

was due to the interactions between Tolkien and his fellow Inklings. Glycer¹⁴ shows how much the members of this loose writers' group influenced one another and in what ways they did so. She points out that influence is not a simple thing and has many components including both positive and negative influence (resonators and antagonists). She comes out in a mid position between the early writers who claimed that the Inklings were some kind of 'artistic movement' and consciously integrated their works to some Christian end, and the opposite position which Humphrey Carpenter espoused that Tolkien was not influenced by anyone.

Glycer quotes correspondence from various sources (ref. 14, pp. 5, 34, 58 — the wager of a space and a time travel story between CSL and JRRT; ref. 14, pp. 73, 84, 88, 94, 116–119 — influence on *The Lord of the Rings* as it was being written). It seems pretty clear that this discussion group, debating society and writers circle that was the Inklings as a loose group of people did affect one another both in what they wrote and in their held views. Debates were ferocious and ideas had to be defended against others in the group. Under these circum-

stances, it is not a surprise that Tolkien's views on Lang as one example would change markedly with time. 

Alex Lewis is a gentleman and a scholar.

See page 7 for David Doughan's review of the new edition of *On Fairy-stories*.

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The curious case of Denethor and the *Palantír*

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This essay is inspired by a theory of Tom Shippey, put forward in four different places, three of them with reference to the Peter Jackson film, *The Return of the King*. Shippey wrote¹:

What did he see on the 13th, the day when Faramir was brought in, the day the 'pale light' was seen flickering? The 13th is the day when Frodo is captured and taken to Minas Morgul [*sic*: it was the tower of Cirith Ungol]. The likelihood is that *that* is what Denethor has seen, in a vision controlled by Sauron.

Elsewhere² Shippey comments on the scene when Denethor returns from his "secret room under the summit of the Tower" with his face "grey, more deathlike than his son's" and his words to Pippin on the next page "the Enemy has found it, and now his power waxes", Shippey wrote that "Denethor is allowed to see Frodo captured in the *palantír* and thinks Sauron has the Ring".

In his Hope College lecture³, Shippey said that the *palantíri* were used four times in the book: by Pippin on 5 March; by Aragorn on 6 March; by Saruman throughout the narrative, and by Denethor on 13 March: "Denethor sees Frodo captured at Cirith Ungol and mistakenly concludes that Sauron has the Ring." I should add Denethor's final view of his Stone, just before he goes to his death, in the early morning of 15 March, and Shippey also notes this in his book.

Finally, we have Shippey's penetrating analysis⁴, which approves of Jackson's treatment, on the whole. Discussing the *palantíri* he argues that Jackson has nearly eliminated the element of false information that was part of Tolkien's plan: Sauron seeing Pippin, and then Aragorn, and concluding that each had the Ring. Here is his discussion of Denethor:

On the 13th Faramir is brought back badly wounded, and Denethor retires to his secret chamber, from which people see "a pale light that gleamed and flickered ... and then flashed and went out." When he comes down, "the face of the Lord was grey, more deathlike than his son's" (*Lord Of The Rings*, p. 803). Clearly Denethor has been using his *palantír*, but what has he seen in it? Much later on, close to suicide, he tells Gandalf that he has seen the Black Fleet approaching (as it is), though he does not know (though at that moment the reader does) that the fleet now bears Aragorn and rescue, not a new army of enemies (*LOTR*, p. 835). However, this does not seem quite enough to trigger Denethor's total despair. Surely we are meant to realise that what he has seen in the *palantír* is Frodo, whom he knows to be the Ring-bearer, *in the hands of Sauron*. Both Frodo's capture and Faramir's wounding take place on March 13th; and one may recall that Sauron plays a similar trick by showing Gandalf and the leaders of the West Frodo's *mithril*-coat and Sam's sword in the parley outside the Black Gate. The matter is put beyond doubt, however, by what Denethor says to Pippin as he prepares for suicide. "Comfort me





not with wizards! ... The fool's hope has failed. The Enemy has found it and now his power waxes" (*LOTR*, p. 805). "The fool's hope" is Gandalf's plan to destroy the Ring (see *LOTR*, p. 795), and the "it" that "the Enemy" has found must be the Ring. Once again, then, Denethor has seen something true in a *palantír*, and has drawn from it a *wrong conclusion*.

What does the first-time reader of the text learn about the *palantíri* from Saruman's, Pippin's and Aragorn's experiences with the Orthanc-stone? He learns (from Gandalf's inferences afterwards while riding with Pippin) that Saruman had no will to argue with Sauron. He was obsessed with the Stone and Sauron could compel him to come to the Stone at will: "How long, I wonder, has he been constrained to come often to his glass for inspection and instruction ...?" asks Gandalf. Maybe Saruman's dependence was aided by the fact that they were both Maiar, and on the same wavelength, so to speak, for their communication would have been wordless.

Pippin was obsessed with the Stone from first holding it, and "driven by some impulse that he did not understand" he stole it from Gandalf, found a place apart and gazed into it "like a greedy child". He was then forced to answer the question Sauron put to him, by mindspeech only, which luckily only ran to "who are you?", to which Pippin replied "a hobbit" He did not give his name: Pippin felt physical pain as Sauron gloated over him. It would seem that conversational use has a longer range than distance-viewing, as Sauron did not see far enough to witness the destruction of Isengard by the Ents.

Finally Aragorn was able to wrench the Orthanc-stone to his bidding by force of personality and hereditary right. He showed himself to Sauron in a different guise, and displayed his sword. Then he used it to survey a large area of the country round, noticed the corsairs massing to sail up the river, and decided it would be his task to stop them.

By the time Pippin reaches Minas Tirith we know the *palantíri* are dangerous. In the book Denethor refers to the Stones early on, and as Gandalf has already told Pippin of the Seven Stones and their locations, this is a clue for the first-time reader. "Yea ... for though the Stones be lost, they say, still the lords of Gondor have keener sight than lesser men ..." At this Pippin fancies that Denethor knows that he has looked into a Stone.

How much does Denethor know of Frodo's quest? Denethor discovers the truth from Faramir, and responds with the classic phrase "a witless halfling". Gandalf, despite Pippin's experience, still did not anticipate Faramir's news to recognise a serious danger to Frodo's quest.

Denethor uses his *palantír* twice in the book: once when Faramir is brought back near to death; and second just before he leads the procession to the House of the Stewards, when he sees the corsairs sailing up the river, presumably when he went up to the high chamber to bring the Stone down. Thus he did not see the battle when Aragorn and the Dead defeated the corsairs and filled the ships with allies. Sauron, however, sent him the vision, knowing that Aragorn

had taken over the ships yet hoping to make capital out of Denethor's delusion.

Although the *palantíri* do not show probabilities and alternatives, unlike the Mirror of Galadriel (and how uncanny it was for that mirror to predict the near-failure of the quest at Cirith Ungol), they may show more than simply events happening elsewhere, in 'real time'. Gandalf expresses the desire to use the Orthanc-stone to look back thousands of years to Tirion, "while both the White Tree and the Golden were in flower", a time which he had lived through as Olórin. Aragorn shows himself to Sauron in a different guise. After Denethor's suicide, his Stone will only show, to all except the strongest of will, the image of "two aged hands withering in flame".

Windows on the past

The key to these usages is found in Tolkien's essay in *Unfinished Tales*, based on notes he wrote when revising *The Lord of the Rings* and assembled by Christopher Tolkien into an essay with notes. Tolkien wrote that the Stones could see "scenes or figures in distant places, or in the past", and then "visions of the things in the mind of the surveyor of one Stone could be seen by the other surveyor" (note 5). In note 18 we read that "They retained the images received, so that each contained within itself a multiplicity of images and scenes, some from a remote past". This explains why Gandalf believed that he could look back to Valinor; why Aragorn could make Sauron see him as dignified, not travel-worn; and why Denethor's suicide was imprinted on his Stone for future viewers.

Until Shippey announced his interpretation, very few of Tolkien's readers interpreted Denethor's despairing return from his chamber as proof that he had seen Frodo captured. I disagree partly with Shippey and also with Tolkien, speaking through Gandalf, when he says "He was too great to be subdued to the will of the Dark Power; he saw nonetheless only those things which that Power permitted him to see." In the essay from *Unfinished Tales*, Tolkien modified that assertion. When Tolkien revised this part of the story, under pressure, he may not have realised the need to change the text to something like "nearly all that he saw was under Sauron's control".

If Denethor went to his Stone when he chose, and it was not near at hand as Saruman's was, there would be times when Sauron was otherwise engaged, though he may have come to his Stone quite quickly if he sensed that Denethor was 'on line' or had just 'logged in', extremely risky behaviour that Gandalf, surprisingly, did not anticipate. When Pippin suggests that Denethor consult Gandalf over Faramir's illness, Denethor refused. Had he done so, and told him he had seen Frodo captive, Gandalf, although horrified, would have reassured him that the Enemy did not have the Ring — for Gandalf would have sensed it with his own Ring.

However, I believe that Sauron did not know Frodo was captured. Sauron would have had to discover Frodo on a routine sweep of Mordor, as no word was sent to the Dark Tower of the capture, and a Nazgûl only appeared to

investigate just as Frodo and Sam were escaping.

First, had Sauron noted Frodo in his Stone, he would have sent a Nazgûl at once to fetch him to Barad-dûr, as he planned to do with Pippin. Second, if he decided to leave him there for a day to see if there was a rescue attempt, he would have monitored Frodo's chamber and the access to the Tower to watch for a rescuer, so that when Sam arrived Sauron would have watched him give Frodo back the Ring. Disaster! However, there would have been no need to have left Frodo there. His potential rescuer(s) would not know Frodo had been spirited away under cover of darkness. Sam would have turned up at the Tower and found two troops of orcs in ambush. Disaster!

Even had Sauron left Frodo captive, missed Sam's rescue, and then discovered Frodo had escaped, he would have mobilised Nazgûl and orcs to catch the fugitives. We are to assume that he left Frodo in the chamber; left the orcs to get on with killing one another; sent a Nazgûl when all the orcs were dead and not before; and only sent a small team hunting for the fugitives, assuming that if they couldn't be found, that they were heading back through Shelob's lair, and he needn't bother about them.

If, however, he did *not* know about Frodo, it is surprising that he didn't check up on Cirith Ungol until all the orcs were dead, and that, if he did check just before the Nazgûl arrived, he didn't then catch Sam rushing up the stairs or giving Frodo the Ring!

There is textual evidence against Sauron knowing about Frodo. Both parties of orcs had been sent on patrol by Nazgûl, not by Lugbúrz (*i.e.* the Dark Tower), and only Shagrat's mob, based at Cirith Ungol, owed loyalty to the Eye. Gorbag and Shagrat agreed that the Eye was "busy elsewhere" and they couldn't get it to pay attention to the fear of Spies on the Stairs (which might have happened because the Witch-king sensed the Ring as his army marched out). Gorbag advised Shagrat to catch Frodo's companion before he sent in his report, which suggests that Lugbúrz wouldn't move in their direction first, and that the Eye was not focused on Cirith Ungol at all. As Sam climbed the tower he heard Shagrat tell Snaga that "News must get through to Lugbúrz, or we'll both be for the Black Pits", suggesting again that they had been left to their own devices, and that the Nazgûl, arriving just as Frodo and Sam were leaving, had not been sent by Sauron, but is making its own inspection, triggered off by the Watchers, and possibly the light from Galadriel's phial. Finally, we know that the Eye was preoccupied on 16 March with a vision of Aragorn he saw on 6 March, well before Frodo and Sam climbed the Stairs, reinforced by watching Aragorn capture the corsairs' fleet on 13 March and win the Battle of the Pelennor Fields on 15 March.

We also have Gandalf's assertion (and Tolkien's, speaking through him) about what Denethor saw. Just after Denethor's death Gandalf summed him up: "the vision of the great might of Mordor that was shown to him fed the despair of his heart". And he repeated this at the Last Debate: "Denethor saw great forces arrayed against him in Mordor,

and more still being gathered". Were Gandalf wrong, and Denethor also saw Frodo captive, then Gandalf could also have been wrong to have said that Denethor saw only what Sauron permitted him to see.

Finally we have the evidence from the drafts, in *The War of the Ring*. In the draft outline (page 360 of the hardback edition), Denethor did not commit suicide. He greeted Aragorn coldly and suggested that as Faramir was likely to die, the line of Stewards would die out anyway, and thus Aragorn would become king. By the next outline (p. 374) Tolkien had decided that Denethor would die in the pyre, and then he wrote drafts close to the published work, a major difference being that Denethor knew that Aragorn had taken the corsairs' ships, and still intended suicide, because he would not yield to a descendant of Isildur. Moreover, Tolkien first intended that Denethor would look in the Stone for the first time after Faramir returned, near to death (pp. 381–382), but later changed the story to read that Denethor had frequently consulted the Stone as an aid to war strategy. Had Tolkien intended us to understand that Denethor saw Frodo captive through Sauron's control of the Stone, then it is likely there would have been a hint of this in the early drafts.

However, the contentious passage does not occur in *The War of the Ring*. After Denethor's suicide Pippin described Denethor's departure and return to Faramir's sickbed, and then Tolkien wrote that passage retrospectively.

Part of the scheme

I would also plead the opinions of Hammond and Scull (ref. 5: pp. 547–548). They also helpfully add (p. 608) details from a document kept at Marquette University, the *Scheme*, which says that after Shagrat arrived at Barad-dûr (on 17 March), he was slain by Sauron, presumably for failing to keep him informed, for losing two troops of orcs, and for letting the prisoner escape. Sauron's haste to punish Shagrat therefore protected Frodo and Sam; Sauron did not send out the hunting party, it was ordered by the Nazgûl, who have a misleading description of Frodo and Sam, possibly gained from a wounded orc. The conversation between the tracker and the soldier, about to give up their hunt, is very useful.

The *Scheme* also has news of the escape of the prisoners reaching Barad-dûr "almost at same time as news of their capture" on 15 March, while in the draft quotes in *Sauron Defeated* (p. 10), a foot-soldier passes news of the capture to a rider, who brings the news to Sauron on the 14th or 15th. Sauron sends a Nazgûl to Cirith Ungol, who arrives too late. However, by the published *Tale of Years* Tolkien had decided to postpone news of Frodo's capture reaching Sauron until 17 March, Shagrat going by foot.

Frodo's *mithril*-coat is thus doubly useful: it delays the report to Barad-dûr; and causes two troops of orcs to massacre one another: Sam doesn't even have to kill one orc — Snaga falls down the trap-door ladder and is killed (in the film Sam runs him through from the back).

Conclusive evidence of Tolkien's intentions is found, I believe, in *The War of the Ring* (Part 3 Minas Tirith, Ch. II, 'Book Five begun and abandoned', pp. 231, 257). Tolkien's

original synopsis had Gandalf take the *palantír* to Minas Tirith! Tolkien wrote: “Ships of Harad. New force from North. Episode of the Palantír and Gandalf.”

This is part of a note from another synopsis:

As the siege grows and the armies of Gondor are pressed back he looks in the Palantír. He catches sight of Frodo in tower and then Sauron cuts in. Gandalf gives a great shout and hurls the Stone from the battlements. It slays ? a captain ...

Christopher Tolkien comments that: “This is the original germ of the story of Denethor and the Palantír ...” I interpret this rejected idea as Tolkien realising the danger of Sauron discovering Frodo captive. Once he decided that Gandalf should give the Stone to Aragorn he made much useful capital out of it. Sauron became preoccupied with Aragorn and neglected the threat of spies.

Compare also this line from *The Treason of Isengard* (p. 437): “Sauron is busy with war and it takes time for message to reach him”, and all the calculations of the dates of Frodo’s capture and rescue and the delay in sending the message about Frodo to the Dark Tower in *Sauron Defeated* (pp. 7–11).

I am satisfied that Sauron did not know Frodo was captured until long after he had escaped, but could Denethor have seen Frodo in his Stone, unbeknownst to Sauron? The Denethor of the published book knew from Faramir’s report that Frodo, Sam and Gollum were heading to Mordor via the Morgul Vale and Cirith Ungol. It is likely, in the interests of good management of the war, that he would have surveyed the Tower of Cirith Ungol to see if he could have seen the questers. This would have been extremely risky: had Sauron ‘logged in’, he would have caught Frodo’s image. Was Denethor aware that Sauron was often present when he used the Stone?

Is it not strange that Denethor does not consult the Stone just before he sends Faramir out the second time, possibly to his death, to check the disposition of the Enemy’s armies? He could have seen the Morgul-host and given Faramir informed advice. Or was the Darkness just too dark for him to see? This flaw in the plot is essential for the story, to illustrate Denethor’s poor decision-making, and to ensure that Faramir returns to the city near to death. Denethor is less harsh to Faramir in the earlier versions, and Tolkien deliberately made him harsher (*War of the Ring* pp. 332–333).

Another example of Denethor’s independence from Mordor would have been his knowledge of other events, such as Rohan’s success at Helm’s Deep, when he might have seen Aragorn in action (see the *Unfinished Tales* essay, p. 411).

I note here that in accordance with the original usage of the Stones, for their security and to ensure good sightlines, all users of the Stones sought high places in which to view them, including Aragorn in the Hornburg, and even Pippin on a ‘green hillock’. Let us assume that Denethor knew about

Frodo, and Sauron did not. Gandalf’s extreme negligence in allowing Denethor to know about the quest is apparent to me. Gandalf did not know how strong Denethor was against Sauron; he knew how Sauron dominated Saruman and Pippin. Had Sauron asked the right questions, Frodo’s quest would have been ruined. He could have inquired, for example, after the location of the Ring, or the identity of the Ringbearer. Tolkien knew that Denethor could have resisted such questions, but Gandalf need not have done.

While revising *The Lord of the Rings* in the mid-1960s, Tolkien had second thoughts about Denethor’s *palantír*, shown in the changes to the text of *The Two Towers* and *The Return Of The King*, and in the notes in *Unfinished Tales*. He changed Gandalf’s words “long have I known that here in the White Tower, as at Orthanc, one of the Seven Stones was preserved” to “long ago I guessed that here in the White Tower, one at least of the Seven Seeing Stones was preserved”. Tolkien makes it clearer in his essay notes that Gandalf’s experience with Saruman prompted concern over Denethor, with the clues of Denethor’s wide knowledge of faraway events and his “appearance of premature old age” — the *palantír* being used constantly in conflict with Sauron having an effect similar to that of the One Ring. Simply changing ‘known’ to ‘guessed’⁶ does not exonerate Gandalf from putting Frodo’s quest in terrible danger. I suggest three options for Gandalf that Tolkien might have pondered when he realised how Denethor could have betrayed the quest under pressure.

First, he could have forbidden Faramir to have mentioned Frodo, and the story would have proceeded as the theatrical release of the film, without the crucial report scene that highlights the different characters of Denethor and Faramir and shows how Denethor reacts to the Ring’s temptation: a scene far too important to lose.

Second, he could have taken command of Minas Tirith and demanded that Denethor be deposed and imprisoned —

rather as Gandalf does in the film, beating Denethor with his staff, to boot.

Third — and this is the solution I prefer — after the report scene is played out in full, Gandalf could have realised the danger to the quest, guessed where Denethor kept his Stone (and asked Beregond), and then gone up to the chamber and laid a spell on the door so that Denethor could not have used his Stone.

Whatever Tolkien did beyond minimal rewriting would have been noticed and remarked on. After the business of rewriting that chapter of *The Hobbit*, it would have been embarrassing to have done it again. So he simply touched up the text lightly (after all, he needs Denethor to have searched the Stone while Faramir lay near death, in order to become suicidal), and wrote himself detailed notes to explain that Denethor, as the rightful owner of the Stone, could not be dominated by Sauron. He “retained the strength to control the Stone to his own purposes” while Sauron “would not

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(and could not) have the Ithil-stone under perpetual observation” — nor did Sauron delegate the use of his Stone. Neither Saruman nor Sauron were rightful owners or users of their Stones, and Tolkien even suggests that Denethor held conference with Saruman, when Sauron could not eavesdrop.

I have decided not to accept Shippey’s version of events, but prefer the solution that Denethor saw Frodo in his Stone out of his own curiosity and not impelled by Sauron, whose attention was entirely elsewhere, thus endangering the quest, should Sauron have used his Stone while Denethor was engaged in observing Frodo (only metaphorically, “in the hands of Sauron”).

Denethor risked the whole future of Middle-earth, and moved towards suicide: by gazing to the east, he missed an event that should have brought him comfort for Gondor’s sake, though mixed feelings for his stewardship: Aragorn capturing the black fleet. Sauron was watching this same battle, angry that Aragorn had flouted his plans, yet devising the plan to deceive Denethor. Had Denethor not been so dangerously curious, in my reading, he would have known the fleet was full of Gondor’s allies and would not have been deceived by Sauron.

Furthermore, neither Sauron nor Denethor observed the Ride of the Rohirrim, whose arrival was a surprise to both, approaching Minas Tirith under the cover of the forest and the darkness, and thus camouflaged from the view of the Stones.

Another detail in *Unfinished Tales* (p. 410) is relevant: Tolkien notes that the *palantíri* were blocked by darkness and “could see through walls but see nothing within rooms, caves . . . unless some light fell on it”. A high red lamp lit the Cirith Ungol chamber, and Frodo lay huddled in the dark. Unless Sauron used his Stone during Frodo’s interrogation, he would not have been able to tell whether the figure was an orc or a hobbit, or even see him at all. Denethor might have done better, looking for a figure the size and shape of Pippin.

But as nobody before Shippey had perceived that Denethor could have seen Frodo captive in his Stone, and as Tolkien would be expected to be more explicit about this, given the need to rewrite, and to write private notes about the function of the Stones: why not, as the Creator, simply decide that Denethor did not see Frodo, and leave it at that?

Real life

I conclude that Tolkien, allowing his characters the autonomy of behaving as they might have behaved in ‘real life’, could not dismiss the possibility of Denethor searching his Stone, as he had allowed Denethor the information that Frodo went up the pass of Cirith Ungol. As Denethor could have seen Frodo and thus wrecked the quest had Sauron eavesdropped, Tolkien analysed the functions of the Stones in his 1966 writings, so as to minimise the chance of Sauron exploiting his curiosity. He left unwritten what Denethor did see during the Siege of Gondor, and made but a few textual changes. He was so successful in covering up his plot-hole

that for nearly 50 years nobody saw the possibility.

When these ideas first occurred to me I had just seen the theatrical version, and marked the omission of that very important scene in which Faramir reported to Denethor and Gandalf, with Pippin present, about his adventure with Frodo, Sam and Gollum. Denethor then bitterly regretted that Boromir hadn’t been in charge, and Gandalf responds: “He would have kept it for his own, and when he returned you would not have known your son.” In the theatrical version Gandalf rescues Faramir with Pippin also riding Shad-owfax, and as soon as Faramir enters the courtyard of Minas Tirith he tells them that he has seen Frodo and Sam, and that they have gone to the Morgul Vale, by which Gandalf understands that they have taken the path of Cirith Ungol.

As Gandalf, earlier, in book and film, warned Pippin that he was not to say anything to Denethor about Frodo’s quest, it follows that the film-Denethor knows nothing about Frodo and the Ring.

If the film-Denethor had no *palantír*, which John Noble reported was the case⁷, it further follows that his degeneration is due to his grief over Boromir, not corruption by Sauron as well. As a war commander he should have been prepared for Boromir’s death as his chief captain.

It is most likely that Jackson dispensed with the *palantír* for artistic reasons; having moved the scene of Pippin’s temptation into the third film. He felt that to have two elderly lords corrupted by two Seeing-stones would be repetitious, especially after he decided to have Saruman parade his Stone in front of Gandalf, Théoden and their retinue. Tolkien also considered this by revealing Denethor’s Stone at the very last moment.

From the extended version of the DVD we find that the crucial report scene was filmed, and reinstated as ‘The Wizard’s Pupil’, a two-hander between Faramir and Denethor. This is extremely fine: Faramir speaks Gandalf’s words and most of the dialogue is straight from the book. Jackson added Denethor’s vision of Boromir behind Faramir, reinforcing our opinion that Denethor is going insane. John Noble himself attributed some of his motivation to Denethor’s loss of his wife.

However, Denethor still has no Stone, and I wonder whether Jackson, in the process of reordering the events of *The Return of the King*, hit on the same drawback that I have found, and that I believe Tolkien also realised as he was revising the trilogy.

Had Sauron known of Frodo he would have summoned him to the Dark Tower. Jackson may also have stumbled upon this plot-hole, and dealt with it by excising Denethor’s *palantír* from the story. Whether accidentally or on purpose he solves Tolkien’s plot-hole by omitting the Stone altogether, for which I am sorry. John Noble played Denethor as Jackson wished, and he has some fine moments, but he verges towards a stereotypical mad king instead of the subtler character that Tolkien drew.

Appendix 1 At some point in the Oxonmoot 2006 lecture series somebody pointed out that in the film’s Voice of

Saruman scene, Saruman mocks Gandalf for sending the Halfling to his doom, which suggests that Saruman knows the nature of Frodo's quest. As he is Sauron's slave, it would follow that Sauron would also know about Frodo's quest — which is nonsense, so here is an inconsistency caused by the desire to endow Saruman with more menace and pride before his fall.

Appendix 2 Tolkien's time-scheme suits both Shippey's interpretation and mine. Denethor consults his *palantír* late in the evening of 13 March. Sam sets out to rescue Frodo at noon on 14 March, a moment that Tolkien anchors by stating where Aragorn, Merry and Pippin were at the time. Sam rescues Frodo that evening, and the next morning the Darkness begins to clear for Frodo and Sam as well as Minas Tirith. The Battle of the Pelennor is fought and Frodo and Sam hear a Nazgûl-shriek, which tells us of the Witch-king's death.

Had Denethor looked again at Frodo's prison chamber before he went to the pyre, he might have seen Frodo and Sam together, or an empty chamber, the latter of which would not have given him comfort. However, it was good (in my reading) that Sauron did not pick up Frodo's image from Denethor, but kept him firmly focused on the west-facing view of the Stone, and on the black fleet.

Finally, I would like to refute any suggestion that the Stones had a 'flashback' or 'time-travel' function. They could see distant objects, and scenes from the past provided that that Stone had already viewed those scenes. Furthermore, a surveyor could see an object retained in the mind of the

surveyor with whom he was communicating. It was not, however, possible to require a Stone to show past events that it had not witnessed: otherwise the Quest would have failed as soon as Sauron learned of the escaped spies. He would simply have travelled back in time to find Frodo and Sam, and then move forward quickly to find them in 'real time'. Such a power would also have been useful to Saruman in his part of Middle-earth, sending news to Sauron beyond the reach of his (Sauron's) Stone. But obviously the Stones did not have that power. However, had Sauron encouraged Saruman to survey well north of Isengard, he might have been able to spy on the Fellowship before and after they came to Rivendell. m

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The realm of Faërie, and the shadow of Homer in Narnia and Middle-earth

LOUIS MARKOS

"Me, sir!" cried Sam, springing up like a dog invited for a walk. "Me go and see Elves and all! Hooray!" he shouted, and then burst into tears. (*The Lord of the Rings*, Bk I, Ch. 2)

"This is the land of Narnia," said the Faun, "where we are now; all that lies between the lamp-post and the great castle of Cair Paravel on the eastern sea." (*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Ch. 2)

Near the beginning of *On Fairy-stories*, J. R. R. Tolkien offers a provocative and helpful distinction as to the true nature of fairy stories:

... fairy-stories are not in normal English usage stories about fairies or elves, but stories about Fairy, that is *Faërie*, the realm or state in which fairies have their being. *Faërie* contains many things besides elves and fays, and besides dwarfs, witches, trolls, giants, or drag-

ons: it holds the seas, the sun, the moon, the sky; and the earth, and all things that are in it: tree and bird, water and stone, wine and bread, and ourselves, mortal men, when we are enchanted.

Fairy stories, that is to say, are not stories that necessarily revolve around small, winged creatures, but stories that transport us to Faërie, to what Tolkien later calls a "Perilous Realm". The exact nature of this realm "cannot be caught in a net of words", Tolkien tells us, "for it is one of its qualities to be indescribable, though not imperceptible". It can be imagined, if not always described, and it can, sometimes, be reached. The heroes of fairy stories have found their way to the Perilous Realm through a variety of different means: Jason and Odysseus aboard their ships, Alice down a rabbit hole, Dorothy on a tornado, and the Pevensie children through the back of an old wardrobe. Tolkien himself takes us there by turning back the clock to explore the mythic