and must always concern the Faerie. The secondary world must
always be believable so that there is no moment of disconnect. And magic must be self-contained
and function via the laws of the world in which it is used.

Stationary Fantasy relies upon Tolkien’s traditional model of fantasy. Stationary Fantasy
defamiliarizes the reader as it removes him/her from the familiarity of the primary world and
places him/her in the secondary world. The reader does not at any point in time believe that the
secondary world is our world, and defamiliarization is immediately apparent, accepted, and
indeed desirable.

In that Stationary Fantasy humans may be a part of the fantasy, but they cannot be the
focus. If one wants to read about the experiences of humans then one can find plenty of primary
world stories that discuss these experiences. The fantasy should rather focus on the experiences
of another world. Whatever connection humans have to these experiences is up to the author, but
the fantasy itself must concern the experiences of the secondary world and its inhabitants. *The*
Lord of the Rings for example, follows a Hobbit’s arduous journey to destroy the One Ring. Readers enjoy experiencing the world from the perspective of a secondary other. If The Lord of the Rings had followed a man then the story might have been less interesting and a man could not have done what Frodo accomplished. Stationary Fantasy offers a new and interesting perspective, allowing the reader to experience the secondary world through the eyes of one of its inhabitants.

**Expansionary Fantasy**

In contrast to Stationary Fantasy, with its completely separate secondary world, Expansionary Fantasy begins in the primary world, but the reader comes to realize through defamiliarization that the primary world actually is an unfamiliar and desirable secondary world. Expansionary Fantasy, unlike Stationary Fantasy, does not rely upon the separation of the worlds, but rather explores the identity of our world as the secondary world. In Harry Potter, for example, places from our world are referenced, but when the characters visit these places they do not feel wholly the same. Harry travels to London to purchase his school materials, and in the center of London exists a magical community only wizards and witches can access. The reader begins to question whether Rowling’s London is in fact the London we know. Another example is in Cassandra Clare’s The Mortal Instruments, in which New York City is transformed into the secondary world. The main character, Clary, sees the primary world as it appears to be until she becomes aware of the secondary world around her. Slowly her world transforms until sees the secondary world everywhere she goes. In this example, the secondary world is hidden from the primary, but once you become aware of it then you realize it exists all around you. The effect of
this is profoundly humbling, requiring a further mental questioning of one’s perspective and acknowledging the intimate desire for a secondary reality.

In contemporary fantasy, some Expansionary Fantasies rely upon the defined secondary world of Stationary Fantasy, allowing Expansionary Fantasy to be split into two subgroups, Divergent and Emergent. Divergent Expansionary Fantasy begins in the primary world, and transitions into a separate secondary world reminiscent of traditional fantasy. Emergent Expansionary Fantasy begins in the primary world and the secondary world emerges around the reader slowly, absorbing the primary world in order to reveal the hidden secondary world that hid beneath.

Divergent Expansionary Fantasy establishes a primary and secondary world structure in which the characters from the primary often cross over into the secondary world or vice-versa. In this case, the two worlds must remain separate, with a definite border. For the story to remain a fantasy and not a fiction, reality and fantasy must be kept distinct with a clear transition point in which the plot emerges into the secondary world. For example, let us pretend that sisters Anna and Claire find a magical portal to a world of pixies, creatures similar to fairies, but generally portrayed as particularly impish in nature. However, in the story the sisters continually cross back and forth between the human world and the pixie world. This cannot be a fantasy because the story relies too heavily on the primary world. A better example can be found in J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter*. The characters occasionally cross between the magic and Muggle world, Rowling’s term for the human world, but the time they spend in the human world serves as a crossroads. Typically, this occurs when Harry lives with his Aunt and Uncle while he waits to return to Hogwarts. His time in the Muggle world is spent waiting to return to the magical world, and he always returns to the Muggle world reluctantly. Just as Tolkien’s ideal fantasy
allows the reader to escape the primary world, Expansionary Fantasy allows the reader to do the same while first establishing a primary world link that allows the reader to more readily enter into the story.

Expansionary Fantasy as a whole has less rigidity than Stationary Fantasy because it is not wholly reliant upon the separation of worlds. Divergent Expansionary Fantasy must always include a border between the two worlds. The secondary world cannot merely include fantasy creatures; these races must play a significant role in their own universe, and not simply be tools to create a ‘fantastic’ feel. The two, or more, worlds must have a clearly defined gateway that allows for travel between them. The majority of the action must always take place in the secondary world, because too much action in the primary world creates a fiction rather than a fantasy. And a story cannot revolve around the experiences of humans. Humans may certainly be involved, but a fantasy must at some level be about the experiences of the other rather than the familiar self.

In Expansionary Fantasy, the primary world and the secondary world can be featured in the same fantasy story as long as the two remain separate, and as long as the point of convergence is clearly defined as well. Lewis utilizes a gate in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, while Rowling’s *Harry Potter* uses a train, though Rowling offers other methods of magical transportation into the magical world such as the entrance through the Leaky Cauldron or Apparation, the ability of a mature wizard to instantly appear in another place. The majority of the story’s action must take place in the secondary world, or the story will be fiction and not fantasy. The primary world should be used as a beginning or an end, a mechanism that allows the characters to enter, or leave, the secondary world. If the story ends in the primary world, there must be some hint that the story may not be over or that the characters are still tied to the
secondary world. If I write a story about goblins and elves who live in the shed behind my house, does this make my story a fantasy? No, because including fantastical creatures does not make a story a fantasy. However, if the shed is a gateway to a realm where goblins and elves are at war, then this would be a fantasy because the two worlds are separate but connected via a gate of some sort. In this example, the gateway is a magical portal to a land where elves and goblins exist separate from our world. A gate connects the two, but the borders of the two worlds are defined and tangible. In another example, C.S. Lewis writes in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* that the Pevensie children enter through a wardrobe into the magical land of Narnia. This example reinforces the idea of a gate that works some of the time but not at others; Lucy Pevensie is able to enter the world, but when she returns her siblings cannot get the gate to open, causing them to believe she is playing make-believe. Tolkien’s theory does not consider Lewis’s novel a fantasy because it connects to the primary world; Lewis’s story begins and ends in our world. Another example is Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series. Harry lives in our world until he takes the train to Hogwarts where he receives his magical training. However, the train is not the only gateway. Entrances into the magical world are often obscured from the sight of Muggles who often ignore these places, or cannot see them at all. For example, the wizard hospital, St. Mungo’s Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries, is believed by Muggles to be an out-of-business store, generally ignored by anyone who lacks magic. Both of these stories are commonly considered fantasies, but Tolkien’s theory claims that they are not, whereas my theory includes them as Expansionary Fantasy because of their ability to expand the primary world into a fantastical secondary world through clearly defined gateways.

Emergent Expansionary Fantasy relies upon many of the same tenets as Divergent Expansionary Fantasy, albeit in different ways. The emergent model often does have a border
between the two worlds, but this border is more loosely defined. The two worlds often coexist closely enough that one overlooks the other. The border in this model often exists in that humans are unaware of their secondary neighbors. The gateway between these worlds in this example is then the acceptance of the human into the fantastic. Once humans are brought into the fold they then become aware of the secondary world. The more humans grow to accept this world then the more it manifests around them. In a sense, as humans come to realize the secondary world exists, they begin to spend less time in the primary world and more time in the secondary. For example, in Clare’s story Clary spends less time in her human New York when she discovers the secondary New York. However, as the secondary world absorbs the primary world, the primary world itself is defamiliarized for the reader. Essentially, the more the reader is introduced to the secondary world of New York the more the reader comes to believe that this fantastic New York is not in fact the New York of the primary world. In the Emergent model, the majority of the action still takes place in the secondary sectors of the world. And the story concerns humans, but especially the experiences they face in the secondary world. The story is this case focuses on the human’s interactions with the secondary world and how it changes them. As primary readers, we follow this familiar human figure though an unfamiliar world and experience the fantasy for ourselves.

If an Expansionary Fantasy relies upon a defined place that is separate from the primary world, then it would fit the Divergent model. If the fantasy relies less upon a defined place and instead blends the worlds together, then it would align with the Emergent model. Both explore similar themes, but each employs defamiliarization differently. Divergent Expansionary Fantasy relies upon defamiliarization in the same way as Stationary in that it seeks to directly place the
reader in unfamiliar surroundings. In that the Emergent model, in contrast, the primary world slowly becomes defamiliarized for the reader through contact with the fantastic.

**Stationary Fantasy and Tolkien**

Tolkien’s theory of fantasy, which I define as Stationary Fantasy, focuses exclusively on a secondary world and includes the following main points: (1) A fantasy must have a world centered focus, (2) a fantasy must concern the Faerie, (3) a fantasy must be believable, (4) and magic cannot be a means of justification for the workings of the world. For Tolkien, the integrity of the world is paramount.

While one might describe the story Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* as Frodo Baggins’ journey to destroy the One Ring, this is actually a lone character’s role in a larger story: the story of Middle-Earth. Tolkien’s world concerns much more than the adventures of a Hobbit, a creature of small stature, providing for the secondary-world-centered focus. Tolkien chooses to rely upon the events of the world to push his story along, and the characters fall into place where they are needed. The characters, like Frodo, are well suited for their roles, but the story could have happened had another carried the One Ring. Frodo is suited to carry the One Ring, but another equally pure and humble character could have carried the ring and completed the quest.

Tolkien crafts an intricately designed world in which his characters adventure. The contents of *The Lord of the Rings* often refers to events of Middle Earth’s past, an entire history Tolkien has discovered. Tolkien encountered difficulty in publishing *The Lord of the Rings*, as mentioned in the “Preface to the Second Edition” of *The Silmarillion* (xiii), in part due to its length and also in part due to its content. Many of the events preceding *The Lord of the Rings*...
were later published with the help Tolkien’s son Christopher Tolkien. *The Lord of the Rings* makes perfect sense without the lore provided by *The Silmarillion*, but Tolkien’s lore helps demonstrate the extent to which Middle Earth and its historical ages are the focal point of Tolkien’s fantasy. *The Lord of the Rings* is a single story that takes place in an established world. Frodo’s story is a smaller piece of a larger and ongoing puzzle.

In the first section of *The Silmarillion*, “Ainulindalë”, Tolkien offers the story behind the creation of Middle-Earth and its peoples. The god Eru, “The One” (Noel 141), known more commonly as Ilúvatar, creates the Ainur, “The Holy Ones” (107), from his thoughts and teaches them music; and eventually, Ilúvatar called the Ainur together and with them sang the world into existence (*The Silmarillion* 13, hereafter *Sil*)³. In *Quenta Silmarillion*, Tolkien explains the reality of the powers of Sauron the dark lord, a Maia and descendent of the Valar, fourteen of the Ainur who desired to live in the new world and entered it as lords and queens.⁴ The Maiar were created to serve the Valar and help them watch over the world. Melkor, Sauron’s master and the first Dark Lord, was the strongest of the Ainur, as he received the most knowledge from Ilúvatar. Melkor was eventually defeated and cast into the void, a region of non-existence that existed before all creation. Melkor is often referred to as Morgoth, “The Black Enemy” (Noel 172), because his name was forfeited when he betrayed Ilúvatar’s vision (18). However, before Sauron served Melkor he was the Maia of Aulë⁵, the lord “…over all substances of which Arda is made…” and “…a smith and master of all crafts…” (15). Aulë’s mentoring gave Sauron the skill to craft the One Ring. Another of Sauron’s abilities is the power to assume any form he wishes, which allowed him to deceive many of the Valar and Maiar because to them he appeared “noble

---

³Ainur and Ilúvatar: Appendix B
⁴Valar: Appendix B
⁵Aulë: Appendix B
and beautiful” (295). Tolkien has created/discovered a world entirely separate from our own. It relies upon its own laws and mythos making it a Stationary Fantasy according to my model and contemporary fantasy.

Tolkien’s story is Middle-Earth-centered because of his expansive lore: as “Ainulindalë shows, *The Lord of the Rings* exists inside of a much larger story that has occurred over several ages. The story of the One Ring is but a small piece of history, though an important piece as it signals the end of the age of the Elves and the beginning of the age of Men. Frodo’s quest helps to shape the story, but it ultimately remains tied to the events of the world. Melkor was defeated and cast into the void, but Sauron was spared because he in some manner repented. Tolkien suggests that this repentance was real, if only inspired by fear, because had Sauron not expressed some degree of remorse, he would have likely received the same fate as Melkor, subject to punishment had he not escaped to Middle-Earth and hid himself there (295). *The Lord of the Rings* comes about because of Melkor’s corruption of Sauron. The story does not end with his destruction nor does it end with Frodo’s journey to the west. The story of Middle-Earth continues without these two characters or any other character. The larger tale concerns the fate of the world, not the designs of the individual.

The second tenet of Tolkien’s theory claims that the fantasy must concern the faerie, or the peoples of Middle Earth in this case. The story need not concern all of them, but it must concern the matters of another world’s people rather than our own. *The Lord of the Rings* therefore concerns the adventures of a Hobbit. Young Frodo Baggins is encouraged by the wizard Gandalf the Grey, a Maia, to carry the One Ring to the Council of Elrond, the meeting to determine the fate of the One Ring. Dwarves and men are invited to the council by Elrond and Gandalf because the fate of the three races would be tied to the destruction of the One Ring, into
which Sauron poured his power and to which he tied his existence. In order to truly defeat Sauron, the races of Middle-Earth need to destroy the One Ring. No one people dominates the story of Middle Earth. The story has Men in it, but neither they nor the Dwarves are the focus of the story. *The Lord of the Rings* takes place during the age of the Elves, the firstborn of the races of Middle-Earth and guardians of three of the Rings of Power, and therefore the most powerful. The story ends with the end of the age of the Elves, because the destruction of the One Ring brings about the beginning of the age of Men. Tolkien’s theory claims that the story must concern the faerie, and Tolkien’s story noticeably ends with the Elves leaving Middle-Earth to journey to the west. This is seen when Gandalf says, “This is your realm, and the heart of the greater realm that shall be. The Third Age of the world is ended, and the new age begins; and it is your task to order its beginning and to preserve what may be preserved…For the time comes of the Dominion of Men, and the Elder Kindred shall fade or depart” (*The Lord of the Rings* 971, hereafter *LOTR*). The age of the Elves, known as the Third Age, concerned the enemies of the Dark Lord and with the end of his reign so came the end of the Third Age, giving way to the Fourth Age would then concern the lives of Men.

The story does not continue after *The Lord of the Rings* because this Fourth Age concerns the triumphs and trials of Men. During the Third Age, Men played only smaller roles in Sauron’s destruction and the Elves were considered Sauron’s true enemy, since he desired to rule over them. Tolkien indicates this when he writes, “Men [Sauron] found the easiest to sway of all the peoples of the Earth; but long he sought to persuade the Elves to his service, for he knew that the Firstborn had the greater power;” (*Síl* 297). The Elves lived with and knew of the Valar and the Maiar. They were created first and knew the most of Ilúvatar’s children. Men know much less than the Valar, Maiar, and the Elves. For example, Gandalf is a Maia, but men only know him as
a wizard. They may suspect that he is something more, but they only know him as a member of the Wise, a wizard who travels Middle-Earth and cares for its peoples. _Lord of the Rings_ ends with then Third Age, the age of the Elves, because if it continued with Fourth Age, the age of men, it would have primarily concerned the story of men and not the story of the Fae, violating Tolkien’s second tenet.

Tolkien’s third tenet is that the fantasy must be believable, because, for Tolkien, if the fantasy is not believable then it cannot be true. This is the hardest tenet to describe because believability depends on the reader. However, as long as the core of the story is plausible then the fantasy itself is believable. The core of Tolkien’s story centers on the power and destruction of the One Ring. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss the One Ring and the plausibility behind its powers.

In Tolkien’s lore, Sauron, a servant of Aulë the smith, had the knowledge necessary to create the One Ring, or the Ruling Ring. The Elves crafted many rings, but many of these creations were influenced by Sauron, as Tolkien writes, “But Sauron guided their labours, and he was aware of all that they did; for his desire was to set a bond upon the Elves and to bring them under his vigilance” (Sil 297). Only three rings were made that Sauron had no hand in, but could still control with his One Ring. These were the “Rings of Fire, and of Water, and of Air, set with ruby and adamant and sapphire” created by Celebrimbor, an Elf and accomplished smith (Sil 299). These rings could protect the bearer from aging due to the effects of time, and they could dampen the effects of weariness brought by the worries of the world. However, even though these three rings remained free from Sauron’s tainted hand, he could still control them. These rings were given to the Wise and hidden for their powers could never be used openly or Sauron would know of the ring’s locations. Sauron’s ring allows him to perceive the efforts of the lesser
rings and the minds of their bearers. Tolkien writes, “And much of the strength and the will of Sauron passed into the One Ring; for the power of the Elven-rings was very great, and that which should govern them must be a thing of surpassing potency…” (Sil 297). By binding himself to the One Ring he created the Ruling Ring, but he also created the means of his own destruction. Sauron is powerful and capable of hiding his true form, and few could face him in might, but the One Ring’s power is limited. It possesses his power and mind, but it cannot move on its own. It relies upon a bearer to carry it and do its will, but the One Ring can be resisted. It will twist the minds of those around it, but for a time the power of the One Ring can be fought. In Tolkien’s world, the One Ring has power over those who wield it and yet did not create it. According to the laws of Middle-Earth, the ring will only bend itself to Sauron’s will because he created the One Ring as a fragment of himself. This aids the believability Tolkien’s The Lord of the Rings as Stationary Fantasy because it is a direct defamiliarization from our world. Many readers question why the One Ring was not ignored or why it had to be destroyed in the fires Mount Doom. Well in part these had to happen because otherwise there is no story, but also in part because this is what separates our world from Tolkien’s. In our world the One Ring would have surely been used in the war. In Tolkien’s world the One Ring is destroyed because there exists people capable of resisting the One Ring’s influence. I hesitate to argue that a Human could do the same because Frodo is able to resist the One Ring because he is essential nonhuman qualities. Hobbits are peaceable and slow-moving. They are not quick to respond because out of necessity they have never had to. Frodo is able to resist the One Ring so well because he has no desire to wield it as Man would. Perhaps a human could do the same, but Tolkien’s Stationary Fantasy is successful because it relies on the established mythos that men cannot succeed in Frodo’s quest.
The central battle of *The Lord of the Rings* lies in resisting the Ruling Ring long enough to destroy it, which can only be done in the fires of its birth. The One Ring resists nearly all fire and is impossible to damage with brute force. In the first book of the *Lord of the Rings*, “The Fellowship of the Ring”, throws the One Ring into a fire and it comes out unharmed (*LOTR* 49). Sauron crafted his precious Ring in the fires of Mordor, and only in the fires of Mordor can it be destroyed. However, the One Ring will do everything in its power to avoid destruction because it is an extension of Sauron’s will. Only by wielding the Ring with no intention of using it can one bear the One Ring long enough to destroy it without becoming corrupted by the power of Sauron. Men have proven themselves unable to withstand the mind of Sauron; the nine kings given rings by Sauron eventually become his servants known as the Nazgûl, or Ringwraiths. Isildur, the human king who cut the Ring from Sauron’s hand, could only withstand the effects of the Ring for amount of time it took to stumble to Mt. Doom, where the Ring could be destroyed, where Isildur rejected that responsibility and claimed the Ring for himself. It is clear that it only takes the Ring a few hours to thoroughly corrupt Isildur to protect itself. Frodo and his cousin, Bilbo, manage to hold on to the Ring for many years before it has any effect on them. This is likely due to the very nature of the hobbits as a race. They live separated from society, and their culture seems to move more slowly than the world around them. Hobbits are generally unconcerned with the events of the world, mostly uninterested in greed and power and could quite possibly continue living without ever knowing that a war was waging all around their home.

Because of the detailed secondary world constructed in Tolkien’s fantasy, its internal coherence and long history, that world is plausible and desirable. The entire point of *The Lord of the Rings* is to destroy the One Ring and thus end the reign of the Dark Lord. However, the
methods by which to destroy the Ring make logical sense in a world where rings of power exist that can slow or even stop the ravages of time. The One Ring was created using the fires of Mordor and protected from harmful forces that wish to destroy it. The only method of destruction available for the races of Middle-Earth was to use the fires by which the Ring was created to destroy it. This makes sense even if the reader is unaware of the lore surrounding the One Ring. Tolkien writes that, “It cannot be unmade by your hands, or by mine…It has been said that dragon-fire could melt and consume the Rings of power, but there is not now any dragon left on earth in which the old fire is hot enough; nor was there ever any dragon…who could have harmed the One Ring, the Ruling Ring, for that was made by Sauron himself” (LOTR 61). This statement, even without the context of Sauron’s identity as a Maia or the knowledge of the Rings of Power, alone provides believability to the story’s premise. It sets up the possibility that a dragon could perhaps destroy a normal Ring of Power, but not one crafted by the Dark Lord. The reader may not know that Sauron was the servant of the greatest smith in the world, but they do know that he is an incredibly powerful Dark Lord who terrorized the world. It makes sense that by his power he created a Ring that was indestructible to all means except one, and that if he were to get the One Ring back he could rule the world once more. Middle-Earth’s only chance to keep the Dark Lord from rising is to keep the One Ring, Sauron’s greatest weapon, away from him, and the only method of doing so is to destroy it in the very fire he used to create it. The secondary world has consistent internal laws that render it plausible.

Tolkien’s fantasy is an obvious example of Stationary Fantasy, which celebrates the secondary world on its own terms, without the inherent hierarchical structure of “High” Fantasy attached to it. However, Edmund Spenser’s The Faerie Queen is very rarely discussed as a
fantasy and is most commonly described as an allegory. I desire to examine it as a Stationary Fantasy and to consider the potential in exploring it as such.

**Stationary Fantasy and Spenser**

While Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* is an established fantasy, Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* operates primarily as an allegory, a story that utilizes several layers of meaning ("Allegory" 8). It is possible for a story to both an allegory and a fantasy, but the allegory potentially complicates the defamiliarization of reality through the multiple layers of meaning and references to the primary world. *The Faerie Queene* has two primary layers of meaning: while the more literal meaning establishes a fantasy story about knights in the land of Faerie, the secondary meaning considers these knights as personifications of the virtues, such as holiness, temperance, and chastity. Many scholars read Tolkien as an allegory, but these readings make the story problematic. There are many similarities between Tolkien’s secondary world and our own, and scholars can read the story as one of corruptibility and salvation, but humans ultimately could not resist the power of the One Ring and, in Tolkien’s mythology, if it were up to humans the war would have been lost (*The Lord of the Rings* xxiv). It was because of a Hobbit that the war was won and Sauron defeated. However, Spenser’s example was written as allegory with fantastical elements and, because of this, it has potential to be read as both. Spenser implies that some of the characters are inhabitants of our world, such as Queen Elizabeth I and Saint George. Scholars typically read *The Faerie Queene* as an allegory with a “true meaning” grounded in our world. However, one could ignore the allegory and examine the primary layer of meaning to see
if it meets the requirements of Stationary Fantasy, as in the following test case focusing on Redcrosse’s fight with the dragon.

Most, but not all, scholarship surrounding Spenser examines the allegorical elements of the story, such as associating Redcrosse with holiness. For example, Kathryn Walls examines Una as an allegorical figure who “…reflects God as the Trinity…What she allegorizes is, rather, a community whose real—as opposed to allegorical—function is to represent God” (119). In *The Faerie Queene* Una can function as the allegorical representation of Truth, but Walls reads more specifically her as a representation of God’s community. Spenser’s story includes a representation of the Trinity in the House of Holiness, the three maids Dame Celia, Mercy, and Charissa (122). However, Una is a physical representation of all three aspects of the Trinity (126). This reading of Una provides a slightly different reading of the allegory. Scholars generally agree that she represents Truth allegorically, but Walls believes that she allegorically symbolizes the church and the Trinity as well.

Spenser’s Redcrosse Knight allegorically represents both Saint George and Holiness, but Redcrosse can be read differently at the literal meaning of interpretation. Richard A. Levin examines both Redcrosse and Una, but instead of focusing on the allegory, Levin focuses on the romance plot central to the story of Book I. Levin writes, “Criticism has tended to nod in the direction of the love interest before settling down to elucidating Spenser’s allegory…yet the critical climate now seems favorable for a redressing of the balance” (1). Levin examines the story and the allegory, describing “Redcrosse [as] both a wavering lover and an erring Christian, and Una [as] both a good woman saving Redcrosse from lust, and also Truth saving him from Error” (1). Redcrosse repeatedly proves unfaithful to Una throughout the story, but it ends in their marriage. Scholars often discuss his ascendance into holiness, but Levin chooses to focus
on his marriage to Una. However, this is potentially problematic as Levin notes when he writes, “Spenser indeed risks controversy, for this, the keynote Book, is uniquely concerned with Holiness, the state of the soul leading to a Christian’s redemption” (2). Levin believes there is a danger in mixing physical mortal love and the matters of the soul. However, Una’s efforts are the main reason that Redcrosse ascends to holiness and therefore the romance is important to the plot. Levin notes this when he writes, “Realizing his urgent need for spiritual help, Una whisks Redcrosse off the House of Holinesse, where he repents and is educated in the Christian scheme of salvation” (17). This follows the part of the story where Redcrosse battles with Despair and nearly loses himself, and his time in the House of Holiness is central to his defeat of the dragon.

In contrast to the ‘allegorical’ and ‘romantic’ readings of Spenser’s text, very little scholarship examines *The Faerie Queene* as a fantasy, perhaps because the story needs to be read literally in order to do so. Susannah Brietz Monta, however, writes that, “Tolkien supplies an apt model for approaching Spenser’s archaic faerie world. Tolkien’s insistence that the worlds created in fairy stories have their own rules and expectations helps students grasp how Spenser’s poem constantly negotiates its own chivalric fiction and the implicit rules thereof” (192). This is particularly seen when Redcrosse confronts Errour, a monster who resides in a cave. Had Redcrosse ignored her and not entered the cave, he could have avoided the encounter with Errour, but because he erroneously believes that he is bound by his code of chivalry, he feels obliged to confront her. However, according to Monta, “…he is unaware of another set of rules operative in his world, in which his battles have or ought to have moral and spiritual significances” (192). Redcrosse has no other reason for defeating Errour than his oath to uphold the code of chivalry. He chooses to confront the beast, defying the laws of the secondary world. This choice sets in motion the sequence of events the story follows. Redcrosse’s battles with
Archimago, Sans Joy, and Despair mirror his original battle with Errour. This mirroring is seen in that he feels obliged to uphold his code of chivalry in instances where he should not fight according to the laws of the world. He finally comes to terms with the rules of the world of Faerie in the House of Holiness and is able to step out of his cycle of error and confront the dragon.

If a reader encountered *The Faerie Queene* without the knowledge that it was an allegorical representation of our world, it would be quite possible to read the story without ever realizing that some of the knights are allegorical representations of people from the primary world. *The Faerie Queene* meets Tolkien’s first tenet. The story could function without Redcrosse as the Knight of Holiness. There is an element of destiny in play that he is meant to fill this role but it is possible that another Knight could fill the role. *The Faerie Queene* also meets the second requirement that the fantasy must concern the secondary world, as it discusses the events that occur within the world of Faerie. However, the third tenet is where *The Faerie Queene* potentially fails to pass. Spenser relies heavily upon primary world allusions to craft *The Faerie Queene*, but the text could be considered fantasy so long as the reader firmly believes that it is not in fact our world. Spenser does meet the fourth requirement in that he crafts a unique set of laws and codes in his world, one of which we have already discussed in that creatures can only be slain for a specific significance. If these laws are broken, the character must suffer the consequences. In this case, Redcrosse does suffer repeatedly as he consistently struggles with error. While magic exists within Spenser’s world, it is never brought to the foreground. Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* meets the requirements of Fantasy, but this is dependent on the reader’s defamiliarization to the allegorical interpretations of the secondary world. In this regard,
the historical distance aids the reader in that it is already unfamiliar to them and thus the fantasy becomes more apparent.

Since *The Faerie Queene* does in fact meet all of the requirements of Stationary Fantasy, then what is the possible benefit of reading it as such? Let us then consider Redcrosse’s fight with the dragon. At the beginning of their battle, Redcrosse fails to hurt the beast. Eventually Redcrosse manages to score a wound, but this enrages the beast and it breathes fire upon his body, gravely wounding him. He promptly falls into a source of water or a stream (I.XI.16-28), a symbol of some significance:

> It fortuned (as fayne it then befell,)
> Behynd his backe vnweeting, where he stood,
> Of auncient time there was a springing well,
> From which fast trickled forth a siluer flood,
> Full of great vertues, and for med’cine good.
> Whylome, before that cursed Dragon got
> That happy land, and all with innocent blood
> Defyld those sacred waues, it rightly hot

*The well of life*, ne yet his vertues had forgot (I.XI.29.1-9)

This passage describes what we might call the spring of life, which helps to revive Redcrosse from certain death. Unbeknownst to our hero he fell into a crater which possesses the qualities to revive him, to restore Redcrosse’s courage and life. This passage demonstrates all four points in the stationary theory: first, it concerns the secondary world and the Faerie. Secondly, the fight is between Redcrosse, one of the inhabitants of Faerie, and the dragon, a monster that plagues it. Thirdly, Redcrosse fights the dragon with his own prowess. The story maintains believability
because he receives no mystical aid aside from those provided by the laws of the world. Finally, the spring is filled with sacred virtues and power and these virtues empower Redcrosse’s ability to fight the dragon. In Spenser’s story we have seen Redcrosse restored through virtue in the House of Holiness and this aids the believability of the situation. Una’s home is supposedly a place of holy power where lost relics and sites of power exist across the land. This spring exists in the laws of Faerie and empowers Redcrosse based on these laws.

Spenser discusses the secondary world during Redcrosse’s fight with the dragon, which lasts three days, with Redcrosse’s fall into the spring of life marking the end of the first day. On the second day, Una prays through the night for Redcrosse who in the morning rises from the spring renewed in vigor. The waters have made him and his sword stronger in power and he manages to wound the dragon yet again, but the dragon in retaliation wounds him on the shoulder. Redcrosse cuts off the dragon’s claws as the dragon attempts to pull away his shield, but as he retreats he falls into a mire where a tree grows (I.XI.30-46). This tree is described as:

There grew a goodly tree him faire beside,
Loaden with fruit and apples rosy red,
As they in pure vermillion had beene dide
Whereof great vertues ouer all were red:
For happy life to all, which thereon fedd,
And life eke euerlasting did befall:
Great God it planted in that blessed stedd
With his Almighty hand, and did it call
The tree of life, the crime of our first fathers fall (I.XI.46.1-9)
This is where *The Faerie Queene* becomes problematic for both Tolkienian Fantasy and Stationary Fantasy. Fantasy must draw upon the primary world: fantasies have trees and green grass; because these are unavoidable connections readers need to enter into a secondary world. However, Spenser’s direct connection to the Tree of Life from Genesis, a direct allusion to the primary world, could create a problem. Spenser refers to it as “the crime of our first fathers fall” (I.XI.46.9), creating a stronger connection through the allusion to Adam. However, it is possible for this to be considered a fantasy. In Genesis, Eden is separated from the primary world after the fall: it becomes mythical, in the distant past, impossible to identify with a specific place in the primary world—it is lost forever. Spenser’s reference to Eden is brief enough and unfamiliar enough that the reader could still believe that this world is not in fact our own. *The Faerie Queen* maintains believability and follows the laws of the secondary world in regards to magic, and Spenser risks toying with primary world allusions but in this case it does not inhibit the fantasy.

The events of the previous two encounters with the dragon serve as tools for Spenser to craft the reason for Redcrosse’s success. The story continues to explain that on the third day Redcrosse rose from the mire healthy and restored, which angers the dragon, who promptly attempts to swallow the knight whole. Redcrosse takes advantage of this and thrusts his sword into the beast’s mouth, slaying him once and for all (I.XI.47-55). Redcrosse succeeds in his quest because of the world around him. If not for the spring of life and the tree of life he would have surely perished at the claws of the dragon. The dragon in its arrogance died because it attempted to overpower the knight. At its death, it was barely wounded; and had it continued the fight with claw and fire, it could have surely won. Dragons are typically described as greedy beasts of prideful arrogance. Smaug from Tolkien’s *The Hobbit* displays similar qualities. Had Smaug chosen to deal with the dwarves in The Lonely Mountain rather than strike out to Lake Town in
pursuit of vengeance, then he might have won the day. Redcrosse then in this instance does not survive by his own might, but rather by the magic of the world in which he lives and because the dragon arrogantly believed it could destroy the knight once and for all.

Allegory here complicates fantasy as it risks disillusioning the fantasy. So long as the sense of defamiliarization is maintained, the allegory and fantasy can coexist, but there is a risk that the reader could begin to believe that the fantasy no longer exists. In the case of *The Faerie Queene*, is Stationary Fantasy. The instances when the allegory complicates the reading are brief enough that it is possible to maintain the necessary sense of defamiliarization and separation from the primary world.

**Expansionary Fantasy and Cooper**

In contrast to Tolkien’s Stationary Fantasy and Spenser’s allegory, Susan Cooper’s *The Dark is Rising* exemplifies the more contemporary emphasis on Expansionary Fantasy, specifically the Emergent model. Cooper’s *The Dark is Rising* Sequence (1965-1977) focuses on the battles between The Light and the Dark, two races of power. The servants of the Light fight to save humans from the Dark, which aims to cover the world in darkness and rule over humans. Cooper’s sequence is described as a fantasy, but Cooper’s story does not adhere to the Tolkienian definition of fantasy because she utilizes the primary world in a unique way to expand the secondary world. Some action of her story takes place in the secondary world, but the characters live in the primary world. The servants of the Light seek to banish the Dark from the world so that they can return to their home, separate from the primary world. However, in order to protect the primary world they live amongst its inhabitants. Cooper uses the primary world as
the secondary world inhabitants’ base of operations, but the most significant action takes place outside of the primary world.

While Cooper’s characters live in the primary world, she constantly refers to the blurring of reality. When Will Stanton initially crosses outside of time into the secondary world he notices that it is his home, but at the same time it is not. Cooper writes that “the strange white world lay stroked in silence. No birds sang. The garden was no longer there, in this forested land. Nor were the outbuildings nor the old crumbling walls. There lay only a narrow clearing round the house now, hummocked with unbroken snowdrifts before the trees began, with a narrow path leading away” (The Dark is Rising, hereafter TDR, 26). It is his home, but objects from his world are no longer there and even people are missing as he calls for his brothers but no one responds (TDR 26). Will experiences a sense of defamiliarization in that the world he is in no longer matches his own; through Will, the readers begin to wonder if the world is in fact the one they know. It seems to be, but when the characters cross outside of time, we lose any sense that it is in fact our world because of its defamiliarity.

Will Stanton’s encounter with the defamiliarized primary world is a crucial moment in The Dark is Rising Sequence, which follows the Light and its human allies as they follow this quest to vanquish the Dark. Will Stanton, a ten-year old boy, and Merriman Lyon, an elderly man, are Old Ones. Will is the last of the Old Ones to be born in the primary world, and Merriman is actually Merlin from the secondary world who teaches Will how to harness the power of the Light. Cooper places the Arthurian legends into her story, but she uses the characters as inhabitants of the secondary world who have crossed over into the primary world in order to save it. Essentially, Cooper’s story dictates that the Arthurian characters of legend originate from the secondary world, and the primary world has adopted their exploits as stories in
our world. The Drew Children, Simon, Jane, and Barney, are three human allies who help the servants of the Light recover certain artifacts, such as the Holy Grail, to aid the Light in its quest. The Light needs humans in this case because the servants of the Dark attempt to thwart them from retrieving the artifacts, but humans can move about unnoticed by the Dark. Bran Davies, a Welsh boy, is also a human ally of the Light, but he is also the Pendragon, the son of King Arthur brought into the human world to live as a human. He has a place with the Light in the secondary world, but he gives that place up once the quest is over because he realizes that he is human and not a member of the Light.

Cooper’s story, like Spenser’s, poses a problem alongside Tolkien’s theory of fantasy because she does not rely on a secondary place. Her secondary world exists alongside the primary world to the point that it is difficult to distinguish one from the other. In Cooper’s model the secondary world will eventually become entirely separate from the primary world, but her story is problematic for Tolkien’s theory because this separation is not present from the outset. The Light is an ancient force that has embedded itself into human culture. Old Ones, servants of the Light, are born seemingly human, but when they come of age, at twelve, they grow into their powers as members of the Light. These powers allow them to freeze time and even control the elements. The servants of the Dark are a more mysterious but similar race to the Old Ones. They possess similar powers, but the Dark aims to cover the human world in darkness and rule over it and the Light aims to stop the Dark. However, because the story bridges between the primary and secondary world, Tolkien’s theory would consider it not a fantasy, but fiction. While Tolkienian theory excludes Cooper’s story, Expansionary Fantasy includes it as a fantasy.

*The Dark is Rising* Sequence closely incorporates the secondary and primary worlds within its story. The reader is often suddenly taken from the primary world into the secondary
world. The Old Ones have embedded themselves within human society, but while the story concerns the primary world, the most significant action takes place primarily outside of time, since the Old Ones and those of the Dark possess the power to remove themselves from primary-world time. When they remove themselves from time they step into an unfamiliar world that resembles our own, but is clearly not the same. While the characters may live on Earth, the battle for Earth wages on the fringes of time. Their original world, referred to as “the time outside of Time”, also exists separate from the primary world (Silver on the Tree, hereafter ST, 328). In this case, the secondary world exists outside of the primary world, but intersects with it as well in clearly defined ways, such as when Will comes to his powers. At that moment, he exits the primary world and steps into a foreign and more vibrant world that is similar and yet not the primary world (TDR 27). The Old Ones return to it once they vanquish the Dark. This is noted when Cooper writes, “Our task is accomplished, and we may leave the last and longest task to those who inherit this world and all its perilous beauty” (ST 323). The Lady of the Light, the leader of the Old Ones, notes here that their mission is accomplished. However, it is not entirely clear that the Light will be leaving the world until Jane Drew asks Merriman Lyon, an Old One, if they will ever see them again, to which he responds that they will only ever see Will Stanton again (ST 331). Will Stanton is the last of the Old Ones to be born on Earth. He is left behind because he needs to finish out his human life before leaving time to rejoin the Light. He is both human and an Old One and therefore cannot leave until his human life is spent. However, the Light’s mission is accomplished at this time and he serves no greater purpose as a member of the primary world. Merriman says to the Drew Children that “…it is altogether your world now. You and all the rest. We have delivered you from evil, but the evil that is inside me is at the last a matter for me to control” (ST 332). The Light’s mission was to drive the Dark outside of time
permanently. Upon fulfilling this mission the Old Ones can now return to their own world outside of time since the human world is now safe. Time itself is the boundary, and the Light and the Dark both possess the power to cross over this boundary with their human allies, thus establishing time as the boundary between the worlds.

Expansionary Fantasy requires a gateway between the worlds, a point of access between the secondary and the primary. In Cooper’s model this gateway is both tangible and intangible. Humans do not possess the power to cross between the worlds unaided, but an Old One can. Will Stanton demonstrates this power without realizing his abilities. Cooper writes, “As he stood listening, the world around him seemed to brighten a little; the woods seemed less dense, the snow glittered, and when he looked upward, the strip of sky over Huntercombe Lane was a clear blue” (TDR 27). This scene occurs on Will’s tenth birthday, the first day of his ascendance to his true nature. He accidentally crosses outside of time and meets with another Old One, the Walker, and the Dark Rider, a servant of the Dark (TDR 30-33 and 36-38). These interactions mark the beginning of Will’s fated quest as the Seeker whose purpose is to find the six Signs of the Light, symbols of great power. The Walker is a human cursed to exist throughout time because he betrayed the Light, and the Dark Rider is a lord of the Dark who tries to prevent Will from achieving his destiny. Will flees the Rider with the aid of a creature of the Light, a horse, and finds himself in front of what Cooper describes as “two great carved wooden doors” “leading to nowhere” (TDR 38). These doors function as the physical manifestation of a gateway between the worlds. The Old Ones need not summon the doors to travel outside of time, but the Servants of the Light always pass through the doors in order to leave time, whether or not the doors actually appear.
The Dark is Rising Sequence concerns secondary world characters saving the primary world, but humans serve as aids to the Light and the Dark, as seen in the first book Over Sea, Under Stone, when the three human Drew children are tasked with recovering the Holy Grail, another artifact of the Light. The Drew children are recruited by their “uncle,” Merriman Lyon, an Old One living as a university professor, to retrieve the Grail because the Dark thwarts his attempts to retrieve it. He cannot travel unseen by the forces of the Dark because they stalk his every move, but three human children can move unnoticed by these forces. Initially Drew children are not aware of their involvement in the war, but they become aware because they are three members of The Six, people destined to aid the Light in banishing the Dark from the world forever. Will Stanton and Merriman are also members of The Six alongside Bran Davies. Bran Davies is not an Old One, but he is a member of the Light, the Pendragon and heir to King Arthur, a warrior of the Light and lord who rules outside of time.

In order to banish the Dark from the world, the Light needs artifacts of power from the secondary world. The final quest of the series involves The Six combating the forces of the Dark using these relics of power. These include the Six Signs and the Crystal Sword, the mythic sword belonging to King Arthur that was lost outside of time. It can be wielded by either the Light or the Dark to banish the other from time completely. This can only be done by using the sword to cut a piece of mistletoe from the Silver Tree. The Six require the Six Signs in order to protect the bearer of the Crystal Sword as he attempts to cut the flower from the tree. These Six Signs are the only objects that can repel the full power of the Dark as it attempts to stop the Six in its quest. Three of The Six are human and three are members of the Light. However, Bran chooses to relinquish his immortality and live amongst humans when the rest of the Servants of the Light return to the secondary world. His choice marks the loss of his right to live outside of time with
his people. Cooper mentions this when she writes, “But consider well, Bran. If you give up your place in the High Magic, your identity in the time that is outside of Time, then you will be no more than mortal...you will remember nothing that has happened, you will live and die as all men do” (ST 328). Humans are involved within the story, because the Light and the Dark cannot wage war entirely on their own. The war cannot be won in the secondary world until the war is won in the primary world because the worlds became tied together when the Dark began to wage war in the primary world. Both sides need allies in order to accomplish their missions. However, some of these humans are chosen for what sets them apart from other humans. For example, Jane and Barney drew both possess qualities that set them apart from most humans. The Greenwitch is a ritual creation made as a sacrifice to the Wild; she is a creature of Wild Magic, and at her creation it is said that if you touch her and make a wish that wish will come true (Greenwitch 34, hereafter GW). Jane wishes for the Greenwitch’s happiness (GW 37), and this convinces the Greenwith to give Jane the key that will help to translate the words inscribed on the grail. Because Jane is the only person to selflessly seek the decoder, she received it from the Greenwitch, whereas others with ulterior motives failed to obtain the decoder (GW 133). Barney is rumored to possess prophetic abilities, but his power does not set him completely apart because he is not aware of them. In the Greenwitch his abilities are expressed in his art, which the Dark steals to summon the Greenwitch (GW 25). Both the Light and the Dark recruit humans in order to accomplish their goals, but humans must remain in their world. Only the Old Ones can return to the time outside of Time. Bran could have chosen to return with the Light, but he chose instead to remain human and live amongst the people who raised him. The story concerns the experiences of the Light and its allies, but it is more focused on the experiences of Bran and
the Old Ones, members of an ancient race who once resided outside of time until our world
needed their help.

Cooper utilizes a layered magic system in her universe: “High Magic”, “Old Magic”, and
“Wild Magic”. High magic is the most powerful force that operates in both worlds, and it has
rules that no one can ignore. For example, the servants of the Dark attempt to remove Bran from
the final quest through High Magic by claiming he is uninvolved in the quest because he was
raised human with no relation to the Light (ST 302-303). This causes him to be frozen outside of
time by High Magic until his place in the quest can be decided. Another example is seen where
Bran and Will are tested in their attempt to retrieve the Golden Harp to wake the Sleepers, King
Arthur’s Knights. They are tested by a Lord of the Light, a Lord of the Dark, and a Lord of High
Magic and cannot succeed in their quest until the High Magic deems them worthy. Old Magic is
the magic the servants of the Light and Dark possess. The Light and the Dark are polar opposites
and balance one another out. Old Magic grants its users the ability to step outside of time, control
the elements, and in some cases change their forms into that of animals (GW 82). Wild Magic is
the force of nature exemplified in the Greenwitch. It is said to be equal to Old Magic, but
unaffected by other (GW 128). The Light and the Dark can never control Wild Magic because it
is as powerful as Old Magic.

Cooper’s framework possesses a certain beauty, since she fully incorporates the primary
and secondary worlds; humans and secondary-world beings are interdependent. She writes an
undiscovered secondary world behind Arthurian stories of Faerie, making the stories of Arthur
and his knights appear to us in the primary world only as a mere glimpse of a secondary world
reality, a battle between the Light and the Dark beyond the bounds of time.
Conclusion

To review the test cases: Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* is a Stationary Fantasy adhering to his own definition of a fantasy story. Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* seems to be dependent on the primary world because of the allegory, but the primary references can be ignored because they are small and inconsequential to the underlying fantasy. Spenser’s story is then a Stationary Fantasy based entirely in a secondary world. In contrast, Expansionary Fantasy allows for the commingling of the primary and secondary worlds. Readers want to defamiliarize themselves from the primary world and experience the secondary world because it offers a magical world with new experiences alongside our own world. Cooper’s *The Dark is Rising* provides an example of Expansionary Fantasy in the Emergent model. Rather than allowing Tolkien’s theory to exclude the work of others like Cooper from fantasy, the theory of Expansionary Fantasy includes fantasies that embrace the primary world rather than exclude it. While Stationary Fantasy examines the secondary world form the perspective of the world itself, Expansionary Fantasy investigates the reader’s urgent desire to recognize the ‘reality’ of the secondary world to experience something new. Defamiliarization has become the essential component of contemporary fantasy. As readers, we willingly suspend belief in the primary world because we want to readily accept that the secondary world is real and can reshape our view of the primary world itself.
Appendix A: Inhabitants of Middle-Earth

Dwarves: The “third” of the free peoples of Middle-Earth. Created by Aulë, these creatures were never intended to exist originally, but Eru took mercy on them and spared their lives after punishing Aulë for irresponsibly creating them. They were put to sleep under the earth until the firstborns (the Elves) arrived in Middle-Earth. Dwarves are considered to have brash attitudes and, in their stubbornness, resemble the stone from which they were made.

Elves: The first people to be born into existence who do not die until killed. Often referred to as “the children of Iluvatar”. The Elves are considered a very graceful race and in possession of “enchantment”. The oldest of the free peoples and one of the few races to have seen the Valar and/or their homeland in the West (not all Elves have seen Aman).

Hobbit: an inhabitant of Middle-Earth, often described as “Halflings” who, while they vary in size, are about half the size of normal humans. They are peace-loving farmers with close ties to the land. Hobbits are often described as being fleet of foot and possessing the ability to disappear from sight in natural surroundings. Unlike other races, Hobbit live longer lives and ‘come to age’ at fifty.

Men: Tolkien refers to the humans of his story as Men. The children of Men are often homeless and considered travelers. They can and do settle, but the race as a whole is liable to roam more than settle in one place. Men are vulnerable to greed and they desire power. Men live short life spans.

Appendix B: Beings of Power

Ainur: “The Holy Ones” (Noel 107) a collective term for the Valar, “the powers” (203) and Maiar before they descended into Arda, which translates as “The Realm” (Noel 115) and is another name for Middle-Earth.
Aulë: One of the Valar who is smith and master of all crafts, the builder of the gods. He is often responsible for many of the “structures” seen around the world. He is also the father and creator of the dwarves.

Eru: “The One” or “He That Is Alone” (Noel 141) and another name for Ilúvatar, “The Father of All” (Noel 157). God of Tolkien’s universe.

Ilúvatar: See Eru

Maiar: The lesser powers of the Ainur. It is their purpose to serve the Valar and most server individual Vala. For example, Olórin, also known as Gandalf, learned pity and patience from Nienna, a Vala.

Valar: “The Powers” (Noel 203) that shaped Middle-Earth. We would refer to them as angels or even gods, as in Greek or Norse gods. The Valar possess power, but it is limited by their state of being. For example, they can only act in the realms where they hold power. There are fourteen Valar, separated into the seven lords and the seven queens. An example is Aulë, and his consort Yavanna, who sang the world into existence and created the Ents, the “Shepherd of the Trees.”
Works Cited and Bibliography


Walls, Kathryn. "Una Trinitas: Una And The Trinity In Book One Of The Faerie Queene."