

Starlight in Shadow

Before I get to my editorial proper, it is important to take a moment to appreciate how challenging the past few months have been for everyone. Not only has the world been seemingly turned upside down by a pandemic, but early this year the Tolkien community lost one of its guiding lights: Christopher Tolkien.

I know that there have been many things to grieve over the past several months. In the midst of such grief, however, I like to think of Sam sitting in Mordor. When he sees the stars shine out above the shadow, he feels comforted that evil is a passing thing. It is my earnest hope that this issue of *Mallorn* will serve as a kind of starlight for you during this difficult time. What I mean by that is: while not a profound thing that changes your life, this issue can be a part of something bigger that has had meaning to you for a long time. In being that part, that ray of light, may this issue of *Mallorn* remind you of the joy that you have in Tolkien and in works of fantasy and fiction more generally. May it be a small reminder that these times of sadness pass and that greater things endure.

I am particularly grateful to my fellow editors, the peer reviewers, the writers, and the artists of this issue. These individuals, in addition to facing many of the same hardships as everyone else, decided that *Mallorn* was important enough for them to take on additional work during this difficult time. I am indebted to them for making this issue possible, and their commitment to this process means that the members of the Tolkien Society have something to look forward to. Now, in the spirit of providing the kind of quality research, scholarship, and content that we hope you will come to expect from us, I will step back into the editorial that I had planned for this issue, and from there we will continue as normal.

As the new editor-in-chief, I am very grateful for this opportunity to continue the work of the influential editors who have come before me, including my immediate predecessor

Rosalinda Haddon. I share her vision of making *Mallorn* a peer-reviewed journal, and I want to go one step further – I believe that *Mallorn* should strive to be an essential part of every scholarly conversation about Tolkien. You will notice some changes in content in this issue, and I hope you will agree that this puts *Mallorn* on a firm footing to reach that goal.

My experience as a scholar, podcaster, and public academic has shown me that the Tolkien fan community is filled with the desire and ability to consume the scholarship surrounding the things they love. It is my hope that these changes to *Mallorn* will be seen, as they are intended, as a way to enable Tolkien Society members to follow this longing to a much broader and deeper extent.

Mallorn will no longer publish poetry or fiction. Instead, the journal is transitioning to focus more exclusively on discussion of academic topics important to scholars and fans. The articles accepted for publication are all peer-reviewed, and the length will grow over time to be closer to what is expected in other peer-reviewed publications. You will also find a new section for shorter content called Notes. This has become a popular category in scientific journals and is finding increasing popularity in the humanities. Notes typically do not require as much secondary support. Rather, they are useful for things such as updating previous scholarship, presenting an idea that will be developed further in a later project, or presenting resources or material that is beneficial for the scholarly community.

I know that, in the past, *Mallorn* editors have used the editorial as a space to provide opinions about certain topics, or even to have guest editorials. My vision for this space is primarily to provide an outline for the contents of the current issue, contextualise how the issue fits in with current scholarly discussion (and previous *Mallorn* issues), and share relevant news and information of which the readership of the journal should be

aware. That being said, allow me to transition to discussing the contents of this issue.

Mallorn 60 presents a nice balance of scholarship. It includes articles comparing Tolkien's work to contemporary fiction, looks at some of Tolkien's less-explored works, touches on some biographical material, and examines Tolkien using a variety of critical lenses. In a sense, these articles follow many of the same impulses as those published in *Mallorn* 59.

In the first article, Garrett Van Curen uses the lens of Foucault's Panopticon to analyse the way that power is wielded in the Shire after the hobbits return from the quest of the Ring. He also does a nice job of complicating an overly simplistic analysis of this sort. While the panoptic characteristics of Sharky's power are more obvious, some of these traits are common to the hobbits of the Shire as well.

The next article is a very interesting comparison between *The Hobbit* and Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* using the frame of liminal spaces and personal identity. Identity formation is often discussed as being an important theme of literature for children and adolescents, and Kristen McQuinn shows how this theme is present in both novels. The article also intersects with ideas of liminality and uncertainty often present in fantasy literature.

Andrew Higgins' article presents a sweeping analysis of Tolkien's use of the theme of holidays, as well as some of his personal opinions about holidays more generally. The scope of this article is ambitious, and it manages to accomplish a lot in a small space. Ultimately, Higgins illuminates how Tolkien's conception of holidays is one that requires nuance to understand because it is associated both with ideas of enjoyment and creativity, as well as a return to the mundane and a sense of loss when they are over.

The final article discusses the ways in which the depiction of the moon in *Roverandom* is consistent with or differs from other depictions. Martin Beech examines how modern readers may be unfamiliar with the

astronomical and literary background that Tolkien is pulling from to depict the moon. Ultimately, though, Beech concludes that it is this background that makes the moon such an engaging aspect of the text for the reader's imagination.

The Notes in this issue provide a good overview of the intent of the Notes section moving forward. The first two notes deal with prior scholarship on Tolkien and with new information about Tolkien himself. Nick Polk uses his note to effectively reframe some of his logic and to clarify terminology from his article published in *Mallorn* 59. Mick Henry's note contributes some important biographical information about Tolkien and also includes a drawing by Tolkien which has never before been published.

The final note deals more with the broader scholarly community. Erik Muller-Harder's note provides an introduction to his Tolkien Art Index, which is an essential tool for scholars who include references to Tolkien's art. It is my sincere hope that *Mallorn* and all other Tolkien journals will use his referencing system in the future, which would alleviate confusion over which art pieces are being discussed.

Finally, this issue includes Book Reviews for *Sub-Creating Arda: World-Building in J.R.R. Tolkien's Work, Its Precursors, and Its Legacies*, edited by Fimi and Honegger, *Tolkien's Library: An Annotated Checklist* by Oronzio Cili, *Tolkien and the Classics* edited by Arduini, Canzonieri, and Testi, and *The Heroes of Tolkien* by David Day.



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