

Pauline Anstruther

Mr. Hartenburg

Inklings

Reflection Essay

May 30, 2003

Word Count: 328

### The Return of the King

The desperate deeds, both attempted and accomplished by Eowyn, arise from an adamant desire to recover her honor and the honor of Rohan. Gandalf shrewdly assesses the means by which the courageous and spirited Lady is daunted by illuminating the poisonous words of the servant of Saruman. Wormtongue endlessly mocks the dignity and glory of Rohan and the shadow of his deceptions takes root deeply in the spirit of Eowyn. She finds herself seemingly imprisoned by ignominy and her hope of regaining the majesty of her people gradually wanes into utter despair. Afflicted with hopelessness, Eowyn resolutely seeks a valiant death in battle and which is denied her at the moment of consummation. Nonetheless, the great lady continues to desire emancipation in the manner of her beloved king, “for he died and has both honor and peace” (939).

At this point in her development, Eowyn encounters the wise, compassionate Steward of Gondor who becomes her intimate friend and serves as a catalyst to her transformation. As they mutually consider the Evil that threatens Middle-earth, Eowyn describes herself standing “upon some dreadful brink, and it is utterly dark in the abyss before my feet, but whether there is any light behind me I cannot tell. For I cannot yet turn” (941). Although Faramir acknowledges the yawning chasm, he turns to find that Light will overcome the darkness and simultaneously with this proclamation, victory over Mordor is declared for all but Eowyn. The Steward later confesses the greatness and beauty of Eowyn. His sincere love and respect shatter her visions of ignominy and the overwhelming Evil is paralyzed. Once Eowyn admits joyfulness, she also turns to see that strength lies in the Light and the power to preserve what is good and honorable in redemptive healing, not destruction. Eowyn “gives up” in that she surrenders a burden of a blinding despair. Her character is not drawn as an exemplar but as an illustration of the fatefulness of despair and the overcoming quality of living hope.