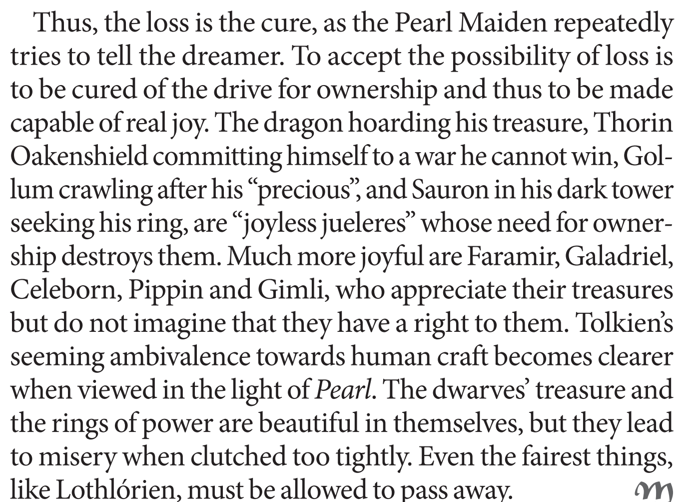

but without his jewel, he is no longer a "joyles julere": the drive to claim the ring for his own is gone, and he is "glad" that Sam is with him. This, too, is the state in which the awakened dreamer finds himself: he "yern[s] no more then was me gyven" and finds in God a "frende ful fyin", whom he is content to serve.

Thus, the loss is the cure, as the Pearl Maiden repeatedly tries to tell the dreamer. To accept the possibility of loss is to be cured of the drive for ownership and thus to be made capable of real joy. The dragon hoarding his treasure, Thorin Oakenshield committing himself to a war he cannot win, Gollum crawling after his "precious", and Sauron in his dark tower seeking his ring, are "joyless jueleres" whose need for ownership destroys them. Much more joyful are Faramir, Galadriel, Celeborn, Pippin and Gimli, who appreciate their treasures but do not imagine that they have a right to them. Tolkien's seeming ambivalence towards human craft becomes clearer when viewed in the light of *Pearl*. The dwarves' treasure and the rings of power are beautiful in themselves, but they lead to misery when clutched too tightly. Even the fairest things, like Lothlórien, must be allowed to pass away.

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1. Foreword. *The Lord of the Rings* 2nd edn (HarperCollins, 1965).
2. For example, see Smith, L. 'I have looked the last on that which is fairest': Elegy in Beowulf and Tolkien's Lothlorien. *Mallorn* No. 44, 43–46 (2006); Deyo, S. M. Wyrd and Will: Fate, Fatalism and Free Will in the Northern Elegy and J. R. R. Tolkien. *Mythlore* **14**(3), 59–62 (1988); Walker, S. The War of the Rings Treelogy: An Elegy for Lost Innocence and Wonder. *Mythlore* **5**(1), 3–5 (1978).
3. Dunn C. W. & Byrnes, E. T. (eds) *Pearl, in Middle English Literature* (Routledge, 1990).
4. Tolkien, J. R. R. (trans.) *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl, and Sir Orfeo* (Ballantine Books, 1992).
5. Eckman, S. Echoes of Pearl in Arda's Landscape. *Tolkien Studies* **6,** 59 (2009).
6. Shippey, T. *J. R .R. Tolkien: Author of the Century* 196–200 (Houghton-Mifflin, 2000).
7. Amendt-Raduege, A. Dream Visions in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. *Tolkien Studies* **3,** 49–50 (2006).
8. Shippey briefly but directly connects the narrator in *Pearl* with Tolkien's jewellers in *The Road to Middle Earth* (Houghton-Mifflin, 2003). There, he notes the kinship between craftsmen such as Fëanor and Tolkien himself, who "must have thought" that the *Pearl*-poet was right "to call himself a jeweller" (242). This reference to a jeweller's 'sub-creation' is justified by Tolkien's letter to Milton Waldman, in which he asserts that gem-making symbolizes "the sub-creative function of the elves"— Carpenter, H. (ed.) *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien* 148, (Houghton Mifflin, 2000). However, Shippey makes this observation in passing and does not explore the full implications of the metaphor.
9. Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Hobbit* (Houghton Mifflin,1996).
10. Garrison, J. Liturgy and Loss: *Pearl* and the Ritual Reform of the Aristocratic Subject. *The Chaucer Review* **44**(3), 294–322 (2010).
11. That is, as Fëanor, whose case, as mentioned earlier, should be examined in a future paper.
12. This fact is especially noteworthy in light of Shippey's observation that the rivers in Lothlorien seem influenced by the river in *Pearl* (see ref. 4).
13. For a discussion of the Ring's addictive powers and drug-like operation, see Shippey, T. *The Road to Middle Earth* 139 (Houghton-Mifflin, 2003).
14. Many critics have expressed dissatisfaction with an ending they consider too neat and too easy. For example, see Aers, D. The Self Mourning: Reflections on *Pearl*. *Speculum* **68,** 54–73 (1993). One solution is suggested by Garrison (see ref. 13). I would argue that Tolkien suggests another.

A woman of valour: Éowyn in *War and Peace*

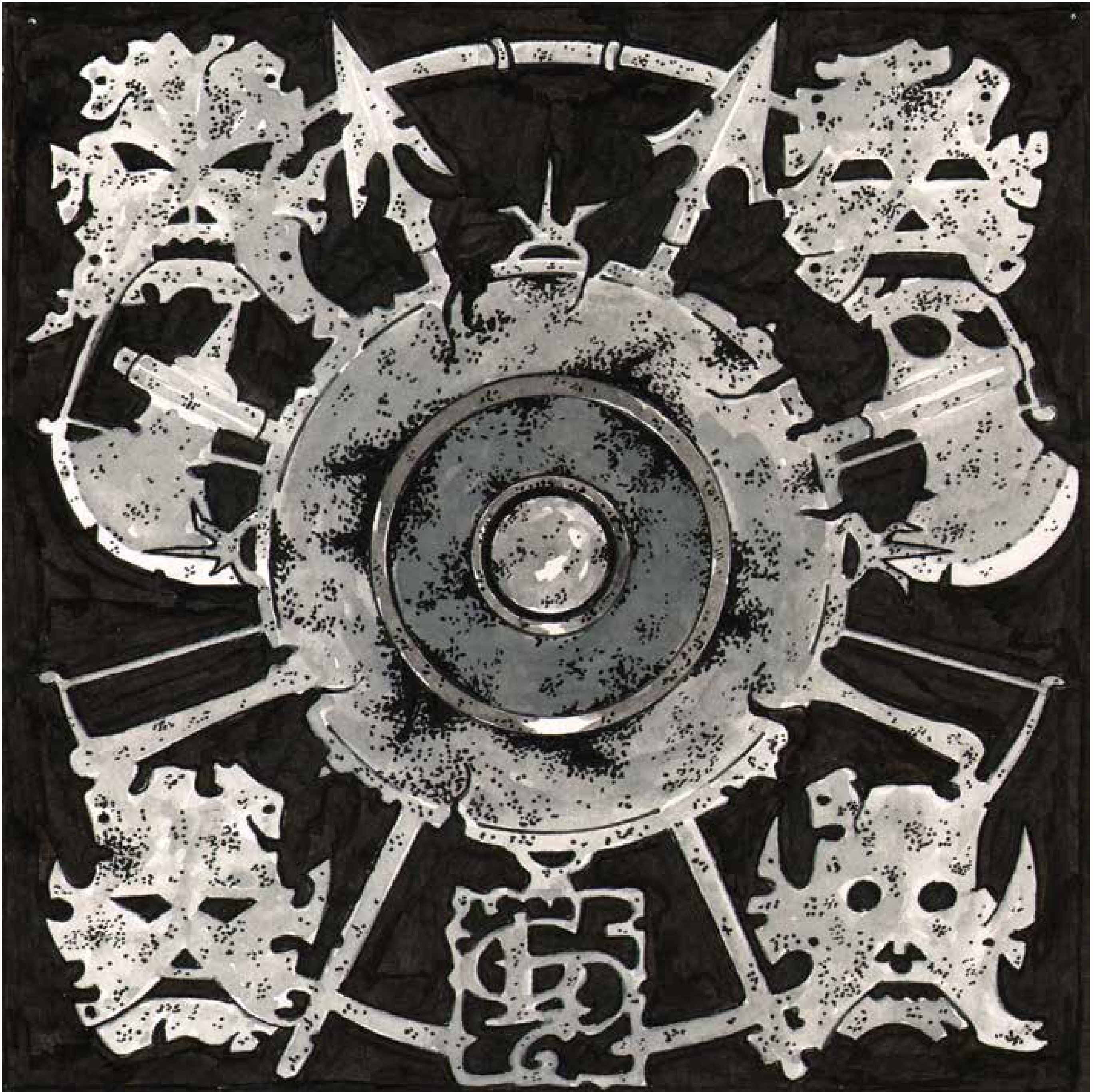
CATHERINE MADSEN

> And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. — Ezekiel 36:26

It is easy to read Éowyn's change of heart from shield-maiden to healer with mild incredulity, even with some irritation. There is something formulaic and even facile in the presentation — not as forced as Jane Studdock's conversion in Lewis's *That Hideous Strength*, where one is not sure she will like having children any better than she liked having dreams, but still too sudden and thoroughgoing. A conventional feminist reading would call it Tolkien's convenient way to dispose of a woman who, by taking up arms, has trespassed (however fortunately for the free peoples of Middle-earth) on a male preserve.

This would be a superficial reading, considering Tolkien's sympathetic treatment of Éowyn's frustration and also Aragorn's and Faramir's respect for her valour. Yet the question remains whether Éowyn is treated quite adequately at the climactic moment of 'The Steward and the King' (*The Lord of the Rings VI* 5). Possibly Tolkien did not entirely know how the subtleties of such an emotional reorientation operate in a living woman's life; possibly he was reproducing a schema long established in literature by other male writers who had themselves observed the shift only from the outside. Telescoping the complex process of sexual awakening and vocational redirection into a few lines of rather formal dialogue, the form cannot hold the experience.

Tolkien has a reputation of doing badly with female characters, although some of the unhappy women of *The Silmarillion* material reveal a greater psychological acuity in this realm than he is generally given credit for. Éowyn herself is thoroughly convincing as long as she is unhappy. Joy is notoriously more difficult to convey in writing than sorrow and discontent, and as Éowyn's joy is only a minor detail in the great eucatastrophe of Sauron's overthrow it



is no wonder if Tolkien cut corners a bit in presenting it. Yet as he clearly did not mean Éowyn's transformation to be read as a defeat, its nature and its evolution are worth considering more closely.

Éowyn and Faramir are subtly linked by the plot, beginning with the Battle of the Pelennor. As Éowyn, disguised as Dernhelm, rides in with the host of Rohan, Faramir lies wounded and delirious on a pyre in the tombs of Minas Tirith. Gandalf, compelled to protect Faramir from the madness of his father Denethor, must turn from his confrontation with the Nazgûl King at the broken gates of the city and cannot join the battle; thus it falls upon Éowyn, with Merry's help, to slay the Nazgûl. Éowyn and Faramir are brought to the Houses of Healing on the same morning, and are healed by Aragorn on the same night. By this point the reader is, in a sense, prepared to think of the two in the same breath. If the presence of Merry as Aragorn's third patient did not serve as a decoy, the reader might make the match before the plot does.

Considering the two characters together, one can see parallels and antitheses in their respective unhappinesses. Both Éowyn and Faramir have suffered not only in the war, but in the course of their youth: Éowyn is orphaned, and has waited on her uncle Théoden during the darkest period of his reign, whereas Faramir's mother died young and his brother Boromir was their father's favourite. The shieldmaiden of Edoras has been forbidden to ride to war and the gentler son of Denethor has been compelled to; Théoden is passive and Denethor abrasive. But the young Steward and the Lady of Rohan are more or less

equal in position, and certainly equal in physical training and courage.

Faramir is presented as better schooled than Éowyn in courtesy and patience, just as Gondor is presented as more highly civilized than Rohan. Rohan is still young and brash — at its highest social level a nation of riders and warriors — whereas Gondor is the remnant of Númenor, chastened and bound to the memory of a noble history. The experience of national and geological cataclysm is spiritually indelible: Faramir himself has a recurring dream (like Tolkien's own) of the wave crashing down upon Númenor. Rohan has no such nightmares. Although its alliterative verse is rooted in lament and profound sobriety, its elite warriors think the Elves are an old wives' tale and have no comprehension of the origins of the war with Sauron.

Partly for these reasons, Éowyn is not old enough psychologically and morally to perceive Faramir as a wounded man in need of her help. Neither her cultural nor her personal experience has prepared her to read the signs. She is proud and decisive in pursuit of her own purposes, but she is not strongly perceptive about other people's. Her experience of men who respond to her beauty has been limited to the lewd glances of Wormtongue and the polite rejection of Aragorn; she responds to Faramir's first compliment civilly but coolly. Nevertheless she perceives in him, even at their first meeting, something more than she perceived in Aragorn. The seasoned warrior to whom she brought the cup at Edoras represented an escape from her embittered life, but he would not assist her escape; at Dunharrow he hinted that he was not available, and told her to do her duty. Faramir in the Houses of Healing represents friendship and in a sense conscience, at a level more intimate and voluntary than the duties of her position. She is concerned lest he 'think her merely wayward', without the self-discipline to endure — as he endures — forced inactivity as the war hangs in the balance. His sympathy and fellow-feeling call forth a human response in her, if only self-pity at her unwilling idleness. She is indifferent to his praise of her beauty, although it is given with the painful clarity of a mind facing the likelihood of death; but she has already looked him steadily in the eyes at his invitation to walk in the garden, and faintly blushed, as though aware of discovering a boundary at the instant of crossing it.

During her convalescence Éowyn is exposed to the inexhaustible peacetime vocation of healing. No loss of dignity, and no necessary connection with women's work, is involved in taking up this vocation, of which Aragorn himself is the exemplar. It is not clear, even after the end of the war, that she will live to need another vocation, but the very fulfilment of her role as shieldmaiden has accomplished its obsolescence. The slaying of the Nazgûl King is an achievement surpassed only by the overthrow of Sauron; it is as spectacularly decisive as Aragorn's arrival in the ships of the Corsairs (and Aragorn, for all his superior strategic skills, could not have slain this foe). For the first time in her life, Éowyn encounters an open future.

There are various female conversions in literature that suggest themselves as parallels to Éowyn's. Superficially — if only because of the phrase "There goes a man who tamed a wild shieldmaiden of the North" — Shakespeare's Kate comes to mind, with her furious resistance and her ultimate abject capitulation to wifely obedience. But Kate's violence is uncontrolled, whereas Éowyn is a disciplined fighter; Kate is genuinely brutal to her suitors and her sister, and Petruchio is genuinely brutal in his remedy. Peter Saccio[1] argues convincingly that Kate's transformation is not a defeat: it amounts to her putting her considerable energies in play with Petruchio's rather than in opposition, plunging into a wildly inventive cooperation that becomes an elaborate marital game. By comparison, the simplicity and directness of Faramir and Éowyn's courtship is distinctly 'vanilla': calculated role-playing has no part in it.

A more illuminating, though surprising, parallel is Princess Marya Bolkonskaya in *War and Peace*[2]. Two more dissimilar women would be hard to imagine — Princess Marya is pious, unattractive and all too painfully willing to do her duty — but she and Éowyn have certain critical experiences in common, both domestic and emotional.

War and Peace has a level of psychological detail far surpassing *The Lord of the Rings*. Its method and its raison d'etre is to show the fullness of the ordinary life that war disrupts, alters, destroys and reconstitutes. Tolkien had lived through this process of breakdown and recovery in the First World War, and was as well aware of it as Tolstoy, but his sensibility and style went in another direction: a heroic romance must suggest in highly compressed form what a novel illustrates at length. It even seems faintly unfair to read too much detail into the incidents of a heroic romance — to do midrash or psychohistory, as it were, on

the inner workings of a shieldmaiden's mind. At the same time, Éowyn is the only thoroughly developed female character in *The Lord of the Rings*. Every glimpse of her is an assessment of her motives. She trembles as she gives the cup to Aragorn in Edoras; at Dunharrow she gives him a concise and desperate account of her frustrations; Aragorn, Éomer and Gandalf pool their observations of her despair as she lies unconscious in the Houses of Healing; Faramir analyses her refusal to go to the Field of Cormallen after the war's end. Whereas Goldberry and Rosie Cotton are mere sketches, and Galadriel a striking but distant figure whose past Tolkien had to rough out in retrospect, Éowyn is vividly and closely drawn: in the end we know her nearly as well as we do Frodo, Sam and Gollum.

Princess Marya and Éowyn each have a strenuous and inescapable duty to a difficult old man. Prince Bolkonsky is both more isolated and more energetic than the bewitched and depressive Théoden, full of theories and schemes, and perpetually in search of intellectual companionship on his distant country estate. He supervises his daughter's education, terrifies her with his geometry lessons, discourages her suitors, makes her life a misery and cannot bear the thought of her leaving home. Princess Marya's luminous and sympathetic eyes are her most extraordinary feature, but her face breaks out in red blotches on the frequent occasions when she is nervous or ashamed. Early in the book she is repeatedly described as having a heavy step. Her piety offends her father, amuses her brother Andrei, and charms the wandering mendicants who stop for charity at their house. Marya is self-sacrificing without question or resentment, precisely as Éowyn is not.

Yet Marya's self-sacrifice puts her as effectively beyond ordinary female society as Éowyn's warrior disguise puts her. Marya's service to her father is essentially a slavery imposed by his personality on hers; her determination to serve him piously and lovingly rather than truculently is the only form of rebellion available to her, amounting to rebellion only because her piety does offend him. Marya is unattractive, and knows it, and knows that everyone knows it; her piety is also a defence against the pain of being unable to participate competently in the rituals of courtship, as practised (in French) by her equals in the frivolous Russian aristocracy. But above all her piety is a form of intellectual seriousness that puts her beyond frivolity. She does not really want to enter the world of her friend Julie, her sister-in-law Lise and her paid companion Mlle Bourienne. She grieves at the thought of never being loved, of never marrying or having her own home, but there are things she cannot do to achieve those ends.

Although Éowyn is described as beautiful, there is no equivalent in her features to Princess Marya's luminous eyes. Éowyn has been taught the womanly arts of her folk — she is an attentive hostess, a good organizer, a compassionate leader of her people in their retreat to Dunharrow and a tactful patient of the Warden — but she is cold and embittered where Marya is submissive and uncomplaining. The piety of Rohan is in deeds of arms, and in that sense Éowyn is pious, yet in Rohan this piety is overwhelmingly masculine and its free exercise is impossible to her. Like Marya, she has little hope for the future, but we are not told what she has dreamed of except escape.

Marya, after her father's death and burial, is trapped on the estate by a mutiny of the peasants, who will neither come with her nor allow her to flee as Napoleon's troops advance into the region. She is rescued by the chance arrival of the young officer Count Nikolai Rostov, brother of the lovely and flighty Natasha to whom her brother Andrei was once engaged. Rostov's pity and help move the bereft Marya deeply, and he is equally struck by her vulnerability and gratitude; an immediate emotional bond springs up between them. When Rostov later visits the princess at her aunt's house outside Moscow, Marya's attachment to him becomes visible and audible:

> When Rostov entered the room, the princess lowered her head for a moment, as if giving her guest time to greet her aunt, and then, just as Nikolai turned to her, she raised her head and her shining eyes met his gaze. In a movement full of dignity and grace, she rose with a joyful smile, gave him her slender, delicate hand, and began to speak in a voice in which, for the first time, new, throaty, feminine notes sounded. Mlle. Bourienne, who was in the drawing room, looked at Princess Marya with bewildered astonishment. A skillful coquette herself, she could not have maneuvered better on meeting a man she wanted to please. (ref. 2, p. 951)

Mlle Bourienne — who previously had no compunction about attempting to seduce Marya's first suitor almost before her eyes — finds the change in the princess incomprehensible: the sudden grace of her movements, the deepening of her voice, the self-possession have come out of nowhere. The inadvertent, uncalculated response of personality to personality, and of female body to male body; the mutual illumination of two difficult lives; the shared memory of the crisis in which they met: all these elements combine to transform her. Whereas most of the women of the novel — notably Pierre Bezukhov's first wife Hélène and Marya's friend Julie, as well as Mlle Bourienne — treat courtship as a complex game of social advantage, Marya's experience is the real, biological thing. Mlle Bourienne knows the rules of the game; Princess Marya is discovering the law of her nature.

The rules of the game prescribe and nag. The old pop song 'Wishin' and Hopin" exhorts the young woman in search of love to take herself in hand, to undergo a radical makeover of appearance and personality: "You got to show him that you care just for him / Do the things he likes to do / Wear your hair just for him." This is the remedial version of sexual communication, the marionette version for those who want the experience but have not located the instinct. People in love change their looks and sample each other's enjoyments in a trance of mutual attentiveness. People hoping for love do the same things in a frenzy of anxious obligation. In time anxiety turns to resentment: women turn

self-contemptuous for seeking male attention, or contemptuous of men who apparently require but may not respond to these unremitting efforts. Marya, who could not convincingly adopt the social compulsions, responds with her whole soul to the biological drive. Her physical transformation is a consequence, not a stratagem.

Faramir, on the cold final day of the war — a mere five days after their first meeting — wraps Éowyn in his mother's cloak, like Boaz spreading his robe over Ruth or Isaac bringing Rebecca into his mother's tent. Their first physical contacts occur as they stand together on the ramparts, while the fate of the Ring is decided far away. Éowyn draws closer to Faramir as he speaks of the drowning of Númenor; their hands meet as fate hangs in the balance; Faramir kisses Éowyn's brow in sudden joy. After this they are separated for some time as Faramir takes up his stewardship, and Éowyn relapses. The Warden — a good psychologist — sends for Faramir, who speaks frankly to her of her love for Aragorn, his own love for her, and his surmise that she hesitates between them. Éowyn, who at their first meeting had said, "Look not to me for healing!" finds herself healed by his declaration.

Her shift of feeling, like Marya's, takes place internally, and the reader sees only its outward evidence. Or perhaps something slips here, and for an instant the reader sees the author in a hurry to tie up the plot. The suggestion that Éowyn 'at last' understands her heart is explanatory, and perhaps faintly patronizing; her rather formal opening words, which situate her in place and time, have an artificial ring. Her declaration that she will no longer 'vie' with the Riders, whom she has by now surpassed, may be meant to show a becoming feminine humility — or simply an incomprehension of the scale of her achievement — but it suggests just as strongly a certain authorial inattention. A sensitive actress might make something of Éowyn's words: Saccio speaks of having heard Kate's last speech performed slowly, wonderingly, the sharp and ready shrew discovering aloud a new pattern of relationship. Certainly once the words are said, Éowyn joins Faramir in a warm flirtation.

In *War and Peace* it is Marya who crosses the boundary to Nikolai: when the Rostovs lose their money he is too proud to court her, lest he appear to be marrying for fortune as his mother has always encouraged. He is deliberately stiff and distant, controlling himself rigidly till she appeals to him in pain at the loss of their friendship; then, as at their first meeting, her suffering is unbearable to him and he must relieve it. In the epilogue we see Marya and Nikolai's marriage alongside Natasha and Pierre's: Marya's piety, which Nikolai admires but which is foreign to his temperament, has reasserted itself, and in a sense she replicates her

father's pedagogy through her moral bookkeeping with their children.

Éowyn as healer is never shown in action; we do not see her studying with the Warden, or observe her at work amid the materia medica of Ithilien. In terms of the wider story there is no need. Tolkien, like Niggle in his short story, was burdened with professional and domestic duties, and "there were some corners where he [did] not have time … to do more than hint at what he wanted". But it is useful to have for comparison Tolstoy's acute perception of Marya, which provides more than a hint. By what inner alchemy — hormonal, ethical, vernal — does 'a lady high and valiant' become the biblical *eishet chayil*, the 'woman of valour' of the last chapter of Proverbs, who employs her inexhaustible energies for life and for peace?

Catherine Madsen's previous essays on Tolkien are 'Light from an Invisible Lamp' (*Mythlore* **53,** 43–47) and 'Eru Erased' (in *The Ring and the Cross* ed. Paul Kerry, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; 2011).

1. Saccio, P. 'Shrewd and Kindly Farce' in *Shakespeare Survey: An Annual Survey of Shakespearian Study and Production* vol. 37. (ed. Wells, S.) (Cambridge University Press, 1984). Saccio makes the same point more strikingly in the lecture 'The Taming of the Shrew: Farce and Romance' in the audio series *William Shakespeare: Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies* (The Teaching Company, 1999).
2. Tolstoy, L. *War and Peace* (trans. Pevear, R. & Volokhonsky, L.) (Knopf, 2007).

We hatesses those tricksy numbers: Tolkien, Lewis and maths anxiety

KRISTINE LARSEN

In an often cited (especially by this author) passage in the famous essay *On Fairy Stories*, Tolkien explained that in his early years not only did he like fairy stories, but "many other things as well, or better: such as history, astronomy, botany, grammar, and etymology". Flieger and Anderson have allowed us to peek into Tolkien's thought process as he crafted this essay, by publishing excerpts from his drafts. Manuscript A contains similar language for this specific passage, as Tolkien wrote[1]: "In that distant day I preferred such astronomy, geology, history or philology as I could get, especially the last two." However, Manuscript B contains two versions of this passage (the first crossed off, the second not so) that contain a puzzling counterpoint to the list of "preferred" subjects. The first states:

> In that happy time I liked a good many other things as well (or better): such [as] astronomy, or natural history (especially botany) as I could get. If I preferred fairy-stories to arithmetic, it was merely because (alas!) I did not like arithmetic at all. (ref. 1)

The second reads:

> I liked many other things as well, or better: such as history, astronomy, natural history (especially botany), and more than all philology.… I was quite insensitive to poetry (I skipped it if it came in tales); and stupid at arithmetic. (ref. 1)

His admitted insensitivity to poetry is interesting, given his later proclivity for inserting it into his own tales, but what fascinates (and confounds) this author is his apparent childhood aversion to mathematics.

Although it is true that maths anxiety (or mathphobia) is and has been a problem in education circles for far too long, we should not be so quick to use that easy explanation to brush off Tolkien's comments. Like poetry, mathematics plays a fundamental role in the crafting of Middle-earth and, in my mind, Tolkien displays an equal ease with both disciplines. In fact, poetry depends on mathematics, in terms of its meter, and we know that Tolkien was undaunted by difficult meters. As he explained in a 1962 letter to his aunt Jane Neave:

> The Pearl is much more difficult to translate, largely for metrical reasons; but being attracted by apparently insoluble metrical problems, I started to render it years ago.… I never agreed to the view of scholars that the metrical form was almost impossibly difficult to write in, and quite impossible to render in modern English. (*Letters* 238).

Likewise Tolkien correctly and deftly used arithmetic to coordinate the timelines of events in his legendarium; determine distances and travel times for the journeys of Bilbo, Frodo and others; establish the various calendar systems of Middle-earth (one of which was actually suggested for possible real-world adoption by a 1978 editorial in *Chemical and Engineering News*[2]); and work out inconsistencies in the lunar-phase chronology in the drafts of *The Lord of the Rings*[3]. In addition, Tolkien seems to have demonstrated a working understanding of the 19-year Metonic cycle of lunar phases in his descriptions of how Durin's Day was related to the moon-letters in *The Hobbit*. Tolkien also wrote in a 1972 letter that he had devised numeric signs analogous to the Fëanorian alphabet "accommodated to both a decimal nomenclature and a duodecimal, but I have never used them and no longer hold an accurate memory of them" (*Letters* 344).

Tolkien also played with mathematics in crafting a calendar for Valinor, leading both Tolkien and (in his commentary)