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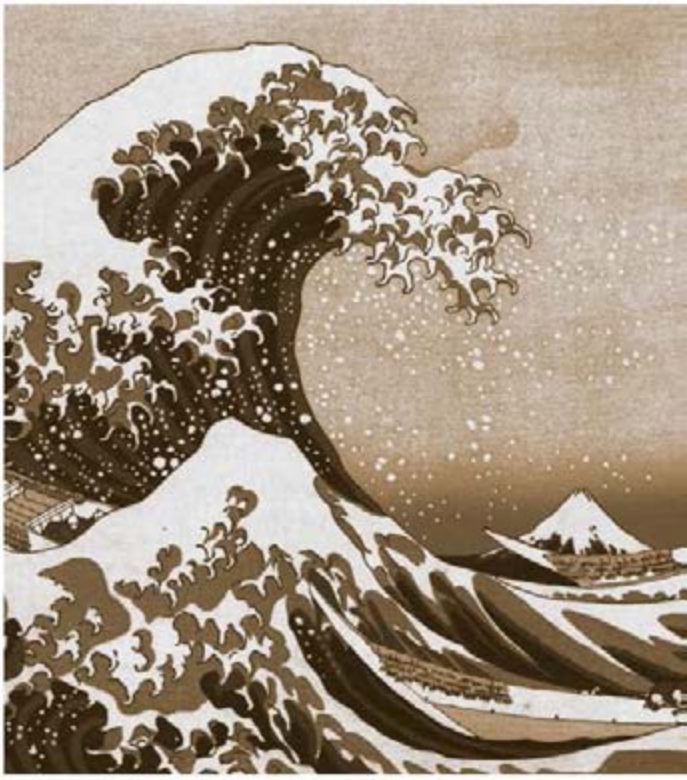

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Edited by

Michael D. C. Drout

Verlyn Flieger

David Bratman

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Tolkien Studies: An Annual Scholarly Review

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Editors' Introduction

This is the tenth issue of *Tolkien Studies*, the first refereed journal solely devoted to the scholarly study of the works of J.R.R. Tolkien. As editors, our goal is to publish excellent scholarship on Tolkien as well as to gather useful research information, reviews, notes, documents, and bibliographical material.

All articles have been subject to anonymous, external review as well as receiving a positive judgment by the Editors. In the cases of articles by individuals associated with the journal in any way, each article had to receive at least two positive evaluations from two different outside reviewers. Reviewer comments were anonymously conveyed to the authors of the articles. The Editors agreed to be bound by the recommendations of the outside referees. Although they are solicited and edited by the editors, book reviews represent the judgments of the individual reviewers, not *Tolkien Studies*.

From 2005-2012 David Bratman wrote "The Year's Work in Tolkien Studies" and was a member of the *Tolkien Studies* advisory board. With the present volume he becomes co-editor of the journal. Merlin DeTardo, who co-authored the "Year's Work" in 2011 and 2012, now assumes sole authorship of this essential section of the journal. *Tolkien Studies* is also pleased to announce that the journal will continue to be published by West Virginia University Press.

Michael D. C. Drout
Verlyn Flieger
David Bratman

Notes on Submissions

Tolkien Studies seeks works of scholarly quality and depth. Substantial essays and shorter, "Notes and Documents" pieces are both welcome.

Submissions should be double-spaced throughout and use parenthetical citations in the (Author page) form. A Works Cited page should conform to the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed. All citations to Tolkien's works should follow the "Conventions and Abbreviations" of *Tolkien Studies*.

Self-addressed, stamped envelopes should accompany all correspondence unless the author wishes to communicate via email and does not wish the hard-copy manuscript to be returned, in which case this requirement is waived.

Electronic submissions are preferred. These should be sent to Verlyn Flieger (verlyn@mythus.com) as attachments. Microsoft Word is the preferred word-processing program.

Hard-copy manuscripts should be sent to:

Tolkien Studies
c/o Prof. Verlyn Flieger
10221 Meredith Avenue
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Books for review should be sent to:

Tolkien Studies
c/o David Bratman
1663 Albatross Dr.
Sunnyvale CA 94087

Tolkien Studies encourages researchers to send us offprints of articles for inclusion in the yearly Bibliography and Year's Work. These should be sent to:

Tolkien Studies
c/o Prof. Michael Drout
Wheaton College
26 East Main Street
Norton, MA 02766

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Finally, we acknowledge a special debt of gratitude to our anonymous, outside reviewers who with their collegial service contribute so much to *Tolkien Studies*.

In Memoriam

Maggie Burns (1954–2012) was a librarian working in the Local Studies and History department of the Central Library in Birmingham, England. She was a graduate of St. Hilda's College, Oxford. A prolific creator of library displays and web pages related to the history and growth of Birmingham, she became expert on Tolkien's early life there, particularly his time at King Edward's School, and on the local family history of earlier generations of the Tolkien and Suffield families. In addition to displays on these matters for the library and for Tolkien conferences, she wrote a number of articles for the Tolkien Society. Notable among these are "John Ronald's Schooldays" and an extensively annotated edition of Tolkien's school poem "The Battle of the Eastern Field," both in *Mallorn* in 2008, and further articles in *Mallorn* in 2010 noted in the present volume's "Year's Work in Tolkien Studies." At the time of her death she had done a large amount of work on a book on the Tolkien and Suffield families in Birmingham.

Conventions and Abbreviations

Because there are so many editions of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, citations will be by book and chapter as well as by page-number (referenced to the editions listed below). Thus a citation from *The Fellowship of the Ring*, book two, chapter four, page 318 is written (*FR*, II, iv, 318). References to the Appendices of *The Lord of the Rings* are abbreviated by Appendix, Section and subsection, so subsection iii of section I of Appendix A is written (*RK*, Appendix A, I, iii, 321). The "Silmarillion" indicates the body of stories and poems developed over many years by Tolkien; *The Silmarillion* indicates the volume first published in 1977.

Abbreviations

B&C	*Beowulf and the Critics*. Ed. Michael D. C. Drout. Tempe, AZ: Arizona Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 2002. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 248.
Bombadil	*The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1962; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963.
CH	*The Children of Húrin* [title as on title page:] *Narn i Chîn Húrin: The Tale of the Children of Húrin*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: HarperCollins, 2007; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007.
FG	*Farmer Giles of Ham*. Ed. Christina Scull and Wayne G. Hammond. London: HarperCollins, 1999. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999.
FR	*The Fellowship of the Ring*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1954; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1954. Second edition, revised impression, Boston: Houghton Mifflin,1987.
H	*The Hobbit*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1937. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1938. *The Annotated Hobbit*. Ed. Douglas A. Anderson. Second edition, revised. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002.
Jewels	*The War of the Jewels*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: HarperCollins; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994.
Lays	*The Lays of Beleriand*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985.
Letters	*The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*. Ed. Humphrey Carpenter, with the assistance of Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981.
Lost Road	*The Lost Road and Other Writings*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: Unwin Hyman; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987.

Lost Tales I *The Book of Lost Tales, Part One.* Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984.

Lost Tales II *The Book of Lost Tales, Part Two.* Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984.

MC *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays.* Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984.

Morgoth *Morgoth's Ring.* Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: HarperCollins; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993.

OFS *Tolkien On Fairy-stories: Extended Edition.* Ed. Verlyn Flieger and Douglas A. Anderson. London: HarperCollins, 2008.

Peoples *The Peoples of Middle-earth.* Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: HarperCollins; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996.

RK *The Return of the King.* London: George Allen & Unwin 1955; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1956. Second edition, revised impression, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987.

S *The Silmarillion.* Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1977. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977. Second edition. London:HarperCollins, 1999; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001.

Sauron *Sauron Defeated.* Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: HarperCollins; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992.

SG *The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrun.* Ed Christopher Tolkien. London: HarperCollins; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009

Shadow *The Return of the Shadow.* Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: Unwin Hyman; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988.

Shaping — *The Shaping of Middle-earth*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986.

SWM — *Smith of Wootton Major: Extended Edition*. Ed. Verlyn Flieger. London: HarperCollins, 2005.

TL — *Tree and Leaf*. London: Unwin Books, 1964; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965. Expanded as *Tree and Leaf, including the Poem Mythpoeia [and] The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth Beorhthelm's Son*. London: HarperCollins, 2001.

TT — *The Two Towers*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1954; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1955. Second edition, revised impression, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987.

Treason — *The Treason of Isengard*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: Unwin Hyman; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989.

UT — *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-Earth*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980.

War — *The War of the Ring*. Ed. Christopher Tolkien. London: Unwin Hyman; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990.

Tolkien's Work: Is it Christian or Pagan? A Proposal for a "Synthetic" Approach

Claudio A. Testi

1. Foreword

Is Tolkien's work Christian or Pagan? Readers and scholars have been asking themselves this question since *The Lord of the Rings* was published in 1954. The dispute continues to the present day,[1] which is hardly surprising since what is at stake is a theme of fundamental importance in order to understand the work of the Oxford philologist. In this contribution, I would like:

1. to provide a short summary and a schematic list of weaknesses in both the thesis that "Tolkien's work is Christian" (§2) and its antithesis, "Tolkien's work is Pagan" (§3);
2. to attempt an interpretative approach (§§4–6) that could explain the tension between Paganism and Christianity that is typical of Tolkien's work in a unitary and non-contradictory perspective.

My argument should not at all be considered to be of a polemic nature. On the contrary, it should be seen as a serene analysis aimed at promoting additional contributions on the subject. It is therefore with the utmost respect that I will quote only a few of the major authors and only with the aim of exemplifying different viewpoints.

Before entering into this analysis, it is useful to emphasize that the subject under study is not Tolkien as an individual—his biography leaves no doubt about his being a devout Roman Catholic—but rather his works and especially his legendarium.

2. Thesis: Tolkien's Work is Christian

From this perspective, the legendarium can be seen as a world *intentionally containing explicit and exclusive Christian elements* such as the Uni-Trinity of God or His Resurrection (see below, §4.b''). When looked at this way, stories and characters are mainly interpreted with reference to the Christian concepts they should portray and, by that, preach. The most radical critic in this respect is certainly Joseph Pearce, followed by many others who share a similar approach: John G. West Jr., Stratford Caldecott, Peter J. Kreeft, Ralph C. Wood, and Nils Ivar Agøy among them. Such an approach shows five main weaknesses.

2.1. *It contradicts "Tolkien's razor."* Tolkien thought that the main defect of the Arthurian cycle was that it "is too lavish, and fantastical, incoherent and repetitive. For another and more important thing: it is involved in, and *explicitly contains the Christian religion*. For reasons which I will not elaborate, that seems to me fatal" (*Letters* 144, my emphasis). The same "razor" is used by Tolkien in writing *The Lord of the Rings*, as he himself tells: "the 'Third Age' was not a Christian world" (*Letters* 220); "I don't feel under any obligation to make my story fit with formalized Christian theology" (*Letters* 355); "I have deliberately written a tale, which is built on or out of certain 'religious' ideas, but is *not* an allegory of them (or anything else), and *does not mention them overtly, still less preach them*" (*Letters* 283–84, my emphasis). Not just from these statements (the author can fail in interpreting his own work), but mainly because Tolkien makes wide and consistent use of this razor (see § 5.2), it would be wrong to depict the legendarium as a mythology containing explicit Christian elements, as some critics assert:

> Among the chief accomplishments in our growing appreciation of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is the consensus view that *it is indubitably a Christian epic*. . . . If Tolkien had enjoyed several more lives beyond his allotted 81 years, he might have extended his mythological project to include the Incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection. (Wood, "J.R.R. Tolkien," 117, my emphasis)

> We are able to see the relationship between Christianity and the legendarium more as a process. . . . As the focus [of the *Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth*][2] shifted more and more from "stories" to working out in detail the philosophical and metaphysical framework in which they existed, *explicit Christianity and Roman Catholic form* simply could not be avoided. (Agøy, "The Fall and Man's Mortality," 17 and 26, my emphasis)

If this were so, it would be tantamount to Tolkien's having introduced into the Sub-creation truths that should instead belong to the Primary World, and this would, according to his own system, fatally destroy the enchantment of Tolkien's myth.

2.2. *It mistakes* applicability *for* allegory *and theorizes* hidden meanings. Tolkien carefully distinguishes these three different concepts: "I think that many confuse 'applicability' with 'allegory' but the one resides in the freedom of the reader, and the other in the purposed domination of the author" (*FR*, Foreword, 7); "I remain puzzled, and indeed some-

times irritated, by many of the guesses at the 'sources' of the nomenclature, and theories or fancies concerning *hidden meanings*. These seem to me no more than private amusements, and as such I have no right or power to object to them, though they are, I think, *valueless for the elucidation or interpretation* of my fiction" (*Letters* 379–380, my emphasis; cf. *Letters* 262, 307). As long as these distinctions are respected (see Matthew Fisher 220), a Christian may very well "apply" *The Lord of the Rings* to the Gospel in order to explain some passages with a catechizing intent,[3] but in no way can this be considered an *interpretation* of the text. Neither can we accept as interpretations the purported allegories or hidden meanings, since "It [*The Lord of the Rings*] is not 'about' anything but itself" (*Letters* 220; cf. *Letters* 284). Therefore, it is quite surprising that some authors insist on stressing such interpretations without supporting them with solidly grounded arguments:

> So even though *The Lord of the Rings* is not an allegory of the Gospels, we can find numerous parallels to the Gospels in *The Lord of the Rings*. . . . For instance, Frodo's journey up Mount Doom is strikingly similar to Christ's way to Cross. Sam is his Simon de Cyrene, but he carries the cross bearer as well as the cross. . . . [Christ] is more clearly present in Gandalf, Frodo and Aragorn, the three Christ figures. (Kreeft 222)

If we limit ourselves to the widely discussed parallel between Frodo and Christ, there is not a single passage in *The Lord of the Rings* where Tolkien endorses this "hidden code," to quote an expression used by Caldecott (see below and §5.1–5.2). Unlike the Son of God, the halfling is not without sin, which is why he is unable to throw the Ring in the Crack of Doom, a failure that prevents him from making his own return as a hero (*Letters* 234, 251, 252, 325–26). This sinfulness poisons his soul and also his body, due to the wound inflicted by the Morgul blade (*FR*, I, xi, 208), and will ultimately result in the impossibility of his living "happily ever after" in the Shire, which—as he himself says—"has been saved, but not for me" (*RK*, VI, ix, 309). Frodo is therefore a tragic figure, one who must leave all his friends to go to Eressëa, an island facing Valinor that is not Paradise (heavenly or earthly as that may be) (*Letters* 328, 411; Flieger, "Missing Person"). His will be a Purgatorial sojourn, on which he may recover from the shadow that afflicts him,[4] but nobody knows if this chance bestowed on him by the Valar will bring about a positive outcome.

2.3. *It mistakes source for representation.* The *aprioristic* wish to find parallels and connections between the legendarium and revealed religion

leads to a diminished attention toward Tolkien's texts, and thus to mistaking sources for representations. Tolkien's sources are in fact both Christian and Pagan (see §5.2.3–5.2.4), but the world and the characters he sub-creates from these are a "mixture" impossible to differentiate, to such an extent that they cannot be considered a "representation" of one or the other of these sources. As Tolkien himself affirms, what counts the most is savoring the taste of the soup (the tale or the sub-created character) rather than looking for the bones or the ingredients (the sources, in other words) out of which it has been boiled (*OFS* 39). So, just to give an example, it is certain that the figure of Mary is one of the sources for Galadriel (just as is the Morrigan of Celtic tales [Burns, *Perilous Realms*, 106–8], or Haggard's *She* [Rateliff, "*She* and Tolkien"]), but Galadriel certainly cannot be, as Caldecott asserts, a representation of Mary:

> For Tolkien, Elvishness and Catholicism were closely related. I think you can detect a "hidden code" that refers to Catholic themes and ideas, such as the Eucharist and the Blessed Virgin Mary, in *The Lord of the Rings*. (Caldecott, "Tolkien's Project," 226)[5]

> What Elbereth, Galadriel, and other characters such as Lúthien and Arwen, surely express is precisely what Tolkien said he had found in Mary: beauty both in majesty and simplicity. (Caldecott, *Secret Fire*, 61)[6]

The same can be said for many other characters. Among the sources for Eärendel we find the Medieval poem *Crist,* but the half-elven mariner is not a representation of Jesus (Flieger, "Missing Person," 225–26). The inspiration for *lembas* could well be based in part on the Eucharist (e.g. Coloumbe 57), but it *is not* its representation (cf. §5.2.2).

2.4. *It derives a total identity from a partial similarity, without taking differences into account.* Many of these authors justifiably highlight similarities between parts of the legendarium and contents of the revealed texts, and by that infer that Tolkien's work is totally Christian in its nature. For instance, starting from the analysis of similarities of style and content between "The Music of the Ainur" and *Genesis*, they come to the conclusion that "The Music of the Ainur" is Christian:

> The theology of *The Silmarillion* is orthodox in nature, paralleling the teachings of traditional Christianity to remarkable degree. . . . This Catholic Theology, explicitly present in *The Silmarillion* and implicitly in *The Lord of the Rings*, is omnipresent in both. (Pearce, *Man and Myth*, 94)

According to Michael D. C. Drout and Hilary Wynne, "the flaw in this approach is the same as that of many of the source studies. Interpreting Tolkien's works by saying that they have the effect of one of the mysteries of the Church merely defers the problem of interpretation" (109–10). Additionally, the critics forget that some of the contents they emphasize, far from being the exclusive property of Christianity, are rather common to several cultures. The existence of God/Eru, for instance, or of other spiritual entities, was indeed an accepted concept for many ancient religions well before the advent of Christ (see §5.2.1). Finally, and most of all, such interpretations, as we will see below (§5.2), are inevitably and ideologically forced to overlook some significant differences between *The Silmarillion* and the Bible.

2.5. *It diminishes the vastness of Tolkien's conception.* Another limitation of those authors who interpret Tolkien's work exclusively in terms of Christianity, is that of confining the enormous breadth of Tolkien's *opus* to just one single dimension:

> It is not merely erroneous but patently perverse to see Tolkien's epic as anything other than a specifically Christian myth. (Pearce, "Foreword," ix)

This very strong assertion (too strong, indeed) back-fires on the author himself, who thus contradicts all the texts of Tolkien's that show how the legendarium is not simply reducible to Christianity (§2.1–2.4). It is therefore erroneous to propound as *the* single possible correct interpretation of Tolkien's thought the one that focuses only on its specific Christian dimension, even more so because this single-minded hermeneutic approach cannot explain in full Tolkien's philological and linguistic inspiration in the legendarium, nor his "true" love for heathen sagas, all just as essential for understanding his complex works as the religious Christian element in them.[7]

3. Antithesis: Tolkien's Work is Pagan

Other authors, even if they do not totally deny the importance of Christian elements in the conception of the legendarium, assert that *an essentially Pagan perspective is predominant* in Tolkien's Secondary World, and that such a perspective more or less markedly contradicts *the Christian "orthodox" vision* of life and history. In this case we find that their positions are less "undifferentiated" than the Christian interpretations, ranging from "radical" ones, such as those by Madsen, to more "moderate" (Hutton and Morillo), to environmentally oriented polytheistic interpretations (Curry). This approach tends to suffer considerable limitations that are almost symmetrical to those discussed above.

3.1. *It diminishes the relevance of the texts that show the fundamental relation between Tolkien's works and Christianity.* It tends to underestimate, sometimes even to ignore, the texts that unmistakably show how relevant the order of Christian Revelation is for the shape and "structure" of the legendarium. Madsen, for instance, considers the epilogue of "On Fairy-stories," as well as the "Tale of Aragorn and Arwen" in *The Lord of the Rings*, only as a sort of *post scriptum* (Madsen, "Eru Erased," 157), whereas both the Epilogue and the Appendices are integral parts of the text to which they belong (*Letters* 237). In the same way, to support the thesis of the absence of God/Eru in *The Lord of the Rings*, they point out that He is never mentioned but for "two fairly cryptical and untheological references in the appendices" (Madsen, "Light," 35), forgetting how aware Tolkien was of the importance of similar references (*Letters* 201). In a similar way, they often ignore or underrate the letters in which Tolkien affirms the importance of Catholic faith in his works, and to diminish them they refer to the alleged incompleteness of the published *Letters*, implying who-knows-what Neo-pagan unpublished material, although they nevertheless unhesitatingly invoke the very same letters when they speak of differences between Tolkien's and the Christian world.[8]

3.2. *It considers some elements of Tolkien's works as incompatible with Christian Revelation, when in fact they are not.* Another common error in the Neo-pagan approach is that of considering some passages of Tolkien's work as incompatible with the authentic Christian message, supporting that thesis with overly stretched interpretations of the key passages. One example is interpreting the Mythopoeia verse "We make still by the law in which we're made" (see §5.1.2) as the reference to a divine force and not to the Creator, thus enabling a polytheistic interpretation and confining the Christian content only to the order of Morality and Ethics:

> *The Lord of the Rings* transcends any strictly monotheistic reading. . . . Now, Tolkien's almost identical statement—"We make still by the law in which we're made"—assumes a theistic Creator who made us. But the logic of what he is saying, it seems to me, can be accommodated by Hoban's "god-force" without any significant loss. (Curry 117–18)

> The spiritual word of Middle-earth is a rich and complex one. It contains both polytheistic-cum-animist cosmology of "natural magic" and a Christian (but non-sectarian) ethic of humility and compassion. (Curry 28; see also 110)

But Tolkien's ecological views can indeed very well be fit in the frame of a Christian cosmology based on the concept of stewardship, as shown by Dickerson and Evans (strongly criticized by Curry in his review) and Siewers.

Hutton appears indeed to be much more cautious when he affirms that there are moments in Tolkien's life, and passages in his works, that show how his "religious faith was not a robust and untroubled one but subject to doubt and losses of confidence" ("Pagan Tolkien" 59), a theory that Agøy justly criticizes on the basis of a detailed analysis of Tolkien's biography and writings ("Christian Tolkien" 74). However, what is surprising in Hutton's argument is his conviction that the doubts and dark moments a believer may undergo are signs of an uncertain and shaking faith, when that is instead a state shared by most Christians, to the extent that "the dark night of the soul," which includes even long periods when one senses the absence of God in one's life, was famously experienced by St John of the Cross and St Teresa of Ávila (both Doctors of the Church) and, more recently, by Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta.[9]

Hutton reminds us also (*Witches* 229; "Pagan Tolkien" 62) that Tolkien and other Inklings shared a strong neo-Platonist streak. True, indeed, but to consider that philosophical tendency as antithetic to Christianity would be quite erroneous, as is clearly shown by St Augustine's Christian Platonism, by the fact that the neo-Platonist writings by Pseudo-Dionysius were accepted in the Middle Ages as written by the disciple of St Paul's who converted in the Areopagus, and by the neo-Platonism recently rediscovered even in St Thomas Aquinas[10] (see §6.1).

3.3. *It derives irreconcilable contradictions between Tolkien's and Christian world from what are only partial differences.* The world of *The Lord of the Rings* not being a Christian world (§2.1), it must necessarily contain certain elements that prevent it from being identified with the Biblical Revelation. Nevertheless, to deduce from such elements an opposition between Tolkien's world and the order of Revelation is totally wrong. A typical argument is the existence in the legendarium of a people (the Elves) who reincarnate, whereas the official theology refuses the doctrine of reincarnation. True, but easily countered by just recalling that the reincarnation of Elves is concerned with no dogma since Elves do not exist in the Primary World. It is also worth mentioning that we find at times non-orthodox views even among the more prominent Doctors of the Church (for Thomas Aquinas the Virgin Mary was not "immaculate," for instance, in contrast to the dogma; *Summa Theologiae* III q. 27 a. 2.). In other words, the possible "non-orthodoxy" of some

partial aspects of Tolkien's works is insufficient to sustain the thesis that he is in contradiction with the Revelation.

3.4. *It confuses historical Paganism with "Tolkienian" Paganism.* When proposing a "Pagan Tolkien" by emphasizing similarities between different contexts, the important differences between Middle-earth and the historical Pagan civilizations (such as human sacrifices in use among Germanic peoples[11] and the Egyptians [Najovits 41], relationship between magic and religion [Hutton, *Triumph*, 391–93, *Witches*, 98 and 129], presence of nudity in rituals [Hutton, *Witches*, 193–214], etc.) are usually not sufficiently remarked (cf. §5.2.3).

3.5. *It diminishes the vastness of Tolkien's conception.* Finally, as we have already remarked, this form of negationism (just as the Christian "exclusivist" belief) induces the authors to disregard important elements in the Tolkienian *opus* (§§1, 4) or to force the interpretation of texts (and even of Tolkien's life) with the intent to detect ill-founded neopagan elements in them (§§2, 3), forgetting that for Tolkien "all this is 'mythical,' and not any kind of *new* religion or vision" (*Letters* 283, my emphasis) and that "there are more significant facts, which *have* some relation to an author's works. . . . For instance I was born in 1892 and lived for my early years in 'the Shire' in a pre-mechanical age. Or more important, I am a Christian (which can be deduced from my stories), and in fact a Roman Catholic" (*Letters* 288). By doing so they diminish the vastness of Tolkien's perspective, where, if well understood, his profound Christian sense plays an indisputable role in his works (as we will see in §§5.1–5.2).

4. Synthesis: Difference of Levels and Points of View

According to the above discussion, thesis and antithesis appear utterly irreconcilable. Both, however, have limitations that do not do justice to Tolkien's greatness and complexity although, on the other hand, both give glimpses of the truth because they each identify elements that are indeed actually present in Tolkien's work. That being so, can there be a more profound and synthetic perspective such as to explain coherently the tension between Paganism and Christianity and, at the same time, comprehend all of Tolkien's texts in an organic structure without any exception? In my opinion, yes! The approach I propose is based on a logic that distinguishes between two points of view from which it is possible to examine the legendarium:

a') The first one from the *inside* of the work, by examining the theological and ethical background within which the characters' storylines are internally developed;

b') The second one from the *outside*, by making, through a meta-narrative analysis, a historically grounded comparison of Tolkien's work and the development of culture within our real world.

In addition, my proposal outlines two strictly distinguished conceptual orders, in harmony with each other even if differing in parts:

a") *The plane of Nature*, where actions, knowledge, and products are made by rational beings *only* in virtue of their own inherent capabilities and faculties (i.e. reason, language, freedom, craftsmanship);

b") *The plane of Grace*, or the super-natural order, where the rational beings receive gifts such as Faith, or revealed truths such as Unity and Trinity, Incarnation and Resurrection of God, or the Final Judgement and the Resurrection of the Bodies, belonging to the Judeo-Christian Revelation which would be *impossible to obtain fully* by means of mere natural abilities (§6.1. note 44).

Concerning the terms, "pagan" comes from the Latin noun *pagus*, i.e. "village" (so *paganus* means "villager" or "country dweller"), and has now in Modern English a narrower meaning that denotes one who follows the old gods. "Heathen," on the other hand, is an Old English word that according to its etymology can mean "inhabitant of open country" or "foreigner" (see Holmes 122). Following Tolkien himself,[12] I will use here the two terms as synonyms, to denote "*all those who do not partake of the alliances of Abraham and Jesus,*"[13] or, in other words, all people who do not believe in the supernatural Biblical Revelation (i.e. all those who, regardless of historical period and confession, are not Jews, Christians, or Muslims). Since under this perspective "the natural state of Man is Paganism . . . Man is naturally Pagan" (Daniélou, *Miti pagani*, 9), I will also use "*Pagan*" as a synonym of "*Natural,*" "non-Supernatural," or "non-Christian" (considering that the Christian message includes both Old and New Testament), to refer to all capabilities and truths that are accessible to rational beings *without* the Biblical revelation or any supernatural aids.

Does it really make sense, however, to qualify a literary work as "Pagan" and/or "non-Christian"? Indeed it does, or at least I think it does when what we are facing is a detailed and coherent universe that, regardless of the "period" in which the sub-created world is placed (pre-Christian or not), includes also cosmogonic (§5.2.1), religious/ethical (§§5.2–5.3), or philosophic (§5.4) contents. In the context thus established, four main cases can be distinguished:

1. a Christian author sub-creating a world characterized by Christian contents that are in harmony with the Revelation, as is the case for C. S. Lewis with his *Chronicles of Narnia* and his so-called "Science-fiction trilogy" (Flieger, "Missing Person," 224);

2. a non-Christian author sub-creating a Pagan/Natural world devoid of supernatural Christian contents that is not in harmony with the Revelation, as is the case for Philip Pullman's "His Dark Materials" trilogy (see Gray; Wrigley);

3. a non-Christian author sub-creating a non-Christian world that is in harmony with the Revelation, as is the case for George Lucas with *Star Wars* or Gene Roddenberry with *Star Trek*;

4. a Christian author sub-creating a non-Christian world that is in harmony with the Revelation, as is the case for Tolkien.

To support having named Tolkien as an example of the fourth case, we can advance the following considerations:

1. If we look at Tolkien's world from the *internal point of view*, it is clear that the *plane* on which his conception is based is *natural*, meaning that knowledge, choices, and actions of his characters result only from their inherent natural abilities, with no specific reference to any form of supernatural Faith or Biblical Revelation. In this sense, we must say that *we are in the presence of a world that is devoid of Christian contents,* where "He [God] was immensely remote" (*Letters* 204);

2. However, if we consider the world from an *external point of view*, and we confront it with the development of Western culture, we have to say that *its contents are in harmony with the supernatural plane of the Christian Revelation*;

3. Finally, it is on account of the presence of *both these elements* (a world essentially devoid of Christian elements because it takes place on a natural level *and* harmony with Christian Revelation) *that we can consider Tolkien's work as expression of a Catholic culture.*

In short, my critical approach can be summarized in the three following propositions:

> (1) Tolkien's world is internally devoid of specifically Christian elements, being the expression of a simply natural plane.
>
> However,
>
> (2) it is externally in harmony with the supernatural plane of Christian Revelation.
>
> So
>
> (3) the co-existence of those aspects in Tolkien's work does express a fundamentally Catholic culture.

The perspective I here propose takes inspiration from some authors (Shippey and Holmes in particular) who, even if they did not systematically develop this approach, have with their intuitions helped me to direct my thoughts. However, these authors base their analyses mostly on the concept of *praeparatio evangelii* (present, at least at a hint stage, in many others),[15] and this idea has in itself the limitation of introducing a "chronological" aspect into the Tolkienian world that cannot explain the presence in the legendarium of so many entirely modern elements (Saruman's technical mindset, the narrowness of the bourgeoisie mirrored in the Hobbit society, the anachronistic use of certain words, etc.). What is pivotal in my analysis is instead the concept of *natural plane* as background for the Tolkienian world, in which all of the problems of "mere" Man—be they characterized as antique or modern, pre-Christian, Christian, or post-Christian—can thus find a place.

5. Tolkien's World is Non-Christian but in Harmony with the Revelation

In this section I would like to demonstrate the first two enunciations (§4.[1],[2]) of the proposed synthesis by resorting to:

1. Tolkien's own "statements of principles," mentioned especially in the most important of his critical essays or lectures, which can be considered as the very foundations of his own narrative world (§5.1);

2. the "actual" application of those principles in the sub-creation of the legendarium (§5.2).

5.1. General Statements

5.1.1. "On Fairy-stories"

The natural plane of fairy-stories and sub-creation

In the beginning of this essay, which Tolkien considered to be definitive (*Letters* 297, 310), the author affirms that fairy-stories are not solely associated with the world of children. On the contrary, they are deeply rooted in human nature, since "fairy-stories are a natural human taste" (*OFS* 56) that responds to "the satisfaction of certain primordial human desires" (*OFS* 34). This explains why fairies (and the other inhabitants of Faërie as well) are creatures that are totally "*natural*" (*OFS* 28).

Consistent with this concept, Tolkien sets Fantasy (the human capability from which fairy-stories are produced) strictly on the plane of Nature, establishing a positive relation with Reason:

> Fantasy is a natural human activity. It certainly does not destroy or even insult Reason; and it does not either blunt the appetite for, nor obscure the perception of, scientific verity. On the contrary. The keener and the clearer is the reason, the better fantasy will it make. (*OFS* 65)[16]

Therefore, to the domain of Fantasy belongs the power of succeeding in sub-creating a secondary world endowed with an inner truth of its own where, if speaking of a "green sun," it will be possible to say that: "if you have built your little world well, yes: it is true in that world" (*OFS* 77). Here, explicitly stated, is the importance of having an *internal point of view* where is possible a "Secondary Belief" (*OFS* 52), without which the story would lose all its value and its power on the reader.

Harmony between sub-creation and the Gospel

Besides, it is worth noting that if *mythopoesis* does not postulate the order of revelation and faith, neither is it against it: "The road to fairyland is not the road to Heaven; nor even to Hell" (*OFS* 28). Fairy-stories have in fact three faces:

> the Mystical towards the Supernatural; the Magical towards Nature; and the Mirror of scorn and pity towards Man. The essential face of Faërie is the middle one, the Magical. But the degree in which the others appear (if at all) is variable. (*OFS* 44)

This first hint of the supernatural plane may perhaps derive directly from "Progress and Religion," the text by Dawson where the famous

Catholic historian maintains that religion is the main cause of a civilization's development, and that religions (especially primitive ones) used their rituals to try to express the "ocean of supernatural energy" (see *OFS* 200) that is the "confused intuition of transcendent being" (Dawson 77). In this respect, it is then "man who is, in contrast to fairies, supernatural" (*OFS* 28), because "there is a part of man which is not 'Nature'" (*OFS* 81).

Tolkien then explains how this natural ability of sub-creating is the reflection of the creating power of the Creator of the Primary World, thus almost saying that the orders of Nature and Super-Nature are not severed but deeply connected:

> Fantasy remains a human right: we make in our measure and in our derivative mode, because we are made: and not only made, but made in the image and likeness of our Maker. (*OFS* 66)

In the Epilogue he goes even further, and by introducing the concept of "eucatastrophe" (the happy ending that is the essential element of fairy-stories) goes so far as to connect the natural plane of Fantasy (and its products) to that of Revelation:

> approaching the Christian Story from this direction, it has long been my feeling (a joyous feeling) that God redeemed the corrupt making-creatures, *men*, in a way fitting to this aspect, as to others, of *their strange nature*. The Gospels contain a fairy-story, or a story of a larger kind which embraces all the essence of fairy-stories. . . . [T]he desire and aspiration of sub-creation has been raised to the fulfilment of Creation. The Birth of Christ is the eucatastrophe of Man's history. The Resurrection is the eucatastrophe of the story of the Incarnation. . . . The Evangelium has not abrogated legends; it has allowed them. (*OFS* 77–78, my emphasis)

In brief, "On Fairy-stories" situates fairy-stories and fantasy on a natural plane, attests the internal truth of the sub-created worlds and, at the same time, sanctions the full harmony of all of this with the supernatural plane of Christian Revelation, to the extent that, in the closing statement, Tolkien can affirm that "God is the Lord, of angels, and of men—and of elves" (*OFS* 78).

5.1.2. "Mythopoeia"

The very same "philosophy of myth" is exposed in the poem "Mythopoeia," dedicated to C. S. Lewis, who had reached Christianity from a

mere theistic position thanks, among other things, to having understood at last that not only were Pagan myths not in contradiction with the Gospel, but were both absorbed and preserved in it.[17] In the following poem the sub-creating activity is re-affirmed as *characteristic of human nature*, meant so by the Creator:

> Dis-graced he may be, yet is not dethroned,
> and keeps the rags of lordship once he owned
> his world dominion by creative act:
> not his to worship the great Artefact,
> man, sub-creator, the refracted light
> through whom is splintered from a single White
> . . .
> We make still by the law in which we're made.
> (*TL* 87; see *OFS* 65)

This theme is taken up again in the closing stanza, where reference is made to Paradise and Salvation, which does not destroy but rather safeguards all there is that is positive in Man (gardener/children) and in his products (garden/toys), by that saying that the *good things of the natural plane will be preserved (and perfected) in the supernatural one*:

> Then looking on the Blessed Land 'twill see
> that all is as it is, and yet made free:
> Salvation changes not, not yet destroys,
> garden nor gardener, children nor their toys.
> (*TL* 90)

In this conclusion Tolkien goes so far as to speculate that in heaven Man will continue the same activity of narrator (*TL* 90). Certainly the meaning of these verses still remains obscure, but they are consistent with other hints made by Tolkien to the possibility that the worlds sub-created by the narrator be so in harmony with Eternal Life as to be able to somehow achieve actualization in Paradise ("There is a place called 'heaven' where the good here unfinished is completed; and where the stories unwritten, and the hopes unfulfilled, are continued" [*Letters* 55]).[18]

5.1.3. *Beowulf*: Critics, Dwarves, and Giants

The pagan Beowulf *as expression of the nature of Man*

In his masterful essay "*Beowulf*: the Monsters and the Critics" (1936) Tolkien first assures us that the poet is not a (neo) Pagan, but a Christian who wants to depict the Pagan nobility of ancient times:

> So far from being a confused semi-pagan . . . he brought probably *first* to his task a knowledge of Christian poetry. . . . *Secondly*, to his task the poet brought a considerable learning in native lays and traditions. . . . His [is] an attempt to depict ancient pre-Christian days, intending to emphasize their nobility. (*MC* 26–27)

Even more interesting is his remark that the poet did not simply describe ancient paganism, nor ideologically superimpose the Christian message on it, but rather outlined a picture where the Pagan heroes are already "purified" from many of their flaws (e.g. polytheism): "but if the specifically Christian was suppressed, so also were the old gods" (*MC* 22). This means that if we use the distinctions made in our critical approach (§4) and examine the poem from the *internal point of view*, we will see that it develops itself on *an essentially natural plane*, where the main character is neither the historical Pagan nor the Christian saint, but rather the Man *naturaliter sumptum* who transcends any historical epoch:

> [Beowulf] *is a man*, and that for him and many is sufficient tragedy. (*MC* 18, my emphasis)

> [The poem] glimpses the cosmic and moves with the thought of all men concerning the fate of human life and efforts; it stands amid but above the petty wars of princes, and *surpasses the dates and limits of historical periods*. (*MC* 33, my emphasis)

Harmony between Pagan and Christian culture

Tolkien unequivocally sets this attempt within a very wide and important doctrinal frame that is about the value of Pagan cultures as against the succeeding Christian Revelation. The essay in fact opens with the famous allegory of the stones and the tower, which Tolkien takes up to emphasize the limitations of the *Beowulf* criticism that tends to destroy the unity of the poem (the tower, from which the Christian poet could see the sea) in order to unveil the Pagan sources from which it was derived (the stones; cf. the metaphor of the soup and the bones in "On Fairy-stories" [see §2.3]). The image reminds us of Bernard de Chartres when he affirms that "we [the Moderns] are like dwarves perched on the shoulders of *giants* [the Ancients],"[19] thus summarizing a philosophy of culture where paganism is not seen as at all antithetical to the Christian Revelation:

> We might say that this poem was (in one direction) inspired by the debate that had long been held and continued after, and that it was one of the chief contributions to the controversy: shall we or shall we not consign the heathen ancestors to perdition? What good will it do to posterity to read the battles of Hector? *Quid Hinieldus cum Christo?* (*MC* 23; cf. *B&C* 7 ff.)

This famous question was asked by Alcuin (an English monk of the eighth century), who urged monks not to listen to pagan stories. *Hinieldus* (Ingeld) is a minor character in *Beowulf*, the son of King Froda, who according to Saxo Grammaticus and Snorri Sturluson was a benevolent king—and contemporary of Christ—who hated war.[20] Fortunately, Alcuin's attitude was a minority in the history of Christian culture, to the extent that the Catholic theology (as we shall see in §6) will be characterized by an authentic recovery of Man *sic et simpliciter*. According to Tolkien this is exactly the attitude of the poet of *Beowulf* who:

> showed forth the permanent value of the pietas which treasures the memory of man's struggle in the dark past, man fallen and not yet saved, disgraced but not dethroned. (*MC* 23; cf. §5.1.2, first verse of "*Mythopoeia*")

> it is the poet himself who made antiquity so appealing. His poem has more value in thought than the harsh and intolerant view that consigned all the heroes to the devil. (*MC* 28; see also *B&C* 63, 119)

Hence, if we look at this pagan poem from the external point of view (cf. §4, b'), we cannot but remark the *great harmony with the supernatural plane of Revelation*, as shown by the role played by the monsters (pivotal for Tolkien), the enemies of Man who will later also become the enemies of the one God:

> A Christian was (and is) still like his forefathers a mortal hemmed in a hostile world. The monsters remained the enemies of mankind, the infantry of the old war, and became inevitably the enemies of the one God. (*MC* 22)

> At this point new Scripture and old tradition touched and ignited. Man alien in a hostile world, engaged in a struggle which he cannot win while the world lasts, is assured that his foes are the foes also of Dryhten [God]. (*MC* 26)

This perspective is also present in *Beowulf and the Critics*, which, according to Drout, "is one step in a lifelong intellectual project of recovering

(as Tolkien believed the *Beowulf*-poet had) the old, lost stories *and harmonizing them with the new Christian truth*" *(B&C* 27, my emphasis). In this view, Tolkien explicitly speaks of a "differentiation" (*MC* 39) inside the poem where religious matters are concerned (notably the various ways to name "God"), one that strongly recalls the one we proposed in §4. In more detail, according to Tolkien, what must be differentiated are the positions of:

> — Beowulf, who, by what he says, looks to be a "good pagan," and who, while clearly aware of hell (*MC* 39–41), seldom speaks of God, and when he does, tends to identify Him with Fate (cf. lines 441, 2526, 1658–61; *MC* 40) with the only notable exception, besides line 571, of the passage at 2469. Here he mentions the "light of God" that his grandfather Hrethel is heading to after his death, explained by Tolkien as a concession of the poet to that shared theory according to which good pagans may know God (cf. quotes from St. Paul and St. Thomas in §6.1);
>
> — Hrothgar, the poetic champion of this natural capacity of dealing with God, who, even more than Beowulf, is "on the path" to the supernatural plane of Revelation, portrayed as he is as a monotheist and, while still staying a Pagan, molded out of the kings and patriarchs of the Old Testament (*MC* 40).
>
> — the *Beowulf*-poet himself who witnesses Hrothgar's "path": he, by his comments, certifies the harmony between the natural/Pagan plane and the Christian. Indeed, he sees in Beowulf's strength the "favour of God" (*MC* 43, line 65) and knows that "good pagans" are not doomed to hell (*MC* 39), which is only for those who worshipped idols and ancient customs out of malice (*MC* 42–44, lines 175–80, a line of thought that has run inside Christianity ever since, see §6.1). By doing this the Poet shows a great lucidity, to the extent that he keeps portraying the context (and the hero) of the poem as essentially Pagan, in contrast with interpolation from scribes that tend to superimpose the two planes (*MC* 40, line 2186).

It is hard to tell whether *Beowulf* itself actually was among Tolkien's sources of inspiration for this differentiation between natural/Pagan and supernatural/Revealed, or if he already had had such an inspiration and through that analyzed the poem. At any rate, we can conclude that in his works we can see the "theorization" (and the

application) of the two distinctions of planes and points of view that we highlighted in §4.

5.1.4. From Beorhtnoth to Gawain

Northern ethics: internal self-criticism and harmony with Revelation

According to Tolkien, one of the most important "ethical" achievements of the Northern Pagan culture was the theory of courage which, being already present in *Beowulf*, he examined in detail in "The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth, Beorhthelm's Son," a text conceived at the beginning of the 1930s but published only in 1953. In the "Homecoming," Tolkien sets forth an interpretation of the poem that very much differs from the more "accepted" one adopted by his friend E. V. Gordon,[21] according to whom, the center of the poem can be found in verses 312–313:

> Will shall be the sterner, heart the bolder
> Spirit the greater as our strength lessens. (*TL* 124)

These words have usually been considered as "the finest expression of the northern heroic spirit, Norse or English; the clearest statement of the doctrine of uttermost endurance in the service of indomitable will" (*TL* 143). However, Tolkien judges this interpretation as too simplistic, as he explains:

> For this 'northern heroic spirit' is never quite pure; it is of gold and an alloy.
>
> 1. *unalloyed* it would direct a man to endure even death unflinching, when necessary: that is when death may help the *achievement of some object of will*, or when life can only be purchased by *denial of what one stands for*. But since such conduct is held admirable,
>
> 2. *the alloy of personal good name* was never wholly absent. . . . Yet this element of pride, in the form of the desire for honour and glory, in life and after death, tends to grow, to become a chief motive, driving a man beyond the bleak heroic necessity to excess—to chivalry. 'Excess' certainly, even if it be approved by contemporary opinion, when it not only goes beyond need and duty, *but interferes with it* (*TL* 144, italics and divisions added).

From the text it is evident that for Tolkien, the less noble metal (that is personal pride) may conflict with the gold core of this ethical vision

(the will, undaunted until death, to reach a goal that is deemed as superior to any other "value"). This is the reason why Tolkien identifies the core of the poem as lines 89–90, which according to his reading express this awareness:

> Then the earl in his overmastering pride
> Actually yielded ground to the enemy, as he should not have done. (*TL* 143)

Going against a well-established philological tradition, Tolkien translates "*ofermod*" as "overmastering pride" rather than the usual "overboldness," in order to demonstrate how within the poem there is a criticism of the possible ethical degeneracy that an emphasis on the lesser noble metal could bring about. The same critical perspective is expressed by Tolkien in the "The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth Beorhthelm's Son" about the retrieval of Beorhtnoth's body by Torhthelm (son of a minstrel and totally imbued with old ballads) and Tídwald (an old farmer who had taken part in many battles and whose attitude towards the value of heroic deeds is much more critical and cynical).

> In this dialogue we can trace a double warning about the Northern ethics of courage:[22]
>
> 1. on the one hand, the less-pure metal should not be overemphasized, lest it damage the gold. This is what Tolkien does when he translates "*ofermod*" with "overmastering pride" and stresses the importance of verses 89–90;
> 2. on the other hand, the gold should not be thrown away together with the less noble metal. This is what Tídwald does when, besides his legitimate criticism of Beorhtnoth, whom he considers "too proud" (*TL* 137), he ridicules Torhthelm when he quotes the famous verses 312–313 labeling them as "pagan." It is almost the same attitude as Alcuin's when he asked himself "*Quid Hinieldus cum Christo?*" an attitude with which—as we have already seen—Tolkien did not agree.

Therefore, this text of Tolkien's puts us in front of a critical re-evaluation of Pagan ethics, which, *albeit "born" in a mere natural plane (i.e. outside the Christian context)*, is seen as capable of internal self-criticism (acknowledgment of the limits of the *ofermod*) and, with its "gold and alloy" nature, also *in great harmony with Christianity.*[23]

Northern and Christian ethics: differences and sanctification of the former

Tolkien highlights the same criticism of *ofermod* in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (1953), because in this fourteenth-century poem, King Arthur accepts as a point of honor the most perilous challenge of the terrifying Green Knight and the poet disapproves of him for this (verses quoted in *TL* 149). However, the faithful Gawain offers to fight in his king's place, thus saving the kingdom from the loss of its king. Tolkien perceives in this poem a meditation over the subservient role of chivalry ethics to the more markedly Christian ethics (*MC* 105): this is the meaning of the poet's criticism to Gawain who, among his many mishaps, had accepted out of chivalry a belt from a ravishing lady, thus risking the fulfillment of his superior mission.

Tolkien's interpretation of the poem shows once more how central to his thought is *the tension between Paganism and Christianity*, between Chivalry/Honour and the Superior Good, although in this work what is mainly stressed is the difference and subordination relationship between the two planes/codes (§4, a" and b"). That said, what stands out is that for Tolkien this Germanic culture of Courage has not been overridden by the *supernatural plane* of Revelation, which has rather *in great harmony* assimilated its very essence, that is staying undaunted even in the face of the long defeat which is History (*Letters* 255, 89):

> Nowhere, incidentally, was it [this northern spirit] nobler than in England, nor more early sanctified and Christianized. (*Letters* 56; see also §5.2.4)

In the end, we cannot be surprised that thanks to this harmony between the two ethics, the Germanic people rapidly converted to Christianity (Shippey, "Tolkien and the Appeal of the Pagan," 28), nor can we misinterpret the fact that Tolkien defines himself as a "converted heathen" (*MC*, "English and Welsh" 162).

5.2. Applications of the Principles in Tolkien's legendarium

As a matter of fact, these general statements of unequivocal harmony between naturally Pagan and Christian culture are implemented within Tolkien's "Secondary World." Examining the whole of Tolkien's work would, however, be impossible, so I will limit myself to mentioning only a few of the main structural topics where this twofold aspect of absence of specifically Christian elements and harmony with the super-natural order of the Revelation is present.

5.2.1. Theology

Natural theology in Tolkien's world

The legendarium is a collection of texts that Tolkien's narrative genius has conceived by taking into account three main points of view: those of Elves, Men, and Hobbits. Even with different "degrees" of detail, at times very accentuated, these three perspectives vouch for the existence of:

1. Eru/Ilúvatar/The One, the only power that, thanks to a mysterious Secret Fire, is capable of creating things from nothing;
2. Powers of a lesser degree (Ainur, Valar, Maiar), created by Eru but capable of developing the musical themes proposed by Him and—after its creation—helping Arda itself to grow, in which some of them would enter taking bodily forms as raiment;
3. Elves and Men, intelligent beings made of *fëa* and *hröa*; that is, of a spiritual and a bodily part.

However, we must say that the Greeks, with Plato's One and Aristotle's Unmoved Mover, had already theorized the existence of a principle of all things separated from them, as well as the existence of separate spiritual substances and the immaterial soul of Man. Therefore, these elements are not exclusive to the Judaic-Christian Revelation. What are truly distinct aspects of the Christian Revelation are truths such as the incarnation of God's own Son or the Unity and Trinity of God (§4.b"; §6.1. note 44), concepts that in the legendarium are not explicitly manifest or even hinted at: "The Incarnation of God is an *infinitely* greater thing than anything I would dare to write" (*Letters* 237). In addition, we can pinpoint more considerable differences as opposed to the "official" Christian theology of our Primary World, such as the fact that the world created by Eru had been marred by Melkor's sin way before Elves and Man were created,[24] or that in it we have "angels" (Valar or Maiar as they may be) who associate among each other (e.g. Manwë and Varda) or with Elves (Melian and Thingol), having in the latter case even children with them.

Because of these differences, and the almost full absence of revealed data, we have to say that *the theology of the legendarium is expression of a "natural theology"* (*Letters* 220) *with no supernatural elements.*

Harmony with Revelation

However, this perspective is still quite different from the polytheism proper of a certain historical Paganism, because Man "escaped from 'religion' in a pagan sense, into a pure monotheist world" (*Letters* 204,

this parallels Hrothgar's monotheistic position, see §5.1.3). But the Theology of Middle-earth is also different from atheistic perspective typical of the contemporary world: the existence of a Creator cannot be denied (unlike the situation in Pullman's "His Dark Materials") to the extent that atheism becomes the "creed" divulged by Sauron in Melkor's honor.[25]

We can affirm that *the theology of the legendarium, even with its differentiations, is in harmony with the Christian theology* because the latter builds the foundations of a cosmos organized in a tripartite hierarchy (God the Creator, Angels and Man) where some of Tolkien's mythological intuitions may also find their place: the Valar as the ranks of the angels and the Secret Fire as one of the Persons of the Trinity (see Kilby 59), the possibility that the author enters the world (§5.2.3) then fulfilled with the incarnation of Christ.

5.2.2. Religious Cults and Prayers

Absence of supernatural sacraments

Another theme is that of religion and cult: "There are thus no temples or 'churches' or fanes in this 'world' among 'good' peoples. They had little or no 'religion' in the sense of worship" (*Letters* 193 in note). This absence of any form of cult within the legendarium does not imply a total absence of religion: "The only criticism that annoyed me was one that it 'contained no religion'" (*Letters* 220).

But if we compare it to other cultural human experiences it strongly differentiates religiosity in Middle-earth from the Judaic-Christian religion, where believers come into contact with God Himself by means of Rite and the Sacraments (effective signs of God's Grace).[26] In this respect, the "ontological status" of the Eucharistic Bread and Wine (Christ's real presence in body and blood) is, as an example, quite different from *miruvor* and *lembas*, absolutely natural food certainly and not conceived as super-natural substances.

To conclude, the world of Middle-earth is a monotheistic world of the so-called "natural" or "cosmic" religions (Daniélou, *I santi pagani*, 15 ff), with no essentially Biblical contents.

Harmony with Revelation

However, not only do we not find in Middle-earth any mention of the barbaric practices of historical paganism, e.g. the human sacrifices (see §3.4) in use among the Egyptians, source of inspiration for the Númenóreans (*Letters* 281), but in *The Lord of the Rings* Tolkien qualifies as "heathen"[27] the ritual that was in use among mysterious ancient kings (and reinstated by Denethor) of burning themselves after defeat

in battle, employing in an intentionally anachronistic way a term that, it is worth noting, is used in a like way in *Beowulf* at lines 175–180 to refer to idolatrous pagans as opposed to "good pagans" such as Beowulf (see §5.1.3). At the same time Tolkien's world is quite apart from contemporary a-religious positions if we consider that the existence of a God and Superior Powers to whom addressing their prayers is an established fact among at least the wisest of his characters: "For help they [Elves and Men] may call on a *Vala (*as *Elbereth)*, as a Catholic might on a Saint, though no doubt knowing in theory as well as he that the power of the Vala was limited and derivative" (*Letters* 193).

If, from an external point of view, we confront it with the antique and modern Paganism of our Primary World, the monotheistic religiosity of Middle-earth appears as a starting step for Man in order to walk away from the cult of false idols and get closer to a *Revealed Christian dimension* with which he will be in great *harmony* also, as far as prayer (to Saints, to the Virgin and/or God) is concerned.

5.2.3. Philosophy of History

Intramundane perspective

Tolkien's Philosophy of History is undoubtedly pessimistic. In the beginning we have some dramatic Falls (Melkor's at first, then that of the Elves and of Man) and with the passing of time the initial light will break and dim progressively, bringing about a certain ontological decadence (Flieger, *Splintered Light*). The ultimate destiny of the Children of Eru is not very clear: the Elves are condemned to be bound for ever to the Circles of the World, but nothing is said about what is going to happen to them when Arda will cease to exist. Man's destiny is even more undefined: death allows Men to detach themselves from the cycle of time, but nothing more is said except that "we are not bound for ever to the circles of the world, and beyond them is more than memory" (*RK*, Appendix A, I, v, 344).[28] Even the Elvish and Mannish traditions related to the end of the world (Great Music, Great End, Arda Healed) are very undetermined and they vary according to when the different phases of the legendarium were written. Besides, the elf Finrod and the human Andreth, with a supreme effort at "rational theology" (see note 2), discuss the possibility that the Author may enter the world He Himself has created in order to "heal" it, thus allowing a possible and definitive return of Men and Elves in Arda Healed.

But the idea of the Fall is certainly not typical of the Judaic-Christian culture exclusively: let us remember the Golden Age narrated by Hesiod in *Works and Days* or the downfall of Osiris depicted in *The Book*

of the Dead. However, although we have to mention the "Revelation" of St John (as well as the Pagan Ragnarök; see Whittingham 172–74) among the sources of Tolkien's eschatology, we do not find explicit references to the Christian ideas of Paradise, Purgatory, and Hell (in fact, Tolkien explicitly rejects those of his writings where these concepts had been introduced in his mythology; see Manni).

So, if we observe the legendarium from the inside (§4.a'), the perspective guiding its characters is essentially intra-mundane and not oriented towards Eternal Life. Because of this distance from the revealed truth, we have to say that *the philosophy of history* in the legendarium *is essentially based on a natural plane because it has no references to Judeo-Christian Revelation.*

Harmony with Revelation

We need to point out that the Falls are not seen as positive (as they are in Pullman's theology; see Gray) and that the idea of a "long defeat" in history is absolutely not antithetical to a Christian perspective: "Actually I am a Christian, and indeed a Roman Catholic, so that I do not expect 'history' to be anything but a 'long defeat'" (*Letters* 255). The true Christian (and Jesus Christ before everybody) has been, and always will be, a "loser" on the human level ("the prince of this world" is indeed Satan), and the eucatastrophic fullness of Joy will only take place "after" history, after the end of time. In addition, unlike in the Norse mythology where the Fall of the Gods will result in a reciprocal annihilation of positive and negative powers that will give way to a new cycle of the world, the concept of history in the legendarium is linear and the idea of a cyclical Eternal Return is absent from it.[29] Even more, we find in it a hint to a definitively positive end of history (Great End, Arda Healed; see note 29).

These ideas (initial Fall, long defeat, linearity and positive end of history) are in harmony with some of the revealed truths. From this point of view the vision of Christian history, from "Genesis" to "Revelation," including also the so-called "*novissimi*" (Death, Judgement, Hell, Purgatory and Paradise), *is in great harmony with those signs just hinted in Tolkien's universe.*

5.2.4. Ethics of the Hero

No saints, but virtuous pagans

Basically, we can find two different kinds of heroes in Tolkien's world: the "epic" hero (exemplified by Aragorn), who originated from medieval sagas and poems, and the "ordinary" hero (the hobbits), whose primary sources are fairy-tales and popular stories.[30] We can say with a

certain degree of accuracy that the ultimate objective that guides the actions of both types of hero is the good of their own land (be it an Elvish kingdom, Gondor, the Shire or the whole of Middle-earth) and of the people they love (friends, relatives or wives): "I should like to save the Shire, if I could" says Frodo (*FR*, I, ii, 71).

Therefore the main characters of the legendarium act on a completely different plane from that of the Christian heroes (the saints or the martyrs,[31] which is what Tolkien's mother was in his own eyes). Their actions are mainly driven by their love for a transcending God with whom they aspire to be reunited (Saint Teresa of Ávila's words: "I die because I do not die") and the wish to bear witness by their own self-sacrifice to their Faith, putting it on a higher plane than ethics (Isaac's sacrifice—prepared by Abraham because of his purest faith—is deeply different from Iphigenia's one, carried out by Agamemnon to obtain favorable winds in the war against Troy).[32]

In consideration of this lack of explicit references to the superior order of Grace, we can conclude that *the heroes of the legendarium are essentially virtuous pagans, expressions of a mere natural ethic.*

Harmony with Revelation

At the same time Tolkien's heroes are completely different from Howard's Conan, nor do we find in Middle-earth the same ethics of courage typical of the Northern cultures (§5.3–5.4). The same reproach Tolkien has made to Beorhtnoth for his *ofermod* is implicitly addressed to Túrin, who out of pride refuses many times to go back humbly over his decisions, thus plunging his life into tragedy; to Denethor and his "heathen" suicide (cf. §5.2.2); and to Boromir who covets the Ring in order to set Gondor free and make his own return as a hero. It is for this reason that the hero of the legendarium is essentially different from the hero of the historical Paganism. In fact, in Tolkien's world we find examples of "pagans" who fully realize the "purest" and "gold" part of Northern heroism (§5.1.4) without ever letting the overmastering pride prevail. Gandalf, for instance, unlike Beorhtnoth (or Beowulf), faces the Balrog armed with his staff and sword and yielding no ground on the Bridge of Khazad-dûm (see Bowman) and in the end asks the Company to flee. In a similar way, the Rohirrim embody Tolkien's idea of being undaunted even in the face of sure defeat, but without the *ofermod* that can be cause of passive resignation (as it is for Denethor). In *The Lord of the Rings* we find this spirit in the sortie of the Rohirrim at Helm's Deep (*TT*, III, vii, 146), and in their ride on the Fields of Pelennor where they shout "Death, death, death" (referred to themselves and not to their enemies) (*RK*, V, vi, 119) after they

have witnessed the death of their own king Théoden and the apparent death of young Éowyn.[33]

Now, this Germanic culture of courage that in Tolkien's works is amended from the *ofermod*, *has not been cancelled by Christianity*; on the contrary, its authentic essence has been *preserved harmoniously* in it and is manifest in the unflinching attitude in the face of history as a long defeat: "you and I belong to the ever-defeated never altogether subdued side" (*Letters* 89).[34]

6. Tolkien's Work and Catholic Culture

6.1. Meaning of the Term "Catholic"

If we now consider the third statement of the proposed synthesis (§4 [3]), I would like first of all to explain what I mean by the term "Catholic," whose literal meaning is "universal," by drawing attention to some theological theses that I will use only as historical references to a certain kind of doctrine *without implying either their truthfulness or the reader's faith*. If we want to give a cultural (and not merely confessional) definition, we can say that this interpretation of Christianity is characterized by the always present *principle of harmony between Nature and Grace* according to which we can distinguish two different orders, one based on Natural Reason and the other on Revelation, both not separated but in reciprocal harmony. *Gratia non tollit naturam, sed perficit*[35] reads a famous Thomistic adage. In this perspective, the "Pagan" Man (all men in the past, present, and future that do not believe in Judaic-Christian Revelation: see §4) acquires enormous dignity if we consider that he has the natural abilities that allow him, if only in part, to have access to that Truth and Beauty present in full in the *Evangelium*.

In the Old Testament we can find figures that can be defined as "Pagan saints" because they are "just men" who have not yet received the Revelation: let us think of Abel, Noah, Melchizedek, the Queen of Sheba (see Daniélou, *Santi pagani*). In the books of Job and Jonah, translated in part by Tolkien for the English *Jerusalem Bible* (Scull and Hammond 439), the theme is exactly that of the sanctification of a Pagan who has endured so many trials and the salvation of the pagan town of Nineveh. In the New Testament it is even clearer that salvation is for all of mankind (let us just think of Jesus' preaching that goes far beyond the border of "official" Judaism, or of his descent into hell to save the souls of those who died before his incarnation [*Mt.* 12, 40 and 27, 52; *1 Pt* 3, 19]); Saint Paul explicitly affirms the possibility for the Natural Reason of Man to learn of the existence of God (*Rm* 1, 19–20; cf. *Wisdom* 13, 6) and Providence (*Jews* 11, 6) without explicit Revelation.

Based on these themes from the Sacred Scripture, the Fathers of the Church (e.g. Clement of Alexandria,[36] Eusebius of Caesarea,[37] Augustine of Hippo[38]) accepted some of the conquests of the Pagans and used Greek philosophical categories in order to include the content of the Scripture,[39] so that Justin can say:

> He [Christ] is the Word of whom every race of men were partakers; and those who lived reasonably are Christians, even though they have been thought atheists; as, among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus, and men like them. (St. Justin, First Apology, n. 46)[40]

A "consequence" of the harmony between Nature and Grace is the positive judgement they give of the ancient culture and the concept that salvation was accessible to the "virtuous" Pagans, including their contemporaries.[41]

Thomas Aquinas,[42] one of the pillars of Catholic theology,[43] offers us the most lucid distinction between different orders of a unique Truth, to the point that some of those truths that Natural Reason can grasp become preambles to be perfected by Faith.[44] This being established, it is not surprising that Aquinas affirms that "*omne verum a quocumque dicatur, a Spiritu Sancto est*" (*Super Evangelium Johannis*, chap. 81,6). This is why he thinks that salvation is possible for those Pagans who have followed the rational and ethical principles rooted in human nature (such as, for instance, the pre-Abrahamic patriarch Enoch and the prophet Elijah,[45] the Sybilles,[46] and Trajan), and he considers them as belonging *in potentia* to the Church,[47] sharing, at least in its content, the same Faith.[48] Concerning Trajan, it is important to note that according to an old legend, handed down from St. Gregory Magnus to John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*, this Roman emperor (a persecutor of Christians) was resurrected and baptised because of his virtue.[49] Thomas Honegger has brought to my attention the presence of a similar legend in the poem *Saint Erkenwald* (perhaps written by the author of *Pearl* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*) and certainly known by Tolkien: his "Celtic Library" (English Faculty Library of Oxford, coll. VC272) includes the volume (Horstman 264–274) containing this poem.

Additionally, the very history of Christianity, which preserves in the Arts[50] and Liturgy most of the classical[51] and Northern[52] culture, *de facto* accomplishes this "assimilation" of Paganism: it suffices to note that the celebration of Christmas, the "most Pagan of all holy days" (Daniélou, *Miti pagani*, 30), was introduced only in the fourth century in continuity with the celebration of *Sol Invictus*.

The Lutheran Reform, on the contrary, radically refuses the harmony between Reason and Faith (*sola fide, sola scriptura*, Luther

affirmed) to the point that it rejects the idea of *praeparatio evangelii*[53] and, in polemics with Zwingli, the very idea of eternal salvation for the "virtuous Pagans":[54]

> Tell me, you who would be a Christian, what need is there of Baptism, the Sacrament, Christ, the Gospel, or the Prophets, and Holy Scripture, if such godless heathen, Socrates, Aristides [and Antigone, Cato and Hercules, mentioned before] . . . are blessed and saints with the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles in heaven, though they knew nothing of God, Scripture, the Gospel, Christ, Baptism, and the Sacrament, or the Christian faith? . . . I lost all hope in an improvement of those followers [of Zwingli] (to the point I ceased praying for them). (Luther, 6; my translation)

These ideas were followed by other Protestant theologians of the seventeenth century,[55] emphasizing even more the "Catholicity" of the "appeal of the pagans" to the point that for the Catholic Church (from the Fathers up to present times) every man that is inculpably outside the Church (and this applies to the majority of the world's people, also in Christian countries) can nevertheless be saved (as the *Beowulf*-poet himself, so high in Tolkien's esteem, also thought, see §5.1.3).[56] But these ideas concerning the value and salvation of the pagans are only a consequence of the thesis of the *two distinct Planes* (Nature and Grace, Reason and Faith) considered *in reciprocal harmony*. This "axiom," as we have seen, has been confirmed with an impressive continuity (one that, as Cardinal Newman affirms, distinguishes the "Development of Christian Doctrine"[57]) up to the theology of the twentieth century,[58] the II Vatican Council[59] and beyond,[60] to the extent that it can really be affirmed as the cultural essence of Catholicism.

6.2. Tolkien's work as expression of a "fundamentally Catholic" Culture

We are now able to better assess the meaning of "catholicity" in Tolkien's way of thinking, as it has been affirmed in the third statement of my proposed synthesis (§4 [3]). We have shown that all the Tolkienian *opus* (§5.1–5.2) is structurally built on the principle of simultaneous distinction and harmony between the natural and the super-natural planes (§4), a principle that enables us to fit into a unitary frame the tension between Paganism and Christianity that is typical of Tolkien's works and that makes them so vital and essential.

Even more, we have seen that this principle of "distinction in harmony" is also intrinsic to the very cultural essence of Catholicism (§6.1), which has always aimed at integrating in a Revealed perspective

the conquests of Man *naturaliter sumptum*, rather than rejecting them. All this lets us conclude that the Tolkienian *opus* proves to be a most complex synthesis expressing in a literary language a culture that is Catholic in its essence. This, in my humble opinion, is the real meaning of *Letters* 172 (too often quoted but rarely analyzed in its deep significance), where Tolkien says that his work is "fundamentally religious and Catholic." In other words, *the fundamental catholicity of Tolkien's work* is not to be found in confessional elements related to his Faith, but paradoxically *in the quite peculiar non-Christianity of his world*, where the most authentic existential and ethical tensions involving the "mere natural" Man are represented.

7. Conclusion

By this essay I hope to have contributed to a debate that has involved (and involves) many great scholars. The interpretation I have here offered does not pretend to be "original" or "revolutionary," but only to be "synthetic" and in some aspects "new" because, while taking into account previous (and different) positions:

- It is a comprehensive and systematic interpretation of Tolkien's works (§5), based on a small and consistent set of foundational principles (§4).
- It is able to explain the true difference (§2.1, §3.2), but also the fundamental relationship between Tolkien's world and Revelation, denying neither (§2.4; §3.1).
- For this reason, it differs from explicitly Christian or essentially Pagan views of the subject matter, thus avoiding any mistake or reductionism (§2–3).
- In being based on the idea of a natural plane devoid of chronological contents, it also differs from the simple idea of *praeparatio evangelii* as it has already been propounded by others (§4).
- It strongly affirms the absence of exclusively Christian elements in Tolkien's world, for this reason differentiating itself from the most common interpretations that do affirm just a coexistence of Christian and Pagan ones ("Christian but not only that" is often said about the legendarium);
- Finally, it explains by the same principles that the sub-created universe of the legendarium is the expression of a "fundamentally Catholic" culture mainly because of its peculiar non-Christian nature (§6).

To conclude, I hope I have helped show why Tolkien's mythology, as proved by its universal appreciation as well as by the most recent critical studies,[61] is meant neither for a single nation (England) nor a specific religion (be it Christian or Pagan), but for "all of Mankind"[62] capable of sensing with their natural capabilities that beyond the Circles of the World there is "more than memory" (*RK*, Appendix A, v, 344).

Notes

1 For an excellent bibliographic analysis of this theme see Fornet-Ponse "*Lord*" and Kerry's preface to *The Ring and The Cross*, which include some important examples of this passionate debate. See also Kerry-Miesel, Evans.

2 In my essay ("Logic and Theology") I try to show that this most fundamental and problematic text is an essay of "rational theology" where some truths are demonstrated (or at least grasped) starting from axioms that are shared in the legendarium by the Wise but do not belong to Christian Revelation (see also §5.2.4).

3 For an explicit example, see Bruner and Ware.

4 See Croft 133–38, where Frodo is masterfully described as afflicted by war neurosis and post-traumatic stress disorder.

5 For a strong criticism to Caldecott see Seaman's review of this text, based on the letter quoted in §2.1 where Tolkien writes on what he sees as the «fatal» error of the Arthurian cycle.

6 Much cited for this purpose are *Letters* 288, although *it does not at all admit any connection*, quoting only the opinion of a critic, and *Letters* 172 and 407, where it is "only" written that the Virgin Mary is one of the sources of Tolkien's æsthetical conception, as well as of the character of Galadriel. However, as Tolkien himself says in 1971 (*Letters* 407; cf. 386), Galadriel was doing penance in Middle-earth for having followed Fëanor in the rebellion against the Valar and in the massacre of the Teleri, being therefore everything but "immaculate" when *The Lord of the Rings* was published. The existence of a note where Galadriel stands against Fëanor, written by Tolkien shortly before his death (*UT* 231–32), does not contradict the fact that the connection Galadriel/Mary was groundless and, in my opinion, so it stays despite the late annotation.

7 "A minority point of view, vigorously expressed by Joseph Pearce, seeks to stress Tolkien's catholicity instead, going so far as to claim

that only Catholics can truly understand Tolkien's work (see, for example, Pearce's foreword to Bradley J. Birzer)" (Rateliff, "And All the Days," 97n66). See also Bratman 292.

8 "The famous collection of his letters, edited by Humphrey Carpenter . . . are a very different class of document, with particular pitfalls and limitations" (Hutton, "Pagan Tolkien" 58).

9 "There is so much deep contradiction in my soul. Such deep longing for God—so deep that it is painful—a suffering continual—and yet not wanted by God—repulsed—empty—no faith—no love—no zeal. Souls hold no attraction—Heaven means nothing—to me it looks like an empty place—the thought of it means nothing to me and yet this torturing longing for God" (169).

10 See Fabro; Geiger. About Tolkien's Christian Neo-Platonism see Zimmer (50).

11 See Turville-Petre (251-61); Du Chaillu (364). Also Shippey mentions human sacrifices perpetrated by the Germans (*Author of the Century* 176) and attested by Tacitus ("De Origine et situ Germanorum" 40.2).

12 In "*Beowulf*: The Monsters and the Critics" "pagan" (and its derived terms) do occur 27 times and "heathen" (and its derived terms) 24 times. Their use as synonyms is particularly obvious on page 7-8 ("heathen heroic lay . . . pagan lays"), page 36 ("pagan 'belief' . . . heathen practice and belief"), pages 38–39 ("pagan past . . . heathen past"), and page 42 ("a certain part of pagan Danes—heathen priests"). Tolkien uses "heathen" twice in *The Lord of the Rings*: first, Denethor affirms: "We will burn like heathen kings before ever a ship sailed hither from the West" (*RK*, V, iv, 98–99), then Gandalf reproaches him: "And only the heathen kings, under the domination of the Dark Power, did thus, slaying themselves in pride and despair, murdering their kin to ease their own death" (*RK*, V, vii, 129). For this use of the word "heathen" see: Shippey (*Road*, 229, 237); Holmes; Hammond and Scull (*Reader's Companion*, 835); Dickerson ("Heathenism"); and §5.2.2. In the *History of Middle-earth*, "heathen" is used twice in the mythology to indicate the etymon of Dunharrow (*War* 267, which is quoted in the "Guide to Names in The Lord of the Rings"), and to describe the temples of Númenor after Sauron's arrival (*The Notion Club Papers* in *Sauron* 258, 384). "Pagan" is used in some notes to indicate the Ainur as "pagan" gods (three times in *Lost Tales I* 249), and also about Ælfwine considered as a "pagan Englishman" (*Lost Tales II* 322).

13 Daniélou, *I santi pagani*, 14, my emphasis. The use of the term "pagan" in theology is however questionable (every religion has indeed terms of its own to denote people who do not share its creed) and has also undergone many changes from century to century. Despite being rooted in both the Old and the New Testament, it has been used differently in the Middle Ages and appears in no statements of the Catholic Church lately (see Maurier, Tworuschka).

14 Jews were never reckoned among Pagans (Tworuschka 517). As for Muslims, although being commonly accepted only since the sixteenth century, their exclusion traces back to Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Contra Gentiles* Lib. I. Cap. 2 n. 4; *De rationibus fidei* c. 7) and the 13th century (Tworuschka 517–18).

15 At least implicitly, this perspective is mentioned in: Birzer (*Sanctifying Myth*, xxiii ff.); Burns ("Norse and Christian Gods"); Candler; Dickerson (*Following Gandalf*, 210 ff.); Kocher (84–85). On the theme of Tolkien's "Modernity" see Chance and Siewers; Honegger and Weinreich; Garbowski (121 ff.); Kreeft (222).

16 Lawhead also underlines the "laity" of artistic creation, where the value "in itself" spares the author the use of "explicit" sermons: "Tolkien's middle way could be called the Freedom of Implicity" (164).

17 Green and Hooper (18, 119, 188, 397); Carpenter (127 ff.); Wood, ("Conflict and Convergence," 333).

18 See also "Leaf by Niggle" and Rateliff ("And All the Days," 86).

19 Quoted in John of Salisbury, *Metalogicon*, III, 4.

20 On this theme see Shippey (*Road*, 233–34; *Author of the Century*, 182–87); Agøy ("Quid Hinieldus").

21 What we are interested in here is how Tolkien develops those themes rather than establish who, between him and Gordon, was right or wrong (Drout, "Tolkien's Medieval Scholarship," for instance, thinks Gordon's interpretation was more solid).

22 Tom Shippey sees in it the parricide of the Northern ethics of courage (which Nazism was corrupting), perpetrated from a Christian point of view: "Was it possible to create an alternative and Christianized image of a heroic style? . . . I would suggest then that Tolkien was trying in his work to reconcile a Christian attitude and a heroic attitude" ("Tolkien and 'The Homecoming

of Beorhtnoth'" 339). See also Shippey's essays "Heroes and Heroism," "Tolkien and the Appeal of the Pagan," "Tolkien and the *Beowulf*-poet," and "Tolkien and Iceland"; see also Raddatz.

23 See Shippey, "Tolkien and 'The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth.'"

24 Purtill clearly underlines these differences (128 ff.).

25 "Sauron was not a 'sincere' atheist, but he preached atheism, because it weakened resistance to himself (and he had ceased to fear God's action in Arda). As was seen in the case of Ar-Pharazôn. But there was seen the effect of Melkor upon Sauron: he spoke of Melkor in Melkor's own terms: as a god, or even as God" (*Morgoth* 397).

26 Catholic Church, *Catechism*, n. 1127 ff.

27 See Madsen, "Light from an Invisible Lamp"; for rituals in Middle-earth see also Reynolds and Klinger.

28 On these themes, that are inevitably linked to the notion of freedom and destiny, see the masterful "debate" between Flieger, "The Music and the Task," and Fornet-Ponse, "Strange and Free."

29 Eliade; Chiesa Isnardi (186–92).

30 For these distinctions see Verlyn Flieger's excellent essay, "Frodo and Aragorn: The Concept of the Hero." On the same theme see also Auden; Glenn; Christensen; Clark.

31 About the differences between the Christian and the Pagan Hero see Fromm (114–18).

32 See the classic *Fear and Trembling* by Kierkegaard; see also *OFS* (80, 120).

33 For the role of the Rohirrim as the perfect example of Germanic heroism in its noblest aspects, see Honegger ("The Rohirrim"), and Fehrenbacher.

34 See Richard C. West. On the *ofermod* theme see also Matthew Fisher.

35 *In II Sententiarum,* distinctio 9 art. 8 ag 3. Cf. *ibid.* ad 3; *In III Sent. d.* 24, q. 1, a. 3A; *Summa Theologiae* I.62.5. co; *De Malo* q. 2 a. 11.

36 "Philosophy . . . was a preparation, paving the way for him who is perfected in Christ" (*Stromata* I, c. 5, 6); "Philosophy . . . prepares the way . . . for the reception of the truth" (*Strom.* I c. 16);

"therefore, truth is one . . . so the sects both of barbarian and Hellenic philosophy have done with truth, and each vaunts as the whole truth the portion which has fallen to its lot" (*Strom.* I, c. 13, 57; cf. *Strom.* V, c. 10, 66, 3 e *Protrettico*, 74, 7; my translation).

37 Author of the text *Praeparatio Evangelii.*

38 "Church is His body, wherewith also are united and numbered all the saints who lived in this world, even before His advent, and who believed then in His future coming, just as we believe in His past coming" (*De catechizandis rudibus*, c. 3, in Daniélou, *I santi pagani*, 20; my translation).

39 Daniélou, *Messaggio evangelico*; Jaeger.

40 "Whatever things were rightly said among all men, are the property of us Christians" (*II Apologia*, 13, 4, referring in particular to Plato and the Stoics), cf. "those who lived reasonably are Christians, even though they have been thought atheists; as, among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus, and men like them; and among the barbarians, Abraham, . . . and Elijah, and many others" (*I Apologia*, 46, 2–5; my translation). For the possible biblical references present in Plato's *Timaeus* cf. *II Apologia* 10, 2 and *I Apologia*, 60.

41 On these themes, and the development of the related principle "*Extra Ecclesia Nulla Salus*," see: Caperan; Hardon; Sullivan; Müller; Mazzoleni; Lubac; Morali; Daniélou, *Dio e noi* and *I santi pagani.*

42 Among the authors that have emphasized affinities between Tolkien and Aquinas in certain aspects, see Kocher 85; Wood, *Gospel*, 76; Milbank 20; McIntosh, "*Ainulindalë*" and *Flame.*

43 Catholic Church, *Documents of the II Vatican Council, Optatam Totius* n.807; *Gravissimum Educationis* n. 10.

44 "Certain things that are true about God wholly surpass the capability of human reason, for instance that God is Three and One, while there are certain things to which even natural reason can attain, for instance that God is, that God is One" (Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* Lib. I, cap. 3); "The existence of God and other like truths about God, which can be known by Natural Reason [as St. Paul writes in his Letter to the Romans], are not articles of faith, but are preambles to the articles; for Faith presupposes natural knowledge, even as Grace presupposes Nature, and perfection supposes something that can be perfected" (*Summa Theologiae* I q. 2 a. 2. ad 1; my translations).

45 *In III Sententiarum.* d. 18 a.6b ad 1; *In IV Sent.* d. 45 q. 1 a. 3 arg. 5. He, just as Elijah, is in the earthly Paradise and not yet in the heavenly Paradise.

46 *Summa Theol.* II–II q. 2 a. 7 ad 3.

47 *Summa Theol.*, III.8.3 ad 1.

48 *Summa Theol.*, II-II q. 7 a. 3, where it is said that the "substance" of faith is the same (existence of God and his Providence, according to *Jews* 11, 6) from the first appearance of Man onwards, although historically we have a wider and wider revelation of its contents (passion, death and resurrection of Christ). See Daniélou 1988, Introduction.

49 *De Veritate* q. 6 a. 6 ad 4. Dante too uses the legend of Trajan (*The Divine Comedy, Cantica* III, c. XX, vv. 103 ff), placing other "illustrious" pagans in his Paradise (Ripheus among them, who sacrificed his life for Aeneas' safety) and the most famous poets and philosophers of antiquity in Limbo (*Cantica* I, c. IV). It is worth noting that the International Theological Commission (Commissione Teologica Internazionale) has stated that the theological hypothesis of Limbo is today to be considered as obsolete.

50 On the continuity of Pagan culture into Christian culture see Daniélou, *Miti pagani*, and Dronke 2003. See also the entries "Classicismo" and "Mitologia" in the *Enciclopedia dell'Arte Medievale*, vols. 5 and 8.

51 Salvaged from the fall of the Roman Empire and handed down to posterity thanks to the work of the Benedictine amanuenses. For some general guidelines on this vast subject see Billanovich, Villa, and Alessio; Cavallo; Penco 79–81 and 175 ff).

52 As general reference, see Ries. On the continuity of Northern paganism we refer to Boyer. On the permanence of pagan elements within the Catholic liturgy, see. as an example, Eliade.

53 Luther explicitly rejects it in *In Ps* XIV, pp.144–45 (quoted in Caperan 235).

54 Luther reproaches Zwingli for admitting the salvation of Socrates, Antigone, and other virtuous pagans (Caperan 243) and also attacks Erasmus for his positive evaluation of pagan culture (see Boyle). In the *De Servo Arbitrio* Luther affirms that "if therefore the most strenuous efforts and works of the best among pagans are evil and wicked, what should one think of the rest of the people,

that is the worst of the pagans?" (390); "They [the Pagans] were offered to know Christ when before [Paul's preaching] they could not have had any idea of Him, nor have sought Him nor have prepared themselves to Him" (p. 391). (My translations.)

55 In Wittenberg, the Professors publicly protested: "as for me, I would not like to be in Zwingli's heaven" (Caperan 214) where virtuous pagans like Socrates, Antigone, Cato, and Hercules were admitted too. Salvation of Pagans remains problematic in Protestant culture even today (Sullivan 169 ff; on Barth and Kraemer see Caperan 585, 593; see also the demythicization theory affirmed in Bultmann).

56 "The damnation of all pagans that have never heard of Jesus Christ has never been a Catholic doctrine. . . . To those who do their best, God does not refuses grace: this principle, that Protestants have so harshly reproached to the Scholastic . . . was applied by catholic theologians as a benefit to the infidels" (Caperan 592; my translation); "It is only those who are culpably outside the Catholic Church who would thereby be excluded from salvation [but] Vatican II presumes the absence of culpability . . . then we must conclude that they can be saved. And this applies to the majority of the world's people who have neither Christian faith or baptism" (Sullivan 150–51).

57 On Tolkien and Newman see Fornet-Ponse, "Tolkien, Newman und das Oxford Movement."

58 See as an example the already cited works by Lubac and Daniélou.

59 "Those also can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience. Nor does Divine Providence deny the helps necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God and with His grace strive to live a good life. Whatever good or truth is found amongst them is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the Gospel" (*Lumen Gentium* n. 16).

60 John Paul II, "Fides et Ratio"; Benedict XVI, "Faith, Reason and the University."

61 See the groundbreaking study by Chance (first published in 1979), and some later development: Burns, "Norse and Christian

Gods"; Flieger, "The Footsteps of Ælfwine" and "A Mythology for Finland"; Hostetter and Smith; Drout, "A Mythology for Anglo-Saxon England"; Honegger, "A Mythology for England"; Birzer, "Last Battle," 279.

62 Honegger, "A Mythology for England," 25.

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Vague or Vivid?
Descriptions in *The Lord of the Rings*

Nils Ivar Agøy

To some extent, this presentation is a follow-up of something I said at the Ring Goes Ever On conference in Birmingham in 2005:

> *The Lord of the Rings* is a book to make one's own. It is automatically personalized, so to speak. It invites participation, in many subtle ways. Then, too, we simply *have to* contribute something of our own if we are to visualize what happens in it. Tolkien's descriptions are rarely very detailed. People, buildings and objects are usually described more or less as the scenery or weather is described, quite vaguely, that is; as seen from a distance. We are told that a main character like Aragorn is long-legged and weather-beaten, but not if he has a beard or buttons in his clothes. The chair he sits on is low and comfortable, but what is it actually made of? The book encourages, almost forces the reader to make her own, more detailed pictures of people and settings—which many do so thoroughly as to become quite annoyed when they discover, in illustrations or films, for instance, that others see things differently. There are not many books about which you can have decade-long discussions about fictional characters' hair colour or possible moustaches—or hypothetical wings.

In *Tolkien Studies* for 2011 Deidre A. Dawson wrote an impressively thorough review essay on the proceedings of the 2005 conference. She mentioned the passage I just quoted, writing:

> Some readers might take issue with Agøy's claim that descriptions in *The Lord of the Rings* are not very detailed: "People, buildings, and objects are usually described more or less as the scenery or weather is described, quite vaguely, that is; as seen from a distance." Surely, *The Lord of the Rings* contains some of the most lush and vivid examples of nature writing of any twentieth-century work; who cannot imagine the stunning beauty of the golden-leaved Mallorns in the forest of Lothlórien or the towering giants of Fangorn? But perhaps my use of the word "imagine" proves Agøy's point: Tolkien's prose is rich in creating

> atmosphere and environment, but he allows the reader to finish the scene in her mind. (Dawson 188f.)

I admit I was a little surprised at this, because I thought I had only said something that was commonly agreed upon nowadays. Obviously, I was mistaken, and Professor Dawson is a scholar for whom I have considerable respect. So there seemed to be cause for taking a new and close look at the matter. What *are* the descriptions in *The Lord of the Rings* really like?

I have tried to look into this, perhaps methodically hampered by the fact that I am a historian, not a literary scholar. My approach has been extremely simple. I have read through the entire main text of *The Lord of the Rings* slowly and taking detailed notes. I have used a wide definition of "description": any words helping the reader to visualize the persons, objects, places and events in the text. (*The Concise OED* defines *description* as "a spoken or written account of a person, object, or event"). And yes, I do see the massive methodical objections, starting with the fact that very many nouns are in themselves descriptions. And no, I have not dealt with "style" as such, although of course the descriptions are an integral part of it. I have not tried to judge the descriptions aesthetically.

What should we expect?

But before we turn to the results of this close reading, let us ask what we should expect? What, if any, were Tolkien's views on descriptions in (fantastic) literature?

Many who have asked this question have turned to *On Fairy-stories*, in which some of the ideas underlying the writing of *The Lord of the Rings* are presented. In Note E Tolkien discusses not descriptions as such, but illustrations to fairy-stories in his wide sense. But as his oft-quoted remarks pertain to the reader's visualization and factors restricting it, they are relevant to us. He says:

> However good in themselves, illustrations do little good to fairy-stories. The radical distinction between all art (including drama) that offers a visible presentation and true literature is that it imposes one visible form. Literature works from mind to mind and is thus more progenitive. It is at once more universal and more poignantly particular. If it speaks of bread or wine or stone or tree, it appeals to the whole of these things, to their ideas; yet each hearer will give to them a peculiar personal embodiment in his imagination. Should the story say "he ate bread," the

> dramatic producer or painter can only show "a piece of bread" according to his taste or fancy, but the hearer of the story will think of bread in general and picture it in some form of his own. If a story says "he climbed a hill and saw a river in the valley below," the illustrator may catch, or nearly catch, his own vision of such a scene; but every hearer of the words will have his own picture, and it will be made out of all the hills and rivers and dales he has ever seen, but specially out of The Hill, The River, The Valley which were for him the first embodiment of the word. (TL 70)

This is clear enough. The implication must be that the writer should not unnecessarily constrain the reader's "own picture." It points in the direction of quite vague descriptions.

Tolkien did not, as we know, live up to this idea in *The Hobbit*, quite richly illustrated by the author. However, that book was written well before the writing of *On Fairy-stories*, and it contains other ideas that he is known to have changed his views about, such as writing patronizingly for children. Also, as pointed out by Wayne Hammond and Christina Scull, the "few illustrations of particular scenes in *The Hobbit* are more notable as settings than for what is going on within them. Tolkien provided backgrounds on which readers can paint their own mental pictures, directed by a text but not constrained by too specific an image" (Hammond and Scull 98). The Dutch artist Cor Blok interprets Tolkien's *Hobbit* pictures in much the same way, finding that most of them "represent not actions but the settings in which these take place; forests, river valleys, mountain landscapes—creating an *atmosphere* rather than recording events" (Blok 15). However, Hammond and Scull find *The Lord of the Rings* to have been "tailor-made" to the philosophy set out in *On Fairy-stories*, although, as they add, "he did not wholly subscribe to it," as his sketches and illustrations show (Hammond and Scull 187).

When Blok visited Tolkien in Oxford in 1961, the author told him clearly "that he was not in favor of illustrated editions" and "did not want readers to see his characters through the eyes of any individual artist" (Blok 15). Nevertheless, he did admire some of Blok's own paintings inspired by *The Lord of the Rings*, even though they sometimes clash with the text. But then Blok consciously followed a system of *Fortlassen*, "leaving out": leaving out as much as possible from his pictures, always asking "how much can be left to the viewer's imagination while preserving the essentials of the story the image is supposed to tell." Just like Tolkien and his *reader*, Blok did not want his *viewer* to get bogged down in details. "As long as the viewer is enabled to

identify the actors and to interpret the action correctly, there are many details that can be dispensed with as irrelevant" (Blok 21). To quote his own "extreme" example, "wherever throughout [his extensive *Lord of the Rings*] series figures are depicted sitting the chairs are missing" (Blok 22). Instead of details of furnishings and such, he used color, and hobbits and human figures were "all cast in the same mould—clothing and all," and they are given standardized attitudes, gestures and facial expressions.

Leaving *The Lord of the Rings* aside for a moment, we know that Tolkien was enthusiastic about Pauline Baynes' illustrations for *Farmer Giles of Ham*, *Smith of Wootton Major* and *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*. He mentioned his own "philosophy," i.e. the case against illustration, in a 1961 letter to Pauline Baynes, but thought that there was "a case for illustration (or decoration!) applied to small things" (*Letters* 312).[1] Which *The Lord of the Rings* is definitely not. The material is not unambiguous, but all in all Tolkien's views on illustration support the expectation of a text with plenty of spaces for the reader to fill in.

What have others found?

Next, what have Tolkien's critics had to say about his descriptions? This section necessarily has to be very incomplete. An influential essay was Burton Raffel's "*The Lord of the Rings* as Literature," both because Raffel is a noted translator of old and epic works, including *Beowulf*, and because it appeared in the early (1968) Isaacs and Zimbardo collection of critical essays. Raffel liked *The Lord of the Rings* although he reached the weird conclusion that it was "not literature." On our subject today, descriptions, he is in two minds. "Consider simple description," he writes. "For most purposes Tolkien's prose is brilliantly adequate, straightforward, just starched enough to have body, resilient enough to catch the echoes of speech, not a supercharged instrument, nor one with great range, but very competent" (Raffel 220). His example here is the passage where Frodo wakes up the morning after he meets Gildor Inglorion. However, he finds that "other sorts of description strain Tolkien's powers. When Bilbo disappears, 'he jumped over a low place in the hedge at the bottom, and took to the meadows, passing into the night like a rustle of wind in the grass'" (Raffel 221). This he does not like so much because it is, yes, too generalized, with little of the "sense impressions" he demands from "the language of literature." In the same vein, he later criticizes the description of the hobbits' arrival at the Prancing Pony because it is too general, has too little detail. It is not that the picture is not clearly painted; it is, and

> one cannot mistake either the setting itself or the things about it of which Tolkien approves. […] But to tell us, for example, that a room is "small and cosy," is to tell us only that the feeling Tolkien wants us to have about the room is one of comfortableness and modest size. "Low and comfortable chairs" tells us, again, what we are to feel about the chairs, not very much of the chairs themselves. (Raffel 225)

In short, he is unimpressed when Tolkien writes according to the tenets of Note E, which he quotes but does not approve of. "'He climbed a hill and saw a river in the valley below' does not, I suggest evoke any kind of scene at all" (Raffel 226). Instead of allowing the hearer to make his own picture, Raffel wants "particular objects in particular relationships with the characters" and not so much uncertainty and ambiguity as he finds in *The Lord of the Rings* (Raffel 227).

If there is an anti-Raffel in Tolkien criticism, it has to be Steve Walker, who in 2009 published his deeply perceptive book *The Power of Tolkien's Prose*. For his part, he is "convinced, in direct contradiction to those who read as Raffel does, that Tolkien's narrative positively abhors abstraction. The prose is sensuous, the landscape tangible" (Walker 56). He writes about Tolkien's "open-ended concreteness," but he also readily concedes "that, even at his most sensuous, Tolkien is less concrete than he seems. Much of his writing upon close examination proves surprisingly general, and it is this generalized quality that has led reasonable readers to adjudge Tolkien's fiction as 'not literature'" (Walker 56, 159f.).

Tolkien's invitational style is indeed a main theme in Walker's book, and he elaborates in many different and elegant ways the point I was more clumsily trying to make in the 2005 lecture. Walker insists that *The Lord of the Rings* demands reader participation, and that its intended ambiguity in turn explains why there are so many distinctly different visions of Middle-earth. "Tolkien's creation is an open invitation to subcreation," he writes. "This deft author provokes reader involvement with alluring depths of apparently transparent narrative" (Walker 28). And: "despite all the detail he puts in, Tolkien leaves more out" (Walker 93).[2] And:

> […] in its every aspect there is more to Middle-earth than meets the eye, and most of the more is a matter of the imagination of the reader. The really impelling part of Tolkien's fiction is the implicit part. Its depths are the depths of reader imagination. Tolkien opens the door to Middle-earth. His fiction serves an introductory function:

> it is vivid; it is evocative; and it is deliberately insufficient to realize Middle-earth without active imaginative involvement of the reader. (Walker 111f., cf. 148)

In the 2009 volume of *Tolkien Studies*, the same year as Walker's book appeared, much the same point was made by John D. Rateliff. His title was "Tolkien as Literary Craftsman." He too criticizes Raffel and quotes the inevitable Note E, which he interprets as Tolkien making clear his goal "of writing in such a way as to draw in his readers, making them participate in the creation of the fictional world by encouraging them to draw on their own personal memories." Rateliff finds that Tolkien's developed narrative style "is deliberately crafted to spark reader participation" (Rateliff 4). Although calling Tolkien "a details man," he notes that he does not tell his readers *every* detail, but "does tell us everything we need to know, in general terms with just enough specific detail to bring the scene home, to guide the reader's imagination, to draw on our own memories" (Rateliff 1, 6). And he makes the interesting observation that Tolkien "often describes a scene not as you would experience it but as you would remember it afterwards" (Rateliff 6).

Jared Lobdell has commented on the "non-pictorial" way in which *The Lord of the Rings* was written. He finds that Tolkien's descriptions are often auditory rather than visual, and that others are only "ostensibly visual," presenting color rather than form and "not always describing so much as 'connoting'," by which he means "an approach that virtually precludes the description of anything outside the reader's experience" (Lobdell 42, 43). The way Tolkien writes, his words "cannot be used for pure description," he says, and tells us how he learned from his own experience

> that the connotations and linguistic objective correlatives tend to outweigh the actual description. It was not until somewhere around the umpteenth rereading that I formed an accurate picture of the abode of the Elves in Lothlórien. (Lobdell 45)[3]

Brian Rosebury, in his *Tolkien: A Cultural Phenomenon* has considered Tolkien's style in *The Lord of the Rings* and has written about some aspects of his descriptions in that connection. His observations regarding Tolkien's emphasis on *place* are perhaps of particular interest to us here. The sense of place is closely connected to landscape and nature descriptions, which Rosebury often accords very high marks, as does Walker and many other critics. He shows how Tolkien is often concerned that the reader should sense and understand the characters'

surroundings and spatial location and orientation, and how his portrayal of places, sky, weather and ambience is much more detailed, and often more leisurely, than "any conventional criterion of narrative urgency" calls for.[4] "Tolkien's descriptions excel […] in three-dimensional views," he writes, "in evoking the sensory experience of a moving spectator situated in the landscape" (Rosebury 214).[5] Taking one of Frodo and Sam's resting-places in the Morgai as an example, Rosebury states that the reader's experience "is profoundly determined by knowledge derived from numerous other passages, adjacent and distant in the text; and that this knowledge is coordinated around a sense of extremely precise physical location and orientation" (Rosebury 61).

What was found

After this brief look at Tolkien's views and some critical reactions, what were the results of my close reading? To this we shall now proceed, in a semi-systematic manner, starting with descriptions of persons.

Some very central characters are not described at all. Examples are Pippin and Gimli—we do not even know their hair color. We can surmise that Frodo had brown hair, but this is only because Nob, the servant at the Prancing Pony, tells him that he has made "a nice imitation of your head with a brown woollen mat" (*FR*, I, x, 186). Incidentally, this also confirms the general impression that when someone is said to be "fair," as Frodo is, this does not necessarily apply to hair color, though it actually does apply to Frodo's hue of face (*TT*, IV, x, 342). It is extremely seldom that we hear about facial features except eye and sometimes skin color. People with grey or blue eyes are invariably enemies of Sauron, while those with dark eyes are found on both sides. Squinting or slanting eyes are a bad sign, and, as we gradually learn, probably a trait particularly of the Uruk-hai and the half-orcs and men in Saruman's service. Hobbits as a people are collectively described in the Prologue, but with plenty of room for variations. After 160 pages we learn that Frodo has a cleft in his chin and red cheeks (*FR*, I, x, 179). Farmer Maggot's *face* is round (*FR*, I, iv, 101); Sam's *head* is round (*TT*, IV, I, 220); Aragorn has a "pale stern face" (*FR*, I, ix, 169); Saruman has a long face with a high forehead (*TT*, III, x, 183); Denethor has a lean, carven face with "proud bones and skin like ivory," and a long curved nose (*RK*, V, I, 27); Boromir has a "noble face" (whatever that means, *FR*, II, ii, 253); Ghân-buri-Ghân has a flat face with scanty beard on a lumpy chin (*RK*, V, v, 105); and Barliman Butterbur's face is broad (*RK*, VI, vii, 273). That's it for the entire work, really, except for some orcs with broad faces.

Nor are the famously few women described more closely than men (excepting the special case of Goldberry, which will be treated below).

We do learn the color of Éowyn's, Arwen's, and Galadriel's hair, but not Rose Cotton's. Indeed, Rose is never described in any way whatsoever. Ioreth, who speaks nearly three times as much as Arwen in the book, and more than six times as much as Rose, is never described other than as "old." Of the women, Éowyn gets the most attention: her face is white and "[v]ery fair" (*TT*, III, vi, 119); she is tall and slender with long, golden hair and grey eyes. Galadriel is also "white and fair" (*FR*, II, vii, 376), slender and golden-haired, and probably taller than Éowyn ("Very tall," *FR*, II, vii, 369). According to Gimli, her hands are translucent (*TT*, III, viii, 152). Arwen is "fair to look upon," with dark hair and grey eyes; "her white arms and clear face were flawless and smooth" (*FR*, II, i, 239).

With orcs and monsters we could justifiably have expected more visualizing detail because we as readers cannot contribute as much from our own familiar experiences as with hobbits and men. Sometimes we get it. Shelob gets a description and even an indication of size: "huger than the great hunting beasts" (*TT*, IV, ix, 334). With apologies to southern elephant seals, I take this to mean that she was bigger than polar and Kodiak bears. As for orcs, Tolkien very usefully tells us the first time the Fellowship encounters them that a "huge orc-chieftain" is still only "almost man-high" (*FR*, II, v, 339). But as a look at Tolkien illustrations by various artists will quickly attest, orcs are really not easy to visualize from the book. When some are described as swart—does this mean that the rest were not? Probably, because the tracker Frodo and Sam encounter in Mordor is "black-skinned" (*RK*, VI, ii, 202), Uglúk is called "a large black Orc" (*TT*, III, iii, 50), Gandalf mentions "black Uruks of Mordor" (*FR*, II, v, 338), and Merry recounts having seen men in Isengard with "goblin-faces, sallow, leering" (*TT*, III, ix, 171). What color are the rest? The book does not say (although Tolkien wrote to Forrest J. Ackerman that orcs were "sallow-skinned," *Letters* 274). One of Pippin's and Merry's guards is singled out as the "yellow-fanged" one (*TT*, III, iii, 48, 50); did the others have whiter teeth? Was the hairy villain Grishnákh with his hairy arms *exceptionally* hairy, or is he only encountered more closely than others? Orc hands are described both as clawlike and *as* claws, and some orcs are even described as having claws and at the same time "fingering their knives" (*RK*, VI, i, 187, cf. "clawfingered" *RK*, VI, vi, 257).

Clothes make the man, or the hobbit, perhaps. We learn more about hobbit clothing than any other peoples', and get the idea that ordinary male Hobbit travelling outfit is breeches, tunic and jacket, plus cloak and hood and possibly a scarf. Sam had a hat, or rather "a tall shapeless felt bag" (*FR*, I, iii, 79). He also brought woollen hose and linen on his journey (*FR*, II, iii, 293). Bilbo wore trousers and

an embroidered silk waistcoat with golden buttons for his party, but neither trousers nor buttons ever appear again. Shirts are never mentioned except for mail-shirts and leather shirts to wear beneath armor. Some types of footwear are mentioned, like Strider's high boots of supple leather, Gimli's dwarf-boots, iron-nailed orc shoes, and Legolas' light ones—but not if any of the other Free peoples wore tunics or how they covered their legs (although some orcs obviously used hairy breeches). Perhaps Ralph Bakshi can be forgiven after all for putting Strider in a green miniskirt? At least the color was right, and indeed more often than particulars of cut or cloth Tolkien tells us what color his characters dress in. But even this is not particularly often. We never learn the color of Frodo's "old weather-stained" travelling clothes (*FR*, II, iii, 291), nor of Merry's, Pippin's or Sam's.

The characters described most often are Aragorn (sixteen times in my notes) and Gollum (fourteen). Why? Well, in Aragorn's case we meet him in Bree as the strange-looking and weather-beaten Strider with his dark hair flecked with grey (*FR*, I, ix, 169), but in Rivendell he *seems* to be clad in elven-mail (*FR*, II, i, 250), in Lothlórien he "*seems* clothed in white, a young lord tall and fair," (*FR*, II, vi, 367), it *seems* that years of toil have fallen from his shoulders (*FR*, II, viii, 391). Aragorn changes and becomes more and more kingly (possibly losing his grey hairs, as they are never mentioned again), and Tolkien wants to make absolutely sure that the reader observes it. Gollum's case is radically different. As pointed out by Walker, he is given or gives himself a lot of contradictory animal names, kingfisher and fish, cat and mouse; but also spider, insect, maggot, frog, fox, and squirrel. But for all the characterizing images and mentions of large feet and head, thin limbs, long neck, bulging luminous eyes, yellow teeth, bony brows, flat hands, and clammy fingers, it is my contention that Gollum is *still* not easy to visualize. We will come back to that.

As with Aragorn, Galadriel is to quite a large extent presented to the reader through the impression she makes on others, as when Frodo sees her as the dark queen (*FR*, II, vii, 381), when Gimli praises her beauty, or when Sam tries to describe her to Faramir in a series of contrasts: "Beautiful she is, sir! Lovely! Sometimes like a great tree in flower, sometimes like a white daffadowndilly, small and slender like. Hard as di'monds, soft as moonlight. Warm as sunlight, cold as frost in the stars. Proud and far-off as a snow-mountain, and as merry as any lass I ever saw with daisies in her hair in springtime" (*TT*, IV, v, 288). But this is not much help to us here.

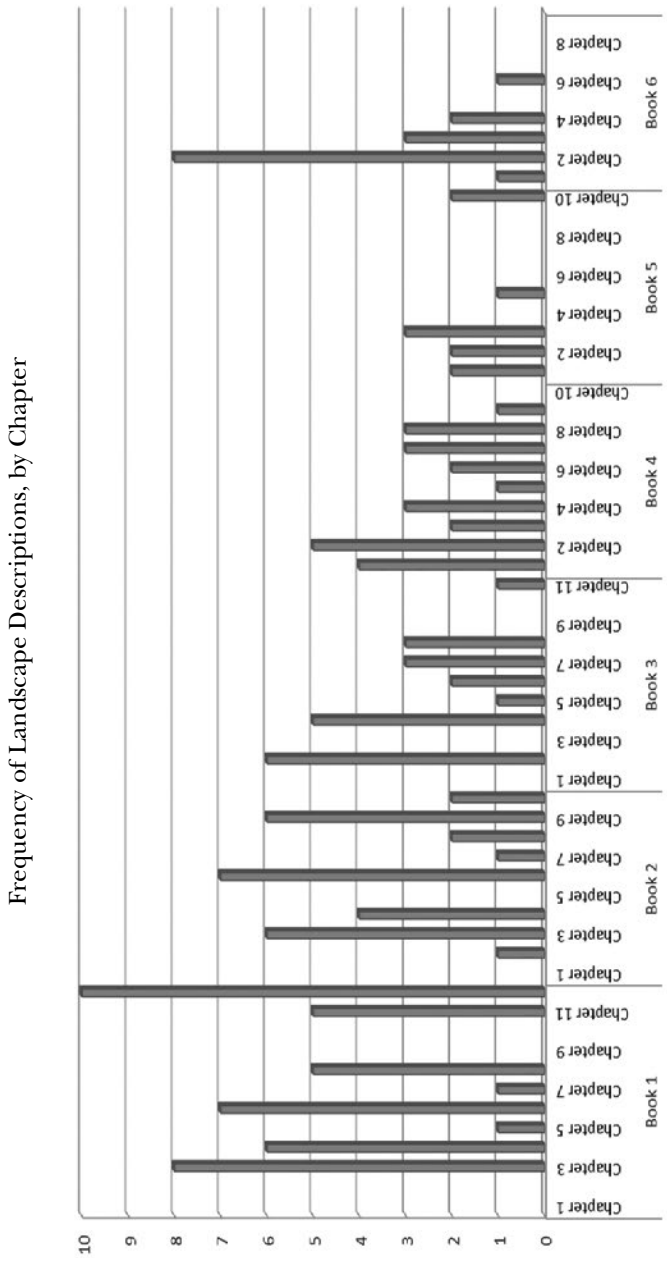
The person described in greatest visualizing detail is actually Tom Bombadil. We are told about his approximate height, the thickness of his legs, the color of his hair, beard, eyes, and face, his hat with its

tall crown and blue feather and of course his yellow boots and blue coat. The reason seems obvious: he had a visible and tangible model. Tom Bombadil was, as we know, the name of a Dutch doll owned by Michael Tolkien and equipped with hat, boots, and coat. Even as a literary creation, he predated *The Lord of the Rings*, figuring in several poems from the early thirties. He lost his peacock's feather when he was moved into Middle-earth, but other than that, he was moved as a complete, and completely visualized, figure. In a way he is an example of a characteristic way of writing which is more prevalent in the many-versioned *Silmarillion* material: Tolkien writing around vivid and often dramatic images, scenes or tableaux which are relatively stable even if their contexts may change radically.[6]

Perhaps Tom's specificity is the reason why Goldberry is also more closely described than usual, as she is in some ways his counterpart. True, we are not told anything at all about her face and figure, but hear that she has white arms and long yellow hair, and her gown is described: "green as young reeds, shot with silver like beads of dew; and her belt was of gold, shaped like a chain of flag-lilies set with the pale-blue eyes of forget-me-nots" (*FR*, I, vii, 134). Even the garden, the furniture and the food are described in greater detail in the house of Tom Bombadil. The flagged floor in the guestroom is "strewn with fresh green rushes" (*FR*, I, vii, 136), while Goldberry sits amid "wide vessels of green and brown earthenware" with white water-lilies (*FR*, I, vii 134). The chairs are not only low, but also rush-seated (*FR*, I, vii, 135), and the table is "of dark polished wood" (*FR*, I, vii, 134) The food is "yellow cream and honeycomb, and white bread, and butter; milk, cheese, and green herbs and ripe berries" (*FR*, I, vii, 135), and a drink that seems to be clear water. This is more detail than Tolkien usually provides, with correspondingly less leeway for the reader's imagination.

With the Bombadil episode as the main exception, furniture is extremely vaguely described. Food gets a little more detail, but often in the form that we are told what the characters think of it. Tolkien's predilection for plain and simple fare is evident, and the few meals where specific foodstuffs are mentioned are of this sort. At farmer Maggot's there is "beer in plenty, and a mighty dish of mushrooms and bacon, besides much other solid farmhouse fare" (*FR*, I, iv, 105), at the Prancing Pony "hot soup, cold meats, a blackberry tart, new loaves, slabs of butter, and half a ripe cheese" (*FR*, I, ix, 166), at Henneth Annûn "pale yellow wine, cool and fragrant, [. . .] bread and butter, and salted meats, and dried fruits, and good red cheese" (*TT*, IV, v, 285, cf. *TT*, III, ix, 166; *RK*, V, i, 35).

Objects described in any kind of detail are usually things for personal use, like jewellery, horns and weapons. Andúril's sheath and


Frequency of Landscape Descriptions, by Chapter
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
Book 1
Chapter 1
Chapter 3
Chapter 5
Chapter 7
Chapter 9
Chapter 11
Book 2
Chapter 1
Chapter 3
Chapter 5
Chapter 7
Chapter 9
Book 3
Chapter 1
Chapter 3
Chapter 5
Chapter 7
Chapter 9
Chapter 11
Book 4
Chapter 2
Chapter 4
Chapter 6
Chapter 8
Chapter 10
Book 5
Chapter 2
Chapter 4
Chapter 6
Chapter 8
Chapter 10
Book 6
Chapter 2
Chapter 4
Chapter 6
Chapter 8

Merry and Pippin's Barrow-blades are more closely described than Frodo's Sting or Gandalf's Glamdring. But Tolkien was an inveterate pipe smoker, and we do learn that Merry kept tobacco in "a small leather bag," presumably the one he later gave to Saruman, and that he bore in "a little soft wallet on a string" the pipe that he gave to Gimli, "a small pipe with a wide flattened bowl" (*TT*, III, ix, 168). His own old pipe is wooden. Aragorn's pipe is "long-stemmed" and "curiously carved" (*FR*, I, ix, 168), and Bilbo presents Merry and Pippin with "two beautiful pipes with pearl mouth-pieces and bound with fine-wrought silver" (*RK*, VI, vi, 265).[7] Other than this, we know more about Bill Ferny's pipe, short and black (*FR,* I, xi, 193) than about the ones belonging to Gandalf, Sam and Pippin.

Utensils are seldom described, the chief exception being the mostly plain and unadorned "platters, bowls and dishes of glazed brown clay or turned box-wood" at Henneth Annûn, with here and there "a cup or basin of polished bronze" and Faramir's "goblet of plain silver" (*TT*, IV, v, 283). Faramir, as we know, also gives Sam and Frodo "two stout staves of wood, shod with iron, and with carven heads through which ran plaited leathern thongs" (*TT*, IV, vii, 303)—which is much more detail than the wizards' staffs, which are just "rough" and made of ash for Gandalf, and heavy and black for Saruman (*TT*, III, v, 95; *TT*, III, vi, 116; *TT*, III, x, 188).

To sum up so far, the contention that descriptions in *The Lord of the Rings* are general, in many cases almost generic, seems to hold up very well. And we certainly cannot use the degree of detail to determine how important a person or an object is to the plot. If we see cosy Bag End in vivid color and high definition, the colors and details are added by us, the readers, to a framework provided by Tolkien.[8]

> Before them dark in the dawn the great mountains reached up to roofs of smoke and cloud. Out from their feet were flung huge buttresses and broken hills that were now at the nearest scarce a dozen miles away. Frodo looked round in horror. Dreadful as the Dead Marshes had been, and the arid moors of the Noman-lands, more loathsome far was the country that the crawling day now slowly unveiled to his shrinking eyes. Even to the Mere of Dead Faces some haggard phantom of green spring would come; but here neither spring nor summer would ever come again. Here nothing lived, not even the leprous growths that feed on rottenness. The gasping pools were choked with ash and crawling muds, sickly white and grey, as if the mountains had vomited the filth of their entrails upon the lands

> about. High mounds of crushed and powdered rock, great cones of earth fire-blasted and poison-stained, stood like an obscene graveyard in endless rows, slowly revealed in the reluctant light. (*TT*, IV, ii, 239)

Similarly, Swiss Silberhorn was the Silvertine of Tolkien's dreams, and the Glittering Caves of Aglarond were based on the Cheddar caves visited on his honeymoon and again in 1940 (*Letters* 392, 407).

It is interesting to note that landscape and weather descriptions are particularly frequent in books I and II.[9] I doubt it is a coincidence that this is where the hobbits move through countryside similar to those English landscapes Tolkien knew best.[10] A typical example is this passage from "A Short Cut to Mushrooms":

> They waded the stream, and hurried over a wide open space, rush-grown and treeless, on the further side. Beyond that they came again to a belt of trees: tall oaks, for the most part, with here and there an elm tree or an ash. The ground was fairly level, and there was little undergrowth; but the trees were too close for them to see far ahead. The leaves blew upwards in sudden gusts of wind, and spots of rain began to fall from the overcast sky. Then the wind died away and the rain came streaming down. They trudged along as fast as they could, over patches of grass, and through thick drifts of old leaves; and all about them the rain pattered and trickled. (*FR*, I, iv, 99)

My reading also confirmed Rosebury's comments about the characters situated in the landscape. Running spatial orientation is obviously important. And we often seem expected to share a *particular* sense of place. Bombadil's house and its immediate surroundings is one of many examples, as are Wellinghall, Derndingle, Meduseld, Helm's Deep, Dunharrow, the throne hall in Minas Tirith (the description of which was further embellished by the restoration of lost text for the 2004 50th anniversary edition), and the Tower of Cirith Ungol. I fully agree with Rosebury about the reader's knowledge being coordinated around a sense of extremely precise physical location and orientation.

So, Tolkien follows his own advice for persons and objects, but not so much for places. Why? Is it that he himself visualized places better? Should we now remember Tolkien's comment that he could draw landscapes, not people? Or is the reason that "real" landscapes and places could be used as models without clashing with the requirements of the story, while real people could not? Or can it be more subtle,

that the author realized that the reader would want to (or should want to) identify with persons, who ought therefore to be left open, so to speak, while persons can move through many different landscapes, and these can therefore bear closer description without pushing the reader away? I do not pretend to have the final answer. I do however think it interesting that Saruman and Denethor and Bill Ferny's pipe are more closely depicted than Gandalf, Pippin, and Sam's pipe. The reason could well be that the author expected few readers to identify with the three first-mentioned.

There are some indications that Tolkien did indeed have difficulties visualizing his own characters. Returning to Gollum, there is the problem of his color. He is black as night in *The Hobbit*, and the first time Frodo and Sam really meet him, he is presented as a "small black shape" (*TT*, IV, i, 219). Anborn, the Ranger of Ithilien, describes him as black; he is a "black fellow" to Shagrat and "the black sneak" to the tracker orc in Mordor (*TT*, IV, v, 283; *TT*, IV, vi, 293; *TT*, IV, x, 348; *RK*, VI, ii, 202). And so on; Gollum's blackness seems solidly established (and cannot be explained just by dark surroundings). But when we are given a hypothetical eagle's view of the hobbits and Gollum before the Morannon, Gollum is compared to a famished skeleton, "its long arms and legs almost bone-white" (*TT*, IV, iii, 253). And when he is caught by Faramir, he has "white snapping fingers" (*TT*, IV, vi, 297). So, is he black as night or so bone-white that an eagle can mistake him for a skeleton? To complicate matters even more, he is described on Mount Doom as being "all bones and tight-drawn sallow skin" (*RK*, VI, iii, 221). And his head, is it "large" as in "The Taming of Sméagol," or is it "a little black head" as in "The Forbidden Pool" (*TT*, IV, I, 220; *TT*, IV, vi, 294)? I submit that the most probable reason for this vacillation is simply that Tolkien himself did not have a clear picture of Gollum just as he did not have, and did not need to have, a crisp picture of orc hands. Indeed, he could never decide whether Gandalf's beard was *white* as in *The Hobbit* (*FR*, I, i, 33; *RK*, VI, iv, 229; *RK*, VI, vii, 274) or *grey* (*TT*, III, v, 96; possibly *RK*, V, x, 165), or perhaps the indeterminate *silver* (*FR*, II, i, 239) although his *hair* was white all the time. True, Gandalf the Grey becomes the White Rider (on a horse that, contrary to the fond belief of many, was unequivocally *grey*), but the references to him as a greybeard come *after* his transformation.

I said at the start that my definition of "description" was words helping the reader to visualize persons, objects, places, and events. It should now be mentioned that there are some examples of descriptive words that are actually useless, or nearly so, for visualization because they lack points of reference. "The Harfoots were browner of skin,"

the Prologue informs us, while the "Fallohides were fairer of skin" (*FR*, Prologue, 12). All right, compared to *what*? When we first meet Legolas in the text, he is said to be "strange," but we are not told in what way (*FR*, II, ii, 253). All elves would probably seem strange to the reader. The "normal" elves at this point in the story would presumably be those living in Rivendell, but *they* have not been described. So is it Legolas' clothes? His speech? His manners? His looks? (He is presented as "fair of face beyond the measure of Men" (*RK*, V, ix, 148), which does not help very much in picturing him.) Earlier, Gandalf drives an "odd-looking waggon laden with odd-looking packages" (*FR*, I, I, 32). Well, we do get the point that they are odd, but not what oddity consists of. Probably it just signals "foreign," which will of course mean different things to different people. Besides "strange" and "odd," "tall" is often useless for intersubjective visualization in the same way.

A small class of descriptions, perhaps at the margins of my own definition, introduce an unexpected perspective. The main text of *The Lord of the Rings* overwhelmingly gives a hobbit perspective, telling the story as if it were, or could have been, compiled as part of *The Red Book of Westmarch* from the eyewitness accounts mainly of members of the Fellowship of the Ring. This perspective is seldom abandoned, but it does happen, as when the impressions of wild animals or unidentified wanderers are recounted, or we are told about Shelob's thoughts—Shelob whose fate explicitly is not known—or Sauron's. A twentieth-century viewpoint, and a help in visualization, is also famously and jarringly brought in when Gandalf's fireworks dragon at Bilbo's farewell party is compared to an express train (*FR*, I, I, 36). A less-known break with the hobbit perspective is the four references to how Pippin, but mostly Merry, feels like a piece of left luggage (*TT*, III, iii, 48; *RK*, V, ii, 46, 47; *RK*, V, iii, 73). Here we are again in a railway culture where luggage is left at the station to be called for later. This is not strictly visualization, but it does help us modern readers understand how the hobbits felt. We could have felt the same.

In ending

By now it will come as no surprise that my close reading has confirmed my original beliefs about Tolkien's invitational style, characterized not least by descriptions that are deliberately so open that they are mentally filled in by the readers. Or we should say: by most readers. For this method of course presupposes that the readers are willing to invest something of their own. Many readers are, although they do not always realize what they are doing, but exceptions may be found. Burton Raffel's irritation has already been mentioned. Another non-

convert is Ella van Wyk, who unlike Raffel accepts *The Lord of the Rings* as literature, but finds it to be flawed among other things because of its boring, unspecific and repetitive descriptions, particularly of nature. Van Wyk builds on Janet Burroway, author of a much-used textbook of narrative writing which lays down that "[s]pecific, definite, concrete, particular details—these are the life of fiction," and that repetition will draw the reader out of the text (Burroway 58).[11] Van Wyk's example of repetitive description is "looming" or "frowning" mountains, and she thinks its effect is that reader "will picture all the mountains described in *The Lord of the Rings* as looking very similar. If Tolkien had attached particular attributes to specific mountains, the reader would have a clearer picture of them in their mind," thereby keeping the reader "submerged in the text" (van Wyk 114). While I do not think her example perfectly chosen, I do see the point. When Tolkien lets mountains loom (he lets them frown only three times), he does not depict them at all in the same close way as small roads in the Woody End or the ruined guard-house at Isengard, and they are in a sense reduced to generic peaks. I think this is because the looming mountains are far away from his characters, for when these do move in mountainous terrain, as in Emyn Muil, crossing the Mountains of Shadow or climbing Mount Doom, we get the kind of description where resting-sites can be visualized and orientation is significant. The close hobbit perspective is in my opinion more than adequate for keeping the reader submerged in the text—but only if she is willing to help.

It is perhaps necessary to point out that Tolkien's generalized style does not mean lack of realism or ignoring everyday matters. Tolkien has been accused of rejecting the minutiae of everyday life. The "philologist's world of *The Lord of the Rings* is not a miniaturist's world or a world where we read the details of the story of daily life," writes such an astute critic as Jared Lobdell (Lobdell 45).[12] Well, not very much, it is true. But the author once growled to a journalist friend that the loathed the old romances where a knight in full armor would set out on a journey without so much as a crust of bread in his hand. So we do hear about washing up (*FR*, II, iii, 78); Sam's pack (*FR*, I, iii, 79); his cooking gear and salt (*TT*, IV, iv, 261); and about too-warm clothes (*FR*, I, viii, 156). And for those who complain that Tolkien ignores simple bodily functions, I believe I may actually have found a reference to taking a slash: After Aragorn's long storytelling session for the hobbits in the dell under Weathertop, we learn that "Sam and Merry got up and walked away from the fire" (*FR*, I, xi, 207).

My view has on the whole been confirmed, yes, but it has also become more nuanced. I have become more aware than before of the difference between the landscape and locality descriptions and the

people moving and living in them, where the landscapes are often less able to absorb the readers' input than the people and their gear, so to speak. If "vague" can be taken in a positive sense, one might speak of vague people travelling through vivid landscapes, although much of the land is only seen from a distance. We know much about *where* the protagonists are, and quite a lot about *how* they perceive things, but precious little about their *looks*. It is not a new insight, but nevertheless significant that their experiences and perceptions are as a rule expressed so that they could be *our* experiences, under given conditions. Returning briefly to Note E, Tolkien went for *universal* appeal by letting the reader's experience be *poignantly particular*. Welcome to Middle-earth!

Notes

This article was first presented at the Return of the Ring conference at Loughborough University, England, in August 2012. I am grateful for comments on an earlier version from the *Tolkien Studies* Editors and an anonymous reviewer.

1 In an interesting essay, artist Ruth Lacon has recently examined Tolkien's views on illustration and carefully argued the case for illustrating even major works. Among other things, she finds that his actions contradict his (few) statements on the matter, and that the latter may be connected to influence from the ideas of R.G. Collingwood and to special circumstances in the post-war period. She takes issue with Note E, arguing that visual representations are necessary or highly desirable in many contexts (putting, perhaps, very little emphasis on the fact that Tolkien was speaking on Fairy-Stories in particular, but naming *The Silmarillion* as a "difficult" text that would profit greatly from illustration) and even contending that Tolkien's stance "constitutes Iconoclasm," a heresy in the eyes of the Roman Catholic Church. Commenting on Pauline Baynes' Tolkien illustrations, Lacon finds that they are "not realistic in a way that can 'overdefine' any character."

2 Cf. *Fortlassen* above (51).

3 Cf. Rateliff (7) and Walker (137).

4 Rosebury (55). On nature descriptions cf. Bergland.

5 Cf. Kocher (9).

6 See Agøy; cf. Rateliff (8f.).

7 Probably "pearl" is here "mother-of-pearl," as suggested by Anders Stenström (42, 85).

8 Cf. Lobdell, "One can draw pictures from his words, but the pictures are one's own, not his" (42).

9 Based on my own count 72 out of a total of 142 landscape descriptions are to be found in Books I and II. My criteria for defining text as a 'landscape description' are not exact and could well be debated, but the figures should nevertheless give a rough idea. More importantly, Magne Bergland's more formal quantitative investigation of words describing *nature* in *The Lord of the Rings* also concludes that they are particularly frequent in Book I and II, (144f., 140).

10 Cf. Shippey (58–64).

11 The quotation is the same in the fifth edition used by van Wyk.

12 For the original (and much misunderstood) remark about the minutiae of everyday life, see Miller (60).

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No Triumph without Loss: Problems of Intercultural Marriage in Tolkien's Works

Hope Rogers

The Lord of the Rings has often been praised for what Jonathan Evans calls its "cultural, racial, or *ethnic* depth" (194). Middle-earth is rich with diversity, inhabited by various peoples from Men and Hobbits to Elves and Ents. Each of these groups is further subdivided into different cultures, each replete with its own language or dialect, history, cultural practices, and ethnic interests. This feature of Tolkien's work has garnered much critical attention, as scholars have explored everything from how Tolkien draws on medieval sources and folklore to create these peoples to how they function in the symbolism and spiritual themes of the legendarium. Among scholars analyzing the applicability of Tolkien's races to those of the real world, however, the conversation has become deadlocked, polarized over one of the most common criticisms of *The Lord of the Rings*: Tolkien's supposed racism.

His accusers have ranged from "critics who argue that *LotR* is a book about whites rising against a tide of black-skinned foes," as Robert Gehl puts it, to Gehl himself, whose nuanced discussion of the fear of miscegenation represented by Gollum still ultimately comes back to the point that Tolkien's treatment of race is highly problematic (264). Numerous scholars, such as Sandra Straubhaar, Patrick Curry, Jane Chance, Anderson Rearick, and Shaun Hughes have come to Tolkien's defense, pointing to the many positive examples of intercultural interaction in the legendarium. Though they offer many helpful insights into Tolkien's works, they too come repeatedly to a single conclusion, that Tolkien, far from being racist, promotes intercultural interaction and friendship. Chance even places this drive for multiculturalism at the heart of *The Lord of the Rings*, claiming that "returning the Ring to its origin means refusal of power as domination by the One—by sameness, homogeneity—and therefore acceptance of respect for difference and diversity" (33). However, the destruction of the Ring is an act of renunciation, a "triumph" due to which "many fair things will fade and be forgotten" (*FR*, II, ii, 282). Tolkien's works are histories of loss, accounts of the sorrows that ravage a fallen world in the inevitable passing of time. He does not make an exception to this theme to create a singular happy ending in which difference and diversity gain an unproblematic victory, the "carefree multiculturalism" espoused by

many critics (Gehl 264). Instead, racial and cultural interactions in Tolkien's works repeatedly demonstrate problems and losses that accompany diversity in the real world and the imperfections of even the best efforts to find solutions. Critics have almost totally ignored the fact that these concerns about diversity, rather than either its promotion or disparagement, are the focus of Tolkien's portrayal of multicultural interactions.

This paper explores Tolkien's critique of multiculturalism, in the sense of cultural intermixing, by looking at the single issue of intercultural marriage, which covers a wide range of unions, from those between Elves and Men to those between members of the different microcultures of the Shire. Although this spectrum includes more relationships than would typically fall under the real-world umbrella of interracial marriage, Tolkien frequently blurs boundaries between race and culture and often addresses difference rather than race per se, making intercultural relationships a better focus for discussion.

Tolkien's intermarriages hold a central importance in his works, as shown in the story of Túrin, which represents an example of the dangers of rejecting these relationships and the acceptance of difference that they represent. As we can see in this story, although Tolkien critiques intermarriage, he does not reject it, and indeed it remains essential for dispelling prejudice and creating peace. Nevertheless, numerous problems with intermarriage arise throughout Tolkien's works, including the threat of outside prejudice and concerns over assimilation and its alternatives, concerns that go beyond racism and into inherent stresses on personal identity.

Intercultural Marriage

Tolkien introduces concern over intercultural relationships on the second page of *The Lord of the Rings*, as the Hobbiton hobbits discuss Frodo's 'multicultural' ancestry: "Baggins is his name, but he's more than half a Brandybuck, they say. It beats me why any Baggins of Hobbiton should go looking for a wife away there in Buckland, where folks are so queer" (*FR*, I, i, 30). The hobbits are concerned with the apparent unnaturalness of the marriage and the perceived difference of the Bucklander spouse, concerns which seem absurd to the reader given the homogeneity of the Shire. They even question Frodo's cultural identity, and Lobelia uses this confusion to challenge his legitimacy as Bilbo's heir: "You don't belong here; you're no Baggins—you—you're a Brandybuck!" (*FR*, I, i, 48). The appearance of these tensions so early and in a place where they seem to have so little justification alerts readers to the fact that intercultural marriages and the status of multicultural offspring will be problematic issues in the story. If intermarriage

among hobbit families can produce such unease, then it is unsurprising to find it causing trouble elsewhere.

Intercultural marriages hold a privileged position in the legendarium, often constituting or contributing to the stories' happy endings. For example, the marriages of Beren and Lúthien and later Aragorn and Arwen combine the best aspects of their kindreds and unite their peoples. Moreover, the multicultural children of such couples often play key roles in the plot, especially Eärendil, who is able to act as a representative of both Elves and Men to the Valar and thus save Middle-earth. Nor are intermarriages limited to the unions of mortal Men with almost goddess-like Elves; they unite characters from all walks of life, crossing both cultural and class boundaries. The special place of these unions in the legendarium both as a specific form of interaction and as representatives of peaceful relationships in general requires a discussion of their importance before addressing the problems that accompany them. In particular, the story of Túrin, which is in many ways a foil to the tales of both Beren and Lúthien and Tuor and Idril, serves as a powerful exploration of the necessity of intercultural marriage and the acceptance of difference that it represents, as Túrin's rejection of both leads to his tragic fate.

Túrin

It may seem implausible to blame the tragedies of Túrin's life on his choices: he is dogged by bad luck fueled by Morgoth's curse and often seems to have little agency as he is driven by his doom. As Tom Shippey points out, however, Tolkien repeatedly offers double explanations for the events of Túrin's life: "Túrin escapes from Dor-lómin 'by fate and courage', Túrin and Hunthor cross the Teiglin 'by skill and hardihood, or by fate', Túrin survives the illness that killed his sister, 'for such was his fate and the strength of the life that was in him'" (263). The disasters that plague him are similarly caused both by his actions and by his fate, and in fact the curse seems to tragically magnify his negative tendencies and to take his choices to their extreme conclusions.

Specifically, Túrin's tragedy begins with his failure to adapt to and learn from the other cultures with which he comes into contact; he is blind to the value of difference necessary for all successful intercultural interactions and particularly for intermarriage, a weakness that the curse magnifies with disastrous consequences. Although Túrin at various times lives among the Sindar, Noldor, and Men of Haleth, he never accepts any aspect of their cultures, instead ever preferring and elevating the memory of his own family and people. Thus his friendship with Nellas ends "as he turned his thoughts to deeds of men," and

in Doriath "his heart and thought turned ever to his own kin" (*CH* 81). He eventually leaves Menegroth and his foster-father Thingol, who sees "in place of his fosterling a Man and a stranger" (*CH* 83). Túrin's actions have made "Man" and "stranger" synonymous; he has resisted the commonality and acculturation with the Elves that his status as their foster-son could have produced and instead has focused on the differences between the two peoples. Saeros exploits this alienation when he targets Túrin's family in his taunts, and the ensuing violence leads to Túrin's removal from Doriath.

Túrin's friendship with Beleg is especially tainted by his focus on Men and his attendant refusal to compromise his own cultural values, making it a one-sided and eventually fatal relationship for Beleg. He leaves Beleg in Doriath to be with other Men, and, after Beleg spends a year seeking him, he still refuses to return, instead telling Beleg that if he wishes to honor their friendship he must join him and his men. Beleg's acquiescence perpetuates the inequality of their relationship, as the elf makes sacrifices and gives up his people to be with Túrin, without the latter having to give any ground. Túrin's choice to cling to his identity as a Man is eventually taken to its extreme conclusion by his curse-driven bad luck when he inadvertently rejects Beleg as one who is different and thus a foe. At great personal risk, Beleg has rescued Túrin after he is captured by Orcs, but as he cuts Túrin's bonds,

> Túrin was roused into a sudden wakefulness of rage and fear, and seeing a form bending over him in the gloom with a naked blade in hand he leapt up with a great cry, believing that Orcs were come again to torment him; and grappling with him in the darkness he seized Anglachel, and slew Beleg Cúthalion thinking him a foe. (*CH* 154)

Túrin sees Beleg as the enemy and thus slays him. Of course, this perception is largely created by Túrin's unfortunate circumstances: he has been captured and tormented and then awakes to see someone he assumes to be an orc bending over him in the darkness, so it is natural that he reacts by attacking the figure. In this sense, anyone would have acted as Túrin does. Nevertheless, there is a certain logical continuity connecting this accident with the whole flow of Túrin's life. Túrin has always identified with Men and expected Beleg to compromise his own identity as an Elf in order to be his friend, even forcing him to adapt to the life of an outlaw. Through such actions, he creates mutually exclusive categories of Men like him versus those who are different, and an extreme of this classification would be to group Elves and Orcs together, as, by implication, he unintentionally does in this episode. The curse is effected by the exaggeration of his bad judgment blinding

him to the benefits of difference by making him, literally in the dark, blind to the fact that Beleg is a friend and not an enemy.

Túrin's refusal to acculturate continues during his stays in Nargothrond, Dor-lómin, and Brethil, where he fails to accept their policies of secrecy and non-resistance and thus brings great grief to each. However, his most significant repudiation of other cultures is his rejection of Finduilas, the Elf-woman who loves him. Like Nellas before her, Finduilas compares Túrin to Beren with an implied comparison of herself to Lúthien. This allusion reveals her hope of an intercultural union and the possibility that Túrin could follow in Beren's footsteps, but Túrin is blind to both the desirability and necessity of intermarriage. Earlier in the story, when Thingol tells him that he, "one Man alone," can do little in the fight against Morgoth, Túrin replies, "Beren my kinsman did more" (*CH* 85). Melian corrects him: "Beren, and Lúthien" (*CH* 85). Túrin wants to have Beren's impact but does not understand or accept his need for the help of the Elves and specifically the fruitful partnership of intermarriage that Beren and Lúthien had. In keeping with this attitude, he admires Finduilas only inasmuch as she reminds him of his own kin, and his highest praise of her is to say that "I would I had a sister so fair" (*CH* 165). As he has already shown in his previous interactions, he does not value what other cultures have to offer, instead only esteeming the degree to which he can see their resemblance to Men and specifically to his own family. There is no possibility of his loving Finduilas, for that would require him to accept and love her difference from him. After all, intercultural marriage is valuable primarily as a union of difference, not similarity. Túrin irrevocably rejects the possibility of such a union when, under the influence of the dragon Glaurung, he ignores Gwindor's command to save Finduilas, who has been captured, and instead goes to find his mother and sister. Just as he unintentionally kills Beleg when the curse creates circumstances that take his earlier choices to an extreme, he abandons Finduilas not so much by his own free choice but by the curse, acting through the dragon's spell, which exaggerates his earlier, less dramatic rejection of her love. It is highly unlikely that he would have left her to be tormented and killed of his own volition; although he does not love her, he clearly cares for her and later does try to find her, though by then it is far too late. At the same time, however, this second rejection mirrors the first: he originally underestimates her value because she is unlike him and his family, and he later totally rejects her in favor of that family, choosing (or rather, being forced to choose) them over "a maiden of strange kin" (*Lost Tales II* 87). The curse works with his own judgment to lead him to repudiate the difference that Finduilas represents.

Morgoth's curse takes Túrin's choice to reject intercultural marriage to a horrifying extreme through his incest with his sister. Through this ultimate taboo, the curse creates a realization of his desire for a homogeneous union and his own family that is suggested earlier when he likens Finduilas to his sister. Here it is obvious that Túrin is not making a choice; he does not and cannot know that Níniel is actually his sister Niënor and is formally guiltless in the union. Nevertheless, there is again a sense of logic or inevitability in this plot point as he proceeds to inadvertently marry a member of his family. Historically, the incest taboo has been explained by the fact that incest prevents the exchange of women that promotes social and group solidarity (Meigs and Barlow 39). As W.G. Aston concisely puts it, "incest is antisocial" (167). Túrin has already rejected solidarity with the Elves due to his constant focus on and preference for his own people and family, an antisocial tendency, culminating, as we have seen, in his rejection and subsequent desertion of Finduilas. The curse turns this negative tendency towards rejection of difference into an atrocity.

The two alternatives of intermarriage and incest in the story of Túrin suggest an opposition between them, representing the extremes on a continuum of acceptance versus rejection of difference. Indeed, the opposition between the two appears in both of the other major intermarriage stories in *The Silmarillion*. Idril's marriage to Tuor is opposed by her first cousin Maeglin, who desires to wed her, and this desire is explicitly labeled in the story as taboo. In the tale of Beren and Lúthien, Daeron is a minstrel who also loves Lúthien and betrays her and Beren to Thingol out of jealousy. In the original version recounted in *The Book of Lost Tales, Part II*, however, Daeron is actually her brother. The combination of these versions hints at yet another incestuous match. Both Beren and Lúthien and Idril and Tuor choose intercultural marriage over incest, and the triumphant endings of their stories attest to the power of intermarriage as a positive force, especially when compared with Túrin's tragic end. Moreover, when it is opposed to incest, the ultimate rejection of difference, intercultural marriage becomes a symbol of the acceptance of not just spousal but of general difference. For just as Túrin's incest is the accursed culmination of a series of rejections of intercultural collaboration, the other couples' intermarriages are accompanied by a general willingness to accept and learn from those who are unlike them. Intercultural marriage's strength as a form of interaction thus results not only from the peaceful and fruitful nature of the relationships themselves, but also because it is tied to the acceptance of all difference.

Problems of Intercultural Marriage

Just as the specific relationship of intercultural marriage can be seen as representing acceptance of all difference, its specific problems can be tied to the wider issues of intercultural interaction in general. Éowyn brings up the main issues confronting intermarriage when she asks her fiancé Faramir: "Then must I leave my own people, man of Gondor? And would you have your proud folk say of you: 'There goes a lord who tamed a wild shieldmaiden of the North! Was there no woman of the race of Númenor to choose?'" (*RK*, VI, v, 262). She worries about her marriage creating the necessity of leaving her culture and by implication joining another, a dubious process as indicated by the word "tamed," which suggests that she is losing her freedom. She also fears the prejudice and condescension of the Gondorians who see themselves as superior to the Rohirrim. Faramir simply assents and kisses her, but these concerns remain important.

Outside Prejudice

Outside prejudice is the first significant problem facing intercultural marriages. Éowyn worries about acerbic comments, but this prejudice often has much more violent manifestations. Thingol tries to send Beren to his death to prevent him from marrying his daughter Lúthien, despising him because "Lúthien he loved above all things, setting her above all the princes of the Elves; whereas mortal Men he did not even take into his service" (*S* 166). He sees Beren as an inferior and thus seeks his death, a major obstacle for the relationship. Nevertheless, his ire is directed only at Beren, and, rather than limiting the relationship's impact, he increases it beyond imagination. Maeglin, on the other hand, betrays his entire people to Morgoth, causing great harm, partially out of anger about the Man Tuor's marriage to the Elvish princess Idril. At first, this betrayal seems to have little to do with racial prejudice; Maeglin tells Morgoth the location of Gondolin under torture, and inasmuch as his treachery does relate to the intercultural relationship, it seems to stem from his desire for Idril: his hatred grows "for he desired above all things to possess her," and "desire for Idril and hatred for Tuor led Maeglin the easier to his treachery" (*S* 241, 242). Jealousy, not prejudice, seems to be the cause.

His earlier interaction with Huor and Húrin, however, belies this idea, as he says: "Some might wonder wherefore the strict law is abated for two knave-children of Men. It would be safer if they had no choice but to abide here as our servants to their life's end" (*CH* 37). In his view, Men, the second-born, should relate to the Elves as servants, not as equals; like Thingol, he sees them as his inferiors and thus despises

them. To see such a Man made a prince of Gondolin, the husband of Turgon's only heir, would have been an outrage to him under any circumstances, and the fact that Tuor marries Idril, the woman Maeglin desires above all else, is maddening to him. His personal jealousy and racial prejudice amplify each other and create the seeds of treachery, and, just as Túrin's accursed fate takes his personal faults to horrifying ends, Maeglin is captured "as fate willed" and driven to act out his hatred, the "evil in his heart," in this terrible betrayal (*S* 242). His prejudice, unlike Thingol's, has consequences for the entire nation that has accepted the intermarriage. Though Tuor and Idril's illustrious offspring validate the relationship, it is achieved only at the cost of Gondolin itself. Thus prejudice lowers the probability of intercultural marriage occurring and dramatically limits its effectiveness as a unifier when it does take place.

Intercultural marriages are also threatened by a second form of prejudice. In this case, the connections to a marginalized or enemy group that accompany or are created by intermarriage do not recommend that group to the hostile culture. Instead, the connections become evidence that the person who has married into that culture is also an enemy, separating him from his own people. For example, Aragorn's relationship with the Elves of Lórien, among whom Arwen has lived, is beneficial both to him and to the other Fellowship members in terms of much-needed aid and cultural enrichment. However, reactions to this relationship are negative. For example, when Aragorn reveals to Éomer that he and his friends have been aided by Galadriel, he responds, "if you have her favour, then you also are net-weavers and sorcerers, maybe" (*TT*, III, ii, 35). He projects his prejudice against the Elves onto those connected with them; Aragorn and his friends are alienated by association. Though Éomer proves willing to listen and change his mind about them, even in the face of Gimli's aggressive defense of his Lady, this episode shows how those who choose intercultural unions can become isolated from their own people, unable to dispel prejudice because they themselves are its objects.

Leaving Home

Intercultural marriages can also result in separation from one's people because of its basic requirement of leaving home. Sam brings up this problem when he challenges Bilbo's proposed happy ending, "*and they all settled down and lived together happily ever after*," asking "And where will they live? That's what I often wonder" (*FR*, II, iii, 287). He seems to be responding to the word *together*. Where can people of different cultures live together happily ever after? Some would have to give up their homelands, a great sacrifice. Sam's question silences

the other hobbits, ending the conversation. Unanswered, it hovers over the rest of the text. Though Sam raises the issue of giving up one's home in a general context, it becomes particularly pressing for multicultural couples, since they must choose a single residence and a single culture in which to live. Specifically, the sacrifice of leaving home often falls to the women in such marriages. Though there are examples of men going to live with their wives' peoples, including Tuor and Drogo Baggins, overwhelmingly the wives go to live with their husbands. Frequently this circumstance has to do with the social status of the husbands involved, who are often kings or lords of their lands and thus must stay there to rule, but it also reflects a real-world reality. Historically, women who married outside of their races were commonly ostracized from their families and cultures, and, today, there is still the perception that women, not men, must give up home and culture and thus bear the brunt of this cost of interracial unions (Alibhai-Brown 71, 89). This custom is not restricted to interracial marriages but extends to other unions of difference; we can note, for example, that when Tolkien married Edith, she converted to his faith and not the other way around.

Nevertheless, Tolkien offers a challenge to this paradigm in the story of Aldarion and Erendis. Like his mother's people, Aldarion is drawn to the sea, but Erendis cannot or will not abandon her pastoral homeland to be with him. Their inability to find a place where they can live together destroys the relationship, which splits along both cultural and gendered lines as Erendis ensconces herself in Emerië in a solely female household while her husband lives on his ship Ëambar with the male Venturers. The rupture is so severe that Aldarion decrees that the King's Heir can only marry within the Line of Elros, creating a barrier to intercultural unity that has repercussions even up through the time of Valacar and Vidumavi and their son Eldacar, who is nearly ousted from the throne of Gondor because of his mixed blood. Erendis and Aldarion's failure to accept the sacrifices that come with their union has serious consequences, not only for their own family, but also for their entire culture. This breakdown, like Túrin's failings, reinforces intermarriage's status as a union of difference, which is here not only cultural but also gendered. Moreover, it highlights the importance of finding middle ground, indicting both for their refusals to compromise and challenging the idea that the woman alone must bear that burden.

The story of Arwen best exemplifies the cost of separation from one's culture. She must choose between Aragorn and her people, most specifically her father. Tolkien makes the magnitude of the sacrifice involved clear: "grievous among the sorrows of that Age was the

parting of Elrond and Arwen, for they were sundered by the Sea and by a doom beyond the end of the world" (*RK*, VI, Appendix A, 343). Tolkien considers their grief comparable to that which results from the destruction and death-toll of the War of the Ring. Elrond and Arwen's separation is tragic because it is final; when they part, they part forever. For Arwen, there are no visits home, no retreats to familiar places and faces. She is trapped in a mortal body and an alien culture. The loss she suffers is thus complicated and magnified by the differing fates of Elves and Men; it does not come from the simple need to move to Gondor. Nonetheless, just as Túrin's curse couples with his negative choices to make him an extreme example of the danger of rejecting intermarriage, Arwen's special circumstances increase the normal loss of leaving home to create a heightened picture of this necessary sacrifice.

Assimilation

Once the spouse has left her culture, she faces a second choice: she must decide either to assimilate to her new people or to try to maintain her own cultural identity. In modern terms, this is the choice between cultural assimilation and cultural pluralism. Tolkien's clearest account of assimilation occurs in the story of Valacar and his Northern wife Vidumavi, who "bore herself wisely and endeared herself to all those who knew her. She learned well the speech and manners of Gondor, and was willing to be called by the name Galadwen, a rendering of her Northern name into the Sindarin tongue" (*Peoples* 260). At the time of the marriage, the Gondorians are the higher-status culture, with superior technology and learning. Tolkien writes that her assimilatory practice is wise, partially because it helps deflect the prejudice against her and, from a Gondorian perspective at least, allows her to share in Gondor's higher civilization. Nevertheless, such assimilation is not without its critics. When Thengel marries the Gondorian lady Morwen during his long residence in Gondor and then continues to use the Gondorian language after his return to Rohan, Tolkien notes that "not all men thought that good" (*RK*, VI, Appendix A, 350). Such a comment may seem terse and understated, but its mention in the brief, annalistic Appendices ranks this issue as equal to great wars and deaths of kings, highlighting its importance. Indeed, in Thengel's case this linguistic crisis would have been a major issue; he is the king of Rohan and thus bears the responsibility to lead and preserve his country. By using the language of Gondor at court, he is yielding politically to Gondorian influence and power and potentially compromising his country's independence. For Rohan, assimilation is indeed a danger.

In fact, fear of assimilation is a major concern throughout the legendarium, for the threat of cultural loss looms over every person who enters into a multicultural relationship. Faramir states this fear most explicitly when describing the consequences of the friendship between the Gondorians and the Rohirrim: "Yet now, if the Rohirrim are grown in some ways more like to us, enhanced in arts and gentleness, we too have become more like them, and can scarce claim any longer the title High" (*TT*, IV, v, 323). Although Tolkien elsewhere rejects the prejudice and superiority in this statement, it still illuminates a basic fear of cultural loss. Even if the Gondorians are not actually becoming less noble and "High" through their friendship with the Rohirrim, they are growing more like a different culture and losing important elements of their Númenórean heritage. Granted, Faramir is in part referring to a more general phenomenon in which skill in warfare is prized above all other crafts, a value system that he associates with the Rohirrim but that could equally have arisen from intracultural changes among the Gondorians. From this viewpoint, his connection of what he sees as a negative change to the culture of the Rohirrim could indicate more about his prejudice against those people as "Middle Men" who are inferior to the Gondorians than about knowledge gained through any real cultural contact. That is, he could simply be saying that in becoming worse, the Gondorians are becoming more like their inferiors. His high praise for the Rohirrim, however, makes him unlikely to take his prejudice that far, and his parallel that the Rohirrim are also becoming more like the Gondorians by learning their arts and manners—cultural characteristics—suggests that there is likewise real cultural change happening among the Gondorians as a result of their contact with the Rohirrim. Assimilation is occurring to some extent, and the changes themselves are a real threat to the preservation of both cultures.

Tolkien explicitly expresses this concern about assimilation and globalization in his letters. In one, he vehemently writes:

> The bigger things get the smaller and duller and flatter the globe gets. It is getting to be all one blasted little provincial suburb. When they have introduced American sanitation, morale-pep, feminism, and mass production [throughout the world], how happy we shall be. At any rate it ought to cut down travel. There will be nowhere to go. (*Letters* 65)

According to this view, although globalization can enrich cultures by introducing difference, it ultimately creates sameness as it mixes everything together or imposes dominant cultures everywhere. Assimilation ultimately poses as great a threat to difference as any actually

hostile force. Vidumavi's assimilation may have been wise, but widespread imitation of her tactic is both undesirable and frightening.

Pluralism

However, the alternative of pluralism carries problems of its own. Arwen does not undergo cultural assimilation. She continues to be known as a "lady of the Elves," not adopting a Gondorian or even a Mortal identity (*Sauron* 127). This choice is perfectly understandable; she has lived for thousands of years as an Elf and thus as a member of a higher-status culture. In this identity, she is able to live with her beloved Aragorn without giving up her heritage. After his death, however, she has no ties to the people with whom she has made her home, for she has lived as a minority; in a largely homogeneous land, her pluralism means that she alone is different. As Aragorn dies, "all left him save Arwen, and she stood *alone* by his bed" (*RK*, VI, Appendix A, 343, my emphasis). She leaves Gondor and goes back to the now-deserted Elvish land of Lórien, "and dwelt there *alone* under the fading trees until winter came" (*RK*, VI, Appendix A, 344, my emphasis). She has given up one culture but failed to join another, and these passages highlight her heartbreaking isolation. The choice of cultural pluralism may avoid some of the pitfalls of assimilation, but it leaves the spouse disconnected from the culture in which she lives and utterly alone once her partner has died.

Multicultural Identity

The decision between assimilation and acceptance of pluralism becomes even more complicated for the children of intercultural marriages, who must struggle to decide whether to affiliate themselves with one or both of their parents' cultures or to create a new identity altogether. There are four possibilities for the identities of multicultural children (Yancey and Lewis 96-8):

1. They may form what Yancey and Lewis call a protean identity, moving comfortably back and forth between the different cultures and thus preserving both.

2. They may form a border identity, belonging to neither culture.

3. They may form a traditional identity, choosing one culture to which they will belong.

4. Finally, they may form a separate identity as being multicultural.

Protean identities are rare in the legendarium. Certainly bicultural children do move between cultures, but these moves usually entail either abandoning their first culture or being alienated from the new one. A possible exception is Frodo, who seems to be able to move back and forth between the microcultures in the Shire. He is born in Buckland among the Brandybucks, then is adopted by his uncle and becomes a Baggins of Hobbiton, and later briefly moves back to Buckland, all without much apparent trouble. This ability is no doubt fostered by the near-homogeneity of the groups between which he is moving. Nevertheless, Frodo's protean identity does not remain unchallenged. The hobbits in *The Ivy Bush* show discomfort over Frodo's "mixed-ethnicity" background, and the Gaffer defends him not by validating both identities but by asserting that he is actually a Baggins: "Mr. Frodo is as nice a young hobbit as you could wish to meet. Very much like Mr. Bilbo, and in more than looks. After all his father was a Baggins" (*FR*, I, i, 30). Though Frodo may have a protean identity, these hobbits appear to accept him only in the traditional identity of a Baggins. Similarly, Lobelia uses Frodo's Brandybuck heritage to deny his legitimacy as a Baggins, claiming that he is not a Baggins at all but a member of a separate family and culture who does not belong in Hobbiton. Frodo may be able to live in both identities, but some of those around him still seek to cast him as one or the other.

The border identity appears most clearly in the character of Maeglin and stems from hostility and prejudice between the ethnicities involved. Maeglin is the son of the Dark Elf Eöl and Aredhel, a princess of Gondolin, whom Eöl has taken captive and forced to marry him. He has characteristics of both of his parents; he "resembled in face and form rather his kindred of the Noldor, but in mood and mind he was the son of his father" (*S* 134). Despite his mixed ancestry, his parents immediately try to label him as one of their own people, each naming him in his or her own language. As he grows up, he is closer to his mother, who constantly tells him of Gondolin and her kin there and thus fosters his identity as a Noldo. However, his father puts equally strong pressure on him: "You are of the house of Eöl, Maeglin, my son, and not of the Golodhrim... and I will not deal nor have my son deal with the slayers of our kin, the invaders and usurpers of our homes" (*S* 134). Eöl attempts to utterly deny his son's ancestry, being careful to name him "*my* son" and to cast the Noldor as the enemies of "*our* kin" and "*our* homes." By attempting to repudiate their son's heritage with such hostility, Maeglin's parents alienate him from both cultures. He

escapes with his mother to Gondolin, standing by when his father is put to death there, an act which Eöl equates with forsaking his father and his kin.

Later, evidence of similar alienation from his mother's people appears in his incestuous love for Idril. For Idril, this love represents the drive toward homogeneity, but its significance to Maeglin differs due to his border identity. She is his first cousin, too close to marry, and Tolkien specifically states that none of the Eldar "had ever desired to do so" (*S* 139). Maeglin's desire then results from the fact that he does not identify himself as one of her relatives or part of her people; to him, his love is not incestuous because he does not see her as his cousin, but as a woman of an entirely different ethnicity. His attempt to force her to wed him, reminiscent of his father's similar method of wedlock, further dissociates him from his mother's culture, in which the woman may choose whom she marries. Ultimately, his taboo desire, the result of his problematic border identity, combines with his racial prejudice against Tuor to lead to his betrayal of the Noldor. The conflicting influences of his parents have permanently separated him from both cultures.

Nor is this the only incidence of such separation. Ancalimë, daughter of Aldarion and Erendis, is alienated from both her father and mother's peoples by her parents' hostility; she becomes, like her mother accuses Númenórean men of being, like "half-Elves... neither the one nor the other," malicious to her parents, hating her husband, feared by her children, and ultimately alone even as she rules Númenor (*UT* 206). Her situation makes a mockery of the power of marriage, one which is literalized when her own husband uses a wedding to avenge himself and humiliate her (*UT* 211–12), creating a second separation that mirrors that of her parents.

By far the most common identities are the multicultural identity and the traditional identity. However, in his treatment of these identities, Tolkien reflects the modern ambiguity towards multiracial people. Do they still belong to one of their parents' races, or are they something else entirely? Tolkien never decides, instead leaving mixed and contradictory evidence about the status of these people, particularly the Half-elven. Their name implies that they fall into the multicultural identity, and indeed Elrond is introduced not as an Elf but as "Elrond Halfelven" (*FR*, I, iii, 75). Dior, the son of Beren and Lúthien, calls himself "the first of the Peredhil," or the first of the Half-elven, and gives his children names with both Elvish and Beorian (Mannish) roots, suggesting a strong, separate identity (*Peoples* 369). However, the Half-elves' identity is complicated because each Half-elf must choose whether to be counted as Man or Elf with

regard to immortality. Elrond may be called the Half-elven, but for all practical purposes he is an Elf, both in terms of lifespan and culture. Further confusing matters, Tolkien considers Elrond's daughter Arwen, also technically one of the Half-elven, an Elf when he names the three unions of the Eldar and the Edain (*RK*, VI, Appendix A, 314). Her decision to live as a Mortal (like Lúthien's) does not affect this classification, suggesting that mortality is not the only factor in the assignation of a traditional identity.

Confusion regarding multicultural people and identity separate from mortality are also attested in the case of the Half-elven Eärendil and Elwing. Even the Valar do not know what to make of them. When discussing Eärendil, Ulmo says, "And say unto me: whether is he Eärendil Tuor's son of the line of Hador, or the son of Idril, Turgon's daughter, of the Elven-house of Finwë?" (*S* 249). The Valar themselves cannot answer this question. They do, however, seem inclined toward traditional identities. Ulmo asks this question in response to Mandos calling Eärendil a mortal Man, and later Manwë decrees that Eärendil and Elwing, along with their children, "shall be given leave each to choose freely to which kindred their fates shall be joined, and under which kindred they shall be judged" (*S* 249). They may choose freely, but they must choose nonetheless. Moreover, their choice affects two things: their fate (mortality) and their judgment, a more ambiguous issue that ties into the spiritual differences between Elves and Men that are beyond the scope of this paper. This second aspect of choice implies that they are meant to be choosing more than whether or not to be immortal, but to be making a more holistic decision.

Yet the complications that arise from Eärendil's choice suggest that even the gods cannot neatly resolve this issue. When Eärendil chooses in which people to be counted, Tolkien notes that "Elwing chose to be judged among the Firstborn Children of Ilúvatar, because of Lúthien; and for her sake Eärendil chose alike, though his heart was rather with the kindred of Men and the people of his father" (*S* 249–50). His choice does not define him; in the end, he is Half-elven by blood, an Elf by immortality, and a Man by culture. His characterization as a wanderer, finally mythologized in his transformation into a star, is perhaps most apt; he belongs nowhere. Thus Tolkien creates the separate multicultural group of the Half-elven but then challenges and complicates that identity both by forcing them to choose a race and by demonstrating that they have traditional identities even before that choice. Such an ambiguous identity, like a border identity, makes it extremely difficult to belong to a specific group or culture. Multicultural children may face all the problems of their parents and more.

Applicability

Before concluding, I want to address briefly the question of whether intercultural marriages in Tolkien's works can really shed light on such relationships in the real world. The answer to this question is not a defense against the charge of racism, which has already been attempted by many critics, but rather an assertion that, despite lingering problems, there is justification for such an analysis. This present response must address how we read such marriages in Tolkien's context and our own, in light of the spiritual hierarchies present in Tolkien's works, and considering the substantial differences between Elves and Men.

First, in hypothesizing that intercultural marriage in the legendarium equates to embracing cultural or racial difference in the real world, whether in Tolkien's time or our own, I do not want to assert that Tolkien was necessarily expressing support for the interracial unions of his own day, which remained rare and were long generally deemed unacceptable (Alibhai-Brown 67). It seems unlikely that endorsement of interracial relationships would have been his explicit purpose, especially given the fact that the intermarriages in his stories are frequently between people of different cultures rather than distinct races. It thus seems more probable that Tolkien would have been engaged with such cultural differences within England. For example, in his lecture "English and Welsh," he addresses Saxon racialism, which contrasted the "racially pure" Saxons with the supposedly inferior Celts and "remained powerful through the early decades of the twentieth century" (Kidd 199). There he evokes the idea of the English as a mixed race and highlights cohesion between Saxons and Celts, despite some continued confusion and slippages (Fimi 139). If we read his works as a mythology for England, he could be asserting such a racially mixed past by means of the intermarriages in his writing, while simultaneously acknowledging the threat to regional identities posed by such mixing. Such a representation would also embrace insular differences evident in Tolkien's time even as it poses questions about the consequences of blending them. Furthermore, Great Britain today has one of the highest rates of interracial marriage in the world (Alibhai-Brown 77), making modern readings of Tolkien's intermarriages highly relevant. Whether Tolkien intended it or not, intercultural relationships in his works and in the real world are now frequently equated, as seen in the writings of many critics like Jane Chance and Sandra Straubhaar. Given such readings, it becomes increasingly important to recognize the nuances in Tolkien's portrayal of unions of difference.

Second, reading real-world intercultural romance in a world structured by a hierarchy of light and dark can be troubling, especially given the potentially racist implications of connecting race, light, and spirituality. Tolkien's categorization could be seen as reflecting nineteenth-century racialism, which "associated particular racial groups with certain spiritual characteristics" and saw religions as "expressions of ethnicity" (Kidd 171, 177). Though, as already noted, Tolkien's works do tend to blur boundaries between race and culture, these negative implications do not eliminate the viability of real-world applications. First of all, Tolkien rejected the racialist ideas of Max Müller and George Dasent that connected race and mythology or religion ("There would always be a fairy-tale" 31–33). Furthermore, Tolkien did later gain an awareness of the potential offensiveness of his hierarchies and discredited them accordingly. Dimitra Fimi points to a passage in *The War of the Jewels* in which Tolkien discusses how the Noldor use the terms for Light and Dark Elves in problematically derogatory ways (Fimi 158), and Tolkien similarly undermines the hierarchies of Men in *The Peoples of Middle-earth* (313–14), casting them not as a spiritual reality but instead as flawed and subjective systems created by the Númenóreans. Finally, as Flieger points out in *Splintered Light*, Elves and Men are associated with light not through an inherent association but through their movement away from or towards the light (145). The Elves, moving away from the light, can put Men on the right path, and Men in turn may be able to help the Elves regain the light. In this view, intercultural marriages may ennoble Men, but they also provide hope for the fading Elves, creating spiritual equality that is not tied to a particular race. Although spiritual hierarchies exist, they ultimately do not represent a form of superiority that would fatally impede our reading.

Third, although Elves and Men are created separately and differ in their experiences of mortality, these divisions do not invalidate the relevance of their intercultural relationships to the real world. For instance, although he created races with divergent origins in his fiction, Tolkien, along with most conservative Christians of his time, would have rejected the racialist theory of polygenesis, the idea that the "races" of our world were created separately and constituted separate species. Furthermore, readers who wrote to him with literal questions about the ability of the separate races of Elves and Men to interbreed left him confused (*Letters* 188–89); he seems to have given little thought to such concrete biological interpretations. In fact, as I have argued, there is clear evidence that identity and mortality can be separate issues. Though the intermarriages between Elves and Men bear special significance in the legendarium, the couples involved face the same

challenges and problems as other multicultural pairings, suggesting that the differences are ultimately subsumed by the commonalities. It should be noted that there is an exception: the case of Andreth and Aegnor. For them, the problem of the mortal Andreth's aging seems insurmountable and prevents the relationship from occurring; Finrod seems to be correct that, in Tolkien's mythology, a "high purpose of Doom" is necessary to enable these relationships and thus our analysis of them (*Morgoth* 324).

Conclusion

Ultimately, Tolkien provides no simple answers. He establishes intercultural marriage as a valid way to assuage conflicts yet simultaneously brings up problems that accompany it. Widespread intermarriage can lead to assimilation and cultural loss, yet pluralism leads to cruel loneliness. Failing to choose between the two creates troubling confusions of identity. Ultimately, all are tainted, problematic alternatives for a fallen world. Rather than offering easy solutions, Tolkien presents a clear critique of intercultural marriage without discounting its value and thus acknowledges both the benefits and the costs of uniting differences in the real world.

In many ways, this reading of Tolkien accords with the push among critics like Tom Shippey to place Tolkien among the modernists, who addressed the ambiguities and fragmentation of the world after the War. Though Tolkien does maintain a belief in absolutes grounded in his faith as a Christian, he also recognizes the inevitability of change and the breakdown of tradition, that nothing can go back to the way it was. Though there is hope of future redemption, every choice now comes with a cost, so that his story is ultimately one of pervasive loss that makes even the happiest and most triumphant of moments bittersweet. In the end, the evil of prejudice is much like that of the Ring; some conflicts may be neutralized by intercultural collaborations like intermarriage, yet "many fair things will fade and be forgotten" (*FR*, II, ii, 282). There is no triumph without loss.

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My Most Precious Riddle: Eggs and Rings Revisited

Thomas Honegger

Tolkien enjoys the reputation of having been a "niggler"[1] with his texts, which is, in the case of his legendarium, mainly due to his wish to solve textual contradictions or explore the origins of words and names.[2] The overall effect achieved, however, is not that of a coherent "monomyth" but rather of a "great chain of (re)reading," to use Gergely Nagy's term.[3] Yet while Tolkien could and would change, revise and develop the manuscript texts of his legendarium at will or at least within self-imposed limits, the same freedom no longer applied to those that had been printed and published. The case of *The Hobbit*, which originated as a tale for his children yet later changed into a "prequel" for *The Lord of the Rings*, is the most prominent example.[4] But even the existence of a printed and published text did not stop Tolkien from changing it in subsequent editions.[5]

Within *The Hobbit*, it has been the chapter "Riddles in the Dark" that has undergone the most extensive re-writing in the second (1951) and later editions so that the account of the finding of the Ring and of Gollum's character is now more in line with what we know about them from *The Lord of the Rings*. However, the existence of a new second edition did not mean that the original text had been obliterated from public memory. So Tolkien hedged his bets and inserted Bilbo's confession at the Council of Elrond (*FR*, II, ii, 262) to set things in the right perspective.[6] Thus, ever since the publication of Tolkien's *magnum opus* in 1954/55 we have a corpus that comprises the text of the first edition of *The Hobbit* (1937), the revised one of the second edition from 1951, and the new information from *The Lord of the Rings*. And while John D. Rateliff (175) correctly warns against "unconscious[ly] import[ing] more sinister associations for the ring into the earlier book [i.e. *The Hobbit*] than the story itself supports," I would like to do a conscious re-reading of the chapter "Riddles in the Dark" in its original form in light of the new information provided by *The Lord of the Rings*. Bilbo (to remain within the framework of the fictional authorship) may have deviated from the truth in his first account of his encounter with Gollum, yet even the "doctored" and "superseded" text can be profitably queried from a post-*Lord of the Rings* point of view. Within such a framework it is not so much an untruthful report of what had happened, but rather contains the remnants of an "alternative scenario" that has been superseded and replaced by the author Tolkien's later accounts.

As we know from his texts, Tolkien responded readily and with great enthusiasm to the challenges posed by puzzles (and not only of the crossword-puzzle variety, which he loved and of which we find some specimen among his notes), enigmas or riddles.[7] It may therefore come as no surprise that riddles proper take a central place in the first part of *The Hobbit*, where Bilbo, after having lost both his companions and his way in the tunnels and caves beneath the Misty Mountains, finds a golden ring and a short time later finds himself face to face with the creature Gollum. Bilbo's elvish sword saves him from being eaten on the spot yet cannot help him with his other problem: how to find the way out. Realizing that they have reached a momentary stalemate, Gollum proposes to play a game of riddles. After a "warm up" riddle, which Bilbo had no problem answering (mountain), Gollum spells out the rules and determines the stakes for the competition: if Bilbo cannot answer a riddle, then he will be eaten by Gollum. If Gollum is not able to find the answer to a riddle, then he will show Bilbo the way out.

The idea to solve a conflict or to establish the status of the protagonists by means of an opposition of wits in the form of a riddle-competition is ancient. As Jean-Philippe Qadri (". . . un concours") has shown,[8] we find them as far back as antiquity (the riddle of the Sphinx) and the apocryphal biblical tradition (Solomon vs. the Queen of Sheba), next to the well-known later examples in the literatures of the Germanic peoples (especially in Old Norse texts). What is more, the riddle-contest between Bilbo and Gollum not only participates in this venerable tradition, but it also contains several riddles that have (more or less) close analogues in these older texts.

Yet while the greater part of the riddles fits the traditional view of the genre, Bilbo's final and clinching "What have I got in my pocket?" (*H,* V, 125) poses something of a problem. It has puzzled readers and commentators (and Tolkien himself)[9] for decades. In the tradition of the "unanswerable final question" as found in riddle-exchanges between King Heidrek and Gestumblindi (i.e. Odin in disguise) or between Odin and the giant Vafthrudnir, it is one possible way of clinching the contest.[10] Tolkien was, of course, aware of the problematic nature of the "final riddle", as can be seen in the narrator's rather explicit comment (reflecting Bilbo's own doubts): "And after all that last question had not been a genuine riddle according to the ancient laws" (*H,* V, 126–27). And once more as author-narrator in the Prologue to *The Lord of the Rings*: "The Authorities, it is true, differ whether this last question was a mere "question" and not a "riddle" according to the strict rules of the Game; but all agree that, after accepting it and trying to guess the answer, Gollum was bound by his promise" (*FR,*

Prologue, 21). One wonders of course which "Authorities" (with capital A) Tolkien could have meant—Odin himself?[11] Or maybe he was simply referring to the medieval models where we find similarly unanswerable questions in at least two contests. As concerns the status of the "riddle," Tolkien is right to point out the distinction between genuine riddle and mere question. Solutions to the former can be found by an application of wit, intelligence and "knowledge of the world" to the interpretation of the hints and clues provided by the riddle itself, whereas the answer to the latter is simply a matter of private or esoteric knowledge. Both types occur (either on their own or side by side) in medieval contests and dialogues, so that the clinching of a predominantly "metaphoric" riddle-contest by means of a "mere question" is no Tolkienian invention.[12]

The scholarly reader may be able to place Bilbo's final riddle within a traditional context, yet the "uneducated" reader is likely to see Gollum's interpretation (and acceptance) of Bilbo's question to himself as a valid riddle[13] as nothing more than yet another instance of good luck. As a consequence, the average reader attributes the seemingly unorthodox form of the riddle to its origin in a (fortunate) misunderstanding. If Bilbo had had the time and some more information on the ring he had found, he presumably could have come up with a "proper" riddle such as:

> Created from matter cold, delved in the deepest of mines
> enclosing nothing, glimmering it shines;
> But encircling one of five, all into nothing disappear
> and in vain you search far and near.

The problem with such a "proper" riddle is, of course, twofold. First, it presupposes knowledge about some of the characteristics of Gollum's ring that Bilbo did not have at the time, and, secondly, Gollum would have had no difficulties in guessing the answer. Thus a "proper" riddle would not have sufficed to defeat Gollum and save Bilbo's life. As has been shown by Douglas Anderson, Jean-Philippe Qadri, John D. Rateliff and Verlyn Flieger, among others, the tradition of concluding and clinching a riddle-contest by means of an unanswerable question has a long pedigree with some prominent representatives in Old Norse literature, such as "Vafthrudnir's Sayings" or the Riddles of Gestumblindi.[14] Since the stake for Bilbo is his own life, we could see the riddle-game in *The Hobbit* as a representative of the "neck-riddle" sub-tradition. "Neck-riddles" were called thus because they provided the accused or convicted person with the chance to save his or her neck by answering a riddle or by winning the riddling contest against the opponent (cf. Riddles of Gestumblindi) respectively.[15]

However, the neck-riddle framework normally presupposes a considerable inequality of power among the participants, so that one of them has no other choice but to accept the asymmetrical distribution of the reward and/or punishment. In the contest between King Heidrek and Gestumblindi, for example, King Heidrek sits in judgment over his opponent and risks nothing but his reputation as the "wisest man"—whereas Gestumblindi is in danger of losing his life.

The situation in *The Hobbit* is different and somewhat puzzling. The texts of both the first and of the later editions name the eating of Bilbo as the desired "prize" for Gollum, whereas Bilbo is to win a "present" (first edition) or the right to be guided to the exit (second and later editions).[16] If we are to assume a basic equality of power between Bilbo (elvish sword) and Gollum (physical strength, aggressive potential), then the stakes should be roughly equal. Bilbo's ready acceptance of the stakes in the first edition is therefore a bit of a mystery—at least from a modern psychological point of view. Who would wager his life in a riddle-contest of unknown outcome if the prize to be won were merely a no more closely specified "present"? The setup of the stakes is, at first sight, blatantly asymmetrical—especially since this asymmetry is not based on a likewise asymmetrical power-relationship between Bilbo and Gollum. Tolkien redressed this imbalance in the text of the second edition so that from 1951 onwards we find more or less equal stakes: If Bilbo loses he will be eaten, but if he wins he will be shown the way out and thus be saved from certain death (by hunger and thirst, by the goblins, or by Gollum). This "correction" is part of Tolkien's larger attempt to adjust the nature of Gollum's ring in *The Hobbit* and bring it in line with its re-appearance as the One Ring in *The Lord of the Rings*. "The present" of the original text, as becomes clear, is the golden ring Bilbo has found shortly before meeting Gollum (see Anderson 128f, n. 25). Interestingly, Gollum in the text of the first edition is willing to give it to Bilbo—who actually cares very little about his prize (Anderson 128, n. 25) and seems (rightly so) more worried about the general fix he is in. Numerous scholars have commented on the inappropriateness if not impossibility of Gollum's willingness to hand over his ring, or rather the Ring, in light of the later revelations concerning its true nature and powers.[17] Indeed, by taking the Ring (i.e. "the present") out of the equation in the later revision, Tolkien is able to bring the text into closer agreement with the account given in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Yet I would like to question the view that the change in the assessment of the Ring, which occurred only during the writing of what later became the chapter "The Shadow of the Past," made changes to the chapter "Riddles in the Dark" inevitable and compelling. Of course,

Tolkien had (good) reasons to worry about potential inconsistencies in his conception of the Ring, its effects on Gollum (and later on Bilbo and Frodo), and re-writing crucial parts of his earlier text was one way to eliminate some of the most obvious discrepancies.[18] He was, so to speak, trying to answer Bilbo's question on a meta-level. Yet while the revision succeeded in removing some of the most blatant contradictions, the new information about the nature of the ring/Ring makes it also possible to see the original text in a new light. Reading, or rather re-reading the original "Riddles in the Dark" chapter with the knowledge that Gollum's ring is actually the One Ring changes our interpretation of some of the elements and they acquire an additional dimension not intended by Tolkien in the first edition, but now present in the post-*Lord of the Rings* framework.

First, the identification of Gollum's ring with the One Ring solves the problem of the apparent asymmetry in the stakes (life vs. "present") in the text of the first edition. Such an asymmetry is a problem in so far as it runs counter to the idea that Gollum is "playing fair"—as has to be assumed if we are to believe the comment by the narrator in the text of the first edition: "But funnily enough he need not have been alarmed. For one thing Gollum had learned long long ago was never, never, to cheat at the riddle-game, which is a sacred one and of immense antiquity."[19] (Anderson 128, note 25). Furthermore, the (not to be taken for granted) symmetrical structure[20] of the contest (each participant asks a riddle in turn) is an additional characteristic that suggests a basic overall symmetry. The post-*Lord of the Rings* identification of the "present" with the One Ring then remedies the asymmetry between the two stakes since the readers of *The Lord of the Rings* know that Gollum valued the proposed "present" about as much as Bilbo does his life; as Gandalf states in "The Shadow of the Past": "He [i.e. Gollum] hated it [i.e. the Ring] and loved it, as he hated and loved himself" (*FR*, I, ii, 64).[21]

From Gollum's (and the post-*Lord of the Rings* reader's) point of view, the wager "Bilbo's life vs. the Ring" was therefore a fair one—and, as Qadri (". . . un concours" 51) has argued, Gollum's extremely ambiguous attitude towards his Precious renders his decision to risk the loss of the Ring no longer as something completely out of the question. Whether Gollum would have, in the end, really handed over the Ring is a moot point. The new reading merely asks us to modify the view of the "Ring addiction" so as to allow for the existence of ambiguous or even contradictory feelings in Gollum's mind towards his Precious[22]—as Gandalf's statement quoted above suggests. Furthermore, if we take Gandalf's explanation of the Ring's more active role into account—"the Ring itself decided things. The Ring left *him*" (*FR*, I, ii,

65)—it would be possible to argue that the Ring, wanting to leave Gollum after all these centuries, has been influencing him in this direction for some time. All these readings have to remain to some extent educated speculations since we lack a coherent and comprehensive corpus of Ring-lore.[23] Nevertheless, they provide a new dimension to the original text and rescue it from being discarded as merely a faulty prequel that has to be corrected, re-written and thus brought into line with the new master narrative of *The Lord of the Rings*.

Furthermore, such a proposed re-reading may also have an effect on the interpretation of Riddle 6 (asked by Bilbo),[24] which runs as follows:

> *A box without hinges, key, or lid,*
> *Yet golden treasure inside is hid*
> (*H*, V, 123)

The overt, traditional and accepted answer is, of course, "egg." Tolkien himself explained this riddle to be "a reduction to a couplet (my own) of a longer literary riddle which appears in some "Nursery Rhyme" books" (*Letters* 123). Anderson identifies this "longer literary riddle" as the following:

> *In marble halls as white as milk,*
> *Lined with a skin as soft as silk,*
> *Within a fountain crystal-clear,*
> *A golden apple doth appear.*
> *No doors there are to this stronghold,*
> *Yet thieves break in and steal the gold.*
> (Anderson 123f., note 19)

Anderson also provides the transcription of Tolkien's Old English version, which he must have composed in the early 1920s.[25] There is, however, a big and important difference between the "long literary riddle" (both in its modern and Old English versions) on the one hand and the "couplet" used in *The Hobbit* on the other. The radical reduction of the six-line (Modern English)/ten-line (Old English) egg-riddle to a couplet causes an equally radical reduction of clues, which, as a consequence, leads to a greatly increased overall ambiguity and openness as concerns the possible answers. The modern English riddle alone contains some six distinctive elements that have to be matched: white halls (a) that are lined with soft skin (b) containing a clear fountain (c) in which we see a golden apple (d); no doors (e) but thieves break in (f). The solution "egg" is able to accommodate all of them and I have not come across an acceptable alternative answer. The riddle is thus "enigmatic" by means of presenting the elements

within the framework of "a room/chamber" (metaphorical transfer), yet once the metaphorical transfer has been recognized and the back-transformation to "egg" concluded, its solution is quite unambiguous and it would be hard to come up with an alternative or secondary solution.

If the riddler aims at ambiguity, he or she either carefully constructs the text so that even the longest list of elements matches two (or more) solutions, or (radically) reduces the number of elements to be matched, thus allowing almost automatically a wider range of possible answers. Riddle 25 from the Old English *Exeter Book* is a good example of an ambiguous riddle of the first type. It illustrates how a painstakingly constructed, long metaphorical riddle[26] accommodates two possible solutions.

> Ic eom wunderlicu wiht, wifum on hyhte,
> neahbuendum nyt; nængum sceþþe
> burgsittendra, nymþe bonan anum.
> Stapol min is steapheah, stonde ic on bedde,
> neoþan ruh nathwær. Neþeþ hwilum
> ful cyrtenu ceorles dohtor,
> modwlonc meowle, þæt heo on mec gripeþ,
> ræseþ mec on reodne, reafaþ min heafod,
> fegeþ mec on fæsten. Feleþ sona
> mines gemotes, seo þe mec nearwaþ,
> wif wundenlocc. Wæt biþ þæt eage.
> (Krapp and Dobbie 193)

> I'm a strange creature, a joy to women,
> Useful to neighbors! No one of the people suffers
> At my hands except for the slayer.
> My stem is erect, I stand up in bed,
> I'm hairy underneath. From time to time
> A beautiful girl, the brave daughter
> Of some churl dares to hold me,
> Grips my russet skin, plunders my head
> And puts me in a stronghold. At once that girl
> With plaited hair who has confined me
> Feels our meeting. Her eye moistens.[27]

The defining elements are:

a = joy to women
b = only slayer suffers
c = useful to neighbors
d = erect stem in bed

e = hairy underneath
f = girl grabs me and "plunders my head"
g = puts me into a stronghold
h = the girl feels the encounter > wet eye

As in many of the other *Exeter Book* riddles, the "thing" to be guessed presents itself: "Ic eom wunderlicu wiht"—I am a strange creature (cf. German *Wicht*). It then goes on to describe its various characteristics and the effects it has on the other people who come into contact with it. The solution to the riddle is found by means of a metaphorical back-transformation and by matching the eight defining (relevant) characteristics *a* to *h* of the "wiht" to their counterparts in the assumed solution. In order to do so we have to change categories, namely from "(autonomous) animate talking being" ('wiht" need not be human, but it certainly is "animate" and "autonomous," i.e. not dependent on being part of a larger entity) to "part of an animate being" or simply "inanimate being". Among the surviving Anglo-Saxon riddles, such transfers between categories are numerous. Riddle 25 belongs to the category of bawdy riddles for which at least two quite divergent solutions have been proposed.[28] In contrast to other riddles with two or more possible answers, the ambiguity of the bawdy riddles has been carefully designed by the author since both the innocent as well as the bawdy solutions—which are in this case "scallion/spring onion" and "penis"—fit perfectly. Both solutions are able to accommodate all eight distinctive features without contradictions, and the narrative explication of the "spring onion" solution may be given as follows: Spring onions are highly appreciated by women for their taste (a) and "useful" for feeding the entire family/clan (c). When cut, the pungent fumes make only the cook suffer (b). Scallions grow in a bed with a stem pointing upward and a "hairy" root bulb in the earth (d, e). The woman in charge of the garden plucks the spring onion and tears/cuts off the "head" (i.e. the root bulb) (f) and puts it into an earthenware jug or the larder (g). The fumes make her eye water (h). The alternative reading with the solution "penis" provides an equally satisfactory "narrative," though this time we have not only a metaphoric transfer between categories ("autonomous and animate" to "part of an animate being") but also a metaphoric interpretation of several of the distinctive characteristics ("the slayer suffers," "plunders my head," "puts me in a stronghold," "the eye moistens"). This reading exploits the fact that the language used to describe taboo topics (such as sexual activities) makes use of the same linguistic strategies as the metaphoric riddle. It is rare for a riddle to have two (or more) equally fitting solutions—at least if the text provides more than just the most general characteristics of the thing in question.[29]

Re-considering the literary egg-riddle, we can state that it would be very difficult to find an alternative solution—the determining characteristics are too many (six) and too specific to fit any other solution than *egg*. The couplet, however, is an example of how ambiguity arises from a reduction of the elements to be matched. Whatever the reasons for Tolkien's reduction of the longer egg-riddle with six elements to a couplet with only three defining characteristics may have been,[30] the effects are clear: it is now possible to find more than one fitting answer. Thus, the thing in question is a receptacle (a) without key, lid, or lock (b), and with a golden something inside (c). The solution *egg* still fits, yet since the three very specific characteristics of the long literary riddle that helped to narrow down the list of potential solutions have been omitted, the field is now open for additional suggestions. It could, in theory, be a bee-hive,[31] if we want to preserve the metaphorical nature of the description, or simply a bag with a piece of gold—or even Bilbo's pocket containing the golden ring.[32]

What makes the (theoretically possible) solutions *beehive* or *bag of gold* unlikely and the solution "pocket containing Ring" attractive is the fact that all the riddles so far (and yet to come) are closely related to the (often shared) experienced reality of the two contestants. Thus all riddles but the last are answered because the clues to the solutions lie in the protagonists' past or since they link up to present experiences[33]—and neither beehives nor bags of gold have, as yet, featured prominently in the biography of either protagonist.[34] The Ring, however, does so—most prominently for Gollum, who had it in his possession for centuries. And maybe it starts to make itself felt also in Bilbo's mind, teasing its former owner whom it has left in a veiled way in Riddle 6 and later openly establishing its presence in the last riddle.

Thus a conscious re-reading of the original "Riddles in the Dark" chapter within a post-*Lord of the Rings* framework has two effects. On the one hand, the re-analysis of Riddle 6 has uncovered a hitherto unnoticed alternative additional meaning, adding a secondary layer that can be seen as foreshadowing Bilbo's final riddle and contributing towards the development of the new active nature of the Ring, even though the basic ambiguity is already there in the pre-*Lord of the Rings* framework. On the other hand, a re-evaluation of Gollum's behavior under the assumption that his ring was already the Ring discloses the potential for an alternative scenario, which Tolkien the author chose not to develop. Nevertheless, it constitutes in its published form a reminder that *The Lord of the Rings*, which in part can be seen as Tolkien's answer to the meta-question "What have I got in my pocket?", could have turned out differently.

Notes

1 See Tom Shippey's allegorical reading of "Leaf by Niggle" in his *Author of the Century* (266–77).

2 See Wayne G. Hammond's "'A Continuing and Evolving Creation.'"

3 See Gergely Nagy's important essay "The Great Chain of Reading" on the concept (and the effects) of the "great chain of reading" in Tolkien's works.

4 Thus when Tolkien published the poems in *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil* (1962)—most of which had been published independently before—he not only changed elements in the texts but also provided a Preface that places them into a clearly defined Middle-earth context. For the origins and the publication history of *The Hobbit*, see Douglas Anderson's *The Annotated Hobbit* and John Ratefliff's *The History of The Hobbit*. For a critical yet perspicuous assessment of *The Hobbit* see Brian Rosebury's *Tolkien. A Cultural Phenomenon* (111–17), and for an insightful discussion of the development of Tolkien's narrator from *The Hobbit* to *The Lord of the Rings*, see Paul Edmund Thomas' "Some of Tolkien's Narrators."

5 See the books and editions by Anderson and Rateliff for detailed studies of the changes and alterations.

6 Bilbo's statement may be seen as yet another instance of the "paratextual strategy" as encountered in the Prologue or the Appendices. See Allan Turner's "Putting the Paratext in Context" for a discussion of the concept.

7 See Fisher ("Riddles") for a general overview on riddles and "riddle-like" puzzles. See Honegger ("Man in the Moon") for an in-depth discussion of Tolkien's extended interaction with the "riddle" of the Man-in-the-Moon nursery rhymes.

8 See also Bryant (3–30), Rateliff (168–74), Kisor, Fisher ("Riddles") and Qadri ("Énigmes").

9 Cf. *FR*, Prologue, 12, and most recently Flieger, "Bilbo's Neck Riddle".

10 See Flieger, who investigates the literary precedents of Bilbo's "riddle".

11 Foster (37), on the authority of information provided by Dick Plotz (dated 9/12/65), identifies the Authorities as the Valar.

However, I have some problems imagining the Valar debating the finer points of the riddle-contest and prefer Flieger's (160) interpretation of the Authorities as "experts in the field whose judgment is to be relied upon."

12 The contest between Heidrek and Gestumblindi with its predominantly metaphoric riddles and a clinching "unanswerable question" shows the greatest similarity to the exchange between Bilbo and Gollum.

13 Bilbo "was talking to himself" (*Hobbit*, V, 73).

14 "Vafthrudnir's Sayings" are to be found in *The Poetic Edda* (39–49), the riddles of Gestumblindi in *The Saga of King Heidrek the Wise* (30–44).

15 The term "neck riddle" was coined by the folklore-scholar Archer Taylor. For a concise overview on Bilbo's neck-riddle and the literary tradition of the "unanswerable question/riddle" see Flieger. On the Riddles of Gestumblindi see Christopher Tolkien's comment in his edition of *The Saga of King Heidrek the Wise* (xviii-xxi).

16 Anderson (121, n. 12) gives the text of the first edition as "and we doesn't answer, we gives it a present, gollum!", which was changed in the 1951 edition to "and we doesn't answer, then we does what it wants, eh? We shows it the way out, yes!" See also the text of the original manuscript as printed in Rateliff (156).

17 See, among others, Rateliff (175) and Shippey (*Author of the Century* 113).

18 See Rateliff's detailed discussion of the textual history and the changes and alterations. He (175) also points out that there remain still discrepant elements although Tolkien re-wrote some of *The Hobbit* to make it better agree with the concept of the Ring as presented in *The Lord of the Rings*. Thus the shadow cast by the Ring-bearer seems to have disappeared completely in the later text and "the Ring plunges Frodo into an invisible, ethereal world . . . [whereas] Bilbo experiences nothing of the kind" (Rateliff 175).

19 The text of the manuscript, as given by Rateliff (160), differs only after "riddle-game": "But funnily enough he need not have been alarmed. For one thing Gollum had learned long long ago was never, never, to cheat at the riddle-game. Also there was the sword."

20 See Qadri (". . . un concours" 60) for a discussion of symmetrical/asymmetrical riddle-contests.

21 See also Gandalf's slightly earlier statement: "He hated the dark, and he hated light more: he hated everything, and the Ring most of all." (*FR*, I, ii 54). Compare also the drafts in *The Return of the Shadow* (79-80) where Gandalf is even more explicit about Gollum's wish to pass on the Ring, which, over the centuries, has become a terrible burden.

22 On the nature of the Ring see especially Shippey's illuminating chapter "The concept of the Ring" in his *Author of the Century* (112–19) and Judith Klinger's "The Fallacies of Power".

23 See Tolkien's chapter "Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age" in *The Silmarillion* (285–304) and also Honegger ("Rings of Power") and Fisher ("Three Rings").

24 Qadri (". . . un concours" 69) was the first to propose an identification of the ring as another possible solution.

25 The earliest extant (handwritten) version of the text is found on a postcard to Henry Bradley (dated June 26, 1922). It was published together with the Old English version of another riddle in 1923 in *A Northern Venture*. See Rateliff (170) for the text of the Old English egg-riddle.

26 Barley (145) gives the following definition: "Basically, the metaphoric riddle works as follows: Two terms A and B are recognised and classified by their distinctive features a, b, etc. The riddle equates A and B metaphorically and, by metonymy, a_1 is equated to a_2 etc."

27 The translation is my own.

28 In most of the cases, the *Exeter Book* provides no solution and most answers have to be accepted on strength of their inner logic.

29 Those *Exeter Book* riddles for which scholars could not agree on one or, in the case of the intentionally ambiguous and bawdy ones, two solutions have remained "ambiguous" mainly because a) we lack either a vital piece of cultural knowledge, or b) because the distinctive characteristics fit several members of the same category (e.g. birds), or c) all known answers contain contradictions so that no single solution is able to accommodate all characteristics perfectly. They are only very rarely ambiguous due to generalization, i.e. a lack of sufficient distinctive characteristics.

30 "Short riddles" are rather rare and Tolkien never explained why he reduced the riddle to a couplet.

31 Julia Cater, a student in my Old and Middle English course, has recently suggested the solution "bee-hive," which would be indeed a possible alternative solution.

32 The objection that the yolk is an inherent part of the egg and that a piece of gold or the golden ring are not so for the bag or pocket respectively, presupposes that the element(s) mentioned must be inherent to the "thing" in question. This is too strict a view since we know of medieval riddles that rely for their solution on non-inherent elements. Riddle 86 of the *Exeter Book* (239), for example, describes a one-eyed onion (or garlic) seller. The onions/garlic are as "inherent" (or not) to the man as would be a piece of gold or the ring to a bag or Bilbo's pocket respectively.

33 The "time" riddle is arguably the other exception since Bilbo, in asking for more time, inadvertently answers correctly.

34 This, as Qadri argues (". . . un concours" 67), allows Gandalf to make some informed guesses about Gollum's early life.

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Tolkien's Japonisme: Prints, Dragons, and a Great Wave

Michael Organ

The original September 1937 George Allen & Unwin edition of *The Hobbit* features artwork by J.R.R. Tolkien along with an accompanying dust jacket. This latter work is a modern, stylized graphic design composed of a not entirely symmetrical view of a Middle-earth landscape (night to the left, day to the right), with the Lonely Mountain rising in the distant center, flanked by steeply sloped, snow-covered Misty Mountains and in the foreground Mirkwood's dense, impenetrable forests. Additional features include a crescent moon, the sun, a dragon, eagles, a lake village, and a rapier-like path—a straight road—heading toward a darkened, megalithic trapezoidal door at the base of the mountain.[1] The runes which form the border read: "The Hobbit or There and Back Again, being the record of a year's journey made by Bilbo Baggins; compiled from his memoirs by J.R.R. Tolkien and published by George Allen & Unwin."

The dust jacket is considered a classic of modern graphic design, notable for its layout, harmonious balance of color, and symbolic richness. It remains in print with both hard- and soft-cover editions of *The Hobbit* published by HarperCollins, successors to George Allen & Unwin (Collier). Such is the status of this artwork, Tolkien's final draft, part of the Tolkien Collection at Oxford's Bodleian Library (MS. Tolkien drawings 32), was featured in the *Treasures of the World's Great Libraries* exhibition mounted in 2002 by the National Library of Australia. While an intimate study of the dust jacket reveals the process of creation—an early draft survives—we need to look beyond traditional biographical and literary studies to artistic influences. For example, the flat perspective, simple design and blocks of color used by Tolkien (blue, green and black) are suggestive of Japanese ukiyo-e woodblock prints from the Utagawa period, as best seen in the work of Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) and Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858). Was Tolkien aware of such prints and Japanese arts, crafts, and mythology? Did he, like many turn of the century artists, exhibit his own form of Japonisme as a manifestation, knowing or unknowing, of such influences?[2]

Tolkien is not usually considered a Japanophile, with only a single reference to that country amongst his voluminous published correspondence. In a letter written during the last months of World War Two he comments briefly on Japan's imminent surrender following

the dropping of the atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki (*Letters* 116). Indirectly there is another connection to Japan in Tolkien's life, for as early as 1914, while an undergraduate at Oxford University, he purchased Japanese woodblock prints for his rooms at Exeter College (Carpenter 69). The paucity of first-hand accounts and direct mention of Japan by Tolkien may imply a lack of knowledge or interest. Yet elements of his art suggest otherwise, with *The Hobbit* dust jacket a case in point.

Middle-earth and Mount Fuji

Between 1641 and 1854, during its period of isolation from the outside world, Japan developed a distinct art form based around the woodblock print. These small, fragile images on rice paper displayed vibrancy in color, design and subject matter, while their production involved expert craftsmanship in both the cutting of blocks and laying of paint. Woodblock prints typically portrayed landscapes of picturesque localities throughout Japan, aspects of life in population centers such as Edo (Tokyo) and around the Yoshiwara pleasure precinct, portraits of famous kabuki actors, botanical and scientific studies, and mythological subjects such as ghosts, demons, and dragons, with the latter group reflecting the richness of Japanese folklore and story-telling (Hunter, Piggott). Tolkien's interest in dragons from earliest childhood would have attracted him to such works (Evans 22; Hargrove). The ukiyo-e print flourished through the years of isolation as artists, engravers, and publishers combined to produce an ever changing array of prints and hangings to grace the walls of residences, public buildings and entertainment venues. Woodblock prints were also used in books ("manga") to illustrate text and as a precursor to the modern comic and graphic novel (Harris 10-51).

When copies of Japanese prints, hangings, and elaborately designed textiles such as the kimono first reached Europe in large numbers during the 1870s, they caused a sensation. The distinctive use of color and design immediately attracted the attention of French Impressionists. Artists who openly championed Japanese art during this period included Manet, Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Klimt and, much later, Picasso (Ives; Serra 24-49). Stimulated by the "new" Japanese style, Western artists produced numerous examples of graphic design, pottery, prints, and gallery-quality paintings with direct reference to Japanese art in composition, color, and content (Wichmann 23-73). The term Japonisme entered the language in connection with commentary and criticism. Japanese art and craft, being ideally suited to book illustration, also saw acceptance in an area which, since the early part of the nineteenth century, had been dominated by the steel

engraving. A good example is John Tenniel's illustrations for Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, first issued in 1865. Posters and prints requiring splashes of color commonly utilized lithography, but by the end of the century full color half-tone and photographic processes were being used more widely, especially in circumstances requiring large print runs. A fin-de-siècle explosion in the arts took place following on, and concurrent with, the discovery of Japan's rich artistic heritage and the appearance of movements such as Impressionism, Expressionism, Pre-Raphaelitism, Symbolism, Art Nouveau, Abstraction, and the catch-all Modernism (Mortimer 114).

The first decades of the twentieth century provided a rich environment in which the young J.R.R. Tolkien (born in 1892) could develop his interest and expertise in the basic rudiments of drawing in pen, ink, and watercolor, both for his own enjoyment and as an adjunct to his writing. Though only having received informal training from his mother, who died when he was 12, Tolkien reached a level of skill and competency as an artist which is reflected in the works he produced for *The Hobbit*. And while repeatedly downplaying any talent in this area, he nevertheless possessed the necessary expertise and drive to provide all the pictorial material for this, his first publication aimed at a general audience. Tolkien also published a work of fiction in 1945, *Leaf by Niggle*, which featured an artist as the main character and is, in part, autobiographical.

In recent years Tolkien's achievements as an artist have been highlighted in a number of publications. These include illustrated art volumes, including one specifically on the art of *The Hobbit* (*Pictures by J.R.R. Tolkien; The Art of The Hobbit*), a detailed discussion of selected works (*J.R.R. Tolkien: Artist & Illustrator*), a reminiscence by his daughter Priscilla ("My Father the Artist"), calendars, and numerous articles and websites (Arwen-undomiel; Ellison; Paterson). Within these often discursive texts, direct influences on Tolkien's painting, drawing, and design work have been identified or suggested, including artists operating in the folklore tradition such as the English Walter Crane, Arthur Rackham and Audrey Beardsley, and the Russian Ivan Bilibin (Anonymous; Garth; Jones; Maliszewski; McLeod and Smol; Menofgondor; Wang). Leaving aside the connections based on general comparisons in style, Tolkien is known to have copied directly and/or adapted the work of Scandinavian Kay Nielsen, Archibald Thorburn, and Jennie Harbour for specific illustrations in *The Hobbit* (Podles). While much of his art comprises simple landscapes, designs, and illustrations of subjects specifically related to his writing, some of it also reveals an interest in experimentation and new trends in art. For example, between 1911 and the late 1920s he

compiled a folio of works under the general heading *The Book of Ishness*, containing phantasmagoric, abstract, and symbolic works, many of which are rendered in vibrant watercolor and lightly done (Scull and Hammond 2: 52-53; Unruh). *Ishness* appeared around the same time as Tolkien purchased Japanese woodblock prints and was, in turn, influenced by them.

The most comprehensive study of Tolkien's art to date, Hammond and Scull's *J.R.R. Tolkien: Artist and Illustrator*, is indispensable for gaining an appreciation of the variety and extent of his work, ranging from landscapes, figurative pieces, and maps through to graphic designs, patterns and book covers. The authors' encyclopedic knowledge of Tolkien makes the book a rich source of information on some 200 individual works out of the more than 800 known to exist. The book adopts a theme-based approach throughout, as opposed to the chronological method traditionally applied in surveys of individual artists. It is therefore somewhat limited in enabling assessment of the development of Tolkien's art over time, both in regard to technique and subject matter. No clear picture emerges. Scull and Hammond's inclusion of a summary entry on "Art" is welcome, as is the comprehensive list of works illustrated in a variety of publications (Scull and Hammond 1: 828-40, 2: 53-55). Two posthumous exhibition catalogues featuring works from Oxford University's Bodleian Library are also enlightening (*Drawings*; Priestman). Siegfried Wichmann, in the introduction to his expansive work on Japonisme, considers the inherent difficulties in unraveling the many and varied influences on a individual artist. He concludes:

> The most convincing method of presenting a case in the study of the fine arts is through a series of pictorial examples, constructed according to a genetic principle. Such a series can illustrate the way in which any number of variants can branch off from a basic primary type. . . . It is an adaptable system and can be used for comparing thematic as well as technical matters, such as colour, form, line, depth, light and shade. (Wichmann 6)

We do not have the luxury of a corpus of letters and diary entries by Tolkien discussing individual works and the various elements brought to bear in their production. Neither are there contemporary exhibition catalogues that elicited comment or commentary. A closer study of Tolkien's art is called for, with an approximate chronology developed to reveal associations between the evolution of his art and specific events in his life, such as the purchase of Japanese woodblock prints in 1914, the birth of his children between 1917 and 1929, and

introduction to literary works such as the Old English epic poem *Beowulf* and the northern *Volsunga Saga*. References to developments in Tolkien's art are nevertheless provided by Hammond and Scull, arising out of their own viewing of his many works. For example, we are informed that

> suddenly, in 1927-8, [Tolkien] was extraordinarily productive. . . . His skill was greatly increased. At times he still used bright colours, but now these were applied with a mastery and subtlety not seen in his art before. His style remained dynamic but became more painterly, with such drawn outlines as there were now almost invisible. (Hammond and Scull, *Artist* 50)

Such significant assessments of his progress as an artist are often buried amongst densely written discussions around the mythology of Middle-earth. The failure to date works illustrated throughout *Artist & Illustrator* both precisely and approximately, despite this information often appearing in the text, is problematic. Dramatic changes took place at various periods in Tolkien's life, and while it may be easy to connect these to literary influences and the development of an increasingly complex Middle-earth mythology, it is also likely that his knowledge of, and interaction with the fine arts had effect. Apart from works seen by Tolkien on the walls of art galleries, the fact of his being a widely read scholar and teacher suggests he would have encountered illustrated volumes of folklore and mythology from which to draw inspiration. These may have included Asian and Middle Eastern examples and reproductions of Japanese woodblock prints. Did such encounters influence Tolkien and his art, and if so, to what degree? In attempting to answer these questions we can start our investigations with mountains, a subject Tolkien made good use of in the development of a Middle-earth topography and a common feature of Japanese woodblock prints.

The steep mountains depicted in Tolkien's dust jacket illustration for *The Hobbit* are based in part on what he encountered during a walking tour of the Swiss Alps in 1911 (Atherton 131-38). Drawings from that time feature the mountains and their distinctive, rugged snow-capped peaks. They appear in many of his subsequent writings with, for example, the Silberhorn transformed into Middle-earth's Silvertine and Celebdil (Foster 552; *Letters* 391-93). Some of Tolkien's images of mountains from the 1920s onwards are suggestive of Japan's sacred Mount Fuji, the focus of numerous works by Japanese ukiyo-e artists (Forrier). Mount Fuji's almost perfect triangular form differs in silhouette from the more ragged and uplifted European peaks in the

matter of its majestic symmetry and smooth slopes when viewed from a distance. The isolation and domination of a surrounding largely flat landscape also enhances its iconic status. Tolkien's fondness for isolated mountain peaks in the Mount Fuji style—usually an extinct or erupting volcano—is seen in *The Sillmarillion* (the White Mountain or Taniquetil), *The Hobbit* (the Lonely Mountain) and *The Lord of the Rings* (Mount Doom). Beyond mountains, landscape and environment in general are important elements of Tolkien's storytelling and often imbued with character. For example, in *The Hobbit* the Arkenstone is "the heart of the mountain" and within *The Lord of the Rings* Ents are a living embodiment of the forest (Atherton 73-75).

The presence of mountains as a design element on *The Hobbit* dust jacket is foreshadowed in a number of Tolkien's Christmas letters to his children (Tolkien, *Letters from Father Christmas*). Compiled between 1920 and 1943, they comprise letters and envelopes featuring illuminated handwriting by Tolkien alongside panelled illustrations and "official" North Pole stamps on the covers. For example, the illustration *North Polar Bear Karhu 1931-32* is a simple two color drawing in dark green and red ink featuring two symmetrical mountains around a central rising sun (Hammond and Scull, *Artist* 72; Tolkien, *Letters from Father Christmas* 73). The spike North Pole which features in many of these Christmas illustrations is perhaps precursor to two of the towers featured in *The Lord of the Rings*—Saruman's Orthanc and Sauron's Barad-dûr. Most intriguing and of relevance to the present discussion, however, is Tolkien's drawing of a stamp for the 1925 Christmas envelope, bearing a striking similarity to *The Hobbit* dust jacket (Tolkien, *Letters from Father Christmas* 19). Using a different 3-color palette of red, black and purple, elements of the work include symmetrically placed conical peaks, a central North Pole feature instead of the later Lonely Mountain, and a darkened sky highlighted by a crescent moon and opposing sun. A further comparison of Tolkien's series of Father Christmas letters with works reproduced in *Artist and Illustrator* reveals that subtle changes reflecting Japanese influences occurred in his depiction of mountains over the years between the Swiss Alps excursion and publication of *The Hobbit*.

Tolkien's purchase of Japanese prints in 1914 formed part of a growing collection, though we have no detail as to the extent or precise content. According to Carpenter, who had access to unpublished manuscripts and interviews with immediate family members, Tolkien's art was "suggestive of his affection for Japanese prints" (Carpenter 163; Willett 62). However, Hammond and Scull play down the influence of Japanese prints, suggesting:

> Such prints were popular at the time, and do not seem to have had much influence on his own art except perhaps to suggest to him, for works such as *Glórund Sets Forth to Seek Túrin*, a simplification of natural forms and the use of flat colour for pattern effect rather than for modeling. (Hammond and Scull, *Artist* 9)

It could be argued that these very points support the view that Japanese woodblock prints were a decided influence on Tolkien and help explain why Carpenter made the connection he did. We can see this influence in drawings, watercolors, and designs from the 1910s through to the 1930s. Tolkien was not alone in being so affected, for Japonisme is evident in the work of many British artists from this period. A good example is the late Pre-Raphaelite Edward Burne-Jones and his engravings for the Kelmscott *Chaucer*, a book Tolkien would have been aware of (Chaucer; McCann; Ono). English artist Walter Crane, identified by Hammond and Scull as an influence on Tolkien, was a leading student of Japanese art and a devotee of the Middle Ages. Crane's work highlighted the connection between the art and craft of Japanese woodblocks, which he called "a living art, an art of the people, in which traditions and craftsmanship were unbroken and the results full of attractive variety, quickness and naturalistic force" (Wichmann 8), and the work of the English Pre-Raphaelite artists such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the writer, poet and publisher of the Kelmscott Press, William Morris. The Pre-Raphaelites looked to medieval arts and crafts for inspiration, producing brightly colored works in defiance of the somber tones preferred by the Royal Academy. Morris was an especially significant influence on the young Tolkien. With Japanese arts, designs, and crafts entering Britain during the first decades of the twentieth century, and the work of local artists reflecting the impact of such influences, it is not surprising that Tolkien took elements on board and re-used or adapted them within his art and writing.

Mark Atherton draws a comparison between the mountains in Tolkien's watercolor of the dragon Glórund emerging from the entrance to Nargothrond and those commonly seen in Japanese prints (Atherton 42-43). The large mountain in the distance is reminiscent of Mount Fuji, while the depiction of the dragon is influenced by Tolkien's reading of *Beowulf*. The Glórund watercolor dates from September 1927 and is a significant work in the artist's oeuvre. It is also somewhat similar in layout to *The Hobb*it dust jacket, with the central mountain flanked by conical forms, though to a lesser degree and not as symmetrical. The dragon is horned, unlike *The Hobbit's* Smaug, and more lizard-like. It has been noted that the style is similar to Lancelot

Speed's illustration in Andrew Lang's *The Red Fairy Book* of 1895, in which Tolkien first encountered the dragon Fafnier and the Nibelungen saga (Atherton 42-43; Hart 10).

Hokusai's Dragons

Tolkien's depiction of dragons evolved over time, and most especially in the decade between drawing Glórund and Smaug (Scull and Hammond 2: 215-22). Whilst Glórund was in part a traditional, flightless European dragon, latter depictions are mostly variants of the Japanese / Chinese dragons of mythology—serpentine, scaled, with 3 or 4 toed claws, long spiraling tail, wings and a face displaying almost human-like character (Giovannitti and Sanders; Shuker). The Chinese dragon has horns; the Japanese does not, and neither does Tolkien's Smaug, although Glórund is horned.[3] The dragon in Tolkien's watercolor *Conversation with Smaug* from *The Hobbit* series is almost identical to the beast depicted by Katsushika Hokusai in a number of woodblock and screen prints from the nineteenth century, which in turn can be traced back to 13th century Chinese works such as Ch-en Yung's *Dragons among waves* (Frunzetti and Stanculescu 43). Hokusai's famous print from his multi-volume *Manga* of the *Dragon Fudou eating the devil-subduing sword Kurikara* brings to mind not only Tolkien's depiction of Smaug but the three swords which feature in *The Hobbit*: Sting, Orcrist and Glamdring (Hokusai). Hokusai's other famous dragon works include flights about Mount Fuji, reminding us of those variant drawings by Tolkien depicting the White Dragon pursuing Roverandom and the Moondog, and Smaug circling the Lonely Mountain (Hammond and Scull, *Artist* 81, 142-43; *Art of The Hobbit*). It is possible that Tolkien was drawing on Japanese art and mythology in developing this aspect of *The Hobbit* narrative.

A further manifestation of Tolkien's art is his use of calligraphy, which features in both published and unpublished works. A connection has been suggested between the distinctive monogram he developed in that hand (which now appears as a trademarked logo on all his official publications), and the Japanese calligraphy for the word *soku* (Kane). Tolkien would have encountered Japanese characters in his collection of woodblock prints, the majority of which bear calligraphic inscriptions describing the subject of the work and the artist responsible. Tolkien's monogram was commonly applied in his art, and can be seen on the lower right corner of *The Hobbit* dust jacket. Early examples were of the traditional, non-symmetrical form utilizing the letters JRRT. However one of his drawings dated 31 August 1912 shows the symmetrical monogram in the Japanese style, suggesting an awareness of Japanese calligraphy from at least that point (Hammond

and Scull, *Artist* 18). The final version of the monogram maintains this connection, although with additional refinements.

In seeking evidence and examples of Japanese influences on Tolkien's art, recent internet postings provide a rich resource. Roh_wyn, a correspondent on the *Menofgondor* internet forum, noted a similarity between Tolkien's watercolor of Taniquetil (Hammond and Scull, *Artist* 56) and Japanese woodblock prints such as Hiroshige's *Mount Fuji seen across a plain* c.1850 (Forrier). Both works reveal similar use of color, composition and application, and a solitary, snow-covered conical peak dominating the surrounding landscape. The Russian blog "Wave propagation" points out a connection between Hokusai's woodblock print *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* and Ivan Bilibin's illustration of a barrel being hit by a wave, as published in *The Tale of Tsar Saltane* (Pushkin; Wang).[4] Bilibin's wave is very much in the distinct animated fractal style of Hokusai's. In turn, *The stone of the hapless* blog connects the Bilibin work with Tolkien's watercolor *Bilbo comes to the Huts of the Raft-elves*, as published in *The Hobbit*. The comparison is based primarily on subject matter and, to a lesser degree, on the color palette and rune-like borders. There the direct similarity ends, apart from the fact that both the Bilibin and Tolkien works are illustrations for books of the mythology genre. Such convolutions of connectivity reflect the difficulties in isolating artistic influences, especially for an artist such as Tolkien who rarely discussed his art in detail.

Tolkien, in his famous 1939 lecture, "On Fairy-stories," commented briefly on the role of art as a supplement to text, though it presented a very negative view. He held that, "however good in themselves, illustrations do little good to fairy-stories" (*OFS* 81-82; Hammond and Scull, *Artist* 187). He also made isolated remarks about the morbidity of Surrealist works in a footnote to the lecture notes. Such comments perhaps grew from frustration in not being able to portray in visual art the complexity and depth of stories which grew from his fertile imagination, especially in regards to figures. This frustration is understandable, but such a view is not one that generally applies. We can see, for example, with Hokusai's *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* that a work of art can succeed beyond measure in capturing a moment in time and portraying what mere words cannot, in this instance the awesome power of nature. Hokusai, as one of the greatest exponents of Japanese woodblock art, was prolific, popular and extremely influential in the wake of Japonisme. His print *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* is the most famous of all ukiyo-e works and has been copied and adapted on numerous occasions since first "discovered" and analyzed by French artists such as Manet in the 1870s (Clark).

A link may exist between Tolkien's dust jacket design for *The Hobbit* and *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*. Both works are dominated by triangular forms, in the former the Lonely Mountain and Misty Mountains, in the latter the unbroken and breaking waves, with Mount Fuji in the distant background. Both prints display a flattened, condensed image of a nevertheless powerful landscape, and a limited color palette dominated by Prussian Blue. Tolkien's work has a lightness of tone and application of line in keeping with the ukiyo-e style, though the Art Nouveau curved sections which feature along the lower section reminds us this is from the 1930s and not a hundred years previous. In *The Hobbit* dust jacket the Misty Mountains are hills like waves or "like mountains moving" or "hills rolling" (*Sauron* 251, 290). Hokusai's waves are in turn like mountainous hills in motion. In *Smith of Wootton Major* from 1967 Tolkien makes a rather prosaic reference to water, waves, and mountains in relation to the experiences of the main character of that work:

> When he first began to walk far without a guide he thought he would discover the further bounds of the land; but great mountains rose before him, and going by long ways round about them he came at last to a desolate shore. He stood beside the Sea of Windless Storm where the blue waves like snow-clad hills roll silently out of Unlight to the long strand, bearing the white ships that return from battles on the Dark Marches of which men know nothing. He saw great ships cast high upon the land, and the waters fell back in foam without a sound. (*SWM* 26)

The Great Wave

Hokusai's dramatic representation of a breaking wave about to overwhelm boats full of men would have resonated with the author of *The Hobbit*, for reasons little known to the public at the time of the book's initial publication, though a significant area of Tolkien's personal experiences whereby writing and art come together.

Throughout his life Tolkien was haunted by the dream of a great wave bearing down upon the countryside or ocean before him and sweeping him away. Tolkien would wake from sleep with a start, gasping for breath as if drowning and questioning the origin and meaning of this traumatic experience. The dream tormented him from earliest memory, though abated somewhat after elements of it were put down on paper in the form of the tale of the destruction of Númenor. This retelling of the Atlantis myth began in the mid thirties, just prior

to publication of *The Hobbit*. It subsequently took numerous forms, as "The Fall of Númenor"; chapters within "The Lost Road"; and as the tale of "Akallabêth" within *The Sillmarillion* (Scull and Hammond 1: 180; Moss, 2011, 2012; Finduilas; Mitchell). In the abandoned novel "The Notion Club Papers," written in the mid 1940s, Tolkien made further references to a great wave, in the context of a meandering discussion between the Club's members on the topic of dreams. One of the characters, Michael George Ramer, recounts that within one of his many dreams, "there is a Green Wave, whitecrested, fluted and scallop-shaped but vast, towering above green fields, often with a wood of trees, too; that has constantly appeared" (*Sauron* 194).

In *The Lord of the Rings* Tolkien gave the experience to Faramir, who, while standing on the walls of Minas Tirith as the Ring is being destroyed, says to Eowyn that he is reminded of an ominous "great dark wave climbing over the green lands and above the hills, and coming on, darkness unescapable. I often dream of it" (*RK,* VI, v, 240). In a later letter to W.H. Auden, dated June 7, 1955, Tolkien publicly noted the intensity and impact of this dream:

> I say this about the 'heart,' for I have what some might call an Atlantis complex. Possibly inherited, though my parents died too young for me to know such things about them, and too young to transfer such things by words. Inherited from me (I suppose) by one only of my children, though I did not know that about my son until recently, and he did not know it about me. I mean the terrible recurrent dream (beginning with memory) of the Great Wave, towering up, and coming in ineluctably over the trees and green fields. (I bequeathed it to Faramir.) I don't think I have had it since I wrote the 'Downfall of Númenor' as the last of the legends of the First and Second Age. (*Letters* 213)

Tolkien referred to the dream and its significance in a number of letters, including the following draft to an American correspondent "Mr Thomson," dated January 14, 1956:

> Out of that came the 'missing link': the 'Downfall of Númenor,' releasing some hidden 'complex.' For when Faramir speaks of his private vision of the Great Wave, he speaks for me. That vision and dream has been ever with me—and has been inherited (as I only discovered recently) by one of my children. (*Letters* 232)

In a later letter to Christopher Bretherton, dated July 16, 1964, Tolkien states in relation to development of *The Lord of the Rings*:

> Another ingredient, not before mentioned, also came into operation in my need to provide a great function for Strider-Aragorn. What I might call my Atlantis-haunting. This legend or myth or dim memory of some ancient history has always troubled me. In sleep I had the dreadful dream of the ineluctable Wave, either coming out of the quiet sea, or coming in towering over the green inlands. It still occurs occasionally, though now exorcized by writing about it. It always ends by surrender, and I awake gasping out of deep water. I used to draw it or write bad poems about it. When C. S. Lewis and I tossed up, and he was to write on space- travel and I on time-travel, I began an abortive book of time-travel of which the end was to be the presence of my hero in the drowning of Atlantis. This was to be called *Númenor*, the Land in the West. (*Letters* 347)

And in a letter to Dick Plotz of the Tolkien Society of America, dated September 12, 1965, Tolkien records:

> Of all the mythical or 'archetypal' images this [the Atlantis myth] is the one most deeply seated in my imagination, and for many years I had a recurrent Atlantis dream: the stupendous and ineluctable wave advancing from the Sea or over the land, sometimes dark, sometimes green and sunlit. (*Letters* 361)

Within "The Notion Club Papers" Tolkien discusses at length on the origin, meaning and variety of dreams, many of which are likely a reflection of his own experiences. In seeking an explanation he raises the subject of previous lives as an inexplicable source for dreams and thoughts of imagination. Of the great wave dream and art, it is interesting to note Tolkien's comment in the letter to Christopher Bretherton that he "used to draw it or write bad poems about it." Scull and Hammond refer to a 15 March 1914 production of a watercolor of the sea "or possibly of the Great Wave which sometimes haunts his dreams" and identify extant artworks and prose such as "The Horns of Ylmir" pertaining to this comment (Scull and Hammond 1: 51, 2: 69). That this appearance should occur around the time Tolkien was known to have purchased Japanese woodblock prints and commenced compilation of his sketchbook *The Book of Ishness* is perhaps coincidental (Scull and Hammond 1: 49), but the coincidence may reflect his awareness

of Japanese art and works such as Hokusai's *Great Wave off Kanagawa* or a transformation from the dreamscape into an evolving Middle-earth context. As Olog-Hai points out, the tsunami-like references in the tale of the destruction of Númenor and Faramir's reminiscences are, uncharacteristically for Tolkien, "born out of images rather than languages" (Olog-Hai). While Tolkien was keen to promote the fact that in his writing it was often the word that came first, followed by development of the tale, there is no doubt that in evolving his immensely complex Middle-earth mythology personal experiences, readings and encounters with art and imagery played an important and ongoing role. The connection is frequently drawn, for example, between his experiences at the Battle of the Somme in World War One and subsequent accounts of war in *The Lord of the Rings* (Croft). The recurring dream of a great wave was used in a similar manner, as both an intellectual and emotional source for storytelling. Works such as Hokusai's *Great Wave off Kanagawa* and Walter Crane's Symbolist masterwork *Neptune's Horses* of 1892 bring to mind the wave which swept away the Nazgûl at the Ford of Bruinen within Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, and lines from "The Horns of Ylmir":

> The torrents gathered and the leaping billows ran,
> Till the foam-haired water-horses in green rolling volumes
> came—
> A mad tide trampling landward. (*Shaping* 216)

Definitive connections between Tolkien, his art, and Japanese woodblock prints remain elusive. The use of Japanese technique and imagery was, from around 1912, an element of the Modernist approach Tolkien brought to his art, in seeking to reinvent what is and utilizing what was, just as works such as *The Lord of the Rings* and the evolving Middle-earth legendarium were a literary expression of this desire to invent and reinvent (Mortimer 116). Tolkien's knowledge of, and appreciation for Japanese art can also be inferred from somewhat cryptic, though positive comments he made late in life after viewing the 1965 Japanese edition of *The Hobbit*, featuring illustrations by Ryuichi Terashima. In a letter to Rayner Unwin dated 15 December of that year, Tolkien commented: "Much could be said about the pictures: in many ways astonishing" (Scull and Hammond 2:421). There is the suggestion within this that Tolkien was not only well informed regarding Japanese art, but extremely impressed with the manner in which Terashima interpreted his work. And in a meeting the following year Clyde S. Kilby noted: Tolkien "showed me with particular pleasure the frontispiece which portrayed Smaug falling convulsively over dale" (Kilby 23). Future studies of the more than 800 works of art by Tolkien

may reveal definitive connections and influences. Until then, we are left with a few fragments of evidence and mere opinion gained from viewing individual artwork.

It remains a fact that one of the greatest writers of the twentieth century is responsible for an iconic work of art—*The Hobbit* dust jacket—that was produced not by mere chance but as a result of perseverance, skill and artistic expertise. The influence of Japanese woodblock prints in its creation is strongly suggested, though not proven. Perhaps the final comment on this subject can be left to British fantasy author Terry Pratchett who, in 2001, noted in regards to our subject's place in the history of fantasy fiction writing:

> Tolkien appears in the fantasy universe in the same way that Mount Fuji appeared in old Japanese prints. Sometimes small, in the distance, and sometimes big and close-to, and sometimes not there at all, and that's because the artist is standing on Mount Fuji. (Pratchett)

Notes

1 In Tolkien's Middle-earth mythology, the "straight road" leaves the curvature of the earth and moves through the sky and space to the Undying Lands or Aman, a continent to the west of Middle-earth which at the end of the Second Age was removed from the surface of the earth. Immortals reside there, though ring-bearers Bilbo and Frodo Baggins were taken on Elven ships over an ethereal sea to Valinor, in the middle of Aman (*S* 338).

2 Japonisme is a French term for a specific art style exhibited during the latter part of the nineteenth century. It refers to those artists whose work reflected Japanese influence. The term is now more broadly applied and extended into the early years of the twentieth century (Wichmann 8–14).

3 Examples of the Japanese dragon can be seen in modern Studio Ghibli anime features *Spirited Away* and *Howl's Moving Castle*.

4 The original Hokusai print was published sometime during 1830–31 as part of a series entitled (in English) *Thirty six Views of Mount Fuji*. Originally labeled "Kanagawa oki name ura"—which translates as "In the hollow of a Wave off the Coast at Kanagawa," in Tokyo Bay—the print is now more commonly known as "The Great Wave off Kanagawa."

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"Jewish" Dwarves: Tolkien and Anti-Semitic Stereotyping

Renée Vink

In an article that appeared in *Mythlore* in 2010 and subsequently in a revised version on the Internet, Rebecca Brackmann claimed that (possibly unconscious) anti-Semitic stereotyping went into Tolkien's depiction of Dwarves in the early stages of his legendarium and in *The Hobbit*. The Nazi treatment of Jews before and during the Second World War made Tolkien realize that such stereotyping could have horrifying consequences, causing him to drastically alter the image of Dwarves in the works he wrote after *The Hobbit*, notably *The Lord of the Rings*. But, according to Brackmann, this change merely served to turn negative into positive stereotyping without solving the underlying problem that thinking in stereotypes is wrong to begin with. In this essay I hope to show that a closer look at the evidence in both Tolkien's Middle-earth writings and his letters suggests a different story, undermining Brackmann's thesis and exonerating Tolkien from being a (closet) anti-Semite.

Tolkien's Dwarves as Jews

In a BBC radio interview with Dennis Gueroult, recorded in 1964 and broadcast the next year, Tolkien connected his Dwarves with the Jewish people, stating: "The Dwarves of course are quite obviously—wouldn't you say that in many ways they remind you of the Jews? Their words are Semitic obviously, constructed to be Semitic." Also in 1964, Tolkien wrote to W.R. Matthews: "The language of the Dwarves . . . is Semitic in cast, leaning phonetically to Hebrew (as suits the Dwarvish character)." Indeed the dwarven tongue Khuzdul has a phonology and a triconsonantal root system that resemble Hebrew (and modern Ivrit for that matter)[1]. From these triconsonantal roots words are formed by inserting vowels, doubling consonants or adding suffixes. Compare, for instance, Hebrew words and names such as *melek*, *David*, *shalom* and *baruch* with Dwarvish words and names like *Gabilgathol*, *baruk* and *khazad*,[2] which are obviously similar in phonetic structure (the meanings of similar looking words in Dwarvish and Hebrew, however, are completely different; *Baruk* means "axes", while *baruch* means "blessed").

In the original BBC-interview, the text of which is given by Zak Cramer in *Mallorn* 44 (2006), Tolkien's statement is longer. It turns out that Tolkien had added a remark about "a tremendous love of the

artefact, and of course the immense warlike capacity of the Jews, which we tend to forget nowadays." This was cut from the interview.

Given the work he put into creating this Semitic-like language, Tolkien's comparison of Dwarves and Jews was obviously not made on the spur of the moment. In fact, he had made it years before, the first time in an unpublished letter of September 1947, quoted in *The History of The Hobbit*: "Now Dwarves have their secret language, but like Jews and Gypsies use the language of the country" (Rateliff 757). Eight years later, on December 8, 1955, he wrote to Naomi Mitchison: "I do think of the 'Dwarves' like Jews: at once native and alien in their habitations, speaking the languages of the country, but with an accent due to their native tongue" (*Letters* 229).

In his commentary to the first phase of the history of *The Hobbit*, John Rateliff elaborates on this, remarking that a motif "already present by the time this first chapter of *The Hobbit* was completed would be the partial identification of the Dwarves, in Tolkien's mind, with the Jewish people" (79). He points to the existence of a diaspora, in which the dwarves settled "in scattered enclaves amongst other folk, yet still preserving their own culture." The warlike nature of Tolkien's Dwarves is associated with his reading of certain books of the Bible.[3] Their craftsmanship resembles that of the medieval Jewish artisans of the Iberian peninsula, while their interest in gold is associated with banking—for centuries, moneylending was one of the few occupations open to Jews. But, Rateliff notes, "to his credit, Tolkien has been selective in his borrowings, omitting the pervasive anti-Semitism of the real Middle Ages" (80).

Norse dwarfs and Tolkien's Dwarves

That some scholars, and Tolkien himself, have concluded that Dwarves resemble Jews may come as a surprise, as popular belief has it that Tolkien's Dwarves are based on the dwarfs of Norse mythology. With the exception of Balin, all Dwarvish names in *The Hobbit* were taken directly from the *Poetic Edda*. In Norse mythology dwarfs originated as maggots in the flesh of the fallen giant Ymir that were given life by the gods (Sturluson, 15). Highly skilled craftsmen who made most of the artefacts of the gods, the dwarves lived underground and could not abide sunlight. They possessed knowledge, cunning and wisdom but were also greedy and often malevolent, although they could bring luck as well. They discovered the runes and taught the gods to read, but they could also act as opponents of the gods, as in the Eddic lay *Alvíssmál*. The Prose Edda equates them with *døkkálfar*, meaning "dark elves," adding that they are blacker than pitch (Sturluson 21; Shippey 4–9). Oddly enough, Norse dwarfs seem to have been

of average human stature (Liberman, 56–58), their main characteristic being that they dwelled in the earth.

Tolkien's Dwarves share some of these characteristics: they are very capable smiths who do not merely have "a tremendous love of the artefact," to quote the deleted sentence from the interview, but make those artefacts themselves. They prefer to dwell in caves and under mountains. They love silver and gold more than anything. However, they have no problem with sunlight (this trait was given to the trolls); they are not of human stature; and they did not invent the runes but merely adopted them for their own use. Generally, they are lesser beings than in Norse myth.

At the initial stage of Tolkien's legendarium, Dwarves are mostly evil. In *The Book of Lost Tales* they prefer Melko to the Elves and ally themselves with orcs. These alliances in fact make them more evil than the Norse dwarfs, who do not join the enemies of the gods (although they neither join with the gods to fight the monsters during *Ragnarök*, the last battle). Evil dwarfs do figure in the Middle High German *Nibelungenlied*, however, a text with which Tolkien was very familiar. When he mentioned "Norse and Teutonic legends, including Siegfried," among the texts that inspired *The Lord of the Rings* (Scull and Hammond I, 483), he probably had had in mind this epic,[4] in which Siegfried is one of the protagonists.

But at some point, Tolkien decided to make his Dwarves less evil. In later versions of the Silmarillion, the Dwarves of Nogrod still ambush and slay Thingol, as they did in *Lost Tales*, but those of Belegost try to dissuade them from it. In the Nirnaeth Arnoediad an army from Belegost fights alongside the Elves and Edain against Morgoth. The Dwarves are also given a creation story of their own. The Vala Aulë, too impatient to wait for the Children of Ilúvatar, created "the Dwarves even as they still are, because the forms of the Children to come were unclear to his mind." When Ilúvatar rebuked him for this, pointing out that Aulë as a created being possessed neither the authority nor the power to give his creations a will of their own, the Vala repented and offered to destroy them. Suddenly displaying initiative, the Dwarves shrank from his hammer. Acknowledging Aule's humility and obedience, Ilúvatar in his mercy had given them "a life of their own" (*S*, 43).

Traces of Anti-Semitism in *The Hobbit* and *The Silmarillion*?

In her "'Dwarves are Not Heroes': Antisemitism and the Dwarves in J.R.R. Tolkien's Writing,"[5] Brackmann assesses the comparison Tolkien made between his Dwarves and Jews rather differently than Rateliff does, considering it not so innocent. In her view, the Silmarillion

creation tale of the Dwarves depicts them both as inferior to Elves and Men and as separate from them because they are not Children of Ilúvatar. They were not even allowed to walk the earth before the coming of the Children: Ilúvatar put them to sleep until the awakening of the Elves. Brackmann sees a parallel with the Christian attitude towards Jews. For her, the story betrays

> the sort of supersessionist dynamic that early Christian writers used to separate Christianity from its origin within Judaism. The idea of supersession, that the Jewish religion was supplanted and replaced by Christianity and the Jews as the chosen people of God by Christians, appears in Christian writing beginning with Biblical. (87)

The story of Aulë and the Dwarves was written around the time when the language of the Dwarves began to resemble Hebrew, claims Brackmann, quoting a letter from early 1938 in which Tolkien calls the Norse names an "editorial concession," and stating that the real language of the Dwarves was "both complicated and cacophonous" (*Letters*, 31). So, apparently, Tolkien had begun to devise Khuzdul while writing *The Hobbit*, and to Brackmann this chronology means that the idea that Dwarves had a secret language of their own, resembling Hebrew in structure, dates from the same period as *The Hobbit*. This was also the period when Tolkien wrote the story of the creation of the Dwarves. Additional parallels between Dwarves and Jews are found in *The Hobbit*, Brackmann argues, for instance the labelling of the Dwarves as "bearded." Throughout much of history, and especially in the art and literature of the Middle Ages, Jews wore and were depicted with beards. Tolkien could easily have picked up this stereotype from his study and teaching of medieval texts and from anti-Semitic stereotyping he came across in his youth.

Additionally, Brackmann asserts that the psychology of the Dwarves in *The Hobbit* draws on anti-Semitic stereotypes of Jews as whiny, cowardly and greedy (examples of such stereotypes are found in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* as well as in many other works of literature). She compares the behaviour of the Jewish character "Benjamin" from one of the Scarlet Pimpernel novels (who actually is the Scarlet Pimpernel in disguise and merely *acts out* an anti-Semitic stereotype) with what we are told about the Dwarves in *The Hobbit*. Tolkien's Dwarves fit this stereotype: they complain constantly. So does Bilbo, but he gets over it. Not so the Dwarves, she says.

Dwarves are greedy as well, says Brackmann: getting their treasure back is the main motive behind their expedition to the Lonely Mountain, even though they don't really need it, as Thorin explains to Bilbo

in the first chapter. The chief crisis of *The Hobbit* arises when Thorin denies Bard his family's share in the treasure and shows himself unwilling to give the inhabitants of Lake-town any compensation for their help, even after Smaug has destroyed their town. Now the question is, whether or not Thorin is representative for all Dwarves in doing this. We read that "most of them seemed to share his mind—except perhaps old fat Bombur and Fili and Kili" (*H*, XV, 239). So greed does seem to be a typically dwarvish vice that only the young and the funny fat guy do not share to the same degree.

Vengeance, not mentioned by Brackmann, is the other motive behind the quest. But as vengefulness is merely another anti-Jewish Christian stereotype, this would fit as well—if vengeance weren't such an important motive in many of the Icelandic family sagas Tolkien knew so well.

Finally, Brackmann considers the Dwarves to be cowardly. Heroism is of paramount importance in Tolkien's world, but the Dwarves of *The Hobbit* hardly have a share in it. As Tolkien writes in chapter 12: "Dwarves are no heroes but calculating folk with a great idea of the value of money; some are tricky and treacherous and pretty bad lots; some are not, but are decent enough people like Thorin and Company, if you don't expect too much" (*H*, XII, 192). Even when Thorin finally decides to join the Battle of the Five Armies, it remains unclear whether this is heroism for a good cause or just the wish to defend his gold at any cost. Also, the way he is described—"the great dwarf gleamed like gold in a dying fire" (*H*, XVII, 254)—reminds the reader of his Dwarvish greed, undermining his bravery, according to Brackmann.

She admits that greediness was a trait of Norse Dwarves, too. But in the letter that mentions the complicated and cacophonous dwarven language, Tolkien explicitly writes that his Dwarves are "not quite the dwarfs of better-known lore" (*Letters*, 31), and Brackmann notes

> if Tolkien began with folkloric Dwarves who loved gold, and then decided to also give them a Semitic language and other attributes that anti-Semitic beliefs attached to Jews (whom he himself stated that the Dwarves resembled), it pretty much proves the point. The way *The Hobbit* shows all these traits "going together" and uses them to justify the exclusion of Dwarves from the mainstream culture of the text resembles real-life anti-Semitic beliefs. (93-94)

Whether this scenario fits all the available facts remains to be seen.

The Image of Dwarves in *The Lord of the Rings*

In her article, Brackmann points out that a number of people, among them Zak Cramer, Anders Rearick III, and Craig Bird, have defended Tolkien against the charge of racism, maintaining that he was no racist and never lifted a finger, or a pen, against any Jews; they were among his best friends, they wrote. Brackmann had tried to pre-empt this line of argument by pointing out that, to her, anti-Semitism is not restricted to actions: it is a mind-set which includes belief "in a racial Jewish identity that consisted of linked and recognizable biological and psychological traits" (94). Tolkien had been exposed to the anti-Semitic elements in the culture of his time and in the medieval texts he studied, and this exposure shows in *The Hobbit*.

However, Tolkien's image of Dwarves improved markedly in *The Lord of the Rings* because of the picture he paints of their chief representative in the epic, Gimli son of Glóin. Gimli's motives to join the quest have nothing to do with greed or vengeance. He does not whine and is consistently courageous and steadfast (and, I'd like to add, no comic relief is involved). Although he has a moment of great fear before entering the Paths of the Dead, he overcomes this fear (and overcoming fear is one of the definitions of valor). And his positive qualities "are often set out in such a way that they do not just reflect his character but his entire race" (Brackman 96). Gimli and his race shine in the episode of the Glittering Caves of Aglarond, when he assures Legolas:

> No dwarf could be unmoved by such loveliness. None of Durin's race would mine those caves for stones or ore, not if diamonds and gold could be got there. Do you cut down groves of blossoming trees in the springtime for firewood? We would tend these glades of flowering stone, not quarry them. (*TT,* I, viii, 153)

He also says that Dwarves would give gold for no more than a brief glance at the caves. Such statements effectively do away with the image of Dwarves as motivated by avarice, just like Gimli's obvious and selfless courage overrides the less-than-heroic picture of the Dwarves in *The Hobbit*. So does the "act of revision" in the "Durin's Folk" section in Appendix A of *The Lord of the Rings*, where Dwarves are said to be very resistant to the power of Sauron's rings.

> The only power over them that the Rings wielded was to inflame their hearts with a greed of gold and precious things, so that if they lacked them all other good things seemed profitless, and they were filled with wrath and desire for

> vengeance on all who deprived them. (*RK*, Appendix A, III, 358)

As Brackmann points out, this suggests that dwarvish greed and the concomitant vengefulness were *caused* by the rings, not innate. This characterization is a clear improvement on the picture given in *The Hobbit*. Brackmann concludes that Tolkien must have felt a bit guilty about his anti-Semitic stereotyping in the earlier book after World War II had hammered home the horrifying consequences such a thing could have, and actually had had, in Germany. Brackmann believes Tolkien would have written out the greed of his Dwarves when revising *The Hobbit* if only this had been possible without undermining the plot.

Scrutinizing the Evidence

If I voice some objections against Brackmann's scenario now, this is not because I disagree with her assessment of anti-Semitism and racism in general as a mind-set. Many of us suffer from at least some form of bias or even racism, often unconsciously, and I do not think Tolkien was very different. But whether there is racism to be found in his works is debatable, although they are certainly rife with racialism, or racial categorization, defined by*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* as "an emphasis on race or racial considerations."

First, the argument that Tolkien's Dwarves resemble Jews because of their beards is not particularly convincing. Throughout history many men have worn beards without being Jewish. In Norse myth and saga, for instance, adult males generally wear beards. That the *Prose Edda* refers to women's beards as equally non-existent as the sound of a cat's footfalls and the breath of a fish (Sturluson 34) implies male beardedness. [6] Neither of the Eddas explicitly mentions dwarf beards, but both the *Alvíssmál*, in which Thor speaks of the dwarf Alvíss's pale nose instead of his pale face (*Edda*, 124, stanza 2), and the facial growth the dwarf Regin shows on the doors of the Hylestad stave church[7] in Norway, argue for their existence. Tolkien was undoubtedly aware of this. Furthermore, there is no need to refer to Old Norse sources to explain why dwarf beards do not necessarily suggest Jewishness. In European folklore, dwarfs usually have beards, as many illustrated fairy tale books attest, including those available in Tolkien's time.[8]

Next, Brackmann points to the constant complaining of the Dwarves in *The Hobbit* as an example of anti-Jewish stereotyping. However, the Dwarves are not always described as a collective and not all Dwarves are equally whiny. Dori, Nori and especially Bombur grumble and complain a lot, but it is hard to catch Fili and Kili at it, and there is less complaining after they have reached the Lonely Mountain and

recovered their treasure. On the other hand, although Bilbo contrasts somewhat favourably with the more whiny among the Dwarves, he never quite stops complaining, either. So while it is true that there is a lot of whining going on, it is incorrect to say that most of it is done by "the Dwarves" as a collective and that Bilbo is the only member of the expedition who gets over it.

Another minor problem is that Brackmann does not seem to notice any discrepancy between Tolkien's supposed stereotyping of Jews as fearful in *The Hobbit* and his remark about their "warlike capacities" in the 1965 interview, which she takes to be a compliment. Granted, she argues that their somewhat fearful attitude is replaced by valor in *The Lord of the Rings*, but for this change to make sense, we have to assume that Tolkien either suddenly remembered (or, even more unlikely, discovered) the biblical accounts of martial Jews, or else that something happened to make him realize Jews were not cowardly or timid after all. This something could have been the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto of 1943, but nothing in his published correspondence suggests he was aware of it. Mere knowledge of the persecution of the Jews by the Nazis would not, I believe, suffice to change any biased ideas about Jewish fearfulness. It is more likely that Tolkien simply needed no reminder of Jewish courage, because at the time he wrote the story the Dwarves of *The Hobbit* were not conceived of as being parallel to the Jews.

And how fearful were the Dwarves in *The Hobbit* meant to be? Though Brackmann does not mention this, several of the dwarf-names Tolkien took from the Poetic Edda may indeed have a meaning associated with fear: Bifur and Bofur probably mean "shaker" and "trembler," and Oin, "timid one." On the other hand, Thorin almost certainly means "brave one," and whatever his motives, he does justice to his name. Ori could mean "combative." Fili and Kili have names meaning "file" and "wedge" respectively, sharp objects that suggest aggression rather than timidity. However, as the meaning of these names is often far from clear, what Tolkien *thought* they meant would be the decisive factor here—and we do not know this. We cannot even be sure if he intended the names to mean something at all, although names like Thorin, and Gloin ("glowing one")—for one of the fire-makers of the company—suggest that he did. In that case, he intended the Dwarves to be a mixed bunch, like almost any group of people, neither more nor less fearful than other groups, and showing more and more courage as the story progresses. None of them deserts from the Battle of the Five Armies, for example.

A more serious objection is based on the fact that Brackmann shows herself insufficiently aware of the order in which the texts that went into *The Silmarillion* were composed, and of the chronological

place of *The Hobbit* in this writing process. In addition to this, her use of the term "Silmarillion" is somewhat confusing. She writes, for instance, that though *The Hobbit* does not mention "the Dwarves' creation by Aulë, the *Silmarillion* does, and it suggests that Tolkien was already thinking of the Dwarves as 'like the Jews' when *The Hobbit* was written" (88). Does she mean the published *Silmarillion* of 1977, or one of the texts dealing with the matter of Beleriand published in *The History of Middle-earth*? And if so, which one?

The original creation story of the Dwarves belongs to the "Later Annals of Beleriand," published in *The Lost Road*. It differs markedly from the account written after the publication of *The Lord of the Rings*:

> . . . it is said by some of the wise in Valinor (. . .) that Aulë made the Dwarves long ago, desiring the coming of the Elves and Men, for he wished to have learners to whom he could teach his crafts of hand, and he could not wait upon the designs of Ilúvatar. But the Dwarves have no spirit indwelling,[9] as have the Children of the Creator, and they have skill but not art; and they go back into the stone of the mountains of which they were made. (*Lost Road* 129)

Now Dwarves made from stone clearly hark back to the creation story of the dwarfs in the *Prose Edda*, where they are said to have originated as maggots in the flesh of the giant Ymir, the material from which the Norse gods created the earth. So what we have in this passage is a modification of the Norse creation myth of the Dwarves. Tolkien specified the earth as "the stone of the mountains" and omitted the maggots—maybe because this detail seemed a bit gross. According to Christopher Tolkien's comment on the passage, the assertion that Dwarves "have no spirit indwelling" reflects "the old hostile view of them" (149), the one found in the *Book of Lost Tales*. So the earliest creation story is rooted in the conception of Dwarves as Norse, reminiscent of the light-shunning, greedy and sometimes malevolent, yet clever and skilled beings from the Eddas. These Dwarves are metaphorical maggots, so to speak. They may not be quite the dwarfs of better-known lore, but nonetheless the resemblance is remarkable. That this version of their creation story laid the basis for anti-Semitism in the description of the Dwarves in *The Hobbit* is unlikely.

At some point, Tolkien amended the statement that Dwarves "had no spirit indwelling" by adding that it was the Noldor who believed so, whereas others said "that Aulë cares for them, and that Ilúvatar will accept from him the work of his desire, so that the Dwarves shall not perish" (*Lost Road*, 146, see also 191). Who the others are remains unclear, but in any case the idea that Dwarves had no spirit was

reduced to a rumor, a "myth" in the modern sense of an uncorroborated story.[10] This emendation is a first step towards a more positive view of Dwarves.[11] Why would Tolkien have made it?

Both the original passage and the emendation were written between 1930 and the end of 1937 (*Lost Road*, 107); a narrower time frame is not given. *The Hobbit*, although published in 1937, was almost certainly written between the summer of 1930 and January 1933 (Rateliff xv–xix). So *The Hobbit* and the first creation story of the Dwarves belong to the same period. Whichever came first, the fact Tolkien gave most of the Dwarves in *The Hobbit* names from the Poetic Edda suggests that they were still closely associated with their Norse counterparts at the time, in the same way his dwarvish creation story resembled the account in the Prose Edda.

It seems possible that the "decent enough" Dwarves in *The Hobbit*, while still only loosely connected with the matter of the Elder Days, inspired Tolkien to move Dwarves in general away from their exclusive association with evil, and that this was the reason behind the emendation. However, in the "Quenta Silmarillion," dating from the same time frame of 1930-37 but probably written after "The Later Annals of Beleriand" they remain a faceless collective that prefers to stay neutral until one side "hath the mastery" (*Lost Road* 307). In fact, they resemble the dwarfs of the Eddas who do not participate in *Ragnarök*—with the difference that these Eddic dwarfs are not given a motivation, whereas Tolkien ascribes opportunistic motives to their Middle-earth counterparts. In short, at this stage of writing Tolkien's Dwarves are still predominantly Norse and for the most part unsympathetic. The account of their making, still *in statu nascendi,* is clearly indebted to the Prose Edda. If anything, the Dwarves in *The Hobbit* are an improvement rather than exponents of cultural anti-Semitism embedded in a supersessionist creation story. The creation account Brackmann criticises in her argument is, in fact, largely based on a text in *The War of the Jewels*, which wasn't written until *after* the publication of *The Lord of the Rings*. It is chronologically impossible for this particular version of the account to suggest that Tolkien was comparing Dwarves and Jews when he wrote *The Hobbit* at least two decades earlier.

So it begins to look as though preconceived notions led to the idea that *The Hobbit* displays anti-Semitic features. A possible source for these preconceived notions is Rateliff's statement in *The History of the Hobbit* that Tolkien's partial identification of Dwarves with Jews was already present when the first chapter of *The Hobbit* was completed (79). Unfortunately, the only substantiation Rateliff gives for his statement is the BBC interview of 1965, and this does not tell us when exactly Tolkien began to attribute Jewish traits to his Dwarves. As argued above,

there is no compelling reason to believe the identification dates back to the early 1930s. Curiously, Brackmann does not refer to Rateliff's work,[12] though her reasoning and his are partly the same: Tolkien must have been influenced by medieval texts about Jews. Whatever is the case, what looked harmless to him apparently turned virulent for her—but on shaky grounds.

My last, equally serious objection would be that Tolkien's letter of 1938 about the dwarvish tongue contains no indication that it was a language of the Semitic type, or that Tolkien had worked out this language in any detail at the time. In his foreword to *The Lord of the Rings* he famously claimed that "the mythology and legends of the Elder Days . . . [were] primarily linguistic in inspiration and [were] begun in order to provide the necessary background or "history" for Elvish tongues" (*FR*, Foreword, 5). In one of his letters, he went as far as calling *The Lord of the Rings* "an essay on 'linguistic aesthetic'" (*Letters*, 220), and in another "an attempt to create a world in which a form of language agreeable to my personal aesthetic might seem real… in which a common greeting would be *elen síla lumen omentielmo"* (*Letter*s, 264–65).

However, Dimitra Fimi has argued that these statements are half-truths at best. The name Earendel, for instance, first used in 1914, came from the Old English poem *Crist* and was only incorporated into Qenya (the predecessor of Quenya) in the form "Eärendil" when Tolkien wrote "The Fall of Gondolin" in 1916-17. A story inspired by the tale of Kullervo in the Finnish epic *Kalevala* was begun in 1914 and later rewritten and completed as "The Tale of Turambar," which was then added to the *Lost Tales* in 1918. Most importantly, the decision to create a mythology was made in early 1915, before Tolkien made the first sketches of Qenya, as John Garth has shown (Fimi, 65-66). In the case of Adunaic, the real order is especially clear: this original language of the Edain and later of the Men of Númenor was developed shortly after World War II (*Sauron*, ix), long after the Edain had been established as a people.

Regarding the language of the Dwarves, there is "no hint of any sort" in *The Hobbit* that the names used by Thorin and Company were "not their real names: the 'secret language of the Dwarves' and the motif of their hiding their true names had not yet arrived" (Rateliff 79). Both these elements appear for the first time in the essay "Durin's Folk" in Appendix A of *The Lord of the Rings*, written long after *The Hobbit*. Meanwhile it remains far from certain when Khuzdul was developed. The "Quenta Silmarillion" (16–12) only mentions that Aulë devised the dwarven speech, which was "harsh and intricate" (*Lost Road* 273). The first four names that can be identified as Khuzdul

also appear in the "Quenta Silmarillion" (although the language itself is unidentified). They appear to have the Semitic triconsonantal root structure: Khûzud, the compounds Gabilgathol and Khazaddûm (274), and Zirak (319). It is unknown whether any more words and names of this type existed at that time, whether these four were part of a more detailed linguistic structure inspired by Semitic languages, and when exactly Tolkien decided they belonged to a language of that type named Khuzdul. There is no proof that he devised these names before he completed *The Hobbit* towards the end of 1932 or at the beginning of 1933, so we do not know if Thorin and Company spoke a language meant to be Semitic in structure at that stage of development. It seems unlikely, though.

The pre-war German Hobbit affair

What we do know, is that in 1938 Allen & Unwin had negotiated a German translation of *The Hobbit* with publisher Rütten & Loening. In the summer of that year the German firm sent a letter to Tolkien wanting to know if he was of Aryan origin. Like any upright person, Tolkien was no doubt appalled at the persecution of the Jews by the Nazi regime, which had begun in 1933 with Hitler's rise to power. *Kristallnacht* (from 9-10 November 1938) still lay in the future at that time,[13] but the Nuremberg laws revoking German citizenship for Jews dated from 1935. In a letter to Stanley Unwin regarding this affair, dated July 25, 1938, an outraged Tolkien called the racist Nazi laws "lunatic," adding "I do not regard the (probable) absence of all Jewish blood as necessarily honourable; and I have many Jewish friends, and should regret giving any colour to the notion that I subscribed to the wholly pernicious and unscientific race-doctrine" (*Letters* 37). He went on to draft two negative reactions to the German publisher's question straight away (the one preserved in the Allen & Unwin files is also dated July 25, 1939). In the unsent letter he went to the attack by stating that if Rutten & Loening wished to know whether he was of Jewish origin, "I can only reply that I regret that I appear to have *no* ancestors of that gifted people." Further on he wrote: "If impertinent and irrelevant inquiries of this sort are to become the rule in matters of literature, then the time is not far distant when a German name will no longer be a source of pride" (37–38).

Not surprisingly, but much to Tolkien's regret, the projected translation was cancelled. So, standing up for his principles, he may have risked a minor sacrifice (expected German royalties, plus the satisfaction of having a work translated into a foreign language). In a way his involvement with the cause of the Jews had now gone beyond an indignant rejection of what was going on in Nazi Germany. Could it be that

this, along with the Semitic traits of the budding dwarven language triggered some kind of identification of the Dwarves of Middle-earth with Jews first encountered in a letter of 1947? For lack of further evidence, this cannot be proved, but if it was the case, making Dwarves resemble Jews must have been a decision made after the publication of *The Hobbit* in 1937. That Tolkien had not consciously intended to make a connection between the two before, may be implied by something he writes in the unsent letter to Rutten & Loening: "Your enquiry . . . would be improper, even if it had (*as it has not*)[14] any bearing whatsoever on the merits of my work or its suitability for publication" (*Letters*, 38). If the connection Dwarves-Jews had been a conscious one at that point, would he have put it quite like this?

It begins to look as though we have two scenarios here, based on Tolkien's own comparisons of Dwarves and Jews, made in 1947, 1955 and 1964:

- In the first scenario, possibly due to his study and teaching of anti-Semitic medieval texts, negative Jewish stereotyping crept into Tolkien's description of the Dwarves in *The Hobbit*. This rather negative view of Dwarves was embedded in an anti-Judaic supersessionist creation account reflecting ancient Christian prejudices. However, seeing what the Nazis did to the Jews before and during the Second World War, Tolkien felt guilty about his stereotyping and did his best to undo the most negative aspects of it—Dwarves as greedy and cowardly—in *The Lord of the Rings*. There Gimli, and by extension the dwarvish race in general, is described in a much more positive light. Excessive greed in Dwarves is now ascribed to the evil influence of Sauron's rings.

- In the second scenario, Tolkien's Dwarves initially derived most of their characteristics and their creation story from the Norse Eddas; they were depicted in negative terms. In *The Hobbit* they began to move away from these origins, becoming more decent, but they retained some Norse characteristics: greed and great craftsmanship. Their names remained Norse as well, until Tolkien began to create a new language for his Dwarves that turned out to be Semitic in structure. Outrage at the persecution of the Jews in Nazi Germany, possibly reinforced by inquiries concerning Tolkien's own racial background by a German publisher in 1938, stimulated him to further elaborate the connection between Dwarves and Jews in a positive way. The greed was mostly written away; his Dwarves acquired an ancient culture

> of their own and became great warriors, but also victims of prejudice. Unfortunately both positive qualities like Jewish craftsmanship and negative stereotypes like Jewish greed overlapped with the original Norse characteristics, becoming indistinguishable and casting a long shadow backwards over *The Hobbit*.

Evidence from Later Writings

To find out which scenario is most likely to apply, it is time now to look at Tolkien's post-*Lord of the Rings* writings regarding Dwarves to see if they have any bearing on the matter. As Brackmann has done so as well, I will take a look at her findings first. She discusses three late texts in which Dwarves have a part. In the first place, there is "The History of Galadriel and Celeborn" in *Unfinished Tales*, where Galadriel looks "upon the Dwarves 'with the eye of a commander, seeing in them the finest warriors to pit against the orcs" (*UT* 235). If the far-sighted Elven-lady knew that the Dwarves would play an important and even necessary role in fighting the evil of Sauron, Brackmann argues, "it implies that they were, indeed, part of the Creator-deity's design for Middle-earth from the beginning" (101). In *The War of the Jewels*, she adds, Aulë informs the Fathers of the Dwarves that "Ilúvatar will hallow them and give them a place among the Children in the end" (*Jewels* 204).

The way Galadriel looks at Dwarves as great tools to use against the enemy rather than as complete beings is a little disturbing, but it says more about her than about them, or about Tolkien as the primary world author. In any case, as an improvement to the early creation accounts and their emendations, it fits both scenarios. The Dwarves without an indwelling spirit, coming from stone and returning to it, have gone, and the idea that Dwarves "shall not perish" is replaced by the much more positive thought that they will be counted among the Children of Ilúvatar. However, this is perfectly in keeping with a movement away from the Edda-based origins of the Dwarves, and there is no need to bring in guilt-feelings regarding Jewish stereotyping on Tolkien's part.

Also, it is rather peculiar that an account Brackmann calls "supersessionist" when she ascribes it to the 1930s, is suddenly being approved when it is post-*Lord of the Rings* and fits neatly into her theory. The sentence in *The War of the Jewels* beginning with "Ilúvatar' will hallow them" made it verbatim to the 1977 *Silmarillion*. Yet Brackmann only quotes it in the context of the *Unfinished Tales* discussion, omitting it from her earlier, critical discussion of the creation account in

the same 1977 *Silmarillion*. Did she not notice it was there, or did she suppress it?

The second late text Brackmann looks at is "The Quest of Erebor," also in *Unfinished Tales*. Gandalf's words "Dwarves understand devotion to friends and gratitude to those who help them" (*UT* 325), reinforces the positive image of Dwarves from *The Lord of the Rings*, she writes (103). Thorin's avarice is no longer connected with his "dwarvish heart," as *The Hobbit* had it, and therefore is no racial trait but a personal flaw, against which Gandalf warns him. This would fit the scenario where Tolkien amends his negative stereotyping. His rewrite of the first three *Hobbit* chapters in the style of *The Lord of the Rings* in 1960 indeed reinforces the idea that Thorin's flaws are predominantly personal. In these chapters the chief Dwarf is a darker character than he is in most of *The Hobbit*. As Rateliff—who does not ascribe his greed and possessiveness in *The Hobbit* to his race—notes:

> In the original book his succumbing to the dragon-sickness had been a sudden and surprising departure from his usual self, a distortion of his fundamentally admirable personality and a frightening lesson in the corrupting power of dragon-haunted gold; here an obsession with his property and grievance over his rights has simply become part of his character, an innate flaw. Like the anticipations of Saruman's fall Tolkien inserted into some of his later writings, these have the effect of hinting that the character was corrupt from the beginning, which was very much not the case in the original book. (Rateliff 781)

On the other hand, Brackmann ignores a couple of less positive remarks about another dwarf in the altered B-version of the "Quest." The most important of these is Gandalf's rebuke that Glóin doesn't know much about the Shire-folk, if he considers them "simple, because they are generous and do not haggle" (*UT*, 333). Glóin is not Thorin, so we are not dealing with the latter's personal flaws here. If Dwarves have a somewhat dim view of people who are too generous to haggle, what does this say about Tolkien's views of Jews post *Lord of the Rings*—assuming the identification holds? Perhaps Glóin isn't representative of the dwarvish people as a whole either, but only four Dwarves get to say anything in this text. The remaining two are Balin and Fíli, and only Fíli's remarks are (relatively) innocent. On the whole, the picture of Dwarves as a race in the "Quest" fragments does not fundamentally differ from that in *The Hobbit*; only Thorin's flaws are brought out more clearly and become more personal. That means Scenario 1 does not work here. But the picture does not quite fit Scenario 2, either. Maybe

the reason is that there is a limit to what an author can change when he is writing backstory for a classic published decades earlier.

Brackmann's third example is different. It concerns Mîm and the Noegyth Nibin, the Petty-Dwarves of Beleriand, and here the textual situation is complicated. Brackmann notes that Tolkien's picture of Mîm seems to worsen in the revision process. She points out that the chronology of the various texts is uncertain and that inconsistencies could be ascribed to Tolkien's failing memory of what he had written earlier. Yet there is no escaping the fact that Mîm's reluctance to show the orcs the way to Túrin's refuge after his capture vanishes in the post-*Lord of the Rings* version found in the published *Children of Húrin*. There, driven by his hatred of the elf Beleg, he actively seeks out the orcs to betray Túrin and his followers. Once Beleg lies bound he gloats over him, sharpening a knife (*CH* 150). "Mîm's trajectory seems to reverse my claim that Tolkien revised his negative portrayal of the Dwarves after the publication of *The Hobbit*," Brackmann admits (100).

However, she argues that Mîm is not typical of his race but belongs to the alienated Petty-Dwarves, who had been banished from the dwarf cities below the Blue Mountains and "loved none but themselves" (*CH* 121). The word "petty" derives from French "petit," and Brackmann suggests that Tolkien used this non-Germanic word (from a language he disliked) to distance Mîm and his sons from Dwarves proper. The meaning is "little," but also "trivial" and "spiteful," which fits Mîm's character. The conclusion: "As the dissonant French-Germanic compound [Petty-Dwarves] suggests, Mîm's evil deeds, if Tolkien did mean for them to stand in the final version, were not meant to be racial, not indicative of Dwarves in the aggregate" (101). Or rather, one could amend, Mîm eventually ended up not being representative of his race in general; in *The Book of Lost Tales* he still is a typical evil dwarf, the captain of the guard of Glorund the Dragon (*Lost Tales II* 103).[15]

The Strange History of the Petty-Dwarves

However, there is more to be said about these Petty-Dwarves. They weren't merely banished, they were a persecuted race, hunted and killed by the Sindar until they were recognised for what they were (*S* 204). Too late: in the days of Túrin, only three males were left. Now at first sight this persecution theme accompanying Tolkien's picture of the Petty-Dwarves seems to support the comparison with Jews, despite Brackmann's attempts to shut this group out of her argument. Yet the general wretchedness of the Petty-Dwarves seems to suggest that Tolkien lapsed into his earlier negative stereotyping habits when he described them, which does not fit into Scenario 1 any more than the situation in "The Quest of Erebor."

In fact, there's something very peculiar going on in the history of the Petty-Dwarves. In her article "Noegyth Nibin – Racism in Beleriand" Magdalena Kudelska brings a couple of fairly obscure facts from Tolkien's late Middle-earth writings to the fore. On reading that the Petty-Dwarves were descended from Dwarves who had been cast out from the cities Nogrod (Tumunzahar) and Belegost (Gabilgathol) under the Blue Mountains, Kudelska searched for the reasons behind their banishment. She found them in *The War of the Jewels*, in the essay "Quendi and Eldar," which according to Christopher Tolkien can be dated to 1959-60 (*Jewels* 359). There we read that the forefathers of the Petty-Dwarves had left the cities or were "driven out from the Communities, being deformed and undersized, or slothful and rebellious" (*Jewels* 388). In itself, the idea of deformed and undersized Dwarves seems peculiar enough. In a draft for Appendix A of *The Lord of the Rings* that did not make it to the published version, Dwarves are said to be "singularly immune to diseases such as affected Men, and Halflings." The only disorder they suffered from was corpulence (*Peoples,* 285). Did Tolkien change his mind when he wrote the history of the Noegyth Nibin, or had he completely forgotten this draft? We can only guess. Outright unsettling is the notion of Dwarves casting out the infirm and the handicapped. Again, World War II comes into the picture, but as Dwarves are both perpetrators and victims here, comparisons with the persecution of the Jewish people are pointless and misplaced.

After dealing with the Sindarin hunting of the Petty-Dwarves—not the whitest page in the history of the Eldar of Beleriand—and pointing out that Mîm hated the Elves of Doriath for a reason, which puts his betrayal in a somewhat different light, Kudelska draws attention to another alarming fact. Before the Noldor settled in Nargothrond, it was one of the two remaining refuges of the Noegyth Nibin in Beleriand, called Nulukkizdin. "The Shibboleth of Fëanor," a very late text dating from about 1968, tells us that:

> Finrod had help of Dwarves in extending the underground fortress of Nargothrond. It is supposed originally to have been a hall of the Petty-Dwarves (Nibinnogs), but the Great Dwarves despised these, and had no compunction in ousting them . . . —especially for great reward. Finrod had brought more treasure out of Túna than any of the other princes. (*Peoples*, 352)

What we have here is Dwarves driving out other Dwarves and being paid handsomely for it by one of the supposedly most noble princes of the Noldor. Were it not that Dwarves were on both sides, the term

"ethnic cleansing" would apply here. It may still apply to Thingol, who told Finrod about these caves and who doesn't have a particularly good record when it comes to tolerance of other races. Kudelska concludes her essay by contemplating the sad fate of the Petty-Dwarves:

> They were subjected to scorn and persecution, which can be easily classified as racist, from both the Elves (. . .) and the "great" Dwarves. Was this picture consciously created by the author? Did Tolkien realize what blemish on the characteristics of the Elves, and in particular of Finrod (pictured in *The Silmarillion* almost as a saint) is left by his notes on Noegyth Nibin? Personally, I suspect not entirely. (102)

I am inclined to concur.

Conclusion

What's more, I believe any closer analogy between Dwarves and Jews breaks down here. Jews persecuting other Jews and committing eugenics? And that is not the only problem with the analogy: in other late texts about Dwarves (which Brackmann does not seem to have checked), Tolkien presents a mix of dwarvish characteristics that hardly lend themselves to categorizing or stereotyping. He wrote that Dwarves were not skilled linguists, had never invented any form of alphabetic writing and were "unadaptable" (*Peoples* 297). Their runic spelling of the Common Speech was often incorrect due to haste or lack of knowledge (298). There were seven kindreds, of which the Longbeards were wisest and most far-seeing, and held in awe by Men. These Longbeards were builders, road-makers, miners and craftsmen (301) and "the most redoubtable warriors of all the Speaking Peoples" (302). They refused to tell anyone their personal names and did not allow them to be written down (303). They had an elaborate sign language. They were short-sighted by nature (*Jewels* 395).

Someone insisting on finding anti-Jewish stereotyping here will find it: insufficient knowledge of the Common Speech can only be Tolkien's comment on Yiddish as a deformed variety of German. The elaborate sign language must be an allusion to gesticulating Jews (though maybe Dwarves were merely a bit Mediterranean. . . .). The Jews didn't invent their own script, they adapted an existing one (like the Greeks, incidentally; so we are still visiting the Mediterranean). The short-sightedness refers to the myth of genetic Jewish bad eyesight, of course. Oh yes, and the treatment of the Noegyth Nibin by the Great Dwarves is the Israelis driving out the Palestinians, also a

Semitic people, while the Elves must be the British, with Thingol as Churchill. Seek and ye shall find. But the evidence seems rather thin all the same.

So, did Tolkien engage in anti-Semitic stereotyping or didn't he? He did, says Brackmann; despite his corrections in *The Lord of the Rings*,

> the basic assumption that there are innate Dwarvish and Jewish "qualities" survives intact, and this assumption remains troubling. Reversing the qualities from negative to positive ones does not erase the underlying belief that makes the whole system of thought possible. . . . I think readers and critics do need to acknowledge that he could be (and was) influenced by such aspects of English culture as anti-Semitism. (103–4)

However, as we have seen, her assessment is based on various mistakes and misconceptions. The chronology of Tolkien's writings is confused, a later idea is projected backward in time, evidence is ignored and alternative interpretations are not being taken into consideration. A partial identification becomes complete. If Dwarves = Jews, Brackmann would have a point, but that would turn the Dwarves into allegories, which they are most certainly not. Saying that "in many ways Dwarves resemble Jews" is not the same as making them identical with Jews. Scenario 1 can go; Brackmann is wrong. Scenario 2 has a better chance of being near the truth, but even this overstates the strength of the connection between Dwarves and Jews, as it requires a more systematic similarity than Tolkien's Middle-earth text corpus actually suggests. In the end, we have to assume a third scenario.

In 1947, when Tolkien first compared Dwarves to Jews, the Second World War was still fresh in people's memories, and the Jewish people regularly made it to the news.[16] Not that he ever says so, but Tolkien must have had ample opportunity to hear and read about them. At some point the idea occurred to him that his Dwarves had some things in common with the Jews, and apparently this notion held enough appeal to him for it to stick. But this identification of Dwarves with Jews remained partial. It is restricted to language type, fighting spirit and Tolkien's qualification of his Dwarves and the Jewish people alike as "at once native and alien in their habitations, speaking the languages of the country, but with an accent due to their native tongue," to repeat his own description (*Letters*, 229). This last assessment is obviously historical rather than stereotypical; to the majority of Jews it didn't apply any more even in Tolkien's days. The second one, the fighting spirit, may look stereotypical, but it is a reference to a part of the Bible that can't possibly qualify as anti-

Semitic: the Old Testament, the Jewish *Tenach*. And the first assessment, finally, is purely linguistic and scholarly. It is also, in my opinion, the most prominent one, given the importance of the linguistic element in Tolkien's inspiration. Finally, none of these traits are racial.

So in some respects, Dwarves resemble Jews. However, attempts to widen the analogy to greedy, cowardly Jewish Dwarves later promoted to fierce warriors who prefer the glitter of gold to its value because Tolkien got a bad conscience thanks to Hitler, falls flat. The analogy does not fit the development of his writings and it does not fit the other evidence. Brackmann turns the analogy into an allegory and thereby kills it. It should not be stretched beyond Tolkien's own words. There is no reason to assume that anti-Semitism or any form of Jewish stereotyping contributed to Tolkien's depiction of Dwarves.

Notes

1 For a close comparison between Khuzdul and the Semitic languages, notably Hebrew but also Arabic, see: http://www.forodrim.org/daeron/md_khuzdul.pdf (retrieved 1-14-2013).

2 *Khazad*, with the root kh-z-d, can be turned into *khuzdul* by adding the genitive suffix –ul also found on Balin's tomb in Moria, which tells us that Khuzdul means something like "of the Dwarves."

3 Joshua, Judges, and 1st and 2nd Maccabees

4 Or Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen*, in which dwarfs also are evil. But this hardly qualifies as "Teutonic legend."

5 In this article, all references are to the revised Internet version at thefreelibrary.com.

6 This also shows that Tolkien's bearded female Dwarves were not originally Norse.

7 Depicted on the dust cover of *The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún*, 1st impression hardback. Regin is found on the back side, together with Sigurd as a beardless youth.

8 For instance, dwarf beards are in evidence on the illustrations both Walter Crane and Arthur Rackham made for Grimm's "Snowwhite and the seven dwarfs." In the Disney *Snow White* cartoon of 1937, beardless Dopey is the odd dwarf out.

9 This assertion is also made in the "Lhammas," the "Account of Tongues" ascribed to Pengolod of Gondolin and dating from the

same period as "The Later Annals of Beleriand" (*Lost Road* 166-198 at 178).

10 Still later this "myth" is said to be Mannish. Christopher Tolkien points out that in *The Lord of the Rings* the opinion that Dwarves grow out of stone is ascribed to "some Men," and is called "foolish" (*Lost Road* 149).

11 In the "Quenta Silmarillion," written in the same period but probably after "The Later Annals of Beleriand," the passage about the absent spirit was probably erased at the time when the emendation was made, according to Christopher Tolkien (*Lost Road*, 277). The same goes for the concomitant passage in the "Lhammas" (191).

12 However, Rateliff's argument made it to the Wikipedia article about Tolkien's dwarfs (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dwarf_%28Middle-earth%29), and this may be the way the idea has spread.

13 As did the visit of Father Vincent Reade to Tolkien's home at 20 Northmoor Road "not long before the beginning of the Second World War," during which the priest gave Tolkien "an eyewitness account of the maltreatment of Jews in Germany" (Scull and Hammond II, 814).

14 My emphasis.

15 For a discussion of the relation between Tolkien's Mîm and the dwarf Mime in Wagner's Ring des Nibelungen I refer to my book *Wagner and Tolkien: Mythmakers* (50–54).

16 Great Britain had become their opponent in Palestine, where Jewish militants were conducting a guerrilla war against the British army. By then, Tolkien had nearly finished Book VI of *The Lord of the Rings* (Scull and Hammond I, 305–8) with its positive image of Dwarves. So if this man, who denounced British (and American) imperialism (*Letters* 115) and wrote about "orcs on our side" (*Letters* 78) compared Dwarves to Jews at this point, it was in all probability a compliment, and perhaps even an implied criticism of his own government. Given the linguistic character of the remark in the 1947 letter, it seems unlikely that it had anything to do with anti-Jewish stereotyping. Jewish postwar militancy may also have been the reason behind his (much later) comment about the warlike capacities, but this is even more speculative.

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"The Web of Story": Structuralism in Tolkien's "On Fairy-stories"

Derek Shank

In *The J. R. R. Tolkien Companion & Guide*, Christina Scull and Wayne G. Hammond aptly describe Tolkien's essay "On Fairy-stories" as "widely cited (if not extensively discussed)" (688). Critics frequently explicate such concepts from the essay as sub-creation, eucatastrophe, and Secondary World in order to shed light on Tolkien's other work, particularly *The Hobbit, The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Silmarillion*. Only a few scholars, however, have ventured to undertake a close examination of the essay itself. Much remains to be done in unpacking Tolkien's conception of Faërie, and the relationship between his theory of language and his aesthetic theory. I have chosen to approach these issues through an exploration of Tolkien's relationship with structuralism. I shall demonstrate that despite his critique of the structuralist analysis of comparative folklore, from the beginning to the end of the essay Tolkien himself relies on a structuralist framework for theorizing the relationships between human beings, language, stories, and the external world.

When I write of Tolkien's relationship with "structuralism" I do not use the term in its more strict linguistic or anthropological senses. Rather, by "structuralism" I designate a theory of literature which assumes that the nature of a text is determined by the implied order of the relationships between its constitutive elements. In other words, there is a system of rules according to which the components of a text relate to one another to produce its meaning. Because Tolkien believes that stories *qua* literature do not exist merely in isolation but as part of lived experience, the "components" of a text also include the reader. Thus, for Tolkien the implied order or system also includes the reciprocal interaction between the individual story and the individual human being, which is structuralist in so far as it operates according to universal principles that govern the nature of stories and human nature.

Scholars have often characterized "On Fairy-stories" as a sprawling hodge-podge on various topics, which Tolkien was never able to form into a coherent and persuasive argument. Even his sympathetic editors Verlyn Flieger and Douglas A. Anderson make similar concessions in characterizing the essay in their introduction: "Tolkien is not making a single argument, nor is he trying to prove a thesis. Rather, he is offering a wide-ranging overview . . . packed with information

and erudition" (9-10). One of the things I hope to demonstrate in the course of my analysis, then, is that by reading "On Fairy-stories" in relation to structuralism we can help to explain the interrelationships between the various parts of the essay, which possesses more conceptual unity than most scholars have acknowledged.

Tolkien begins "On Fairy-stories" by claiming that his addressing the topic of fairy-stories constitutes "a rash adventure" (1), for "Faërie is a perilous land" (1).[1] In the logical connection between these two sentences is implicit what Tolkien states later on, that "fairy-stories are not . . . stories *about* fairies or elves, but stories about Fairy, that is *Faërie*, the realm or state in which fairies have their being" (10, his emphasis). Faërie is the central concept upon which the entire essay is based, but perhaps partially by virtue of this very position it is the most slippery of Tolkien's terms. Tolkien himself confesses his inability to explain Faërie as a concept, writing, "I will not attempt to define that, nor to describe it directly. It cannot be done. Faërie cannot be caught in a net of words; for it is one of its qualities to be indescribable, though not imperceptible" (12). In fact, the indescribability of Faërie is rooted in its wondrous nature: "In that realm a man may, perhaps, count himself fortunate to have wandered, but its very richness and strangeness tie the tongue of a traveller who would report them" (2). Since fairy-stories are stories about Faërie, but Faërie itself cannot be defined, Tolkien takes the opposite approach, and attempts to delineate Faërie indirectly and by implication, through his examination of fairy-stories. Flieger glosses Faërie with reference to its etymology, explaining that just as the modern word slavery "can mean both the act of enslavement and the condition thus brought about of being enslaved," so too does faërie refer both to "the act of enchanting" and "the state of being enchanted" ("Faërie" 184). This double meaning reflects how Faërie plays a role both in the author's production of works of Fantasy, and the reader's reception and experience of these works. In Tolkien's theorization of these two processes, therefore, we can expect his conception of Faërie to emerge. But the Perilous Realm cannot be approached directly. After the opening section where he defines fairy-stories apophatically, by saying what they are not (beast fables, travellers' tales, dream narratives), Tolkien approaches the nature of fairy-stories through a critique of the way in which they have been studied.

Launching an attack on the structuralist method of literary analysis as it is practiced in comparative folklore,[2] Tolkien argues that although scholars who undertake analysis that focuses on recurring motifs or similarities between plots engage in a "perfectly legitimate procedure," their scholarship is ill-suited to *literary* study, because they are

"using the stories not as they were meant to be used, but as a quarry from which to dig evidence" (23). According to Tolkien, the most important meaning or value of a story does not lie in the structures that comparative folklore elucidates, for "it is precisely the colouring, the atmosphere, the unclassifiable individual details of a story, and above all the general purport that informs with life the undissected bones of the plot, that really count" (24). By using an organic metaphor to conceptualize the story as a living organism, Tolkien suggests that it must be understood on the basis of how it operates as a whole, not merely as the sum of its parts. Furthermore, the dissection metaphor expresses the inherent violence involved in what Tolkien calls "comparative" analysis, as well as implying that it can only operate on "dead" stories—or perhaps even that it kills those stories through the process of its analysis. Tolkien expounds a similar view in his essay "*Beowulf:* The Monsters and the Critics," in which he warns against the possibility that the critic may "kill what he is studying by vivisection," because "myth is alive at once and in all its parts, and dies before it can be dissected" (15).[3] A comment made by Rivkin and Ryan will help to shed some light on Tolkien's critique of how structuralism is manifested within comparative folklore: "A structure is both like a skeleton and like a genetic code in that it is the principle of stability and coherence in any cultural system, while also being the principle of action that allows the culture to exist in time as a living thing" (53). For Tolkien, the kind of analysis practiced by comparative folklorists, which focuses on recurring plots and imagery, reveals only the mechanics of the skeleton, or more specifically a dead and dried-out skeleton, rather than the vital principle which animates the tale.

Tolkien explains a similar point by means of another metaphor, that of the soup. He quotes Dasent as stating, "We must be satisfied with the soup that is set before us, and not desire to see the bones of the ox out of which it has been boiled" (25), but redefines the terms, writing,

> Dasent by "the soup" meant a mishmash of bogus pre-history founded on the early surmises of Comparative Philology; and by "desire to see the bones" he meant a demand to see the workings and the proofs that led to these theories. By "the soup" I mean the story as it is served up by its author or teller, and by "the bones" its sources or material. (25)

In these terms, then, we could suggest that while the comparative approach investigates the ingredients, thus leading to some knowledge about how the soup was formed, it fails utterly in comprehending the smell, taste, and texture of a particular serving or story, which is precisely the function of the soup and its significance for diners—the

investigation of the latter qualities is likely what Tolkien means when he says that we ought to practice "criticism of the soup as soup" (25).

Despite Tolkien's critique of the kind of structuralist analysis practiced by comparative folklorists, his use of the soup metaphor implies a structuralist understanding of the nature of story: "Speaking of the history of stories and especially of fairy-stories we may say that the Pot of Soup, the Cauldron of Story, has always been boiling, and to it have continually been added new bits, dainty and undainty" (35). The metaphor of the soup explains how various heterogeneous elements undergo transformative processes as they interact with one another over time—in short, the temporal evolution of a structure according to particular principles.[4] Nevertheless, Tolkien emphasizes that the choice of individual human beings plays an important role in this creative process: "we must not wholly forget the Cooks" for "their selection is important" (38). Furthermore, the soup metaphor also accounts for how individual readers or hearers have different reactions to the same tale—they have different tastes. It thus addresses the issue of how tales which are both formed and defined by the underlying order of structures can inspire a multiplicity of meanings and interpretations. We can see, therefore, that in using the soup metaphor Tolkien attempts to offer a model for how the complex structures of individual stories and of folklore as a whole interact with individual human beings who have their own freedom, and vice versa. Tolkien's quarrel is therefore not with a structuralist understanding of the nature of stories, but with the kinds of analysis and assumptions that have resulted from particular manifestations of it. Because literary analysis entails "criticism of the soup as soup," our focus should not be the explication of the processes of its production from historical and cultural ingredients, but rather "the effect produced *now* by these old things in the stories as they are" (39).[5] Tolkien goes on to write, "Such stories have now a mythical or total (unanalysable) effect, an effect quite independent of the findings of Comparative Folk-lore, and one which it cannot spoil or explain" (40). When Tolkien refers to a "total (unanalysable) effect," he means that the reader's experience of a story exceeds the sum of the story's individual components. Tolkien explains this in an earlier footnote using the image of a tapestry:

> For with the picture in the tapestry a new element has come in: the picture is greater than, and not explained by, the sum of the component threads. Therein lies the inherent weakness of the analytic (or 'scientific') method: it finds out much about things that occur in stories, but little or nothing about their effect in any given story. (26n)

We can also gloss this argument with the soup metaphor: a diner's experience of the soup is not fully explained by the recipe which lists the ingredients along with the physical and chemical processes which produced it. We can see, then, that for Tolkien the meaning of the story as a structure is not inherent to the structure itself, but rather lies in the observer's perception of the structure. In fact, as Chris Seeman points out (80), Tolkien argues that linguistic representation is superior to visual representation because it makes the reader or listener take an active role in imagining the objects and events described.[6]

Tolkien also explains that because the "bits" put into the Pot include both literary and historical ingredients, it does not make sense to consider the relationship between story and historical figures unilaterally (35-38). In fact, "History often resembles 'Myth', because they are both ultimately of the same stuff" (38).[7] Tolkien here advances a structuralist view that explains the similarities in various modes of narrative with recourse to universal aspects of human experience in which all mimetic representation is rooted: "If no young man had ever fallen in love by chance meeting with a maiden, and found old enmities to stand between him and his love, then the god Frey would never have seen Gerdr the giant's daughter from the high-seat of Odin" (38). In a similar vein, he argues earlier on in the essay that inquiring into the direction of temporal development between Thórr as a personification of thunder and Thórr as a farmer character with a personality is "asking a question without much meaning" (31). Rather, these two aspects of Thórr are intimately connected, so we ought not to "insist that one of these things must precede the other" (31). Tolkien suggests instead, "It is more reasonable to suppose that the farmer popped up in the very moment when Thunder got a voice and face; that there was a distant growl of thunder in the hills every time a story-teller heard a farmer in a rage" (31). No matter how far back we might trace the myth, "there would always be a 'fairy-tale' as long as there was any Thórr. When the fairy-tale ceased, there would be just thunder, which no human ear had yet heard" (32). What Tolkien is saying here is that myth is integral to the way human beings experience the world. He does not mean to suggest that the mythical structure is predetermined, but neither it is an entirely arbitrary imposition with no natural relation to the phenomena with which it is associated. This middle ground between natural determination and creative invention demonstrates the affinity that Patrick Grant points out with Jung's "theory of a collective unconscious which (like Tolkien's cauldron) contains archetypes stirred into activity by the artist" (89-90).

Tolkien's structuralist framework of analysis is also evident in the relationship between his theory of the sub-creation of Secondary

Worlds and his theory of language. The following remarkable passage is much quoted, but is rich enough to warrant another examination:

> The human mind, endowed with the powers of generalisation and abstraction, sees not only *green-grass*, discriminating it from other things (and finding it fair to look upon), but sees that it is *green* as well as being *grass*. But how powerful, how stimulating to the very faculty that produced it, was the invention of the adjective: no spell or incantation in Faërie is more potent. And that is not surprising: such incantations might indeed be said to be only another view of adjectives, a part of speech in a mythical grammar. (27)

Important to note here is how Tolkien describes perception as an active mental activity, rather than merely the passive reception of sense impressions. According to Tolkien, is it not the eye that "sees" (at least not in the most meaningful sense), but "the human mind" (27), which takes part in constructing the experienced world through discriminative and taxonomical practices, which necessarily entail aesthetic judgments.[8] Through language, the human being is able to name various phenomenological categories, and Tolkien proceeds to explain later on in this paragraph how language allows for the imaginative translation of adjectives to nouns with which they are not normally associated, imparting the power to construct alternate realities. Tolkien's use of the words "spell" and "incantation" is particularly appropriate, since both words denote the process of Faërian enchantment while etymologically deriving from words that refer to the use of language. "Incantation" derives from the Latin *cantare*, "to sing"—the same etymology, in fact, as "enchantment" itself.[9] "Spell" derives from Old English *spel*, "recital," "tale" (OED), prompting Tolkien to exclaim later on in the essay, "Small wonder that *spell* means both a story told, and a formula of power over living men" (38). Tolkien's use of the words "spell" and "incantation" thus leads into the following sentence, in which he suggests that the creation of Secondary Worlds can be described as employing "mythical grammar," suggesting that secondary reality, like language, is itself a structure.

The Secondary World is not an entirely independent or self-contained structure, however. Rather, as the passage on adjectives demonstrates, the Secondary World is linked to the Primary World because it is composed of language that reflects human experience of primary reality. Or, as Tolkien writes more succinctly later on, "Fantasy is made out of the Primary World" (85). Nevertheless, a Secondary World cannot rely merely on the power of language alone for its success: "Anyone inheriting the fantastic device of human language

can say *the green sun*. . . . But that is not enough" (68); rather, "to make a Secondary World inside which the green sun will be credible, commanding Secondary Belief, will probably require labour and thought, and will certainly demand a special skill, a kind of elvish craft" (69). In other words, the rearrangement or transposition of Primary material, which Tolkien describes as "combining nouns and redistributing adjectives" (77), is not effective when practiced at whim. The sub-creator must construct the Secondary World to form a coherent and organic whole in which all the parts are harmoniously interrelated—in other words, a structure.[10]

We can elucidate the nature of the structure of Secondary Worlds by examining one of Tolkien's rather odd examples: "A real enthusiast for cricket is in the enchanted state: Secondary Belief" (51). What Tolkien refers to here is the process of a spectator "getting into" the game, which we might characterize in greater detail with recourse to John Searle's notion of constitutive rules. Searle distinguishes between what he calls brute facts, which describe the world as one might in physics, and institutional facts, which describe events in terms of constitutive rules, rules which "create or define new forms of behaviour" rather than merely governing existing forms (33). As an example, Searle argues that an observer could accurately describe a football game using brute facts which recorded the sum of its physical actions, but would require knowledge of its institutional facts (namely, rules, such as the definition of a touchdown) in order to comprehend the game *as* football (52-53). Though Tolkien could not have had Searle's *Speech Acts* in mind, it seems clear that when Tolkien refers to Secondary Belief in cricket, he describes an observer who is immersed in the game with respect to its constitutive rules. In other words, the observer does not merely possess the requisite intellectual knowledge of the rules to understand the game and root for a team (which Tolkien describes as the mere "willing suspension of disbelief" [51]), but rather *believes* because he enters the game such that the set of its rules constitutes for him a Secondary Reality. Therefore, we can extrapolate from Tolkien's cricket example that the structure of a Secondary World includes a set of rules for making sense of events within the story, rules which Tolkien calls "the laws of that world" (50).

Another word remains to be said on Tolkien's rejection of Coleridge's notion of "willing suspension of disbelief" in favor of genuine belief in a successfully sub-created Secondary World (50-51). Flieger and Anderson describe Tolkien's model as "the involuntary suspension of disbelief" (12), but Tolkien would probably not be happy with this characterization. The problem for Tolkien is not just that the word "voluntary" implies a cold and calculated detachment from

the Secondary World, but that "suspension of disbelief" is a poor and paltry substitute for actual belief. One who suspends disbelief does not *eo ipso* believe. Hence the importance of the regularity of the Secondary World's structure: suspension of disbelief allows the reader to accept flaws and inconsistencies which true secondary belief will not admit.

It is important to note the context in which Tolkien advances this theory of belief in Secondary Worlds. He does so in the section of the essay titled "Children," which he devotes to refuting the commonly held opinion (endorsed by Lang himself) that associates fairy-stories with children (42-64). Against Lang's claim that children more readily believe in fairy stories, Tolkien proposes his theory of secondary belief in order to demonstrate that the "*literary belief*" of children is the same as that of adults (50). We can better understand how Tolkien's argument about children relates to his points about the nature of language and folktale by examining a passage of Lang's which he refutes: "Their taste remains like the taste of their naked ancestors thousands of years ago" (54). Tolkien here rejects an evolutionary model of human culture that parallels phylogenesis, the evolution of the species, with ontogenesis, the evolution of the individual. Tolkien is quite skeptical of stereotypical views of "primitive" cultures, and quips, "do we really know much about these 'naked ancestors', except that they were certainly not naked?" (54). As Philip Irving Mitchell demonstrates, Tolkien, like his friend Owen Barfield, as well as other Christian thinkers such as Christopher Dawson and G. K. Chesterton, was concerned with counteracting "the secularizing impulses of evolutionary history and anthropology" (13). So just as Tolkien rejects Max Müller's view of mythology as a "disease of language" (27), so too does he reject Andrew Lang's view that children and fairy-stories are primitive. In opposition to both these evolutionary views Tolkien advances a Christian humanism with a structuralist theoretical basis. He argues that children are essentially just less experienced human beings, so we ought to explain the literary belief of both children and adults using the same model.[11]

Despite the connection between Primary and Secondary Reality through the common transcendental categories of human experience embodied in language, the fairy-story enacts a different mode of ontology. In response to Lang's assertion of the credulity of children in ascribing primary belief to fairy-stories, Tolkien writes of his own childhood experience: "Fairy-stories were plainly not primarily concerned with possibility, but with desirability. If they awakened *desire*, satisfying it while often whetting it unbearably, they succeeded" (55, his emphasis). David Sandner accordingly writes, "Fantasy succeeds for Tolkien not by satisfying his sense of wonder, but by awakening it, and, what is

even better, by 'whetting it unbearably'" (134). Sandner is correct to seize on the important fact that such desire can never be fulfilled, but he neglects to explain why Tolkien claims that the stories do in fact engage in the process of "satisfying it." We can account for this paradox with recourse to Tolkien's distinction between Primary and Secondary Worlds. Later on in the essay, Tolkien writes, "Enchantment produces a Secondary World into which both designer and spectator can enter, to the satisfaction of their senses while they are inside" (75). According to Tolkien, Fairy-stories are in fact capable of satisfying desire, but only temporarily by means of the individual's immersion in a Secondary World.[12] The relegation of such satisfaction to a Secondary World is what gives Enchantment its "uncorrupted" artistic purity (76), and distinguishes it from Magic, by which the Magician selfishly attempts to achieve power through enacting alterations in Primary Reality (75-76). The fact that desire cannot be fulfilled in the Primary World is important because it makes desire a universal longing inherent in human nature: "In this world it is for men unsatisfiable, and so imperishable" (76). The insatiability of desire explains why individuals may read the same story again and again, and why more and more stories continue to be told.

We can gain a better understanding of Tolkien's conception of the relationship between fairy-stories and human experience of the world by examining his concept of Recovery, which is one of the functions of Fantasy:

> Recovery (which includes return and renewal of health) is a re-gaining—regaining of a clear view. I do not say "seeing things as they are" and involve myself with the philosophers, though I might venture to say "seeing things as we are (or were) meant to see them"—as things apart from ourselves. (83)

Unfortunately, some critics seem to have misunderstood Tolkien's claims in this passage. Alison Milbank, for example, interprets the passage as follows:

> The "things in themselves" to which Tolkien alludes are those elements of phenomena to which Kant, a critical idealist, believes we have no access, and to which he gives the term, "noumena." Despite his apologetic tone, Tolkien is actually saying something quite radical: that fiction in the form of fantastic recreation of the world can give us access to the real by freeing the world of objects from our appropriation of them. (19)

Milbank seems to ignore the fact that Tolkien explicitly writes, "I *do not say* 'seeing things as they are'" (my emphasis), going out of his way to make it clear that he is not claiming that we have access to noumena at all. On the contrary, his earlier discussion of active role that the human mind plays in perceiving reality (see above), as well as his phrase "'seeing things as we are (or were) meant to see them,'" suggests instead that he is claiming that we can recover a clear view of what Kant calls phenomena, objects as they are perceived by the mind transcendentally, that is, according to certain *a priori* processes. Tolkien argues that we do not experience simple or basic aspects of the world fully because they have been dulled by "triteness or familiarity" (83), and so we fail to grasp the wondrous nature of ordinary existence.

As a number of critics have noted, Tolkien's argument here seems reminiscent of the formalist notion of defamiliarization. Clyde B. Northrup has pointed out, however, that Tolkien's theory of how recovery operates is in fact different, because the "formalist idea of defamiliarization uses the technique of 'baring the device' [of artistic representation] rather than verisimilitude to make the familiar seem strange" (822). Surprisingly, however, Northrup does not point out that Tolkien in fact makes this distinction himself in his discussion of *Mooreeffoc*. Tolkien acknowledges that there are alternative means of recovery, and borrows from Chesterton this example of the word "Coffee-room, viewed from the inside through a glass door, as it was seen by Dickens on a dark London day" (84),[13] which is clearly an instance of defamiliarization in the manner that Northrup describes. Tolkien argues that the trope of *Mooreeffoc* possesses "only a limited power; for the reason that recovery of freshness of vision is its only virtue" (84). As a clever manipulation of ordinary language, we might gloss the "limited power" of *Mooreeffoc* with Tolkien's comment about "the green sun" (see above), where the ultimate potential of the linguistic innovation of "the green sun" is only fully realized when incorporated into a sub-created secondary reality which successfully inspires "Secondary Belief."

Therefore, it is by recombining the fundamental aspects of Primary Reality in a Secondary World that Fantasy allows us to appreciate their true power: "It was in fairy-stories that I first divined the potency of the words, and the wonder of the things, such as stone, and wood, and iron; tree and grass; house and fire; bread and wine" (86). Once again we can see in Tolkien's formulation that the power of the words is rooted in the experience of the objects as they are perceived. It does not seem a coincidence that the last things Tolkien mentions, "bread and wine," refer to mundane objects of human consumption which are transubstantiated in the Eucharist to the body and blood of Christ,

providing believers with redemption and spiritual fulfillment—Tolkien's use of the word "divined" is no accident. The fact that the recombination of the aspects of Primary Reality in a Secondary World makes them "all the more luminous by their setting" (86) demonstrates that for Tolkien words and phenomena derive their meaning from their relationship with the whole world of words and phenomena in which they are situated—in other words, from their position in a structure.

In addition to the subtext of the Eucharist I have just noted, Tolkien's argument earlier on in the essay about the shared basis of history and myth (see above) also preempts the religious argument expressed in his conclusion, which scholars have often found to come as a surprise. For example, Flieger and Anderson write, "by a kind of Faërian free association, Consolation leads Tolkien to Joy and Joy leads him to *evangelium* and the essay's 'Epilogue'" (14), while Thomas Honegger calls the epilogue "an afterthought" (124) because Tolkien added it subsequent to delivering the lecture. When we consider these two sections in relation to one another, however, there is a natural connection between Tolkien's saying history and myth are "both ultimately of the same stuff" (38) and declaring "Legend and History have met and fused" (105). But the latter statement acquires a more radical significance when we realize that, unlike in the first instance, Tolkien uses the word "history" to refer not merely to narratives or representations of past events (i.e. history as written), but also to the underlying actuality of the past (i.e. history "as it really happened"). Tolkien is aware, however, that the narrative form that recorded history takes makes it impossible to distinguish fact from fiction—but rather than argue, as Hayden White does, that such meaning is necessarily imposed upon historical events, he claims that meaning can actually be inherent to these past events. We can see the fullest statement of this view in a paragraph appended to the essay's end in manuscript B:

> It is a great error to suppose that true (historical) stories and untrue stories ('fantasies') can be distinguished in any such a way. Real (primarily real) events may possess (must always possess if we can discern it) mystical significance and allegory. Unreal ends may possess as much plain logical likelihood and [some?] factual sequence of cause and effect as history. (296)

Perhaps Tolkien did not include this argument in the published version because he realized that it moves beyond a mere fusion of legend and history, and in fact nullifies the meaningfulness of employing a distinction between them, since it becomes epistemologically impossible to differentiate between the two. We can see that despite the fact that

Tolkien insists on a division between Primary and Secondary Worlds ("historical stories" and "'fantasies'"), there is simultaneously for him an impulse to dissolve this boundary. So Tolkien claims that the Christian story of the Gospels "has entered History and the primary world" (104), but in support of this statement he argues, "the Art of it has the supremely convincing tone of Primary Art, that is, of Creation" (104). In the preceding argument we clearly have slippage, for Tolkien asserts the ontological reality of a series of events based on his phenomenological experience of their documentation in narrative form. Not only is this logically fallacious (given that Tolkien throughout the essay is clearly a realist who thinks that reality exists independently of our experience of it), but it is precisely the distinction Tolkien himself argued it was impossible to make in the paragraph from manuscript B. Tolkien wants to be able to say meaningfully that "Legend and History have met and fused," but the arguments he makes in support of that statement would render it either epistemologically untenable or semantically vacuous.

Here I must admit that I was intentionally ambiguous when I wrote in my introduction that Tolkien relies on a structuralist framework "from the beginning to the end of the essay,"[14] for at the end of the essay, Tolkien describes the eucatastrophe as that which exceeds a story's structure. With regard to the eucatastrophe of the "serious tale of Faërie" (i.e. a tale originating from the folklore tradition), Tolkien writes, "in such stories when the sudden 'turn' comes we get a piercing glimpse of joy, and heart's desire, that for a moment passes outside the frame, rends indeed the very web of story, and lets a gleam come through" (101). As Tolkien indicates by following this sentence with a quotation from *The Black Bull of Norroway* which he does not analyze at all, the eucatastrophe is precisely the point where words fail us, where any attempt at explication by the critic is in vain. All Tolkien can hope to accomplish is to re-create with his quotation the same effect that he himself has felt. We can better appreciate Tolkien's awareness of the radical nature of his statement when we compare his more cautious formulation of this sentence in the draft in manuscript B: "When that sudden turn comes we get a piercing glimpse of joy or heart's desire: of heart's mending, of joy that can only come after pain—that *seems* for a moment *to pass* outside the frame, *to rend* indeed the very web of story and *let* a gleam come through" (244, my emphasis). Tolkien revised the sentence from wording which emphasized the, if not entirely illusory, at least purely phenomenological subjective experience of the eucatastrophe ("seems"+ infinitives), to a confident declaration that such an event actually takes place (present indicatives). Ultimately, the containment of the tale in a Secondary Reality clearly demarcated

from Primary Reality (the "frame"), and the tale's elaborately woven linguistic and narrative structure (the "web"), are utterly incapable of explaining the profound effect that it has upon the reader, not only emotionally, but epistemologically and ontologically. We can perhaps conceive of Tolkien's metaphysics here by imagining the web of story as a back-lit tapestry. The viewer can see forms and colours by means of the light placed behind the tapestry, and as long as s/he does so his or her vision is determined by the structure of the threads. In the true eucatastrophe, however, the tapestry is torn and its viewer sees not its images but a gleam of the light itself, which is ultimate truth and pure being, the principle which illuminates the tapestry but is not itself a part of it. It is important to note the violence of this epiphany, however. The eucatastrophe is a beautiful moment for the reader, but in order for it to take place the web of story must be rent, the reader torn out of the Secondary World.[15]

Tolkien therefore expresses in the end of his essay a supreme dissatisfaction with his structuralist model, because, being bound up in the transcendental, it cannot account for the transcendent. Nevertheless, though Tolkien disavows structuralism he does not entirely abandon it. The eucatastrophe bears a necessary relation to the structure of the tale, because "it depends on the whole story which is the setting of the turn" (101), and in authentic fairy-stories it is "far more powerful and poignant" (101) than it is in modern ones. So we might say that, paradoxically, although the eucatastrophe depends upon the tale, it constitutes the tale's undoing of its own structure. Like Faërie, the eucatastrophe "cannot be caught in a net of words; for it is one of its qualities to be indescribable, though not imperceptible" (12).

In the essay's epilogue Tolkien continues to flirt with the structuralist model. Given Tolkien's dispute with the comparative folklorists, it seems quite odd that he would claim, "the Gospels contain a fairy-story, or a story of a larger kind which embraces all the essence of fairy-stories" (104). Is he not making the very same interpretative move that he argued against? Is he not advancing a different version of Vladimir Propp's thesis, "*All fairy tales are of one type in regard to their structure*" (74, his emphasis)? Yes and no. Claiming that the Gospels contain a fairy-story, or a story that "embraces all the essence of fairy-stories," is to adopt a structuralist model inasmuch as it is to assert a shared similarity, a common core that unites apparently disparate and heterogeneous elements.[16] Tolkien's claim is less about the structure of the stories themselves than their mode of operation, however: what he earlier calls "the satisfaction of certain primordial human desires" (16).[17] Tolkien's discussion of the similarity between the Gospels and fairy-stories revolves around the eucatastrophe and the joy it produces.

The Gospel is the greatest fairy-story of all because "there is no tale ever told that men would rather find was true. . . . To reject it leads either to sadness or to wrath" (104). So we can see, then, that Tolkien's argument is as much a claim about the nature of humanity as it is about the nature of the stories. By relocating the site of a story's meaning from the relations of its internal structure to the effect it has upon human beings, Tolkien both moves away from structuralism and also extends it into the realm of phenomenology and psychoanalysis. Faërie remains perilous and mysterious because even if such realms are governed by structure, the structure is unknowable because we are blinded by our location deep within its center rather than afforded a clear view as objective external observers. The reason that we cannot describe such things as Faërie and eucatastrophe is that we would need to view the structure from the outside, but we are in fact always already bound up inside of it. Human experience, human subjectivity, is itself the core of the structure, and for that reason the most slippery and invisible component. We cannot tell whether the structure constitutes an independent order possessing its own ontology, or a make-shift construct of human phenomenology. Tolkien's ambivalent relationship with structuralism therefore lies at the heart of his conception of Faërie. Hence he could never decide whether Faërie was an external and independent principle, or an internal construction of language and imagination. Ultimately, Tolkien acknowledges the humbling fact that the nature of literature will always exceed the scope of the critic's explication: "if by grace what I say has in any respect any validity, it is, of course, only one facet of a truth incalculably rich" (103).

Notes

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1 All citations of "On Fairy-stories" refer to the final published version unless otherwise identified, and reference the essay by *paragraph number*. I specify in the main text whenever I cite the manuscripts as transcribed by Flieger and Anderson, which I refer to by page number.

2 Flieger details useful background information on the folklore controversy to which Tolkien is responding ("There Would Always Be a Fairy-tale" 26–35).

3 Randel Helms notes the connections between the *Beowulf* essay and "On Fairy-stories" in more detail (11–16).

4 Tolkien's notion of stories being added to the soup has some affinity with Eliot's characterization of the literary tradition in "Tradition and the Individual Talent":

> what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, and values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. (1217)

5 In manuscript A Tolkien wrote, "I am much more interested in our fairy-stories as they are, and what they have become for us by various strange alchemic processes (in worlds and time)" (179), where alchemy suggests the mysterious and not fully knowable nature of the development of folklore. In the main text, Tolkien suggests also that such stories "have been preserved . . . often if not always, precisely because of this literary effect" (41).

6 Seeman's article "Tolkien's Revision of the Romantic Tradition" is one of the few excellent extended treatments of "On Fairy-stories." His main argument "is that Tolkien's seemingly minor disputes with Coleridge in reality form the necessary basis for his claim that drama—and indeed all visual modes of art—are essentially hostile to fantasy" (73). For the influence of George MacDonald and German Romanticism, see Frank Bergmann (5–14).

7 In this statement Tolkien seems to anticipate Hayden White's argument that the perceived truth of past events is dependent upon the meaning contained in the structure of historical narrative (5-6).

8 Randel Helms argues that "like all Romantic artists, Tolkien is strongly convinced of the instrumental priority of imagination over perception, that, as Blake puts it, 'we see *through*, not with the eye'" (24). I disagree with the manner in which Helms characterizes Tolkien's view, however. Instead of seeing it as a question of the "priority" of imagination versus perception, I think it makes more sense to understand Tolkien's view of "perception" as itself including mental processes in constructing our experience of the world.

9 For the connection between *incantare* and "enchantment" I am indebted to Flieger and Anderson's note (112).

10 Ideally, of course. Here too Tolkien thinks that the structure is greater than the sum of its individual components. In the epilogue he writes that the most important part of the secondary world is its "peculiar quality" (103), acknowledging in a note that "all the details may not be 'true': it is seldom that the 'inspiration' is so strong and lasting that it leavens all the lump, and does not leave much that is mere uninspired 'invention'" (103n). Cf. P. B. Shelley, "the mind in creation is as a fading coal . . . when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline" (*Defence of Poetry* 531).

11 Here Tolkien differs quite significantly from Bruno Bettleheim, who endorses a developmental model of psychoanalysis and so explains the meanings of tales with reference to how the child psyche differs from the adult psyche (e.g., 5–11, 45–53).

12 Cf. the earlier version of the passage on desire in MS B: "I at any rate never *believed* (in the primary sense) in fairy-stories; for to me their essential quality was *desire*. It is difficult to be more explicit. To say that I wished them to be objectively true, and that this wish, combined with recognition that they were not true in my mortal world, produced the peculiar quality of longing which these possessed, and which they satisfied while whetting it unbearably would be too explicit" (293–94).

13 Milbank notes that "although Tolkien might have read Chesterton's 1906 study of Charles Dickens, from which this observation originally derives, it is much more likely that he knew it from Maisie Ward's introduction to *The Coloured Lands*" (xiii). The relevant sections of both sources are quoted in the commentary by Flieger and Anderson (114–15).

14 I have borrowed this rhetorical sleight-of-hand from Christoph Bode (290–93).

15 *Pace* Tanya Caroline Wood, who argues that the encounter with "underlying reality or truth" takes place inside the Secondary World of the story: "Tolkien's fantasy worlds, a reflection of God's truth, are a Christian version of Plato's underlying ideal world" (104). Nevertheless, Wood's main argument is sound: "Part of Tolkien's legacy is classical rhetoric and Renaissance philosophy. He is a Renaissance Man in the sense that he shares some of the

period's informing ideals in terms of the recreative imagination, classical rediscovery, and Christian humanism" (107).

16 Flieger notes, "Tolkien is not simply imposing his view of Christianity on fairy-stories; others have come to much the same conclusion . . . . Erich Auerbach points out in *Mimesis* . . . that the story of Christ is such an integral part of the mind and imagination of Western culture that it has informed almost all Western narrative since its time" (*Splintered Light* 29). Cf. also Bettleheim: "Except that God is central, many Bible stories can be recognized as very similar to fairy tales" (53).

17 Cf. Bettleheim, "The fairy tale . . . is very much the result of common conscious and unconscious content having been shaped by the conscious mind, not of one particular person, but the consensus of many in regard to what they view as universal human problems, and what they accept as desirable solutions" (36).

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Tolkien and Bakhtin on Authorship, Literary Freedom, and Alterity

Benjamin Saxton

> What a tale we have been in, Mr. Frodo, haven't we?" [Sam] said. "I wish I could hear it told! Do you think they'll say: *Now comes the story of Nine-fingered Frodo and the Ring of Doom*? And then everyone will hush, like we did, when in Rivendell they told us the tale of Beren One-hand and the Great Jewel. I wish I could hear it! And I wonder how it will go on after our part." (*RK*, VI, iv, 228–29)

Sam's narrative, which he imagines amidst danger and despair, indicates the vital place of stories and creative collaboration in Middle-earth. For Tolkien, the act of narration becomes a metaphor for living in the world. Listening to other voices and expressing one's own are major considerations of his fiction. But despite many insightful treatments of fate and freedom in his mythology,[1] critics have rarely focused on Tolkien's presentation of *literary* freedom or, more broadly, how his theory of sub-creation can be situated among contemporary views of authorship.[2] This essay is principally concerned with the role of creative relationships in Middle-earth: the way in which authors (including Tolkien himself) enable or restrict the agency of their characters or their fellow narrators. Artistic creativity, when shared, becomes a liberating and life-enriching partnership; when denied, it becomes a harsh, suffocating kind of discourse.

I read Tolkien alongside the Russian thinker Mikhail Bakhtin, whose provocative discussion of author-hero relations can illuminate Tolkien's own exploration of authorship and alterity. I begin by discussing how they both conceive of the author as a figure who shares narrative responsibilities with his characters. Next, I briefly discuss the ways in which this collaborative approach to authorship departs from contemporary critical views that call for the removal (or "death") of the author. Finally, I consider how Bakhtin's understanding of alterity appears in the character-character (or self-other) relationships in *The Lord of the Rings*. A second purpose of this essay, then, is to show that the similarities between Tolkien and Bakhtin are more extensive than has been previously recognized.[3] While their views are certainly not identical—indeed, I will suggest that there are important differences between them—both writers emphasize what might be called an ethics of creativity: choosing to talk with others or to shut them out, deciding to craft shared stories or domineering monologues.

Variations of Authorial Freedom and Control

Bakhtin's account of author-hero relations is intimately tied to his broader theory of dialogics. For Bakhtin, an individual is never a single, isolated person in full possession of his or her speech, but rather a person among persons whose voice gains meaning only with others: "Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree" (*Problems* 293). Each spoken utterance, as a result, "is accompanied by a sideways glance at another person" (*Problems* 32). A single word—"precious" comes to mind—gains its meaning in the space *between* speakers as diverse as Gollum, Bilbo, Frodo, Pippin, Isildur, Gandalf, the narrator, and Tolkien himself.

Even if life is irreducibly dialogic, this does not prevent us from defining each other and the world monologically—that is, as the condition in which "*another person* remains wholly and merely an *object* of consciousness, and not another consciousness" (*Problems* 293). Monologic discourse shuts out the voice of the other, turning him or her into a lifeless object rather than a living subject. With very few exceptions, Bakhtin argues, this condition has characterized the history of the Western novel. Just as we are tempted to close out voices prematurely in order to exert a measure of control over the world, so too have authors imposed artificial unities in their work. The monologic author, standing outside the novel as an omnipotent judge, knows everything about his characters and can evaluate, contrast, and juxtapose them as he pleases. "An internal connection, *a connection between consciousnesses*," as a result, is completely absent (*Problems* 69). "The characters," Bakhtin writes, "are self-enclosed and deaf; they do not hear and do not answer one another. There are not and cannot be any dialogic relationships among them. They neither argue nor agree" (*Problems* 70).

In resistance to monologism and its corollaries—manipulation, false unities, even totalitarianism[4]—Bakhtin searched for an alternative relationship between authors and characters, which he found in the fiction of Dostoevsky. This special relationship, which he called "polyphony," can be considered an intense, very rare kind of dialogism. In the polyphonic novel, according to Bakhtin, the strict hierarchy between author and hero has been somehow dismantled. "*A plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world*," engage on equal terms with the author, who is one voice among many (*Problems* 6). Characters can disagree with the author, surprise him, and develop in ways that the author himself could never predict. Bakhtin compares the polyphonic author to Goethe's Prometheus, who "creates not voiceless slaves (as does Zeus) but *free* people, capable of standing

alongside their creator, capable of not agreeing with him and even of rebelling against him" (*Problems* 6).

Two of the points mentioned above have special relevance to Tolkien's conception of author-character relations. First, in a striking parallel to Bakhtin's contrast between monologue and dialogue, Tolkien distinguishes between "magic" and "enchantment."[5] The latter technique, used by the Elves, "does not seek delusion nor bewitchment and domination; it seeks shared enrichment, partners in making and delight, not slaves" (*TL* 48; *OFS* 64). This kind of free and shared creativity is entirely different from the "magic" of those who create as a means of enslaving others, which spoils the freedom implicit in the creative act and represents a monologic attempt to rival Primary creation (*TL* 48–49; *OFS* 64). When Sauron forges the One Ring, for instance, the object-ification of others becomes strikingly literal, as the Ringwraiths, Gollum, and Sauron himself are bound by its seductive power. Dialogic and monologic discourse, then, reinforce the tension in Tolkien's mythology between shared storytelling, an act that preserves freedom and creativity, and the impulse of Sauron (among others) to reduce people to self-enclosed objects, appropriately symbolized by the One Ring.

A still deeper connection exists between Tolkien's view and Bakhtin's: they both see a natural connection between the artist as "sub-creator" and God as Creator.[6] While Bakhtin seldom discussed theological questions—he was an exceedingly private man who also wrote under the shadow of Soviet censors[7]—a rare passage details how Dostoevsky, in his novelistic activity, operates as God-Creator. For Bakhtin, Dostoevsky appears as God "in His relation to man, a relation allowing man to reveal himself utterly (in his immanent development)" (*Problems* 285). If Dostoevsky's relation to his fictive world resembles the activity of God in his relation to man, as Bakhtin suggests, then the "divine" principle behind Dostoevsky's activity is freedom—open-ended dialogue, transition, conflict, and unfinished searching. His heroes and antiheroes are granted the unconditional ability to develop, even if (as is often the case) this freedom leads to their ruin. In this sense, the fictive world that Dostoevsky created is the world "as it is": a place of many competing truths, unresolved arguments, and perpetual struggles between good and evil. The artistic position of Dostoevsky as God-Creator is therefore one in which Dostoevsky does not overwhelm his characters with supreme power and knowledge, but respects their intrinsic freedom and independence.

Whether Dostoevsky actually achieved this special type of dialogic relationship—or whether polyphony can, in fact, exist at all—is debatable.[8] Without entering into these debates, the question that I want to consider here is whether Tolkien's fiction meets the conditions of

the polyphonic novel. As we have seen, Bakhtin's conception of the God-Creator as a purveyor of freedom, enabling man to "reveal himself utterly," bears a striking resemblance to Tolkien's understanding of proper sub-creation, which features partners in making rather than slaves. Tolkien expressed similar views in his much-quoted distinction between applicability ("the freedom of the reader") and allegory ("the purposed domination of the author") (*FR*, Foreword, 7). Here, Tolkien resists the constraints of allegory in which the characters and plot are merely instruments that are "dominat[ed]" by the author's engineered moral or idea. In this way, the freedom of shared creation between Primary creators and sub-creators is extended to readers as well.

Tolkien's fiction is also "unfinished" in a way similar to (though not identical with) Dostoevsky's fiction. Verlyn Flieger has noted that Ainulindalë, the creation story in *The Silmarillion*, "is a portrait in music of the real world as it really appears—unfinished, conflicted, containing harmony and discord, love and hate, war and peace" ("The Music and the Task" 162). In my opinion, the Music of the Ainur stands as a metaphor for Tolkien's mythology as a whole: a magnificent, incomplete corpus that was conceived as part of an ongoing, self-revising process. In addition, Martin Simonson has recently discussed Tolkien's ample use of the ever-changing, multigeneric form of the novel. As a hybrid creation, his mythology is deeply entrenched in literary, philosophical, and political concerns that are at once medieval and modern, epic and playful. Christopher Tolkien's editing of *The History of Middle-earth* and Peter Jackson's ongoing film adaptations suggest that Tolkien's mythology is—and will remain—*literally* unfinished.

These general similarities should not obscure a crucial difference between Bakhtin's position and Tolkien's: while "freedom" for Tolkien remains an essential part of artistic and sub-creative relationships, it is necessarily contained within, and ultimately subordinate to, the governing "word" of the author.[9] We can discern this principle at work, I think, when Ilúvatar and the Valar compose the Great Music. Throughout the creative process, the Valar are not a group of automatons who mindlessly carry out Ilúvatar's will but rather an artistic group of sub-creators whose imagination leads to a splendid harmony of chords. Rather than ruling in a fashion that is justified by his vast power, Ilúvatar takes pleasure *through* their actions, suggesting that the proper relationship between Creators and sub-creators (or authors and characters) is a collaborative one.

At the same time, the autonomy and creative freedom that the Valar enjoy depend upon an understanding that they work within the boundaries that Ilúvatar establishes. When Melkor wishes to shape

the music "of his own imagining" (S 17), his rebellion is reprehensible not because he employs creativity, but because he desires a self-apotheosis that will increase his personal power and glory. Melkor's theme, however, cannot wholly separate itself from Ilúvatar's primary theme: "it seemed that its most triumphant notes were taken by the other and woven into its own solemn pattern" (*S* 17). The fact that the most "triumphant notes" from Melkor's music are put into the service of Ilúvatar's theme underscores the relationship between Creator and sub-creator: while the latter enjoys agency and creativity, this freedom is contained within, and is ultimately subordinate to, the pattern of the former. As Ilúvatar explains, "Thou, Melkor, shalt see that no theme may be played that hath not its uttermost source in me, nor can any alter the music in my despite. For he that attempteth this shall prove but mine instrument in the devising of things more wonderful, which he himself hath not imagined" (*S* 17).

Aulë, similarly, creates the Dwarves because "he was unwilling to await the fulfillment of the designs of Ilúvatar" (*S* 43), which results in characters devoid of any agency. As Tolkien explains, "The One rebuked Aulë, saying that he had tried to usurp the Creator's power; but he could not give independent life to his makings. He had only one life, his own derived from the One, and could at most only distribute it" (*Letters* 287). Here, Tolkien points out a condition of monologic control in which the author, attempting to create for himself, makes only puppets, a counterfeit creation that is a mockery of its true source, Ilúvatar. Unlike Melkor, however, Aulë's disobedience is tempered by a genuine longing to bring creatures into the world who can appreciate Ilúvatar's handiwork. After Aulë's humble appeal, Iluvatar extends life to the Dwarves and ensures that they live apart from Aulë's will. The creative artists in *The Silmarillion*—including not only Melkor and Aulë but also Feanor, Sauron, and many others—remain apart from, and yet inextricably bound to, the laws and the dictates of their Creator. Jason Fisher puts the matter very well when he writes that "Melkor is free to move his pieces in the great game that is the struggle for dominion over Middle-earth, but Ilúvatar made—and can change, if he wishes—the rules of the game" (166).

The tension between authority and freedom can also be expressed in terms of how Tolkien's own "word" sounds in relation to the "word" of others in his mythology. Many critics, most notably Tom Shippey, have commented on the splendid assortment of voices in Tolkien's mythology: the way in which Middle-earth reverberates with different dialects, narrative styles, and oral traditions. Sometimes these voices are comical and aggressive, filled with the foolishness of bar-room banter; other times they are solemn and speculative, probing the

mysteries of long-ago events. Whether these storytellers are Elves or hobbits, wizards or warriors, they speak in a variety of ways and craft their narratives as they see it. All the while, Tolkien's own voice is both "there" and "not there." "The author," Tolkien once put it, "is not in the tale in one sense, yet it all proceeds from him (and what was in him), so that he is present all the time" (quoted in Flieger, "The Music and The Task" 179).

Middle-earth is, indeed, a remarkably dialogic space. But the presence of these diverse voices and dialects does not mean that they have equal weight. In most novels, in fact, they seldom have equal weight. Polyphony describes the very rare condition in which the relation between voices is democratic, such that no voice, including the author's, has priority over any other. From this perspective, the ethical and religious beliefs espoused in (for instance) Tolkien's letters can have no voice in his fiction—or, to put it differently, they can have a voice, but that voice sounds in the chorus of his characters' voices and does not (and structurally cannot) have superiority over them. I would argue that, on the contrary, Tolkien's word retains a privileged place throughout his mythology and, furthermore, that he places rhetorical approval behind those characters with whom he agrees. Gandalf's voice, consequently, is more convincing than Saruman's; Frodo's voice is more convincing than Gollum's. As a reflection of Tolkien's medieval and Catholic worldview, Middle-Earth contains a "theological guarantee," in Gergely Nagy's words ("Lost Subject" 57)—a guarantee that, however deferred or invisible, remains subtly linked with its author.

For evidence, we might take a look at the Council of Elrond, a scene that at first glance offers an instance of "polyphonic" diversity.[10] At the Council, many speakers tell the story of the Ring and discuss what to do with it. No one, including Elrond and Gandalf, has a clear answer. As the Council debates, one particular utterance—Frodo's "I will take the Ring"—receives both explicit and implicit approval. The narrator tells us that Frodo "wondered to hear his own words, as if some other will was using his small voice" (*FR,* II, ii, 284). Elrond, one of the wisest characters and the official head of the Council, echoes the narrator's description with a blessing, telling Frodo that the task was "appointed for you" (284). This "other will" who has "appointed" Frodo's task is presumably Ilúvatar, who oversees and implicitly authorizes the decision of the Council. Finally, Tolkien's silent hand positions Frodo's declaration at the end of the chapter, which stamps his words with a degree of finality and resolution. Frodo's word thus receives (explicit) approval from Elrond and (implicit) approval from the narrator, Iluvatar, and Tolkien himself, who considered Frodo "an instrument of Providence" (*Letters* 326). The hierarchy of authorities

that positions itself behind Frodo suggests that, within the Council scene and elsewhere, not all utterances are created equal.

Even if Tolkien's fiction is not polyphonic in the strong sense, as I have suggested, it is in complete accord with Bakhtin's broader assertion that proper author-character relations are dialogic and collaborative. Indeed, one way to discern Tolkien's admiration (or distaste) for his literary creations is to pay attention to those characters who participate in, and actively enjoy, their narrative responsibilities. Gandalf, for instance, knows "every language that had ever been spoken in the West of Middle-earth" (*FR*, II, iv, 321). He exhibits an enormous vocal range and flexibility during the Council of Elrond, reproducing the voices of Isildur, Saruman, the Gaffer, Radagast, Gwaihir, Denethor, and even the Black Speech of Mordor. Gandalf is the "Voice" that urges Frodo to take off the Ring ("*Take it off! Fool, take it off! Take off the Ring*!" [*FR* II, x, 417]), while Sauron is the rigid "Eye" that wordlessly urges Frodo to submit to his temptation. To the extent that Sauron talks at all (through the palantír, the inscriptions on the Ring, or the Mouth of Sauron), his voice is a deferred whisper that is conveyed by and through others. Saruman, whose melodious voice is deceptive rather than instructive, exhibits a similar kind of dubious integrity. As Brian Rosebury has suggested, the capacity to narrate is a moral privilege, "a hallmark of the benign" (50).

The importance of narrative collaboration also appears on the metafictional level between Tolkien, as the author of his mythology, and internal narrators who translate, compile, and tell the stories of Middle-Earth. Nagy has pointed out that "the different author positions in the fictional texts (like Bilbo's role as original author, translator, compilator or adaptator or Frodo as author) inscribe different sorts of relationships toward texts and their contents into the textual world" ("Medievalist('s) Fiction" 33). Just as Ilúvatar grants the Valar and the inhabitants of Middle-earth the capacity for agency, so too does Tolkien delegate his own narrative responsibilities, passing the writer's pen to fictional characters and even inventing a persona as the faithful compiler of already-written accounts.[11] When Tolkien refers to "the Writer of the Story (by which I do not mean myself)" (*Letters* 253), he reveals a key aspect of his own creative approach.

It is worth noting that Tolkien's and Bakhtin's related views on authorship, which call for a collaboration between authors, characters, and readers, depart radically from the anti-authorialism of contemporary critical theory. Many of these theories, especially Roland Barthes's "The Death of the Author," assume that a single, indivisible meaning resides with authorial presence, necessitating the removal—or "death"—of the pesky author.[12] "The text," he writes, "is not a line

of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash" (146). Like Tolkien and Bakhtin, Barthes relies upon a theological analogy to make his point. This analogy, however, is colored by a few assumptions: first, that domination follows naturally from God's omnipotence and omnipresence; and second, that the author retains this omnipotence when he constructs a text. It is this (understandable) displeasure that leads Barthes to rebel against an Author-God whose unitary message precludes any interpretive freedom. In a remark that draws a stark line between readership and authorship, Barthes asserts that "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author" (149).

In my opinion, both Tolkien's fiction and his extra-literary writing show that there is no need to accept these assumptions as absolute. While Barthes's Author-God is monologic *by definition*—he always issues "a single 'theological' meaning"—Tolkien breaks down the causal relationship between omnipotence and domination and, in its place, presents God as an omnipotent force that leaves space for the creativity and agency of his subjects. The creative artists in Tolkien's fantasy—Niggle, Melkor, Aulë, and Fëanor, among others—retain attributes of the divine, but they are not omnipotent. Iluvatar, by contrast, who *does* have omnipotence and all the attributes normally associated with the Christian God, does not rule through domination but rather through a delegation of power. Throughout his mythology, and especially in *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien conceives of God as a force that is at once omnipotent and detached, pervasive yet invisible, consistently requiring his subjects to be active agents without foreclosing the possibility of a mysterious type of Providence that is involved, to provide one example among many, with Gollum's role in the destruction of the One Ring. God in Middle-earth exists, in Brian Rosebury's words, "not as original Power but as original Artist: an essential feature of an artist, in Tolkien's conception, being the renunciation of power over one's creatures, the delegation of power to others" (186).

Life as a Co-Endeavor: Alterity in Middle-earth

My discussion thus far has concerned Tolkien's views on authorship, specifically his tendency to see characters as subjects capable of agency rather than as lifeless objects controlled by the author. I want to turn now to the ways in which the ethical implications of Bakhtin's writing can be fruitfully applied to the character-character (or self-other) relations in Tolkien's fiction.[13] I use *alterity* to imply both a sense of difference (or "otherness") and also an ability to distinguish between one's own perspective and the perspective of another. Alterity, for Bakhtin,

is implicit in every creative act, which involves a first stage of identification with the other and a reverse movement whereby the novelist returns to his own position: "one must become another in relation to himself, must look at himself through the eyes of another" (*Answerability* 15). This moment of empathy is at the heart of Bakhtin's understanding of dialogue and aesthetic activity, which depends upon one person's accurately imagining what is really happening to and in the other. Narrative fiction is instrumental in this process because of the special way in which it creates and structures intersubjective relationships between authors, characters, and readers. Both within the world of the novel and outside it—in life itself—Bakhtin asserts that one must *find* one's own voice and *hear* the voice of the other. We are accountable, then, for any response given to others in the course of (co-)authoring our lives, a condition that he calls "answerability" (*Answerability* 2).

It is precisely in the movements of seeking, listening, and answering that one reaches the essence of Tolkien's position, which, as we have seen, finds rich expression in the Music of the Ainur. Like Bakhtin's emphasis on "voice," the orchestra of interweaving harmonies is a dynamic process that stresses response, change, and improvisation. But how does this relate to Tolkien's treatment of alterity? Jane Chance has recently argued that, despite readings of Tolkien as conservative or even racist, he especially disliked "the segregation of the Other, and isolation of those who are different, whether by race, nationality, culture, class, age, or gender" ("Other" 172). Tolkien's "solution" to the problem of alterity, as she argues elsewhere, is to create in Frodo "a composite hero who mingles differences ontologically" ("Subversive" 10). As an enigmatic hobbit, Frodo is both aristocrat (a Fallohide) and "queer folk" (a Brandybuck), insider and outsider, hero and failure, master (of Gollum) and slave (to the Ring) (*FR*, I, i, 31). One of Tolkien's crucial insights, as he suggests through Frodo, is that the other is not a hostile, alien force but rather a formative part of one's own personality—what Bakhtin calls the "not-I-in-me" (*Speech Genres* 146). By locating alterity within the sphere of the self, Tolkien sees life as a co-endeavor, as a kind of shared story that is carried out in a spirit of mutual recognition and trust.

Frodo and Sam exemplify this kind of trust at work. Tolkien exaggerates their class difference at the beginning of *The Lord of the Rings*, emphasizing Frodo's (and Bilbo's) gentry status and Sam's lower-class vocation as a gardener. These associations are challenged and inverted, however, as they trudge toward Mordor. The "servant," Sam, briefly assumes the mantle of Ringbearer, saves Frodo, and carries his exhausted "master" up Mount Doom. Tolkien thus implies that Frodo's and Sam's class differences need not rule mutual respect and

dependency. Sam also loves tale-telling, which links him with Frodo and the broader community of storytellers. As the pair stands near Orodruin in their final moments (or so they think), Sam frames their adventure in terms of the story that appears in the epigraph to this essay. In this climactic scene (and throughout their quest), storytelling takes on a vital role for the two hobbits, allowing them to stave off suffering and despair and to situate their journey in the context of a broader, collective narrative (Glofcheskie). The pair engages in a collaborative aesthetic activity that mirrors and builds upon their friendship.

While Frodo's relationship with Sam is in many ways an ideal one—despite differences in class and temperament, they remain the closest of friends—Tolkien does not suggest that an engagement with the other is easy. Through Frodo's relation to Gollum, he also creates an open and ongoing obligation to respond to those who, at first glance, might be brushed aside in the interest of reason or convenience. Frodo's initial wish for Gollum's death ("what a pity that Bilbo did not stab the vile creature, when he had a chance!") eventually gives way to his view that Gollum, while pathetic and reprehensible, is deserving of pity (*TT*, IV, i, 221; see also FR, I, ii, 68). Frodo identifies with the downtrodden hobbit when, in a peculiar scene, they share a strange meeting of the minds:

> For a moment it appeared to Sam that his master had grown and Gollum had shrunk: a tall stern shadow, a mighty lord who hid his brightness in grey cloud, and at his feet a little whining dog. Yet the two were in some way akin and not alien: they could reach one another's minds. Gollum raised himself and began pawing at Frodo, fawning at his knees. (*TT*, IV, ii 225)

As Frodo looms over his doglike servant, he perceives something related and akin to Gollum. Unlike Sam, who sees him as a slithery, dangerous nuisance, Frodo feels the weight of the Ring and can see, as Sam cannot, why Gollum is more an object of pity than of loathing or hatred. Frodo's heroism comes from his ability to look at Gollum and see "himself": a tormented slave to the Ring who presages what Frodo might become. When Frodo imaginatively steps into Gollum's shoes (or his hairy hobbit's feet, as it were), he extends a degree of empathy that would not exist if he saw Gollum from the outside. In this way, the other is recast from an outsider to a crucial part of Frodo's self that is enriched and, ultimately, saved.

Where Frodo succeeds, Gollum fails. Just as Frodo demonstrates the virtues of empathy and love, so does Gollum stands as a warning against the dangers of solipsism. We often see Gollum convulsing,

frantically looking around, or shaking his head "as if engaged in some interior debate" (*TT*, IV, viii, 324). These frequent interior conversations demonstrate that, as Bakhtin conceives it and Tolkien practices it, dialogue does not only occur between voices, but also *within* them. We can therefore no more escape from dialogue, even in discussions with ourselves, than a character like Gollum can forget the voice of Smeagol. Gollum's lonely internal discussions do not give real others the chance to intervene, talk back, or offer help; they do not alleviate one's situation but, as Bakhtin points out, are a pale imitation of real dialogue: "A single person, remaining alone with himself, cannot make ends meet even in the deepest and most intimate spheres of his own spiritual life, he cannot manage without *another* consciousness. One person can never find complete fullness in himself alone" (*Problems* 177).

To be sure, Gollum talks to some*thing*—the Ring. As Nagy writes, stressing the role of Gollum's favorite word, "'precious' is the *addressee* of Gollum's language: it is both himself and something else which at least superficially seems to be the Ring" (60). Gollum's doom is that he regards his "*addressee*" as a living person rather than a physical object—to use Tolkien's subtle distinction, Gollum talks to his "Precious," not his "precious." As a "we" instead of an "I," Gollum's identity becomes inextricably linked with the Ring. So too does the Ring destroy its creator, Sauron, who becomes bound by his own creation. Sauron's will is bent on domination and becomes objectified as he seeks to objectify others.[14] The physical character of the Ring, especially its rigidity and circular shape, symbolizes this self-enclosing process.

If identity is found in meaningful relationships, then Sauron diminishes his identity by choosing the path of domination and self-enclosure. The characters with the most integrity, on the other hand—Gandalf, Aragorn, Galadrial, and Elrond come to mind—recognize that the Ring's power, like Sauron's, is to subdue and absorb others' wills into the service of one's own. As Matthew Dickerson puts it, "if the greatest gift to Man is that of freedom, and with it the gift of creativity, then the greatest evil—the evil of Melkor, his servant Sauron, and the Sauron's One Ring—is the taking away of that gift of freedom" (114). The symbolic character of the Ring reinforces the paradox that, while Tolkien's characters stand apart as individuals, they are inseparable from a collective of speakers and listeners. A failure to acknowledge the importance of this larger verbal community, as Gollum and Sauron eventually learn, is the hell of isolation, "the absolute lack of being heard" (Bakhtin, *Speech Genres* 126).

Could Gollum have been saved? One of the most striking remarks in Tolkien's letters is his observation that Gollum's failure is "the most

tragic moment of the Tale" (330). "If [Sam] had understood better what was going on between Frodo and Gollum," he wrote, "things might have turned out differently in the end" (330). Tolkien's comment implies that the fate of Gollum was not predetermined or scripted in advance, a sentiment that finds physical confirmation in Gollum's "other," Frodo. In an approach that Gary Saul Morson has called "sideshadowing," Tolkien often shows the range of possible choices available to his characters, stressing the reality of each choice that they make.[15] The arrangement of numerous foils or oppositional figures—between Hobbits (Frodo and Gollum), wizards (Gandalf and Saruman), kings (Theoden and Denethor), and brothers (Faramir and Boromir)—underscores how these choices, very much like the act of sub-creation, are bound up with freedom and responsibility. They also demonstrate that, for Tolkien's characters, "the other" is always, to some extent, "me." Gandalf alone seems to be aware of this. "Yes, I am white now," he says after returning to Middle-Earth as Gandalf the White. "Indeed I *am* Saruman, one might almost say, Saruman as he should have been" (*TT*, III, v, 98). For the two wizards—as for many others—the space between wisdom and folly, salvation and destruction, is razor-thin.

The question of whether Gollum, Gandalf, or others could have chosen differently raises some vexing questions. As a product of the author's imagination, characters are limited by the very fact that they are a literary creation and not a real person. How, then, can a literary creation be "free" in any sense? Furthermore, we are told that only Men are given the "great gift" of free will while everyone else, including the Elves, are governed by fate (*Lost Tales I* 61). How does one reconcile this apparent determinism with creative freedom? Without trying to answer these questions, I want to reiterate a point that has been mentioned above: the rich paradox at the core of Tolkien's fiction—between fate and free will, authority and freedom, coercion and collaboration—resemble the workings of the world "as it is." The complexity and moral urgency of Tolkien's mythology reflects the world that he saw and knew: a world riven by two World Wars and governed by the incomprehensible mystery of freedom and fate (Flieger, "The Music and the Task" 176). Rather than offering a solution, Tolkien placed the mystery at the center of his fiction.

"Art and life are not one," Bakhtin wrote, "but they must become united in myself, in the unity of my answerability" (*Answerability* 2). As I have suggested in this essay, Tolkien also sees art and life as intimately, if mysteriously, related. For Tolkien, as for Bakhtin, aesthetics is inseparable from individual responsibility. Tolkien's conception of authorship, as a result, does not appear as an abstract Credo but as a living

"sub-creator," an intersubjective "I" that is one self among many. It is a nuanced portrait that contradicts the tendency, in mainstream literary studies, to see Tolkien as (merely) a fantasist whose opinions are unsophisticated, outmoded, or irrelevant (Drout). On the contrary, we should see Tolkien as a fantasist *and* as a gifted theorist who expressed unique and valuable views on authorship.

Notes

1 Verlyn Flieger, Brian Rosebury, Matthew Dickerson, Thomas Fornet-Ponse, and Jason Fisher offer excellent discussions of the philosophical, theological, and political dimensions of fate and free will in Tolkien's fiction.

2 For a range of approaches to the topic, see Judith Klinger's edited volume *Sub-creating Middle-earth—Constructions of Authorship and the Works of J.R.R. Tolkien.*

3 Bakhtin has rarely been employed in Tolkien studies. A few critics have briefly identified Bakhtinian concepts at work in Tolkien's mythology: see Tanya Bird's masters thesis *Freedom and Shared Storytelling* (especially 63–65) and her subsequent article "Life as a Shared Story" (Glofcheskie). Martin Simonson's *Tolkien and the Western Narrative Tradition* uses Bakhtin to discuss the "intertraditional dialogues" in Tolkien's fiction.

4 Bakhtin's insistence on the transformative potential of dialogue is surely tied to living in a society in which millions of human voices were permanently silenced in the name of totalitarianism. Barely escaping execution during the Stalinist purges in 1929, Bakhtin was exiled to a remote area of Kazakhstan for six years, where he subsisted as a bookkeeper (Clark and Holquist 144).

5 For an insightful discussion of Tolkien's distinction between magic and enchantment, see Curry.

6 Tolkien's views on this matter are well-known: "Fantasy remains a human right: we make in our measure and in our derivative mode, because we are made: and not only made but made in the image and likeness of a Maker" (*TL* 75; *OFS* 66).

7 Considered by friends to be a private man in all matters, including religion, Bakhtin rarely broached the topic in public. While his status as a religious thinker is a contentious question that is also plagued by a regrettable lack of information about his life,

it is generally accepted that Bakhtin was a profoundly religious man (Clark and Holquist 120). For a discussion of Bakhtin's relation to Christianity (especially Eastern Orthodoxy) see Clark and Holquist, chapter five.

8 The precise nature of polyphony and its application to Dostoevsky's fiction are extremely controversial topics. Not everyone agrees that Dostoevsky grants his characters freedom; some even consider him to be the most "monologic" of writers. A good overview of polyphony appears in Caryl Emerson's *The First Hundred Years* (127–61) and Joseph Frank's "The Voices of Mikhail Bakhtin."

9 For an extended discussion of divine freedom in *The Silmarillion*, see Jenson.

10 When Martin Simonson writes that Tolkien's fiction—especially the Rivendell section—"is marked by a very insistent polyphony, which Bakhtin considers one of the main traits of the novel genre" (141), he seems to be confusing dialogue with polyphony. As I have tried to show, the presence of diverse voices or speech zones (dialogue) does not necessarily mean that these voices are weighted equally (polyphony). Moreover, Bakhtin clearly states that polyphony is the supreme *exception* to the novelistic tradition, which has traditionally been monologic: "Dostoevsky is the creator of the polyphonic novel. He created a fundamentally new novelistic genre" (*Problems* 7).

11 Douglas A. Anderson has noted that the runes on the jacket of the first editions of The Hobbit, when translated into English, read: THE HOBBIT OR THERE AND BACK AGAIN BEING THE RECORD OF A YEARS JOURNEY MADE BY BILBO BAGGINS OF HOBBITON COMPILED FROM HIS MEMOIRS BY J.R.R. TOLKIEN and PUBLISHED BY GEORGE ALLEN UNWIN LTD (Anderson 378).

12 This strident anti-authorialism is by no means exclusive to Barthes but also appears, to varying degrees, in the work of Foucault, Derrida, de Man, and others. For a treatment of contemporary anti-authorialism, see Burke.

13 Bakhtin's theory of dialogics has recently been reframed as a convincing ethical discourse. Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, for example, suggest that Bakhtin's early writings, especially his *Art and Answerability*, "seem likely to alter our sense of Bakhtin, primarily, by calling attention to the centrality of ethics in his thought" (332).

14 A good discussion of Sauron and monologic discourse appears in Bird's *Freedom and Shared Storytelling* (48-64). She writes that "the inauthentic quality of Sauron's discourse is mirrored in the nature of his power-based approach to other beings, since Sauron's will to power destroys both identity and the possibility of interpersonal relationships" (62). For a broader treatment of the function of narration in Tolkien's fiction, see Garbowski.

15 Rather than implying, as foreshadowing does, that a present event contains future outcomes, sideshadowing offers "a middle realm of real possibilities that could have happened even if they did not. Things could have been different from the way they were, there were real alternatives to the present we know, and the future admits of various paths. By focusing on the middle realm of possibilities, by exploring its relation to actual events, and by attending to the fact that things could have been different, sideshadowing deepens our sense of the openness of time" (Morson 6). Bird offers an insightful discussion of sideshadowing as it appears in Tolkien's fiction (132–45).

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Tom Bombadil's Last Song: Tolkien's "Once Upon A Time"

Kris Swank

"Once Upon A Time" (1965) is one of J.R.R. Tolkien's last original poems to be published during his lifetime. "For W.H.A." was published in 1967. "Bilbo's Last Song", revised around 1968 from an earlier poem, was published posthumously in 1974.[1] It is surprising, then, that such a late work has received so little critical attention. "Once Upon A Time" (hereafter referred to as "Once") poses intriguing mysteries, such as the date of its creation and the interpretation of its content. It is hoped that analyzing these aspects of the poem may yield some insight into Tolkien's later work and life.

"Once Upon a Time" is Tolkien's third poem (independent of *The Lord of the Rings*) to feature the character Tom Bombadil. Both "The Adventures of Tom Bombadil" and "Bombadil Goes Boating" appeared in *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil and Other Verses from the Red Book* (hereafter, *Bombadil*) in 1962. The first poem was revised from an earlier version published in *The Oxford Magazine* in 1934, while the second was written especially for *Bombadil*. "Once" was first published in October 1965 in the anthology *Winter's Tales for Children*, edited by Caroline Hillier. It was accompanied by another Tolkien poem, "The Dragon's Visit," which was revised from an earlier version published in *The Oxford Magazine* in 1937. Both poems were reprinted in the 1969 anthology *The Young Magicians*, edited by Lin Carter. Since both anthologies in which the poem appeared are out of print, "Once" is reproduced in its entirety as an appendix to this essay.

Dating the Poem

Without definitive evidence, scholars have only been able to speculate as to when "Once" was written. Christina Scull and Wayne G. Hammond state that it was "evidently written at least after [the 1934 poem "The Adventures of Tom Bombadil"], and probably after [*The Lord of the Rings*]" in 1955 (II: 689). It is possible that "Once" was created during Tolkien's early stages of poetic output in the 1920s-30s. During that period, he was experimenting with lyric verse forms and whimsical creatures, such as in the original versions of "The Man in the Moon Stayed Up Too Late"[2] and "The Mewlips."[3] Jay Ruud finds the mysterious creatures in "Once"—the lintips—a "fanciful invention… reminiscent of Tolkien's very early poetry" (325). Allan Turner, although he does not mention "Once," points out:

> Tolkien wrote most of his independent poems in the earlier part of his life, mainly from the beginning of his student days to the mid-1930s. The ones that were chosen to appear in [*Bombadil*] date mostly from his Leeds and early Oxford period. . . . His verse production seems to have petered out as he became more involved in writing the prose tales which form the major part of his work. (3)

While this observation could suggest an early date of composition, Turner mentions that two of *Bombadil*'s poems were written later. "Cat" was composed in 1956 and "Bombadil Goes Boating" was written for *Bombadil* early in 1962 (Turner 3). Tolkien's poetic output may have tapered off in later years, but it had not ceased. Although "Once" might have been originally written in the 1920s or 1930s, there is more convincing evidence that the poem was written later.

Around the beginning of October 1961, Tolkien's aunt, Jane Neave, asked if he "wouldn't get out a small book with Tom Bombadil at the heart of it" (Carpenter 244). Tolkien replied, "I think your idea about Tom Bombadil is a good one, not that I feel inclined to write any more about him. But I think that the original poem . . . might make a pretty booklet" (*Letters* 308). Rayner Unwin liked the project, too. Unwin asked Tolkien to send all the poems he could find to make up a book of reasonable size. In mid-November that year, Tolkien replied that he had "copies made of any poems that might conceivably see the light or (somewhat tidied up) be presented again. The harvest is not rich, for one thing, there is not much that really goes with Tom Bombadil" (*Letters* 309). Later that month, Tolkien wrote his aunt that he enjoyed "very much digging out these old half-forgotten things and rubbing them up" (*Letters* 309). As Scull and Hammond point out, "rubbing up" indicates that Tolkien emended or revised at least some of the poems (I: 580).

John Rateliff, author of *The History of The Hobbit*, argues that "Once" was probably written after *Bombadil* was assembled in 1962:

> I think "Once Upon A Time" is slightly later, because otherwise I don't know why it wouldn't have been included in the book [i.e. *Bombadil*]. For one thing, it's a Bombadil poem in the literal sense that it's about Tom and Goldberry. . . . For another, it's considerably better than some poems which did make the cut, both of which points make me think that if it'd existed by the time Tolkien was finished putting the book together he would have included it.

Ruud agrees that while it could have been written earlier, "it is certainly a good possibility that if Tolkien had written 'Once Upon a Time' before [1962], it would have been included in that volume rather than in Hillier's three years later," and he speculates that, "perhaps it was inspired by his work on the earlier collection" (324). Another reviewer[4] concurs that Tolkien would have put "Once" in the *Bombadil* collection if it existed at the time "unless, of course, he'd mislaid it, which in Tolkien's case is not impossible."

The correspondence between Tolkien and Unwin during 1961-62 documents the process of creating what was to become *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*. There are several references to "Bombadil Goes Boating," written especially for this collection, but there is no mention of a third Bombadil poem (Scull and Hammond I: 578-601, *passim* and II: 25-27). Therefore, unless "Once" was an older, forgotten poem, it does not appear to have existed at the time *Bombadil*'s contents were finalized in the spring of 1962. Yet in order for the poem to have been published in Hillier's anthology in October 1965, it was likely composed no later than summer that year. "Once" was, then, possibly written between spring 1962 and summer 1965.

In the years between the publications of *Bombadil* and "Once" in *Winter's Tales*, Tolkien was involved with numerous projects, including the writing of *Smith of Wootton Major,* his last short story. Correspondence from Tolkien's cousin on March 1, 1965 indicates that *Smith* was written no later than February of that year (Scull and Hammond, I: 629). In May 1965, Unwin returned a copy of *Smith* that Tolkien had lent him, wishing there were more stories like it. He wrote, "if the spirit moves you to write three or four others we might make a little collection of them" (Scull and Hammond I: 632). In 1965, Tolkien also met with Donald Swann about Swann's idea to create musical settings for a few of Tolkien's poems, a project that would become *The Road Goes Ever On: A Song Cycle* (1967). Tolkien sent a copy of "Once" to Swann in November 1965 (Scull and Hammond I: 680); however the poem was not included in Swann's recordings. It is possible that Tolkien wrote "Once" in response to Unwin's request for companion pieces for *Smith* or for Swann's consideration for his recordings. Either possibility suggests that the poem was created sometime in 1965.

This possible date range—spring 1962 to mid-1965, with Tolkien's work on *Smith* and *The Road Goes Ever On* suggesting the latter end of this range—would indeed make "Once" one of the last poems Tolkien wrote, and the last one set in Middle-earth except for "Bilbo's Last Song." The likelihood that "Once" is a late composition, rather than an early one, is itself a key to analyzing the poem's content, as will be seen later.

Previous Critical Analysis

There has not been much critical commentary on "Once." Carter calls the poem "charming" (255). Rateliff finds it has "utter charm. . . . Here Tolkien finally manages to write a 'Goblin Feet'/'Princess Mee' type of poem which is neither precious nor cloying." Ruud concludes, "In its content, it is little more than a simple celebration of wonder at natural beauty and a fanciful invention of tiny, precious creatures reminiscent of Tolkien's very early poetry" (325). On the other hand, Kinga Jenike feels the poem has "melancholy tones. . . . Tom Bombadil appears in a slightly different way. He does not seem to be as happy as earlier, and he does not wear his yellow boots. Although Goldberry is next to him, we cannot meet any other characters, not even Old Willow" (73).

In fact, the poem is both charming *and* melancholy. In June 1962, as they were working on the *Bombadil* poems, Tolkien wrote to illustrator Pauline Baynes that "though on the surface 'lighthearted' these things have a serious undercurrent, and are not meant at any point to be merely comic" (Scull and Hammond I: 593). The same could be said of "Once." The meter, imagery, language, and our prior knowledge of Tom all evoke, on one hand, the characteristic ebullient atmosphere that readers associate with Bombadil. However, each of these elements also subtly unsettles the poem.

Meter and Rhyme

Ruud describes "Once" as consisting of "three stanzas of 14 lines each, rhyming in couplets *aabbccddeeffgg*. In a loose way, the lines mimic Old English meter (though without the alliteration), since each has four stressed syllables with a pause mid-line, and the lines tend to have any number of unstressed syllables" (324-25). This rhyme and meter is similar to that employed in the previous Bombadil poems. Both "The Adventures of Tom Bombadil" and "Bombadil Goes Boating" feature end-rhyming couplets (*aabbcc*, etc.) and lines consisting of two phrases with two-stressed syllables per phrase plus an irregular number of unstressed syllables. For example, the opening lines from "The Adventures of Tom Bombadil" each contain two phrases, each with two stressed syllables, and a variable number of unstressed syllables (italics added by the author to show stresses)—

/ ∪ / ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ / ∪ / ∪
Old Tom *Bom*badil was a *mer*ry *fel*low;

∪ / ∪ / ∪ ∪ ∪ ∪ / ∪ / ∪
bright *blue* his *jack*et was and his *boots* were *yel*low.

It is a bouncy, sing-song meter. The reader can feel Tom skipping and dancing through the forest. The same cadence exists in "Bombadil Goes Boating," as exemplified by its opening lines—

U / U U / U U U / U U
The *old* year was *turn*ing brown; the *West* Wind was *cal*ling;

/ U U / U U / U U U / U
Tom caught a *beech*en leaf in the *For*est *fal*ling.

While "Once" has a similar two-phrase, two-stresses-per-phrase meter, its lines end on stressed, rather than unstressed, syllables—

/ U U U / U U / U /
Once upon a *day* on the *fields* of *May*

U U / U / U U U / U /
there was *snow* in *sum*mer where the *blos*som *lay*;

These final stresses cause the lines of "Once" to end with a *thunk* rather than a light skip, making the cadence of "Once" heavier than the previous Bombadil poems. Tom doesn't dance through the forest, but stomps.

Imagery

In "Once," Goldberry is relaxing by a green pool during the day, while Tom is walking barefoot through the grass at night. The setting is undoubtedly the Old Forest of Middle-earth since, in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Bombadil himself says "Tom's country ends here: he will not pass the borders" (*FR*, I, viii, 159) and Gandalf remarks that "now he is withdrawn into a little land, within bounds that he has set . . . and he will not step beyond them (*FR*, II, ii, 279).

In the final note to his seminal essay, *On Fairy-stories*, Tolkien wrote:

> As for beginnings of fairy stories: one can scarcely improve on the formula *Once upon a time*. It has immediate effect . . . it does not name any year or land or person . . . it produces at a stroke the sense of a great uncharted world of time. (161, Tolkien's emphasis)

Tolkien not only chose this traditional fairy-story beginning as the title of his poem, but he uses variations on the phrase six more times in its forty-two lines. The three stanzas successively begin "Once upon a day" (line 1), "Once upon a night" (line 15) and "Once upon a moon" (line 29). The effect is simultaneously a sense of timelessness "in elvish

land" (line 14) as well as the establishment of specific settings for each of the three stanzas: day and night.

Goldberry and Tom. Day and night. These are just two of the juxtapositions in the poem. "Once" is full of them. Marjorie Burns describes how "Tolkien has a habit of creating matched, parallel, or double individuals . . . parallels and repetitions are also prevalent in Tolkien's incidents, objects, and scenes" (127–28). These allow Tolkien to explore dualities, either in correspondence or opposition to one another. There are in this poem, among others, juxtapositions of light/dark, color/pallor, and fragrance/fetor.

In the first stanza, Goldberry is surrounded by light, color, and fragrance: "the buttercups tall sent up their light" (line 3), the sun is in the sky, and the water sparkles around her hand. There is a profusion of bright whites: snow, lady-smock, and dandelion clocks. There is also the gold of buttercups and sunshine (as well as Goldberry herself), green grass and green water, and the pink wild roses. The earth-stars refer to either a type of white fungus that opens in rain, or to daisies that open in the sun, perhaps using daisies again as they are used in *The Hobbit*.[5] But whether fungus or daisy, the earth-stars add to the brightness Tolkien evokes in this stanza. The abundant flowers, combined with the scent of fresh water from the pool, imbue the scene with pleasant aromas.

The second and third stanzas become progressively darker and danker. In the second, it is night: "shadows were dark, and the Sun was gone" (line 17), though the moon shines and stars twinkle. Goldberry is gone. The world has been leached of bright colors as the palette shifts to grey, silver, and white. The water is now dripping and wetting as Bombadil walks barefoot through the grass. By the third stanza, the fragrant flowers have given way to the "mousy smell" (line 33) of the lintips. At the poem's end, the only light remaining comes from faint "star-winks" (line 41).

Tolkien uses color symbolically, as Victor L. Parker describes. Green is associated with the vigor and vitality of green landscapes, elves of the greenwood, and the Elessar jewel that signifies Aragorn's ascent to the throne. White can signify either purity (e.g. The White Tree) or menace (e.g. the snows of Caradhras), but black and shadow usually signify the malign (Parker 106-7). For Tolkien, gold can symbolize either greed (e.g. a hoard of gold) or the beauty of nature (e.g. Lothlórien, the "Golden Wood"). For Goldberry, her name and yellow hair signal a close relationship with nature. The absence of bright colors, especially gold, in the last two stanzas (even, as Jenike notes, of Tom's yellow boots), is conspicuous and adds to the feeling that the natural landscape has lost its vitality.

Language

The most unsettling feature of the poem is the appearance of the mysterious lintips in stanza three. There is no other mention of these creatures in Tolkien's works. Scull and Hammond remark that "readers have failed to identify a source of the 'lintips', which may be no more than undefined invented creatures like those in *The Mewlips*" (II: 689). Shippey wrote that the word "sounds like 'mewlips', which I likewise took to be an invention. That doesn't mean there isn't some reason, it's just I don't know it."[6] Like the Mewlips, readers find only a few clues as to the lintips' appearance: Bombadil kneels down to speak to them, calls them "little lads" (line 32) and notes their "mousy smell" (line 33). These clues suggest a small stature.

Attempts have been made to uncover the nature of the lintips through etymology. In 2005, Stéphanie Loubechine translated *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil* poems into French. She included "Once" in her collection and there remarks on the difficulties of translating the word *lintips*. Assuming it is a compound word constructed from *lin* and *tips*, she says simply, "Elle n'a pas de sens en anglais modern" (36).[7] Looking instead to historical English, she finds *lin* to mean "flax," derived from the Irish *linn*, related to the Welsh *llyn* ("pool" or "pond") and the Breton *lenn* ("marsh"). Elsewhere, a contributor to the TheOneRing.com forum points out that the words *linti* and *lintip* appear in "The of Combat of Ferdiad and Cuchulain."[8] This section of *The Cattle-Raid of Cooley* (*Táin Bó Cúalnge*)," the central epic of the Ulster cycle, is found in two 12th century Irish manuscripts. "Linti" is translated as "pool" and "lintip" as "waves" (Taylor). Loubechine also notes that Tolkien's Sindarin word for "pool" is "lîn" (36). Based on these several clues, then, it is reasonable to speculate that Tolkien envisioned his lintips as water-creatures, perhaps found in pools. This accords with the other damp imagery throughout the poem (e.g. water, pool, dew, dripped, wetting), and accounts for the lintips' interest in "a-dewing" (line 30, i.e. "gathering dew," line 25). Add this idea to the notion that lintips are small and have a "mousy" scent, and we are left with an image of semi-aquatic rodents such as water voles.

Less sleuthing has been done regarding the second part of the word, "tip." However, one contributor on the TheOneRing.com forum notes that *tip* is Welsh for the ticking of a clock. This suggests intriguing associations with the poem's preoccupation with Time. But as interesting as these speculations may be, as Loubechine notes, if Tom doesn't know what the lintips are, the rest of us can only guess: "car si lui [Tom], l'Ancien, l'ignore, lui qui sait tous les noms et tous les

chants, lui qui est le Maître, comment pourrions-nous dès lors émettre un jugement péremptoire à leur sujet?" (36).[9]

Knowledge

Aside from being (possibly) wet, smelly rodents, the lintips are also unsettling due to Tom's apparent inability to communicate with them. Tom speaks, but they only laugh and steal away. He remarks they are "The only things that won't talk to me, say what they do or what they be. I wonder what they have got to hide? . . . I don't know" (lines 37–39, 41). "Knowing" is Tom's business. Tolkien wrote that Tom Bombadil is "the spirit that desires knowledge of other things, their history, and natures, *because they are 'other'* and wholly independent of the enquiring mind" (*Letters* 192; Tolkien's emphasis). Elsewhere he described Bombadil as taking "delight in things for themselves without reference to [himself], watching, observing, and to some extent *knowing*" (*Letters* 179; author's emphasis). In *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Tom emphasizes his role as observer and collector of knowledge:

> Eldest, that's what I am. . . . Tom was here before the river and the trees; Tom remembers the first raindrop and the first acorn. He made paths before the Big People, and saw the little People arriving. He was here before the Kings and the graves and the Barrow-wights. When the Elves passed westward, Tom was here already, before the seas were bent. He knew the dark under the stars when it was fearless. (*FR*, I, vii, 142)

Later, when Frodo asks Tom to accompany the Hobbits to Bree, Bombadil declines, "I've got things to do . . . my making and my singing, my talking and my walking, and my watching of the country" (*FR*: I, viii, 156).

In the first two Bombadil poems, as well as the *Fellowship of the Ring*, Tom is portrayed as knowing the name and having mastery over every tree, bird, and beast in the Old Forest. Even those who are antagonistic toward Tom acquiesce to his directives. In "The Adventures of Tom Bombadil," when he is almost caught three different times, Tom sings, "You let me out again, Old Man Willow!" (line 35); "Now, old Badgerbrock, do you hear me talking? / You show me out at once! I must be awalking" (lines 59–60); and, to the Barrow-wight, "Go out! Shut the door, and never come back after!" (line 83). All three antagonists, though appearing to have Tom at a disadvantage, let him go (*Bombadil* 170-71). He does not own them, "That would indeed be a burden," Goldberry tells Frodo, but she adds "He is the Master of wood, water, and hill" (*FR*, I,

vii, 135). Tom's mastery comes from knowing everyone and everything in his domain. And knowledge, in Tolkien's world, is power.

But Tom knows nothing about the lintips—not what they are, where they come from, or what they are doing in his forest. The lintips will not say; they do not acquiesce. They merely laugh and steal away. This lack of "knowing" represents a weakening of Tom Bombadil's mastery. Jenike notes this too, remarking that "in this poem, Tom seems old and tired, as if he feels that his story will soon be finished" (73).

Now the dating of "Once Upon A Time" becomes the final key to analyzing the poem. If it was, in fact, one of Tolkien's last poems, written between 1962 and 1965, then it may reflect Tolkien's own feelings near the end of his career and his life. In his biography of Tolkien, Humphrey Carpenter stated:

> In some ways he found old age deeply distressing, while in other respects it brought out the best in him. He was saddened by the consciousness of waning powers, and wrote in 1965: 'I find it difficult to work—beginning to feel old and the fire dying down.' Occasionally this plunged him into deep despair, and in his later years he was particularly prone to the gloom that had always characterised his life. . . . But the other side of his personality, the capacity for high spirits and good fellowship, remained just as strong, and if anything it too increased to balance the growing gloom. (236)

Shippey notes the "elegiac mood of Tolkien's later years" (534) in his reviews of other late poems which share themes of sadness, resignation, and death, including "Imram" (1955) and "Bilbo's Last Song" (1974). *Smith of Wootton Major* (1967), Tolkien's last short story, ends when the aging Smith must give up his passport to the land of Faery. In her overview, Verlyn Flieger noted the story has been interpreted by some "as an expression of grief and renunciation of powers at the approach of old age" (619).

In the midst of these works, in the midst of his preoccupation with old age and death, Tolkien wrote (or at least "rubbed up") "Once." It is unclear how he came to be a contributor to *Winter's Tales*. Did he write this poem especially for that collection, perhaps inspired after working on the *Bombadil* collection three years earlier? Perhaps he wrote it for Swann's consideration for *The Road Goes Ever On*, or maybe Tolkien wrote the poem at Unwin's urging for companion-pieces for *Smith of Wootton Major*.

Regardless of the impetus, the poem serves as a companion to his other elegiac works. Like Brendan's last voyage, Smith's farewell

to Faery, and Bilbo's farewell to Middle-earth, "Once" is, in tone and imagery, Tom Bombadil's farewell to his mastery over the Old Forest and its inhabitants. The heavy meter, the images of falling night, Tom's lack of knowledge of the mysterious lintips: all point to Tom's decline. Previously overlooked as merely a charming paean to nature, recognition of its underlying themes of darkness falling and waning powers now make it possible to group "Once Upon A Time" with Tolkien's other late, melancholy works. It is spirited yet sad, just as Carpenter described Tolkien himself in old age.

In *On Fairy-stories*, where Tolkien praised the time-honored opening, "once upon a time," he was equally realistic about the traditional ending: "and they lived happily ever after": "it does not deceive anybody," he said (*OFS* 161). In 1965, Tolkien felt the 'fire dying down' (Carpenter 236), and in "Once Upon A Time" Tom Bombadil is also conscious of his waning powers. Unless more Bombadil material surfaces, this is, sadly, Tom's last song.[10]

Once Upon A Time

Once upon a day on the fields of May
there was snow in summer where the blossom lay;
the buttercups tall sent up their light
in a stream of gold, and wide and white
there opened in the green grass-skies
the earth-stars with their steady eyes
watching the Sun climb up and down.
Goldberry was there with a wild-rose crown,
Goldberry was there in a lady-smock
blowing away a dandelion clock,
stooping over a lily-pool
and twiddling the water green and cool
to see it sparkle round her hand:
once upon a time in elvish land.

Once upon a night in the cockshut light
the grass was grey but the dew was white;
shadows were dark, and the Sun was gone,
the earth-stars shut, but the high stars shone,
one to another winking their eyes
as they waited for the Moon to rise.
Up he came, and on leaf and grass
his white beams turned to twinkling glass,

and silver dripped from stem and stalk
down to where the lintips walk
through the grass-forests gathering dew.
Tom was there without boot or shoe,
with moonshine wetting his big, brown toes:
once upon a time, the story goes.

Once upon a moon on the brink of June
a-dewing the lintips went too soon.
Tom stopped and listened, and down he knelt:
'Ha! little lads! So it was you I smelt?
What a mousy smell! Well, the dew is sweet,
so drink it up, but mind my feet!'
The lintips laughed and stole away,
but old Tom said: 'I wish they'd stay!
The only things that won't talk to me,
say what they do or what they be.
I wonder what they have got to hide?
Down from the Moon maybe they slide,
or come in star-winks, I don't know':
Once upon a time and long ago.

Poem reprinted from *The Young Magicians*, edited by Lin Carter (New York: Ballantine Books, 1969), 255-56, by the kind permission of the Tolkien Estate. The essay's author added the line numbers for ease of reference.

Notes

1 "Bilbo's Last Song" was revised around 1968 from the 1920s–30s poem "Vestr Um Haf".

2 Originally published as "The Cat and the Fiddle" in *Yorkshire Poetry*, 1923.

3 Originally published as "Knocking at the Door" in *Oxford Magazine*, 1937.

4 Anonymous outside reviewer for *Tolkien Studies*, forwarded by email message to author, October 15, 2012.

5 Bilbo's "Sun on the daisies" riddle in *The Hobbit*, Chapter 5 "Riddles in the Dark" plays on the etymology of the word *daisy*, or "day's eye" by comparing the daisy in the field as "an eye in a green

face" to the Sun in the sky as "An eye in a blue face" (see Anderson, 122n16). In "Once," it is possible that Tolkien is comparing the daisy as an "earth-star" to the Sun as a sky-star climbing "up and down" (lines 6–7), thereby linking this image with the other star imagery later in the poem.

6 Email message to author, November 17, 2011.

7 Translation: "It does not make sense in modern English."

8 Thanks to the forum members at TheOneRing.com for their several speculations about possible meanings of the word *lintip*, http://forums.theonering.com/viewtopic.php?t=87502.

9 Translation: "because if he [Tom], the Elder, does not know, he who knows all the names and all the chants, who is the Master, how could we then issue a peremptory judgment on their nature?"

10 I am grateful to Dr. Dimitra Fimi of Cardiff Metropolitan University for her comments on an earlier version of this paper.

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Book Reviews

An Hobad, nó Anonn agus Ar Ais Arís, by J.R.R. Tolkien. Translated by Nicholas Williams. Cathair na Mart: Evertype, 2012. xiv, 270 pp. £34.95/$45.95. ISBN 9781904808909.

Hobbitus Ille, aut Illuc atque Rursus Retrorsum, by J.R.R. Tolkien. Translated by Mark Walker. London: HarperCollins, 2012. 319 pp. £12.99/$19.99. ISBN 9780007445219.

The year J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* turned seventy-five, translations of the children's classic were published in two additional languages. *The Hobbit* in Irish—*An Hobad, nó Anonn agus Ar Ais Arís*, translated by Nicholas Williams—appeared in March, a historic event in modern Irish-language literature, which, though by no means lucrative, maintains a strong tradition of publishing original works for children. *The Hobbit* therefore joins an exclusive circle of classic and bestselling children's books, including *Alice in Wonderland*, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, *Artemis Fowl*, and *Guess How Much I Love You*, to have been translated into Irish. Then, on September 19, nearly to the day that *The Hobbit* was first published in 1937, came the much anticipated *Hobbitus Ille, aut Illuc atque Rursus Retrorsum*—the Latin translation by Mark Walker which makes *The Hobbit* one of perhaps a dozen modern novels to have been adapted to the language—or the words, at least—of ancient Rome. Together, Irish and Latin join nearly seven dozen other languages into which *The Hobbit* has already been translated, several of which (including Danish, Hebrew, Polish, Portuguese, and Russian) have seen multiple renderings.

Little more than their shared year of publication bids the two translations be reviewed together. A cursory glance will reveal that the Irish *Hobad* and Latin *Hobbitus* are different products for different markets, and will likely find themselves side by side only on the shelves of collectors. Despite their obvious differences, many of which will become clear in the following review, similarities in style and in circumstance can nevertheless be found to compare the two translations. Both, for example, are almost certainly for audiences who also speak and read English—readers who either have read *The Hobbit* in the original already, or would have little difficulty doing so. The translators of *An Hobad* and *Hobbitus Ille* are both native English speakers, and while Irish is, unlike Latin, the native language of an existing nation (I will avoid the problematic "living" and "dead" to distinguish the languages), it is fair to estimate that there are about as many young, monolingual

readers for each. This sets these translations apart from those into more robustly Japanese, Albanian, and other languages whose readers are likely to be monolingual,and it is also an important consideration when assessing some of the decisions of the two translators. This is especially the case with *Hobbitus Ille*, for which the original English-language text is occasionally required for clarification.

Ideally, anything as ambitious and as laborious as a translation of a three-hundred-page classic deserves a full critical review, with choices in nomenclature, idiom, and other criteria weighed against the original text by a critic fluent in both the original and the target languages, and knowledgeable of both cultures. This is, of course, unfeasible here, but it is also, with the Irish *Hobad* and Latin *Hobbitus*, largely unnecessary. Recognizing that pedantry and pragmatism will clash anywhere translations are concerned, one can observe, though in quite different ways, that both *An Hobad* and *Hobbitus Ille* are thoroughly and systematically faithful to the original English-language text. For most readers, I suspect, this demonstrates professional responsibility on the part of the translators, as well as due deference to Tolkien's exacting preferences regarding translations of his work. For those with the interests of the target language and their cultures fully at heart, this fidelity may be seen as a flaw, or at least a lost opportunity. The degree to which this can be said of each translation differs greatly, with *Hobbitus Ille* forgoing classical models by essentially transposing the English original with Latin words. The Irish *Hobad*, on the other hand, balances its concessions to the original text with fidelity to the idiom of its living vernacular. As discussed below, the results vary, but both editions deserve highest praise for doing precisely what their translators and designers set out to do. (Unless otherwise indicated, all back-translations are my own. Their lack of polish is not intended to reflect the quality of the commercial translations, but rather my own emphasis on certain grammatical and syntactical distinctions between English and the target languages).

An Hobad is a print-on-demand volume issued by the independent publishing house Evertype, of which linguist and Tolkien enthusiast Michael Everson is proprietor. According to Everson, the original hardcover edition is intended to appeal to international collectors, with a more affordable, black-and-white paperback edition tentatively planned for mid-2013. Evertype purchased the Irish-language translation rights directly from HarperCollins, and Everson was personally responsible for duplicating the handwriting—including Tolkien's own—on the fully translated maps, runes, and captions. This includes the runic initials and tengwar writing appearing in the forefront of *'Ag Comhrá le Smóg'* ('Conversing with Smaug') (197), a possible first

among translations of *The Hobbit*.[1] A gorgeous and expensive showpiece, the cover of *An Hobad* displays the image from the dustjacket of Allen & Unwin's original edition, with the publication information—again, translated—represented in runes as a border. The book contains all the standard black-and-white and color illustrations (the latter appear particularly brilliant), as well as the half-tone illustration of Mirkwood which has gone unseen in English publication of the book since the second printing ('*An Mhodarchoill*' [125]). The maps, which bookend the text, are parchment-colored, with deep red moon-runes on Thorin's map and blue text on the map of Wilderland. Tables of contents are included for both the chapters and illustrations, and a foreword by the publisher is included. The only English section of the book is the note on languages and letters (x-xi), which is a translation of the Irish version which precedes it (viii-ix). There, Willliams explains his choice to translate "elf" as *ealbh*, and mentions that the word *orc* has been rendered into Irish as *púca* and *mórphuca* ("goblin" and "hobgoblin" in the original; see below for further discussion). The list of runes not used on Thror's Map is expanded, reflecting Irish orthography and phonology. It is worth recognizing that Irish has an early script, Ogam, which is comparable if not analogous to the runes of Germanic languages. It seems likely that using Ogam in the place of runes must have at least occurred to the publisher; the decision to work with the Anglo-Saxon *fuþorc* of the original text was probably the wiser choice. Concluding the book is a guide to the pronunciation of words, mostly proper nouns, retained from the original text.

Both Everson and translator Nicholas Williams seem well suited to the task of bringing Tolkien's original bestseller into Irish. Williams, Professor Emeritus of Celtic Studies at University College, Dublin, had previously translated into Irish Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There*; Williams is also a leading expert in Revived Cornish (a surprisingly schismatic movement), for which he has written a dictionary, collections of essays, and study guides, and has, most recently, translated into Cornish *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and *The Bible*. All are published by Evertype, which specializes in the dictionaries and translations of invented and little-known languages. *An Hobad* is likely the most mainstream item in its catalogue, and is a major publication in Irish-language literature. At least five years in the making, and receiving release eight years after the best-selling *Harry Potter agus an Órchloch* (2004), *An Hobad* is something of a landmark in the publishing history of J.R.R. Tolkien's works as well. Despite the seminal influence of Welsh on the invented languages of Middle-earth, the perceived influence of Celtic mythology on Tolkien's *legendarium*, and the adjacency of the Goidelic and

Brythonic territories to England, *An Hobad* marks only the second time that one of Tolkien's works has been translated into a Celtic language. The first, *The Hobbit* in Breton (*An Hobbit pe eno ha distro*, translated by Alan Dipode) appeared only in 2001—long after translations into Japanese, (ホビットの冒険 [*Hobitto no Bōken*], 1965), Hebrew (ההוביט, [*ha-Hobit*] orig. 1976), and Estonian (*Kääbik, ehk, Sinna ja tagasi*, 1977), as well as only one year after the first translation of *The Hobbit* into Esperanto, an invented language (*La hobito, aŭ tien kaj reen*, 2000). *The Lord of the Rings*, meanwhile, remains to be seen in any Celtic language; Everson has stated online that there is some chance of seeing it in Irish, "but it will take quite a long time indeed."[2]

The Latin *Hobbit, Hobbitus Ille*, is a mass-market hardcover published by HarperCollins, and also available in electronic format. The volume is bound in dark brown cardboard with gold lettering on the spine. Its book jacket displays a textured and brightly colored mosaic adapted from a portion of 'A Conversation with Smaug,' showing the dragon lying atop its gold, with Bilbo on the right margin. On the back is the first paragraph in full of Chapter One—Mark Walker's Latin translation followed by the original English. *Hobbitus Ille* includes the two maps, fully translated (Thror's at the beginning, Wilderland at the end, printed across pasted endpapers and flyleaves), the eight standard black-and-white drawings, as well as a full-page black-and-white rendition of 'The Hill: Hobbiton across The Water' (2). There is a table of contents for the chapters, but none for the illustrations. At the end of the book are three appendices: an index of proper names, an index of *verba fortasse aut incognita aut nova* ("words possibly either unknown or new"), and a brief guide to the poetical meters used in the book. Walker's "Translator's Introduction" follows the publishing information and precedes the table of contents; he credits Mike Barry, Head of Classics at Caldicott School, for proofreading the book, and concludes by specifying his spelling and orthographical practices (those of the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*).

Walker holds a BA (Hons) in Philosophy from Durham University and an MA in Classics from the University of Wales at Lampeter. A former editor at Amazon.co.uk and self-described occasional Classics instructor, he has published three books on Latin writing past and present (*Annus Horribilis: Latin for Everyday Life* [2009], *Annus Mirabilis: More Latin for Everyday Life* [2010], and *Britannica Latina: 2000 Years of British Latin* [2010]), a verse translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Vita Merlini*, and a historical fiction novel set in ancient Rome (*Amida*). A proponent of Living Latin, he also edits the biannual online publication *VATES: The Journal of New Latin Poetry*. *Hobbitus Ille*, something Walker declares in his introduction to be "a long-cherished

ambition" (5), is the latest in the longstanding trend of translating children's favorites into Latin which began with Alexander Lenard's *New York Times*-best-selling translation of A. A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh* in 1960. Since that time, titles ranging from *The Wizard of Oz* to *Walter the Farting Dog* have been transposed into the Classical tongue, though it is Peter Needham's translations of the first two Harry Potter books, published in the last decade, which have made up the largest part of the page count. Despite the many precedents and the varying degrees of respectability they impart on the Latinizing vogue, Tolkien's works seem foremost candidates for this sort of treatment, with the linguistic, mythopoeic, and creatively historical spirits of his *legendarium* all jostling at the restraints of conventional language. With *The Hobbit*, Walker finds that suitability to Latin translation lies in technical qualities, citing short sentences, lucidity of meaning, the absence of modern nomenclature, and "a sonorous dignity of expression that falls naturally into Latin cadences" (6). It is indeed true that, for the most part, *The Hobbit* lacks the complex heteroglossia of *The Lord of the Rings*, where even the opening conversations of the first chapter present ponderous idiomatic difficulties. Translation of *The Lord of the Rings* into Latin is currently underway by Richard Sturch, who is reportedly using various Classical and monastic models to duplicate different modes of speech and narration. Walker and Sturch claim to have been in contact during their respective projects, but their degree of consensus remains unclear. One discrepancy, broached during their talks at "The Return of the Ring" conference at Loughborough University in August 2012, is in the translation of *troll*, for which Walker's *trollum* and Sturch's *troglodytus*.

Opening statements in both the Irish *Hobad* and Latin *Hobbitus* provide indications as to how the translations proceeded. Michael Everson's foreword in the Irish *Hobad* reflects an awareness of and respect for Tolkien's guidance, and suggests that he and Nicholas Williams were not always in agreement over certain decisions:

> *Tá corpas de scríbhneoireacht chriticiúil ann maidir leis na haistriúcháin ar shaothar Tolkien go teangacha éagsúla, agus d'fhág Tolkien féin a chuid treoracha faoina raibh le haistriú agus conas é a dhéanamh, nó cad ba chóir a fhágáil ar lár. Chuir saineolas Tolkien sna teangacha Gearmánacha claonadh ar a chuid treoracha, ábhar, ach ba dhual sin dó mar b'í an Ghearmáinic foinse go leor dá chuid inspioráide agus an Meán-domhan á ainmniú aige. Mar fhoilsitheoir, rinne mé iarracht ar a bheith dílis den chinneadh a shíl mé a dhéanfadh Tolkien féin sa chás is go ndeachathas i gcomhairle leis agus gurbh éigean dó dul i ngleic le cuid de na*

> *roghanna a bhí faoinár gcomhair. Tá mé buíoch den aistritheoir a bhí tuisceanach agus cineálta go leor ligean liom sa ghnó seo.* (v)
>
> There is a body of critical writing on the subject of translating Tolkien's works into various languages, and Tolkien himself left directions about translating and how to do it and what could be left out. Tolkien's expertise in the Germanic languages put a slight bias on his directions, but that would be expected of him, since he found a good share of his inspiration in the Germanic linguistic wellspring, as well as the name of Middle-earth. As a publisher, I tried to be faithful to those decisions I thought Tolkien himself would have made if I had gone to him for advice, and if he had to wrestle with some of the choices that were before us. I am grateful to the translator, who was understanding and kind enough to indulge me in this matter.

An Hobad, then, strives to be faithful not only to the original text of *The Hobbit*, but also to the exacting tastes of its late author, and HarperCollins has, according to Everson, reported that the Tolkiens are "delighted" with the edition.[3] Walker's stated motivation and intentions for the Latin *Hobbitus* are much more insouciant, with no such mention of Tolkien's directions, but an admission that "[t]ranslating *The Hobbit* has been quite an adventure: exciting, fascinating, daunting, terrifying. All those, and more besides" (8). Ebullient if not blithe, his introduction promotes *Hobbitus Ille* as a relaxing and long-sought-after oasis between the initial material of Latin classrooms and the cosmopolitan grandeur of historical Latin literature:

> What [is there] for the reader who just wants to read Latin—the very idea!—for *fun*?
>
> This is where the Latin *Hobbit* comes in. It is nothing more or less than a novel—but a novel now in Latin. Which is to say, it is a Latin text whose principal aim is to be read solely for the pleasure of reading, not one to be studied with the aid of copious editorial notes, or laboured over in order to glean hard-won quotations for an essay assignment. Reading for pleasure is a rare experience for Latinists, who, in my opinion, deserve to enjoy themselves as much as anyone else. (5–6)

Walker goes on to reiterate his position that *Hobbitus Ille* is not a beau idéal of Classical idiom, declaring such a thing to be "a pointless

exercise, in my opinion," and stating conclusively that "[t]his is not *The Hobbit* as written for Emperor Augustus; it is simply *The Hobbit* for anyone who has sufficient Latin grammar and a good dictionary" (6). He then goes on to consider some of his translations of nomenclature and proper names, as well as to emphasize the particular pleasure of translating the book's songs and riddles into Latin verse.

Walker is prudent to underscore the casual purpose for which *Hobbitus Ille* was translated, though I suspect that even someone with sufficient Latin grammar will be able to detect his very non-idiomatic handling of Latin. The title itself seems improper, with *Ille*—a demonstrative adjective, conventionally translated as "that"—forced to assume the role of the definite article in order, apparently, to mirror the two words of *The Hobbit*. A more idiomatic translation would be *De Hobbito*, or, at the very least, *Hobbitus,* preferably with only a single *b* (*Hobitus*), since Romans would have pronounced both. "*Hobbitus*" would have the consonance of "crab-bait."[4] The book's alternate title *Illuc atque Rursus Retrorsum* ("There and Back Again"), seems misbegotten as well, although a remedy is less obvious; the sense of motion, implicit in the English idiom, is usually explicit in Latin, with a verbal prefix to indicate repetition rather than an independent word. Effectively a double adverb, *rursus retrorsum* suggests the act of going back twice. Even the celebrated opening line, *in foramine terrae habitabat hobbitus*, is problematic, with the noun *foramen* (a rare word in classical Latin) indicating a hole not in the sense of a burrow, but rather in the sense of an aperture or a bore. Almost any other word for 'hole' seems more accurate; if *cavum* looks too much like 'cave,' then possibly *lacuna* or even *cuniculus*. In the same paragraph, Walker translates "hobbit-hole" as *foramen-hobbitum*, effectively a compound noun that denotes neither a hole for a hobbit, nor even a hole shaped like or made by a hobbit (e.g. "bullet-hole"), but rather, as suggested by the direct reverse translation 'hole-hobbit,' a hobbit that *is* a hole. Examples such as these can be found on nearly every page.

The basic sense, however, remains clear, and while a Roman or a non-English-speaking Classicist would likely be confused or amused at times, English-speaking Latinists—particularly those who have already read *The Hobbit*—will find the pieces fall readily into place. In this respect, *Hobbitus Ille* is indeed fun to read. Some of the coinages are quite clever ("blind man's bluff" is rendered as *lusus viri oculis obligatis*), and the indices make the book's terminology easier to negotiate than that of the *Harrius Potter* titles. The metrical poetry is meticulously well crafted, exemplifying both rhythmic and classical verse forms—no mean task in our time, which might be considered the nadir of Latin composition.[5] This is not to say that Latinists will

all admire or condone what Walker has done in *Hobbitus Ille*. The translator's occasional indifference to shades of meaning, as well as his systematic rejection of Latin idiom, make him an easy target for charges of carelessness or ineptitude (such charges must nevertheless take into account that he has literally written books on Latin proverbs). *Hobbitus Ille* does have both unseemliness and error, and not simply grammatical examples. "Gandalf" is translated as *Gandalphus*, and "elves" as *dryades*.[6] One wonders why *orc* was not simply retained as *orcus* (lower-case, relating to *Orcus* as "devil" to "Devil") instead of the lumpish *gobelinus*. Walker finds "Gollum" to suggest "a fortuitous neuter proper noun" (7), which is fair, but one must keep in mind that the final *–um,* which consummates the glottal sound of his onomatopoeic name, then becomes a case-ending, disappearing in all but the nominative and accusative cases, and leaving us occasionally with *Gollo* and *Golli*. The more direct adaptation *Gollumum* seems a decorous alternative. In terms of errors, the chapter *Non Domi* "Not at Home" omits the negative when Bilbo declares ["]*spero illum in summo Monte adesse nos despicientem!"* (249) "'I hope he [Smaug] is up on the Mountain looking down at us!'." The memorable expression in the "The Gathering of the Clouds," which begins with Thorin declaring "'[w]e have little time to lose'" (*H*, xv, 240) has Bilbo answering with *"et paulo tempore uti!"* (265) "and little *time* to use!" [italics mine] instead of "'…little food….'." These are more likely errors in proofreading than errors in translation, but they remain potentially symptomatic. One cannot fault Walker's intentions with *Hobbitus Ille*, nor deny the raw felicity of the reading experience. If there is a single objection one might raise to his execution, it is that *The Hobbit*—the work of a fluent Latinist, and "also a professional linguist, a pedantic don," as Tolkien once referred to himself (*Letters* 248)—might not have been the best subject for this sort of translation. Alexander Lenard reportedly took seven years to translate *Winnie Ille Pu*, for example, and it seems unjust that the *Harrius Potter* books can be considered superior to *Hobbitus Ille*.

The Irish *Hobad* contains no such blunders, which is to the great credit of its translator, as well as of its editor Alan Titley. Like *Hobbitus Ille*, *An Hobad* adheres to Tolkien's writing faithfully; unlike *Hobbitus Ille*, the translator of *An Hobad* had recourse to—and was able to reflect—the living vernacular of its target audience. Unlike with the Latin of *Hobbitus Ille*, one cannot truly speak of "non-idiomatic" Irish, save in the sense that *An Hobad* seeks to retain the verbal character of the English-language *Hobbit* rather than reconstitute it through the systematic use of native analogies. Even here, however, compromise is essential. Grammar and syntax contribute to idiom as well as phraseology, and the linguistic idiosyncrasies of the Celtic languages

are such that almost any translated phrase will become idiomatic. Rich in prepositional constructs, some of which serve as modal verbs, Irish displays several features that are relatively exotic for an Indo-European language, including a VSO (verb-subject-object) word order, initial consonant mutation (where, for example, *bord* "table" or "a table" becomes *bhord* [pronounced *vorθ* or *worθ*] and *mbord* [pronounced *morθ*] in certain circumstances), and a rather opaque relationship between pronunciation and orthography (which, on consideration, is perhaps not so exotic for readers of English). Relative periphrasis can be ponderous; "no going upstairs for the hobbit" is rendered as *Níor mhaith le hobad ar bith dul suas agus teacht anuas staighrí* (1). Of course, to speak of a language in any aesthetic or deterministic sense is to violate the conventions of modern linguistics, but one need only consult one's impressions to be reminded of the antiquity, folksiness, and romantic intrigue of Irish. It is, I venture, a good language for *The Hobbit*. For what it is worth, however, Tolkien himself seems not to have been enthusiastic about Irish, certainly not to the degree of thralldom which marked his interests in Old English, Old Norse–Icelandic, Gothic, Welsh, and Finnish.[7]

The delights of *An Hobad* are numerous. Gollum's "'my precious'" is rendered as *a sstóirín*, a feminine diminutive of *stór* "treasure, riches" expressed in the vocative case and clearly constructed to retain both the original's sibilance and number of syllables. The word for "elf" is *ealbh* (pl. *eilbh*), which pre-existed in part as a borrowing from the Old Norse *álfr* into Scots Gaelic (*ealbh* [pl. *ealbhar*]), but which has been retrofitted as a first-declension Irish noun to provide the necessary dignity and antiquity. The decision appears to have been a difficult one; as Williams discusses in his consideration of languages and letters, the Scots Gaelic borrowing of *álfr* followed a similar semantic development to the Middle English borrowing in that both came to indicate a useless or idiotic person (*i.e.* English "oaf"). Tastes no doubt vary among readers, but the decision seems preferable to using an existing term from Irish mythology and folklore, especially some variety of *sídhe*, which, unlike the shadowy *ælf* and *álfr*, retains the historical and cultural baggage of numerous literary precedents.[8] The translation of "goblin" as *púca* shows how precarious this sort of borrowing can be, with the Irish "pooka" traditionally being represented as a shapeshifting, usually equine, spirit of house and farmland. One will never entirely avoid such friction, however—even the Irish for dwarf, *abhac*, has its etymological origins in a word for "water creature," which contradicts the elemental nature of the dwarves.[9] Translation is as much a gamble with audience's expectations as it is a calculated compromise, and Williams has played his cards well.

Among the best examples of the fidelity of *An Hobad* are the songs, whose verses accommodate Irish cadence while retaining most of the diction and—reflecting the coincident importance of rhyme and alliteration in traditional Irish poetry—most of those qualities found in the original English-language text. The first two stanzas of the dwarves' dinner song are as follows:

> *Bain mant as na gloiní, scoilt miasa is plátaí!*
> *Maolaigh na sceana is lúbaí na foirc!*
> *Má dhéanaimid siúd ní bheidh Baigín róshásta;*
> *bristear na buidéil is loisctear na coirc!*
>
> *Srac an scaraoid, satail an ghréisc!*
> *Doirt an bainne ar chathaoir is clár!*
> *Le hais na leapa leag spóla agus éisc,*
> *is stealltar an fíon gach ionad, gach áit!*
> (11–12)

> Take a bite out of the glasses, crack dishes and plates!
> Dull the knives and somebody bend the forks!
> If we do that, Baggins will not be too pleased;
> Let someone break the bottles and burn the corks!
>
> Tear the tablecloth, trample the fat!
> Pour the milk on the chair and floor!
> Next to the bed, lay joints and fish
> And let the wine be splashed every place, everywhere!

The original rhyme scheme of these rhythmic stanzas is ABAB; Williams has ABCB and ABAC, and demonstrates an even, though variable, number of beats per quatrain (12-10-12-10 / 8-8-10-10). The goblins' marching song from "Over Hill and Under Hill" is even more faithful:

> *Sciob! Scrab! Brúigh is basc!*
> *Griog, gread! Sáigh is smeach!*
> *Síos faoin gcnoc, chuig Púca-loc*
> *Síos leat, a mhac!*
> (55)

The original is as follows (*H*, iv, 58):

> Clap! Snap! the back crack!
> Grip, grab! Pinch, nab!
> And down down to Goblin-town
> You go, my lad!

The pairs *sciob* and *scrab* ("grab" and "scratch"), *griog* and *gread* ("harass" and "thrash"), and *sáigh* and *smeach* ("stab" and "smack") are analogous to Tolkien's terms; alliteration and the impression of violence are more important than precise translation here. The number of beats per line matches the original (5-5-7-4); *Síos faoin gcnoc, chuig Púca-loc / Síos leat, a mhac* translates literally as "down under the hill, to Goblin-place / down with you, son!" Williams seems to replicate the qualities of the original verses wherever he can, but results suggest that, for whatever reason, he is not unwilling to abandon his efforts. For example, his handling of the elves' song in the chapter '*An Geábh Deiridh'* ("The Last Stage") shows remarkable resiliency, but with occasional lapses in rhyme.

With this review's repeated emphasis on idiom, a final point of comparison will take three idiomatic examples from *The Hobbit*, and illustrate how both translators endeavored to represent them faithfully. The first example is the Cockney-inspired speech of the Stone-trolls in "Roast Mutton." Tolkien has:

> "Mutton yesterday, mutton today, and blimey, if it don't look like mutton again tomorrer," said one of the trolls.
>
> "Never a blinking bit of manflesh have we had for long enough," said a second. "What the 'ell William was a'thinkin' of to bring us into these parts at all, beats me — and the drink runnin' short, what's more," he said jogging the elbow of William, who was taking a pull at his jug. (*H*, ii, 34)

The qualities of this folk speech, including curse-words, slurring, and g-dropping, add two colloquialisms to the narrative itself, "jogging," and "taking a pull…". All exemplify highly idiomatic English, perhaps the densest *The Hobbit* affords. *An Hobad* offers the following in Irish, translated with idioms in boldface:

> *"Caoireoil inné, caoireoil inniu, agus* ***mallacht orm****, mura bhfuil an chuma air gur caoireoil a gheobhas muid amárach freisin," arsa duine de na troill.*
>
> *"****Dheamhan*** *ruainne d'fheoil dhaonna ní bhfuair muid le fada fada an lá," arsa an dara troll. "Céard* ***sa diabhal*** *a bhí ar intinn ag Liam dár dtabhairt isteach sa gceantar seo,* ***níl a fhios agam beirthe ná beo****—is tá an deoch i ngar a bheith imithe freisin," a dúirt sé ag tabhairt* ***sonc*** *do Liam, a bhí ag baint* ***fliúit*** *as a chrúsca.* (31)

> "Mutton yesterday, mutton today, and **curse me**, if it doesn't have the appearance that we will get mutton again tomorrow," said one of the trolls.
>
> "**Never a damned** scrap of human's flesh we haven't got for a long, long time," said the second troll. "What **in the Devil** William was thinking to bring us into this region, **I haven't a notion**—and the drink is nearly gone as well," he said giving **a nudge** to William, who was taking **a swig** from his jug.

The examples of *mallacht orm* ("curse me"), *sa diabhail* ("in the Devil"), and especially *dheamhan* ("demon," "never a…") demonstrate the role played by the infernal in mild Irish imprecation, a role similar to the one it plays in English. Meanwhile, the delightful expression *níl a fhios agam beirthe ná beo* is literally "the knowledge is not on me, born nor alive." *Sonc* "nudge, poke," is, as its sound might suggest, a colloquial word, and stands in well for "jogging the elbow"—*fliúit* is literally "flute." There are likely other examples in the passage more perceptible to a native speaker, particularly in its syntax. Even with these, however, one can appreciate the efforts of the translator to create an experience fully approximating the original.

Though much more modest technically, Walker's handling of the passage in *Hobbitus Ille* reflects a comparable effort, including a conventional expression of dismay—*heu* "alas"—and the late Latin *damnabilis*. Unlike the idiom of the original and Irish texts, however, there are no difficulties which might confuse an unitiated reader. The sense is spartan in its denotation, and relies for its spirit on the reader's recourse to, or recollection of, the original text:

> *"heri ouilla, hodie ouilla, et* ***heu****, ouilla iterum esse uidetur cras," unum trollum inquit.*
>
> *"numquam portionem* ***damnabilim*** *carnis-hominis satis diu habuimus," alium inquit. "de quo* ***in infernis*** *cogitauerit Gulielmus ut nos in has regiones umquam duxisset me superat—et potio paene consumitur praeterea," inquit, fodicans cubitum Gulielmi, qui ex urceo potabat.* (49)
>
> "Mutton yesterday, mutton today, and **alas**, it seems to be mutton again tomorrow," one of the trolls said.
>
> "Never a piece of **damned** human-flesh have we had for long enough," the other said. "What **in the hell** William was

> thinking of to have led us into these regions defeats me—and the drink is nearly gone, besides that," he said, poking the elbow of William, who was drinking from the jug.

The passage illustrates well the consistent simplicity of *Hobbitus Ille*, one which many students will no doubt find flattering.

Other examples which illustrate the translators' approach to idiom include the chapter title "Out of the Frying Pan and into the Fire," a very English expression that both chose to translate directly rather than represent with a native analogy. The prominence of fire in the chapter helps to the justify the choice, but both Irish and Latin offer similar expressions which involve or suggest flames. Despite the Irish expression *ó thigh (an) deamhain go tigh (an) diabhail* lit. "to go from the demon to the Devil," *An Hobad* has "*As an bhFriochtán Isteach sa Tine*." In Latin, comparable expressions range from the entirely suitable *ire de fumo in flammam* "to go from the smoke to the flame," attributed to the fourth-century Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus, to the famous line—rendered unsuitable by its allusion—from Walter of Châtillon's *Alexandreis*—*incidit in Scyllam qui vult vitare Charybdim* "he fell into Scylla who wished to avoid Charybdis." Walker nevertheless went straight with '*E sartagine in ignem*.' It is within that very chapter where we find an example of discrepancy between the translators, in Gandalf's use of the back-to-back expressions "[a] very ticklish business" and "touch and go" (*H*, vi, 90). In *Hobbitus Ille*, Walker translates the first flatly as *"fuit res trepidissima"* ("it was a most alarming affair"), and the second directly, offering *"tange et i"* (107). One parallel expression in Latin for "touch and go" is *pendere filo*, "to hang by a thread," though its allusion to the sword of Damocles perhaps taints its candidacy here ("touch and go," however, may itself allude to automobiles). In *An Hobad*, the execution is different; Williams translates Gandalf's first expression almost directly, *"*[o]*bair fhíoríogair"* ("a very touchy task"), but uses an Irish equivalent for the second, *"chuaigh sé go dtí an dóbair"* (84). Extremely difficult to translate, it matches "touch and go" in suggesting a precarious state of affairs.

These are some of the ways in which *An Hobad* and *Hobbitus Ille* represent the original literary experience of *The Hobbit*—primarily through faithful and direct translation, though with differing accommodation of the respective target language's idiomatic conventions. As stressed in the opening paragraphs, their joint review here is more a matter of convenience than a suggestion of their comparability; many, if not most, of their differences in execution can be attributed to the differences separating their target languages and audiences. Irish is, among other distinctions, the first and official language of

a contemporary nation-state. Latin is, despite its awesome historical prestige, a language of books and classrooms primarily. A great many sparks might be struck between the two, in terms of these translations, cultural positions, linguistic tastes, and other matters. With *The Hobbit*, however, both languages have been used to describe the events of an imagined history, and must remain approximations in any event.

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Notes

I would like to thank my former instructor, Máirín Nic Dhiarmada, Senior Lecturer in modern Irish at the University of St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto, for her input during the writing of this review.

I would also like to dedicate this review to *T.*, friend of fifteen years, who passed away during its preparation.

1 The tengwar is idiosyncratic, and presents problems for the transcriber (for an attempt, see Allan 24). Rather than follow Tolkien's convention of using diacritical marks to indicate vowels that precede the consonants to which they are attached, Everson appears to use the opposite, reflecting the orthographic conventions of, for example, the Arabic and Devanagari scripts. Properly transcribed, the inscriptions and their translation are as follows (the square brackets indicate where the ladder propped up against the jar in Tolkien's illustration obscures the writing; the letters have been deduced):

man tr[ ]s tran *maoin Tro*[*ir i*]*s Train*
"property/treasure of Thrór and Thrain"

is marg[ ] gadi *is mairg* [*an*] *gadai*
"Woe to the thief" (lit. "is wretched the thief")

t.t. *T.T.*
(Initials of Thrór and Thrain)

2 Everson discusses this and other matters in a series of comments posted on "An Sionnach Fionn," accessed 26 February 2013, http://ansionnachfionn.com/2012/05/11/in-praise-of-an-hobad-but-why-the-awful-gaelicisations.

3 Everson, "An Sionnach Fionn."

4 For example, the Irish "*Hobad*" is itself an adaptation of "*Hobbit*" to Irish phonology. Referring to Tolkien's "Guide to the Names in *The Lord of the Rings*," Michael Everson justifies the modification:

> First, Tolkien says "do not translate 'hobbit'" but he does not say "do not assimilate to your language." Broad and slender rules prevent "hobbit" as a word-form in Irish. You're stuck with "hoibit" or "hobait" and no double b's either. Nicholas [Williams] chose "hobad" pl "hobaid" because it was the best fit to Irish phonology and morphology. A first-declension masculine plural gives the word "age," which is a consideration in the mythological construct. Failing this, what would you have? Hoibit, pl hoibití? Hobait, pl hobaiteanna?

5 See Califf for a contemporary guide.

6 For a consideration of misspellings of "Gandalf," particularly *Gandalph*, see Shippey (4).

7 Of Irish, Tolkien's *Letters* speak of both a scholastic (134) and an aesthetic disinclination (219, 289).

8 A hyperlinked list of possible Irish equivalents to "elf," as well as Michael Everson's articulate rejection of their suitability, may be found at "An Sionnach Fionn" accessed 26 February 2013, http://ansionnachfionn.com/2012/05/11/in-praise-of-an-hobad-but-why-the-awful-gaelicisations.

9 s.v. "abac" in Vendryes A-5.

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The Qenya Alphabet, by J. R. R. Tolkien, edited by Arden R. Smith. Mountain View, CA: Parma Eldalamberon, 2012. 160 pp. $35.00 (oversize paperback) [no ISBN] *Parma Eldalamberon 20*.

The latest volume of *Parma* is devoted to what the Editor calls the "Qenya Alphabet" (he explains why he chose not to use the term *tengwar*). It contains forty "documents" (Q1-Q40) including both texts and commentaries. I have been and still am (occasionally) an artist and calligrapher, and it is from this perspective that the current review is written. Since Tolkien was not only a calligrapher of no mean skill, but it was a skill learned literally at his beloved mother's knee, calligraphy was clearly important to him (Hammond & Scull),[1] so a calligraphic view seems an appropriate way to view the present volume. After all, adherence to linguistic principles is not the only thing that makes Tolkien's languages seem real. One must also consider his alphabets in terms of their suitability for expressing visually a writer's thoughts and needs in a variety of circumstances. A real language is both spoken and written, with the latter form represented not just by formal usage in proclamations or poetry but in less formal usage by all sorts of people for many different purposes.

The particular value of *The Qenya Alphabet* from a visual perspective is the presence of a treasure-hoard of reproduced texts. Of the forty documents, thirty-five consist of reproductions (in whole or in part) of Tolkien's actual uses of this alphabet scanned from photocopies of the originals. According to the Editor, these are examples of "tengwar-style Elvish script" dating primarily from the early 1930s (pre-"Fëanorian Alphabet"). Most are transliterations into the Qenya scripts of texts in English or Latin, although two are from Old English and one from Old High German. Many of these texts are Tolkien's own compositions, including previously unpublished letters and drafts of the poems "The Adventures of Tom Bombadil" and "Errantry." Also among the texts are prayers and literary excerpts, including Lewis Carroll's "The Walrus and the Carpenter" (which Tolkien misquoted from memory). Keeping to his consistent custom when using his phonetically-based alphabets, Tolkien renders his modern English texts phonetically rather than treating his alphabets as ciphers reproducing English spellings.

In my analysis, the styles of the scripts presented here fall into several visual categories. What Tolkien called "formal style" I think of as "uncial," although it wouldn't necessarily match the actual definition of uncial in all respects. However, this style has the disciplined fluidity of the work of many a medieval scribe, with rounded letters and relatively short ascenders and descenders. The uses reproduced here are largely religious—multiple examples of "Te Deum" (Q18–20) and

"Gloria in Excelsis Deo" (Q21–22). Tolkien calls the latter two styles "large rounded" and "formal book-hand rounded," but they seem to be fairly subtle variations on the formal style. Other examples include a ninth-century excerpt from *Evangelienbuch*, in a dialect of Old High German. Since the work is based on the Gospel, it connects with the religious theme of the others. An interesting outlier is "God Save the King" (Q14–16), although one could argue that for a devoted monarchist this verges on religion. In addition, Q16 includes "Our Father," which might suggest an interesting, if not necessarily conscious, connection in Tolkien's mind.

"God Save the King" (Q16) is actually written in two different scripts, with three of ten lines written in what Tolkien calls the "pointed angular" hand. That's an accurate description of its main features, although I can't help thinking of it as the "black-letter" version. Tolkien uses it in additional examples of "Gloria in Excelsis Deo" (Q23-24) and excerpts from "Tom Bombadil" (Q34) and "Errantry" (Q37). This script appears more contrived, less natural. Tolkien's own terms for two of the alphabet versions discussed in the beginning of this review contain the term "rounded." Indeed, the body of each letter is very round, and this roundness is enhanced by even shorter ascenders and descenders than the formal hand (best illustrated by Q21-22).

The word "ductus" is a calligraphic term referring to the number, direction and sequence of the strokes a calligrapher uses to create a letter. Although, like the formal style and its more rounded variants, the pointed style is beautifully designed for the italic nib, its execution would be considerably less fluid, requiring abrupt changes in stroke direction. Any calligrapher would be aware, just by looking at the letters, of the different feel of a hand writing the one versus the other. Imagine, if you will, writing the letter *O*, which is usually done in one smooth stroke. In the "pointed angular" hand, however, the most efficient way takes two strokes with abrupt changes of direction at ninety-degree angles. The result resembles a square tilted on the diagonal. That said, Tolkien was able to use this pointed style to write actual correspondence in this script (Q4), although it would be illuminating to learn how long it took him to do so. (One also wonders whether Tolkien sent these copies out, and, if so, what the recipients thought of them. He did, on at least a few occasions, write in his invented alphabets to devoted fans whom he knew could read them [see *Letters* no. 112 and 118]).

Despite its somewhat artificial feel, a page carefully written in pointed style does yield a striking image, which is a more forceful and "heavier" version of its parent font. If one were using Qenya script for a document sent to Dwarves, this is the version they would most

appreciate. Indeed, the Cirth runes used by Dwarves are angular, as are Primary World counterparts like Anglo-Saxon and Norse runes or Ogham (for Old Irish and Brythonic languages). All these are angular for a reason: they are meant to be carved or inscribed on a hard surface such as wood or stone. Tolkien has shown it is possible to create such a script for the pen, but it's rather impractical. Few people other than Tolkien would find it conducive to efficient letter-writing.

Tolkien was of course no stranger to scripts impractical for common use. Two excerpts from "Tom Bombadil" (Q31a–32) are almost overelaborated with decorative flourishes (the former has been reprinted in *Pictures by J. R. R. Tolkien* (no. 48) and *The Silmarillion Calendar 1978*). The latter (Q32) is done with such unusually thin lines that the difference between text and decoration is sometimes unclear; it would be at home framed in a Victorian parlor. Such specialty fonts remind me that Tolkien's creative talents were not limited to a single sphere even within the visual arts. His visual expressions could be varyingly characterized as the work of an artist, illustrator, calligrapher, and/or designer. I suspect that for Tolkien, the boundaries between and among these functions were so porous as often to be nonexistent (see illustration 186 in Hammond & Scull for an excellent visual confirmation). Although not, perhaps, of great importance to Tolkien, there is a difference between *written* letters and *drawn* letters. Sometimes this difference can be mainly in the skill of the calligrapher; other examples are clearly *designed* to be drawn. Such documents as Q31a and Q32 are examples of the latter. Consider also the *Father Christmas Letters*, some of which were being written at the same time as these documents. The decorative initial letters in both share a certain similarity with Q32, and the wobbly handwriting of Father Christmas himself has to be more drawn than written.

Despite the value in comparing numerous examples of the basic styles of Qenya calligraphy and their variations, the look of most of the aforementioned examples will not be unfamiliar even to casual students of Tolkien's languages. His later alphabets have been reproduced in many places, used by artists, and are even available as digital fonts. The outstanding value of *The Qenya Alphabet* lies in the number and diversity of examples of informal uses of his script. The many examples of the cursive form, plus looser and more idiosyncratic versions of the scripts described above, do more than anything yet published to demonstrate the flexibility in Qenya script of the sort expected in real languages and alphabets. This is shown at a glance in Q39, which is helpfully titled by Tolkien "Examples of Various 'Elvish' Handwriting Styles." The short texts include excerpts from nursery rhymes, poetry ("The Man in the Moon Came Down Too Soon"), and multiple bits

from versions of "The Walrus and the Carpenter." These are written in what looks to me like fifteen different versions of Qenya handwriting. Some are careful and controlled—only slightly looser versions of the formal hand. Others are amazingly open and fluid. The last scripts portrayed, for Q39a and Q39d, are particularly good examples. Both look so much like everyday handwritten prose that a casual glance in a different context might actually lead the reader to assume the text is in the Latin alphabet rather than the Qenya script.

There are several italic versions (what Tolkien calls "cursive style") in this compendium. The most curious are the first and last in Q9a and Q9b, and especially the first script of Q39. All look like a cross between Qenya and English cursive, with loops in ascenders and descenders typical of the letters known to most schoolchildren of earlier generations. Other examples, such as the second portrayed on Q39d, looks much more like traditional Qenya script. Q6d and Q13b are somewhere in between. There are two letters written in italic script—Q28 (to E. V. Gordon) and Q29 (to C. S. Lewis). The former is careful, on the border between calligraphy and handwriting. The latter is more interesting, looking "dashed off." Cursive is attractive to many people because a slanted script seems to lend itself to writing more quickly. The letter to Lewis has an amazing energy and sense of speed that are reinforced by longer-than-usual ascenders and descenders, which are more acutely slanted than other examples. The use of sweeping *tehtar* reinforces the sense of speed even further.

A comparison with Tolkien's older alphabets might be illuminating. The Alphabet of Rúmil (published in *Parma* 13) dates all the way back to 1919. Its most startling characteristic, for those used to later versions of the alphabet, is the arrangement of letters. They are usually written vertically, top to bottom, and sometimes attached to a stem. The rules for inserting the *tehtar* representing vowels seem rather complex, and some of them can make a page of text look cluttered and sometimes difficult to interpret. It must be noted that Tolkien was experimenting a great deal at this stage, and there many variations in both letters and arrangement. This alphabet was designed especially to write English and other languages. Nonetheless, the vertical letters, especially with a connecting spine, imbue it with an immediate aura of otherness (at least to someone used to the Roman alphabet).

The next experiment chronologically was Valmaric (published in *Parma* 14). The creation of Valmaric overlapped with the Alphabet of Rúmil, during a time when Tolkien was trying out many different alphabets. The majority of the documents are tables of letters. The most frustrating aspect of these documents, calligraphically speaking, is the almost total lack of connected texts. The lone exception is only a

single paragraph (an excerpt from *Beowulf*). Since there are essentially no other examples of Valmaric extant, evidence is thin on the ground. From this scant example (V8a), it appears that Valmaric is perhaps a bit less florid than the Alphabet of Rúmil. This paragraph is written in the style of the Roman alphabet, up to down and right to left, with no connecting spine. The notion of attaching letters to a spine has apparently been largely abandoned. With sweeping *tehtar* above the letters, this wouldn't be practical anyway.

Issues sixteen and eighteen of *Parma* contain roughly ten examples of "pre-Fëanorian" alphabets. I say "roughly" because it's difficult to be sure what constitutes a different alphabet versus a variation on another. We can see that Tolkien is still toying with the "letters-on-a-spine" idea, but only in occasional doodles. Interestingly, this notion can be seen to have evolved into something less obvious. Frequent horizontal lines occur on the waistline and baseline (top and bottom of the main body of a letter without ascenders or descenders) of many letters, persisting through all versions. When they appear in a longer text—especially when written in a calligraphic style—spine-like connections appear in groups of letters, which can be exaggerated or embellished by a calligrapher. However, in the "mature" Qenya alphabets, there is a significant change is in the number and appearance of *tehtar*. They are both fewer and less intrusive. In the earliest of Tolkien's alphabets, the *tehtar* were many and pronounced, often rivaling in size the letters they were attached to. Now they are unobtrusive enough that they don't impinge on the readability of text, but leave room for a calligrapher to use them aesthetically.

I believe that much remains to be learned by the study of Tolkien's alphabets from the perspectives of calligraphy (aesthetics and "writeability") and practicality (ease in handwriting and suitability for representing the sounds of a particular language). Tolkien's writing systems tend to be phonetic or semi-phonetic, with many designed for use in representing more than one language. That requires inventing letters for a larger number of phonemes than any one language uses. The risk is ending up with so many letters that they may become overcomplicated and/or difficult to distinguish. A consonantal language, with diacritics used for vowels, can help a little by reducing the number of letters needed, but that solution carries its own risks, as I mentioned above. Tolkien's eventual solution as demonstrated in *Parma* 20 strikes a good balance. Since I'm only truly familiar with the Roman alphabet, it would be fascinating to see Tolkien's alphabets analyzed by those whose primary language does not use this alphabet. Those intimately familiar with consonantal languages could bring a particularly useful perspective.

Parma Eldalamberon has done Tolkien studies a great service to scholars and linguists by publishing otherwise inaccessible documents on Tolkien as a language creator. With this issue (and previous ones that covered alphabets), the editors have done particular service to the calligraphers, artists and designers among us. It is my hope that they have opened up a fruitful new area for research.

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Notes

1 The "Appendix on Calligraphy" [p. 201] appended to this excellent work gives a précis of this topic that is essential reading to anyone interested in the calligraphic aspects of Tolkien's alphabets.

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The Art of The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien, by Wayne G. Hammond & Christina Scull. London: HarperCollins, 2011. 143 pp. $40.00 (slipcased). ISBN 9780007440818.

An exhibit of many of the originals of Tolkien's artwork for *The Hobbit* graced the 1987 Mythopoeic Conference (the 18th) at Marquette University. I was pleased with the opportunity to see the originals of some of Tolkien's pieces. Included in the exhibit was "Bilbo Comes to the Huts of the Raft-elves." Two things struck me on first sight: "It's so *small*," and then "It's so *blue*." Virtually all reproductions of this piece present an over-all green hue to the image. Seeing the original, I realized two things about why the reproductions look as they do: the sun which peeps over the edge of the background mountain is very, very pale, and the sky is such a delicate blue wash it is almost invisible. In order to bring up the detail of the rising sun, the painting is usually filtered through a faint yellow screen. The result is the familiar green hue of most of the reproductions.

Also included in the Marquette exhibit was the original painting of "Conversation with Smaug." I confess that this is my favorite of Tolkien's paintings. The difference between the original and the reproductions is less dramatic in this case. However, some things a reproduction cannot quite convey. In the original, the blacks are quite deep and solid, while the yellow-oranges are vivid and bright. One thing I have always enjoyed in this painting is the sly expression on the dragon.

Seeing the originals in the exhibit gave me a new appreciation of J.R.R. Tolkien as an artist. This appreciation was augmented a few years later, when I visited Oxford for the Tolkien Centenary conference. I had always assumed that the roundedness of his landscapes of the Shire was borne of a naïf stylization, until I actually rode through the Oxfordshire countryside after the conference. That drive made me realize that he had rendered the Shire as the countryside in which most of his days as a scholar had been spent. I gained an insight into how observant of nature Tolkien was as an artist.

Thus it was with great and pleased anticipation that I approached the task of reviewing this volume of Tolkien's artwork. Hammond and Scull have gathered finished pieces, discarded artistic choices, and the barest of preliminary sketches of the author's artwork for *The Hobbit*. This well-put-together volume is presented to the reader in a squared page binding, in a slipcase. The selection of format might seem surprising at first, but in the end it works quite well for the display of the various pieces of artwork.

Hammond and Scull make a point of informing the reader that the pieces contained in the book are reproduced in the exact dimen-

sions and size as the originals (there are some enlargements, mostly of specific details). Those who are familiar with the poster sized reproductions of "Bilbo Comes to the Huts of the Raft-elves" should keep this important difference in mind. Also of interest is that the reproductions in this volume, with the exception of "Mirkwood" (the original being lost), were all made from the original pieces. This absence of "reproductions of reproductions" allows for a fresher perspective on the pieces. Although the reproduction of "Bilbo Comes to the Huts of the Raft-elves" in this volume does appear to have been screened (to bring up the detail of the pale sun), it is not as heavily so as in previous reproductions. Considered together, an excellent job has been done in showing us even the lightest of sketches in which Tolkien tried out an idea.

In addition to the squared pages, Hammond and Scull make use of gatefold pages in order to present a sequence of four images that can be viewed together. This gives the reader a satisfying opportunity of studying Tolkien's choices for the progress of a specific image toward the one finally chosen for publication.

The first use of the gatefold pages comes with the sketches for "The Hill: Hobbiton Across the Water." This choice in layout allows the reader to see Tolkien's development toward the final image that became the color frontispiece for the novel. As we look at the sequence, we can see how Tolkien varies the nature of the Road down the Hill: first twisty, and then straight, until he finds the combination that satisfies him. Of note, though, is that in every version, the door of Bag-End in the distance and the tower of the Mill in the foreground are always very nearly aligned on the center axis of the picture. Tolkien frequently works from a base of symmetry, a feature that shows up in several of the pictures in the volume. The next piece that gets the gatefold treatment is "Rivendell." Opening these pages allows one to see a progress of four sketches at once, giving the reader the feel of exploring the location with its creator as he visualizes it. And then comes the final watercolor that we know so well. It conveys the narrowness of the valley, the power of the river flowing by, and the snug way the Last Homely House fits into its pocket between woods and cliff-like mountain walls.The use of the gatefold presentation for "The Elvenking's Gate" displays four finished pieces based on Tolkien's original conceptual drawings of Nargothrond. The greatest variances in this set are in the nature of the entrance itself: the slight differences in the structure of the bridge leading to the entrance, more pronounced differences in the cuttings around the great doors, and the doors themselves. The decision to use the gatefold for the preliminary sketches of "Bilbo Comes to the Huts of the Raft-elves" allows us to see a very different process than with the

"Elvenking's Gate." The previous example showed similar views, while this section shows differing choices being made. There is a watercolor sketch of Bilbo on a barrel, under a dark night sky with a full moon riding high. The other sketches are of color pencil work, including one that has a composition similar to the final painting, but without the framing of the end of the forest.

If there is one complaint I have, it is that the use of the gatefold presentation was *not* made to show us Tolkien's versions of Smaug flying around the Lonely Mountain. These four pieces would have been even more striking to observe in the opened-out format. The various versions are remarkably consistent in the shape of the landform, while showing that Tolkien was still deciding the course of the river. The other variance in the pieces is the placement of Smaug in flight. The four versions demonstrate Tolkien's abilities with different styles. In the first, he used delicate lines in ink. The second is done with color washes, including a dark sky. There is a faint amount of red at the entrance to the mountain hall, and the dragon flying above has a streak of orange color. In the third version, Tolkien returns to lined ink-work, although heavier in this one. The night sky is conveyed by bolder lines, and the dragon is white against the dark mountain. Of interest for those who know bits of climatology, above the mountain in this version, Tolkien worked in lenticular clouds, ringing the mountain-top. It is Tolkien the observer of nature shining through. The last version is a combination of lined ink-work and brushed inks. The sky is completely black, and the dragon now flies to the side of the mountain, not across the face of it, making Smaug more visible. Although the two-by-two presentation in the layout is adequate, a gatefold would have been more satisfying here.

In the text of the volume, Hammond and Scull review the history of writing of the tale, Tolkien's own background as an amateur artist, and the development of these pieces of art specifically for the publication of *The Hobbit*. One thing that becomes clear as the reader follows the development of sketches to the final art is that for all his lack of formal training, Tolkien had a good eye for design and a knowledgeable consideration of the demands of publication, both for reproduction to best effect and for presentation within the volume. It is rare that an author is given such input into the visuals for his book, yet the end results are aesthetically pleasing. Throughout the volume we are given instances where Tolkien changes his approach to an illustration because of the demands of publication.

The first such instance involves the illustration of Bilbo's encounter with the trolls. The first image for this sequence shows a heavy sky rendered by ink lines effectively using variable widths. The inked

wooded hillside also manages to convey aspects of the darkness of the moment. The one splash of color is the burst of red, indicating the trolls' fire. It is certainly a promising image in itself, but if it was not to be a full color plate, it was the wrong approach for the book. The following two attempts at showing the trolls being turned to stone display Tolkien's weakness with the human form. But also, because the space in them is so open and light, they lose the sinister feel of the moment. Tolkien left these attempts, and instead produced a picture that shows the contrast of the blaze of the campfire with the darkness of the woods crowding about, with the trolls half hiding in the shadows on the far side of the fire. Artistically, it is a much more effective expression of the moment in the story.

With the pieces showing Beorn's hall, we again experience Tolkien making different choices with an eye toward publication. "Firelight in Beorn's Hall" displays Tolkien's mastery of perspective by giving us an unusual angle on the hall, with the primary vanishing point off to the right and our line of sight being laid diagonally across the space. By having the deep, low slope of the roof cut off part of our view, Tolkien creates a sense of a closed-in space. He then livens up the darkness of all the line-work by using red ink for the fire and hints of the fire's reflection on the wood. But as with the image of the trolls' fire in the distance, he needed to do a plain black and white picture for publication. So he started over. He chose a more conventional viewing angle of the Hall, widened the space, and made the slope of the roof less dramatic. There's a simple clean elegance to the presentation of the Hall, with its carefully delivered perspective. He left out figures. He knew they were his weakest points as an artist, and trying to put them in here would have disrupted the pleasing lines he had achieved. The result is the impression of a warm, welcoming hall waiting to be used.

The change of approach that Tolkien made for "The Elvenking's Gate" did not involve the inclusion of color, however. After his four versions based on his earlier sketch for Nargothrond, Tolkien decided on a different viewing angle. In the end, he switched from the angled view of the gate and river to one showing the approach straight toward the gate through the trees and across the bridge. This piece carries his preferential symmetry, but he places the axis of the drawing slightly off the center. This variance shows his instinctive grasp of the need for a touch of variety in the midst of symmetry. (This work is reprinted as white lines on grey on the binding cover for the volume itself).

Hammond and Scull have also chosen to reproduce peripheral items that are not strictly speaking illustrations, though I suspect Tolkien himself would consider them "artwork." There is his facsimile of

Thorin's letter to Bilbo, as well as several versions of various maps. Thorin's letter contracting with Bilbo for the job of burglar was created for Tolkien's own amusement in *tengwar*. But more than that, it is given a personal style in the handwriting that suits the personality of the purported author. This awareness of the differences in handwriting probably comes from years of staring at the wide variety of handwritten samples from his students. And of course, there is the simple aesthetic appeal of the elvish script itself.

Of the maps, most notable is Thror's Map. The volume includes several versions of it, showing how Tolkien worked out various methods to depict the "moon letters" in such a way as would work with the publisher's limitations. The different versions also show that Tolkien was as fond of mapmaking as he as he was of linguistic endeavors. Other maps are the various ones Tolkien drew up of Mirkwood, as well as a set of several careful plans for the exterior lay-out of the Lonely Mountain.

Another benefit in seeing all these pieces pulled together in one place is discovering how keen an observer of nature Tolkien was. Although he was notoriously weak in rendering the human figure, his artwork depicting nature displays a sure hand, something that stands out when the pieces are viewed together.

The various pictures in "The Misty Mountains" section demonstrate Tolkien's flexibility as an artist as well as his skill in observing nature. "The Mountain-Path" renders a thunderstorm in a high pass in pen and ink, conveying both the heavy darkness and turmoil of the storm as well as the drama of the lightning, all with the sense of depth in the drop from the path. Two versions of "The Misty Mountains Looking West from the Eyrie" show Tolkien being even more stylized in his choices. The second of these two pieces uses simple clean lines, with thin lines lapping round the mountain like water to convey the impression of mists clinging to the feet of the mountains. Then we have the color plate of "Bilbo Woke Up with the Early Sun in His Eyes." The achievement in this piece is not just the well-rendered eagle that is the center of attention; it is the sensation of great height and especially the early morning light. The lighting and coloration are proof that the artist was a keen observer of natural effects.

Once past the affection one has for anything Tolkien did, the volume allows the discerning reader to take note of Tolkien's abilities as an artist. He obviously had a strong visual memory; the lenticular clouds over the Lonely Mountain in one sketch were certainly not something he was likely to observe every day in Oxfordshire, but would have been something seen when hiking in the Alps. The paleness of the early morning sun and sky in "Bilbo Comes to the Huts" contrasted

with the blue shadows of the forest spring from the memory of one who paid attention to the world around himself.

Hammond and Scull bring their meticulous attention to detail in providing as much information about the history of each sketch and painting as can be known. Their inclusion of this data allows the reader to consider the choices Tolkien was making on his way to what would finally be put in front of readers in print. In many cases, the sequence of drawings is not about making better choices as an artist, but rather different ones.

The organization of the material in the volume clusters sketches and finished pieces together, following the general sequencing from *The Hobbit*, followed by binding designs, dust jacket art, and portraits of Bilbo himself (detail enlargements from various pieces). This grouping allows the reader to follow the development of Tolkien's thinking regarding the representation of whatever scene is at hand. The authors record the physical details of each reproduction, noting when a specific reproduction is actually sketched on the back of another piece (such as one sketch of "Bilbo Comes to the Huts of the Raft-elves" being on the back of the finished painting itself). Throughout, they have endeavored to present the pieces in a set in the order they were drawn. The clustering of the various drawings topically, in the order of the storyline, gives the reader a definite sense of the visual image the author had of his own subcreation.

The obvious value of the book is that it pulls Tolkien's own artwork for *The Hobbit* together in one place. Beyond that, it demonstrates his process in artistic choices for the specific purpose of best illustrating key moments in the story for readers of the book. And in that process, he earns the right to be called "an artist." All in all, this is a volume worthy of being *seen*, not merely "looked at."

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Exploring J.R.R. Tolkien's The Hobbit, by Corey Olsen. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012. 318 pp. $25.00. ISBN 978-0547739465.

There and Back Again: J.R.R. Tolkien and the Origins of The Hobbit, by Mark Atherton. London: I.B. Tauris, 2012. xiii, 306 pp. £20.00/$28.00. ISBN 9781780762463.

Last year marked a significant milestone for J.R.R. Tolkien's first published novel. It has now been seventy-five years since *The Hobbit* first captivated readers, never once out of print in all that time. Tolkien's beloved tale of a hobbit who went on an adventure, faced a dragon, and lived to write about it in his memoirs has itself now reached the age of a full human life, and we should have reason to hope that studies of the novel have reached a corresponding stage of greater maturity and sophistication. In just a few more years, *The Hobbit* will have lived longer than its own author. Such an auspicious, even liminal, anniversary has been heralded by more than the usual number of new books about Tolkien in general and *The Hobbit* in particular, not to mention the arrival of the first installment in Peter Jackson's three-part film adaptation. Among the books published in 2012 are two full-length explorations of *The Hobbit*, one from either side of the Atlantic. Both have merits as well as flaws (though not in equal proportion), and considering them together will afford us the opportunity of making some profitable contrasts.

Exploring J.R.R. Tolkien's The Hobbit is the product of Corey Olsen's experience teaching Tolkien at Washington College. Olsen has been a great popularizer of Tolkien, both in and outside the classroom, for which he deserves the Tolkien community's gratitude and congratulations. The community has therefore looked forward to his first book with great anticipation. Its dust-jacket describes it as "a fun, thoughtful, and insightful companion volume designed to bring a thorough and original new reading of this great work to a general audience." It is written in informal, approachable language, free of jargon and academic apparatus, suiting it well to a general audience. And it is certainly thorough, almost relentlessly so. It is occasionally insightful, but I regret to say the promise of an original new reading is too generous for what the book actually delivers.

Olsen's book is one whose value depends very much on who is reading it. For scholars and advanced readers already immersed in Tolkien and his fictional world (for example, anyone likely to be reading reviews in *Tolkien Studies*), its value is unfortunately minimal. But for those not yet serious about Tolkien—the general audience to which the dust-jacket refers—its value may be much greater. For some

readers, undergraduate or high school students studying *The Hobbit*, and perhaps for their teachers, it may well be indispensable—as a ready-made study guide or lesson plan, respectively.

This is, for me, the fundamental defect of Olsen's book. The majority of it comes across like a crib for *The Hobbit*, rehearsing the plot points of each chapter in tedious detail and unjustifiable length. Olsen's chapters even correspond to Tolkien's, one for one, something you normally see in study guides. Subtracting the plot summary alone would reduce the book's bulk substantially. There are no great revelations, no substantial scholarly discoveries. Like a series of undergraduate lectures in an elective seminar on Tolkien, Olsen's chapters are heavy on exposition, light on insight, seldom telling you something you didn't already know.

When he is not summarizing the plot, the interpretations the author offers are usually obvious or superficial, often simply restating what has already been said quite explicitly in the novel itself (for example, Gandalf's appraisal near the end of the novel that Bilbo has changed, on which more below). In addition, Olsen frequently talks down to his readers, or so it seems to this reader. He often wastes paragraphs summarizing where the plot left off in the *last* chapter (perhaps a relic of the book's previous form as a series of separate lectures). He also slips in jarring colloquialisms—Bilbo's "street cred" with the Dwarves (113), for example, or noting that "the eagles are not . . . the Anti-Goblin S.W.A.T. Team" (124). And perhaps the dullest conclusion of all: "[Gandalf] recognizes that Bilbo has indeed changed, noting, 'You are not the hobbit that you were'. . . . He certainly is not the hobbit that he was" (300). I continually found myself wondering, who does Olsen think is his audience?

The book's repetitious style will be the most troublesome flaw for some readers. Olsen continually repeats the same points, beating out a redundant tattoo. The worst of them by far is on the subject of Bilbo's dual Baggins/Took nature, which appears as a section heading more than a dozen times by my count (17, 39, 64, 69, 92, 111, 132, 161, 172, 193, 211, 279, 297). It is certainly worth observing that the two competing sides to Bilbo's personality, the Took and Baggins, are frequently at odds but are eventually reconciled, but Olsen repeats this point far too often. In any case, it's hardly an original insight (see, for example, Green 48–9, 96–7; and Chance 62–70, especially 64–5, 69).

Like Olsen's five or six pet theses, the same quotations from the novel are frequently repeated. To give a representative sample: "the father of the fathers of the eldest race of Dwarves" (67, 81); Bilbo's "own country of safe and comfortable things" (70, 85) and his wish to "wear a sword instead of a walking-stick" (24, 86); Gandalf's assertion

that "if I say he is a Burglar, a Burglar he is, or will be when the time comes" (29, 44, 115); adventures as "nasty disturbing uncomfortable things" that "make you late for dinner" (21, 109, 116); and the worst offender, that Bilbo appears "more like a grocer than a burglar" (27, 45, 114, 165, 233). Here, again, something that works in a classroom does not translate so well to the page.

That is exactly the problem. Olsen's book follows the style, arrangement, and manner of a pedagogue stubbornly repeating the same points to increasingly inattentive students, hoping they will eventually pay attention and the points will stick. What is worse, from my perspective, is that Olsen's observations are so seldom new. As the Baggins/Took example above shows, they have typically been made by other scholars and critics before him (when they are not simply obvious), though Olsen cites almost nothing from the substantial secondary literature on *The Hobbit*. This gives the impression to knowledgeable readers that the author is building on the work of others without due acknowledgement. I don't think this was a deliberate slight. Citations, bibliographies, and notes were no doubt avoided for the sake of the target audience of general readers, to whom such apparatus might be unfamiliar, burdensome, and intimidating, but it may suggest to the unwary reader that the book is more than what it really is. A bibliography of a few pages, tucked out of the reader's way at the end of the volume, would have solved the problem.

Olsen mentions only two scholarly works on *The Hobbit*: Douglas A. Anderson's *Annotated Hobbit* and John D. Rateliff's *History of The Hobbit*. He never actually cites anything from the former, and he sometimes misreads the latter. Discussing Tolkien's revision of "Riddles in the Dark," Olsen says that

> when Tolkien sent his publisher some corrections to the text of *The Hobbit* in 1950, therefore, he made some very important changes to his original depiction of Gollum, making him much more like the Gollum we read about in *The Fellowship of the Ring* and finally meet in *The Two Towers*. (88)

Olsen is mistaken about the date; the material wasn't sent to the publisher in 1950, but in 1947. More importantly, Olsen neglects a critical point. The revised chapter was *not* part of the corrections Tolkien sent to Allen & Unwin, but merely "a specimen of re-writing of Chapter V . . . which would simplify, though not necessarily improve, my present task" of connecting *The Hobbit* to *The Lord of the Rings*, and it was offered only "for the possible amusement" of Stanley and Rayner Unwin (*Letters* 124). Tolkien himself was hardly sure it was a good idea

and did not submit it with the intention it be published. So Olsen is wrong again where he says that "*Tolkien slipped* a significantly altered version of the Gollum story" into the 1951 second edition (11, emphasis mine). The revised chapter was *mistakenly* incorporated into the new text, and not by Tolkien but by the publisher. Tolkien approved the changes three years after he wrote them, with misgivings, once he received the proofs. The change to the chapter took Tolkien "much by surprise," and required "some consideration," as the revision had been only "tentatively suggested"; and Tolkien goes on, perhaps a bit tetchily: "I must say that I could wish that I had had some hint that (in any circumstances) this change might be made, before it burst on me in page-proof. However, I have now made up my mind to accept the change and its consequences" (*Letters* 141).

There are other slips as well. For instance, Olsen tells his readers that the complete first edition text of "Riddles in the Dark" is printed in Rateliff's *History of the Hobbit* (89). But Rateliff prints the first *draft*, not the first edition. Two pages later, Olsen confuses the draft and first edition again.

Olsen identifies three turning points for Bilbo—going on alone in the goblin tunnels, facing the giant spiders in Mirkwood, and venturing down into Smaug's lair. But what of Bilbo's decision to leverage the Arkenstone to attempt to prevent a siege of the Lonely Mountain and redeem Thorin and his friends? I would certainly call this a turning point. In some ways, it is a better example than the first two that Olsen proffers, since in those cases, Bilbo hardly had any real choice in the turning.

Although I have concentrated on weaknesses up to this point, there is merit as well, as when Olsen analyzes the trickiest of Bilbo's self-endowed epithets. "'Clue-finder" is a bit of a puzzle," Olsen writes. "I suspect that Bilbo means something quiet different here. The word *clue* originally meant a ball of string; the Greek hero Theseus famously found his way out of the labyrinth in Crete by sneaking a clue of thread in with him" (212). This would have been a leftover artifact of the original draft of *The Hobbit*, in which Bilbo kept his way inside Mirkwood with a ball of spider silk. This is Olsen's best observation in the entire book, a piece of genuine scholarly insight. Unfortunately for Olsen, John Rateliff had already published the same interpretation a year before in the revised edition of *The History of The Hobbit* (Rateliff 521). Rateliff's interpretation of the epithet was different in 2007 (the edition of his book that Olsen consulted), after which Rateliff himself was "clued" into this idea by Anders Stenström. But Olsen deserves full credit for making this clever discovery independently.

Olsen has been especially praised for giving the proper attention to the songs and riddles in *The Hobbit*, and rightly so. His close readings of the songs are among the bright spots in the book, particularly the Dwarves' and Goblins' songs in Chapters 1, 4, 6, and 7. On the other hand, I don't think it was necessary for Olsen to repeat the poems in full in his book, nor in all cases to explicate them line by line as he does, sometimes word by word. At times, the analysis feels heavy-handed and the conclusions strained (e.g., with the Elves' songs in Rivendell). But Olsen does offer good thoughts on several of them. One particularly nice point to which Olsen draws the reader's attention is that Tolkien tends to give his readers a song each time he introduces a new race.

Studies of *The Hobbit* tend either to dismiss it as a children's story or to try to rationalize it into something suited to an adult's tastes; rather, studies ought to accept that it *is* a children's story but attempt to understand why, in spite of that, it has continued to enchant adults (see, for example, Kocher 23–6). Olsen could have grappled with this and produced something more valuable, but never really gets down to it. He is too concerned with elaborating on the novel plot-point for plot-point. Like a toothless shark, he circles this better prey a few times but never takes a big bite, and so settles for krill instead. Other works—e.g., Green, Kocher, Shippey, Fimi, Chance—do a better job getting to the real place and meaning of *The Hobbit*: how to approach it, how to understand it, and even how to teach it, and I would recommend any or all of these to supplement Olsen's study.

Mark Atherton's *There and Back Again: J.R.R. Tolkien and the Origins of The Hobbit* is a very different kind of book, different in almost every way. Where Olsen is not at all scholarly in tone or purpose (indeed, *anti-scholarly*; see 3–4), Atherton is scholarly in both tone and purpose throughout. Where Olsen avoids footnotes and bibliography, Atherton offers an abundance. Where Olsen's plot rehearsals run on for pages, Atherton's are short and judicious. Where Olsen repeats the findings and interpretations of other scholars without acknowledgement, Atherton is much better about citing his predecessors. Olsen's approach is also rigidly plot-chronological, a choice which exacerbates the problem of redundancy, because the same themes must come up again and again. Atherton's approach is thematic and motivic. He will bring up the subject of dragons or possessiveness or Norse sources, for example, and then wander about in and among the plot elements and episodes in *The Hobbit*—and perhaps more frequently *outside The Hobbit*—to make generally well-developed and cogent arguments. And thus where Olsen keeps almost exclusively to *The Hobbit* (which is not a fault, merely a choice), Atherton's focus strays widely, from *The Lord*

of the Rings to *The Silmarillion*, throughout *The History of Middle-earth*, touching on *Roverandom* and *Farmer Giles of Ham*, and digging through Tolkien's academic writings. In fact, I must scold Atherton for his tendency to lose sight of *The Hobbit*, in spite of its being the ostensible focal point for his entire study. Olsen's book strikes me as a bit too narrow, Atherton's a touch too broad. Olsen's book is too rigidly organized, Atherton's too disorganized. What they have in common is that both books seem to add up to less than the sum of their parts. Read together, each comes across better than if read alone.

Atherton's stated purpose—this is made quite explicit in the subtitle of the book—is to trace the origins of *The Hobbit*, which he feels primarily derived from Tolkien's interest in and study of the history of the English language and its literature (2, 253–54). The study is organized, as I said above, into a series of themes and elements. Part One ("Shaping the Plot") examines the setting of the novel and its analogues in the real West Midlands, then moves on to a survey of fairy stories and beast fables, a closer look at dragons, and a natural segue to possessiveness and hoarding. Atherton's discussion of Tolkien's "favourite trick of English nomenclature: turning a concrete noun into a name simply by capitalizing its initial letter" (7) is a valuable observation, but one already better explained by Green (108–10), whom Atherton never mentions, and Shippey (96). Part Two ("Making the Mythology") continues the meandering exploration, and meanders a bit too far at times, looking into such motifs as "guestkindliness" (that is, hospitality), the sea, mountains, goblins, war, and peace.

Part Three ("Finding the Words") digs into what should be Atherton's real forte: philology, lexicography, rhymes, riddles, and dialect. I am sorry to say that these last chapters, while some of the most interesting subject matter to me personally, feel more rushed and less organized than the preceding and, with a few exceptions, consist more in collecting the findings of other scholars than of Atherton's offering new contributions himself. Of antique words that found a place in *The Hobbit*—*ælf*, *beorn*, *eorclanstan*, *orcneas*, *smugan*, and *wearg*—Atherton says readers "can do no better than" Tom Shippey, Douglas Anderson, and Peter Gilliver (197–98). So why do we need Atherton? He does not have a great deal to add on these points.

At the risk of quibbling over jots and tittles, I sometimes find Atherton a little too imprecise for my liking. Perhaps he is attempting to shield readers from specialist jargon and other minutiae of historical linguistics, but I often found myself pausing to pick nits. For instance, Atherton says that the Old English words listed just above had been "once extinct . . . until revived by Tolkien" (198). Yes, most of them had gone extinct, but not all of them, and certainly not *elf*; and some

of them are still extinct now in spite of Tolkien. He says Old Norse "*gand* means literally 'staff'" (198), but there is actually some debate about this. It's clear that a *gandr* is some kind of magical object, but it might not be a staff (*stafr*), wand (*vöndr*), or rod (*róða*) after all. I could say the same of Old English *beorn* and the claim that it definitely meant "bear." Even though many other scholars agree, it is a fact that *beorn* does not appear to be attested as meaning "bear" in the Old English corpus. While it seems likely that *beorn* was once a cognate to Old Norse *björn* "bear," this meaning was gone from English, supplanted by *bera* "bear", while *beorn* meant (or came to mean) exclusively a "warrior." Atherton also says the Old English cognate to Old Norse "alf" (which should actually be *álfr*) is *ælf*, but this is the West Saxon form. He omits that the Mercian form Tolkien preferred would actually have been spelled *elf*. I suppose that really is picking nits, and I should not fault him too much for it, though it would have made his point stronger. At another point, Atherton writes Old German when he means Old High German. And so on.

Atherton's book, like Olsen's, has its share of outright errors too. Since such mistakes are (or should be) avoidable, I must point a few out for unwary readers. Some are obvious. For example, Dëagol and Smëagol instead of Déagol and Sméagol (57); Caradhos instead of Caradhras (74); and Brill instead of Bree (222). Others are errors of omission, as when Atherton mentions that Tolkien wrote essays for *The Year's Work in English Studies* for 1924 and 1925 (180), but omits that Tolkien did so for 1923 also—and he was, in fact, supposed to write the essay for 1922 as well, but was prevented by illness (E.V. Gordon took his place, earning himself the post when Tolkien stepped down). The bibliography also contains mistakes, for example: Stuart D. Lee and Elizabeth Solopova's book is *The Keys of Middle-earth*, not *The Keys to Middle-earth* (283); Douglas A. Anderson's essay is "An Industrious Little Devil", not "Industrial" (284); and I have never seen C.S. Lewis's ship called the *Dawntreader* (290). Other slips are more worrisome, as when Atherton tells readers that the One Ring "was forged by the smiths" (74). First, which smiths? Atherton does not say. I think he must mean Celebrimbor, but then that is only one smith. Second, and more importantly, the Ring was *not* forged by the Elves but by Sauron himself, alone and unaided. An important distinction in the story!

A few idiosyncrasies also caught my eye, including some real oddities with the footnotes. For example, the prefatory pages to Part One contain four footnotes, and the notes for Chapter 1 then begin with note number 5. All these notes are headed "Chapter One" at the back of the book. The same practice is repeated for Parts Two and Three. And there is something more definitely wrong with the footnotes in

the book's final chapter. Some seem to be misnumbered and some missing. All of this is unfortunately liable to confuse readers. Another idiosyncrasy is the book's more than forty illustrations. The book did not need and does not benefit from any of them. None are particularly good, and many are totally random, unconnected or barely connected to the subject at hand—"Trees and cloud" (49), "Sweet chestnut in Oxfordshire woodland" (67), "Narrowboat on river" (87), "The lonely sea and the sky" (123), "Castle ruin" (157), "Tree trunk with foliage" (163); "Path, wall and garden" (213), just to name a handful of the more baffling.

In spite of such niggling, I think Atherton has many interesting and valuable things to offer. For example, he includes in two appendices poems from G.B. Smith's *A Spring Harvest* (1918) and *A Northern Venture* (1923), both of which have been very difficult to find (though *A Spring Harvest* will shortly be in print again after nearly a century). He also quotes primary material from *Stapledon Magazine*, another source to which most readers will not have ready access (166–9). Where I believe Atherton errs most is in wandering too far from *The Hobbit*, a problem to which I alluded previously. Even when he does so, his observations are sometimes enlightening, but several chapters (indeed most of the seven chapters comprising Part Two) have little or nothing to do with *The Hobbit*. And while Atherton makes insightful points about *The Book of Lost Tales*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and even *Roverandom*, he all the while moves further away from his own stated purpose for the book. It is difficult, if not impossible, to say anything about the origins of *The Hobbit* by discussing its successor. And even Tolkien's nascent mythology, which did predate *The Hobbit*, has very little in common with it and probably had relatively little impact on it. Scholars have debated whether *The Hobbit* really germinated from Tolkien's mythology, or whether it initially grew completely apart from it, but Atherton does not take up this issue. And without picking a side and making his case, one must ask whether Atherton has really shed as much light on the origins of *The Hobbit* as he intended. This might have been a moot complaint had Atherton not explicitly stated his mission in the title, prefatory passages, and epilogue to his book.

In other areas, Atherton is on very solid ground and offers new and valuable insights, as when he brings the beast fable into Beorn's hall, and makes profitable comparisons between Beorn and Beren, and then Beorn and Doctor Dolittle (33–8); or when he adeptly handles the Trolls' Cockney dialect in *The Hobbit* and situates this alongside Tolkien's academic work on dialect usage in Chaucer (233–8). Atherton does not feel the need to quote the songs in *The Hobbit* in their entirety and analyze them line by line as Olsen does. Rather, he pulls

out a few lines or words, offering selective but generally insightful observations, as with his thoughts on the dragon-sickness and its echoes in the roots of the words "en*chant*ment" and "be*wild*erment" in Tolkien's early poem "The Hoard," his story "The Nauglafring" from *The Book of Lost Tales*, and finally *The Hobbit* (60–6). These are the kinds of observations and scholarly synthesis that add to our understanding of Tolkien and the works in question.

Speaking of dragon-sickness, let me offer one more comment by way of a closing fillip. Atherton's handling of dragons in Chapter 3 is first rate, but I think he missed the opportunity for a nice comparison between Tolkien and Bilbo. Atherton reminds us that Tolkien "desired dragons with a profound desire", but that "in my timid body did not wish to have them in the neighbourhood, intruding into my relatively safe world" (*OFS* 55). He might have added that Bilbo, on finding that "something Tookish woke up inside him", almost immediately flinches away, echoing Tolkien's own misgivings around real, living dragons in the neighborhood: "Suddenly in the wood beyond The Water a flame leapt up—probably somebody lighting a wood-fire—and he thought of plundering dragons settling on his quiet Hill and kindling it all to flames. He shuddered; and very quickly he was plain Mr. Baggins of Bag-End, Under-Hill, again" (*H*, I, 45–46). In some ways, then, the forays of Tolkien's hobbits into the perilous realm can be thought of autobiographically.

With the first part of *The Hobbit* film trilogy having already surpassed $1 billion in worldwide earnings, it is not surprising that publishers want to hitch their wagons to that dragon. The most unfortunate aspect of this frenzy is that many inferior books will be foisted onto the Tolkien community. Some will be inferior because their authors have nothing of real value to add to the discussion and merely hope to profit from the success of the films. Others will be inferior because they were rushed to market (most likely with the same motive). Although they certainly do not fall into the first category, it is equally clear that these two books might have been better with more careful consideration.

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Green Suns and Faërie: Essays on J. R. R. Tolkien, by Verlyn Flieger. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2012. 331 pp. $24.95 (trade paperback). ISBN 9781606350942.

When the foremost American Tolkien scholar releases a new book, it's cause for celebration. In each of her three earlier books on Tolkien, Flieger has broken new ground and advanced our understanding of Tolkien's work. *Splintered Light* (1983; rev. ed. 2002) looked at the way Tolkien's ideas about language shaped his work, as well as how the theories of fellow Inkling Owen Barfield might have influenced Tolkien's thought and imagery. *A Question of Time* (1997) considered Tolkien's treatment of dream and time, comparing his conceptions with those of J. W. Dunne. And her magnum opus, *Interrupted Music* (2005), explores just what it means to set out to create a mythology.[1]

In addition to her books, for more than three decades Flieger has contributed insightful and thought-provoking essays to a disparate array of volumes devoted to Tolkien's work: *Tolkien's Legendarium* (2000), which she co-edited; the Blackwelder festschrift, *The Lord of the Rings, 1954-2004*, edited by Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull (2006); the forthcoming Shippey festschrift; all three volumes edited by Jane Chance growing out of the Tolkien sessions at the International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo (*Tolkien the Medievalist*, 2003; *Tolkien and the Invention of Myth*, 2004; and *Tolkien's Modern Middle Ages*, 2005); among others, as well as to a wide array of journals (*Tolkien Studies*, *Mythlore*, *The Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*). Even the most diligent admirers of her work will have found it difficult to keep up with all the works collected here—e.g., those published in conference

proceedings in Finland (1993) and Norway (1997). It's good to have this wealth of scholarship gathered together into one volume, to place on the shelf alongside her book-length studies.

This new collection offers twenty-five essays, five of them[2] published here for the first time. The essays are arranged into three sections: Tolkien as Sub-Creator (eight essays), Tolkien in Tradition (ten essays), and Tolkien and His Century (seven essays), and the book comes with that ever-useful tool too often omitted in essay-collections, an index.

It has long been a hallmark of Flieger's work that she is not afraid to take on the big issues, like the interplay of fate and freewill in Arda, just how reincarnation works in Tolkien's world (and how it differs from inherited memory), or Frodo's 'failure' at Mount Doom and its enduring personal consequences for him. At the same time, she brings keen attention to the seemingly obvious, such as the role of Tolkien's narrators or the effect of Tolkien's pseudepigrapha and embedded authors, with results that challenge preconceptions, as when she delves into the unexpectedly deep significance of the honorific 'elf-friend' and the role those so designated play in the transmission of the story. Add to this thoughtful consideration of what are often treated by others as minor texts—the *Notion Club Papers*, the *Athrabeth*, *The Lay of Aotrou and Itroun*, *The New Shadow*, and especially *Smith of Wootton Major*—and you have a distinctive body of work well worth reading and re-reading. There is much to absorb, much to mull over, and much to respond to in these essays.[3]

A few outstanding pieces deserve special mention. High on the list is "Allegory Versus Bounce: Tolkien's *Smith of Wootton Major*," a lively exchange between Flieger and Tom Shippey over interpretation of Tolkien's final story. Shippey reads *Smith* as an autobiographical allegory mainly dealing with Tolkien's professorial career, while Flieger reads it as a pure fairy-story which presents but does not explain.[4] That two such eminent Tolkien scholars draw diametrically opposed readings from the same tale shows just how much depth and breadth there is even in Tolkien's shorter and apparently (but perhaps deceptively) simpler works. Shippey's contribution can be found in his collection *Roots and Branches* (2007), but it's good to have the full exchange collected in one book so the presentations may be read and considered back-to-back.

The outstanding new essay in this volume, and perhaps the high-point of the book, "Tolkien, *Kalevala*, and 'The Story of Kullervo,'" closely examines Tolkien's earliest prose story. Flieger first identifies the elements carried over from his source, the runos concerning Kullervo in Lönnrot's *Kalevala*, and then traces which elements from

Tolkien's own "Story of Kullervo" make it into the Túrin saga.[5] The result is a major contribution to our understanding of the development of what became the legendarium. Flieger not only argues suggestively that Tolkien's "Story of Kullervo" preceded the Eärendil poems by some two years, dating the tale to late 1912 (188), but assigns it the status of "an extra-mythological transitional story" (187), his "first practical union of 'lit. and lang.'" (188), and "The bridge over which Tolkien crossed from Finland to Middle-earth" (187).

Other essays deal with a wide array of topics. "Tolkien and the Idea of the Book" looks at various likely claimants to have inspired Tolkien's Red Book of Westmarch, both within the legendarium (The Golden Book of Tavrobel) and real-world medieval codices (The Red Book of Hergest), before rather surprisingly settling on the Winchester Malory as the most proximate exemplar. "Tolkien and the Matter of Britain" lays out the many parallels between the Matter of Middle-earth and the Arthurian legend and argues the latter influenced Tolkien more than he would admit—though to my mind her case is weakened by assertions that Tolkien's denying influence is proof of the influence he denies. "Brittany and Wales in Middle-earth" draws surprising parallels between *The Lay of Aotrou and Itroun*'s sinister Corrigan, a beautiful fay beside her fountain in an eerie forest who gives the hero a magical phial, and Galadriel, a beautiful elf who sits beside her Mirror in the dweomer-forest of Lothlórien and gives the hero a magical phial. "Bilbo's Neck-Riddle" looks at mythological parallels to Gollum and Bilbo's riddle-contest and concludes, rather surprisingly, that Bilbo did indeed win fairly according to the traditional rules of such contests.

Some essays are sure to stir controversy (something Flieger has never shied from), such as "The Music and the Task: Fate and Free Will in Middle-earth," where she strongly makes the case that Tolkien is not writing theology but creating an imaginative space in which to tell his story. She argues that his creation of a world in which one sentient race is ruled by fate and the other acts with free will, even when they interact together, is less about his own belief than narrative strategy: the uniqueness of the metaphysical situation thus created enriches the narrative environment in all sorts of interesting ways and provides "a plausible mechanism for change in an ordered universe" (36). "A Cautionary Tale: Tolkien's Mythology for England" observes that the legendarium depicts centuries of endemic warfare, linking the disasters within the fiction to the backdrop of two World Wars of Tolkien's own lifetime. "Taking the Part of Trees: Eco-conflict in Middle-earth" challenges (I think unfairly) Tolkien's reputation as a 'green' author, arguing that the hobbits treat the Old Forest no differently than the

Orcs treat Fangorn. And "Missing Person," perhaps her most famous essay, looks at four 'Christ-figures' in the legendarium[6] whose presence she argues only highlights the absence of Christ himself; she ends with a heartfelt call for critics and readers not to allegorize Tolkien's work but to take it on its own terms.

No reader will agree with all the ideas thrown out in these essays,[7] but reading them is a fine way to spark a line of thought, stir a reader to counter-argument, or send the reader back to the original work by Tolkien under discussion—which is, after all, one of the most valuable things a work of criticism can achieve. These essays are consequential and this collection a major contribution to Tolkien studies. Given that they were not written to a pre-existent scheme, they can be read in any order; I would suggest they be read not all in one great Party Feast but spread out perhaps at the rate of one per day, like hobbit birthdays.[8]

We already have Tom Shippey's *Roots and Branches* and a collection of essays by J. S. Ryan. Dare we hope for more collections like this from Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull, Richard C. West, Douglas A. Anderson, Marjorie Burns, et al.?

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Notes

1 In addition, she co-founded *Tolkien Studies* and has edited or co-edited a number of Tolkien's works: *Smith of Wootton Major* (expanded edition, 2005), *Tolkien On Fairy-stores* (with Douglas A. Anderson, 2008), and most recently "The Story of Kullervo" and Tolkien's early essays on the *Kalevala* (2010).

2 "Tolkien on Tolkien: 'On Fairy-stories,' *The Hobbit*, and *The Lord of the Rings*" (2005), "The Mind, the Tongue, and the Tale" (2010), "The Body in Question: The Unhealed Wounds of Frodo Baggins" (n.d.), "Bilbo's Neck Riddle" (circa 2008), and "Tolkien, *Kalevala*, and 'The Story of Kullervo'" (2012).

3 For a checklist giving the titles, date of publication, and a brief note on the topic of each essay, see the Addendum at the end of this review.

4 She develops this argument further in another essay included in this book, "When Is a Fairy Story a *Faërie* Story?: *Smith of Wootton Major*."

5 She also credits Kullervo's animal helper (an innovation of Tolkien's, not found in the original *Kalevala*), the magical dog Musti, as having provided the origin of Huan in the Beren and Lúthien story (200).

6 Eärendil, Gandalf, Aragorn, and Frodo, the last of these described as "that most moving of hero types, one whose sacrifice benefits everybody but himself" (230).

7 For example, I find myself strongly in disagreement with Flieger's judgment that the first half of *The Hobbit* is a failure, unable to command Secondary Belief because of the intrusive narrator; any judgment which dismisses the Gollum chapter as a failure simply does not accord with my experience as a reader. Similarly, her description of Aragorn as "youthful" (143, 149) seems to me off the mark. Individual readers' responses, obviously, will vary depend on which part(s) of Tolkien's work most holds their individual interests.

8 As with any book, there are some misprints and minor mistakes. Gollum is not naked (125) but wears dark tattered clothing, though this does not much affect her point. The *Kalevala* was not written in the late nineteenth century (131) nor the Proto-*Kalevala* in 1928 (182); the latter is a typo for 1828. Similarly, the B-draft of "On Fairy-stories" dates not to 1934 (242) but 1943. Wayland's Smithy is not in Warwickshire (312). These are minor points of no great consequence: two minor errors that might confuse or mislead readers appear on pages 107 and 199. In the latter, the sentence reading "contrasting guilty Kullervo with innocent Beleg" should instead read "contrasting guilty *Túrin* with innocent Beleg." In the former, Finrod's question "Are there no tales of our days before death" should really read "Are there no tales of *your* days before death"; luckily in this case the correct reading appears when the line is repeated just two pages later.

ADDENDUM: *GREEN SUNS* CHECKLIST

Part One: Tolkien Sub-Creator

- "Fantasy and Reality: J. R. R. Tolkien's World and the Fairy-story Essay" (*Mythlore*, 1999).
  —Middle-earth presents an un-fantastic world, grounded in reality, recognizable from our experience of the real world (best line: "I've spent most of my life arguing with Ted Sandyman").

- "The Music and the Task: Fate and Free Will in Middle-earth" (*Tolkien Studies*, 2009).
  —Tolkien posits a challenging teleological contradiction to carve out imaginative space in which to tell his story; his interplay of two sentient races existing under different sets of rules is less an insight into his own beliefs than a brilliant narrative strategy that enriches his legendarium.

- "Tolkien and the Idea of the Book" (Blackwelder festschrift, ed. Hammond and Scull, 2006).
  —Bilbo, Frodo, and Sam belong to "the long line of transmitters, translators, redactors, scribes, and copyists" who preserve Middle-earth's history, paralleled by the unknown figures who created the White Book of Lecan, The Black Book of Carmarthen, the Yellow Book of Lecan, and especially the Red Book of Hergest; physically the Red Book of Westmarch most closely resembles the Winchester Malory.

- * "Tolkien on Tolkien: 'On Fairy-stories,' *The Hobbit*, and *The Lord of the Rings*" (2005, not previously published).
  —traces a sequence from *The Hobbit* to "On Fairy-stories" to *The Lord of the Rings*; argues that Tolkien learned by doing in *The Hobbit*, set down the lessons thus learned in "OFS," then put those precepts to work to good effect in *The Lord of the Rings*.

- "When Is a Fairy Story a *Faërie* Story? *Smith of Wootton Major*" (*Myth and Art*, ed. Segura and Honegger, 2007).
  —"On Fairy-stories" provides the criteria by which Tolkien wrote *Smith of Wootton Major*; the latter is deliberately opaque, a series of elusive and elliptical events refusing easy explication; "a Faërie story in Tolkien's purest sense of that word."

- "The Footsteps of Ælfwine" (*Tolkien's Legendarium*, ed. Flieger and Hostetter, 2000)
  —the 'elf-friends' found throughout Tolkien's legendarium play a vital role in preserving the stories of the lost world; "to call someone 'Elf-friend' . . . was to confer on that character something of Tolkien's own position as . . . recorder of a mythology"; "Ælfwine provided Tolkien a way to participate in his own mythology." (Begins with the wonderfully Tolkienesque phrase "Although now unrecoverable . . .").

- "The Curious Incident of the Dream at the Barrow: Memory and Reincarnation in Middle-earth" (*Tolkien Studies*, 2007).

—"[to] travel backward in time . . . [is to] travel backward in memory"; rather than "the theologically difficult question of reincarnation," Tolkien opts in *The Notion Club Papers* for "the less problematic concept of inherited memory"; such memories typically recur in descendants, but Merry's memory of the dead Dúnedain prince in whose barrow he had been briefly interred shows this is not always the case; the episode "underscore[s] the immediacy of the past in the present."

- "Whose Myth Is It?" (*Between Faith and Fiction*, Second Northern Tolkien Festival proceedings, 1997).
  —the *Athrabeth* is "a problematic addendum" to the legendarium marked by multiplicity of competing authorities; "a dialogue between contending points of view" without final resolution; "not . . . an answer but . . . a question"; here Tolkien "[has] the authorial honesty to question a bedrock assumption of his invented world."

Part Two: Tolkien in Tradition

- "Tolkien's Wild Men from Medieval to Modern" (*Tolkien the Medievalist*, ed. Chance, 2003).
  —wood-woses and knights gone mad (i.e., wild men distinguished from civilized men driven wild) as models for Ghân-buri-Ghân, Beorn, Strider, Túrin, Gollum ("Tolkien's most brilliant creation"), and Frodo.

- "Tolkien and the Matter of Britain" (*Mythlore*, 2000).
  —Tolkien's Matter of Middle-earth mirrors the Arthurian legend in its range, depth, and multiplicity of texts but lacks a central 'Arthur' figure to unify the myth; thinks the Arthurian cycle "influenced and shaped" Tolkien's legendarium "more deeply . . . than Tolkien was . . . willing to acknowledge."

- "Frodo and Aragorn: The Concept of the Hero" (*Tolkien: New Critical Perspectives*, ed. Isaacs and Zimbardo, 1981).
  —two contrasting examples of heroes within the same tale: one the fairy-tale everyman we identify with whose story ends badly for him (Frodo), the other a larger-than-life almost mythic figure with divine ancestry fated to do great things who triumphs over all obstacles to win great rewards (Aragorn).

- * "Bilbo's Neck Riddle" (circa 2008, not previously published).
  —places Bilbo's final unanswerable question to Gollum in the

context of Norse riddle-contests; argues there is good precedent to consider Bilbo's final question a legitimate conclusion to such a challenge.

- "Allegory Versus Bounce: Tolkien's *Smith of Wootton Major*" (*Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, 2001).
  —a two-part debate over whether *SWM* is autobiographical allegory (Shippey) or pure fairy-story (Flieger).

- "A Mythology for Finland: Tolkien and Lönnrot as Mythmakers" (*Tolkien and the Invention of Myth*, ed. Chance, 2004).
  —suggests E. M. Forster's cry "Why has not England a great mythology?" (*Howard's End*, 1910) provided an impetus and Lönnrot's *Kalevala* project a model for Tolkien's decision to create his legendarium.

- * "Tolkien, *Kalevala*, and "The Story of Kullervo" (2012, not previously published).
  —how this transitional early story set the stage for the legendarium that soon followed. A major contribution and the standout essay in this book.

- * "Brittany and Wales in Middle-earth" (n.d., not previously published?).
  —a two-part piece looking first at Broceliande and the Corrigan as models from Galadriel and Lórien, then at what Sindarin owes to Welsh.

- "The Green Knight, the Green Man, and Treebeard: Scholarship and Invention in Tolkien's Fiction" (*Scholarship & Fantasy*, proceedings of Turku conference, 1993).
  —Tolkien's ent derives from a long tradition of the Green Man.

- "Missing Person" (*Mythlore*, 1986).
  —Middle-earth has saviors but no redeemer; Christ-figures (Eärendil, Aragorn, Gandalf, Frodo) but no Christ.

Part Three: Tolkien and His Century

- "A Cautionary Tale: Tolkien's Mythology for England" (*A Hidden Presence*, ed. Boyd and Caldecott, 2003).
  —Tolkien's legendarium depicts a world of "unrelenting strife and suffering," ravaged by endemic war; it conveys something he felt England needed "to know about itself": how to let go (of empire, &c.).

- * "The Mind, the Tongue, and the Tale" (2010, not previously published).
  —Bombadil, Treebeard, and the Moria gate-inscription as examples of Tolkien's subtle use of language (best line: "If I ever put a bumper sticker on my car, it's going to say" "*Mythology is language and language is mythology*" [a line from the A-manuscript of *On Fairy-stories*]).

- "A Post-modern Medievalist" (*Tolkien's Modern Middle Ages*, ed. Chance and Siewers, 2005).
  —contrasts Tolkien with Fowles (*The French Lieutenant's Woman*) and finds Tolkien the more modern and subtle of the two.

- "Taking the Part of Trees: Eco-conflict in Middle-earth" (*J. R. R. Tolkien and His Literary Resonances*, ed. Clark and Timmons, 2000).
  —argues Tolkien is less 'green' than admirers think, that hobbits treat the Old Forest exactly as Isengard's orcs treat Fangorn (best line, quoted from *The New Shadow*: "To trees all Men [including hobbits] are Orcs").

- "Gilson, Smith, and Baggins" (*Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings: Sources of Inspiration*, ed. Caldecott and Honegger, 2008).
  —argues that Sam's final words in *The Lord of the Rings* should be read as "Well, *I'm* back," mindful of all those for whom there is no homecoming (from Rob Gilson and G. B. Smith to Fili and Kili, Hirluin the Fair and Forlong the Old, and especially Frodo).

- * "The Body in Question: The Unhealed Wounds of Frodo Baggins" (n.d., not previously published).
  —traces in detail the psychic and physical damage Frodo undergoes during his journey and his inability to heal afterwards; suggests he will find no healing even in Valinor

- "A Distant Mirror: Tolkien and Jackson in the Looking-glass" (*Post-modern Medievalisms*, ed. Utz and Swan, 2005)
  —points out how both *Beowulf* and *The Lord of the Rings* refer within themselves to their own story being told; suggests parallels between Jackson's *The Fellowship of the Ring* film on one hand and *The Wizard of Oz* and *Star Wars* on the other.

The Broken Scythe: Death and Immortality in the Works of J.R.R. Tolkien, edited by Roberto Arduini and Claudio A. Testi. Zurich and Jena: Walking Tree Publishers, 2012. xxviii, 256 pp. $24.30/£15.00 (trade paperback). ISBN 9783905703269. Cormarë Series No. 26.

This long-overdue single-topic examination of death and immortality in the works of Tolkien is not simply a collection of thematically linked papers gathered by an editor. Ideas were thrashed out in a string of preparatory meetings among the contributors. It is therefore something of an organic whole, with a complementary set of approaches, philosophical, exegetical, and encyclopaedic. It was, as the editors explain, created to fulfil the need for a scholarly all-Italian book on Tolkien, and although it is too diverse to represent any single 'school of thought,' it certainly has a flavour quite distinct from most Tolkien scholarship from Britain and America.

The contributors also come from overlapping circles: several are on the committee behind the Italian publisher Marietti's *Tolkien e dintorni* series of publications, which first published this collection under the title *La Falce spezatta: Morte e immortalità in J.R.R. Tolkien* (2009). Some are involved in the Tolkien journal *Endòre* [*sic*]. Several are professional translators, and have turned the book into English (at which point I must declare an interest, because one of them, aided by a further three, translated my book *Tolkien and the Great War* for Marietti). There are experts in philosophy, history, and religion, whose expertise and background in mainland European academe give the collection its distinct character. However, while the topic is well defined and overlapping materials are discussed, the approaches taken in the different papers are so distinct that it is best to take them one at a time.

To deal first with the quasi-encyclopedic elements, the book provides two papers which are almost pure information rather than argument. In "Tolkien's *Legendarium* as a *meditatio mortis*," Claudio A. Testi provides a thorough chronological taxonomy of the concepts of death and immortality as developed by Tolkien in his Elves and Men, from the "Lost Tales" to the end of his work on "The Silmarillion." This is exceptionally useful, because the matter is complex and details are scattered across many separate books. Testi gives due weight to Tolkien's late, extended explorations of the topic, published in *Morgoth's Ring*, while showing clearly which of the later ideas were innovative and which conservative. His summary is above all a useful antidote to simplistic assumptions that (a) Elves live forever and are brilliant and happy, and (b) mortals just wink out of existence. The relationship which Tolkien refined is both elegant in its simplicity and complex in its ramifications: Elvish existence lasts from their birth until the end

of the world, but is bound within it; but human death is an exit from the world and probably from time itself. Among the easily overlooked points is that for mortals, death of the body is not necessarily the same as leaving the Circles of the World (49). Testi also examines some of the salient moral and philosophical ramifications of this world-picture, such as that it is Man's mortality which dictates that *faith* must underpin human existence.

Lorenzo Gammarelli performs another useful task by providing brief descriptions of how Tolkien's relevant shorter works treat death and immortality, ranging from the well-known "Leaf by Niggle" to the almost unobtainable *Lay of Aotrou and Itroun*. Terse discussions of bereavement and of the relationship between Faërie and dream suggest he might have much more of interest to say. On the other hand, he dismisses possible significances in "The Mewlips" too easily, by taking at face value the title of the original version: "Knocking at the Door: Lines induced by sensations when waiting for an answer at the door of an exalted academic person." I suspect Tolkien's title was a wry afterthought, a joke he knew would be appreciated by readers of the *Oxford Magazine* where it was published (apparently ten years after its composition). Maybe the imagery is "merely the product of playing with sounds and associations," as Gammarelli says unprovably; but I'd bet there's more to it—including memories of the Somme in 1916. As the surrealists knew, nonsense is a stage upon which deep anxieties are often acted out.

A paper midway between encyclopedic and exegetical, "The Wrong Path of the Sub-creator" by Alberto Ladavas explores the narrative of mortality and power in the stories of Númenor and of the Ringwraiths. The abuse of power in a vain attempt to thwart death is a denial of mortal nature, he notes. One is tempted to add that it is also a mortal error; but that is only true for Ar-Pharazôn's benighted subjects back in Númenor. The king himself and his retinue, imprisoned in "the Caves of the Forgotten" until the end of the world, are cheated of the release that death would bring, achieving a mockery of the immortality they craved. Ladavas clearly brings out the parallel mock-immortality achieved by the Ringwraiths. He also sees a striking analogue of the Nazgûl in the Icelandic legend of Thiðrandi, in which a foolish pagan man ignores all warnings and leaves his hall at night to investigate a knocking; outside, he is mortally wounded by nine black-clad women riding at him from the North with swords unsheathed. For Ladavas, this analogue exposes the Nazgûl to the light of Christian tradition. Similarly, he sees in Aragorn's dying words to Arwen ("Behold! we are not bound to the circles of the world, and beyond them is more than memory") a "Christian vision of death [that] expresses a great faith

in the fate God has allotted to man." But if he had considered the implications of Elvish immortality, he might also have recognised that Aragorn's words contain a particular, rather damning reference to the Elvish addiction to the past.

Andrea Monda too stresses that an obsession with memory is the Elves' great failing, and aptly likens Lothlórien to the land of the lotus-eaters—but with memory substituting for oblivion. His essay 'Death, Immortality and their Escapes' argues that both longevity and memory are forms of escape from reality—in Tolkien's works and in reality alike. He sees our current era as one of death medically deferred and memory technologically extended. The paradox for Tolkien's characters is that in order to protect their world, they must reject a crippling nostalgic yearning for that world as it once was, or as it has been up till their own time. Various degrees of attachment to memory are described in Saruman, Denethor, Treebeard and Gollum, with Bombadil the sole character capable of living happily in the present. Monda argues insightfully that in resisting evil and accepting death, Aragorn and Arwen perform parallel expiations for their ancestors: Aragorn for the death-fearing Númenoreans, Arwen for Galadriel's view of existence as a "long defeat."

Moving on to the philosophical element of the book, Franco Manni's opening "An Eulogy of Finitude: Anthropology, Eschatology and Philosophy of History in Tolkien" is as wide-ranging and complex as its title implies. He sets out to show that, despite a lack of documentary evidence, Tolkien was interested in philosophy: witness his clear and growing interest in key philosophical themes, of which death is but one. Manni finds psychoanalytic parallels for the "psychotic" thanatophobia of Ar-Pharazôn and the Nazgûl, whose lives are so hollowed by the quest for power that they cannot accept the "completion" of an end. He neatly demonstrates the common ground between these "slaves to power" and Tolkien's Elves, with their urge to preserve the past: both groups deny the future, and its capacity for change. Perceptively, Manni notes that Tolkien's fiction deals primarily not with individual death but with "the extinction of peoples in history"; yet he observes Sam Gamgee's sense that what the individual achieves within the longer story is a form of immortality. A very interesting critique is that Tolkien's history of humans indicates such a paucity of cultural or scientific development that it is hardly a history at all. I'm not convinced by his suggestion that Tolkien created these vast timespans merely to trace the individual fates of Elves such as Galadriel, except with regard to the First Age: after all, he stitched the Second and Third Ages on to accommodate non-Elf-centred stories of Númenor, the Quest for Erebor, and the War of the Ring. Charitably, Tolkien's

remarkably static human history may be said to match the real-world historical period in which he specialised professionally: the medieval. Less charitably, I would say that the evolution of ideas was not one of Tolkien's keen interests. Manni succeeds in relating his arguments not only to Middle-earth, but also to the shaping griefs of the First World War and to Tolkien's mindset late in life when he was dwelling on what he had achieved as an author—and what might be left undone.

In "Tolkien, Death and Time," Roberto Arduini embarks where Manni left off, with a consideration of the author's anxieties over the unfinished "Silmarillion," and further stresses the bereavements Tolkien suffered throughout his life. He proceeds to depict Tolkien's creativity as a means of validating existence despite its transience: an heroic journey of sorts. Arduini recruits Borges to concur that endless life would be soul-destroying, and Tolkien to question (like co-contributor Monda) modern aspirations to extend life by medical or other means. Ulysses, Bilbo, Aragorn, and Niggle all undertake deathlike journeys in the dark and emerge enriched with new perspectives to comprehend better "the relativity of the human condition." Niggle's story is the one Arduini then explores at length, with his own readings supplemented by those of multiple English-language commentators. Where he cites Freud on the uses of fiction and drama in reconciling us to death, and expatiates on Niggle's Tree as his (or Tolkien's) unfinished work realized, Arduini could profitably have noted that this idea also seems to underpin Tolkien's Music of the Ainur, and therefore the entire cosmography of Middle-earth. The marred, death-filled world progresses towards an ultimate end when it may be contemplated from eternity as a perfected piece of art.

Claudio A. Testi deals directly, but obscurely, with the idea of the marring of Arda in "Logic and Theology in Tolkien's Thanatology," this time focusing closely on the "Athrabeth" and comparing Tolkien's ideas with Catholic theology of death. I can't pretend to be enlightened by the reduction of Tolkien's prose into the algebra of propositional logic, though I'll concede that some might be. Likewise, the discussion of the subtle distinction between "natural" states and states which "conform to the design" of God/Eru is pitched at readers better-versed in scholasticism than I am. A weakness which is apparent, however, is when Testi seizes on a note in the MSS for "On Fairy-stories" about the difference between miracles and magic, and connects this rather arbitrarily with Thomas Aquinas, only to pull the rabbit out of his hat: Tolkien's own copy of *Summa Theologica*, which Testi discovered and bought in an Oxford bookshop. The rabbit doesn't do much, unfortunately. Although Testi tells us Tolkien's *Summa* had some notes and underlinings, he doesn't tell us what any

of them were. After Testi's splendid first paper, for me at least this is all a disappointment.

Giampaolo Canzonieri's "A Misplaced Envy: Analogies and Differences between Elves and Men on the Idea of Pain" discusses the place of suffering in Eru's plan much more clearly. He pares apart Tolkien's account of the debate over Míriel (*Morgoth*) to show that elvish death from grief exists in Eru's plan only as a potential, which Melkor's marring actualizes. He asks why death from grief would be in Eru's plan for the Elves in the first place, and surmises two reasons: it makes Elves partners in suffering with mortals, and it opens a path to Salvation. Where he questions why mortals do not seem to envy what he calls the Elves' "almost total freedom from pain," I would answer that it is superhuman endurance that protects the Elves, not subhuman insensitivity, and that Tolkien's mortal characters do indeed display envy for that endurance. More usefully for an understanding of the mortal condition in Middle-earth, Canzonieri distinguishes between the differing emotions generated by the expectation of pain and death. Pain is a matter for fear, which is remediable, but death is a matter for dread, incurable by anything but faith. Elves may suffer fear but not existential dread, because their existence is more-or-less guaranteed while the world lasts. But if mortals are not to fall into some degree of despair, they require faith that there is something for them on the other side of death. In another of the sharp observations with which this collection abounds, Canzonieri ends by noting that unlike Lúthien, who died as an Elf and gained vital insights before coming back as a mortal, Arwen is unique in moving from the certitude of an immortal to the uncertainty of a mortal. Her story is all the more eloquent for it, in encapsulating the great divide underpinning Tolkien's world.

For me, perhaps inevitably, the most interesting essay here is "'In the Mounds of Mundburg': Death, War and Memory in Middle-earth," by Simone Bonechi. It's not just that it tackles a topic germane to *Tolkien and the Great War*—surveying Middle-earth funerary and burial customs against the backdrop of Britain's attempts to memorialize its First World War dead—it's the clarity with which Bonechi marshals his case. Tolkien, he argues, was "a son of his time" who, like his peers, wanted to make sense of the deaths of his close friends. Bonechi weighs up the various forms of burials in different cultures, and notes that the grave of the Hobbits who fought in the Shire accords perfectly with English styles of commemoration after 1918. Among the heirs of Númenor and the Rohirrim we see "royal necropolises" which support the nation even as they memorialize the dead. Yet who raised Middle-earth's first war memorial? Bonechi is right: it was Morgoth, with the

Mound of Slain, a weapon of despair. But as he says, with the aid of returning nature—which frequently sanctifies Middle-earth's sites of mourning—even the Mound becomes a stimulus to action against its builder. Bonechi seems less sure of Tolkien's purpose with the Dead Marshes; but I think it significant that this later version of mass death as a weapon of despair was fully imagined by Tolkien at a point when his son Michael had been severely damaged by war trauma, and when his other eligible son Christopher was on the military conveyor belt to battle. The same memories of war motivated both the Mound of Slain and the Dead Marshes, but the Marshes in their unmitigable dread express the cares of a father watching impotently from the sidelines.

The Broken Scythe is a demanding read at times, and the thread sometimes eluded me from one sentence to the next. "At the origins of the universe, be it real or fantastic, we find the intrinsic difference between past and future, without which we cannot think or speak or act. This is why death exists in fairy stories, not only due to isomorphism with real life." As Arduini says of time in the same paragraph, this "slips through the fingers of any type of conceptual understanding" (71). I'm sure the translation is excellent. So is it just my finite brain, or are the authors occasionally more keen to impress than to guide?

The collection's coverage of Tolkien's works is impressive, indeed uncompromising, covering not only *The Lord of the Rings* but also scattered poems and aspects of *The History of Middle-earth*. All deserve to be better known, especially among Tolkien readers not fortunate enough to have much of this material translated into their native tongues. Several key passages and aspects are visited from different perspectives in multiple papers. If the editors wanted to bring serious Tolkien scholarship to Italian readers, in this translation they can congratulate themselves for also providing the corollary: an introduction to Italian criticism on Tolkien, including citations from further papers and other critics. Reference to major writers and thinkers from the non-anglophone world is also welcome.

Finally, by way of an additional footnote to Manni's opening paper, I can add a further observation to bolster the case for Tolkien's interest in philosophy. Humphrey Carpenter records in his *Biography* that Tolkien joined the college's Dialectical Society. By coincidence I visited the archives of Exeter College, Oxford, the same day I sat down to read Manni's essay, and I examined for the first time the society's minutes. There was a notable overlap with Tolkien's own club the Apolausticks, including one member who was Dialectical Society secretary or president from November 1912 until the end of 1914 (when the society stopped meeting). There is no reference to Tolkien, but by no means all attendees were named in the minutes. Papers that

might have interested Tolkien included "The Problem of Evil," "The Philosophy of History" (by A. J. Toynbee), "A Philosophy of Fictions," "Bull-roarers and High Gods," and—yes—"Immortality."

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A Hobbit's Journey: Discovering the Enchantment of J. R. R. Tolkien's Middle-earth, by Matthew Dickerson. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2012. xii, 260 pp. $16.99 (trade paperback). ISBN 9781587433009.

A Hobbit Devotional: Bilbo Baggins and the Bible, by Ed Strauss. Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour, 2012. 319 pp. $9.99 (paperback). ISBN 9781616267438.

Here are two new books about Tolkien in which the author of the first could be (but probably isn't) talking about the second. Matthew Dickerson warns of the danger of trying to "reduce" Tolkien's writings to "any one particular lesson, or to a disguised (or ill-disguised) tract on some political, religious, or philosophical topic—or to an allegory." The problem with this approach is not so much that the politics or religion or philosophy might be falsely imposed on the text, which does in fact have "applicability" to such things, as that the writer might "miss the story as story" (12). And it is in the story *as story* that any applicability (Tolkien's own word) is to be found.

Dickerson's virtue is not that he avoids political, philosophical, and religious lessons. He highlights quite a few. But he finds them by paying close attention to the details of plot, character, diction, and texture in Tolkien's writing. Strauss, on the other hand, does not. His book is really mistitled. It is not so much material for devotionals that he finds in *The Hobbit* as Sunday-School lessons. His sixty short chapters follow a pattern: note something that happens in *The Hobbit*, find something similar that happened to someone in the Bible, and draw a practical application to life. Example: Hobbits love comfort and do not meddle with the outside world; the Israelites at certain periods of their history were similarly insular; Bilbo learns better from his Adventure; therefore, we should care about the people around us and not ignore them. Most of the other lessons are equally innocuous. One can hardly imagine that Tolkien (or anyone else) would have objected to caring about the people around us, or even found this an illegitimate "application" of *The Hobbit*. The real question is why anyone needs to have such things pointed out, and the real problem is the potential

to trivialize the story (and the Bible!) by reducing them to such platitudes. Such a book is of interest to Tolkien scholars only because they want to know how readers of all kinds react to the legendarium. A few minutes with Strauss will tell them all they need to know about a certain kind of pietist.

Dickerson gives us a book we can sink our teeth into. It is a revision and expansion of his earlier work *Following Gandalf: Epic Battles and Moral Victory in The Lord of the Rings* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2003). The earlier title was much more accurate. The new one would lead us to expect a very different book: from epic battles and moral victory to discovering enchantment? But almost the entirety of the original study has been retained. The new material—about maybe 15-20 % of the whole—is worthwhile. It updates the argument, deals with studies published in the last decade, and rounds the discussion out in useful ways. But *A Hobbit's Journey* is still mainly about the ethics of war in Middle-earth, not about "finding enchantment" there as such. Chalk one up to the marketing department.

Dickerson's main thrust, then and now, is wrestling with one of the common criticisms we hear from Tolkien's detractors: that *The Lord of the Rings* glorifies war and violence. So he carefully looks at the battles, at how they are described, and at how the heroes respond to them, participate in them, think and talk about them, and feel about it afterward.

In the process of his careful reading of these passages, Dickerson not only shatters the criticism but notices a significant pattern. Gandalf, Frodo, Elrond, Aragorn, Faramir, and Galadriel all choose what looks like certain military defeat rather than submit to various moral defeats that appear to be the path to victory. They do this even when the military defeat they are apparently accepting would be total and devastating. Saruman, Boromir, and Denethor enact the opposite choices. The grand irony, indeed the eucatastrophe, is that this very preference of military defeat to moral defeat, no matter what the cost, turns out to be the key to ultimate military victory. Yet the people making these choices do not know in advance that it will be so; that is not the reason for their choice. All they have at best is what Gandalf ruefully admits to be "a fool's hope." Why do they make these choices? How does one make such choices? How are they rooted in Tolkien's biblical world view? Such are the questions to which this study is naturally led.

In the revised edition Dickerson adds one completely new chapter, on the ethics of torture and the treatment of prisoners in Middle-earth. This topic is in keeping with the original emphasis on the ethics of war, and reflects the interest in that topic that has been renewed

for us since the first edition by controversies over our own response to global terrorism. The treatment is timely but not platitudinous. Sauron's servants use torture as a matter of course; the Free Peoples avoid it as a matter of principle, erring by preference on the side of kindness (as with the elves who allow Gollum to escape), but finding themselves sometimes driven to the brink of the line if not over it by extreme need (as when Gandalf puts the fear of fire on Gollum). Like us, the heroes of Middle-earth find their principles challenged by the difficult circumstances of life; like some of us, they do not find such challenges reason to give those principles up. A subheading captures the tone well: "The Complexities of Narratives, and of Life." Dickerson expands the old material by taking account of newer scholarship (e.g., a discussion of Tom Shippey's wonderful 2005 paper "'A Fund of Wise Sayings': Proverbiality in Tolkien" makes a delightful addition to the chapter on wisdom) and by some reorganization.

I quibble only over a couple of points. Does Gandalf really cross the line and use torture when he only threatens Gollum with fire, rather than actually employing it? I'm not so sure. There is a very good and balanced discussion of whether and to what extent Tolkien's tale should be read as a "Christian myth." But I wonder if one of the reasons given against that conclusion is not overplayed: that there is no incarnation in Middle-earth (236). For Christian theology, incarnation is not a metaphysical principle so much as an earth-shaking event, the pivot of history. It happened when Caesar Augustus was emperor and Quirinius was governor of Syria. If Tolkien's tales take place in the prehistory of our own world, to have inserted incarnation into the story would have been eschatologically anachronistic. Hence its absence may not be evidence of anything.

Wrestling with significant questions as they are raised and answered by details of plot and texture of passage, Dickerson shows a profound understanding of what literature is and therefore of how it should be studied. The story as story is always in the foreground, and it is what provides the answers. One comes away not only with valuable insights on the "applications" of Tolkien's story to life and ethics, but also with a renewed appreciation for the story itself, in the way this discussion highlights the nature and the audacity of the risks Gandalf and others take in order to preserve their moral vision. What could be better than that?

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The Year's Work in Tolkien Studies 2010

Merlin DeTardo

Tolkien studies in 2010 featured five collections of essays on three themes. Two of these were devoted to the subject of music (very broadly considered), from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean (with one essay appearing in both volumes). These were *Middle-earth Minstrel: Essays on Music in Tolkien*, edited by Bradford Lee Eden (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010) and *Music in Middle-earth*, edited by Heidi Steimel and Friedhelm Schneidewind (Zurich: Walking Tree Publishers, 2010). A few other uncollected essays also discussed musical topics, including one nominally on Tolkien and Wagner, which would be the subject of two monographs from Walking Tree Publishers two years later.

Two more anthologies focused on Christian approaches to Tolkien's work. *Tolkien and Lewis: Masters of Myth, Tellers of Truth*, edited by Joseph Pearce and Robert Asch (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2010) is a special issue of *St. Austin Review* (Vol. 10 no. 1, dated January/February 2010). *The Ring and the Cross: Christianity and the Writings of J.R.R. Tolkien*, edited by Paul E. Kerry (Lanham, MD: Farleigh Dickinson University Press) though dated 2011, actually appeared in 2010; a companion volume, *Light Beyond All Shadow: Religious Experience in Tolkien's Work*, followed in 2011.

The third theme was "Tolkien and Romanticism," subtitle of Vol. 7 of *Hither Shore: Interdisciplinary Journal of Modern Fantasy Literature*, published by the Deutschen Tolkien Gesellschaft. Each of these five collections includes works that easily could have fit elsewhere. Joseph Pearce, to note one example not mentioned below, discusses musical creation stories in his brief editorial (Pearce and Asch 1–2). Contributions to these collections are considered separately in the notes that follow, rather than being arranged by their parent work.

The contents of a sixth 2010 gathering are likewise scattered below, as that work had no theme: *Middle-earth and Beyond: Essays on the World of J.R.R. Tolkien*, edited by Kathleen Dubs and Janka Kaščáková (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2010). Nor, as usual, were there themes in the year's other journals that focus largely on Tolkien's work. Besides *Hither Shore*, already mentioned, these were two issues of *Mythlore* from the Mythopoeic Society, edited by Janet Brennan Croft: Vol. 28 nos. 3–4 (109–10, dated Spring/Summer 2010) and Vol. 29 nos. 1–2, (111–12, dated Fall/Winter 2010); issues 4 (Spring 2010) and 50 (Autumn 2010) of the Tolkien Society's journal, *Mallorn*, edited by Henry Gee; Vol. 19 of the linguistic journal, *Parma Eldalamberon*,

edited by Christopher Gilson; issue 3 (dated 2009–2010) of *Silver Leaves* from the White Tree Fund, edited by L. Lara Sookoo; Vol. 27 of *Seven: An Anglo-American Review*, edited by Marjorie Lamp Mead; and Vol. 7 of this journal, *Tolkien Studies*. *Mythlore* and *Seven* also feature articles on other fantasists, while *Mallorn* and *Silver Leaves* also include fiction. Those items are not discussed here.

Despite the paired theme collections named above, 2010 was not the year that Tolkien scholarship learned to sing or the year that Tolkien studies found religion, but the year of the essay. Though there were no monographs of special note in 2010 (and no new monographs at all solely about Tolkien), the shorter works took up the slack, with many fine studies, led by the contributions of Vladimir Brljak, John Garth, Yoko Hemmi, Janka Kaščáková, Helios De Rosario Martínez, John Holmes (twice), and David Bratman, as well as Verlyn Flieger's edition of Tolkien's own "Story of Kullervo" and essays on the *Kalevala*. That said, many articles, even some of the better ones, make the same points again and again. "On Fairy-stories" is repeatedly paraphrased. Several musical articles are at pains to justify a focus on poetry by emphasizing the ancient unity of song and story. Tolkien's differentiation of allegory from applicability should by now be taken as a given, but isn't. And too many authors believe their analysis is complete when all they have generated is a list. There were some other less frequently seen clusters: five essays on fate and free will, two on *Sir Orfeo*, two on maps, two on the grotesque, and, less surprisingly, two on Tom Bombadil. Finally, several works, including not only those by Tolkien himself but also material from C.S. Lewis, Clyde S. Kilby, and George Clark and Daniel Timmons, were written long before their 2010 publication.

Works by Tolkien

It has long been known that Tolkien in 1914 adapted a portion of the Finnish poem *Kalevala* (compiled by Elias Lönnrot from songs he collected in the early 19th century) into a prose narrative (modeled on William Morris) with interpolated verse. He later referred to this work as the "original germ of the Silmarillion" (*Letters* 87; see also *Letters* 345)—particularly for the tale of Túrin. Extant in one much-amended but never completed draft manuscript, this work finally appears, along with Tolkien's remarks on the source material, edited by Verlyn Flieger, as "'The Story of Kullervo' and Essays on *Kalevala*" (*Tolkien Studies* 7: 211–78). "The Story of Kullervo: (Kalervonpoika)" (214–45), also titled "The Story of Honto Taltewenlen," one of many bynames for the wayward youth Kullervo, is based on the *Kalevala's* runos 31–36. Kullervo ("wrath") and his twin sister Wānōna ("weeping";

cf. Niënor in *The Children of Húrin*) are born enslaved to their uncle, Untamo, who had killed their father. After magically surviving Untamo's attempts to kill him as a baby, Kullervo is sold to Āsemo, a smith in a distant land, where he grows to manhood. When the smith's wife tries to maim Kullervo, he charms bears to kill her (the longest of the story's poems, which keep the original trochaic tetrameter, had been her prayer for the protection for her cattle against bears). At last setting out to kill Untamo, Kullervo learns the route from a forest spirit, who warns him against ascending a particular mountain. Naturally he disobeys, and there finds a young woman lost. After what is at least rough persuasion—take note, Lynn Whitaker (see below)—she falls in love with him, but after a time discovers he is her brother (this is not stated explicitly) and jumps to her death in a waterfall. The story stops here, with notes on Kullervo's further tragedies (which end in suicide). Flieger also gives Tolkien's initial draft synopses, as well as her own notes, largely on how the tale differs from the *Kalevala* and on the names Tolkien invented for his adaptation, some of which appear to be the first examples of Quenya.

The first of Tolkien's two essays is a manuscript titled "On 'The Kalevala' or Land of Heroes" (246–61), delivered in 1914 and 1915, a warm appreciation meant to be accompanied by a reading of selected *Kalevala* passages. Tolkien emphasizes how strange the material will seem to his audience. In addition to fascinating comments on the poem's history and style, Tolkien mentions a preference for Celtic over Greek myths, describes the Welsh *Mabinogion* as a literary and tame work when compared with the *Kalevala*, offers what (as Flieger notes) are precursors of his thoughts on folktales expressed in "*Beowulf*: The Monsters and the Critics" and "On Fairy-stories," and makes reference to people's "probably unwholesome modern thirst for the 'authentically primitive'" (250), which sounds like one of his late letters about the Catholic Church (*Letters* 394). Tolkien's second lecture, a typescript called simply "The Kalevala" (262–78), was probably never delivered, and dates to approximately 1919–24. It is an expansion of the earlier talk by about fifty percent, but stopping four-fifths of the way through. It is in this version that Tolkien wishes for "something of the same sort that belonged to the English" (265). For reasons of mythical geography (and not because of his dissatisfaction with Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha*), he also bemoans the "unfortunate existence of America" (269).

Quenya Phonology: Comparative Tables, Outline of Phonetic Development, Outline of Phonology, edited by Christopher Gilson (Mountain View, CA, 2010), is volume 19 of *Parma Eldalamberon*, continuing the publication in (mostly) chronological order of Tolkien's work on

invented languages, here comprising documents from the late 1930s and early 1950s—some of which Tolkien continued to amend as late as 1970. The "Comparative Tables" (18–28) consists of five charts showing the evolution of consonants and vowels from original Valarin or Primitive Quendian into a dozen later Elvish languages. In associated notes, some of the languages are described by Tolkien as having the flavor of Latin, Welsh, and Germanic. Here and in the two versions of the "Outline," he often maintains the pose of an uncertain transcriber rather than a creator. On a wrapper containing the notes, he indicates they are to "be revised when the individual langs. are *done*" (26). Telerin voiceless stops are said to be "probably of relatively recent development" (27), raising the question of when "recent" is within the mythology. The "Outline of Phonetic Development" (29–67), rewritten (in "beautifully calligraphic style" [11], the first four paragraphs of which illustrate the volume's covers) as the "Outline of Phonology" (68–107), with notes on still later revisions, explains the sound changes that led specifically from "prehistoric" Common Eldarin to Quenya. The "Outline" is said to be based on studies by Tolkien's imagined narrator Ælfwine, the seafaring Anglo-Saxon story-collector created for *The Book of Lost Tales*; the conceit extends even to an indication that Ælfwine had compared a particular Quenya consonant to "the *c* in English *cild* and *ceaf*" (75). The first version was heavily revised; superseded passages are given in lengthy footnotes. Much is made of the interaction of the written Parmaquesta and spoken Tarquesta as the texts proceed through the variations of consonants in various word positions, vowels (which are said to preserve Common Eldarin pronunciations better than vowels do in other Elvish languages), and stress. Neither "Outline" is complete; the later version stops sooner, in a discussion of diphthongs. Gilson's introduction (5–17) describes the texts and explains how dates were determined, with multiple references to *The History of Middle-earth* and earlier volumes of *Parma*; like Gilson, Tolkien himself apparently used different ink colors to track his changes. The non-linguist will find these texts hard going, noting perhaps the odd bit of vocabulary (most of it appears already in the "Eytmologies" in *The Lost Road*—though apparently not the amusingly onomatopoeic Common Eldarin **buzbō* "large fly" [48]) and wondering about the importance of Tolkien's decision in the later "Outline" that the *ʒ* sound did not occur in Eldarin.

Musical articles by John Holmes and Gregory Martin (see below) quote from an otherwise unpublished address Tolkien gave to the Lincoln Music Society; in another linguistic essay, Holmes quotes from Tolkien's lecture notes on Old English vocabulary. The introduction to

Middle-earth Minstrel describes one of Tolkien's lectures on the "Battle of Maldon," but quotes only Tolkien's description of its author as a "minstrel turned scholar" (Eden 2).

Biography and General Works

John Garth has been able to trace the meeting of "J.R.R. Tolkien and the Boy Who Didn't Believe in Fairies" (*Tolkien Studies* 7: 279–90), mentioned in drafts published in *Tolkien On Fairy-stories*, in which a young boy responded to Tolkien's suggestion that fairies lived in poppy flowers with a terse statement that only pistils and stamens were found within. Referring to an unpublished memoir by Marianne Caroline Gilson, stepmother of Tolkien's fellow T.C.B.S. member, Robert Quilter Gilson, Garth shows that Tolkien's precocious interlocutor was Hugh Cary Gilson (1910–2000), Rob's younger half-brother (later an eminent biologist), and that the encounter happened on the grounds of the Gilson home in the Birmingham suburb of Marston Green, probably in either 1913 or 1915; Garth's article includes photographs of Hugh and the garden. Garth notes that Tolkien's *Qenya Lexicon* of 1915–16 actually names a poppy-fairy and that Tolkien was slow to abandon such appeals to children, but Hugh's words evidently stuck with him, coloring his thinking in "On Fairy-Stories" (and perhaps—though Garth doesn't note this—suggesting Councillor Tompkins in "Leaf by Niggle," who dismisses flowers as merely "digestive and genital organs of plants" [*TL* 94]).

Maggie Burns offers two studies of Tolkien's ancestors and early life. In "'An Unlettered Peasant Boy' of 'Sordid Character': Shakespeare, Suffield and Tolkien" (*Mallorn* 49: 17–23), she engagingly notes that Tolkien's maternal grandfather, John Suffield (1833–1930), a successful businessman, was, in his spare time, a member of Birmingham's Central Literary Association (Tolkien's father Arthur was also a member). He argued there that Francis Bacon was the author of Shakespeare's works. Then, noting Humphrey Carpenter's quotation of Tolkien having "poured a sudden flood of unqualified abuse upon Shakespeare" in a 1911 school debate, Burns prints the entire *King Edward's School Chronicle* report from which the description derives (22–23), in which Tolkien was on the (losing) side advocating Baconian authorship. Burns observes that the arguments might be unrelated to the debaters' actual opinions, notes that Tolkien in particular was known as an "eccentric humorist" (22), and adds that the report is in fact by himself: he was then both editor of the *Chronicle* and secretary of the School Debating Society. Tolkien reported that the next speaker, T.K. Barnsley, "ran him to earth" and mocked his "expensive toilet and delicate coiffure" (23). Burns's "'. . . A Local Habitation and

a Name . . .'" (*Mallorn* 50: 26–31) rambles a bit in its argument that Birmingham, and particularly the suburbs and neighborhoods in which Tolkien lived (even after leaving Sarehole), was not as industrialized as Carpenter's biography indicates; among other data, she cites a period tour guide that apologies for the city's lack of large factories. Burns also tentatively suggests that Birmingham, widely known as the "toy shop of Europe," partly inspired Dale in *The Hobbit*.

In a 1983 presentation, Clyde S. Kilby (1902–86), who in 1966 spent six weeks trying to assist Tolkien to bring the Silmarillion to completion, explained why he believed Tolkien never finished it. That talk is now published as "Woodland Prisoner" (*Seven* 27: 48–60), edited by John D. Rateliff, who in the "Introduction to 'Woodland Prisoner': Clyde S. Kilby Speaks on Tolkien" (45–47) notes Kilby's "frankness" (47) in comparison with his earlier essays and his 1976 book, *Tolkien & The Silmarillion*. Kilby feels that Tolkien (whom he describes as "a man born to be unhappy" [54] and easily turned aside by distractions) was, like Niggle, trapped by his perfectionism in the immensity of his creation.

"Language and Human Nature (Manuscript Fragment)" by C.S. Lewis (*Seven* 27: 25–29) is the only known result of a projected collaboration on "'Language' (Nature, Origins, Functions)" mentioned by Tolkien in 1944 and Lewis in 1948 (*Letters* 105, 440). In this fragment, Lewis defines the words "language" and "meaning"; it might be worthwhile to compare Lewis's thoughts to H.P. Grice's work on meaning from about the same time. The fragment receives explication from Steven A. Beebe in "C.S. Lewis on Language and Meaning: Manuscript Fragment Identified" (*Seven* 27: 7–23).

Tolkien makes two appearances in Benjamin Wiker's *10 Books Every Conservative Must Read: Plus Four Not to Miss and One Imposter* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2010), both times among the "not to miss." Moved by Peter Jackson's movies to read the book, Wiker opens "*The Lord of the Rings*: J.R.R. Tolkien" (245–66) with a serviceable mini-biography that skips Tolkien's invented languages and academic work (apart from "On Fairy-stories"). He then explains how Hobbits embody the small-government ideas of the early American Anti-Federalists (whose collected writings appear among the "must read" books); Aragorn's big government is apparently excused because of his great nobility. It is Sam, "the common man" with his "good sense," who saves Middle-earth (257); Wiker doesn't note that Tolkien had misgivings about Sam's "readiness to measure and sum up all things from a limited experience" (*Letters* 329). Sam's words on the Stairs of Cirith Ungol prompt Wiker to extol conservatives to "gather strength from the great tales" (258)—thus this book, apparently. Wiker's next

chapter, titled "*The Jerusalem Bible*" (267–89), mentions Tolkien's contribution to that translation, a book Wiker praises for grand but not ornate language that helps readers both appreciate the stories anew (he mentions Tolkien's ideas about Recovery) and get a better sense of life in ancient Israel.

Jeremy Mark Robinson's *J.R.R. Tolkien: Pocket Guide* (Maidstone, Kent: Crescent Moon Publishing, 2010) is a selection of fifteen chapters from the forty-four in his mammoth *J.R.R. Tolkien: The Books, The Films, The Whole Cultural Phenomenon*, which was discussed in this survey for 2008. The major excisions concern the Peter Jackson movies, but every remaining chapter has been shortened (most by a few paragraphs, some by a few pages). Although Robinson indicates that the opportunity was used to make corrections, the new book includes even typographical errors unchanged from the earlier work.

John D. Rateliff asks "How Do We Know What We Know?" (*Mallorn* 49: 4–8) about when Tolkien's works were written, and weighs contradictory evidence for *The Hobbit*, *Mr Bliss*, and *Farmer Giles of Ham*. A valuable companion piece (not explicitly intended as such) is "Truth or Consequences: A Cautionary Tale of Tolkien Studies" by Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull, a lengthy internet essay originally posted January 26, 2010 to the Scholars Forum at *The Lord of the Rings Fanatics Plaza*. (In a demonstration of the elusive nature of online scholarship, a 2012 upgrade of that website has buried Hammond and Scull's essay in the forum's back pages by labeling it, as of this writing, with an errant posting date of January 1, 1970.)

"Heroes and Heroism in the Fiction of Tolkien and the Old Norse World: An Interview with George Clark" (*The Hero Recovered: Essays on Medieval Heroism in Honor of George Clark*, edited by Robin Waugh, James Weldon [Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2010]: 233–41) is a transcript of the late Daniel Timmons's conversation with the esteemed medievalist (and co-editor with Timmons of the 2000 collection, *J.R.R. Tolkien and His Literary Resonances*); the filmed interview appeared in Timmons's 2003 documentary, *The Legacy of The Lord of the Rings*. Clark first read *The Hobbit* in the 1950s when he found a copy at the home of Francis Peabody Magoun, Jr., for whom he was house-sitting. (He doesn't mention that Magoun's copy was a gift from Tolkien via Houghton Mifflin: see the One-Volume Edition of John D. Rateliff's *The History of The Hobbit* [891].) Clark esteems Tolkien's fiction but disagrees strongly with Tolkien's Old English scholarship, and he sees a conflict within Tolkien between the "urge to create a hero and this instinctive dislike of heroes" that is resolved in the person of Sam (235).

General Criticism: *The Lord of the Rings* and Tolkien's Work as a Whole

Tolkien's well-meant comparisons of Dwarves to Jews in a 1955 letter and 1965 interview deserve a more careful consideration than Rebecca Brackmann offers in "'Dwarves Are Not Heroes': Antisemitism and the Dwarves in J.R.R. Tolkien's Writing" (*Mythlore* 28 nos. 3–4: 85–106). Building on the work of Christine Chism, Brackmann argues that Tolkien, alarmed by Nazism, grew to reconsider how he had portrayed Dwarves. She urges readers to be as tough on Tolkien as he was on himself. In *The Book of Lost Tales* and early versions of the "Quenta Silmarillion," Dwarves are villains. In *The Hobbit*, they are, as her title quoting Tolkien says, "not heroes" and "calculating folk" (*H*, XII, 268) and thus "exclude[d] . . . from the heroic ethos that is the hallmark of the book's value system" (85). In *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien redeems himself with the creation of heroic Gimli, of whom Galadriel says, "over you gold shall have no dominion" (*FR*, II, viii, 393). The Dwarvish language is quasi-Semitic, their features and mannerisms play to anti-Semitic stereotypes, their status as Aulë's imperfect copies of Ilúvatar's Elves and Men suggests Christian supersessionism theories, and Tolkien's late comparisons mentioned above reveal a racial essentialism. In this reading, Tolkien's angry 1938 letter responding to a potential German *Hobbit* publisher's request for proof of his "Aryan" ancestry is partly an expression of guilt for his portrayal of Dwarves to that date. However, for all Brackmann's sober approach and broad scope, she doesn't go deep enough. There are obvious rebuttals or complications to most of her arguments, and she isn't sufficiently careful in establishing what connections between Dwarves and Jews Tolkien had in mind at what time in his writing.

Margaret Sinex examines the relationship between "'Monsterized Saracens,' Tolkien's Haradrim, and Other Medieval 'Fantasy Products'" (*Tolkien Studies* 7: 175–96) and finds that the Men to Gondor's near south are modeled on European beliefs about Saracens, although they are more civilized and less bestial than those portrayed in the Middle English romances *Sir Ferumbras* and *Rouland and Vernagu*. Sinex makes much of the association of the Southrons with red, yellow, and black, and should consider, as a possible counter-example, the "gay scarlet raiment" of Untamo's "cruel and worthless carles" in Tolkien's "Story of Kullervo" (215).

In "Diversity and Difference: Cosmopolitanism and *The Lord of the Rings*" (*Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 21 no. 3: 351–65), Helen Young finds that Tolkien's tale goes beyond merely championing diversity to advocating international cooperation against world-threatening events. The Fellowship is a microcosm of such joint operations, and

Aragorn moves Gondor from a multicultural to a cosmopolitan society, further renewing it, by encouraging "contact with other cultures" like Dwarves and Elves (360). Young may discount Sauron's diverse allies (many tribes of Men, plus Orcs, Trolls, Wargs, and so on) too easily. Like Sinex, Young notes the medieval portrayal of Saracens in medieval works like *The King of Tars* and *Of Arthour and Merlin*.

Robert T. Tally, Jr. declares, "Let Us Now Praise Famous Orcs: Simple Humanity in Tolkien's Inhuman Creatures" (*Mythlore* 29 nos. 1–2: 17–28), a largely unnecessary reminder, given substantial earlier scholarship by Tom Shippey, among others, that Tolkien's Orcs, when portrayed closely (like Shagrat and Gorbag in *The Lord of the Rings*), show individual motivations and characters. As Tally observes, Tolkien struggled with the nature and origin of Orcs in notes published in *Morgoth's Ring*.

Alan Tierney's "Balrogs: Being and Becoming" (*Mallorn* 49: 31–37) tracks Tolkien's changing conception of those demons, which grew more "elemental, indistinct, and mysterious" (33)—and more powerful—thus symbolizing the impersonal nature of modern evil. Tierney feels that illustrators of Balrogs draw as much on their own conceptions as on Tolkien's descriptions.

In "Better Off Dead: The Lesson of the Ringwraiths" (*Fastitocalon: Studies in Fantasticism Ancient to Modern* 1 no. 1: 69–82), Amy M. Amendt-Raduege shows that while the traditional undead creatures of folklore usually are being punished for sinful lives, Tolkien's wraiths choose immortality, only to find it unbearable. The terror they evoke, through their screams that suggest the despair of "some evil and lonely creature" (*FR*, I, iv, 99), is the fear of becoming like them, with "shrivelled mind . . . left naked to the Lidless Eye" (*RK*, V, vi, 116) as the Witch-king threatens Éowyn.

In "The Thread on Which Doom Hangs: Free Will, Disobedience, and Eucatastrophe in Tolkien's Middle-earth" (*Mythlore* 29 nos. 1–2: 131–50), Janet Brennan Croft considers, within a framework of the mythic implications of conflict, and with reference to Stanley Milgram's famous psychological experiments on the difficulty of disobeying evil orders, a multitude of cases in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* to determine Tolkien's position. She concludes that characters should follow the Tao rather than authority. Croft observes that Middle-earth "seems almost constantly at war" (131), but as Martin G.E. Sternberg notes (see below), that may be a function of storytelling. A few of her examples don't demonstrate what she believes they do. First, Thorin & Co. are not punished, in the form of Bombur falling into the Enchanted Stream, for shooting the deer of Mirkwood (140): rather, the hart knocks Bombur from the boat before Thorin takes the

first shot. Second, Bilbo's gift of Thorin's Arkenstone to Bard doesn't *delay* battle between the Dwarves, Elves, and Men "until exactly the moment of the Goblin and Warg attack" (141): in fact, battle is joined sooner than it otherwise would have been when Dain's army marches through the night after learning their heirloom is in enemy hands. Third, Faramir is not "told to retake Osgiliath" (130; that comes from the movie) but to reinforce Gondor's garrison already there against Mordor's initial assault—a move which arguably buys time for the Rohirrim to arrive at Minas Tirith.

William H. Stoddard, in "*Simbelmynë*: Mortality and Memory in Middle-earth" (*Mythlore* 29 nos. 1–2: 151–60), like Vladimir Brljak (see below), finds that Tolkien paints the (imagined) past so beautifully specifically in order to heighten the sense of loss, against which Tolkien emphasizes that, as Stoddard says, "new growth can only come out of death" (156). This is heightened by the absence of any assured afterlife in *The Lord of the Rings*: the only way to be remembered is in song—or, as Stoddard observes, to become friendly with immortal Elves, but they're leaving the world. Stoddard also suggests ways in which the three Elven rings support these themes. Similarly, Amy M. Amendt-Raduege finds that the Hobbits learn during *The Lord of the Rings* to strive to be "'Worthy of a Song': Memory, Mortality and Music" (Eden 114–25). With reference to Old English elegies, she notes particularly that Sam, once he gains an understanding of himself as potentially a character in a future story, repeatedly refers to that idea and also recognizes that Sauron's victory would mean the end of song (and thus, in a way, of immortality).

Murray Smith's "'They Began to Hum Softly': Some Soldiers' Songs of World Wars I and II and of Middle-earth Compared and Contrasted" (Steimel and Schneidewind 185–212) finds the Hobbits' walking songs and what little Tolkien gives of Gondor's songs are like Great War soldiers' music in not being jingoistic, unlike the official British propaganda. They differ in not being satiric, perhaps because the stakes in the conflict with Sauron are too high to question authority (however, against that idea, remember that there are at least murmurs that Denethor "drives his son too hard" [*RK*, V, iv, 89]). Smith catches some details easily overlooked, like Faramir being described as a "lover of lore and of music" (*RK*, Appendix A, I, iv, 337), though he does get tripped up by the notorious poem-switch described in "'Fastitocalon' and 'Cat': A Problem in Sequencing" by John D. Rateliff and Wayne G. Hammond in *Beyond Bree* (August 1987: 1–2).

In "Music, Myth and Literary Depth in the 'Land ohne Musik'" (Steimel and Schneidewind 127–48), Gregory Martin relates Tolkien's efforts to revive lost English traditions to Ralph Vaughan Williams's

folk-song collecting, and also compares Tolkien's thoughts to that composer's on connections between music and language and place names. Priscilla Tolkien told Martin that her father liked to whistle, a point seconded by John Holmes, who quotes Tolkien himself writing from a "whistler's point of view" (Eden 44; see below). Martin includes a brief analysis of the melody Tolkien sings in his recording of "The Stone Troll."

Alun Morgan, in "*The Lord of the Rings*—A 'Mythos' Applicable in Unsustainable Times?" (*Environmental Education Research* 6 nos. 3–4: 383–99), thoughtfully considers the value of Tolkien's work for environmentalism. He suggests that people who read *The Lord of the Rings* will be moved to experience nature, be re-enchanted by it, and thus learn to care for it, but he worries that teaching the text for that purpose will undermine the effect. Sam in his humility and eventual leadership-caretaker role is an exemplar for fighting injustice while resisting power. The Shire is both a model for "localism" and a warning about its limitations. Morgan is well-versed in "On Fairy-stories" and Tolkien's biography, and notes that Catholicism calls for "celebration, preservation, and restoration of Creation" (395).

Matthew P. Akers believes that Tolkien demonstrates the (Catholic-inspired) economic system of "Distributism in the Shire" (Pearce and Asch 11–16) with small farms, minimal government, and local trade as a conservative environmentalist response to modernity. Akers believes Lotho's "new mill makes iron" (12) when Tolkien is quite clear that it continues to grind grain (upon Saruman's arrival, it becomes an instrument only of pollution). He also suggests that Lotho and Saruman change the Shire through "free trade" (12), but if so, who was previously imposing tariffs? The Scouring shows the proper level of response, avoiding the flaw of imperialism that G.K. Chesterton exposes in *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* (and to which Sam is tempted in Mordor).

"The Enigmatic Mr. Bombadil: Tom Bombadil's Role as Representation of Nature in *The Lord of the Rings*" by Liam Campbell (Dubs and Kaščáková 41–65) identifies Tom as both an expression of the Green Man myth and a symbol for the besieged natural world; the latter is shown in Tolkien's description of Bombadil as the "spirit of the (vanishing) Oxford and Berkshire countryside" (*Letters* 26) and his reduced domain. Campbell's interpretation of looming rain clouds as suggesting the encroaching forces of darkness suffers from Bombadil's description of that weather as "Goldberry's washing day" (*FR* I, vii, 140). Campbell also misidentifies Tolkien and E.V. Gordon's 1925 edition of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* as a translation. Meanwhile, Kinga Jenike has trouble categorizing "Tom Bombadil—Man of

Mystery" (Dubs and Kaščáková 67–74), in which she successively rejects his classification among each of the peoples or creatures of Middle-earth (including Orcs and Dragons) before concluding that Bombadil is Tolkien himself.

Peter Wilkin's insightful "Æfre me strongode longað: Songs of Exile in the Mortal Realms" (Eden 47–60) is a study of sea-longing in Elves, Men, and Hobbits and its expression in song. Wilkin identifies such longing as a desire for the return to paradise after the fall: only some Elves fell, and their paradise still exists, whereas all Men fell, and the noblest then fell again (in Númenor) from a paradise that was destroyed, which is why the longing is more dangerous for them. (Wilkin might further develop his theme by considering the statement that "to Cuiviénen there is no returning" for the Elves [*S* 48].) Some minor mistakes distract: "The Road Goes Ever On" doesn't appear in "The Grey Havens," though the other Hobbit walking song does (49), and *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil* was published in 1962 rather than 1961 (47; oddly, Vladimir Brljak gives it the same incorrect date).

The "Totemic Reflexes in Tolkien's Middle-earth" (*Mythlore* 28 nos. 3–4: 129–40), Yvette Kisor argues, are shamanistic elements that reflect an earlier age (Kisor is inspired by Stephen Glosecki's writing on this aspect of Old English texts like *Beowulf*, where these components were used by authors who didn't understand their significance). Her numerous examples include Gandalf entranced following his transformation on the Silvertine, when he can hear even the voice of stone; an emphasis on avunculate relationships like that of Théoden, Éomer, and Éowyn; and artifacts that contain essences of their makers. Kisor notes that *The Silmarillion* portrays a much more animistic world than *The Lord of the Rings*; Catherine Madsen (see below) might ask why that is, given that—unlike in *Beowulf*—there has been no intermediate Christianizing. Kisor also suggests a connection between Mircea Eliade's *illo tempore* and Tolkien's Faërie.

Doreen Triebel, in "Celtic Influences and the Quest of National Identity" (*Hither Shore* 7: 76–92) outlines the history of Celtic nationalist literature from James Macpherson's infamous "Ossian" poems (which Tolkien appears to link to "bogus archaism" in his typescript essay on "The Kalevala" [269]), through Keats's inspiration in Celtic folktales, to Tolkien's changing ideas about creating a national mythology. She concludes that Tolkien created a mythology for Britain rather than England, and like Yoko Hemmi (see below), emphasizes his remarks in "English and Welsh." Oddly, Triebel seems to believe that "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" was "composed in Welsh" (87).

Three articles consider decision-making and (wizardly) persuasion. Listening to "The Voice of Saruman: Wizards and Rhetoric in

The Two Towers" (*Mythlore* 28 nos. 3–4: 141–52), Jay Ruud identifies the logical fallacies in Saruman's attempts to convince Théoden, and then Gandalf, to end their quarrels with him. Gandalf, on the other hand, "imparts information and then demands action based on conclusions he considers self-evident" (148). Ruud finds Gandalf's technique to rely on medieval models and adds that he speaks with an "authority reserved for a messenger of God" (149). In contrast, Chad Chisholm's defense, in "The Wizard and the Rhetor: Rhetoric and the Ethos of Middle-earth in *The Hobbit*" (*Mallorn* 50: 34–36), of the tricks Gandalf plays on Bilbo, the Trolls, and Beorn—on the grounds that Gandalf is not lying to himself, or is serving a greater purpose—reads as special pleading. A. Craig Waggaman expounds "On Hobbits and Hoplites: Dilemmas of Leadership in Aeschylus' *The Suppliants* and J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*" (*Damned If You Do: Dilemmas of Action in Literature and Popular Culture*, edited by Margaret S. Hrezo and John M. Parrish [Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010]: 63–86), arguing that Tolkien shows how decisions should be made with transparency, participation, and the recognition of the limits of human understanding, while nonetheless trying to consider circumstances fully. Denethor's perspective is literally limited by Sauron's manipulation of the *palantír*, and Saruman holds a "narrow vision of prudence" (79). Ultimately, "moral dilemmas . . . give us a taste of the essential sadness of the world of becoming where nothing is permanent" (80).

Janka Kaščáková's "'It Snowed Food and Rained Drink' in *The Lord of the Rings*" (Dubs and Kaščáková 91–104) begins as a collection of notes on Hobbit eating habits (and language, including the aphorism in her title and Bilbo's description of himself as "butter that has been scraped over too much bread" [*FR*, I, i, 41]) and deepens into a major examination of comedy and ennoblement. Moments like Bilbo's request for lunch in the Council of Elrond and Merry's first words upon being healed of the Black Breath, "I am hungry" (*RK*, V, viii, 145), make a dark story more endurable. Unlike Aragorn, who is infrequently seen to eat, the Hobbits have to find their own path to heroism: the first weapon Sam uses is an apple, and his reluctance to part with his cookware in Mordor is like Aragorn's unease in leaving Andúril with the doorward at Meduseld.

In an avowedly preliminary study that with further development might prove insightful, Sue Bridgwater finds that there is no clear pattern to "Staying Home and Travelling: Stasis Versus Movement in Tolkien's Mythos" (Dubs and Kaščáková 19–40), as she at least compiles an impressive list of wandering and homebody characters in *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Hobbit*, *Smith of Wootton Major* and "Leaf by Niggle." She notes that Húrin and Túrin through their travels destroy the

homes of those who wish to stay put. Her observation that Gollum, by being forced into wandering by his grandmother, causes "suffering for many" (24), does not consider that had he stayed by the Anduin, he and the Ring might have been found by Sauron or Saruman. Unsurprisingly, Bridgwater finds that staying often is related to possessiveness, and suggests that the best course is to relinquish control and embrace fate.

Kathleen Dubs demonstrates that a list of nearly every humorous moment in *The Lord of the Rings* is "'No Laughing Matter'" (Dubs and Kaščáková 105–24). This is a mix of well-observed details such as Pippin telling Beregond he misses someone to "jest with" (*RK*, V, i, 40) and annoying errors like the claim that Legolas and Gimli continue their counting-contest of killed Orcs through the story's end (113), all without much point.

Lauren Gray opens "From Innocent to Magician: The Heroic Journey of Aragorn" (*The Image of the Hero II*, edited by Will Wright and Steven Kaplan [Pueblo, CO: Society for the Interdisciplinary Study of Social Imagery, 2010]: 134–38), a study of Tolkien's Aragorn, with a speech from Peter Jackson's movies. She attempts to show how Aragorn proceeds through a series of archetypes, emphasizing particularly how he inspires other characters.

David M. Waito believes the journey to destroy the One Ring is ultimately secondary to "The Shire Quest: The 'Scouring of the Shire' as the Narrative and Thematic Focus of *The Lord of the Rings*" (*Mythlore* 28 nos. 3–4: 155–76), and he may be right, but by not carrying his analysis far enough, he's written the year's essay with the greatest unrealized potential. As Waito tells it, the Shire needs Scouring long before Lotho and Saruman seize control, but the heroes aren't knowledgeable or experienced enough to realize this or do something about it. (Waito doesn't recognize the implications for his argument of Frodo's remark, which he quotes, that "an invasion of dragons might be good" for the Shire [*FR*, I, ii, 71].) As per Jane Chance, the Shire encourages suppression of difference that might benefit the community. Through their adventures, the hobbits grow to be what Plato would term "Virtuous Guardians," able to restore and keep justice. The reader is meant to learn to appreciate the need to act and not wait to be saved by superheroes. Among Waito's several clever observations is that there are "more than twenty-five differing forms of 'up'" in "The Scouring of the Shire," a subtle way for Tolkien to emphasize the rebellion (165), but this also indicates Waito's flaws: this fact is statistically insignificant without comparison to chapters of similar length (a comparison which would strengthen his argument: variations on "up" appear almost twice as often in that chapter as they do in the comparably-sized

"The Shadow of the Past" or "The Ring Goes South"). Waito's essay is like Vladimir Brljak's (see below) in subsuming what is normally taken as the main plot in a larger conceptual framework.

General Criticism: Other Works

The quotation in the title of Thomas Fornet-Ponse's "'Strange and Free'—On Some Aspects of the Nature of Elves and Men" (*Tolkien Studies* 7: 67–89) describes how the Valar perceive Elves and Men when they are revealed in a vision from Ilúvatar (*S* 18). Though Elves are there called "free," *The Silmarillion* later says that Men can "shape their life . . . beyond the Music of the Ainur, which is as fate to all things else" (*S* 42), implying that Elves lack free will. This conundrum, particularly with regard to Verlyn Flieger's 2009 thoughts on the matter in "The Music and the Task: Fate and Free Will in Middle-earth" (in *Tolkien Studies* 6), is Fornet-Ponse's subject. He closely examines Tolkien's writings on *fëar* and *hröar* (roughly "spirits" and "bodies") in "Laws and Customs among the Eldar" and "Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth" (both in *Morgoth's Ring*) to establish that Elvish will ought to have control of Elvish minds, and he notes situations in *The Silmarillion* where Elves appear to make conscious choices with serious consequences (Finwë's decision to remarry and Fëanor's choice to not surrender the Silmarils to save the Two Trees) but without completely resolving the dilemma. Because the passage that mentions a special freedom for Men goes on to say that "it is one with this gift of freedom that the children of Men dwell only a short space in the world alive, and are not bound to it" (*S* 42), Fornet-Ponse argues that the real limitation on Elvish freedom is their inability to truly die and leave the world.

Keith W. Jensen seeks to understand "Dissonance in the Divine Theme: The Issue of Free Will in Tolkien's *Silmarillion*" (Eden 102–13) through examination of the stories of Lúthien and Beren on the one hand and Túrin on the other, ultimately settling on the need to recognize one's own free will and to maintain hope. Musical metaphors fade in and out; particularly unhelpful are the statements in nearly successive sentences that "all music incorporates dissonance in some way" and that in "a solo there can be no dissonance" (104). Jensen asserts that Tolkien's only female character to demonstrate free will is Lúthien (107), thus forgetting at least—*pace* Verlyn Flieger for the Elves—Aredhel, Arwen, Éowyn, Erendis, Galadriel, Míriel, and Niënor.

Richard J. Whitt attempts to show that "Germanic Fate and Doom in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Silmarillion*" (*Mythlore* 29 nos. 1–2: 115–29) work independently from Divine Providence. He compares Tolkien's use

of those words to examples in *Beowulf* and *Heliand* and comments on their connection with ideas of judgment and death.

In "Confronting the World's Weirdness: J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Children of Húrin*" (Kerry 145–51), Ralph C. Wood relates the Old English concept of *wyrd* both to quantum uncertainty and to the ancient "unfriendly things in the world" among which Aragorn classifies the spirit of Caradhras (*FR*, II, iii, 302; Wood misidentifies the speaker as Gandalf [147]). Túrin, Wood says, could use more "prudential humility," but Wood is unfair to say he causes Beleg's death through "incautious pride" (149–50).

To criticize Richard C. West for insufficient consideration to Túrin's heroism but not once mention West's 2000 essay, "Túrin's *Ofermod*: An Old English Theme in the Development of the Story of Túrin" (from the collection *Tolkien's Legendarium: Essays on The History of Middle-earth*) is perverse. However, despite that curious decision and some confusion over the textual history of the "Narn i Chîn Húrin" (whose prose is not primarily an adaptation by Christopher Tolkien of his father's "Lay of the Children of Húrin"—itself *not* the first version of the story), Jesse Mitchell's "Master of Doom by Doom Mastered: Heroism, Fate and Death in *The Children of Húrin*" (*Mythlore* 29 nos. 1–2: 87–114) is a fairly reasonable consideration of whether Túrin is a Byronic hero like Cain or Manfred or an Absurd hero like Albert Camus's Sisyphus. Mitchell argues for the former.

In "The Words of Húrin and Morgoth: Microcosm, Macrocosm and the Later *Legendarium*" (*Mallorn* 49: 27–30), Kristine Larsen finds that the conversation between Morgoth and his prisoner Húrin early in the "Narn i Chîn Húrin" encapsulates Tolkien's complex and shifting thoughts about the scale of the dark Vala's power, as shown in various essays published in *Morgoth's Ring*.

Two more musical essays focus on the "Ainulindalë." Larsen's "'Behold Your Music!': The Themes of Ilúvatar, the Song of Aslan, and the Real Music of the Spheres" (Steimel and Schneidewind 11–27), compares the portrait of creation by music in the works of Tolkien and C.S. Lewis with the Big Bang, noting that the current distribution of matter in the universe is a result of sound (pressure) waves in its early moments; she also likens radiation, matter, and dark energy to Ilúvatar's three themes. Reuven Naveh listens to "Tonality, Atonality and the Ainulindalë" (Steimel and Schneidewind 29–51) and considers how Tolkien uses terms of Western music theory (similarly, David Bratman finds Tolkien's presentation to be "as precise as many a program note description of actual concert music" [Eden 144]—see below); Naveh suggests a rough sonata form is present, but without recapitulation. Following a comparison with Richard Wagner's *Das Rheingold* (for

musical conflict between purity and corruption), Naveh posits Melkor as representing Arnold Schoenberg's atonal period and finds a model for the "Ainulindalë" in the theories of Heinrich Schenker concerning a musical superstructure with underlying order and the delayed resolution of dissonance.

Kristine Larsen offers two further astronomical articles. Pondering "Myth, Milky Way, and the Mysteries of Tolkien's *Morwinyon*, *Telumendil*, and *Anarríma*" (*Tolkien Studies* 7: 197–210), she tentatively identifies those particular celestial objects (mentioned in *The Book of Lost Tales* or *The Silmarillion*) as the star Arcturus and the constellations Boötes and Sagittarius, respectively. The unusual motion of Morwinyon fits with descriptions from Classical astronomy, as in Boethius's *The Consolation of Philosophy*. In "Silmaril or Simulacrum?: Simulations of the Heavens in Middle-earth" (*Silver Leaves* 3: 18–23), she compares star domes of ancient Egypt, medieval Europe, and modern planetariums and train stations to Tolkien's examples in Osgiliath, Menelrond (in Doriath; yielding Elrond's name, in one derivation) and the artificial sky above Valinor that Tolkien called a "simulacrum" (*Morgoth* 388). Larsen queries that word, but would have done better to give more attention to Plato's definition and less to that of Jean Baudrillard.

Lynn Whitaker's "Corrupting Beauty: Rape Narrative in *The Silmarillion*" (*Mythlore* 29 nos. 1–2: 51–68), like the year's studies by Rebecca Brackmann and David M. Waito, frustrates by making large claims (and in the case of Brackmann and Whitaker, controversial ones) which are then developed very seriously but insufficiently. If Whitaker could question her archetypical preconceptions, not slide so easily from suppositions to assertions, and unbury her arguments from convoluted language, her analysis might prove very important. In Whitaker's view, Tolkien walks a fine line between showing actual or threatened rape (and thus possibly endorsing it) and hiding it offstage (and thus titillating the reader) in the assaults on Aredhel by Eöl and on Lúthien by Celegorm and Morgoth, ultimately suggesting defilement of the holy; Tolkien may be at fault for "positing . . . female beauty as the catalyst" for rape (51). Whitaker has a good eye for language and motifs that bolster a sexualized reading, but her limitations may be shown in her interpretation of Eöl's spear, that kills his wife Aredhel, as a phallic symbol: this only works if readers are to understand that he meant to rape his son, Maeglin, who was his intended target—something Whitaker does not consider. If Whitaker could improve her article, she might expand it to the cases of Túrin stripping Saeros naked and threatening to "prick [him] on from behind" (*CH* 89) and Árië the Sun-spirit being "ravished" by Morgoth in the "Myths Transformed" texts (*Morgoth* 381).

Michael Milburn compares Samuel Taylor "Coleridge's Definition of Imagination and Tolkien's Definition(s) of Faery" (*Tolkien Studies* 7: 55–66) and finds that Tolkien, in his last attempt, in the essay "Smith of Wootton Major," at defining Faery, settles on "Imagination," in terms that both subsume his earlier definitions in "On Fairy-stories" (and its drafts) and accord with Coleridge. Milburn also catches Tolkien apparently misreading the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of "fancy."

In "Refining the Gold: Tolkien, *The Battle of Maldon*, and the Northern Theory of Courage" (*Tolkien Studies* 7: 91–115), Mary R. Bowman argues that Tolkien's criticism of northern courage in his "Ofermod" essay is more subtle than most observers acknowledge. She also finds scenes in Tolkien's fiction that may echo the Old English poem, most notably Sam's position after Frodo has apparently been killed by Shelob, as he considers and rejects in turn several of the responses of Byrhtnoth's retainers when their lord has been struck down by the Viking enemy.

Aaron Isaac Jackson's "Authoring the Century: J.R.R. Tolkien, the Great War and Modernism" (*English* 59 no. 224: 44–69) interprets *The Hobbit* as a war memoir (the successive camps of Thorin & Co. around the Lonely Mountain, for example, are suggestive of World War I troop movements) and as such relates it particularly to the work of Siegfried Sassoon.

With "Strains of Elvish Song and Voices: Victorian Medievalism, Music, and Tolkien" (Eden 85–101; also Steimel and Schneidewind 149–65), Bradford Lee Eden hopes, by noting some musical allusions in selected Arthurian verses of Alfred Tennyson, Algernon Charles Swinburne, and William Morris and in Tolkien's early poetry, to demonstrate that Tolkien is upholding the traditions of Victorian Romantic poesy. Eden makes little attempt at specific comparison between the poems and seems not to realize that a few excerpts from three poets proves nothing about their total work, much less about the character of an entire era. Eden also errs in his description of Tinfang Warble's role in *The Book of Lost Tales* and repeatedly confuses Tuor and Túrin (96, 98).

Tolkien's Literary Theory and Practice

Vladimir Brljak's "The Books of Lost Tales: Tolkien as Metafictionist" (*Tolkien Studies* 7: 1–34) excels at explaining the complexity of the imagined textual transmission of the supposed sources for *The Lord of the Rings* (though a chart would have been more helpful still) according to the "Note on the Shire Records" that Tolkien created for the story's 1965 second edition. Building on this analysis, Brljak considers how the literary nature of Tolkien's book differs from the chronicle

on which it is derived. Rather than weakening the found-text conceit, he feels this removal strengthens the book's sense of ancientry and loss—qualities that Tolkien praised in *Beowulf* (compare to John D. Rateliff's essay "'And All the Days of Her Life Are Forgotten': *The Lord of the Rings* as Mythic Prehistory" in the 2006 collection *The Lord of the Rings 1954–2004: Scholarship in Honor of Richard E. Blackwelder*). However, this distancing works to "undermine the (intra-fictional) authenticity" (14), a tendency placed in tension with Tolkien's emphasis on the believability of his sub-creation (Brljak goes so far as to suggest that Tolkien may have "discarded" the latter idea [14], but the 1964 introduction to *Tree and Leaf* stresses the relevance to *The Lord of the Rings* of "On Fairy-stories," an essay that strongly emphasizes the importance of sub-creation). The result leaves readers "experiencing the impossibility of ever experiencing" the world in Tolkien's stories (22) by his "telling and untelling them in the same breath" (20). Brljak's fine essay also contextualizes Tolkien amid post-modern metafictional works, with particular attention to Jorge Luis Borges. Brljak cites Tolkien's facsimiles of the Book of Mazarbul to stress that the early emphasis on believable sub-creation extended even to artifacts, but their realism is undercut by being written in English, not Westron (3); for that matter, "*Westron*, 'Common Speech'" is not, as Brljak says, what speakers of that language called it (7; the "untranslated" names are *Sōval Phārë* or *Adûni* [*Peoples* 32, 316]); and Sam, not Bilbo, accompanies Frodo at Cirith Ungol (7).

Having considered authors ranging from Ford Madox Ford to E. Nesbit to Edith Wharton, Lori M. Campbell, in *Portals of Power: Magical Agency and Transformation in Literary Fantasy* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010), offers a chapter on "One World to Rule Them All: The Un-Making and Re-Making of the Symbolic Portal in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*" (143–62). Campbell disagrees with Farah Mendlesohn's division of fantasies into "immersive" and "intrusive" categories; she classifies Tolkien's book rather as a "one-world fantasy," with William Morris as a key forerunner, though *The Lord of the Rings* differs in being "a-historic" yet informed by medievalism (143, 146–48). Within Arda there are portals, very broadly defined as not just places but things or even people who offer transformation. The Ring transforms Frodo, for example, and Gollum is "the conduit through which Middle-earth becomes saved" (161). Campbell occasionally mistakes Jackson's movies for Tolkien's book.

Thomas Honegger's "'The Past Is Another Country': Romanticism, Tolkien, and the Middle Ages" (*Hither Shore* 7: 48–58) is a solid study of Tolkien's Romanticism by way of comparison of *The Lord of the Rings* with Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* and Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*,

both set in the late 12th century. All three works show a preference for managed nature, and they value ancient wisdom. As the Romantics idealized the Middle Ages in response to the French Revolution, so did Tolkien in response to the industrial revolution and World War I—meaning that he deals with problems of technology (like pollution) that they didn't know. Tolkien also differs from the others in not being constrained by history: he can have the Shire exist alongside Gondor and Rohan.

In "Tolkien, the Philistine, and the Politics of Creativity" (*Hither Shore* 7: 188–203), Martin G.E. Sternberg offers some lovely observations on how "the Took carries the Baggins to the theatre of action" (199), i.e., on the tension between the artist and warrior on one hand and the Philistine on the other. The Dwarves' music moves Bilbo both to desire "the love of beautiful things" and to "wear a sword instead of a walking-stick" (*H*, I, 45), but Parish keeps Niggle from his painting. However, Romanticism has a "greed . . . for emotions" (202), and, as Tolkien noted, "days that are good to spend are . . . not much to listen to" (*H*, III, 93): that is, stories distort life, sometimes dangerously.

Emanuele Rimoli and Guglielmo Spirito compare "Outer and Inner Landscapes in Tolkien: Between Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Dostoevskij" (*Hither Shore* 7: 120–36) and find that Tolkien, like Dostoevsky, achieves a clarity of vision lacking in the Romantics, whose attitudes get in the way of their subjects. They also note differences between the method of Dostoevsky, whose drafts reveal him building his settings around his characters, and Tolkien, who can find characters, like Faramir, in the scenes he had created.

"Sleeps a Song in Things Abounding: J.R.R. Tolkien and the German Romantic Tradition" by Julian Eilmann (Steimel and Schneidewind 167–84; translated from German by Steimel) relates Tolkien to the Romantics in expressing the world's hidden magic. Eilmann suggests the work of Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis as models for the mix of prose and poetry in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Those works and Ludwig Tieck's *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen* also share with Tolkien's stories heroes who are moved by artistic longing to go journeying.

Eduardo Segura's "'Secondary Belief': Tolkien and the Revision of Romantic Notion of Poetic Faith" (*Hither Shore* 7: 138–50) is a difficult essay that argues for Tolkien's writing as an improvement on Romanticism (particularly as regards his adjustment to Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "willing suspension of belief") and explains Tolkien's preference for applicability over allegory as indicating that art, as a gift from God whose purpose is being rather than meaning, must respect the free interpretation of its audience.

In "Stars Above a Dark Tor: Tolkien and Romanticism" (*Hither Shore* 7: 8–17), Anna E. Slack compares Tolkien's descriptions of Rohan's horns blowing at dawn to Frodo and Sam's glimpse of the statue king's crown at the Cross-roads and finds that Tolkien imbues his secondary world with transient glimpses of the eternal, thus generating a deep emotional response. She also sees the Romantic appreciation for "the sensuous and the nightmarish" (15) echoed in Tolkien's acknowledgment that serious romance needs horror (*Letters* 120); Tolkien uses such situations to allow the characters opportunities for grace in overcoming their fear.

"Beauty, Perfection, Sublime Terror: Some Thoughts on the Influence of Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful* on Tolkien's Creation of Middle-earth" by Stefanie Schult (*Hither Shore* 7: 152–61) finds that while Burke felt that the beautiful and sublime coexist uneasily, Tolkien is likelier to blend them, particularly in the Elves. She says that "circumvention of reason is essential to bring a fantastic world . . . to life" (154). As Carson Holloway observes (see below), Tolkien would surely disagree.

Through "Reading J.R.R. Tolkien's Work in the Light of Victor Hugo's Notions of the Sublime and the Grotesque" (*Hither Shore* 7: 162–71), Marguerite Mouton identifies scenes in *The Lord of the Rings* that demonstrate the use of contrasting elements (as discussed in the preface to Hugo's play *Cromwell*), such as Sam's comic "Oliphaunt" poem amidst the horror of the Morannon. She also finds that Tolkien's "applicability" satisfies admonitions in *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* to accept texts for their emotional and aesthetic qualities rather than for meanings.

Silvia Pokrivčáková and Anton Pokrivčák's consideration of "Grotesque Characters in Tolkien's Novels *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*" (Dubs and Kaščáková 75–89) is focused not on characters but peoples, who are defined as grotesque based on their differences from Men or Elves, and further identified as good or evil based on their relationship with nature. The authors thus analyze how Trolls, Orcs, Dwarves, Hobbits, Ents, and one individual, Gollum, each works as an "imaginative completion of a known reality through the use of the mechanism of irrationality" (86). Pokrivčáková and Pokrivčák seem confused by the movies: they refer to Hobbits' large feet and to the Shire being ignorant of the outside world after the heroes return (83–84).

"J.R.R. Tolkien: A Fortunate Rhythm" by Darielle Richards (Eden 61–74) effusively praises Tolkien's writing method for its openness to serendipitous imagination and compares him in that regard to Carl Jung and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Richards cites Tolkien's

antagonist critics anonymously and at second-hand, making it impossible to fairly assess their arguments.

Source and Comparative Studies

Despite Martha C. Sammons's title, there is no *War of the Fantasy Worlds: C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien on Art and Imagination* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010), a shaggy dog analysis of how "Tolkien and Lewis share contrasting views" (111) of such subjects as allegory, applicability, and supposition (all quite familiar); Aristotelian vs. Platonic views of reality (better discussed by Jonathon McIntosh; see below); the duties of writers and readers to each other; and the proper relation of fiction to Christianity, particularly expressions of longing for the divine. Tolkien's theories on imagination are compared to those of Coleridge (see instead Michael Milburn's essay), and Sammons combines regurgitation of "On Fairy-stories" with summaries of Tolkien's short fiction, as well as those parts of *The Silmarillion* that concern acts of sub-creation. From this, she develops a theme of evil resulting from attempts to create independently of God, and notes, "Unlike the Bible, Tolkien focuses on the Silmarils" (155). Sammons's methods may be seen in her comments on a letter Tolkien wrote Hugh Brogan in September 1954, in which he said "a part of the fascination" of *The Lord of the Rings* "consists in the vistas of yet more legend and history," but added that a possible "fault in the work" was that "I have perhaps overweighted Part I too much with attempts to depict the setting and historical background in the course of the narrative" (*Letters* 185). Sammons paraphrases the latter statement—right down to referring to *The Fellowship of the Ring* as "Part I"—but with the implication that it applies to *The Lord of the Rings* as a whole, adding as summation of Tolkien's opinion, "A major flaw is the distant views of even more history and legends." This she contrasts with C.S. Lewis's feeling that the work benefits from those distant views (123). Thus she generates a bogus disagreement, which, furthermore, she never develops, instead simply moving on to further misattributions and misunderstandings. Among her numerous lesser errors is a claim that Tolkien is "well-known for his translation of *Beowulf*," although that remains largely unpublished (3).

Thomas Honegger locates "Fantasy, Escape, Recovery, and Consolation in *Sir Orfeo*: The Medieval Foundations of Tolkienian Fantasy" (*Tolkien Studies* 7: 117–36), and suggests that, while Tolkien's essay "On Fairy-stories" names no tales that include all four characteristics he believed to define the form, the Middle English poem fits those requirements. Even Tolkien's epilogue on fairy tales as exemplified in the Gospels would be in keeping with medieval exegesis

of Orfeo's adventures. Honegger suggests that Tolkien was constrained by the requirement of the original lecture to treat the work of Andrew Lang, and he also sees parallels between *Sir Orfeo* and *Smith of Wootton Major*.

"Tolkien's Unfinished 'Lay of Lúthien' and the Middle English *Sir Orfeo*" by Deanna Delmar Evans (Eden 75–84) builds from the work of Tom Shippey to make several helpful comparison between those two works (though Tolkien's poem is titled the "Lay of Leithian"). Most intriguingly, she spots in the "Lay" a fairy king who reneges on his promise to return a man's lost wife: Morgoth, Gorlim, and Eilenel, respectively. On the other hand, Evans describes Tolkien's poem as lacking a happy ending, without indicating that this is because it lacks any ending; she appears to believe that the version of *Sir Orfeo* appearing in Kenneth Sisam's *Fourteen Century Verse & Prose* (1921) is Tolkien's edition; and she inappropriately though punningly describes Beren as a "robber baron."

Sherrylyn Branchaw asks: are "Elladan and Elrohir: The Dioscuri in *The Lord of the Rings*" (*Tolkien Studies* 7: 137–46)? She identifies parallels between Elrond's sons and the Gemini that suggest Tolkien may once have intended this connection. Most striking is the likeness between Dionysius of Halicarnassus's description of Castor and Pollux's participation in the legendary Battle of Lake Regillus and the appearance of Tolkien's Halfelven brothers aiding Eorl's victory on the Field of Celebrant (in one discarded draft for Appendix A of *The Lord of the Rings*).

Jason Fisher offers two winning source studies. He shows how "Horns of Dawn: The Tradition of Alliterative Verse in Rohan" (Eden 7–25) further strengthen that country's likeness to medieval England and specifically the Kingdom of Mercia. In addition to various musical relations (including Béma—the name in Rohan for the Vala, Oromë—from the Mercian word for "horn" or "trumpet"), Fisher mentions other parallels like the dikes of Helm and Offa, respectively, guarding against invaders from the west. Presumably because it doesn't support a connection to Rohan, Fisher doesn't note that the law of Wihtræd he cites, requiring strangers to sound a horn or be considered a thief (*ðeóf*), is suggestive of Boromir's reasons for winding his horn before departing Rivendell. Fisher also tries his hand at "Sourcing Tolkien's 'Circles of the World': Speculations on the Heimskringla, the Latin Vulgate Bible, and the Hereford Mappa Mundi" (Dubs and Kaščáková 1–18) by seeking the inspiration for Aragorn's dying description of the worldly limitations that he expects soon to transcend. Fisher identifies these in the Norse term *kringla heimsins* used in *Ynglinga Saga*, the Latin term *orbis terrarum*—particularly as found in Jerome's translation

of the Book of Wisdom—and medieval T-O maps, like the famous West Midlands example Fisher considers, whose border with the letters M, O, R, and S spells out "death." Paul H. Vigor echoes Fisher in noting that the Hereford Mappa Mundi is arranged with east at the top like "Thror's Map: Decoration or Examination?" (*Mallorn* 50: 50). Vigor hints vaguely at hidden meanings in Tolkien's maps.

Marjorie Burns compares George MacDonald's Old Princess (in *The Princess and the Goblin* and *The Princess and Curdie*) to Galadriel and Varda as "Saintly and Distant Mothers" (Kerry 246–58). Varda is not a literal mother, but in each case, as in that of the image of Mary on which Tolkien drew, these are "goddess-like figures of female power who oversee the world" (248), or at least oversee the stories' characters. Burns's notes on star symbolism and Varda's heavenly vaults bear comparison to Kristine Larsen's article on simulacra.

The modestly appealing "Disenchanted with Their Age: Keats's, Morris's, and Tolkien's Great Escape" by Marie-Noëlle Biemer (*Hither Shore* 7: 60–75) compares those three authors' escapist views and doubts about the idea of progress, noting that Morris in particular felt that beauty can't be shown through realistic portrayals of the modern world. Biemer feels that Tolkien tried least to change the world but through his influence on environmentalism may have done the most. All three share themes of a lost golden age (against suggestions of such a notion as defeatist, Biemer argues that people need tradition), industry against nature, and journeys to Faërie. Biemer wonders if Keats's poetic statement that science attempts to "unweave a rainbow" suggests Gandalf's response to Saruman's "many-colours" speech (70).

Marie Nelson calls "J.R.R. Tolkien's 'Leaf by Niggle': An Allegory in Transformation" (*Mythlore* 28 nos. 3–4: 5–19); the allegory thus transformed, she thinks, is *Everyman*: the similarity is "immediately evident" to her (7), but perhaps as with the presence of Catholicism in *The Lord of the Rings*, not to *Everyone*. Her list of comparisons, some of which are worth further consideration, between Everyman's journey to death and Niggle's journey past death, features a 380-line gap in *Everyman*—which is almost half of the play.

In "Refracted Light: The Possible Genesis of Bilbo Baggins" (*Quadrant* 54 no. 12 [Dec. 2010]: 59–62), Catherine Parish proposes the novel theory that *The Hobbit* is a re-telling of C.S. Lewis's conversions from atheism to theism and then Christianity, with Gandalf representing Tolkien and the Dwarves' song at Bag End standing for Lewis's experience in the *Kolbítar*. She carries her analysis only as far as Rivendell.

"Lewis and Tolkien: Bridges Between Worlds" by Mike Pueppke (*Mallorn* 49: 24–27) compares Psyche and Orual in *Till We Have Faces*, respectively, to Smith and Nokes in *Smith of Wootton Major*, as believers

in and skeptics of the numinous. Pueppke overemphasizes readers' identification with Nokes's point of view.

In "Inheriting the Legacy of Tolkien and Lewis: Paolini's Inheritance Cycle" (Pearce and Asch 26–30), Sophia Mason praises the young author of *Eragon* and its sequels (who is an avowed fan of *The Lord of the Rings* and the Chronicles of Narnia) for his imagination while finding fault with his structure, prose style, coyness, excessive violence, explicitness with magic, and difficulty at conveying goodness in comparison to his literary masters. Mason's Aristotelian argument that no one can truly act "against his will" (28) does not confront Tolkien's comparison of Frodo to the victims of brainwashing (*Letters* 252).

Vanessa Phillips-Zur-Linden compares "Arwen and Edward: Redemption and the Fairy Bride/Groom in the Literary Fairytale" (*Mallorn* 50: 37–41). Edward is the vampire love interest in Stephanie Meyer's novel *Twilight*. Each character is immortal and in love with a mortal; in Phillips-Zur-Linden's curious take, Arwen and Edward both are "apparently unredeemable outsiders" (37). She also claims that Tolkien "created fantasy not as escape or comfort" (38).

Religious and Devotional

Henry C. Anthony Karlson III tries *Thinking with the Inklings: A Contemplative Engagement with the Oxford Fellowship* (Silver Spring, MD: CreateSpace, 2010), a collection of essays, in many of which the Inklings' positions are tested against subjects ranging from literary depictions of the Antichrist to the theological ramifications of life on other planets. The longest chapter, "Overcoming the Great Divorce," argues that Tolkien's and Lewis's opposing views regarding divorce are both based on an incorrect "theology of pure nature" (99–100; Karlson turns to *The Lord of the Rings* to show a "natural, pagan ethic" he finds troubling); he believes Charles Williams's concept of marriage is more satisfactory. Karlson perhaps overstates Tolkien's antipathy to Williams. "Technological Magi" cites Tolkien's comments on the dangers of the Machine to support reconciliation between environmentalists and anti-abortion activists, both of whom are opposed, in Karlson's view, to thoughtless use of technology. "J.R.R. Tolkien: A Catholicized William Morris?" compares *A Dream of John Ball* to "The Scouring of the Shire" to emphasize the limitations of socialism and need for divine grace (in the form of Galadriel's gift to Sam) to achieve lasting change, with some echoes of David M. Waito's article on the Shire's flaws. In comments on *The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún*, Karlson calls for the publication of more Tolkien lectures (the talks accompanying "The Story of Kullervo" should interest him). Karlson's other subjects include Adam Fox's work to popularize Plato, Nevill Coghill's film of *Doctor Faustus*

(Karlson passingly compares that character to Saruman), and Owen Barfield's *Eager Spring* as a summation of Inklings themes. Karlson also explains why John Wain should be considered an Inkling despite Wain's later criticism of the group.

Paul E. Kerry's "Introduction" to *The Ring and the Cross*, subtitled "A Historiography of Christian Approaches to Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*" (Kerry 17–56), is an exhaustive and fair survey of scholarship on the subject of whether and how Christianity informs Tolkien's work. Kerry's "Tracking Catholic Influence in *The Lord of the Rings*" (Kerry 234–45), a reworking of "The Idea of Influence: J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and Catholicism: A Historian's Perspective," from *Tolkien: Influenced and Influencing: Proceedings of the Seventeenth Tolkien Society Seminar*, edited by Matthew Vernon (Cambridge: The Tolkien Society, 2005 [70–82]), not previously discussed in this survey, overlaps the introduction at times in its attempt to explain why the question has received so much attention and argument. *The Ring and the Cross* apparently takes its title from Chris Mooney's breezy "The Ring and the Cross: How J.R.R. Tolkien Became a Christian Writer" (Kerry 170–76), originally published in the *Boston Globe* in 2002. Mooney's article in turn quotes from an interview with Stephen Morillo, whose "The Entwives: Investigating the Spiritual Core of *The Lord of the Rings*" (Kerry 106–18) is one of four essays in the collection to argue against a Christian reading of Tolkien. These can be boiled down to the argument that the spirituality in Tolkien's work is not specifically Christian, a possibly unimpeachable position given Tolkien's well-known statement that he "cut out" the book's religious references (*Letters* 172). Unfortunately, Morillo is weak on supporting details: he believes, for instance, that the three themes of Ilúvatar correspond to the Three Ages of the Sun, and thus that the Fourth Age is moved by no music, which for him explains the book's elegiac tone, unfitting for a Christian work (110, 115). Apparently unaware of Tolkien's comments on the "long defeat" (*Letters* 255), Morillo attributes that tone to Tolkien's medievalism: his study of lost worlds.

Two further skeptical essays in *The Ring and the Cross* are Ronald Hutton's bookends in an entertaining three-part debate with Nils Ivar Agøy. Hutton's "The Pagan Tolkien" (Kerry 57–70), reprinted from *The Ring Goes Ever On: Proceedings of the Tolkien 2005 Conference* (discussed in this survey for 2008) argues—among much else—that Tolkien's own Christian reading of *The Lord of the Rings* is an *ex post facto* interpretation (however, as noted in David Bratman's essay on music—see below—Tolkien associated Elves with Gregorian chant as early as 1952, two years before *The Lord of the Rings* was published); that the earliest versions of Tolkien's *legendarium* in particular are

much more pagan than Christian (Hutton's reference to "*Lost Tales*, I:64–245, passim." is most unhelpful [70]); and that the ennoblement of the humble is not necessarily a Christian theme, as suggested by Tolkien's own reference in *The Hobbit* to the similar folktale motif of "the unexpected luck of widows' sons" (*H*, I, 35). Agøy, in "The Christian Tolkien: A Response to Ronald Hutton" (Kerry 71–89), observes that Hutton has both criticized incautious use of Tolkien's letters to ascertain what was he was thinking earlier in life *and* relied on such a letter to demonstrate a dip in Tolkien's religious feelings in the 1920s. Agøy's point-by-point replies include notes on Hutton's shaky grasp of *The History of Middle-earth* and theological arguments that support a Christian reading of the "Ainulindalë." Hutton defensively responds to some of these points with "Can We Still Have a Pagan Tolkien?: A Reply to Nils Ivar Agøy" (Kerry 90–105). His strongest arguments continue to concern themes not exclusive to Christianity. Magic also troubles him greatly: the heroes' use of it in *The Lord of the Rings*, he feels, is incompatible with Christian teaching, yet his particular example of "shattering a sword with a gesture" (100) is something the evil Witch-king does. Hutton says that if Tolkien intended *The Lord of the Rings* to embody Christian themes, but it fails to exhibit Christianity for many readers, then he is either a poor writer—which Hutton does not believe—or a cryptic one, which Hutton feels would diminish Tolkien's achievement, but is Edward Elgar's *Enigma Variations* a lesser work for having an explicit and still unsolved mystery?

The year's best essay on the absence or presence of religion in *The Lord of the Rings* is "Eru Erased: The Minimalist Cosmology of *The Lord of the Rings*" by Catherine Madsen (Kerry 152–69), which argues that the book is better for Tolkien having cut out the religious elements that are more apparent in *The Silmarillion*, thus offering "religion's effects but not its anxieties" and providing "mutual sympathy and common moral purpose" to people of widely differing beliefs (164, 167). Madsen compares Tolkien's idea of Recovery to Bertolt Brecht's alienation and Victor Schlovsky's defamiliarization. She is also refreshingly tough on the epilogue to "On Fairy-stories."

In "Redeeming Sub-Creation" (Kerry 177–92), Carson L. Holloway wants to show how Tolkien's fantasy "is compatible with and even informed by" his faith (178), and does so via yet another examination of "On Fairy-stories," which is nonetheless well managed. In the process, he includes a useful reminder that sub-creation succeeds because it is plausible, that is, because it appeals to reason, which explains Tolkien's differentiation of fantasy from "irrational" dreaming. While Catholics are above all meant to contemplate, Tolkien knew that to sub-create properly is to appreciate God's work. Holloway interestingly compares

Aulë's Dwarves and Niggle's Tree as imperfectly realized sub-creations that are given reality by God.

"Catholic Scholar, Catholic Sub-Creator" by Jason Boffetti (Kerry 193–204) also explains why the practice of sub-creation is consistent with Catholic teaching (though Niggle's example shows that art alone is insufficient for the Christian), and how allegory breaks the spell of secondary belief, thus interfering with the goal of "presenting aspects of truth faithfully through story" (198). Boffetti suggests that Niggle's leaf represents Tolkien's earliest Elvish words.

In "*Ainulindalë*: Tolkien, St. Thomas, and the Metaphysics of the Music" (Steimel and Schneidewind 53–72), Jonathan McIntosh chides Verlyn Flieger, Bradford Lee Eden, and Bradley J. Birzer for viewing Tolkien's creation myth through a Neo-Platonist lens that shows the created world as an imperfect realization of the Ainur's music. McIntosh argues contrarily that the understanding and achievement of the Valar grow from their music (which Tolkien described as "abstract" [*Letters* 284]) through the historical vision Eru presents them, in which they learn more about Him and Eä than was revealed in the music, to the "gratuitous" even if flawed created World (64). McIntosh cites Aquinas's metaphorical contrast of the mere idea of a house with an actual if imperfect house. McIntosh's argument convinces that far, but doesn't fully address his further complaints that those scholars identify a progressing diminishment within the history of Arda (cf. again Tolkien's "long defeat" [*Letters* 255]) and that they see Eru as a remote figure.

Michael Waldstein contemplates the views of "Tolkien and St. Thomas on Beauty," as well as on mercy (Pearce and Asch 4–10), with particular reference to the roles of Elbereth and Mary. This essay has affinities with Alison Milbank's 2008 article, "Tolkien, Chesterton, and Thomism" (in the collection *Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings: Sources of Inspiration*).

The historical moment Michael Tomko emphasizes in "'An Age Comes On': J.R.R. Tolkien and the English Catholic Sense of History" (Kerry 205–23) is the restoration of the English Catholic hierarchy in 1850, which Tomko sees expressed in *The Lord of the Rings* in its sense of rebirth from the ruins. Tomko attributes Tolkien's melancholy tone to the restoration's failure to lead to full reconversion.

Musing on "*The Lord of the Rings* and the Catholic Understanding of Community" (Kerry 224–33), Joseph Pearce notes themes Tolkien shares with G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, stresses the importance that Lord Acton and Edmund Burke, respectively, placed on the limits of power and freedom, and observes that Tolkien valued the community above the individual. Pearce thinks "Leaf by Niggle,"

"Mythopoeia," and "On Fairy-stories" are "often overlooked works" (225–26), but the evidence in 2010 alone is against him.

Bradley J. Birzer, in "The 'Last Battle' as a Johannine Ragnarök: Tolkien and the Universal" (Kerry 259–82), partially echoing Michaël Devaux's 2009 essay "Dagor Dagorath and Ragnarök: Tolkien and the Apocalypse" (in *Hither Shore* 6), tries to show how Tolkien, like other Romantics who were pushed to deeper considerations by 20th century violence, moved from a "romantic English nationalism" in *The Book of Lost Tales* to a "myth for the restoration of Christendom herself" in *The Lord of the Rings* (265). Along the way, Birzer casually notes that David Jones (poet of *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata*) was "drawing upon" Tolkien's works, but he gives no indication as to the nature of Tolkien's influence (277); see Carl Phelpstead's "Tolkien, David Jones, and the God Nodens," an online essay posted January 30, 2013 to the Scholars Forum at *The Lord of the Rings Fanatics Plaza*.

Two essays identify aspects of Christ in the members of the Fellowship. In "'From Mirrored Truth the Likeness of the True': J.R.R. Tolkien and Reflections of Jesus Christ in Middle-earth" (*English* 59 no. 224: 70–92), Jonathan Padley and Kenneth Padley, like several writers before them, but in this case building from an apparently pioneering but unpublished 1964 study by Barry Gordon, examine Aragorn, Frodo, and Gandalf as "Middle-earth's three most significant Christological loci" (71) with copious but largely familiar examples. The most unusual notion may be that Glorfindel's exhortation to Frodo, "Ride on! Ride on!" (*FR*, I, xii, 225), could derive from Henry Hart Milman's hymn, "Ride on, ride on in majesty!" Cautiously, James G. Shoopman tries to go further with "Tolkien's Composite Christ" (*Silver Leaves* 3: 33–43), seeking Christ-analogues in every member of the Fellowship (partly because they all set out on December 25): Boromir may represent Jesus as tempted, while earthy Gimli, the devotee of Galadriel (Mary), in his friendship with Legolas the otherworldly shows the union in Christ of the physical and spiritual. And Gollum is Judas. Shoopman is open to opposing arguments, but he could be more careful.

Philology and Sub-creation

Yoko Hemmi explains "Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and His Concept of Native Language: Sindarin and British-Welsh" (*Tolkien Studies* 7: 147–74), showing in what sense the story is, as Tolkien wrote, an "essay in linguistic esthetic" (*Letters* 220); she gives particular attention to "English and Welsh," which he related to the story's "Celticness" (*Letters* 227). That essay fully explicated his ideas about a person's "native language," which he differentiated from one's cradle-tongue

(*MC* 190), going far past his thoughts on linguistic predilections in "A Secret Vice" and expanding on concepts that first appeared in "The Notion Club Papers." Tolkien thought that the native language of many English-speaking people in Britain, which they would find ancient and beautiful, was Welsh. Since Tolkien had designed the Elvish language called Gnomish or Noldorin on the principles of Welsh, that invented language could serve a similar function in *The Lord of the Rings*. Hemmi suggests that while Tolkien may not have intended this originally, he came to realize it in 1951 when, as is now well known, he decided that Noldorin was not a language brought by the Noldor from Valinor but an indigenous Elvish language of Middle-earth that the Noldor adopted on their return there; he then renamed it Sindarin (while keeping its affinities with Welsh). He also adjusted other linguistic relationships so that there were connections between Sindarin and the Westron spoken by the Hobbits who serve as the readers' representatives for experiences of things Elvish. Hemmi additionally considers the use by Frodo and Sam, *in extremis* at Torech Ungol, of Elvish words they had not previously heard but which are appropriate to their situation (though they presumably had heard a lot of Elvish "offstage"). Hemmi's paper is like Vladimir Brljak's in its argument that changes Tolkien made after completing the main text of *The Lord of the Rings* give the work a new meaning; this is a variation on Christopher Tolkien's analysis of how scenes his father wrote in draft might survive largely intact into the final text but with the "'meaning' and context still to undergo huge further development, or even complete transformation" (*Shadow* 176).

"*Fairy* and *Elves* in Tolkien and Traditional Literature" (*Mythlore* 28 nos. 3–4: 65–84) is a delightful etymological journey by Helios De Rosario Martínez, who tracks Tolkien's changing conception of Fairy and Elvish size and substantiality and their influence on and interactions with Men. De Rosario Martínez contextualizes the discussion with the history of the words themselves, showing that the Romance "fairy" complemented rather than replaced the Germanic "elf" in English, and that the fairy characteristics Tolkien thought debased once applied to both creatures. (Their diminishing stature may be due to conflation with traditional dwarfs; see Pierre H. Berube's short letter titled "The Origin of Dwarves" [*Mythlore* 29 nos. 1–2: 163–64] for further thoughts on *their* size.) The meaning of the names "Lúthien" and "Vanyar" may show Tolkien reinstating "fairy" by a linguistic back door.

John R. Holmes is positively endearing in two philological essays. He coaxes readers "'Inside a Song': Tolkien's Phonaesthetics" (Eden 26–46), a grammatical, metrical, and rhetorical ramble along the Withywindle that makes "semi-vocalization of post-liquid palato-velars

in Middle English" fascinating even for the non-linguist (27). "'Like Heathen Kings': Religion as Palimpsest in Tolkien's Fiction" (Kerry 119–44) starts from Denethor's arguably anachronistic word "heathen" (as quoted in Holmes's title) to show how Tolkien, who said that religious references in both *The Lord of the Rings* and *Beowulf* were suppressed, modified the concept of a palimpsest (recycled parchment) to convey his story's religious intentions, using words with both older and newer meanings, in an echo of the traditional Christian assimilation of pagan ideas (applying the concept of *preparatio evangelium*). Holmes quotes Tolkien's analysis of Old English religious words including *wegnest*, the Anglo-Saxon equivalent of viaticum: the administration of the Eucharist for Last Rites that Tolkien specifically acknowledged as coloring the idea of *lembas*. (Some new comments from Tolkien himself on Christian sanctification of the pagan appeared in 2010 in "The Kalevala" essay [270], where he writes, e.g., that "the real glory of Latmos was made by Keats".)

Jason Fisher also considers double meanings in "Dwarves, Spiders, and Murky Woods: J.R.R. Tolkien's Wonderful Web of Words" (*Mythlore* 29 nos. 1–2: 5–15), an expansion of two posts made to his blog in 2009 about words in *The Hobbit*, particularly "attercop," "lob," and "Mirkwood," with analysis of etymology in Old English, Old Norse, Swedish, Finnish (particularly the word *myrkky* "poison"; Fisher presumably has since noticed Tolkien's "mirklands" in "The Story of Kullervo" [230]), and Tolkien's invented Mágo (or Mágol).

Maria Artamonova, in "Writing for an Anglo-Saxon Audience in the Twentieth Century: J.R.R. Tolkien's Old English Chronicles" (*Anglo-Saxon Culture and the Modern Imagination*, edited by David Clark and Nicholas Perkins [Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2010]: 71–88), finds the Old English versions (West Saxon and Mercian, and with varying orthography) of the "Quenta Noldorinwa," "Annals of Valinor," and "Annals of Beleriand" in *The Shaping of Middle-earth* to have a linguistic style less like that of genuine Old English annals like *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* than like translations of Latin texts. Just as the former had difficulties with the pagan elements, so Tolkien had to overcome challenges: for instance, he used Old Norse elements in Old English names, or poetic words used for God and the Virgin Mary, to derive terms for the Valar.

In "Romanticism, Symbolism and Onomastics in Tolkien's *Legendarium*" (*Hither Shore* 7: 18–30), Annie Birks probes Elvish personal and place names, finding especially water, star, tree, and bird words, and notes their significance in Romantic symbolism. Lúthien's song is likened to the lark's, and because the Romantics considered that bird a mediator between earth and heaven, this suggests her role in Beren's

return from death. Birks's argument about gold's superiority to silver, because it doesn't tarnish (26–27), is directly opposed to what Tolkien wrote about the effect of Morgoth's taint on those metals (*Morgoth* 400). She also mistranslates the name Aragorn as "royal tree" (as does Peter Wilkin) and Denethor as "water torrent" (12–13).

In "'Lit.', 'Lang.', 'Ling.', and the Company They Keep: The Case of *The Lay of the Children of Húrin* Seen from a Gricean Perspective" (Dubs and Kaščáková 125–42), Robert Di Scala uses the theories of linguistic philosopher H.P. Grice to circularly praise Tolkien's alliterative poem for being meaningful to people who enjoy it.

Four essays in Steimel and Schneidewind's *Music in Middle-earth* are best described as sub-creative. The title of Steven Linden's "A Speculative History of the Music of Arda" (75–90) is borne out in his repeated use of words like "perhaps," "seems," "probable," and "maybe." Linden struggles with the idea that polyphony, having developed in the pre-history Tolkien describes, could have been lost, necessitating a second appearance in medieval Europe. "'Bring Out the Instruments!': Instrumental Music in Middle-earth" by Heidi Steimel (91–105) lists every reference she can find to her title subject, and also, in the case of Rúmil's "fitting signs for recording of speech and song" (*S* 63), to musical notation. Norbert Maier is a professional harp-maker, a fact which informs "The Harp in Middle-earth" (107–24; translated from German by Steimel). He suggests real-world analogues to the instruments Tolkien describes, including some Irish and Scottish harps with silver and gold strings like those the Dwarves reference in song at the "Unexpected Party." Friedhelm Schneidewind, in "Embodying the Voices: Documentation of a Failure" (303–08; translated from German by Steimel), explains the difficulties he encountered in his attempt to determine the appropriate vocal range of each of Tolkien's characters and races.

Reception and Adaptation Studies

"The Tolkien Society: The Early Days" (*Mallorn* 50: 15–24) is Charles E. Noad's chronicle of the slow development of coordinated fan activity in the UK during the period 1960–76. The Society was formed in Tolkien's last years, and he interacted only slightly with its members: early in 1972, he thanked them for an 80th birthday gift of fine tobacco, and later that year briefly met the founder, Vera Chapman, at Allen & Unwin and agreed to be the Society's honorary president. Turning from the past, Marcel Bülles tries "Envisaging the Future" of Tolkien fandom (*Mallorn* 50: 4–6), and suggests practical ways that such organizations can raise their profiles and increase awareness of Tolkien's work.

"Publishing about Tolkien: Polemic Musings about New Developments by an Old Hand in the Business" (*Hither Shore* 7: 254–56) is an editorial by Thomas Honegger on the state of Tolkien scholarship, whose quality he finds threatened both by big publishers who fail to engage expert reviewers (and even skip proper proofreading: Honegger might observe that *a cappella* is misspelled more than once in both of the year's Tolkien-and-music collections) and small or print-on-demand publishers that often function as little more than vanity presses.

Gareth Owens gives "Two Cheers for Applicability" (*Mallorn* 49: 50) with a short reminder that readers are entitled to their own interpretations of Tolkien's work, no matter how much at odds with Tolkien's intentions; Owens does not add that other readers are entitled to find some interpretations more sensible than others.

In *The Music of The Lord of the Rings Films: A Comprehensive Account of Howard Shore's Scores* by Doug Adams (Van Nuys, CA: Carpentier, 2010), Shore explains in a foreword that his accompaniments to Peter Jackson's movies were meant "to create in music an image of Tolkien's writing" (xi) and that the book was always with him during composition. Perhaps contrarily, writer-producer Fran Walsh's introduction describes the movies, like the book, as the "retelling of an ancient myth" (and as an epigraph, she has Gandalf's remarks to Frodo on being "meant to have" the Ring—from her script rather than Tolkien's book). Adams's prologue notes Shore's research into "the history of ring-based mythology" (2) and commends Shore's choral use of Tolkien's languages, which far exceeded the producers' original plans. Unfortunately, Shore is quoted comparing Quenya to Old English (3), but comments from the movies' linguistic specialist, David Salo, are more accurate.

Mira Sommer's "Elven Music in Our Times" (Steimel and Schneidewind 255–82; translated from German by Marie-Noëlle Biemer) examines how Elves are portrayed in the movies' music, as well as in settings by performers such as the Tolkien Ensemble. Sommer fares better when describing the movies than the books, though she is not the first person to trace Aragorn's "Tinúviel" song at Weathertop to the "Lay of Leithian" (258), a work it actually predates.

Many readers, including the present surveyor, have been led astray by Humphrey Carpenter's 1977 observation, in *Tolkien: A Biography*, that Tolkien reacted to a comparison with Wagner by claiming, "Both rings were round, and there the resemblance ceased" (202). Jeongwon Joe, who apparently knows Tolkien's remark only from a misguided 2003 article by Alex Ross, goes so far as to title her "Introduction: Why Wagner and Cinema? Tolkien was Wrong" (*Wagner & Cinema*, edited by Jeongwon Joe and Sander L. Gilman [Blooming-

ton: Indiana University Press, 2010]: 1–26). The 1981 publication of Tolkien's letters revealed that Tolkien's remark (slightly misquoted by Carpenter) wasn't about Wagner at all (*Letters* 306), but the damage was, and clearly continues to be, done. Joe otherwise mentions Tolkien only in her epigraph and when disagreeing with his "rigid denial of Wagner's influence" (26) in her peroration. Doug Adams's book on Howard Shore repeats Joe's mistake, but against these examples, David Bratman and Reuven Naveh get it right in 2010, though Bratman likens *Der Ring des Nibelungen* to a version of *The Lord of the Rings* that is "all about Boromir" (Eden 147; see below).

Again despite the title, Tolkien makes only a brief appearance in Susan Treacy's "Musica Donum Dei: Sibelius, Tolkien, and the *Kalevala*" (Pearce and Asch 31–32), whose primary subject is the Finnish composer's adaptations from Lönnrot. Treacy suggests that the poem's character of Väinämöinen inspired both Gandalf and Saruman.

Two studies concern the use of Tolkien-derived music in the classroom. In "'Tolkien Is the Wind and the Way': The Educational Value of Tolkien-Inspired World Music" (Eden 126–39), Amy H. Sturgis explains that music spurs discussion: the mood of Stephen Oliver's setting of "Bilbo's Last Song," for instance, leads to a consideration of the elegiac nature of *The Lord of the Rings*. Besides settings of Tolkien's words, Sturgis also notes the diversity of music inspired by him (which she terms "sub-sub-creations" and likens to fanfiction), and she identifies some of the more successful efforts in a variety of genres, including Rap and Country. Estelle R. Jorgensen, in "Music, Myth and Education: The Case of *The Lord of the Rings* Film Trilogy" (*Journal of Aesthetic Education* 44 no. 1 [Spring 2010]: 44–57), bemoans the movies' cuts to most of Tolkien's lyrics and believes that Howard Shore's use of leitmotifs simplifies Tolkien. Nonetheless she finds that Shore's emotive music helps students to appreciate Tolkien's mythic qualities. Jorgensen's essay is littered with typos and has an alarming reference to "Sibelius's evocation of the Finnish *Vālhālla*" (44).

The second half of David Bratman's "Liquid Tolkien: Music, Tolkien, Middle-earth, and More Music" (Eden 140–70) overlaps somewhat with Sturgis (but nowhere with John R. Holmes's comments on "liquid palato-velars") as he differentiates between music that "tries to make a consistent addition to Tolkien's sub-creation" and that which does not, and should not be judged as if it did. Focusing on classical and folk adaptations of Tolkien's writing and on orchestral pieces sparked by his work, Bratman provides sensitive description of the short "*Hobbit* Overture" that Tolkien gave permission for Carey Blyton to compose, as well as much later symphonies by Aulis Sallinen and Johan de Meij; a defense of Donald Swann's classical art song approach (although not

of the official recording); and praise for Brocelïande and the Tolkien Ensemble. He notes that Tolkien's verse, given its generally low literary reputation, is adapted surprisingly often. Bratman's first half discusses Tolkien's love and knowledge of music (with the helpful reminder that he would have heard it regularly in church) and attempts to determine what kind of music Tolkien would have thought fit to be used within or derived from his stories. For the former, Bratman suggests English folk tunes for the Hobbits and classical choral works for the "Ainulindalë" (particularly the "Confutatis" from Mozart's *Requiem*, for Melkor). For the latter, Bratman notes Tolkien's stated fondness for Carl Maria von Weber; he also recommends the "superficially conservative" but "thoroughly transformative" and "myth-drenched" works—including a choral *Kullervo*—of Jean Sibelius (148–49; Sibelius is the source of Bratman's title via a comment by fantasist Ellen Kushner) and the West Midlands', Catholic, melancholic Edward Elgar's *Enigma Variations*.

Peering into "An Impenetrable Darkness: An Examination of the Influence of J.R.R. Tolkien on Black Metal Music" (Steimel and Schneidewind 215–40), Michael Cunningham tries to understand how Tolkien's work inspired a rock music genre with "misanthropic aesthetics" (215), with particular attention to the band Burzum ("darkness" in the Black Speech) whose founder was convicted of murder and arson in 1993. Cunningham traces the history of heavy metal music's incorporation of Tolkien's creations, which sometimes happened simply because, as David Bratman says, "they just think orcs and Nazgûl are cool" (Eden 153), but the Scandinavian performers that Cunningham interviews indicate that the more serious borrowing stems in part from the connections between Tolkien's writings and their native mythology; a taste which in some cases developed into a contempt for Christianity. As musicians, some also appreciate the power of Morgoth and Sauron as singers; one says of Sauron's influence that he "gave the world adventure" (299).

Fabian Geier tries "Making Texts Audible: A Workshop Report on Setting Tolkien to Music" (Steimel and Schneidewind 283–300; translated from German by Steimel) in order to better understand Tolkien's songs. However, licensing restrictions have prevented Geier from distributing the settings he made of Tolkien's lyrics on the website to which he directs readers. He considers the kind of music appropriate both for Tolkien's cultures (suggesting steady, conservative rhythms for Dwarves and improvisational freedom for Elves) and for individual characters.

In "Microphones in Middle-earth: Music in the BBC Radio Play" (Steimel and Schneidewind 241–54), Paul Smith discusses the need in radio adaptation for music to evoke what images cannot and Stephen

Oliver's desire to write music in a specifically English idiom for the 1981 version of *The Lord of the Rings*.

Anthony S. Burdge discusses the "prayformances" of S.K. Thoth in "Performance Art in a Tunnel: A Musical Sub-creator in the Tradition of Tolkien" (Eden 171–199). Thoth, best known for New York street performances (and the subject of an award-winning documentary), has acknowledged Tolkien's influence, in particular for having created a mythology; Thoth also identifies with Niggle. In a digression, Burdge disputes Christian interpretations of *The Lord of the Rings*.

Katherine A. Fowkes sometimes slips between discussing Tolkien's book and Peter Jackson's movie in "*The Lord of the Rings* (2001–3): Tolkien's Trilogy or Jackson's Thrillogy?" a chapter in her book, *The Fantasy Film: Wizards, Wishes, and Wonders* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010: 134–44). Fowkes believes Tolkien's "self-contained world is so saturated with detail" (137) that the movies had to emphasize the visual elements—but Tolkien, as per his comments in "On Fairy-stories," often aims for generalized descriptions that stir the reader's imagination, and his characters in particular are not closely described. She finds that the Dementors of the Harry Potter movies are more like Tolkien's Ringwraiths than are Jackson's Ringwraiths, and she complains about the movies' generic fantasy violence, but she feels the movies' reluctant hero trope owes more to Tolkien's characters than to typical cinematic action figures. Fowkes hears, in the DVD audio commentaries, a tendency to flattery and self-congratulation.

Péter Kristóf Makai is not the first person to ask if immersive computer-generated imagery demonstrates the imaginary Elvish art that Tolkien, in "On Fairy-stories," called "Faërian Drama," but Makai's "Faërian Cyberdrama: When Fantasy becomes Virtual Reality" (*Tolkien Studies* 7: 35–53) is the most thorough study to date of that subject. Unfortunately, his analysis falters on many points, and despite a conciliatory note in the final paragraphs, it has a suggestion of chronological and technological snobbery in the argument that computers at last make it possible to realistically render fantasy worlds that Tolkien thought impossible, without even considering that Tolkien wrote of painting that "the visible presentation of the fantastic image is technically too easy" (*TL* 46).

Online Multiplayer Games by William Sims Bainbridge (San Rafael, CA: Morgan & Claypool, 2010) devotes one short chapter (18–20) to "Lord of the Rings Online." Bainbridge seems to think Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is about "assembling and using a ring of immense magical powers" (19). Noting Tolkien's Catholicism, Bainbridge attributes the game's unusual prohibition on spell-casting by good characters to religious causes.

Middle-earth: Visions of a Modern Myth (Nevada City, CA: Underwood Books, 2010) is a collection of Tolkien illustrations by Donato Giancola. There are just enough comments by Giancola to show that he knows *The Lord of the Rings* well—and he expresses gratitude to Tolkien for not being too specific with character descriptions—but his beautiful paintings and sketches, which are quite independent of the movies, are all the comment he needs.

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