HIPPY VERSUS HOBBIT

A WORD TO FARAMIR
                from Belladonna.

My good Faramir -- and incidentally I tend to dislike the
vocative, almost as much as I dislike the 'ad hominem' argument
so I will turn the vocative on you for a change. So Faramir,her
goes. I'm glad that the hippy world has moved on from 'Lord
of the Rings'----that's the best news for a long time. Let them
go and spoil some other book, there are plenty. I don't mind
what they do, if they leave Middle Earth alone. Mind you, I've
seen them, Faramir, if you haven't --- in London, and you must
have seen them in Brighton. But we'll let them alone. No,
Faramir I still insist about drugs. I can take my glass of
sherry or the odd cigarette without hallucinations, but I
think that if the taker of even mild drugs doesn't get 'stoned'
he feels he hasn't had his money's worth ---- that money,
moreover, that a lot of unpleasant people are so clever at
taking off him. I'ts one of the worst rackets, as you aught to
know. The day when LotR or MALLORN becomes associated with
drug-taking (as Gandalf's Garden did) that is the day when I
walk out.

        As to doing my own thing - I do not agree that Tolkien
' did his own thing' for many years. As a professor, he
spent his life as an Establishment man, almost as a nine-to-
five man, holding down a job and doing what he did not always
want to do. Only as a rare escape did he take a 'trip'(unaided)
into Middle Earth. Perhaps if he had been able to write fantasy
books all the time he would have written more and better.....
I doubt it. You can't live on nectar and ambrosia all the time.
Works like these creep up from your subconscious when you're
not worrying about them, and tend to run away when you are.

        Apart from these points, my dear Faramir, I find myself
surprisingly in agreement with most of what you say. Like the
Bible, most good books are capable of being misused; and like
the Bible, they survive it. I'ts good to know that LotR is
likely to do so.
                Wishing you all the luck in the Shire,
                BELLADONNA TOOK

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SOME THOUGHTS ON HIPPIES AND HOBBITS
                                Bob Borsley

        I read with interest Belladonna Took's article on "Hippies
and Hobbits" in Mallorn 2. Belladonna, I thought, argued on the
whole very reasonably', nevertheless, there are, I feel, a
number of important criticisms of her position which should be
made. A.R.Faramir. Fallone of course made a number of
criticisms of Belladonna's position in his "On Behalf of the
Half-Hippy", but I feel he left important criticisms unsaid. In
this essay I shall attempt to show that Tolkien's outlook as
explicitly presented in such places as his "On Fairy Stories"
and implicitly contained in "The Lord of the Rings" is by no
means incompatible with certain hippy attitudes, that there is
in fact a definite connection -- though one which should not
be over-emphasized-- between hippies and hobbits.

First let me try to define wht I mean by "hippy". It seems to me that much of the discussion of the hippy-hobbit question has been characterized by a lack of clarity over just what is meant by the term. It seems to me that the fundamental characteristic of the hippy is that he is a "drop-out"; that he regects the harsh compeditiveness and repressiveness of contemporary society and seeks to create some form of alternative society. Different hippies of course go to differ - ent degrees in "dropping-out"and some are more admirable than others. Most admirable in my view are those mainly American hippies who have established rural communes in which significant steps have been taken towards developing alternative forms of society. These I would say preserve most clearly the original hippy ideals as they emerged around four years ago. Less thoughgoing drop-outs are the urban hippies of America, Britian and Europe. The extent to which these can be seenas attempting to create an alternative form of society obviously Many probably are rather sorry, lost characters; with many, however it would probably be true to say that they share important ideals with their rural counterparts.

(Gandalf's Garden it seems to me was a fair representatio of the ideals and attitudes of British urban hippies. I fail to understand the violence of attacks made on it in the past by Belladonna. It seems to have been characterized by a gentleness and concern for human problems which was far from objectionable)

Less important I would say as defining characteristics of the hippy are the use of drugs and what Belladonna calls their "obcassion with sex". Neither of these things would seem to be important characteristics of the hippies in the American communes.The use of drugs would seem to be comparatively small and they are apparently monogamous. Liberal attitudes towards sex and drugs are probably more important among urban hippies, but these, I would suggest, are one step removed from what one might term the "classical hippy".

(I say this of the urban hippies because they differ comparatively little from the type of person who lived on the fringes of society in big cities long before the term"hippy" was coined. Rural hippies have, on the other hand, attempted to create alternative forms of social life in a way which, if not new,has not been in western countries in this century. They have also formulated, with some degree of clarity, a fairly distinctive philosophy of life.)

Having defined the term "hippy" I shall proceed with an attempt to show three things: firstly that a number of Tolkien' critisisms of modern society are exactly the same as the critisisms hippies make, secondly, that Tolkien is by no means ill-disposed towards escapism and "dropping-out" and, thirdly that the hippy outlook, as characterised above, is not at all inconsistent with the ethical ideals of "The Lord of the Rings"

Firstly the question of the similarity between Tolkien's and the hippies' criticisms of modern society. Tolkien explicitly states some of his criticisms in "On Fairy Stories", and they are very similar to the views of many hippies. His main targets are the blind worship of technological advance and the obsession with material goods. His view that 'It is indeed an age of " improved means to deteriorated ends "' (Ballatine Tolkien Reader p 64).This is a view, I think that most hippies would endorse. Revulsion against the materialism of American society was clearly one of the prime motives in the development of the original hippy movement. In connection with this issue it should be stressed that, since Tolkien's criticisms were made in 1938, he cannot be interpreted as regarding society's ailments beginning with long hair and

permissiveness. In fact it is clear that he regards these ailments as dating from long before 1938. This is made clear by the quotation from Christopher Dawson's "Progress and Religion " which Tolkien cites in a footnote: ' The full Victorian panoply of top hat and frock coat undoubtedly expressed something essential in the nineteenth century culture,and hence it has with that culture spread all over the world, as no fashion of clothing has ever done before. It is possible that our descendants will recognize in it a kind of grim Assyrian beauty, fit enblem of the ruthless and great age that created it; but however that may be, it misses the direct and inevitable beauty that all clothing should have, because, like it's parent culture it was out of touch of the life of nature, and human nature as well' (Tolkien reader p 63)

The final phrase of this quotation is, I think, particularly reminiscent of hippy attitudes towards modern society. I think it would be fair to say then that Tolkien, like the hippies, sees the sickness of modern society as being very deep and as going back an almost indefinite length of time.

Secondly the question of escapism and dropping-out. Again I think "On Fairy Stories " provides considerable evidence to support my view. Escapism, Tolkien argues is a desire to escape, not from life 'but from uor present time and self-made misery' (Tolkien reader p.64)
" Why," he asks, "should a man be scorned if, finding himself in prison, he tries to get out and go home?" (Tolkien reader p 60).
He also comments critically on a clerk of Oxenford who believed that he ' welcomed' the proximity of mass production robot-factories, and the roar of self-obstructive mechanical traffic because it brought his univercity into "contact with real life". In short I think it is clear that Tolkien can in no way be seen as an opponent of escapism or "dropping- out"

Finally I come to my contention that the hippy outlook is not at all inconsistent with the ethical ideals of "The Lord of the Rings.". So far as I have only considered Tolkien's views as contained in "On Fairy Stories " I think I have shown that these views are in no ways incompatible with hippy views. I would claim in opposition to Belladonna that his views in " The Lord of the Rings " are likewise compatible with hippy outlook. Belladonna argues that there is no " dropping-out " or " doing ones own thing" in " The Lord of the Rings", and that therefore the book must be regarded as fundamentally opposed to thesethings. If one accepts Belladonna's premise does her conclusion necessarily follow? It seems to me that it just does not. We are not living in a society remotely comparable to those of the third age- to put it in concrete terms, living under the rule of Ted Heath is rather different from the rule of King Elessar - therefore actions appropriate in the Third age are not necessarily appropriate in the present day. I would claim that one could accept many of the ideals that illuminate "The Lord of the Rings" while acting rather differently from the characters in the story. I would suggest inaddition that Belladonna's premise is perhaps notso obviously true as she thinks it is. I shan't go into this beyond pointing out that Galadriel is a very definite example of "doing ones own thing" She was the last survivor of the Princes and Queens who led the revolting Nodor to exile in Middle-Earth. After the overthrow of Morgoth at the end of the first age, a ban was set upon her return, and she had replied proudly that she had no wish to do so.(The road goes ever on)