J.R.R. Tolkien's Moral Imagination

Gary L. Willhite and John R.D. Bell

This paper like its subject (though less substantial) is, "a tale that grew in the telling." It grew from our discussions of what Tolkien was all about, but in fact its roots are far deeper, dating back to our separate childhoods when we both were enthralled by Tolkien's world and both weighed things in terms of the values of the Third Age of Middle Earth. It was an instrument of moral instruction for both of us, though we were perhaps unaware of that at the time.

In the field of moral education outcomes have received the most attention. As in most things, what you put into the process is directly related to what you get out of it. We would argue that an important way to introduce situations that promote non-actualized moral dilemmas and which encourage moral behaviors is the reading of fiction. This paper looks at not the fiction which we, as educators, deliver as a medium for the introduction of moral debate into the learning environment, but at the genesis of the material that we choose to use. Such an investigation poses questions about how a writer's moral views are filtered through the creative process and how these views reach us.

In this paper we consider Tolkien's moral imagination and how it shaped his writing in ways that even he could not control. The natural follow up to this, how our secondary creative process (in which we both as teenagers who first read the books on different continents and decades brought Tolkien's world to life for ourselves and how it has impacted others) shaped our individual moral outlook, is another tale. Tolkien (1980, p. 162) writes:

> "Dear Sir,' I said--'Although now long estranged,
> Man is not wholly lost nor wholly changed.
> Dis-graced he may be, yet is not de-throned,
> and keeps the rags of lordship once he owned;
> Man, Sub-creator, the refracted Light
> through whom is splintered from a single White
> to many hues, and endlessly combined
> in living shapes that move from mind to mind.
> Though all the crannies of the world we filled
> with Elves and Goblins, though we dared to build
> Gods and their houses out of dark and light,
> and sowed the seed of dragons--'twas our right
> (used or misused). That right has not decayed:
> we make still by the law in which we're made."

In its very nature creativity is a moral act. No-one can create, or 'sub-create', without drawing on what surrounds him/her. As a result, man's creations are always relative to the milieu that supported or surrounded their creation, or to the milieu that surrounds them and the audience of the product of the creative act. Even a decision to create something immoral, or something without reference to morals, is a moral act since it involves making a decision about values.

Morality is the value system by which an individual (or group of individuals) judges his own actions and those of his peers and by which he perceives order or pattern in his environment. Acknowledged or unacknowledged, this value system is expressed in an individual's every action, even in moments when he chooses--or believes he chooses--to act independently. Thus, a writer cannot escape what he believes, because even a conscious decision to deny it in his writing is in itself an admission of its existence.

For the purposes of this paper we shall only be concerned with positive moral values. Tolkien's imaginative writings as a creation, or as he might have it subcreation, are, by the definition above, a moral creation but they also illustrate many of the moral virtues. If we take a succinct definition of these virtues it is clear that Tolkien's writing embodies the six characteristics of a morally mature individual:

The Morally Mature Person: This person "has six major characteristics, which are derived from universal moral and democratic principles. . . .The morally mature person habitually:

1) Respects human dignity;
2) Cares about the welfare of others;
3) Integrates individual interest and social responsibilities;
4) Demonstrates integrity;
5) Reflects on moral choices; and
6) Seeks peaceful resolution to conflict. In general, then, the morally mature person understands moral principles and accepts responsibility for applying them" (ASCD Panel).

Limiting ourselves to one example for each of the above six characteristics of a morally mature person we shall illustrate the moral fabric of Tolkien's writing. They are, in order:

1) Saruman is offered the chance to regain his dignity before Gandalf casts him from the Istari (*The Two Towers*, Book III, ch. 10); respects human dignity.

2) Embodied in the nurturing and support evident in Sam's relationship with Frodo (*The Two Towers*, Book IV, ch. 1 & passim); cares about the welfare of others.

3) The entire mission for the destruction of the ring is for the good of all despite the high personal cost (*The Lord of the Rings*); integrates individual interest and social responsibilities.

4) Galadriel refuses the ring (*The Fellowship of the Ring*, Book II, ch. 7); demonstrates integrity.

5) The choices of Master Samwise (*The Two Towers*, Book IV, ch. 10); reflects on moral choices.

6) The actions of Frodo in the scouring of the Shire (Return of the King, Book VI, ch. 8); seeks peaceful resolution to conflict. In general, then, the morally mature person understands moral principles and accepts responsibility for applying them. It must be added that Tolkien doesn't support indiscriminate appeasement. Theoden is brought to realize that there comes a moment when you have to stand and fight for what is right (The Two Towers, Book III, ch. 6).

Having established that Tolkien's writings have a moral dimension, the question arises: how did these values find their way into the work? Should we look at Tolkien and his imagination as being explicitly moral (the creator striving to communicate a particular view of the world) or are the morals implicit (those writings unconsciously shaped by the author's experiences--as Tennyson's Ulysses character states, "I am part of all that I have met" (*Ulysses*, line 18) and drawn into his world because of who he was and what had made him that way?

It is first of all important to recognize that Tolkien's first

excursions into the myths that we know as *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion* were private and grew, not out of a desire to proselytize, to 'justify the ways of God to man' or to entertain in the mead hall, but out of philological fascination. Kilby (1976, pp. 48-49) records:

At King Edward's School in Birmingham, which he entered in 1903 at the age of eleven, he was introduced to Chaucer and Anglo-Saxon. One reason he was not a top scholar there was because much of his time was spent in private investigations of Gothic, Anglo-Saxon and Welsh as well as early attempts to invent a language of his own.

From childhood Tolkien had been intrigued by languages. The Welsh names on the coal trucks that rumbled past the garden of one of his childhood homes in King's Heath, Birmingham, captivated him. He claimed an instant kinship with dialects of Old English in the West Midlands.

Language clearly excited Tolkien and words had for him an aesthetic impact that might more usually be associated with painting or music. His encounter with the name Earandel, which would later be incorporated into his mythology illustrates this. Tolkien (Carpenter, 1977, p. 7) wrote of reading the lines

"Eala Earandel engelabearhast
Ofer middengeard monnum sended"
that:

I felt a curious thrill, as if something had stirred within me, half wakened from sleep. There was something remote and strange and beautiful in those words, if I could grasp it, far beyond the ancient English.

This "curious thrill" was clearly something intensely personal to Tolkien. Anglo Saxon, especially its West Midland dialect had a hold on him that went beyond intellectual curiosity and directly engaged his emotions. Tolkien (Carpenter, 1981, p. 213) states:

I am a West-midlander by blood (and took to early West-midland Middle English as a known tongue as soon as I set eyes on it.

It was a known tongue because it offered him a link with an ancestral memory. This comment paints a picture of a man whose whole professional and imaginative life was shaped by an instinctive love of words. It is as if for Tolkien language was an integral part of the way that he identified his place in the universe. It was something handed down to him as part of his inheritance from the past and something to cling to as his father's family cut ties with his mother over her conversion to Roman Catholicism and at the time of her death to which he attributed the qualities of martyrdom (Carpenter, 1981, p. 54).

These two themes, the strength of language as a cohesive force that makes sense of the imagined and an underlying dedication to what one perceives as the truth shape Tolkien as a creator. The latter was the force which implicitly underpinned his creativity, the former the building blocks from which Middle Earth was to evolve.

Language is not a moral creation - it is a means by which moral values and ideas may be communicated. Thus a world born of words comes to us without any explicit moral intention, or the impedimenta of preexisting values. Words do not begin life with moral value, they acquire that through use and experience.

We should pause here to review this difference between the explicit and implicit workings of the imagination with reference to moral values. The imagination is a powerful tool which works both consciously and unconsciously. Work like Lowe's The Road to Xanadu have laid to rest the idea that the imagination spontaneously generates ideas but shows that it does throw up startling transmutations of the things that have touched it. Tolkien himself acknowledges this process. Carpenter (1977, p. 126) quotes Tolkien:

One writes such a story not out of the leaves of trees still to be observed, nor by means of botany and soil-science; but it grows like a seed in the dark out of the leaf-mould of the mind: out of all that has been seen or thought or read, that has long ago been forgotten, descending into the deeps. No doubt there is much selection, as with a gardener: what one throws on one's personal compost-heap; and my mould is evidently made largely of linguistic matter.

However, the imagination can be channeled into directions in which the ideas embedded in a work are explicit. Milton's epic similes in Paradise Lost illustrate this. For example: Milton never for one second allows his imagination to gain control of his reason (whatever Blake might have felt in the *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* [Plate 6]). In fact Blake's comment says more about how he read Milton than what Milton believed. An aspect of a work's moral impact will be an important perspective presented later in this paper.

C.S. Lewis (Hooper, 1966, pp. 46-47) tells us that he wrote the 'Narnia' books, beginning from images, then came the form, then the story and finally he arrived at the 'message'/allegorical structure. Here Lewis indicates that, although the message/moral was not explicit when his imagination first touched on the idea, by the time it reached paper it was an integral or explicit part of his design.

Here lies an important difference - proselytizing and story telling are very different to myth making. Tolkien's writings began as myth making (which he would have defended as being an expression of truth). Building on an existing myth whether you are working in the manner of Milton or Lewis is embroidering a piece of cloth on which the basic design has already been imprinted. The decision to work within that framework means that you have adopted an explicit moral position.

Think back now to Tolkien working on his myth--one which sprang from philology. This represents a new beginning, one that is free of explicit patterning and which will be fashioned by the implicit pressures of his personal "leaf mould."

Besides the linguistic mode to his creativity, Tolkien also had a grand cultural vision of what he might achieve. This was evident as early as his undergraduate days when he commented, prompted from a study of the Finnish Kalevala, to "create a mythology for England." This vision reached grand and epic proportions until years later Tolkien (Carpenter, 1977, pp. 89-90), when recollecting it, expressed it as follows:

Do not laugh! But once upon a time (my crest has long since fallen) I had a mind to make a body of more or less connected legend, ranging from the large and cosmogenic to the level of romantic fairy-story--the larger founded on the lesser in contact with the earth, the lesser drawing splendor from the vast backcloths--which I could dedicate simply: to England; to my country. It should posses the tone and quality that I desired, somewhat cool and clear, be redolent of our 'air' (the clime and soil of the

A journey in the dark   *Lorenzo Daniele*

North West, meaning Britain and the hither parts of Europe; not Italy or the Aegean, still less the East), and while possessing (if I could achieve it) the fair elusive beauty that some call Celtic (though it is rarely found in genuine ancient Celtic things), it should be 'high', purged of the gross, and fit for the more adult mind of a land long steeped in poetry. I would draw some of the great tales in fullness, and leave many only placed in the scheme, and sketched. The cycles should be linked to a majestic whole, and yet leave scope for other minds and hands, wielding paint and music and drama. Absurd.

An ambition like this suggests that explicitly Christian ethics were not at the forefront of Tolkien's mind.

Before *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* Tolkien had called into being a body of myths that explained and gave a loose and growing shape to a personal universe. However this world, created by a committed Christian, makes no explicit reference to Christianity. To understand this we must look both at Tolkien's thoughts on myth and his attitude to his creation.

The Tolkien myths were not merely decorative fancies: "lies breathed through silver", as Lewis (Carpenter, 1977, p. 147) called them. In *On Fairy Stories* Tolkien suggested that man might be directly inspired by God and given "a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth" (Carpenter, 1977, p. 92). He wrote of the tales in *The Silmarillion* that:

They arose in my mind as 'given' things and as they came, separately, so too the links grew......I always had the sense of recording what was already 'there' somewhere, not of inventing.

A comment like this begs discussion. When Tolkien writes of "what was already there" he could mean either that he was writing of a place that had/has an independent existence or that he was writing of something that was true, though this might be better described as one of the infinite possible representations of the absolute truth. This much is clear from Tolkien's comments: his imagined world, his myths, are firmly founded on the truth as he experienced it - God as revealed to man through his creation. This belief provides the deep structure for Tolkien's creativity and forms the prism through which his imagination was refracted. As he wrote, creating a world in which his languages could exist, he could not avoid reproducing a pattern which reflected his beliefs because if he did not his world would lack the internal coherence that makes any creation comprehensible. It is not so much that he desired an explicitly Christian universe but that as a Christian subcreator bringing into being a world which could exist he had no option than to produce one that reflected the truth without which, to such a man, any existence would be unthinkable. At no point in his writing does Tolkien indicate that his world is dedicated to God, only that his relationship to God helped shape it. Had Tolkien produced an explicitly Christian world it would have no longer been 'his' because he would no longer have been its creator. In Middle Earth Tolkien was master although he acknowledged (Tolkien, 1980, p. 163) that his role was that of a steward rather than outright lord by the term 'subcreator'.

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.

By subcreation Tolkien was referring to the process by which man reflects the actions of God through the creation of a credible secondary world--a process of fantasy, which Tolkien claimed demanded "a kind of Elvish craft" (Tolkien, 1980, p. 157). Such an act of creation is inherently religious and therefore moral by definition. As man recreates the role of God ("through the mind of the maker") he creates something that is a reflection of truth. Thus Tolkien would argue, and indeed did, that myths so created are true but it must be remembered that whilst the truth might be absolute its representations are infinite.

Having talked so much about myth and the deep pattern that underlies Tolkien's world, or, indeed, the world of any creator whether he wills it or not, it is important to issue a caveat about Tolkien's world and how he viewed it. Clearly its mythological elements were important to him and he was philosophically aware of where his works stood in relation to God, but when one reads his writings, even those of an episodic nature like those that are woven together into The Silmarillion, the factor that always forcibly strikes the reader is his interest in the places themselves: what they are like, their landscape and (of course) what these places were called. Tolkien may have started from myth but when you factor in language and geography it seems as if his real interest had become the place itself. It had assumed a life of its own which fed off both his imagination and places that he loved. For example, The Shire embodies the countryside of Tolkien's youth or the woods of Doriath where Beren first beheld Luthien is a recreation of deeply personal memories of places associated with the early years of his marriage.

This latter shows another strand to Tolkien's mythology which is not within the scope of this paper and that is how his mythology is in part an expression of his own experience. He wrote (Carpenter, 1981, p. 420) of this side of his mythmaking to his son, Christopher:

It seems probable that I shall never write any ordered biography - it is against my nature, which expresses itself about things deepest felt in tales and myths.

As his world assumed a life of its own Tolkien's involvement with it changed and he became more and more the historian of his world trying to draw disparate elements together to coherence and he began to try to discover why and how things had got the way they were. By this point it was not just that his world had the underlying sense of reflecting reality but it had become to him a real place.

When Tolkien moves from myth making to story-telling his myth rests on the foundation of his philology and his world is free of explicit value. The key that unlocks this deeply personal world to the public are hobbits. In them, for the first time in his mythology, Tolkien introduces creations that are closer to allegory than myth. They embody the virtues and values that Tolkien himself endorsed. They are (arguably) the greatest literary embodiment of the spirit of the English countryside, far better than the pastoral nymphs and fauns inherited from classical myth. They fulfill perfectly Tolkien's desire to dedicate something "to England, to my country".

Without Bilbo it is clear to all except the most devoted champions of Tolkien's myths that Middle Earth would have remained Tolkien's private world. It would have grown as he aged and never been known beyond a circle of intimates.

It is ironic that Tolkien's success with a wider audience is built upon something that is so close to allegory, despite Tolkien's frequent denial of any such element in his writing. Though perhaps not surprising given his desire to dedicate something to his country. Especially so since, as we have argued, his world WAS built upon an IMPLICITLY moral

vision.

At the beginning of this paper we demonstrated that Tolkien's writing might strike the reader as being infused with a moral vision. In the intervening sections we have attempted to show how Tolkien could produce a moral work without the explicit intention of doing so. The one dimension that remains untouched is the reception that these works received from those who read them. Amongst whom we must number Tolkien the reader as opposed to Tolkien the writer.

An author cannot control the response that he elicits from his readers, (viz Blake on Milton cited above). The implicit morality of a work or creation can only(?) be judged by what impacts its audience. When, after the publication of The Lord of the Rings, Tolkien became at least partially a member of the the work's audience, and, whilst he was quick to disclaim any allegorical significance he was also open to speculation on the implicit forces which shaped his world.

It was during this period that Tolkien (Tolkien, 1980) would explain his subcreation in terms of the greater truth, which he else where described as "the law in which we're made." Tolkien (Carpenter, 1981, p. 172) wrote to Robert Murray, S.J., that The Lord of The Rings was a "fundamentally religious and Catholic work, unconsciously so at first but consciously in revision". As we discussed earlier it was inevitable that any subcreated world which would satisfy Tolkien's passion for things being right would have been founded on the truth as he saw it, especially since the term subcreation implies the writer reflecting the role of God. Tolkien (Carpenter, 1981, pp. 201-207) claimed that at times he felt he was "given" things rather than "inventing" them and after the publication of The Lord of The Rings sought to explain the significance of what he had done. Examples of this tendency would include his discussion (Carpenter Letters 201-207) on the nature of Gandalf and his return from the dead after his struggle with the balrog. In this Tolkien makes clear that Gandalf really died. He is, Tolkien "would venture to say an incarnate angel." Gandalf alone of the Istari "passes the test", sacrificing himself on the bridge. His role is to teach rather than force or dominate wills. He emerges as a minister of grace, an indication of the divine forces that guide Tolkien's world, (the same forces that saved the world from Morgoroth at the end of The Silmarillion) although Tolkien also acknowledges that his return was a plot necessity. The overall effect of the letter is to leave one feeling that despite a willingness to lean towards an acknowledgement of the books' Christian roots Tolkien would not, perhaps could not, give his work explicit Christian correspondences. The overall effect of this letter and others on similar openly Christian readings is to leave one feeling that Tolkien would not explain the mystery of his world. Perhaps this should not surprise us since, if the world was real to him, the infinite mysteries of creation would defy explanation by his finite mind. This is neatly exemplified in the same letter (Carpenter, 1981, p. 207).

Naked I was sent back - for a brief time until my time is done' Sent back by whom and whence? (Carpenter Letters 207).

Tolkien never answers his own question. He has become more than a subcreator; he is now an historian recording real events in a real world. However, it is clear that he did not intend that Gandalf should represent any form of divinity, Jesus figure or any such allegorical correspondence.

Gandalf faced and suffered death and came back or was sent back.......with enhanced powers. But though this may remind one of the Gospels it is not really the same thing at all. The incarnation of God is a greater thing than I would desire to write (Carpenter, 1981, p. 237).

Even when he acknowledges a Christian or Catholic influence on his writing he immediately takes a kind of intellectual evasive action.

I was particularly interested in your remarks about Galadriel.......I think that I owe much of this character to Christian and Catholic teaching and imagination about Mary but actually Galadriel was a penitent (Carpenter, 1981, p. 407).

He then goes on to establish Galadriel as a being with her own existence. He never seems comfortable admitting to more than an implicit link between his world and Christian teaching. He was probably well aware how allegorical overtones destroy the fantasy and creative coherence of an imaginary world: something any child who has ever felt cheated on discovering that Aslan in Lewis' Narnia books is not a real lion but a symbol, could tell you about.

Tolkien's hints of explicit Christian intention seem to smack of wisdom after the event. Tolkien had been busy in his own world for some forty years before the letters cited above were written. He was aware of the relationship between his creative impulse and God but was rather more involved in making sense of his own world than seeking direct correspondences. His obsessions were with the details of things temporal, like languages and geography, rather than things spiritual. The explicit links are those he made after the fact, and significantly after others had begun to find significances less to his liking and hence his frequent denunciations of allegory.

It might be helpful to see Tolkien's situation as analogous to Plato's Myth of the Cave. He was intellectually aware that the world he had created in painstaking detail was in fact merely a shadow of the true creation, but over the years he had become so captivated by the shadows that he had been more than satisfied with allowing them to run their own course, secure in the knowledge that they had a true foundation--because he had a true foundation. At the time of composition Tolkien was perhaps more caught up in being god in his own universe than modeling himself upon God's actions in this world. The latter informs the former but it is not explicit.

Tolkien's creative habits support the view that his imagination was not explicitly Christian. Despite his painstaking attitude to creating a coherent world, much of the coherence was the result of what might be termed retrospective creativity. He would follow an idea that had emerged from his leaf-mould, (although at times it's more fun to think of his mind as being like Barliman Butterbur's: "a lumber room: things wanted always buried"). Sometimes it would be a name, at others a plot device or new word and then he would stop all forward progress and try to validate, within his overall scheme of things, what he had just brought to life. Even with his early languages Tolkien (Carpenter, 1977, p. 37) worked backwards. He would:

posit the hypothetical earlier words which he was finding necessary for invention by means of an organized historical system.

Carpenter charts this tendency to justify the present be

tinkering with the past through Tolkien's writing and shows how, as his world became more and more real to him, Tolkien would approach problems in the story or names which had suddenly come about because they sounded right "with the attitude, 'What does this mean? I must find out'" (Carpenter, 1977, p. 94).

Thus in a way Tolkien had no ultimate meaning or message to satisfy, only his own passion for a world that made sense. Of course to a Christian it only made sense if it reflected a Christian truth, but that was understood from the beginning and didn't need revalidation at every turn. Tolkien's passion for coherence is illustrated in writings like those published as Unfinished Tales. For example The Quest of Erebor shows him going to some length to explain away the apparent illogicalities of the plot of The Hobbit so that it would fit into the later structures that grew out of it. In fact, many of the pieces in Unfinished Tales have the quality of notes written by an 'omniscient Tolkien' to 'Tolkien the audience' or reader of his history.

In *The Lord of the Rings* Middle Earth grew to meet Tolkien's needs as narrator and creator rather than explicit moralist. "The tale that grew in the telling" (Prologue The Lord of the Rings) drew on his earlier work and threw up new surprises. In a letter to W H Auden Tolkien wrote:

I met a lot of things along the way that astonished me. Tom Bombadil I knew already; but I had never been to Bree. Strider sitting there in the corner at the inn was a shock and I had no more idea who he was than Frodo. The Mines of Moria had been a mere name; and of Lothlorien no word had reached my mortal ears until I came there. Far away I knew there were Horselords on the confines of an ancient kingdom of men, but Fangorn Forest was an unforeseen adventure. I had never heard of Eorl nor of the Stewards of Gondor. Most disquieting of all, Saruman had not been revealed to me, and I was as mystified as Frodo at Gandalf's failure to appear on September 22 (Quoted as epigraph to *The Return Of The Shadow).*

Although his work is not explicitly Christian, he was writing, as we observed at the beginning of this paper, a work with moral dimensions. As the seriousness of the work grew from Hobbit travelogue to heroic adventure the reader is presented, not with just incident and detail, but with a series of moral climaxes where one or another of the characters is faced by a moral decision. In many ways this is in keeping with the epic tone of the work after the journey to Rivendell. These dilemmas are, however, presented in secular form without reference to a divinely imposed code of conduct. The values by which the characters are judged by their peers and by the readers are clearly those of the Christian tradition. The book's moral centre is firmly established. When Eomer asks how a man is to judge in those difficult times Aragorn is unequivocal in his response.

As he has ever judged. Good and evil have not changed since yesteryear; nor are they one thing among Elves and Dwarves and another thing among men. It is a man's part to discern them, as much in the Golden Wood as in his own house (*The Two Towers*, 41).

It is the simplicity of doing what everyone from a Christian tradition or culture knows to be right that lies at the heart of *The Lord of The Rings* as a moral work. The work and world have an implicit moral centre that calls to the basic human desire to make order out of chaos (in the face of non-sentient nature which always moves towards entropy). This springs from the narrative. It doesn't come from a desire to point this truth out to us. As a subcreator, Tolkien is simply performing the task of holding a prism up to nature. What we see is a great educational quality: its importance is all "constructivist" in lesson designs. This is one of the fascinations of his mythmaking.

That it should seem familiar is inescapable - such is the nature of creativity - but this does not make *The Lord of The Rings* a religious work *per se.* In the end Tolkien's oeuvre says more about life than it does about God. It is very much a temporal work about failure and fading rather than triumph. All the great triumphant moments, the eucatastrophies, are preludes to the demise of the Elves, Tolkien's first born and most beloved creations. Unlike the Gospels, Tolkien's tales are, at their deepest level, lamenting the passing of an old order. Like the music of Mozart the surface is triumph and joy but beneath all this lies the sadness of existence. At the end of the Lord of The Rings triumph only further alienates man from those who know of bliss.

The sense of the losses induced by progress and victory bought at a high cost were clearly strong influences in Tolkien's life as a reading of his biography and letters reveal. These exert a strong influence on the work but like the religious content remain implicit. They lie beneath the account of a world which to Tolkien had become like Adam's dream in Eden: he awoke to find it real.

However once Tolkien's world had become a public one the minds of new creators could take over. The readers recreate Tolkien's world for themselves; if they never open the book, never crack the spine, it remains lifeless to them. They give the world life, bringing their leaf mould to Tolkien's and producing something that reflects their imaginations and leanings. To some readers their version of Tolkien's world may be explicitly Christian, however not to the author's of this paper. Once a book has been written it no longer belongs to the author but to each individual reader according to his or her perspective. As Tolkien states in a letter to Carole Batten-Phelps (Autumn 1971) when questioned about 'a sanity and sanctity' in *The Lord of The Rings:*

If sanctity inhabits his [a writer's] world or as a pervading light illumines it then it does not come from him but through him. And neither of you would perceive it in these terms unless it was with you also. . . . Of course *The Lord of the Rings* does not belong to me. It has been brought forth and must now go its appointed way in the world. . .

Selected Bibliography
Carpenter, H., 1978, *The Inklings,* Australia: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.
Carpenter, H., 1981, *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien,* Australia: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.
Carpenter, H., 1977, *Tolkien: A Biography,* Australia: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.
Hannay, M. P., 1981, *C.S. Lewis,* New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co.
Hooper, W., ed., 1966, *C.S. Lewis: On Stories and Other Essays on Literature,* Orlando: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovish, Publishers.
Kilby, C. S., 1976, *Tolkien & the Silmarillion,* Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers.
Lowes, J. L., 1927, *The Road to Xanadu.*
Salu, M. and Farrell, R. T., eds., 1979, *J.R.R. Tolkien, Scholar and Storyteller: Essays in Memoriam,* Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press.
Tolkien, J.R.R., 1937, *The Hobbit,* Australia: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.
Tolkien, J.R.R., 1966, (2nd Ed.) *The Lord of the Rings:* Three Volume Set, Australia: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.
Tolkien, J.R.R., 1980, *Poems and Stories* "On Fairy-Stories" Australia: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.
Tolkien, J.R.R., 1977, *The Silmarillion.* Australia: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.