

# On Tolkien's Presentation of Distributism through the Shire

JAY ATKINS

In creating a mythology for England, J.R.R. Tolkien sets up an entire, self-sustaining universe. He writes a creation story, establishes moral constructs, and creates a moon cycle that dates back to the beginning of time. Down to the minutest detail, Tolkien constructs a good universe. Tolkien presents readers with a variety of cultures with differing economic models or practices: Lothlorien, Gondor, Khazad-dum, Isengard, and even Mordor. Of these models, the Shire's agrarian-based society is an example of harmonious Distributism; the citizens are simple, and do not regard material gain as a goal. Consequently, when industrialism takes over the Shire, it loses its unique culture and sense of camaraderie. Through the Shire's corruption in "The Scouring of the Shire," Tolkien critiques industrialism, Socialism, and Capitalism. These economic forms, he claims, decimate the environment and absorb small, family-owned businesses and farms. A vivid example is the Sandymans' mill; though it was once locally owned and cooperative with nature, it becomes a factory for weapons after Saruman tyrannizes the Shire. Using these elements, Tolkien critiques the dangers of Socialism and Capitalism.

Distributism was G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc's response to the notion that big government and big business are the keys to a healthy society; they wanted to combat this early twentieth-century political movement's destructive tendencies. Distributism is the economic system that emphasizes the widespread distribution of property among a populace, such that a determining number of families own land and the means of production. They found Capitalism and Socialism, the two prominent economic forms, to be straining the commoner's individuality. Corporations or governments that own more land than the people who abide in it disrupt the culture from the populace; in addition, industrialism, the economic vehicle of Socialism and Capitalism, severs its population's connection to the land. Belloc's thesis in *The Servile State* is that, "Industrial society as we know it will tend toward the re-establishment of slavery" (6). Because power is overwhelmingly concentrated and disconnected from local communities in both Socialism and Capitalism, the populace may be exploited. Those in power turn away from locality and, consequently, the community suffers. Socialism and Capitalism detract from the citizens dignity, the environment, and the culture with the use of industrialism. Chesterton shows in *The Outline of Sanity* that concentrating ownership of property into the hands of a "relatively small" class of capitalists "necessitates a very large majority serving those capitalists for a wage (42-43). Part of a dignified human life involves making one's property excellent and beautiful, so if one does not have property, they miss out on this good. The Distributist

questions industrialism's moving ownership into a few individuals rather than the majority. Matthew P. Akers, a contributor for the *St. Austin Review*, argues: "Distributists connect industrialism and imperialism, arguing that the former encourages the latter" (3).

Belloc's famous definition from the essay *Economics for Helen* is fundamental to understanding Distributism: Distributism is "a state of society in which the families composing it are, in a determining number, owners of the land and the means of production as well as themselves the agents of production (that is, the people who by their human energy produce wealth with the means of production)" (102). The distributist values smaller, localized industries managed by families and community members. However, it is worth noting that Belloc does not think that all families in a community need to own land and the means of production, but only a "determining number." The determining number is the number of families that makes a community decisively distributist, which does not even have to be a majority. Furthermore, Belloc and Chesterton both note that Distributism is the most sustainable and oldest economic form available, and that it puts more power into the hands of members of the community. Rather than putting land in the hand of outsiders, the distributist invests in the community and encourages local production.

Belloc and Chesterton worked together to create an economic form built on Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*. Here Leo addresses the "yoke little better than that of slavery itself" set upon the "teeming masses" by the "comparatively few" (3). Leo argues that it is both good and natural for members of a society to own property. Socialism and Capitalism both remove property, and make citizens wage-earners or dependent upon the government. Because property is a vital good for the poor giving them something to invest their wealth into, the state's acquiring a majority of the property primarily withdraws from the well-being of the poor. Belloc and Chesterton adapt Leo's ideas into a new movement. Edward Shapiro, modern distributist writer from Stetson Hall University, writes that ownership ought to be spread out over the populace: "According to the Distributists, a healthy social order required the widespread distribution of property" (211). Shapiro argues that, "Only if property was widely distributed could a society avoid the private economic collectivism of plutocracy on the right and the public economic collectivism of socialism... on the left" (211). The distributist claims that if many people own land, then power will not be focused on one point. Tolkien employs many of these principles in the Shire.

Peter Kreeft states it clearly, "Tolkien's political philosophy had a name: Distributism" (164). Tolkien adapts

Distributism and focuses it in the Shire. The hobbits of the Shire hold a simplistic view toward economics; by and large, they are an agrarian society built on self-sufficiency. Tolkien introduces farmers and gardeners, Farmer Maggot, Sam Gamgee and his father, the Gaffer, and Farmer Cotton who all have active roles in the story. The Shire imports or exports very little, engaging primarily in the export of their renowned and culturally unique Pipeweed. Tolkien hints that the Shire has very little security; travelers are free to enter the Shire as they please. Furthermore, the Shire lacks widely developed industry, showing that the populace values simple gardening over a mass production. The Sandymans' mill is the only thing that could be perceived as industrial. This mill is used for the ends of the local community, rather than for extensive export. In "A Long Expected Party," the Gaffer sits with several companions at a local inn, The Ivy Bush, and tells of his response to Sam's ambitious nature: "Elves and Dragons... Cabbages and potatoes are better for me and you" (24). Furthermore, Bilbo has the power and opportunity to begin a business and become even richer, but he chooses to live simply in the Shire. The Shire's distributist views are more than economic ideology; they are a unique way of life that its populace cherishes.

The Shire's Distributism stems from adhering to natural law. The hobbits live according to a higher moral order, which guides all races in Middle-earth. Peter Kreeft comments on this phenomenon: "Men differ in talents, so there are natural hierarchies as well as unnatural and oppressive hierarchies" (165). The hobbits recognize that they are an agrarian society; this is the skill set they have to offer. Hierarchic conceptions of good and evil are prevalent in Tolkien. For example, evil works by abusing those who are lower on a hierarchic scale. Evil tries to gain power and dominate others, creating disharmony among natural order. In *The Two Towers* when Aragorn and Legolas are searching for the Halflings, Eomer asks Aragorn how one ought to judge good from evil, Aragorn responds, "As he has ever judged... good and ill have not changed since yesteryear; nor are they one thing among Elves and Dwarves and another among men" (Tolkien 438). Tolkien rejects moral relativism, offering world with an objective morality. This being the case, why would Tolkien use Distributist ideas in an orderly society? C.S. Lewis comments on a disordered government in the essay "Willing Slaves of the Welfare State:"

I believe that man is happier, and happier in a richer way, if he has "the free born mind." But I doubt whether he can have this without economic independence, which new society is abolishing. For economic independence allows an education now controlled by the government... Admittedly, when man was untamed such liberty belonged to the few. I know. Hence the horrible suspicion that our only choice is between societies with few freemen and societies with none. (Lewis 338)

Lewis thinks that if all power is attributed to the government, such as education and labor, then no one will have the mind to criticize it. This is an example of hierarchic

injustice, for the government holds the power and forces many to comply. Chesterton comments that in Socialism, "the Government provides everything; and it is absurd to ask a Government to *provide* an opposition" (44). Tolkien offers Distributism as a way for those who are low on a scale of power to still have security and justice done them. Through its emphasis on guilds and fair, commutative justice, Distributism offers society safeguards from one individual's attaining too much power or acquiring too much property.

It is helpful here to think of guilds as economic safeguards within the Distributist system. Guilds ensure that no one individual gains too much economic power. The idea is simple: each member of a guild is a free working tradesman, working against the other tradesmen of the guild, so that there is competition. However, this completion is limited, because there are agreements in place to ensure no one competes "past a certain point" or competes dishonestly. Chesterton observes that guilds have "competition, but it is deliberately limited competition... or artificially limited competition" ("The Guild Idea" 100). The agreements are in place to ensure that competition remains in place, not a combine with one individual gaining more than the others. If competition is not regulated, then "one shop swallows all the rest... or one man swallows all the rest" (100-101). In having limited economic power the hobbits of the Shire respect one another and respect their cultural traditions. Their agrarian culture unites them with the environmental concern of the Elves.

Agrarianism and a concern for the earth are high forms of good in Middle-earth. Not only are they exemplified in the ordinary dealings of the Shire, but they are also deeply engrained in Galadriel's character. Being the wisest and most elegant of Middle-earth, her concern for the environment shows its substantial nature in Tolkien's universe. The hobbits' concern for the environment is uniquely agrarian, while Galadriel's is transcendent. However, the two are deeply connected. For example, she gives Sam the Elvish soil: "Here is set G for Galadriel... but it may stand for garden in your tongue" (Tolkien 375). She goes on to tell Sam that this soil will heal his home and that "there will be few gardens in Middle-earth that will bloom like your garden" (375). Signifying that "G" means Galadriel, as well as garden, automatically associates the two.

Lothlorien is a vision of what something like Eden may have looked like. This is a place unmarked by the tarnish of industry or of agricultural misuse: "No blemish or sickness or deformity could be seen in anything that grew upon the earth. On the land of Lorien there was no stain" (Tolkien 351). This place is both transcendent and holy. However, it is important to note that the elves that dwell here work with nature rather than against it. They live in flets elevated in trees. Rather than destroying or manipulating the environment for gains and ends, they treat it as an end in itself. Galadriel says explicitly that her mirror is not magic, as the hobbits understand it. Magic is the bending of nature to make things that are not natural. Respecting the

environment not only gives the land a heavenly glow, but promotes the Lothlorien culture as well.

The Distributist believes that admiration of nature is vital to a culture. Tolkien and the Distributists “believed that respect for the land and love of nature were essential components of their... traditional beliefs in the family and in the arts” (Akers 2). Tolkien, like the Distributist, thinks that a rich culture is “based upon agriculture and a close relationship with nature” (2). Lothlorien and the Shire reveal their own enduring cultures; they both have a unique way of life that characterizes their values. What they have in common is a deep admiration and concern for nature. However, the Shire seems far from the transcendent quiddity of Lothlorien; it does not capture nature in the way Lorien does. This is a result of the hobbits’ simplicity; they do not know nature in the same way Galadriel and Lorien do. Frodo experiences an overwhelming natural aesthetic in Lothlorien: “He felt a delight in wood and the touch of it... it was the delight of the living tree itself” (Tolkien 351). Although the Shire is simple in comparison to Lothlorien, they both share goodness.

Tolkien agrees with the Distributist that an agrarian attitude is beneficial to culture; they also agree that industrialism causes disorder and evil. Akers argues: “Tolkien identifies industrialism with war-fare, and agrarianism with peace” (2). Throughout *The Lord of the Rings* Tolkien foreshadows the industrialized Shire to which Frodo and Sam return. For example, at the beginning, in “The Shadow of the Past” Sam tells Ted Sandyman, “You can’t deny that others besides our Halfast have seen queer folk crossing the Shire-crossing it, mind you: there are more that are turned back at the borders” (45). Sam says this at the outset of the novel, giving readers a clear idea about the way things typically are in the Shire. Sam’s notion of “the way things ought to be” is explicitly how they are, so he becomes the voice of what is expected in the Shire. His declaration offers readers a source of information: first, there are strangers coming into the Shire, and second, the Shire has few border regulations. The state of the Shire’s borders shows that they have little regard to danger; they are naïve and innocent. An innocent Shire’s accompanied by naivety is better than a knowledgeable, yet corrupted Shire.

Readers are given yet another image from Sam’s vision at Galadriel’s mirror, for he sees the deconstruction of the Shire. He sees Ted Sandyman cutting down many of the Shire’s trees and the installation of a chimney in the new mill. Later in *The Two Towers*, Merry and Pippin find a barrel of pipe-weed in Isengard. Someone has exported the Shire’s unique and exclusive product. Aragorn finds this questionable: “Leaf from the Southfarthing in Isengard. The more I consider it, the more curious I find it... Saruman had secret dealing with someone in the Shire” (Tolkien 575). Most of the gardeners and farmers of the Shire would not have the capabilities, or the desire to do something like this. Yet, “Wormtongues may be found in other houses than King Théoden’s” (575). Sandyman’s exploitation of nature, exportation, and mechanization are counter to Distributism. Tolkien offers much foreshadowing throughout the novel

to prepare the reader for what is to come.

Having an economy based on export tends to exploit the local community comparatively more than an economy based on local production. For example, when Merry asks Hob if the reason that hobbits cannot have extra food is because of a bad year of harvest, Hob Hayward answers, “Well no, the year’s been good enough... We grow a lot of food, but we don’t rightly know what becomes of it” (999). The reader finds out that the food is being “carried off to storage” (999). The hobbits are then informed that there is not any pipe-weed left, and that “wagon loads of it went away down the old road out of South-farthing” (1000). Even when the Shire has had a good year, the hobbits are going with minimal amounts of food. Matthew Dickerson and Jonathan Evans assert that, “Healthy communities eat locally grown food, which feeds not only local people but also the local community and its economy” (207). Dickerson and Mathews argues that there are two problems with Sharkey’s dominion: “The ownership of too much land by one person, and the move from using farmland to grow for the local market toward using it for larger-scale production of export cash crops” (208). Rather than using the land to support the Shire, Sharkey uses the land as a means for cash crops and export. He manipulates the hobbits with “progressive rhetoric” (208) such as “gatherers” and “sharers” (Tolkien 999). Sharkey’s exploitation of the Shire mimics industrialism’s infiltration to communities by way of big government or big business.

Upon returning, the hobbit company finds the “sad and forlorn” Shire very “un-Shirelike” (Tolkien 998) as it is transformed into what Akers calls a “small Isengard” (3). The motives of the populace turn from hard work and love to fear and loathing. Sharkey, the new ruler of the Shire, administers orders to the “ruffians” who, in turn, give orders to commoners. This militarized hierarchy disconnects Sharkey from the local culture, which Tolkien finds dangerous. Sharkey’s primary form of leadership comes from a sense of cruelty and usury; he has very little regard for the will of others and desires to dominate them. Farmer Cotton finds Mr. Lotho, Sharkey’s partner, to be “funny” because he “wanted to own everything, and then order other folk about” (Tolkien 1012). Sharkey’s greed moves the Shire from a basis of ownership to what Hilaire Belloc calls a proletariat basis: the Shire “had already become a society” of one individual “possessed of the means of production on the one hand, and a majority dispossessed of those means on the other” (39). The hobbits find excessive power to be an odd concept because of their own simple culture. It is not common in their Distributist society to want any more than one already has. Modesty and uniformity are the virtues of Distributism: “The Scouring of the Shire” is Tolkien’s critique of the industrialism present in both Capitalism and Socialism. Sharkey is Saruman, the menacing wizard from Isengard. At the point in the story where he takes over the Shire, he is so corrupted by the desire for power that he is barely a person. He has become so obsessed with his own conquest that he is willing to exploit the Shire for his own



ends. Because he comes from the outside, he does not know about how the Shire functions, and so he is abstracted from their culture. Consequently, he is apathetic exporting their rightfully owned crops. Gandalf foreshadows Saruman's character change in *The Hobbit*: "Some believe it is only great power that can hold evil in check, but that is not what I have found. It is the small everyday deeds of ordinary folk that keep the darkness at bay. Small acts of kindness and love" (Tolkien 42). It is the hobbits that are, in part, keeping evil at bay, because their culture is an example of what Gandalf is speaking about.

The modest and widely apportioned ownership of private property is a key component of Distributism. So when Ted Sandyman sells his corn-grinding mill to Pimple and Sharkey, it detrimentally withdraws from the Shire's economic independence and saturates the property into fewer hands. Pimple and Sharkey gain their power by buying up property and then using it for industrial purposes. Dickerson and Evans show that the problem is that "too much land is owned by one person" (208). Furthermore, Tolkien offers several images to contrast industrialism and Distributism. One is that the mill is originally water-powered. After Sharkey tears down the small hobbit-sized mill, he constructs a larger, more productive one. This new mill is powered by fire and coal rather than water. "They're always a-hammering and a-letting out a smoke and a stench, and there isn't no peace even at night in Hobbiton," Farmer Cotton comments (Tolkien 1013). Furthermore, the old corn-grinding mill now makes weapons for war. The mill, once a symbol of sustainability and preservation, becomes a tool for creating destruction and chaos. Tolkien juxtaposes the life giving qualities of Distributism with the mechanisms of industrialism. Matthew P. Akers explains the Shire "Formerly produced life through agrarianism... now produces death through industrialism" (2).

The function of the functioning of the Sandymans' water powered mill and the Shire's agricultural society parallel that of Lothlorien culture. Both of these things work together with nature, rather than against it. The water wheel cooperates with the river to grind corn. The hobbits also live in the earth; they do not detach themselves from the environment in their lifestyle. The elves in Lothlorien, however, are unfallen creatures; their existence among the land brings about its serenity. The environment is elevated by their presence: "In Lothlorien, the ancient things lived on in the waking world... on the land of Lothlorien no shadow lay" (Tolkien 349). Though unlike the Elves, the hobbits maintain reverence toward the environment, which lets them partake in goodness and creates in them an enriching existence and a noble history. The hobbit sense of history is a key element in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Knowledge and love of one's history is important to Middle-earth. Throughout the novel characters sing songs to recall significant events; Tom Bombadil, Treebeard, and Legolas all chronicle their history. Ted Sandyman has his own connection to the past, but chooses not to respect it. He is first introduced as incredibly practical, and he is skeptical

of Sam's admiration toward Bilbo and Frodo. "Oh, they're both cracked... If that's where you get your news from, you'll never want for moonshine" (45). Ted's lack of regard for a bigger world disconnects him from his community and his mill. The mill is Sandyman owned and operated; Ted inherited it from his father. The fact that Ted has a hand in the destruction of the mill shows his disconnection from the land and his family history. "Ted... works there cleaning the wheels for the Men, where his dad was the Miller and his own master" (1013). Ted compromises his family's integrity to play a part in the Shire's destruction. His father chose not to pursue wealth but to be a leader for his community through managing his mill; however, Ted chooses an abusive, servile relationship with Sharkey to become rich. Tolkien claims that Capitalism disconnects one from their culture and their history through greed; it then attributes them a petty and uniform task, forcing them to be submissive.

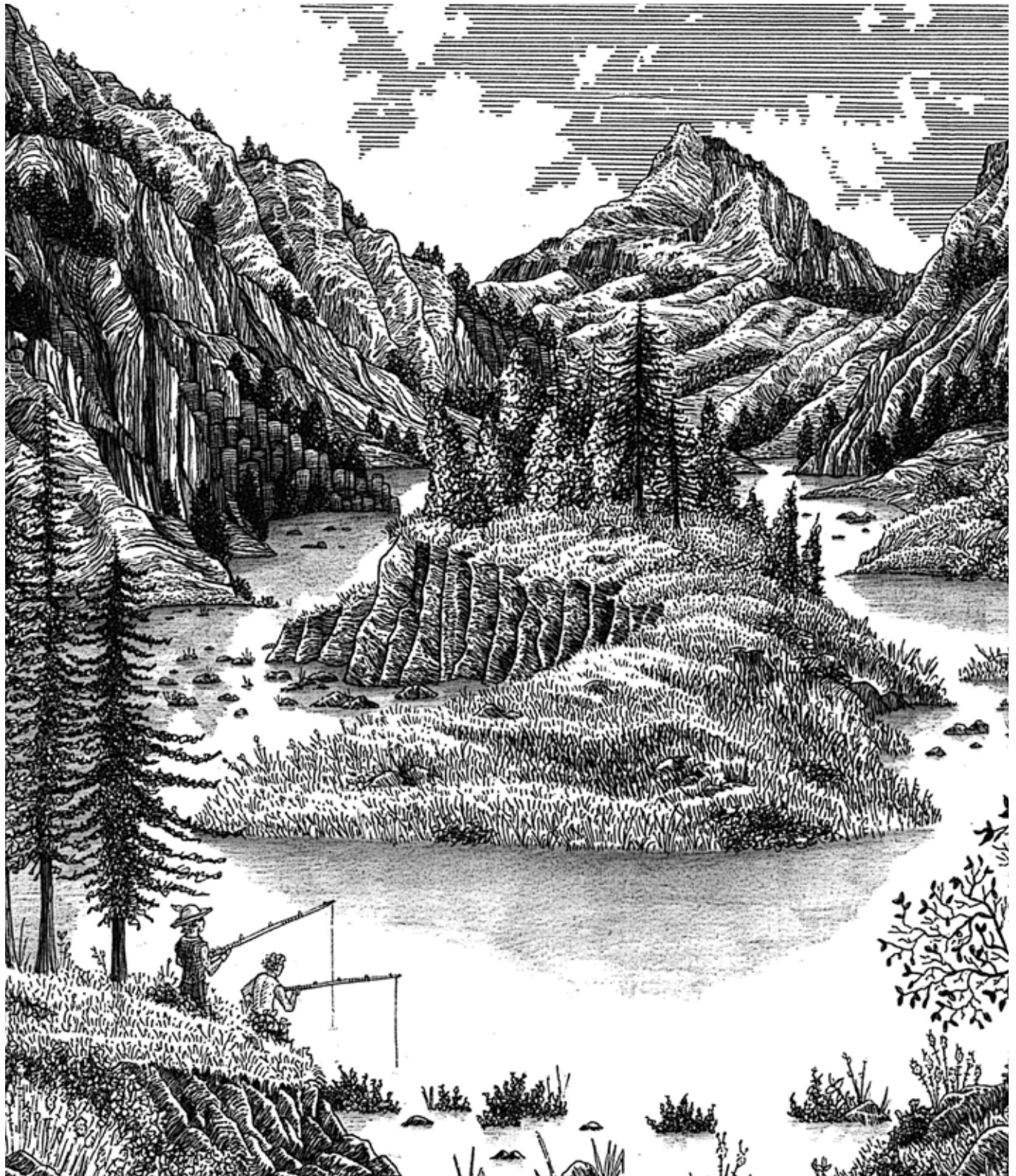
Saruman and Lotho both have aliases to keep their identities hidden. In doing this they are fundamentally disconnected from the community. Where the hobbits could talk to Ted Sandyman if they had a problem with the mill, they cannot talk to Sharkey or Pimple because they are not a part of the Shire's agrarian community. It is interesting to note that Lotho has a dual appellation; he goes by Pimple and, on a more general basis, the "Chief." Though the hobbits know who these individuals are, Tolkien leaves it a mystery for the readers. Sharkey and Lotho's servants do not even know who they actually are. Consequently, Saruman and Lotho become names rather than persons, creating an abstraction of their true identities and disconnecting them from the Shire's community. Between their abstraction and need for power, the ruffians are oblivious to their existence, but still follow orders accordingly: "I'm sorry, Master Merry, but we have orders.' Whose orders?' 'The Chief's up at Bag End.' 'Chief? Chief? Do you mean Mr. Lotho?' 'I suppose so... we just have to say 'the Chief' nowadays'" (Tolkien 998). Later Sam and Frodo talk to Hob Hayward, one of the hobbits under Sharkey and Pimple, who is punished for letting the Chief's identity slip: "'That Lotho—' 'Now shut up Hob Hayward... you know talk o' that sort isn't allowed'" (Tolkien 1000). This kind of disconnection from the Shire's community parallels the way Socialism and Capitalism work; not many know the true identities of those who lead their economy or their government. As the power of the few expands over a more vast land, the identities of the empowered become increasingly vague. Distributism's answer is to keep the power on a local level.

Sharkey has a controlling and inordinate sense of power; consequently, he creates overbearing institutions and a military-like command system. Tolkien claims in his letters that empowerment is inhuman, "The most improper job of any man... is bossing other men. Not one in a million is fit for it, and least of all those who seek the opportunity" (Kreeft 166). Tolkien's attitude toward this improper job is shown through Sam's encounter with the Ring. Sam thinks of using the ring to lead an agrarian revolution against Mordor and



then to turn it into a massive garden. However, he reasons that, “The one small garden of a free gardener was all his need and due, not a garden swollen to a realm; his own hands to use, not the hands of others to command” (Tolkien 901). Unlike Sam, Sharkey looks to control others. He has little regard for the will of others; through manipulation and violence, he moves his inferiors. All of those that Frodo and Sam encounter are motivated by orders. This function may

work well in the military, but by creating a militarized culture, Sharkey deadens the Shire’s natural way of life. Furthermore, Sharkey creates a police force to suppress those that could potentially overthrow him. Being told what he cannot do frustrates Sam: “If I hear *not allowed* much oftener... I’m going to get angry” (Tolkien 1002). The former Shire needed little institution because hobbits made simple yet moral decisions. Institution is being manipulated to further





Sharkey's empowerment, not to look out for the populace. Analogously, Socialism and Capitalism keep the power and property in the hands of a few individuals either in big government or big business. Sharkey and Lotho are the owners of the determining amount of the Shire and abuse those who do not hold ownership. When greedy people abuse these systems, they can look eerily similar to "The Scouring of the Shire."

"The Scouring of the Shire" also touches explicitly upon Socialism. Equality is one of the cornerstones of Socialist ideology. However, it is unjust to define equality as minimally rationing goods to a populace in order to maximize profits. Matthew Akers elaborates on how exportation hurts the Shire: "The formerly self-sufficient economy that was focused on localism and on providing what was needed to maintain its own citizens becomes a 'global market' that seeks consumers outside its boundaries and leaves those within hungry" (2). Welfare and rationing are a disguise for the suppression of the Shire-folk. Farmer Cotton offers a brief history of the socialization of the Shire: "Things went from bad to worse. There was little smoke left, save for the Men... Everything except Rules got shorter and shorter, unless one could hide a bit of one's own when the ruffians went round gathering stuff up 'for fair distribution': which meant they got it and we didn't" (1012). Individuals are not allowed to hold their own crop; Sharkey takes away the hobbit's property and their incentive to do good work. Tolkien offers readers another example: "There was no beer and very little food, but with what the travellers brought and shared out they all made a fair meal; and Pippin broke Rule 4 by putting most of the next day's allowance of wood on the fire" (1000). The Rules are instated to moderate how much of a product the populace can use. However, this quote juxtaposes what fairness genuinely looks like with Sharkey's misuse of it. By coming together sharing a meal, the hobbits experience a strong sense of community, rather than a suppressed one. Through this image Tolkien foreshadows that the Shire is not beyond repair.

Although Sharkey is defeated, he leaves a detrimental impression on the agriculture of the Shire. "For at Sharkey's bidding [trees] had been cut down recklessly far and wide over the Shire" (Tolkien 1022). Sam is the most heartbroken of all over the destruction. He thinks, "This hurt would take long to heal, and only his great-grandchildren... would see the Shire as it ought to be" (1022). However, he remembers to use the soil given to him by Galadriel. Before he knows it the gardens grow greater than anything he could imagine: "Spring surpassed his wildest hopes... the fruit was so plentiful that young hobbits nearly bathed in strawberries and cream... there was so much corn that at Harvest every barn was stuffed" (1023-1024). Akers comments that, "This provides hope that even the worst environmental destruction can be reversed, and that the land, when treated properly, can be coaxed into producing beauty and life once again" (3). Though imperialism and industrialism destroy cultures and lands, there is nothing that cannot be fixed. The Shire is restored into a more paradisiacal place than it was originally.

Once the hobbits band together to defeat Sharkey and Pimple, they repair the Shire. Tolkien implies in many places that the Shire grows much stronger after its industrialization. The community grows tighter over Yule: "There was a great deal better cheer that Yule than anyone had hoped for" (Tolkien 1022). Furthermore, Gaffer comments that Sharkey's hardship has only made the Shire a better place, "All's well that ends better" (1022). A new Row is constructed to replace the tarnished hobbit holes; many think this new Row is the very best. It was suggested that it be called *Better Smials*, but is given the name *New Row*. The Shire becomes a stronger, more enriching place once evil is defeated; their gardens are no exception.

Like those in the Shire, "Distributists think small rather than big, and believe that the seeds of ideas need to be planted at a local level" (Akers 3). The Shire works vividly as an example of Distributist ideals: their lack of exportation, their simplicity, their skepticism toward materialism, and their agrarianism. Tolkien offers readers support of Distributism as well as a critique of Capitalism, Socialism and the industrialism associated with the two. In addition, he shows that even the worst damage caused by the imperialist can be defeated by the good of agrarianism and simplicity. Overall, Distributism works to enrich the lives of those who live in communities. Akers tells us that Distributists, "Seek to change people's hearts, which is where a Distributist restoration- like the one in the Shire- must begin" (4).

## Works cited

- Akers, Matthew P. "Distributism in the Shire." *St. Austin Review*. 7 Nov. 2014.
- Belloc, Hilaire. *Economics for Helen: A Brief Outline of Real Economy*. HIS Press, 2004.
- . *The Servile State*. Seven Treasures Publication, 2008.
- Chesterton, G.K. "The Guild Idea, the Guild Possibility." *The Hound of Distributism: A Solution for Our Social and Economic Crisis*, edited by Richard Aleman, The American Chesterton Society, 2015, 99-105.
- . *The Outline of Sanity*. G.K. Chesterton Collected Works Volume V, edited by George Marlin, Ignatius Press, 1987, 41-54.
- Dickerson, Matthew and Jonathan Evans. *Ents, Elves, and Eriador: The Environmental Vision of J.R.R. Tolkien*. The University Press of Kentucky, 2006.
- Kreeft, Peter J. *The Philosophy of Tolkien: The Worldview Behind The Lord of the Rings*. Ignatius Press, 2005.
- Lewis, C.S. "Willing Slaves of the Welfare State." *The Observer*, 20 July 1958. *Liberty Tree*, [http://liberty-tree.ca/research/willing\\_slaves\\_of\\_the\\_welfare\\_state](http://liberty-tree.ca/research/willing_slaves_of_the_welfare_state). Accessed on 25 Sept. 2016.
- Pope Leo XIII. *Rerum Novarum*. Vatican.va, <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Leo13/113rerum.htm>. Accessed on 8 Nov. 2014.
- Shapiro, Edward. "Postscript: A Distributist Society." *G.K. Chesterton Collected Works Volume V*, edited by George Marlin, Ignatius Press, 1987, 211-221.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*. Harper Collins Publishers, 2008.
- . *The Lord of the Rings*. Harper Collins Publishers, 2004.

**J. Spencer Atkins** is a philosophy graduate student at the University of Tennessee. His interests include epistemology, metaphysics, and medieval philosophy, especially St. Thomas Aquinas. He is happily married to his wife, Rachael and currently resides in Rockford, TN.

## THE JOURNEY

By Julia Baranova

The night is coming to an end,  
Our journey now is over.  
We're going home now, dear friend  
But why are you walking slower?  
The Ring's destroyed, Dark Lord is gone,  
Lit up what once was black!  
And yet when I wake up at dawn  
I see you looking back.  
I see your eyes are turning blind,  
Thoughts raging in your head –  
You think of those you left behind  
Both living and the dead.  
You wonder if you'll fight again  
With Strider side by side,  
O will you look beside and then  
You see wise Gandalf smile?  
You think of Gimli, Legolas,  
Young Hobbits that you knew;  
You dream Elrond has granted pass  
Through Rivendell for you

But elves have left the Rivendell  
To sail to western lands;  
Your friends have bid their farewell,  
Our fellowship now ends.  
You feel that it's a cruel game –  
Return from where you started  
But how your life can be the same  
When you and them are parted?  
Not after things that we've been through,  
Not when we changed the future,  
Not after we got wise and grew,  
Not after this adventure!

I see it all in you, and I –  
I feel the same inside  
I know, it's so hard to say goodbye  
To things that changed your life.

