

J.R.R. Tolkien's Land of Heroes—
Fëanor, a tragic hero of Middle-Earth in
comparison to Seppo Ilmarinen from the *Kalevala*

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| Tiivistelmä – Abstract | |
| <p>Tämän kandidaatintutkielman tarkoituksena oli analysoida Fëanoria, fantasiakirjailija J.R.R. Tolkienin luomaa fiktiivistä sankarihahmoa. Kuvaileva kirjallisuustutkimus jakaantui kahteen osaan: Toisaalta Fëanoria verrattiin traagisen sankarin käsitteeseen käyttämällä Aristoteleen <i>Runousopissa</i> (330-320 eKr.) kuvailemia sääntöjä ja vaatimuksia. Toisaalta Fëanoria verrattiin <i>Kalevalan</i> myyttiseen seppähahmoon, Seppo Ilmariseen. Fëanoria ja Seppo Ilmarista vertailemalla tarkasteltiin myös yleisemmin J.R.R. Tolkienin teosten ja <i>Kalevalan</i>, Suomen kansalliseepoksen välistä vuorovaikutussuhdetta. Tutkimuksen materiaalina käytettiin <i>Kalevalan</i> lisäksi J.R.R. Tolkienin <i>Silmarillionia</i>, joka on suurilta osin rakentunut Fëanorin luomien mystisten jalokivien, Silmarilien, tarinan ympärille.</p> <p>Vertailevana kirjallisuustutkimuksena tutkielma pohjautuu intertekstuaalisuuden eli tekstien välisten yhteyksien tutkimukselle. Intertekstuaalisuuden perusolettamuksen mukaan kaikki tekstit ovat jollakin tasolla yhteydessä toisiin teksteihin, sillä sekä tekstin kirjoittaja että sen lukija tarkastelevat tekstiä oman tekstuaalisen historiansa pohjalta. Kirjailija voi viitata toisiin teksteihin joko tarkoituksella tai vahingossa. Lukija taas tulkitsee näitä viittauksia oman kirjallisen historiansa kautta, jolloin viittaukset voivat myös jäädä tyystin huomaamatta. Toisaalta lukija voi tuoda tekstiin mukaan uusia yhteyksiä, joista taas kirjailija ei ole tietoinen. Näin ollen olisi mahdollista tarkastella tekstienvälisiä vaikutussuhteita yksinomaan lukijan näkökulmasta. Koska J.R.R. Tolkien on kuitenkin myöntänyt <i>Kalevalan</i> toimineen hänelle inspiraationlähteenä, on perusteltua tutkia myös Seppo Ilmarisen ja Fëanorin välistä vuorovaikutussuhdetta.</p> <p>Tutkimuksessa kävi ilmi, että Fëanor täyttää Aristoteleen traagiselle sankarille asettamat vaatimukset. Fëanorin ja Seppo Ilmarisen tarinoita, hahmoja ja luomuksia tarkasteltaessa löydettiin monia yhtäläisyyksiä, ja koska intertekstuaalisuus ei ole riippuvaista kirjailijan alkuperäisestä aikomuksesta, voitiin intertekstuaalisen linkin olemassaolo perustella näillä samankaltaisuuksilla. Suhteellisen pienelle aineistolle perustuneiden tutkimustulosten yleistettävyyttä parannettiin esittelemällä niiden rinnalla aikaisempia tutkimustuloksia, joissa <i>Kalevalan</i> ja Tolkienin teosten välinen intertekstuaalinen suhde oli myös todennettu. Tutkimusta aiheesta voidaan jatkaa vaihtoehtoisten materiaalien ja uusien hahmoparien avulla.</p> | |
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1 INTRODUCTION

The effects of Finnish language and the *Kalevala* on J.R.R. Tolkien's work have been widely acknowledged not only by critics and researchers, but also by the author himself. Tolkien's biographer Humphrey Carpenter quotes him talking about the *Kalevala*: "I would that we had more of it left—something of the same sort that belonged to the English" (1987:89). Tolkien's fascination of mythologies later turned into a need to create, or rather, rediscover the same kind of mythology for England. In his letter to Milton Waldman Tolkien expressed his dissatisfaction with the English lore: "I was from early days grieved by the poverty of my own country: it had no stories of its own" (1981:144). He also described his earlier desire to create "a body of more or less connected legend", something that could later be carried on and added to by others (1981:144-145). In yet another letter, Tolkien elaborates on the role of Finnish and the *Kalevala* in the creation of his legendarium:

"I mentioned Finnish, because that set the rocket off in story. I was immensely attracted by something in the air of the *Kalevala*, even in Kirby's poor translation. I never learned Finnish well enough to do more than plod through a bit of the original, like a schoolboy with Ovid; being mostly taken up with its effect on 'my language'. But the beginning of the legendarium, of which the *Trilogy* is part (the conclusion), was in an attempt to reorganize some of the *Kalevala*, especially the tale of Kullervo the hapless, into a form of my own." (1981:214)

As Tolkien himself greatly emphasized the importance of language, one cannot talk about his mythology without considering it. Tolkien's love for languages is one of the main elements behind his mythology, and his original reason for creating it. According to Grotta (1978:32), Tolkien believed that in order for a language to be meaningful, it had to possess a meaningful history, which would explain why the language exists and how it came to be. Tolkien (1981:214) himself wrote that his stories "are and were so to speak an attempt to give a background or a world in which my expressions of linguistic taste could have a function". Already as a child, Tolkien was interested in other languages and started creating new ones on his own, but his creations only became serious after he first encountered Finnish in Exeter College Library. Finding Finnish was "like discovering a complete wine-cellar filled with bottles of an amazing wine of a kind and flavour never tasted before" (1981: 214). Tolkien became "intoxicated" by Finnish, and one of his own languages "became heavily Finnicized in phonetic pattern and structure" (ibid.). This Finnish-based language developed into the High-Elvish language Quenya (Carpenter 1977:94). In short, Tolkien was heavily influenced by the Finnish language, and finding Finnish was one of the main elements which led to the creation of Tolkien's world.

The Finnish influence has been studied by some Tolkien scholars, and a few aspects of the phenomenon have already been established. Nevertheless many critics have defined the relationship between Tolkien and the *Kalevala* as superficial and understated the effect the Finnish national epic had on Tolkien's work. Another well-researched area of Tolkien studies is the author's personal life and how it affected his writing. The biographical and comparative studies, excluding the Finnish influence, have been so prominent that little attention has been paid to actual analysis of his work. Consequently, I wanted to take the characters as my starting point. I chose to study the tragic hero not only because it is perhaps the most traditional character type in literature, but also as the flawed character and the sorrowful tale of the tragic hero make it the most believable and emotionally engaging of all character types.

As a Finn, I have always been very excited about Tolkien's fascination for the Finnish language and the *Kalevala*. In my opinion, knowledge of the characters and their origins can give the reader a sense of insight and enhance one's understanding of both the text and one's own interpretation of it. In the present study, I wanted to focus on a character that has not been linked to the *Kalevala* in previous research. Thus, I chose to examine the character of Fëanor, the prince of Noldor. I was interested in whether the comparisons to the *Kalevala* can add depth to and open new sides of Fëanor's character, even if there is no proven link to the Finnish epic. As Fëanor's tale resembles the story of Seppo Ilmarinen, a master smith from the *Kalevala*, I wanted to investigate the relationship between the two characters further. Even though this thesis merely scrapes the surface of Tolkien studies, it offers a starting point for more in-depth research both on Tolkien's characters and on the profound nature of the Finnish influence on him.

The theoretical background of my study has been established in *Poetics* (Aristotle 330-320 B.C.E., translated by Potts, 1959), which gives a detailed description of the elements of great tragedy. The next section of my thesis will focus on the theory of *Poetics*. First, I will shortly define **tragedy** in Aristotle's terms. Then I will introduce the term **tragic hero**, which is one of the core concepts of the present study. In the third section I will introduce some of the studies that have been conducted between the *Kalevala* and Tolkien's work. Next, I will discuss the concept of intertextuality as a justification for the present study in the fourth section. In the fifth section, the research questions, data and methods of the present study are introduced. In the sixth section I will analyse the character of Fëanor. The analysis is divided into two parts: in the first part, I will analyse Fëanor as a tragic her and in the second part I will compare Fëanor to Seppo Ilmarinen. Finally, I will discuss the implications and limitations of this thesis and offer suggestions for further research.

2 THE TRAGIC HERO IN ARISTOTLE'S *POETICS*

In *Poetics*, Aristotle provides a comprehensive account of the fundamental rules and elements of the various types of drama, including comedy, epic, lampoon and **tragedy**. The majority of *Poetics* concentrates on the laws and purpose of tragedy and how it differs from comedy. According to Aristotle, the major division between the two types is that comedy is an imitation of characters, whereas tragedy is an imitation of life or action:

Tragedy is an imitation not of men but of doings, life, happiness; unhappiness is located in doings, and our end is a certain kind of doing, not a personal quality; it is their characters that give men their quality, but their doings that make them happy or the opposite (*Poetics*,25).

The main function of tragedy is to evoke strong emotions. Traditional tragedy aims for **catharsis**, from the Greek word *katharsis* (κάθαρσις), which is commonly interpreted as the purification or purgation of overflowing emotions. According to Aristotle, tragedy should purify the audience of excessive emotions (Aristotle 1959: 24). The building of tensions and the tragic climax of the tragedy must evoke pity, sorrow and fear. The audience can then experience suffering and pain through the characters of the tragedy and safely purge themselves of any immoderate emotions. In other words, by the pity and fear it evokes, tragedy offers a normal and healthy way for purging oneself of these emotions.

In *Poetics*, Aristotle lists the six elements of tragedy in the order of importance: Fable, Character, Language, Thought, Melody and *Mise en scène* (Aristotle 1959: 25). As Fable and Character are the most important elements for the purposes of the present study, I will omit the other four elements from this account. I will firstly consider the rules of Fable: how it should be constructed and some of its components. As regards to Character, I will introduce the traditional characteristics of a tragic hero, as the concept has remained virtually unchanged throughout the history of literature.

Tragedy, as stated previously, is an imitation of life. The object of imitation should be an action “of high importance, complete and of some amplitude” (Aristotle 1959: 24). Thus Fable, the most essential constituent of tragedy, should always form a logical unity. In other words, each event of the Fable should be logically connected to all preceding and following events, so that they follow the laws of probability (Aristotle 1959: 29). The effect of tragedy is accentuated by the credibility of the events. Implausible actions, on the contrary, raise the audience's awareness of the tragedy as a constructed piece of art, something that is not true. This awareness decreases the emotional engagement of the audience, lessening the effect of the tragedy. On the other hand, even the most unforeseen events can be credible, if the Fable

is constructed in a way that creates a logical opportunity for them to materialise:

True, the action imitated must contain incidents that evoke fear and pity, besides being a complete action; but this effect is accentuated when these incidents occur logically as well as unexpectedly, which will be more sensational than if they happen arbitrarily, by chance. Even when events are accidental, the sensation is greater if they appear to have a purpose (Aristotle 1959: 30)

This believability or sense of purpose heightens the emotional impact of the tragedy, as the audience can see the gradual and credible deterioration of the hero and follow the steps that lead to his demise. Aristotle states that in creating the arch of the tragedy, the writer should always aim for the furthest possible opposites: the greater the change in fortune, the greater the emotional effect (Aristotle 1959: 33). Thus, in the beginning of the tragedy, the hero is prosperous and respected, but as the Fable progresses, he is slowly stripped of both his material and spiritual possessions.

One of the most important constituents of the Fable is the Irony of Events, which is a dramatic change in the hero's situation. The original term for the Irony of Events is *peripeteia*, which is often translated as a reversal of fortune. In the *peripeteia*, an action results in the very opposite of what it was supposed to accomplish (Aristotle 1959: 31). For example, an ominous prediction is fulfilled by the actions the hero takes to prevent the tragic outcome. Disclosure is another crucial element of the Fable. In the disclosure, the hero experiences "a change from ignorance to knowledge" (Aristotle 1959: 31). According to Aristotle, the disclosure can occur either right before an action and prevent it, or it can come after the action has already taken place and make it seem all the more tragic (Aristotle 1959: 36).

The type of Character is another factor separating tragedy from comedy, as "comedy is inclined to imitate persons below the level of our world, tragedy persons above it" (Aristotle 1959: 19). On one hand, a tragic hero must thus be someone exceptional, often marked for greatness from birth. He is noble and good, destined for great deeds and respected both by those below and above him. On the other hand, this higher quality of the tragic hero's character is a controversial issue in *Poetics*; a tragic hero should at the same time be better than and similar to ourselves, as this similarity allows the audience to empathise and identify with the hero (Aristotle 1959: 33). Furthermore, the same principles of plausibility, which were discussed regarding Fable, should also be applied to Character. This contradiction is explained, up to a point, by the comparison Aristotle makes between the writer of tragedy and a painter; the painter must imitate the world as closely as possible, be it beautiful or ugly, but at the same time make the painting something more than its model (Aristotle 1959: 38). To conclude, tragedy must evoke compassion in the audience, and as "pity is induced by

undeserved misfortune, and fear by the misfortunes of normal people” (Aristotle 1959: 33), the tragic hero must at the same time be better than an average person, but still flawed enough for the audience to identify with them.

Although the flaws in the hero’s nature make him human, it can also lead to his downfall. Even though Aristotle emphasises the fact that tragedy is in the doings of men rather than in their nature, he also states that a person’s character is manifested in his actions (Aristotle 1959: 25-26). Thus, the character of the hero must be one of the forces that guide his actions. This notion of a fundamental flaw of character is called *hamartia*, and it entered the concept of tragedy in the Christian era (Potts 1959: 81). In classical tragedy, the hero’s downfall can also be caused by a simple misstep, or by a choosing the lesser of two evils. In *Poetics*, Aristotle used *hamartia* to refer to a tragic mistake or an error of judgement made by the character instead of an inherent fatal flaw in the hero’s nature. However, as the notion of *hamartia* as a flaw of character has ever since its introduction been an important aspect of the tragic hero’s nature, I have chosen to utilise this interpretation in the present study.

Classic examples of *hamartia* or character flaws are jealousy and unwillingness to change. One of the most common forms of *hamartia* in the history of tragedy is *hubris*, meaning excessive pride or arrogance. Many tragedies rely on the fact that the line between virtue and vice is often blurred, as the transition from good to evil can then be demonstrated in a way that is both striking and believable. *Hamartia* begins the unravelling of the hero’s character. The flaw of character guides each action of the hero, determining his fate and ultimately leading to his downfall. However, although the hero’s downfall is the direct result of his actions, thus brought on by his own choices, his destruction is traditionally not entirely deserved. The actions of others, seemingly small coincidences and even the forces of nature can work against him, making the hero seem almost predestined to fail. Aristotle emphasises this point of “undeserved misfortune”, as it is tragedy’s central method for eliciting pity in the reader (Aristotle 1959: 33). Thus, the downfall is often a result of both the flaw in the hero’s nature and external influences.

In this thesis, I apply the discussed rules to the fictional character of Fëanor, who is one of the most tragic characters in Tolkien’s works. My analysis of Fëanor will follow the guidelines set by Aristotle, and will concentrate on the six most important points: the nature of the character, the opposing force, the *hamartia*, the disclosure, the *peripeteia* or the Irony of Events and the downfall.

3 PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN J.R.R. TOLKIEN AND THE *KALEVALA*

As stated earlier, the influence that Finnish and the national epic *Kalevala* had on Tolkien was profound, and this influence is evident both in Tolkien's own letters and in the fictional texts he wrote. Traces of the *Kalevala* and Finnish can be found on many different levels of his works: from the superficial parallels between words and grammar in Quenya and Finnish (see for example Rautala, 1992) to individual characters, such as those examined in this thesis, to his creative ethic (see Bardowell, 2009), and even to the very purpose behind his writing. In her article, A.C. Petty (2004) argues for a great resemblance not only between the works of Tolkien and the *Kalevala* but also in the role and nature of Tolkien and Elias Lönnrot, the compiler of the Finnish national epic.

According to Petty (2004), the intention of both Tolkien and Lönnrot was to discover and record, rather than invent, the mythological history of their respective nations. Petty (2004:70-71) constructs her argument on the words of the authors themselves: both Lönnrot and Tolkien have explicitly expressed their desire to act as a mediator of legends. Lönnrot's aim was to preserve the fading oral history of the Finnish rune singers before the tradition would be completely lost (Petty 2004:70-71). As stated previously, Tolkien wished to rediscover a similar body of mythology for England. According to Petty (2004:73), Tolkien considered himself as the recorder, rather than the inventor, of the history of Middle-Earth, much in the same way as Lönnrot acted as a compiler of the Finnish oral history.

The relationship between the characters of Túrin Turambar and Kullervo, son of Kalervo, has already been established in previous studies. The origins of Túrin have been traced back to Kullervo, and Tolkien himself admits that the tale of Túrin Turambar is "derived from elements in the Finnish Kullervo" (Tolkien 1981:17). In the following section, I will summarize the main similarities of the two characters, and introduce two Finnish Master's theses with different views on this subject.

3.1 Túrin Turambar and Kullervo as tragic heroes

The characters of Kullervo and Túrin Turambar are often seen as good examples of traditional tragic heroes. This perspective has also been adapted by Hassinen (1988), who in her Master's thesis argues for a great resemblance between Kullervo and Túrin. In both stories, the hero survives the ruin of his family to grow up in a foster family. Kullervo's father is defeated in a

fight before Kullervo is born, and he is raised as a slave of the winning family, the household of Untamo. Túrin's father is taken prisoner when Túrin is 8 years old, and his mother sends him to the elven kingdom of Doriath in order to save him from slavery. Both men are followed by misfortune and failure in their life. Kullervo is sold to the smith Ilmarinen, whose wife treats Kullervo with malice. Kullervo ends up killing her during a moment of rage and is forced to flee as a criminal. A similar fate befalls Túrin: he accidentally kills an elf in self-defence and flees from Doriath. Shortly afterwards, both heroes start a voyage of vengeance: Kullervo intends to kill the Untamo family, and Túrin wants to save his mother and sister from the eastern people. Both of these voyages end in disaster: Kullervo's remaining family dies while he is away, and the mutiny that Túrin has raised only brings more misery to his people. Thus, both Kullervo and Túrin "inherit a hostile situation", but it is their act of vengeance that finally brings them to their tragic fate (Hassinen 1988: 58).

The act of revenge serves the function of the classical hamartia, the error of judgement, which inflicts the impending doom of a traditional tragic hero. The greatest tragedy in the lives of Kullervo and Túrin is, nevertheless, the accidental act of incest that both heroes perform. Kullervo seduces his sister, and after a night together, they find out that they are related. Túrin goes as far as marrying his unidentified sister, and leaves her bearing his child. Both sisters discover the truth about their kinship and drown themselves in nearby rivers seeking peace in death. When Kullervo and Túrin hear about this, they both come to the same conclusion and request their swords to grant them death. In the case of their suicide even the wording in both stories is relatively similar:

Kullervo:
 "And he asked the sword's opinion,
 If it was disposed to slay him,
 To devour his guilty body,
 And his evil blood to swallow.

 Understood the sword his meaning,
 Understood the hero's question,
 And it answered him as follows:
 Wherefore at thy heart's desire
 Should I not thy flesh devour,
 And drink up thy blood so evil?
 I who guiltless flesh have eaten
 Drank the blood of those who sinned not?"
 (*Kalevala* 1:124)

Túrin:
 "Hail Gurthang!
 No lord or loyalty dost thou know,
 save the hand that wieldeth thee?
 From no blood wilt thou shrink!
 Wilt thou therefore take Túrin Turambar,
 wilt thou slay me swiftly?"
 And from the blade rang a cold voice in answer:
 'Yea, I will drink thy blood gladly,
 that so I may forget the blood
 of Beleg my master,
 and the blood of Brandir slain unjustly.
 I will slay thee swiftly.'
 (Tolkien 2006:207.)

After these dialogues, both men secure their swords to the ground and dive into them which, according to Hassinen (1988:73), is the only end befitting such a character. Thus, in both stories the guilt of the downfall drives the heroes to suicide, which again follows the traditional storyline of a tragic hero.

3.2. Kullervo as an antihero

Unlike Hassinen, Ranki (2008:91) argues that although Túrin can be seen as a traditional tragic hero, Kullervo does not meet the standards set by Aristotle in *Poetics*. According to Aristotle, a tragic hero must always evoke compassion in the audience. The audience will feel fear, and thus compassion, when they witness misfortune befall a character similar to them (Aristotle 1959: 33). Thus, the hero must also have enough redeeming qualities in order for the audience to relate to the character. Ranki claims in her Master's thesis that as Kullervo repeatedly acts against the advice of others, has selfish and unethical motives and breaks multiple moral laws, he loses the compassion of the reader (2008:88-91). The contrast between the inner characters of Túrin and Kullervo is evident in many events in the stories. For example, Túrin accidentally kills his friend in self-defence, but when Kullervo kills the wife of Ilmarinen the deed is done in a moment of pure hatred evoked by a dirty trick played by the wife. She has baked a stone into Kullervo's bread, and when he tries to cut a piece out of it, his father's old knife is broken to pieces. Enraged, Kullervo murders her. The different acts of incest furthermore reflect the contrast in the characters' nature. Túrin innocently falls in love with his sister and marries her. Kullervo's story is very different: he seduces his sister on a dark road, and nearly forces himself on her. The motives of Kullervo and Túrin are also very different: Kullervo goes to war against the family of Untamo only to avenge the death of his father, whereas Túrin wants to free his people from the oppression of the eastern people.

In addition to the quality of Kullervo's character, Ranki claims that the text itself has an ironic undertone towards Kullervo which means that the text is neither on his side nor calling for compassion (2008:90-91). In the end of rune 36, Väinämöinen turns Kullervo into a warning example of mistreating children (*Kalevala* 2:125). According to Ranki, this warning brings “a moralistic perspective” into the story (2008:91). The perspective Ranki has chosen emphasises that Kullervo and his actions should be shunned rather than idolised, and from this standpoint he cannot be perceived as a tragic hero. She concludes that whereas Túrin is a tragic hero, Kullervo is the hero of a satire (Ranki 2008: 114). Based on the arguments made by Ranki, and the theory provided by Aristotle, I would go as far as categorising Kullervo as an anti-hero: he lacks heroic qualities, seeks revenge from purely personal reasons and has no sense of morality. In many ways, Kullervo resembles a stereotypical villain, but because of his horrible childhood conditions and the mistreatment he goes through, the reader has some sympathy for him, especially at the beginning of the story.

In conclusion, my interpretation from the master's theses of Hassinen and Ranki is that

Túrin has been correctly categorised as a tragic hero in both studies, but Hassinen is mistaken in her interpretation of Kullervo as a tragic hero. Ranki is more realistic in her analysis that in order to interpret Kullervo as a tragic hero, the reader has to feel compassion for him throughout the whole story. As the character is both selfish and immoral, and the text itself is against him, it is very unlikely that Kullervo could sustain the compassion of the reader.

4 INTERTEXTUALITY- TEXTS IN RELATION TO OTHER TEXTS

The intertextuality of a literary work can be defined as the net of relationships between the text and any other texts. Intertextuality is central to both the interpretation and creation of a given text. In other words, intertextuality is not only the relationships between different texts, but it is also linked to the writer's intentions and the reader's understanding of the text. As stated by Worton and Still, intertextuality as a concept asserts that texts can never stand on their own, completely isolated from other texts (1990:1). The most important notion is that every text has a relationship with both the writer and the reader of the text (Worton and Still 1990:1). Both of these relationships can be divided further into new sections. In the case of the writer, the most important division is between intentional and unintentional intertextuality. Allusions and references can, on one hand, be a conscious, stylistic effort on the writer's part to connect a text to the diverse network of other texts (ibid.). On the other hand, the writer brings to the text at hand all the texts he or she has ever encountered (ibid.), on variable degrees and in various states of consciousness. The very foundation of the writer's thinking is influenced by the surrounding historical, social and intertextual settings.

The relationship between the text and its reader adds another dimension to the concept of intertextuality. As with writers, readers bring to each text their own history of various texts (Worton and Still 1990:1-2). Often the reader's textual history can differ greatly from that of the writer's, especially in the modern day where texts from other areas, cultures and times are readily available both to the writer and the reader. This diversity in textual history can result in two phenomena: the planned references of the author may be unfamiliar to the reader and thus go undetected, or the reader's own textual history contains some additional material, leading to a new understanding of the text, unforeseen by its author (Worton and Still 1990:2).

In the present study, I use intertextuality to refer to any kind of relationship between *The Silmarillion* and the *Kalevala*. As stated previously, intertextuality can be independent from the writer's own intentions, and thus it would be possible to study the reader's interpretation of *The Silmarillion* as having been influenced by the *Kalevala* without trying to establish an

actual link between the two texts. However, as such a link has been found in previous studies, some of which I have already discussed in this thesis, I can safely assume that the *Kalevala* has acted as a source of influence for Tolkien and for *The Silmarillion* in particular.

5 THE PRESENT STUDY

In this section I will present the actual context of the present study. Firstly, I will discuss the motivations of the present study and introduce the research questions. Secondly, I will shortly describe the data of the present study: the *Kalevala* and *The Silmarillion*. Finally, the methods of analysis are discussed on the basis of Aristotle's theory on tragedy and the theory of intertextuality.

5.1 The research questions

This study of character was conducted to serve two purposes. My initial interest was to discover what kind of heroes Tolkien, depicted in his stories. Furthermore, as I and many other researchers find Tolkien much indebted to the Finnish language and mythology, I wanted to study the influence the *Kalevala* had on J.R.R. Tolkien's work. As this is Bachelor's thesis, I had to limit my study to a single character, and I wanted to choose a character that had not been previously studied in regard to the *Kalevala*. I thus chose to study the character of Fëanor, who is not only a very central figure in Tolkien's mythology, but also relatively ignored in previous research. The chosen research questions reflect the bipolar nature of focus in this study:

1. How does Fëanor fit Aristotle's description of a **tragic hero**?
2. What do the *Kalevala* and the character of Seppo Ilmarinen add to the reader's interpretation of Fëanor?

5.2 The data

5.2.1 *The Silmarillion*

Tolkien's need to create a complete legendarium in which his languages could have naturally developed eventually led to the creation of *The Silmarillion*. *The Silmarillion* revolves around the story of the Silmarils, covering thousands of years of the history of Middle-earth from its

creation to the events described in *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien always saw *The Silmarillion* as his central work, but he did not live to see it completely finished. His son Christopher Tolkien edited the manuscript Tolkien left behind and published the final version of *The Silmarillion* in 1977. Out of Tolkien's works, *The Silmarillion* has the closest connection to the *Kalevala*, as Tolkien himself admitted that the Finnish epic was “the original germ for *Silmarillion*” (Tolkien 1981:87).

The *Silmarillion* consists of five parts. The first part is called the *Ainulindale*, which is the creation myth of Middle-Earth. In the *Ainulindale*, Iluvatar, the god of all, creates a choir of godlike creatures called the Ainur. Together they create the world Ea by singing the music of Iluvatar. The Ainur are divided into higher, more powerful Valar and Maiar, the lesser Ainur who serve the Valar. In the second part called the *Valaquenta*, the Valar are described in detail and some of the most important Maiar are introduced. The third part, *Quenta Silmarillion* relates the complete history of the Silmarils, the great gems created by the master smith Fëanor. The extraordinary gems were much coveted, and left a trail of war and sorrow in their wake. The last two parts are called *Akallabêth* and *Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age*, and they narrate the later history of Middle-Earth.

For the purposes of this thesis, I will summarise the story of Fëanor from the *Quenta Silmarillion*. Fëanor is the greatest master smith of the Noldor. He creates the Silmarils, the mystical jewels that hold the light of the sacred trees. Fëanor is very protective of the stones, as they are his most treasured possessions, but Melkor, a fallen Valar, murders Fëanor's father and steals the gems. Fëanor swears an unholy oath to recover the Silmarils, and his seven sons join him in his eternal vow. This oath takes them on a voyage of vengeance, eventually leading to the deaths of Fëanor and all his sons. The three Silmarils are spread across the world, one to the sky, one to the sea and one to the earth. I will discuss Fëanor's tale in greater detail in Section 6.1.

5.2.2 The *Kalevala*

Elias Lönnrot compiled the *Kalevala*, the Finnish national epic, from the oral folklore of Finland and Karelia. Lönnrot acted as both a recorder and an author, on the one hand attempting to keep the material as authentic as possible, and on the other hand remodelling the individual poems and creating new material to form a consistent manuscript. The *Kalevala* consists of 50 epic poems or runes, telling the stories of steadfast old Väinämöinen, young Joukahainen, the master smith Ilmarinen and many others. The runes are written in **Kalevala**

metre, which is a form of trochaic tetrameter. Other prominent stylistic features are alliteration, where consecutive words share the same first letters, as in *Vaka-Vanha-Väinämöinen*, and parallelism, the repetition of previous lines with differing word order or with the use of synonyms (Suomen Kalevalaseura, 2008). The epic played an important role in the development of the Finnish national identity and consolidated the status of the Finnish language in Finland, thus being one of the factors that eventually led to Finland's independence from Russia in 1917 (Vento, 1992). I have chosen to use the translation of W.F.Kirby (1907), as it is the version of the *Kalevala* that Tolkien first encountered it.

As the character Seppo Ilmarinen is used as a point of comparison in the present study, I will shortly review the main events of his tale. Ilmarinen is the great, eternal master smith of Kalevala. He forges many great things, among which are the sun and the moon, but his finest creation is the mysterious Sampo. The Sampo is a magical artefact which makes salt, grain and money. Ilmarinen forges the Sampo for Louhi in order to win her daughter's hand in marriage, but later regrets this decision. Together with Väinämöinen and Lemminkäinen, he steals back the Sampo, but the artefact is destroyed in battle. The sea then carries the pieces of the Sampo all over the world. The story of Ilmarinen is discussed in greater detail in Section 6.2.

5.3 The methods of analysis

In the present study the rules and concepts developed by Aristotle were used as a starting point for a descriptive analysis. On one hand, I compared the character of Fëanor to Aristotle's tragic hero, concentrating my analysis on the six concepts introduced earlier in this thesis: the nature of the character, the opposing force, the hamartia, the disclosure, the peripeteia and the downfall. On the other hand I compared Fëanor to the character of Ilmarinen and found similarities in their stories, characters and creations. This second part of the comparative analysis was based on and justified by the theory of intertextuality; all texts are the sum of previous texts read by the writer and the reader. As Tolkien was very familiar with the *Kalevala* and has explicitly stated that he used it as a source of inspiration (Tolkien 1981:214), it is justifiable to claim that the *Kalevala* was an important element behind *The Silmarillion*. It was thus also reasonable to investigate the existence of an intertextual link, whether conscious or unconscious, between the characters of Fëanor and Ilmarinen.

6 ANALYSING FĒANOR

6.1 Fëanor as a tragic hero

In the following sections I will analyse Fëanor as a tragic hero, following the rules set by Aristotle. I will begin each section by summarising the relevant events in Fëanor's tale and then move to analysing the material in relation to the topic of the section. Firstly, I will study Fëanor's character and compare it to Aristotle's definition of a tragic hero and introduce Fëanor's pride and obsession as forms of hamartia. Then, I will present Melkor as a maleficent force that influences the actions of the hero. Then I will move on to the Fable and discuss the hamartia, disclosure and tragic end of Fëanor's tale.

6.1.1 The character of a hero

Fëanor is the mightiest prince of the Noldor, the firstborn son of Finwë, the high king. His birth name is Fëanáro, the Spirit of Fire, given to him by his mother Míriel. In childbirth, Míriel gives Fëanor so much of her own life energy that she loses her will to live. Míriel departs for Lorien shortly after Fëanor's birth, where her spirit leaves her body and she dies. His noble parentage and his immortal mother's sacrifice set him apart from the ordinary Noldor:

"For Fëanor was made the mightiest in all parts of body and mind, in valour, in endurance, in beauty, in understanding, in skill, in strength and subtlety alike, of all the Children of Ilúvatar, and a bright flame was in him." (The Silmarillion: 85)

Fëanor is just and proud, but has an extremely fierce temper. He is skilled both in word and action: a renowned speaker, craftsman and fighter. Fëanor grows and becomes the most skilful smith of the Noldor. He marries Nerdanel the Wise, who bears him seven sons. Nerdanel tries, often in vain, to moderate her husband's temper. Fëanor's father Finwë remarries and has two more sons, but Fëanor is too proud and never holds much affection for his half-brothers.

Fëanor's nobility and his extraordinary birth create the basis for his heroism. As stated by Aristotle, a hero must be someone exceptional, in many ways greater than the average person. Growing up, Fëanor fulfils the promise of his birth by becoming the greatest gem-smith of the Noldor. He is respected by everyone and fiercely loved by his father and wife. He is the crown prince of Valinor, destined to rule after his father's reign. Thus, he is both "a man of great reputation and prosperity" (Aristotle 1959: 33), meeting Aristotle's first requirements of

a tragic hero. Furthermore, his temper and his proud nature make him more believable as a real character, allowing the reader to empathise and identify with him. This fulfils the second part of Aristotle's contradictory definition of a tragic hero as someone who is true-to-life and yet something more (Aristotle 1959: 38). Fëanor's temper and pride are also established from the very beginning of his tale. These two aspects will become the hamartia, fatal flaws of character leading Fëanor to his downfall.

6.1.2 The hero's corruption: introducing Melkor as the opposing force

Fëanor's greatest creations are the Silmarils, three magical gems that shine with the light of the two sacred trees of Valinor. The Silmarils are utterly unique, as part of Fëanor's own spirit went into the making of them. Not even Aüle, the master maker of the Valar, could copy them, and none knew the substance of which they were made of (*The Silmarillion*: 55). All are in awe of the stones, and the Valar hallow them so that no impure hands may touch them without being burned. Over time, Fëanor grows jealous of the jewels. Melkor, a fallen Valar, lusts for the gems and feeds Fëanor's paranoia by spreading lies and rumours in Valinor. Eventually Fëanor loses his temper and accuses his half-brother Fingolfin of plotting to steal the Silmarils and to overthrow their father from the throne of Noldor. The Valar exiles Fëanor to Formenos for threatening his brother's life. Finwë follows his son in the name of the love he bears for Fëanor, and Fingolfin is elected to rule in Finwë's place. Thus, Melkor's lies come as a result of Fëanor's own actions to prevent them. This element represents a classic form of peripeteia, where the defensive actions taken to prevent an unwanted event lead to the realisation of the fears (Aristotle 1959: 31).

Fëanor takes the Silmarils with him in exile and places them in a safe vault in his house. Melkor, craving for the jewels, attempts to persuade Fëanor to become his ally, but this time Fëanor sees through his lies and rejects him. Enraged, Melkor leaves Valinor and makes an alliance with a large, maleficent spider called Ungoliant. In the meantime, the Valar attempt to end the feud between Fëanor and Fingolfin by summoning Fëanor back to reconcile with his brother. All of Valinor attends the celebration of the united brothers, except for Finwë, who has remained in Formenos. During the celebration, Ungoliant poisons the Two Trees and escapes under Melkor's cloud of darkness.

In Fëanor's tale, Melkor acts as the contaminating force. He sows the first seeds of doubt, turning Fëanor against his own brother and isolating him from the community. He then tries to directly corrupt Fëanor and turn him into an ally, but Fëanor's righteousness and his absolute

hate for Melkor overcome his pride. However, from this moment on all of Fëanor's greatest follies are direct replies to Melkor's actions. Even though Fëanor chooses to act as he does, the tragedy would not have occurred without Melkor's prompting. The introduction of Melkor as a mighty and cunning force of evil takes some of the blame away from Fëanor, making the reader feel that the hero's fate is not altogether deserved. This again creates more empathy towards Fëanor, heightening the tragedy of his tale.

As a wilful agitator and deceiver, Melkor could be compared to the dragon Glaurung in Túrin's tale. Furthermore, as Ranki (2008: 72) claims that Glaurung is a personification of Melkor, the connection is worth investigating. In Túrin's tale, Glaurung lies to Túrin on many occasions, and each lie leads to more destruction. The greatest damage is however inflicted when the dragon reveals the truth about Túrin's wife Níniel. Níniel is identified as Túrin's long lost sister Nienor, who had been enchanted by Glaurung and lost her memory. Hearing the truth, Níniel commits suicide, which leads to Túrin taking his own life. Again, the intrusion of the powerful enemy, Glaurung, combined with all the other connected unfortunate events, creates a feeling that fate itself is against Túrin. This sense of predestination, as in Fëanor's tale, intensifies the emotional effect of the tragedy (Aristotle 1959: 29).

6.1.3 The hamartia and the disclosure

The Trees could be revived with the Silmarils, as the light of the trees still survives in the gems. But Fëanor cannot bear to see them destroyed, even if it means the loss of the Two Trees. Thus, Fëanor refuses to willingly surrender the gems to the Valar and states that were they to take the Silmarils by force, they would be no better than Melkor himself. A messenger brings news from Formenos, stating that Melkor has slain Finwe and stolen the Silmarils. In his rage Fëanor names Melkor Morgoth, the "Dark Enemy". Then, as the new king of the Noldor, Fëanor speaks to his people and with the power of his words and anger persuades them to leave Valinor and retrieve the stones.

Fëanor blames the Valar for everything that has happened and makes an unholy vow to fight anyone who withholds the Silmarils. He invokes the Valar and Ilúvatar himself as his witnesses and condemns his soul into eternal darkness should he fail:

"They swore an oath which none shall break, and none should take, by the name even of Ilúvatar, calling the Everlasting Dark upon them if they kept it not... ...vowing to pursue with vengeance and hatred to the ends of the World Vala, Demon, Elf or Man as yet unborn, or any creature, great or small, good or evil, that time should bring forth unto the end of days, whoso should hold or take or keep a Silmaril from their possession." (*The Silmarillion*: 70)

The seven sons of Fëanor join their father in his oath, and their quest for the jewels becomes a

cause for many a great tragedy in the history of Middle-Earth, first of which is the Kinslaying of elves at the havens of the Teleri. Fëanor needs vessels to take his army over the sea to Middle-Earth, but the Teleri refuse to surrender their ships, as they do not wish to defy the Valar. Thus, Fëanor marches his forces against their own kin. Many of the Teleri are slain and their ships taken.

Fëanor's initial refusal to surrender the Silmarils can be seen as an instance of classical hamartia, a serious error of judgement caused by the fatal flaw of character (Aristotle 1959:26). The moment of refusal marks the spot where Fëanor's obsessive love and jealousy for the Silmarils cause him to act against his noble character. Had he promised to surrender the jewels to the Valar, they undoubtedly would have aided Fëanor in his pursuit of Melkor, potentially changing the whole course of history. However, Fëanor's jealousy and pride make him choose a darker road. From this moment on, Fëanor abandons his virtues one by one as his obsession with the Silmarils overpowers his love for his people, friends and family.

The arrival of the messenger only moments after Fëanor's refusal signifies the most tragic form of disclosure (Aristotle 1959: 36): the hero has acted in ignorance and only gains knowledge of the tragedy afterwards. Had the messenger arrived before Fëanor refused to surrender the Silmarils, he could have negotiated with the Valar and asked for their assistance. Instead, having previously denied the Valar, he is forced to act without their assistance.

The unholy vow and the challenging of the Valar and Iluvatár complete the change from pride to hubris, as Fëanor renounces his faith, god and the final resting place of his immortal soul. Not only does this condemn Fëanor to a tragic fate, but the misfortune is also extended to his sons, and through their actions to the races of elves and men. No children of Iluvatár had ever killed one another before the kinslaying of Teleri, and for this act the Doom of Mandos fell on Fëanor and his sons:

"Tears unnumbered ye shall shed; and the Valar will fence Valinor against you, and shut you out, so that not even the echo of your lamentation shall pass over the mountains. On the House of Fëanor the wrath of the Valar lieth from the West unto the uttermost East, and upon all that will follow them it shall be laid also. Their Oath shall drive them, and yet betray them, and ever snatch away the very treasures that they have sworn to pursue. To evil end shall all things turn that they begin well; and by treason of kin unto kin, and the fear of treason, shall this come to pass. The Dispossessed shall they be for ever." (*The Silmarillion*: 74)

The kinslaying can be seen as Tolkien's equivalent of the original sin, which leads to the banishing of the Noldor from their sacred haven of Valinor and condemning them to roam the dark lands of Middle-Earth without ever returning to the light of the Valar. More specifically, the Doom of Mandos singles out the House of Fëanor, proclaiming that for their sins they shall never regain the Silmarills.

6.1.4 The hero's downfall

As there is not enough space on the ships, Fëanor takes all of them and sails in secrecy to Middle-Earth. His brother Fingolfin and his followers are left on the shores of Valinor. Still tormented by his jealousy, Fëanor decides to burn the ships to prevent his brother from taking the Silmarils. Thus, the Noldor set fire to the ships, and the fire is so great that Fingolfin and his followers see them from across the sea and discover they have been betrayed.

Melkor, having seen the great fire, sends his own armies to fight Fëanor. But the enemy cannot match the Noldor, who still hold the memories of Valinor and the Light clear in their minds. After a victorious battle, the Noldor marches on towards Angband, Melkor's fortress. Fëanor, still fierce in his rage, advances with great haste, laughing as he slays the fleeing remnants of Melkor's host. Finally, he comes within sight of Angband's towers. There he is ambushed by a hoard of Balrogs, fiery spirits of fallen Maiar once corrupted by Melkor. Having rushed on, Fëanor has only few elves with him, but he fights with terrible strength and passion. When his sons join the battle, the Balrogs are defeated, but Fëanor has been fatally wounded and is carried away to a nearby mountain. Fëanor is still filled with anger and defiance, even in death. He curses the enemy, demands his sons to keep their vow and avenge his death, knowing that they can never do these deeds unaided:

“And looking out from the slopes of Ered Wethrin with his last sight he beheld far off the peaks of Thangorodrim, mightiest of the towers of Middle-earth, and knew with the foreknowledge of death that no power of the Noldor would ever overthrow them; but he cursed the name of Morgoth thrice, and laid it upon his sons to hold to their oath, and to avenge their father. Then he died; but he had neither burial nor tomb, for so fiery was his spirit that as it sped his body fell to ash, and was borne away like smoke; and his likeness has never again appeared in Arda, neither has his spirit left the halls of Mandos. Thus ended the mightiest of the Noldor, of whose deeds came both their greatest renown and their most grievous woe.” (*The Silmarillion*: 94)

Fëanor dies, and his passing spirit incinerates his body. His sons remain in Middle-Earth and attempt to fulfil their oath, but one by one they all fall under the Doom of Mandos for the sin of slaying their own kin.

Fëanor's death can be seen as the Crisis of Feeling, yet another requirement named by Aristotle. The Crisis of Feeling is a scene, in which a “harmful or painful experience” is conveyed to the reader in order to increase the emotional effect of the tragedy (Aristotle 1959: 32). The tale has reached its hapless end, as is only suited according to Aristotle's (1959: 34) rules: “...end in misfortune; for it is, as I have said, the right thing to do. This is clearly demonstrated on the stage, where such plays, if they succeed, are the most tragic”.

Even though Fëanor has met his tragic end, the tragedy lives on in his sons, who are still

bound by their oath. The House of Fëanor leaves behind a legacy of sorrow and destruction as the hunt for the Silmarils results in feuds, wars and further kin slayings. According to Aristotle (1959: 34) “the finest tragedies are plotted, and concern a few families”. The destruction of the whole House of Fëanor follows this rule closely. A second rule considering the involvement of family members is also fulfilled by the tragedy of Fëanor’s sons: the closer the connection between the persons involved in the tragedy, the greater its emotional effect (Aristotle 1959: 35).

6.1.5 Conclusion: Fëanor as a classical tragic hero

As demonstrated in the previous sections, Fëanor fits Aristotle’s description of a traditional tragic hero. Firstly, he is a character that is good and virtuous, but at the same time true to life (Aristotle 1959: 38). From the moment of his birth he is marked out as exceptional, someone set out for great deeds. The flaws in his character, pride and temper, make him more identifiable for the reader, fulfilling the conditions of authenticity and plausibility. Secondly, Fëanor is faced with a great enemy, whose lies become reality as he attempts to prevent them. This heightens the injustice of his tragic fate, strengthening the emotional attachment of the reader. Thirdly, Fëanor’s pride and love change to hubris and obsession, which are both classic forms of hamartia. Fourthly, he experiences many instances of peripeteia, where his own actions cause the very things he aimed to prevent. On a larger scale, Fëanor’s entire tale from the creation of the Silmarils to his death can be interpreted as peripeteia: the Silmarils, which were the pinnacle of his creation and greatest achievement, eventually cost him not only his former status and respect, but also his life and the freedom of his immortal soul. The misfortune is also extended to his sons, who join him in his hapless quest. Finally, Fëanor experiences the ultimate downfall, as he is slain by his enemies and dies without achieving any of his goals. The reader is forced to witness the dramatic desecration of the greatest of the Noldor, as Fëanor descends from a respected artisan and leader into a vengeful and bitter ruin of his former glory. The change in fortune is so tremendous that it must produce an intense emotional response from the reader (Aristotle 1959: 33). Furthermore, Fëanor’s actions doom his soul and the souls of his offspring into eternal darkness, destroying his own bloodline and leaving behind a legacy of misery.

6.2. Fëanor and Seppo Ilmarinen

In the following sections I will compare Fëanor to Seppo Ilmarinen, the master smith of the *Kalevala*. The comparison will be based on four aspects: First, I will examine the stories of Fëanor and Ilmarinen and highlight some of the most important similarities. Then I will discuss the nature of the characters and how both men are unlucky in love. Finally, I will compare the greatest creations of the two master smiths, the Sampo and the Silmarils, and demonstrate that the objects are very similar, both on the surface and on an ideological level.

6.2.1. Stories

In order to examine the relationship between Fëanor and Seppo Ilmarinen, I will summarise the story of Ilmarinen from the *Kalevala*. Even though Ilmarinen is a central character in the *Kalevala*, his tale is often intertwined with those of other characters. Furthermore, his story is narrated in small sections and divided evenly among the runes. It was thus harder to create a consistent narrative. The most important runes are 9-10, 18-21, 37-38, 42-43 and 48-49.

Seppo Ilmarinen is the eternal master smith of Kalevala. As a brother of the ancient sage Väinämöinen, he had a godlike status in the Finnish mythology. On the very day Ilmarinen is born, he builds himself a forge and invents steel (*Kalevala* 1:81). When Väinämöinen is searching for a wife, he is captured by Louhi, the powerful sorceress of Pohjola. In exchange for his freedom, Väinämöinen promises her a magical artefact called Sampo. Väinämöinen travels back to Kalevala and attempts to persuade Ilmarinen to forge the Sampo by promising him the hand of the Maiden of Pohjola in marriage. Ilmarinen is not interested, and Väinämöinen has to conjure the winds to carry the smith against his will (*Kalevala* 1: 95-99). In Pohjola, Louhi and the Maiden of Pohjola entertain Ilmarinen. Stricken by the maiden's beauty, Ilmarinen agrees to forge the Sampo (*Kalevala* 1: 100).

There is no forge in Pohjola, so Ilmarinen builds one and begins his work. Four times he attempts to forge the Sampo (*Kalevala* 1:101-105). One by one, four magnificent creations emerge from the fire: a golden bow, a warship, a cow with golden horns and a great plough. However, Ilmarinen is not satisfied with any of the creations, for they all have a maleficent nature. All four creations are broken and fed back into the flames. After the failed attempts Ilmarinen invokes all four winds to blow into his forge, and after three days, the Sampo is finally completed. But the Maiden of Pohjola does not wish to marry Ilmarinen, and the disheartened smith leaves for home. Later on Ilmarinen and Väinämöinen return to woo the

Maiden of Pohjola, and the suitors compete in impossible tasks set by Louhi (*Kalevala* 1:211-224). With the maiden's help, Ilmarinen succeeds in the tasks, and great wedding feast is prepared. The couple marries and goes home.

Ilmarinen buys Kullervo, and assigns the slave to help his wife with the household chores. The wife abuses Kullervo, treating him with malice until the young man loses his temper and murders her (*Kalevala* 2: 92-99). Ilmarinen, grieving for his dead wife, forges himself a new one from gold and silver. However, the golden wife is cold and distant, and Ilmarinen leaves in search of a new maiden to marry (*Kalevala* 2: 125-132). He kidnaps a younger sister of his first wife from Pohjola, but the girl refuses to marry him. Offended, Ilmarinen sings the poor maiden into a seagull (*Kalevala* 2: 132-139). Envious of the prosperity the Sampo has brought to Pohjola, Ilmarinen, Väinämöinen and Lemminkäinen sail there to steal back the creation.

The men succeed in the theft, but Louhi pursues them in the form of a giant eagle and the Sampo is broken in the heat of a battle at sea (*Kalevala* 2: 189). The pieces of Sampo fall into the sea, and the waves carry them to the shores of Finland. Louhi continues to torment the people of Kalevala by stealing the sun and the moon. Ilmarinen then forges a new sun from silver and a new moon from gold, setting them on the tops of great trees (*Kalevala* 2:249-245). Despite all his efforts, the moon and the sun do not shine and Ilmarinen begins to forge mighty weapons to defeat the sorceress. Louhi, seeing her own impending doom in the weapons, releases the lights from their prison (*Kalevala* 2:255-258).

There are many parallels between the tales of Ilmarinen and Fëanor. For example, both men are depicted as exceptional from birth. Ilmarinen and Fëanor become the greatest masters of craftsmanship, but they both have a bad temper. They forge unique magical objects, which are later stolen by treachery and sorcery. In the *Kalevala*, Väinämöinen sings the people of Pohjola to sleep (*Kalevala* 2: 170), whereas in *The Silmarillion*, Melkor and Ungoliant bring a great darkness to Valinor by killing the Two Trees. In both stories, the thieves escape hastily and are pursued by the owners of the objects. The thefts of the Sampo and the Silmarils lead to war and destruction. In the end, both the theft and the pursuit prove unavailing: after much fighting, the objects are either destroyed or lost to all those who once craved them.

Another parallel is the loss and regaining of celestial lights occurring in both stories. In the *Kalevala*, Louhi hides the sun and the moon. After a failed attempt to recreate the heavenly bodies, the heroes eventually succeed in recovering the original lights. In *The Silmarillion*, Melkor and Ungoliant destroy the Two Trees, casting darkness over the whole of Arda. The Valar place the last fruit of the golden Laurelin and the last flower of the silver Telperion in vessels and raise them to the sky as the sun and moon (*The Silmarillion*: 86). The innocent

maiden turning into a seagull is yet another motif that is echoed in *The Silmarillion*: Elwing, granddaughter of Lúthien, is turned into a seagull as the sons of Fëanor attack her home in search of the Silmaril that Lúthien and Beren recovered from Melkor (*The Silmarillion*: 227).

6.2.2 Characters: immortal masters of magic and craftsmanship

Seppo Ilmarinen is depicted in the *Kalevala* as “the great primeval craftsman” (*Kalevala 1*: 83). Like Fëanor, Ilmarinen is immortal in the sense that he does not age, but neither man is indestructible. Both men are the most skilled and respected craftsmen of their respective worlds, and their reputations are widely known across the land. Never has there been an equal for their skill, nor will there ever be. The two men also share a passion for their creations, and will not stop until they are satisfied. For example, when Ilmarinen attempts to forge the Sampo, four other magnificent creations emerge from the fire of his forge, but the smith throws them all back into the flames because he is unsatisfied with them. Not only are Ilmarinen and Fëanor skilled in craftsmanship, but they are also masters of spells who use their magic in their work.

Despite their unparalleled skills in crafts and lore, Fëanor and Ilmarinen also have a darker side to their characters. Both men have bad tempers and are terrible in their anger. Ilmarinen loses his temper with a young maiden who rejects him, and tries to kill her with his sword. But the sword can understand his meaning and refuses to slay the innocent maiden. Ilmarinen then commences with a song that turns the girl into a seagull (*Kalevala 2*: 139). Fëanor also allows his temper to rule his actions: when the Teleri refuse to surrender their ships, Fëanor commands his forces to attack the Havens instead of further negotiations.

The duality of the characters is also reflected in their works: Ilmarinen and Fëanor create objects that bring both comfort and misery. Ilmarinen calls iron out of the lands with his song and forges it into steel, which is used for both tools of peace and war. Fëanor crafts many lesser gems before the Silmarils, among them the Palantíri, the seeing stones “wherein things far away could be seen small but clear as with the eyes of the eagles of Manwë” (*The Silmarillion*: 52). During the course of history, the Palantíri are used to spread knowledge and security, but some of the stones fall into the hands of the enemy, allowing them to spy on and poison the minds of others who hold the Palantíri.

6.2.3 Hapless love

Both Fëanor and Ilmarinen can be seen as being unsuccessful in love, and these misfortunes are ultimately caused by their own actions. Fëanor is married to Nerdanel, who is a loving and wise wife. Like her husband, she is very skilled both in art and mind, but her character differs from that of her husband: where Fëanor is proud and hot-tempered, Nerdanel is more patient and gentle. In the beginning of their marriage, their natures complement each other: her calmness mellows her husband's fire. But as Fëanor's obsession for the Silmarils grows and eventually drives him to folly, Nerdanel cannot accept her husband's deeds, and they become estranged (*The Silmarillion*: 52). When Fëanor leaves Valinor to retrieve the Silmarils, Nerdanel does not follow him, and they are forever parted, in this life and in the next.

Whereas Fëanor's misfortunes in love were caused by his obsession, Ilmarinen initially seems to suffer from sheer bad luck. Having finally succeeded in winning over the Maiden of Pohjola, Ilmarinen takes his wife back to Kalevala to start a family. He buys a slave called Kullervo, who is supposed to help Ilmarinen's wife in the household chores. The Maiden of Pohjola proves to have a mean nature: she abuses Kullervo, who eventually murders her. Ilmarinen grieves for his dead wife for several months, until he forges himself a maiden from gold and silver. The golden maiden is beautiful to behold, but there is no life in her, and Ilmarinen leaves in search of a new wife. He travels back to Pohjola, and asks Louhi to give him her younger daughter for a wife. Louhi, hearing for the first time the faith of her daughter, blames Ilmarinen for the death of the Maiden of Pohjola, and tells Ilmarinen to leave. Ilmarinen then turns to folly, and kidnaps the younger daughter, binding her in his slay and hastening home. But the girl does not want to marry Ilmarinen, and insults him by claiming that she would be happier living with a hare, a fox or a wolf in the forest than in Kalevala with Ilmarinen. Enraged, Ilmarinen sings her into a seagull, and leaves his search for love aside as he joins Väinämöinen and Lemminkäinen on the quest to recover the Sampo.

Ilmarinen and Fëanor have loving wives, but in both stories the heroes are eventually left alone. Whereas Ilmarinen is unjustly robbed of his first wife, Fëanor loses Nerdanel as a result of his own actions. But neither is Ilmarinen entirely without blame: desperate for a companion, he attempts to force an innocent girl into becoming his wife. As all his efforts to find love are in vain, Ilmarinen turns his attention towards his work. In a way, both Ilmarinen and Fëanor abandon romantic love for their works but in a reversed order: Fëanor loses his love as a result of his obsession, and Ilmarinen becomes obsessed because he has lost his love.

6.2.4. Creations: the Sampo and the Silmarills

The relationship between the Sampo and the Silmarils has already been studied by some Tolkien scholars (see for example Himes 2000), but as neither Tolkien nor Lönnrot explicitly explain the nature or the meaning of the objects, it has proved challenging to reach a consensus on the matter. Tolkien himself thought that the objects were both “a thing and an allegory” (Shippey, 1982; 181). On one hand, they were concrete objects, something alluring and valuable, and on the other hand, they were the ideal of the creativity in their makers. Moreover, if the pieces of Sampo were the “true prosperity” of Finland, Tolkien wished to make the Silmarils into “a true prosperity for England” (Shippey, 1982:181).

Next, I will list some of the most commonly mentioned parallels between the Sampo and the Silmarils. Firstly, both are magical artefacts created by the most skilful craftsman of all time, who needed all their skills, knowledge and might to make them. Both the Sampo and the Silmarils are unique objects and cannot be duplicated. Secondly, they act as symbols of prosperity: the Sampo produces grain, salt and money, all of which were important symbols of material wealth, whereas the Silmarils represent a more spiritual, even divine, richness. Thirdly, even though the objects were originally crafted to bring joy and wellbeing, their creation ultimately leads to disaster, evil and war. The Silmarils and the Sampo are both desired by many and eventually stolen through the use of magic and spells. The thefts lead to great wars, which result in the objects being lost to all who once coveted them. The Silmarils are spread all over Arda, one in the sky, one in the sea and one in the land: Eärendil takes one to the Valar, who raise it to the sky as a star, and the two other Silmarils are stolen by Maglor and Maedhros, the last surviving sons of Fëanor. But the Silmarils burn their hands as the gems no longer rightfully belong to them. Maglor throws the second Silmaril to the sea, and Maedhros throws himself into a fiery pit with the last stone. The Sampo is broken into pieces as Louhi and Väinämöinen battle over it. The pieces fall into the ocean and are carried by the waves to the shores of Finland.

To conclude, there are many echoes of the Sampo plotline in the story of the Silmarils. The Sampo and the Silmarils are mystical artefacts, forged by powerful master smiths. The objects were originally made to spread good, but are greatly coveted by all. The artefacts are stolen, and the theft leads to war and destruction. Eventually, both the pieces of the Sampo and the Silmarils are spread over their respective worlds. Furthermore, the Sampo and the Silmarils are not only objects, but symbols of prosperity that reflect the nature of their makers on an ideological level.

6.2.5 Conclusion: Seppo Ilmarinen as Fëanor's ancestor

Several similarities between Seppo Ilmarinen and Fëanor have already been introduced in the previous sections. As for differences between the two characters, the main contrast between Ilmarinen and Fëanor lies in the character type: whereas Fëanor is a tragic hero, Ilmarinen is an epic hero. The change in the hero type was also significant in the case of Kullervo and Túrin: according to Ranki (2008: 114), Kullervo's tale is not a tragedy but a satire, and Kullervo as the hero of a satire differs from the tragic hero, Túrin. Much like Kullervo's portrait, the portrait of Ilmarinen is two-dimensional: he is a mystical, god-like character, whose nature is described rather vaguely in the *Kalevala*. In the end, Ilmarinen is just a powerful smith with a bad temper. Thus, it is hard for the audience to empathise with him. Tolkien, by taking the best and worst of Ilmarinen and by intensifying these character traits, has given the character more depth and brought him to life as Fëanor. As a tragic hero, Fëanor is both great and flawed, which helps the reader to identify with him.

Despite the basic differences in character type, Ilmarinen and Fëanor are remarkably similar. As can be seen in Table 1, there are significant similarities in the stories of Ilmarinen and Fëanor. For example, both men create mystical artefacts, which are later stolen and lost. Furthermore, Fëanor and Ilmarinen both abandon the notion of romantic love for their passion for work. They are unlucky in love, but their misfortunes are partly caused by their own actions. Table 1 also shows that the characters of Ilmarinen and Fëanor resemble each other closely: both men are talented but have a bad temper. Finally, the creations of Ilmarinen and Fëanor, the Sampo and the Silmarils, are also very similar. Thus, based on the numerous surface parallels in the two stories and on the very nature of the main characters, I would argue that Ilmarinen and the *Kalevala* have acted as a major source of inspiration for Fëanor's tale. Not only has Tolkien been inspired by some elements in the story of Ilmarinen and replicated them with little alteration, he has also adapted the very essence of Ilmarinen's character and improved upon it.

Table 1. Similarities between Seppo Ilmarinen and Fëanor

| | SEPPO ILMARINEN | FĒANOR |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Stories | Both stories evolve around mystical objects that are stolen through treachery and sorcery, fought over and finally lost to all those who once desired them. | |
| | Builds himself a forge on the very day he is born. | Marked for greatness from birth: Fëanor's mother gives him all her life force. |
| | The hiding of the sun and moon. | The loss of the Two Trees, which were the only light source on earth. |
| | The forging of the new sun and moon, which, although unsuccessful at first, eventually leads to the recovery of the original celestial lights | The making of the sun and moon. |
| | Ilmarinen curses the younger sister of his wife for not marrying him and turns her into a seagull. | Elwing is turned into a seagull when Fëanor's sons attacked her home. |
| Characters | The immortal master smith of Kalevala, who is also a powerful sorcerer | An immortal master of craftsmanship and magic and the most gifted of the Noldor. |
| | Has a bad temper: sings a maiden into a seagull for rejecting his love. | Has a bad temper: attacks the Teleri when they refuse to surrender their ships |
| Unlucky in love | Has a beautiful wife, who is killed by Kullervo. Ilmarinen then tries to make a maiden out of gold and silver, but she was cold. Finally he tries to win over the sister of his first wife, but she turns him down. | Has a devoted and wise wife, but the couple becomes estranged because of Fëanor's obsession with the Silmarils. |
| Creations | The Sampo | The Silmarils |
| | Was forged with the four winds. The Sampo made salt, grain and money. Originally, the Sampo was supposed to bring prosperity to Pohjola. | Were made with the light of the Two Trees, and the Silmarils could have been used to revive the Trees after the attack. Thus, they could have brought peace and prosperity back to Valinor. |
| | Is stolen by sorcery, and the theft leads to war and destruction. | Are stolen by sorcery, and the theft leads to war and destruction. |
| | During a battle the Sampo is smashed and the waters carry the pieces to the shores of Finland. | Eventually spread all over the world, one in the sky, one in the sea and one on earth. |
| | Were both concrete, alluring objects and also symbols of prosperity and of the creativity of their makers. | |

7 CONCLUSION

The aim of this character study was bipolar. On one hand, Fëanor was compared to Aristotle's description of a tragic hero. The most important constituents of tragedy and tragic hero were introduced and defined on the basis of *Poetics*. The analysis was based on six factors: the nature of the character, the opposing force, the hamartia, the disclosure, the peripeteia and the downfall. On the basis of these six factors, Fëanor was categorised as a classical tragic hero: his tale is a true tragedy in which the hero undergoes a change from a respected artist, warrior and king into an exiled pariah, cast out from the grace of god. In the end, Fëanor dies without recovering his beloved Silmarils, and his whole lineage is destroyed in the hunt for the gems.

On the other hand, Fëanor was compared to Seppo Ilmarinen, the master smith of the *Kalevala*. The characters, stories and creations of Fëanor and Ilmarinen were examined and evidence for similarity was provided from the data. Based on the theory of intertextuality and the significant resemblance between the two characters, a satisfactory intertextual link between Ilmarinen and Fëanor was established from the reader's perspective. This, according to Worton and Still (1990:2), is a sufficient result, as the intertextual relationships of a given text can be studied independently from the writer's intentions. However, as Tolkien himself has reflected on the role of the *Kalevala* as a source of inspiration, it is justified to claim that the intertextual link between Fëanor and Seppo Ilmarinen has been created as a conscious, artistic decision.

In her article, Rautala (1993: 30) suggests that Finnish acted as a "substratum" rather than an origin for Tolkien's artificial elven language called Quenya. Rautala (ibid.) explains that if one considered Quenya as a real language, a possible explanation for the connection would be that the elves migrated to an area of Middle-Earth occupied by a Finnish-speaking people. Then, after a period of coexistence, the Finnish-speaking tribe moved away, leaving behind traces of their culture and language. The same metaphor could be extended to describe the intertextual relationships between Seppo Ilmarinen and Fëanor, and between the *Kalevala* and *The Silmarillion*. Not only did Tolkien imitate surface elements such as characters, motifs and storylines but he also absorbed the very essence and atmosphere of the *Kalevala* and the Finnish language, using them as a substratum for his own imagination. However, *The Silmarillion* is more than just a simple retelling of the Finnish epic: it has evolved into something new and, in a way, original. Tolkien's monstrous effort to create a world that would, despite its artificial nature, be so vivid and life-like, never ceases to amaze literary scholars. In my opinion, the notion of other legends acting as a substratum for Tolkien's stories takes no merit away from the achievement. On the contrary, the *Kalevala* adds yet another dimension to the complex creation of perhaps the most ambitious writer of our time.

As the study was conducted as a Bachelor's thesis, the data had to be strictly limited. Initially I wanted to cover different types of heroes in Tolkien's repertoire, but had to limit my interest first into tragic heroes and eventually to Fëanor. Not only was the number of characters limited but also the number of sources had to be restricted. Thus I had to omit several other sources, as for example Tolkien's other works, and conduct my analysis solely on the basis of the *Kalevala* and *The Silmarillion*. Had I used additional sources, the analysis would have been more extensive, and I might have discovered new aspects both in regard to Fëanor as a tragic hero and to the relationship between Fëanor and Seppo Ilmarinen. As a

study of a single character pair, the intertextual results of this study cannot directly be generalized to Tolkien's work as a whole. However, together with other studies on the topic of intertextual influence, it can be used as evidence for the profound nature of influence the *Kalevala* had on Tolkien and his work.

The complicated histories, mythologies and tales written by Tolkien provide a wide set of characters for analysis. Examining other characters and types of heroes could help the reader understand the diversity of Tolkien's work. Studying other character pairings, such as Beren and Lemminkäinen or Melkor and Louhi, would offer a natural extension for this thesis and help promote the *Kalevala* as an important source of influence for Tolkien. Comparisons on a larger scale could be made between the *Kalevala* and other sources of inspiration, such as the Bible or Beowulf. This and further studies on the subject will hopefully raise the acceptance of Finnish and the *Kalevala* as significant, rather than superficial, influences in Tolkien's work. In addition, this study can act as a great introductory source for those interested in the nature of the influence the *Kalevala* had on J.R.R. Tolkien.

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