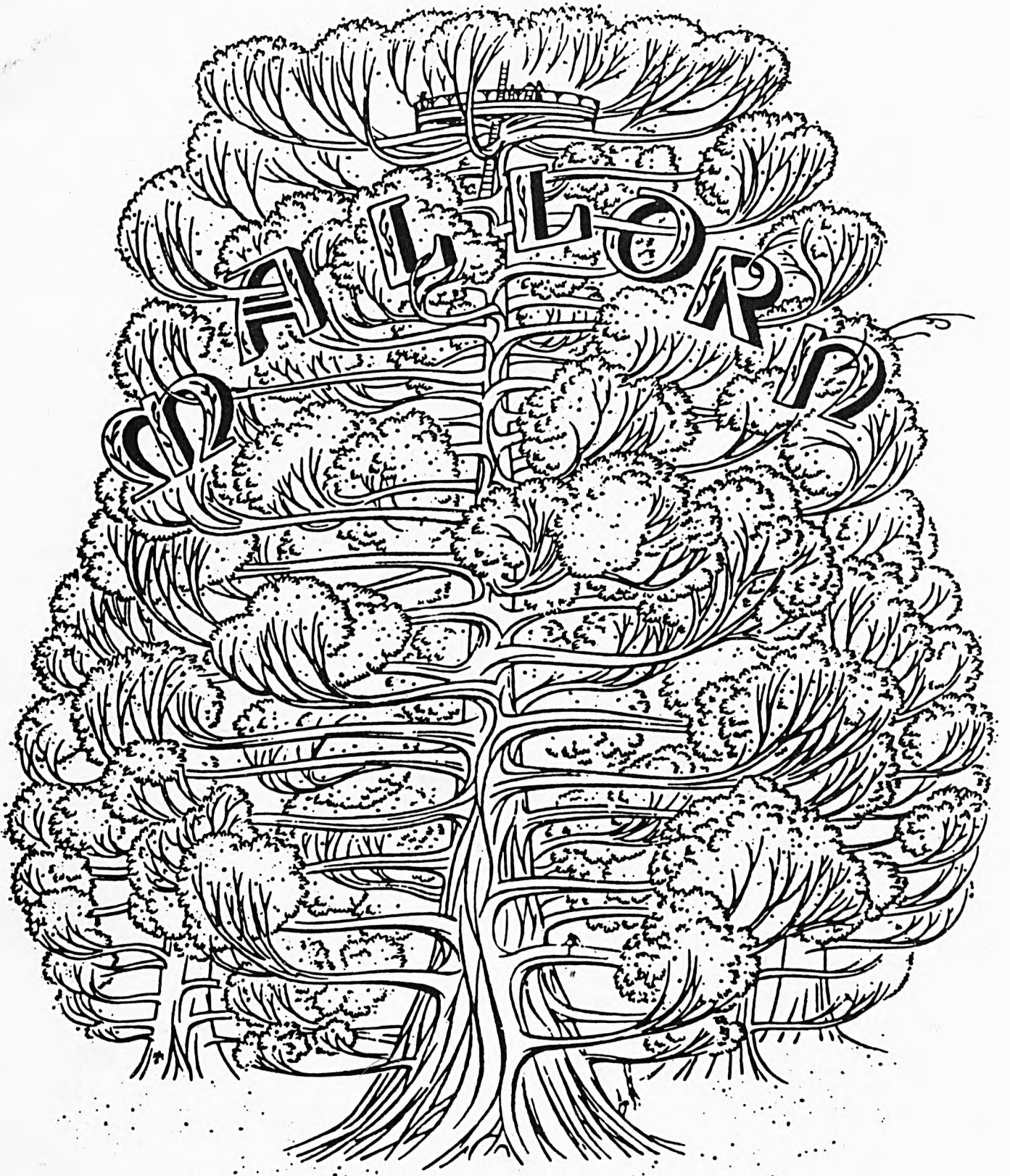


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21

The Journal of the Tolkien Society

June 1984

mallorn

guidelines for contributors

Mallorn welcomes contributions of all types (articles, poetry, artwork, calligraphy, fiction etc.) on subjects related to, or inspired by, the life and works of Professor J.R.R. Tolkien. Prospective contributors, however, are asked to take note of the Copyright statement at the foot of this page; and of the following general guidelines:



1. Quality

Only items which show some originality and skill will be considered for publication, although there is no restriction on the type of material submitted (provided it relates in some way to JRRT).

2. Articles

Articles should present their subject matter in a clear and readable way, with a concern for factual accuracy. As a guide to the approach of the writing of articles, they should preferably present some analysis or new understanding of the matter under discussion; or contribute significantly to our enjoyment of it. Articles which merely summarise or repeat material that is already available elsewhere will not be considered; although reprints of articles appearing elsewhere may be.

Length of articles: Both long and short articles are welcome, but should preferably be between 1000 and 5000 words in length. Articles may be divided into sections with section headings; this can enhance readability, particularly in longer articles.

Footnotes: These should only be used when their inclusion in the text would seriously interrupt the flow of thought.

References: Books, articles etc. that are mentioned in the text should have their full details set out in a *Bibliography* at the end of the article. References should be set out as follows: Author; Title; edition; place of publication & publisher; year (or date) of publication. For example: R. Foster, *The Complete Guide to Middle-earth*, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1978; J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King* (2nd edition, hardback), London, George Allen & Unwin, 1966.

Works by JRRT: References can be given by volume, book and chapter, e.g. LotR II.4.III ("The Black Gate is Closed"); QS ch. XIV ("Of Beleriand and its Realms"). If actual page references are necessary, please give full details of the edition used, as set out above.

Abbreviations of titles frequently referred to may be used. Common ones are LotR (*The Lord of the Rings*); TH (*The Hobbit*); QS (*The Silmarillion*); UT (*Unfinished Tales*) etc. Other abbreviations in the same style may be coined. Other well known works e.g. Foster's "Guide", Carpenter's "Biography" may be abbreviated in the text, but please give full details in a bibliography.

3. Fiction and Poetry

All types of Tolkien-inspired fiction

will be considered. Length should be preferably 1500-5000 words.

Any poetry considered to be of a sufficiently high standard will be considered.

4. Artwork

All sizes and types are welcome, from full page (A4), to half page or smaller inset illustrations, borders and ornaments. But artwork can *only* be in black & white: shades of grey will not reproduce. Shading is best indicated by dots or lines. A margin of at least $\frac{1}{4}$ " (1cm) should be left all around full-page artwork - i.e. the actual dimensions should be $7\frac{1}{4}$ " x 11" (19 x 27.5cm). Full-page and half-page artwork is best vertically orientated.

Please *always* put your name in pencil on the reverse of submitted artwork. Photo or other copies are only acceptable if of good quality. Artwork cannot normally be returned.

5. Presentation of Material

For articles, fiction, poetry etc. contributors are asked to submit typewritten scripts. Typing should be double spaced, on one side of the paper only. Handwriting that proves difficult to read may not be considered, and runs the risk of being returned unread. Handwritten scripts should therefore be neat and legible, on one side of the paper only. Please always put your name on submitted work.

6. Resubmission of Material

Contributions are often felt to be worthy of inclusion but in need of certain correction/improvements. In such cases the item will be returned with a report so that the indicated changes can be made.

7. Return of Material

Material which is used, of whatever kind, cannot normally be returned. If you require the return of your work, and/or comments, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope (or for Overseas members, International Reply Coupon(s), available at Post Offices.

8. Letters of Comment & "Follow-ons"

Letters can be on any aspect of Mallorn (e.g. content, layout, etc.) and should be about 100-200 words in length. Please bear in mind when writing that they will be printed as fully as possible, and mark your envelope "Letter to the Editor".

If you have more to say on a particular article, you are invited to write a "Follow-on" of around 700 words.

All material must be submitted to the Editor on the basis that Copyright therein shall subsist entirely in The Tolkien Society, who may publish the same, or not, in whole or in part, as they see fit, save that this shall not preclude the author of submitted works from publishing the same, in whole or in part, whether for gain or not, elsewhere, in any form, provided always that the Copyright of The Tolkien Society be acknowledged in each such publication.

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mallorn 21

June 1984

Editor: Jenny Curtis

Contents

	<u>PAGE</u>
Editorial.....	Jenny Curtis.....4
<i>The Lord of the Rings</i> as Tragedy.....	Carol Jeffs.....5
Book Review: <i>The Book of Lost Tales (part I)</i>	Charles Noad.....11
Art: 'Rivendell'.....	Bart Maddens.....14
"Lord of the Isles": No, sorry Mr Giddings, I mean "Rings".....	Margaret Askew.....15
<i>Undómiel</i>	Michael Burgess.....19
<i>Lament for Baldor the Brave</i>	Gill Page.....20
Mallorn Mail: Letters to the Editor.....	22
In Defence of Fantasy.....	Jessica Yates.....23
The Gorren: a tale of later years.....	Christine Davidson...29
<i>The Dark Palace beneath the Sea</i>	Thomas M. Egan.....35
The Tree of Tales.....	Dylan Pugh.....36
Guidelines for <i>Mallorn</i> contributors.....	2
Where to Write.....	39
The Tolkien Society.....	40

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EDITORIAL

35 Martindale Close
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Mae govannen!

Welcome to issue 21 of Mallorn - have we 'come of age' or is that still another 12 issues away?! Anyway, it is a full issue this time, with 40 pages - partly to make up for the lack of pages in Mallorn 20 - but mostly because of the quantity (and quality) of material I've been sent recently. It is very gratifying to know people really do want the Mallorn to flourish: which it can only do if nurtured by the contributions that you send!

Please keep sending me material for future issues. In my opinion this Mallorn is the best I've edited: I hope to be able to say that about every issue I produce in the future. While on the subject of contributions, may I draw your attention to the revised 'guidelines for contributors' on page 2. These are not as daunting as they may at first appear: they are designed merely to make my job a bit easier and to give you a better chance of seeing your work in print. And of course, don't forget the new letters page, Mallorn Mail (p.22). I really do like to hear your comments - but please restrict these to Mallorn only. General comments, queries etc. should be sent to the editor of Amon Hen.

Another apology to make this time: to Brin Dunsire for mistakenly calling his story last issue "Quenta Finagillo". It should of course be "Finagillo" (as you can't mix your Quenya and Sindarin!). The mistake was entirely due to my misreading the typescript (must get my contact lenses checked!!). So, sorry Brin! If anyone else has an 'epesse history' I should be glad to receive it.

Well, that seems to be about all I have to say this time. As usual my thanks go to Steve for the titles and other illustrations (I'm sure you'll agree these are really excellent this issue); and to Tony for helping with various bits & pieces (and babysitting while I did the typing!). And of course, to all who have taken the time and trouble to either send their contributions or have written for other reasons.

Good reading,

Anar kaluva tielyanna!

Jenny Curtis



"LORD OF THE RINGS" AS TRAGEDY

CAROL JEFFS

"But the 'consolation' of fairy-tales has another aspect than the imaginative satisfaction of ancient desires. Far more important is the Consolation of the Happy Ending. Almost I would venture to assert that all complete fairy-stories must have it. At least I would say that Tragedy is the true form of Drama, its highest function; but the opposite is true of Fairy-story. Since we do not appear to possess a word that expresses this opposite - I will call it *Eucatastrophe*. The *eucatastrophic* tale is the true form of fairy-tale, and its highest function."¹



IT IS ARGUABLE THAT, ON THIS function of modern fairy-stories, as set down by Tolkien in *Tree and Leaf*, he has failed to live up to one of his own prerequisites in *The Lord of the Rings*. But, as Professor Joad would have said, 'It all depends what you mean by consolation'. Is the story itself consoling, and/or is the act of reading the story consoling? For the present writer, at least, the latter is true. *The Lord of the Rings* allows for an escape far beyond Tolkien's Secondary Belief; the characters are as real for one

as absent friends. In this sense, meeting old friends again, *The Lord of the Rings* is consoling; one has to take a break from normal routine to visit absent friends, therefore Recovery is guaranteed.

But the book as a story contains no *eucatastrophic* ending - or beginning or middle. Respite, although there, is only temporary and fleeting; even victory is defeat for its heroes. On first reading *The Lord of the Rings* one could almost anticipate the successful conclusion of the quest to destroy the One Ring, but not the havoc and change that destruction would bring, before the whole process of a new age could begin: more than likely the same story all over again but with different protagonists, and with each age giving way to less and less mighty foes (a tragedy in itself that the workers of 'miracles' should pass beyond the confines of Middle-earth). But the irony lies in the fact that it is precisely these workers of miracles who are

(1) J.R.R. Tolkien, 'On Fairy Stories', *Tree and Leaf* (and other stories), (Unwin Paperbacks, London, 1975, pp.67-68.

the prime movers of all the tragedies of Middle-earth, stemming primarily from its Creation and Eru himself. Eru may proclaim that the evil created by Melkor during the Creation of Middle-earth is "but a part of the whole and tributary to its glory" (QS p.17) but this can be no consolation when, thousands of years, thousands of unhappy lives, and three ages later, two very unsuspecting Hobbits get landed with the fate of a whole world. Granted, the Shire needed shaking out of its complacency, and needed to be made aware and responsible for its actions; but one feels that the experience of Sharkey was enough to do that without thrusting Sam and Frodo into Sauron's lap. Nevertheless, it was the naivety, the non-realisation of the danger of the task that enabled Frodo and Sam to succeed in their quest, where others mightier and more knowledgeable would have failed. In their quiet sheltered lives, the Hobbits could never have conceived of the evil they were facing, purely *because* of their quiet sheltered lives, wherein nothing more exciting had happened since the Fell Winter, the Battle of the Greenfields, and latterly Bilbo Baggins' wanderings and eventual startling disappearance. They could be brave sitting over a pint in the Green Dragon at Bywater, not knowing what fear was; whereas, the Gandalfs and the Elronds could quail, not from cowardice, but because they realised the full extent of the danger, and they also had the power to wield the Ring to the same devastating effect as Sauron. While Gollum possessed the Ring, he used it merely to survive by becoming invisible in order to kill his prey. Bilbo, not then knowing the full power of the Ring, only used it to escape unwanted visitors like the Sackville-Bagginses. Even when Sam held the Ring knowing its power, he merely dreamt of creating a beautiful garden with its help. "Did not Gandalf tell you that the rings give power according to the measure of each possessor?" (FotR p.381). What the Ring could have created when in the hands of the great is clearly shown when Frodo offers the Ring to Galadriel:

"And now at last it comes. You will give me the Ring freely! In place of the Dark Lord you will set up a Queen. And I shall not be dark but beautiful and terrible as the Morning and the Night! Fair as the Sea and the Sun upon the Mountain! Dreadful as the Storm and the Lightning! Stronger than the foundations of the Earth. All shall love me and despair!" (FotR p. 381)

Indeed, all the fallen had once been great and beautiful but the Promethean lust for power and knowledge approximating that possessed by Eru had

caused their present states of evil and ugliness. It could be argued that even the lowly Hobbit suffered in a small degree from the same malaise. After all, did not Bilbo consort with wizards, Elves and Dwarves, in a quiet way to begin with, and did not Frodo follow in his footsteps? And Sam Gamgee, who appears almost childishly enchanted with the idea of Elves:

"Lor bless me, sir, but I do love tales of that sort. And I believe them too . . . Elves, sir! I would dearly love to see *them*. Couldn't you take me to see Elves, sir, when you go?" (FotR p.73)

Did they not invite a doom upon themselves just as surely as Fëanor did in creating the Silmarils in the First Age; or Elves, Dwarves and Men by creating the rings in the Second?



But it was a tough doom nevertheless and shows the extent of the fortitude possessed by creatures who considered boating on the Brandywine to be the outer limits of bravery or stupidity. The Hobbits though had their saviour to die for them so that they could continue to live in their accustomed ways, a saviour who, though having done most of the donkey work to save the Shire up to its Scouring, was not to partake of the pleasures once the evil had been banished; nor was he to gain any recognition for his deeds in Wilderland. That saviour was, of course, Frodo.

It was all very homely and nice for Sam to muse on the delights of meeting Elves and for Frodo to consort with their like and Gandalf within the confines of the Shire. But both had to learn to accept the implications of such associations: Elves did not merely sing in merry fashion as they wandered through the Shire, and wizards had more up their sleeves than a gift for pyrotechnics. Frodo's first step towards growing into a tragic hero comes when he decides to renounce the Shire and to take the Ring at least as far as Rivendell where the matter can be decided further. But still his thoughts are mainly concerned with the Shire and it will take a long time before he realises the full implication of what he is doing. He has to encounter characters such as Galadriel, Elrond, the Nazgûl, in the rough world outside to realise their full significance and terror. In meeting such folk he also



learns that conflict is not only his prerogative; his concern for the Shire has to grow into a concern for the whole world, because once he accepts the task of Ring-bearer, the world's fate depends on him alone: which is a terrible responsibility for one neither born to nor expecting such hardships. Taking responsibility for his own actions commences at the very start of his journey when Gandalf does not show up as promised and Frodo has to decide which direction to take; he chooses the Old Forest, much to everyone's disinclination, the first of many unmapped journeys. But starting from that first decision, he is enabled eventually to take that crucial decision to go alone into Mordor. Without that decision to go through the Old Forest, the quest would have failed: not because probably the Nazgûl would have caught the Hobbits without the concealing protection of the Old Forest, but because Frodo would have proved too weak in his resolve had he decided not to go ahead without Gandalf. The quest eventually succeeds because Frodo has decided something for himself above and beyond his ordinary everyday life. Technically, he does not resume that responsibility for his own actions again until he does decide to go into Mordor alone - save taking on the quest of the Ring at Rivendell - but his experiences, the characters he meets, the stories he hears, and the terrain he traverses, all contribute towards his growth both as hero and suppliant.

From his insular concerns for the Shire, he eventually concerns himself with the world; and from that same period of insulation when he says to Gandalf: "I do not feel pity for Gollum . . . He deserves death" (*FotR* p.69) Frodo develops to such an extent that when, on the point of trying to enter Mordor, he and Sam do eventually meet Gollum and he can say: "For now that I see him, I do pity him" (*TT* p.222). His experiences have made him merciful too.

"The quality of mercy is not strained;
 . . . it becomes
 The throned monarch better than his
 crown"²
 Mercy is a trait which even Aragorn is not too mighty to show.

Arguably, Frodo's tragedy lies in the fact (as stated previously) that, although he has battled against all the odds to save Middle-earth and has won through, when he returns to the Shire, he is not lauded as he has been in Minas Tirith, nor will he partake of the fruits of victory.

"I tried to save the Shire, and it

has been saved, but not for me. It must often be so, Sam, when things are in danger: some one has to give them up, lose them, so that others may keep them. But you are my heir; all that I had and might have had I leave to you . . ." (*RotK* p.309)

The attitude of most of the Hobbits is typified in a few words:

". . . the Cottons asked a few polite questions about their travels, but hardly listened to the answers: they were far more concerned with events in the Shire" (*RotK* p.291).

Therefore, it is only natural that when Merry and Pippin set about the Scouring of the Shire, it is they who will afterwards receive all the praise, while Frodo will always be considered, together with Bilbo, as a bit of a crank.



But although it is tragic that in Frodo's case he is a prophet "without honour in his own country"³, he has matured to such an extent that he can bear it and even encourages it. Although Frodo's strength has been sapped both by his ordeals and the insidious workings of the Ring, and decisions have hung around his neck like a dead weight, it is not the inability or disinclination to take any more decisions, or to fight further - the Scouring of the Shire would have been a simple matter compared with his experiences in Mordor. No! Two things contribute to his decision to leave this in other hands. Firstly, he is not the only one who has grown enough to cope with the situation obtaining in the Shire on their return. Although to a lesser degree, *all* the Hobbits, like "this tale, grew in the telling" (*FotR* foreword). Both Merry and Pippin have gained enough experience on their travels to cope admirably with Sharkey & Co., so that when Merry says, "Now I've got a plan" very decisively, then "hurried off to give orders" (*RotK* p.289), Frodo can see his chance of slipping quietly into oblivion. For the second reason for acquiescing is the fact that he has reached that strange quietude, that acceptance that martyrs must have achieved, that stasis that enables Frodo to relinquish earthly glory to a new generation. If for no other reason, Frodo could not

(2) William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, Act 4, Scene 1, lines 180, 184, 185.

(3) *The Gospel According to Saint Luke*, chapter 4, verse 2.

have endured the recurring pain sustained in the injury by the Nazgûl knife during the fight on Weather-top; that would need spiritual healing that could not be found within the confines of Middle-earth. But Frodo's resignation was not caused by just one single incident; it was compounded. In one short year, Frodo has been heaped with troubles that the Elves have had three ages to assimilate and even they, who were used to the burden, find it difficult to cope with and constantly long for the Sea. Arwen knew what a gift of peace she was giving to Frodo when she took the 'choice of Lúthien'. Knowing and feeling all this, Frodo is ready for the West which can be seen even before they reached the Shire when Frodo replied to Sam's comment about having seen most things on their travels, "Yes, something of everything, Sam, except the Sea . . . Except the Sea" (*RotK* p.265). This is something which, at their parting, Sam cannot understand, but *not* understanding is not *never* understanding. After Rosie dies, Sam understands and follows.



Although Frodo's doom is probably the toughest in the book in that he was neither born to nor expected the burden that he eventually endured, the tragedy most personally and deeply felt is that of the Elves in general and Elrond and Galadriel in particular. To leave the confines of *The Lord of the Rings* for just a moment and to return to the First Age; it had been an original tragic mistake to place Elves, who were infinite (but still subject to the finite laws of Middle-earth whilst there), beside Men who were finite in a finite world. Death, the Gift of Men from Eru became the Doom of Men as both death in itself and in the fall of Númenor when Men sought the immortality of the West. It also contributed towards the tragedy of Sauron and the Ring-wraiths, this quest for the qualities belonging to Eru alone. The Elves who followed Fëanor to Middle-earth in search of the stolen Silmarils paid dear for their disobedience. As mentioned above, whilst in Middle-earth they became subject to its finite laws and could die of wounding or disease; they were compelled to endure this for three ages with only Galadriel surviving from the initial party of Elves, therefore being the only Elf left in Middle-earth who remembered the Undying Lands and Middle-earth beneath the Stars. During her long, long life she has seen all the

great names pass and most of the beautiful dwellings of the Eldar disappear under a tide of greed and battle, not always emanating from Mordor or Angmar, but from dissension within too. All that is left by the end of the Third Age is Lothlórien, and to a lesser degree, Rivendell.

Nevertheless, despite all the vanished glory of Middle-earth and the memory of the West, after three ages one could expect a very strong bond to have grown between Galadriel and the people and places of Middle-earth, especially for Lothlórien which she knew was created and preserved on the strength of artifice, the power of *Nenya*, the Ring of Adamant. Whilst in Rivendell you can hear stories and songs of the past, "a memory of ancient things; in Lórien the ancient things still lived on in the waking world" (*FotR* p.364). And the tragic dilemma facing Galadriel is this Ring. *Nenya*, together with *Vilya* and *Narya*, the two other Elven rings, was forged by the Elves under the aegis of a dissembling Sauron in conjunction with the One Ring, the Seven and the Nine, though was separate from them and because "they were not made as weapons of war or conquest . . . but [with] understanding, making and healing, to preserve all things unstained" (*FotR* p.287) they have remained true to their original purpose. But the fate of the Elven race is hinted at later in the same conversation, when Glóin asks what would happen if the Ruling Ring were destroyed:

"We do not know for certain . . . Some hope that the three Rings . . . would then become free, and their rulers might heal the hurts of the world that [Sauron] has wrought. But maybe when the One has gone, the Three will fail, and many fair things will fade and be forgotten. That is my belief" (*FotR* p.282).

Galadriel not only believes but *knows* that 'many fair things will fade', including her beloved Lórien, when the One Ring is destroyed:

". . . Verily it is in the land of Lórien . . . that one of the Three remains . . . and I am its keeper. . . . Do you not see now wherefore your coming is to us as the footsteps of Doom? For if you fail, then we are laid bare to the enemy. Yet if you succeed, then our power is diminished, and Lothlórien will fade . . . We must depart into the West, or dwindle to a rustic folk . . . slowly to forget and to be forgotten" (*FotR* p.380).

She faces several possibilities when the Ring comes within her reach; she can seize it from Frodo by force; she can get it from him by wiles; in the event Frodo *offers* her the Ring.

When Frodo sees Galadriel in her full glory, he realises just how great a matter it is and just how hard a decision she has to make when she relinquishes the Ring. Her doom is not only losing Lórien and Middle-earth whether she stays or goes; in either case she 'will diminish' which is by way of punishment - at least in part - for her disobedience towards the Valar during the First Age and for her Promethean act in endeavouring to create something of the Blessed Realm on Middle-earth. Her rewards are that she will be permitted to 'go into the West' and to 'remain Galadriel' (*FoTR* p.381). But even being eternal has its drawbacks. Together with all those who finally sail away from the Grey Havens at the end of the book, Galadriel will have an eternity to dwell on all the joys and sorrows, times and places, and the people they have known during their sojourn in Middle-earth.



Although Elrond shares the same dilemma as Galadriel concerning the Ring - and with Gandalf come to that - the emphasis of Elrond's tragedy is placed on the less lofty but more heart-rending aspect of his family, the tragedy of which lies in the mixing of blood between Mortal and Eldar. His lineage is impressive, combining three noble branches of Eru's creation - Maian, Elven and Mortal. For present purposes we can dismiss the Maian aspect of his lineage; it is the Elven and Mortal aspects that create the dilemma, the Choice, granted to those of mixed blood, to remain either Elven, thus potentially immortal and with the possibility of entering the Blessed Realm; or Mortal which means accepting the Doom of Men. Elrond has already seen his twin brother, Elros, go the way of all flesh, but by the time the Third Age arrives he is faced with the worst dilemma of all. Again, like Galadriel, he has it in his power to turn events in his favour and, also like Galadriel, he does the noble thing, but only after long years of deliberation and on a condition that only remotely has a chance of being fulfilled. His main dilemma is the love between Arwen, his daughter, and Aragorn, leader of the remainder of the Dúnedain and heir to the throne of Gondor:

"Therefore, though I love you, I say to you: Arwen Undómiel shall not diminish her life's grace for less cause. She shall not be the bride of any Man less than the King

of both Gondor and Arnor'" (*RotK* App. A, p.342)

Aragorn, as we know, fights through and wins, as the rest of Middle-earth, against all the odds. Not least, if the battle against evil had been lost, Elrond would probably have been taking all his family with him into the West, because his sons, Elladan and Elrohir, also decide to remain Mortal. But despite his obvious pride, Elrond is not that small-minded. His concern for Middle-earth while he dwelt there has been great - his own sons had ridden with the Dúnedain against evil - and Rivendell was ever the refuge for wanderers from the heir of Gondor to that once reluctant burglar, Bilbo Baggins. Still,

"None saw her last meeting with Elrond her father, for they went up into the hills and there spoke long together, and bitter was their parting that would endure beyond the ends of the world" (*RotK* p.256).

A child feels grief at the loss of a parent. Nature has seen fit to allow most parent to die before their children. But when the order is reversed, the grief is compounded. A child, although feeling attachment to a parent, does not realise the strength of the bond between parent and child until they themselves become parents. And Elrond has to endure the loss of all his children 'beyond the ends of the world'. "To me then even our victory can bring only sorrow and parting'" (*RotK* App. A, p.342).

Was then the Gift of Men the Doom of Men, or vice versa? Certainly it was a hard doom for Elrond to endure his memories for an eternity but as he predicted, "I fear that to Arwen the Doom of Men may seem hard at the ending" (*RotK* App. A p.342).

For it is not until Aragorn decides to die that Arwen fully realises the implication of her Choice:

"As wicked fools I scorned them [Mortals who sought immortality], but I pity them at last. For if this is indeed, as the Eldar say, the gift of the One to Men, it is bitter to receive'" (*RotK* App. A p.344).

This is a bit like Frodo's reactions to Gollum.

But as the rings 'give power according to the measure of each possessor', so too with the extent or gravity of the tragedy. In all cases there is a process of growth, from the Elves' rash decision to leave the Undying Lands for Middle-earth in their 'youth' to the point where their sufferings make them realise that all they really want is to go West-over-Sea; from the Hobbits who only want an adventure like Bilbo's to the point

where they can endure the worst of hardships; so too the Ents gain wisdom through their long sufferings, not only mutilation by orc axes, but more specifically at the loss of the Entwives.

The Ents are a beautiful creation which shows a deep love of trees and a very deep hatred of the encroachment of 'civilization', even more so than Tolkien's descriptions of the waste of Mordor or Sharkey's Shire. The poignancy of Treebeard's memories is felt more because the damage done is irreparable, whereas in time the Shire and Mordor can be remedied, but not that 'one wood' that 'once upon a time' ran 'from here to the Mountains of Lune':

"Those were the broad days! Time was when I could walk and sing all day and hear no more than the echo of my own voice in the hollow hills. The woods were like the woods of Lothlórien, only thicker, stronger, younger. And the smell of the air! I used to spend a week just breathing" (TT p.72).

Celeborn calls Treebeard "Eldest" (RotK p.259) and indeed the Ents and the Forest were in Middle-earth long before Men or even Elves. And the vastness of their kingdom as it once was far outshines the glories of Minas Tirith or Edoras. The Ents' memories go back before and forward beyond these kingdoms of Men. "Never is too long a word even for me . . . they will have to last long indeed to seem long to Ents" (RotK p.258). The magnitude of the vision of the Ents is far greater than that of Mortals, but their days, unlike the days of Men, are numbered, "For the time comes of the Dominion of Men" (RotK p.249), and the Ents have "lost the Entwives" (TT p.78).

In the folly of *their* youth the Ents behaved true to their physical natures. Despite the fact that they were young and supple, they behaved distinctly 'tree-ish', unbending and rooted to the spot. While the Entwives wanted to tame nature, until their respective desires for divergent things separated them beyond recall. It would seem that the Entwives' desire to cultivate and tame had been their utter downfall. While the Ents have suffered from orcs etc., at least in sticking together with the rest of the Forest, this seems to have preserved them from complete annihilation. And the dilemma facing the Ents is no less great to them than the choices facing Galadriel over the Ring, or those facing Elrond over Arwen. Although "For many years we used to go out every now and again and look for the Entwives" (TT p.80) and although "our sorrow was very great" when "nowhere that we went could we find them . . . Yet the wild wood called" (TT p.79-80).

"We believe that we may meet again in a time to come, and perhaps we shall find somewhere a land where we can live together and both be content. But it is foreboded that will only be when we have both lost all that we now have" (TT p.80).

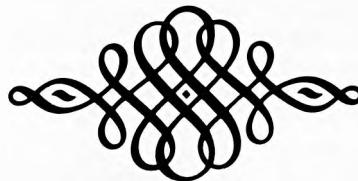
So the follies of both the Ents and the Entwives, wanting *possession* of different things, and redemption only lies in the rejection of those things if they are to gain the most important possession of all which is love. Frodo cannot possess the Shire, nor Galadriel the Ring, nor Elrond Arwen. To gain peace, something has to be forfeited, the physical in favour of the spiritual. And all have to leave the peace of a united world. "It is sad that we should meet thus at the ending" (RotK p.259).

But perhaps the biggest tragedy of all and one felt very deeply by Tolkien himself, although not explicitly stated, is the fading of the miraculous from the world, the leaving of Middle-earth to Men who despoil nature and who have to make everything explicable. When Tolkien bemoans the departure of the Elves he bemoans the onset of an all too scientific age where machines and not Nature spirits are the gods. There is no room left in the imagination for elves or trolls or dragons. Tolkien "Desired dragons with a profound desire" (*Tree and Leaf* p.44) and in this twentieth century could only find them in his own imagination.



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BOOK REVIEWS



The Book of Lost Tales

- PART ONE

by J.R.R. TOLKIEN, edited by CHRISTOPHER TOLKIEN

London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983.

The Book of Lost Tales, the first part of which is now published, was the first comprehensive treatment of his invented mythology that was attempted by J.R.R. Tolkien. It was begun in about 1916-17, when Tolkien was 25, but, despite being subsequently worked on over a period of some years, was eventually abandoned. Its relationship to later versions of greater or lesser comprehensiveness in the degree to which they cover Tolkien's mythology - a matter of considerable complexity - is discussed with great lucidity by Christopher Tolkien in the Foreword to the book.

This volume is the first of two of the *Lost Tales*: further volumes in the 'History of Middle-earth' series of which it is part will deal with later works concerned with more developed versions of the mythology. In his presentation, Christopher Tolkien has edited into separate chapters the rather more continuous narratives that are contained in Tolkien's original notebooks. Each chapter is supplied with copious notes as well as a detailed commentary.

Perhaps the first thing which strikes the reader is the contrast between some of the names encountered here and those of the same persons and places given in *The Silmarillion*: the Noldor are here called the Noldoli (as well as other names: a major characteristic of the book is the profusion of alternative names and titles); Melkor is here called Melko; Nienna, Fui; Utumno, Utumna; Thingol, Tinwë Linte, and so on. In other cases, the names are the same, or nearly so, but the attributes of the person they

describe are different. This treatment of the names alone points to a general characteristic of the development of Tolkien's mythology: to quote the editor: 'Moreover in the history of the history of Middle-earth the development was seldom by outright rejection - far more often it was by subtle transformation in stages . . .'

The lost tales of the title are the legends and histories told to the mariner Eriol by the inhabitants of the isle of Tol Eressëa. The ten chapters in which the tales are organised cover the major episodes of elvish history, from the creation of the world in the Music of the Ainur through to the coming of the Noldoli to the Great Lands (i.e., Middle-earth, though they are not here called by that name). The 'Cottage of Lost Play', of the first chapter, introduces a conception which all but completely vanished in Tolkien's later writings, namely, that there was once a way to Valinor not through purely physical means, but, for the children of man, by way of the path of dreams - the children whom Eriol sees while in the Cottage, where most of the tales are told, being those children who stayed in their dream permanently. This rather twee conception is associated with an early poem that can best be described as 'sentimental', which is reproduced in two versions in the notes. I say 'all but completely vanished': something of the sort perhaps survives in the manner of Smith's journeyings to and from Faery in *Smith of Wootton Major*. In the notes to this chapter, Christopher

Tolkien reveals something else, something very extraordinary: in the earliest formulation of the story, the island on which Eriol makes landfall is geographically identical to *England*. Later in time, in that version, the elves fade, men increase, and Tol Eressëa of legend becomes the England of history; indeed the chief city of the isle, Kortirion, becomes Warwick. In one sense, then, Tolkien's work was truly, as he intended, a 'mythology for England'. By the time that the *Lost Tales* had further progressed, however, this had been changed, but the details of the revised version must await the next volume of *The Book of Lost Tales*. Details are also given here of the overall historical setting of the *Tales*. At this stage there were no Ages of the World: the history of the elves and their rebellion against the Valar in pursuit of Melko after his theft of the Silmarils seems to lead fairly shortly to human history. Only later did *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* lead to an expansion of Tolkien's world in time and space.

The second chapter, 'The Music of the Ainur', is the direct ancestor of the piece of the same name in *The Silmarillion*, although there is one main difference in that whereas, in the latter, the Valar form from chaos the world they have seen in the vision of their music, in *Lost Tales* the world is ready-made for them to enter: indeed, they display a remarkable ignorance about certain details of its construction.

The third chapter, 'The Coming of the Valar and the Building of Valinor', touches upon another aspect of the mythology which was later changed: the fate of men after death. In this version, all men first go to the Halls of Fui (an earlier form of Nienna, but here a sort of death-goddess): some she keeps in Mandos or drives away to the realm of Melko, the Hells of Iron; some are sent aboard the black ship *Mornië* which bears them away to Arvalin (i.e., Araman) where they wander in the dusk until the Great End; and some ride to Valinor, there to dwell among the Gods. Taken with other evidence, Christopher Tolkien suggests that these fates reflect Hell, Purgatory and Heaven, respectively. But, like so much else that is given a detailed physical description in this book, this concept does not survive in later works.

Of especial interest, the commentary on the third chapter produces an early sketch-map of Tolkien's showing the location of Utumna in relation to Valinor and the Great Lands. (This last term together with the 'Outer Lands' are not used consistently by Tolkien: what we now call Middle-earth was first called the Outer Lands, then the Great Lands; the Outer Lands then came to mean the lands and islands, including Valinor, to the west of the Great Lands.) There is also

shown a drawing of a cross-section through the world which shows all the lands floating as a conjoined mass in Vai, the Outer Ocean, which is itself bounded by the Wall of Things. Again, these concepts underwent more subsequent revision.



The later rejection of the specific and the physical in Tolkien's mythology is demonstrated again in the eighth chapter, 'The Tale of the Sun and Moon'. Here we have a detailed description of the fashioning of the vessels of the sun and moon and the efforts of the Valar to get them launched. However, in this case, it was not simply the abundance of detail which offended Tolkien: it was the whole scheme. According to Christopher Tolkien in his commentary, this episode caused his father a great deal of difficulty as his mythology grew and changed; he felt it to be a 'fundamental problem' - as well he might: adjusting history to fit legend is one thing; adjusting the large-scale nature of the physical universe is quite another. Perhaps further light will be thrown on this matter by the *Ambarkanta*, or Shape of the World, composed in the 'thirties, which is promised for later publication.

The Book of Lost Tales has the same relationship to the finished *Silmarillion* as a preliminary charcoal sketch has to the finished painting, or as a rough-hewn block of marble to the finished sculpture. The general outline is there, but a great deal more work is needed to realise its full potential. Perhaps the most obvious difference between the earlier and the later work is simply that of *style*. That of *Lost Tales* is immature and unsophisticated: 'little' and 'magic' abound. Tolkien had not yet learnt restraint or subtlety. This, combined with the abovementioned explicitness of detail in the narration, not to mention an excessive use of archaism (the book requires a glossary of archaic terms), gives the book an unsatisfactory feel. There is no sense of the numinous. This is not to deny the splendour of Tolkien's vision. The germ of that vision seems to have existed from the first; but the vision in its totality, together with the language and style best fitted to express it, did not arrive all at once: they had to take many years to come to full growth. And in a way, the best means for that expression came about, in the end, more or less by accident.

One of Tolkien's major problems was to present his mythology in the proper perspective: it needs to be viewed as that which it is intended to be - a survival from the remotest antiquity, the mighty matter of the Ancient World. It has, then, to be viewed 'from a distance'; but that is the problem: such a perspective can only be brought about indirectly, say by reference to such matter embedded

in a 'higher-level' narrative, and not by direct exposition.

It was *The Hobbit* which provided the seed of a solution: this story, which began life as a tale told for his children in the early 'thirties, used the pre-existing mythology to provide a background for it, rather, one feels, to give the story of Bilbo and his friends a ready-made frame of reference than for any deeper purpose. Then, on being asked to produce a sequel to *The Hobbit*, Tolkien embarked on what became *The Lord of the Rings*. This was the key. In producing this story, Tolkien became much more consciously aware of the mythological background used for *The Hobbit*: *The Lord of the Rings* tells of the winding-up of that mythology, which mythology is itself suggested by references in the narrative to the ancient past. This is exactly the right 'framework' in which to present the mythology. That being so, *The Lord of the Rings* can be seen as being set in a 'pseudo present' rather than the remote past (although it has to be presented that way).

This topic is considered at length by Christopher Tolkien in his Foreword. There he discusses the doubts which Tolkien himself came to feel about the presentation of *The Silmarillion*, when, presumably, he had come to appreciate the effect which *The Lord of the Rings* had produced; and so perfectly achieved was that effect that *The Silmarillion* itself could hardly be expected to live up to it. It was the unpublished *Silmarillion* which gave *The Lord of the Rings* its temporal depth, and *The Lord of the Rings* which gave *The Silmarillion* the right perspective.

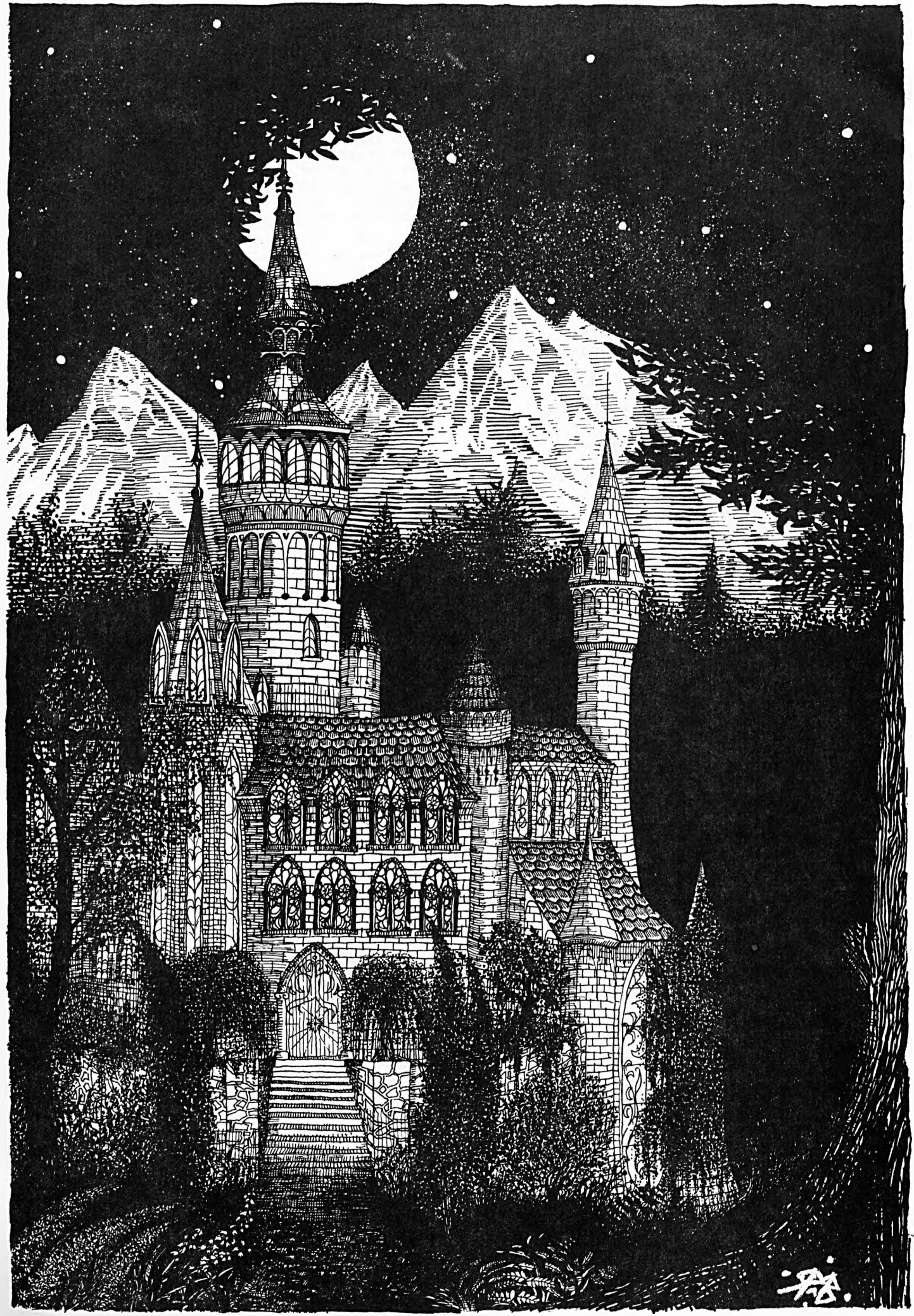
One point that may be noted about *The Book of Lost Tales* is the printing of many of Tolkien's early poems, both published and unpublished, that relate to the mythology as it then stood. Those who have seen some of these poems, e.g., those that were published in *The Oxford Magazine* in the 'twenties, may have tried to work out the 'geography' they assume; how much more confused must their original readers have been! Some of these early poems, it must be said, reflect the worst stylistic aspects of the prose of the *Tales*, but somehow magnified when put into verse form. Nevertheless, in some cases, e.g., "Kortirion", we see how great an improvement was achieved in successive revisions over the years.

The Book of Lost Tales is, I think, of mainly 'archaeological' interest,


and cannot be recommended to the casual reader of Tolkien. As an example of the primitive formulation of his mythology, however, it is of consuming interest, and as such is a welcome addition to the *oeuvre*. Christopher Tolkien has done a job of extraordinary thoroughness, as well as commendable expository lucidity, in bringing this work to the light of day.

Charles Noad





FA.



"LORD OF THE ISLES"
No, sorry MR Giddings,
I mean "RINGS" by
MARGARET ASKEW

VERY WRITER'S WORK IS TO A GREAT extent derivative and originality lies not in the near-impossible invention of a never-before-told plot, but in making an individual arrangement of long-known and studied myths, legends, stories, influences, history, facts and fiction. Since the first publication of *The Lord of the Rings* there has been an ever-increasing flow of scholarly studies of the influences and sources from which Professor Tolkien derived his ideas and narratives, some vital to a deeper understanding of his created world, some considerably less apt. Scholars, in addition to examining the essential sources of Celtic, Norse and

Teutonic legend have studied the Kalevala collection of Finnish mythology, the Mabinogion, the Bible. Tolkien himself examined and lectured on fairy stories. Randel Helms has studied *The Hobbit* from the Freudian point of view, provocative of nervous laughter rather than serious acceptance. Elizabeth Holland has related Middle-earth to Asia Minor and the Shire to *The Wind in the Willows*. Robert Giddings has allied Lothlorien to influences from James Hilton (*Lost Horizon*) and Rider Haggard (*Allan Quartermain*). One source of influence on Tolkien and all his work from *The Hobbit* to *The Silmarillion* remains unexamined and this is, of course, the influence in legend and history of the Great Western Railway.

It is an influence which is easy enough to trace although Tolkien did not often acknowledge it. The reasons for his failure to recognise readily this influence are easily susceptible of discovery; he would be unlikely to acknowledge that a non-literary, non-mythic or non-religio-philosophical factor could influence him as much as an academic course with which he would be consciously familiar. In his later years it seemed that he came to dislike the mechanical inventions and the scientific discoveries of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries for their capacity for destruction and

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communicate with others or keep a land under surveillance (the palantiri, the mirror of Galadriel), and into electronics and nuclear physics to invent 'jewel' containers which hold and transmit power and light (the silmarils, the phial of Galadriel) and security locks which open to a special key or a voice-pattern (Erebor, Moria). He felt the need to invent a new metallic element, mithril, which would be all that the civil and mechanical engineer could desire as well as all that a jeweller could want: light, malleable, non-rusting and 'harder than tempered steel'. Consciously he dismissed industrial technology as 'iron wheels [which] revolved . . . endlessly, and hammers [which] thudded', subconsciously it was part of him and he could not manage without it.

A young man brought up near Birmingham in the early twentieth century and later resident in Oxford could no more have escaped the actuality, myth, memory and history of the Great Western Railway than the Somme valley could have avoided being fought over in July 1916. Actual and legendary memory was still strong in both areas of the work and personalities involved in the building of 'God's Wonderful Railway'; Birmingham was the centre of a controversy in 1845 over whether to admit the Great Western's broad-gauge to the city, while Oxford had been reached by the seven-foot Great Western gauge in a connection from Didcot in 1844. Attempts to connect the two brought about the 'Gauge War' of 1845-46, in which the merits of the seven-foot GWR gauge were tested by practical demonstration, argument, discussion, physical threats and Acts of Parliament, against those of the 4 foot 8½ inch gauge in use elsewhere in the country - indeed overtones of this primal, stupendous row over how the railway system of this country was to be built may even have provided him with source material for the early, originating quarrels between Valar and differences between elves at the opening of *The Silmarillion*. The Gauge War resulted in a Great Western connection to Birmingham being achieved in 1848 after three years of noisy verbal war. The reverberations rumbled on into local legend well into Tolkien's time, taking with it the Great Western names, attitudes and traditions.

It was undoubtedly from the GWR that Tolkien derived his 'westward' thinking. The Great Western Railway easily transmutes into the 'Great West Road' through Middle-earth: Victorian engineers always referred to their metal permanent ways as 'roads'. Great Western's 'tween-wars slogan of 'Go Great Western' and advertisements for the Cornish Riviera Express and other far-western travelling trains to the idyllic retirement counties of Dorset, Devon and Cornwall served to encourage his views of a desirable and legendary far country in the west to

ecological harm, and would be unlikely easily to admit that they had ever held a fascination for him. He had come so much to prefer the idea of a green agrarian country through which a galloping horse provided the fastest transport which it was proper for a man to have and in which non-human powers - wizard's magic, elvish immortality and deep consciousness, entish influences over land and trees, and the spells and terrors of Sauron, the Nazgûl, the Balrog - replaced technology. For Tolkien, iron became the symbol of oppression (Morgoth's iron crown, the iron chains by the paths at Isengard), but if the metal on which and of which the nineteenth century railways were built had not bulked large in his mind he would not have mentioned it so frequently.

Yet he could not entirely suppress from his work references to technology in general and even railways in particular. The most obvious is a spectacularly anachronistic comparison which one would have expected authors or proof-readers to alter, his simile likening the effect of one of Gandalf's fireworks to 'an express train' (*FoTR* ch.1). With no hobbitish or elvish or even orcish railways to speed up transport in Middle-earth, this was a misplaced reference which can only be explained by subconscious stimulation from an old memory that the Great Western was the first railway company to run an express train service. Professor Tolkien ventures into the world of telecommunications to invent two-way television transmitters by which men could

which travellers could make their last journey.

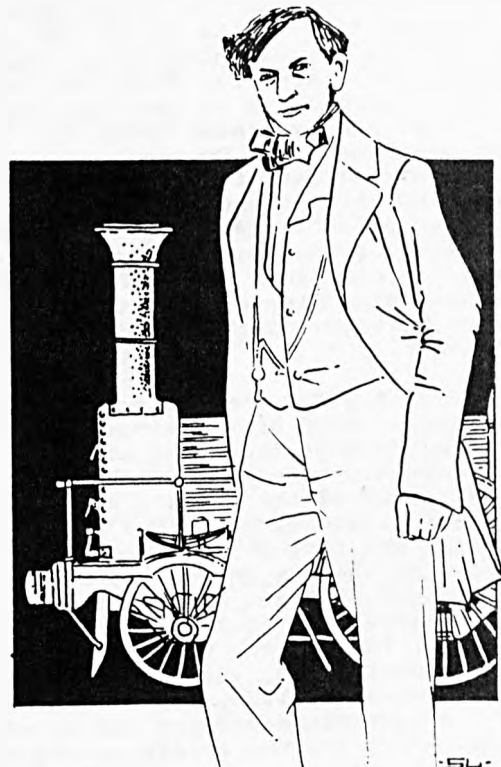
From the earliest days the Great Western itself had had this westward-seeking attitude, for even before the line from Paddington to Bristol had been completed the Great Western's engineer, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, was thinking in terms of extending it from Bristol to New York by a transatlantic steamship to be named 'Great Western' and to be run by the Great Western Steamship Company, plying from Bristol to New York. The ship made her first transatlantic crossing in 1837 in fifteen days, and six years later the company's most successful ship, the SS Great Britain, also designed by Brunel, was launched. The requirement that to reach his Avalon-equivalent Undying Lands it was necessary to cross sea as well as land was established in Tolkien's mind by this tradition, as was the westward urge which he felt but did not personally yield to, though he transmitted it to his elves and some of his other creations. Galadriel, Elrond and the Númenórean-descended men of Gondor look to the west constantly and dream of westward ship journeys to an ultimate home; the grey havens have their equivalent in Bristol, Plymouth and Liverpool.

There are few more Tolkienish-sounding names than that of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the Great Western's first engineer and impressive driving force, and he himself seems a Tolkien creation: hobbitish in appearance, wizardlike in creative powers, elvish in his love of music and language, and Tolkien would have seen him as orchish in his fascination with iron, machinery, speed and massive constructions. Tolkien borrowed Brunel's Norman-French Christian name for the unimportant seventh son of the Old Took, 'Isembard Took', making a significant one-letter change in the spelling as if to deny any influence from a distrustworthy engineer and also to dampen a little of the fire of the original name¹. 'Kingdom' is an idea and influence pervading all of Tolkien's work throughout; the existence of ancient kingdoms and the desire to re-establish them in their old glory prevails throughout *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Silmarillion* is full of the notion of kingship amongst Valar, elves and men. The name 'Brunel' has the sound of the word 'rune', the written method of communication which Tolkien gave to the free peoples of the world.

(1) I am grateful for a reminder from Mrs. Jessica Yates that 'Isembard' was originally chosen as the name for the Old Took. The change of name of this patriarchal character to 'Gerontius' is symbolic of Tolkien's wariness of showing his undoubted fascination with Great Western early history and its multicompetent genius, Brunel.

Brunel is a Fëanorian figure in that he gave himself entirely to his work, allowing it to dominate him entirely even to the point of his destruction and early death, but also Celebrimborian in that his created gifts to the world were good in themselves, like the elven rings.

The name of 'Isambard' has a greater significance in *The Lord of the Rings*, in that it stands for 'Isengard', that ring and tower made by 'the craft of men', once full of fruitful trees (Brunel loved trees and made plans for rowan-trees to be planted in profusion on an estate he hoped to buy) but later chained and pillared with iron and copper (symbolic of Brunel's domination of and by his engineering career), where thousands dwelt (the navvies who built the railways and other engineering works), bored and delved, with shafts driven deep, ground trembling, giant furnaces, smithies, iron wheels revolving, hammers thudding, with plumes of vapour steaming at night, lit from beneath. In this description of Isengard Tolkien has given as good a picture as one is likely to encounter of the work of building a Victorian railway with its cuttings and embankments, and especially the Box Tunnel, two miles long, which consumed a ton of gunpowder and a ton of candles a week and which cost the lives of 100 men before it was completed. When the tunnel was finished and found to be true throughout, Brunel's gift to the works foreman was, Tolkienishly enough, his signet ring taken from his own hand. Brunel also built towers



(Orthanc - the cunning mind) for suspension bridges (slung by heavy chains) and for the South Devon Atmospheric Railway, and he even wore his own symbolic tower, his famous top-hat, usually stuffed with plans and high in the crown for safety in an engineering yard, the Victorian equivalent of the safety helmet.

'Wootton Major', the village where 'Smith' lived and was befriended by the master-cook, had its ancestry in Wootton Bassett near the Box Tunnel, and the tunnel itself, not to mention the earlier Brunel tunnel under the Thames, may well have been the source for the dark stories of the cave under the Misty Mountains in which Bilbo is lost, the Pass of the Spider, and the Dwarrowdelf, the Mines of Moria. The section of the Great Western line built through the Vale of White Horse, past the White Horse of Uffington, gave Tolkien the originals for his Vale of Rohan and even for Asfaloth and Shadowfax. Paddington with its vast heroic Gothic-style roof-span of Brunel's own design, seen by Tolkien every time he travelled from Oxford to London and back by train, may have forefathered the halls of Theoden and Denethor, and the wooden-hammer-beamed roof of Bristol Temple Meads station has its Tolkien-child in the wooden-pillared hall of Beorn. And, of course, there is a long and ultimate railway journey in one of the stories - "Leaf by Niggle".

Varda, or Elbereth, the star-kindler, early found a place in Tolkien's legends and all his books are full of most honourable references to the stars, especially as seen through the elves. The Great Western Railway had its own reason to honour the stars, for their earliest successful locomotive in 1838 was 'North Star', designed by Daniel Gooch for Robert Stephenson and Co., and the first of a notable series of locomotives named after stars which Stephenson and his company supplied to GWR. Later classes of locomotives used by the Great Western after the broad-gauge had been destroyed had names which also exerted their influences on Tolkien: 'Cities', 'Castles' and 'Kings'.

The source for the title itself of the trilogy, 'Lord of the Rings' must have been the most famous of all the Great Western's nineteenth-century locomotives, 'Lord of the Isles', a 4-2-2 eight-foot single of beautiful and powerful design and fast uncluttered lines exhibited by the company at the Great Exhibition of 1851 and kept to the end of broad-gauge days to haul the directors' train. Tolkien may well have remembered the controversy which surrounded its breaking-up in 1906, may even have taken a steam-engine-devoted son to see its eight-foot driving wheels preserved at Swindon, and in early days might have

seen its image on Great Western uniform cap buttons. 'Lord of the Isles' was more than a locomotive, it was a symbol of power and almost a mystic fane, like a great ring.

'Lord of the Isles' was perhaps the finest locomotive to be designed by Daniel Gooch, the Great Western's first locomotive superintendent and later chairman of the line. This plain and official description gives no true image of the rare individual who was almost certainly the direct source for one of Tolkien's most mysterious, heroic, constant and influential characters, Círdan the Shipwright. Even the names relate - Gooch after the award of his baronetcy in 1866 was frequently known as 'Sir Dan'el' or 'Sir Dan', which with a loss of sibilliance falls easily into the Sindarin name 'Círdan', ship-maker.

Círdan the Shipwright, 'Mighty among the wise' is a character almost constantly in the background, building ships at the Grey Havens to serve the elves who sail away from Middle-earth to leave exile and return to the west, but his influence is felt throughout *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings* from first age to the beginning of the fourth. 'Sir Dan' was also a background character in that he disliked publicity, but he was equally possessed of great influence both in the Great Western Railway and beyond. A steam-locomotive genius, he was the GWR's locomotive superintendent and designer from the age of twenty, and he built the most powerful locomotives in the world at the time, and himself drove them faster than any man on earth had travelled until then, at speeds of 60 and 70 miles per hour. Of Círdan it was said 'Very tall he was . . . his eyes were keen as stars', and Sir Daniel was described as a 'lean, silent man with wide-set blue eyes'. Círdan resisted Féanor's revolt, was a friend of Elwë, aided Gandalf in the war against Sauron, and was a member of the White Council. Daniel Gooch also moved quietly in the company of the mighty, owning the manor in which Windsor Castle was a subsidiary holding, being acquainted with Queen Victoria and Prince Albert and a friend of the Prince of Wales and of Disraeli, a Masonic grand master, a magistrate and a member of Parliament.

Gooch was also a shipwright in that he was Brunel's deputy from 1856 as engineer to the Great Eastern, that vast steamship fifty years ahead of its time which Brunel designed and the building and launching of which killed him. In Victorian terms it was comparable with Vingilot, the great ship which Círdan built for Eärendil the Mariner. Gooch was involved with his beloved Great Iron Ship for the rest of his life, succeeding Brunel as engineer and later owning the

ship and sailing it for three historic cable-laying voyages to his own Undying Land, a bay in Newfoundland appropriately named Heart's Content Bay. Círdan wore an elven-ring, the red-stoned Narya the Great, the ring of fire, which he gave to Gandalf for the wizard to use in his resistance to Sauron's forces. Sir Daniel, as mystic and elvish as his Tolkien-counterpart, was also the wearer of a strange ring in which he had set a stone dredged from the Atlantic ocean bed two miles deep, a gift from Ulmo. Like Tolkien's elves, Daniel Gooch was a non-sleeper while working, apparently having a limitless capacity to stay awake, also a visionary of far-western countries which he saw in fogbanks and icebergs out in the far Atlantic, a dreamer of prophetic dreams and a person whose name was a contemporary byword for loyalty in friendship. His writ ran through every inch of Great Western mileage until he departed for the Halls of Mandos in 1889, and his memory would still be strong in the districts in which Tolkien lived the first part of his life. The Great Western's man and Victorian broad-gauge died out but the stories remained, to become legend and to be woven into Professor Tolkien's created Middle-earth a century later.

Author's note: This article in its original form appeared in *Spell 10*, published by the Society of the Ring, Folkestone, in April 1982. A good many readers then showed a gratifying amount of interest, and I was grateful for a kindly message of interest from Mr. Robert Giddings. A more speculative suggestion came from the well-known authority on early railways Professor Heinrich Bahnhofer, who pointed out that the engineer Richard Trevithick, who designed the first working rail locomotive, was without doubt the original behind the character Fëanor - Trevethick's nickname, the 'Cornish Giant', his far-western connections, his early enormous success, the failure of his journey to South America and his death in poor circumstances, forgotten while others continued his work, all indicate Fëanorian characteristics. I am less convinced, however, by the contention of Col. Railtie J. Ironhorse III of Richmond, Virginia, that George Stephenson must have been the basis for a petty-dwarf (see *Silmarillion*) because he aided mining by designing an effective miners' safety lamp.

ONDOMEIL

*Damask-mantled, moth-winged lover,
 Light as cobweb, soft as feather;
 White as swan-wing, stars above her,
 Evening-shadow, wild as weather,*

*Mist and moonlight round her finger,
 Silk and stardust, rosan-slender;
 Clear as crystal, twilight-singer,
 Summer-kissing, deep and tender.*

*Petalled night-star, silver-shining,
 Soft as mothlight, moon-glow-weaving,
 Lithe as lark-song, sorrows-twining,
 Hope-beloved, ever-grieving?*


 MICHAEL BURGESS

Lament for baldor the brave

An oath had he uttered, to all around,
In Meduseld new-made, mead-emboldened;
no tales of terror this tall one would credit:
'fit but for goodwives, no foes affright me!'

So Baldor the Brave, Brego's Heir of the Mark,
stood at red sundown, stern and alone,
in Dimholt darkling, at Dwimorberg's foot:
he'd vow'd to venture the vale of death.

As light the land fled he leapt on his way:
no faintheart this foebane, he felt his oath yet.
Tho' dreadfill'd darkness like deadweight was on him,
on witbreaking woodpaths his way him betook.

He paused at a pillar which pale there stood,
and darkness of doom on him dropped as a hawk;
but boldly he bent to battle on stubborn,
mindful of mocking if meek back he came.

Then glimpsed he the gate, gaping in blackness,
wide rent in the rock: this road he must take.
There grimoires were graven, gaunt in their fellness;
his heart was held frozen but hard he went on.

He stepped in to stand in a starless night,
in a tunnel of terror, his torch held high:
and the world without seemed well a dream -
only now to go onward, for naught else there was.

Then all slipped away. Alone he stood now.
Great spaces he glimpsed, then gone was last hope:
held his flame high and the hellsprites took it;
blind in blackness he - did his bloodrun chill?

Night shadow fell sharply, shaking his fellness,
and whispers so willful welled all around;
now phantoms him followed, fast round him they wove,
whose mind would not melt now? no man may know.

And sudden he saw them, spectres of Dwimorberg:
a pale host and pitiless so pallid in night -
haggard and hollow faced, half-shades unreal;
a grey host and grim, a-glinting their eyes.

A strangely fine spell, a sorc'ry attractive;
dreadfully drawn he was, drained of his sense.
Past him they paraded, pacing all finely,
and led him on after all lowly behind.

Fain would he follow these fearful spectres,
who in magery had meshed him malevolently:
but designed they death for him to die alone,
envy had eaten them in endless night.

Who knows how they left him - leave him they did;
to dark door they drew him, then drifted on through...
fleeting views false perchance to him they showed;
then dreadful work done departed their prey.

The sad lords all stern, the sleepless dead,
had caught him and captured him; calling him on
in magic full mighty, 'neath mountain grim.
Alas! he is lost then, to life, and the Mark.

Death slow at him dragged. In dark his soul fled,
till but bones and bright armour in blackness lay.
Long after his lord found him, alone and forlorn,
Baldor son of Brego; brave son of the Mark.

This poem first appeared in the *Orcish Bugle*, issue 3

GILL PAGE

MALLORN MAIL



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

welcome to Mallorn-Mail, Mallorn's new letters page. It is intended for letters and comments on Mallorn only (general questions etc. should be sent to Amon Hen). Just send your letters to "Mallorn Mail" at the editorial address (following the guidelines on p.2).

I kick off this time with a few encouraging words (for me, at least!) from Brin Dunsire:

Mallorn 20 was a splendid issue: contents, decoration and presentation excellent, save for my perennial beef about the "cont. p.94" phenomenon. I wonder if I am the only person who finds this so annoying? . . .

J.S. Ryan's articles are exactly the sort of thing Tolkien would have liked to see us printing, and to that extent (although we should not fill our magazines with them) I do not much care how inaccessible they may be to [some people] . . . to whom cognate is a sort of toothpaste . . . I take it that JSR's message (echoing JRRT perhaps) is that these archaic words are a pointer to how much OLD material is contained hidden (eg. in our place names) in language, and how looking really hard at any word will lead you down (or up) all sorts of ramifying paths. Do I remember Puck, though, being quoted (or alluded to) by JRRT as saying "What fools these mortals be!" . . .

Good for Kathleen Herbert in producing an appreciative and enthusiastic review of an uncompromising academic work . . . While our talented members can react like this we cannot be accused of having totally abandoned scholarship . . . That is really what Mallorn is for and in my view is doing well.

Thank you for printing "Quenta Findacillo" - hope you have had some response [not yet!-ed] . . . Incidentally it translates as 'hair-victor' . . . It may be no coincidence that the common name element "fin" (hair) echoes the Roman name (later title) Caesar, which I believe originally meant "hairy". Dynastic tradition y'see . . .

No, you're not the only one to dislike the 'cont. on' phenomena (others have said this too!) - it isn't always easy to fit everything in as I would like, but I seem to have managed it this issue! The more pages there are to play with, the easier it is to do (now, if we really did have 94 pages! . . .)

And now from Jessica Yates:

I believe that articles published in Mallorn should conform to proper standards of scholarship as pertaining elsewhere in academia. If a contributor believes his/her work is original, all well and good - though if he does not own a library of Tolkieniana, perhaps his article should be read by someone who does. However, Mallorn contributors should in general keep up with what has been published elsewhere, and

should acknowledge prior publication even of one's original thoughts.

Two articles in Mallorn 20 infringe these principles.

Nils Agøy's review of *Mr. Bliss* mentions several points which I had already made in my review of the book in *Amon Hen* 59 - the similarity of the bears' house to Beorn's hall; of Mr. Bliss to Bilbo; and the hobbitish names of the villagers. Of course Nils's article shows many more parallels. I am therefore grateful to you, Mallorn Editor, for telling me that Nils's review was submitted to Mallorn before mine was published in *Amon Hen*, and that Nils wrote to you pointing out the overlapping material, and that you forgot to footnote his article accordingly.

Incidentally, I disagree with Nils when he says that there is no hint of the *Silmarillion* etc. in *Mr. Bliss*. The couple Mr. Day and Mrs. Knight, though their gender is reversed from that in Middle-earth, could be a forerunner of the Sun and Moon.

The second article which could be said to draw on published material without acknowledgement, is Iwan Rhys Morus's article about Beren and Luthien. Morus writes: "More remarkable is Tolkien's frequent use of the 'encounter in the woods' motif throughout his other works" and he goes on to list several instances. He gives the impression that he is the first to state this in print, and that the list he gives is exhaustive. Neither is so. No doubt Morus, and myself and many other Tolkienists, felt our discovery to be unique, when we first realised the parallels between the first encounters of Beren and Lúthien, Arwen and Aragorn, Smith and the Queen of Faerie, and a later meeting of Aldarion and Erendis. (N.B. Aldarion is incorrectly spelt throughout Morus's article.)

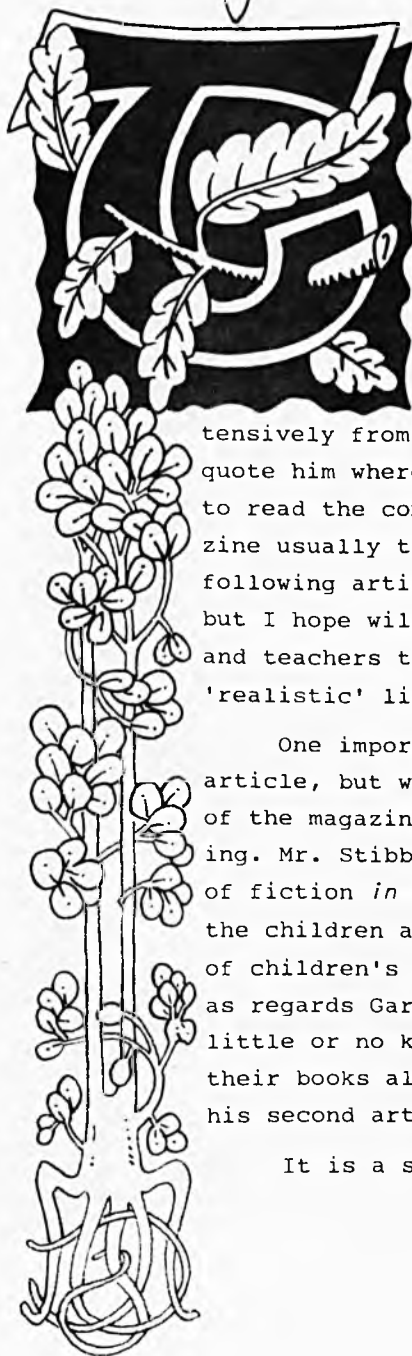
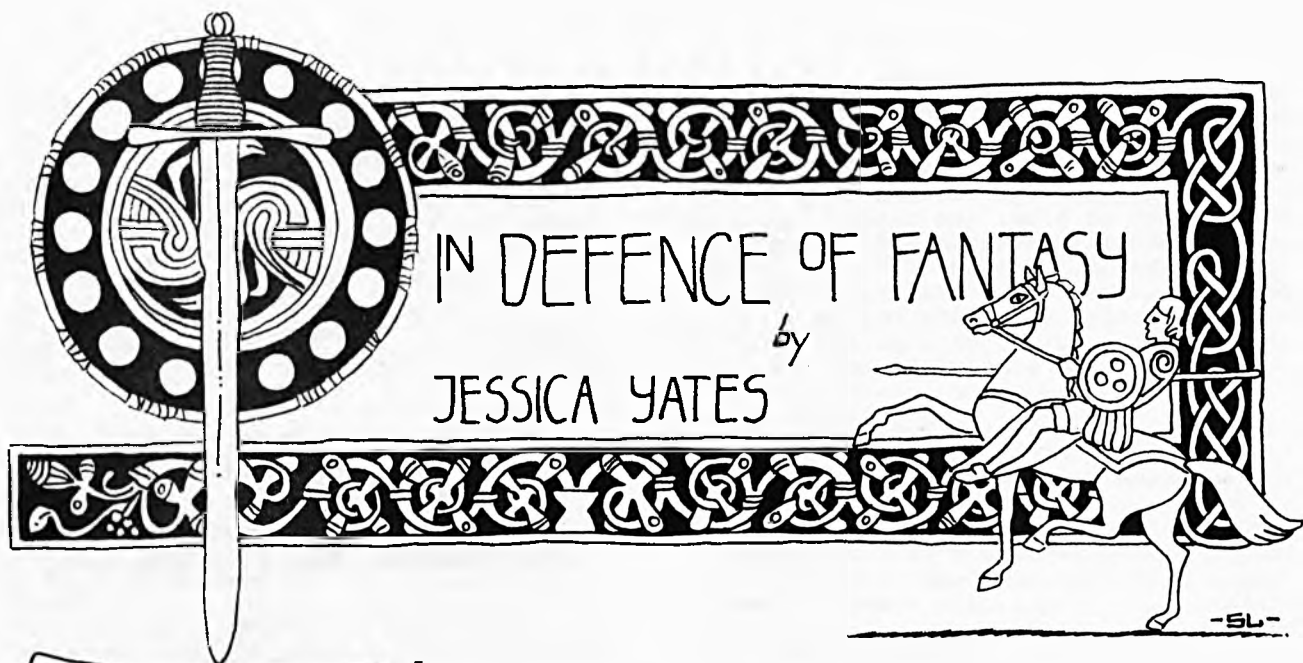
. . . Randel Helms [*Tolkien and the Silmarils*, 1981] [gives] five examples [which] are: Beren and Luthien, Arwen and Aragorn, Thingol and Melian, Smith and the Queen, and 'Shadow-bridge', Morus may be credited with a further example, Eöl and Aredhel, as well as Aldarion and Erendis. (And what about Turin and Nienor?)

But here I would now like to take the 'encounter in the woods' motif yet further, and suggest that both Helms and Morus have not exhausted its possibilities. Chapter 8 of Shippey's *Road to Middle-earth* . . . refers not only to Smith's pleasant encounter with the Queen of Faerie, but also to Tolkien's pessimistic poetry about men who encounter elf-women to their harm: "Aotrou and Itroun", and the poems in *Songs for the Philologists*. So the woodland encounter has to be extended yet further to take in situations where the man gets little joy, and even refuses to love the elf-woman.

[Jessica goes on to say that some of these ideas were presented by her for discussion at Oxonmoot 1982; and that she hopes to present a complete study to Mallorn in the future]

Thanks to Jessica for pointing out that some of this material has appeared elsewhere. However, I don't think it is fair at this point to put off 'amateur' writers from contributing by applying 'professional' standards too strictly (if one may use those terms). Mallorn is primarily by the members for the members. It is unfortunate that some things slip through unnoticed but I am sure these are never intentional. I take note of your comments, however, and will try to ensure due acknowledgement of material published elsewhere (albeit unknowingly) in future. And, of course, I look forward to receiving your article!

Unfortunately this is all the room I have this time: thanks to all who have written, especially Gill Page, Chris Berendt and Adrian Walker. This is the best (indeed the only) way to make your views known, and to keep me in touch. So, keep writing!



his is a REVISED AND expanded version of a long letter of mine which was published in response to an article entitled "For Realism in Children's Fiction", by Andrew Stubbs, a lecturer in Education at Leeds University. His article appeared in *Use of English*, Autumn 1980, my response was published in the summer 1981 issue, and a further riposte from Mr. Stubbs appeared in the Autumn 1981 issue.

Since Mr. Stubbs has revised and clarified his original statements, particularly rejecting the implication that he was attacking fantasy as a genre, I am not going to quote extensively from his article with a view to further criticism. However, I shall quote him where necessary before putting my own point of view. Those wishing to read the complete correspondence should refer to *Use of English*, a magazine usually taken by university libraries and education departments. The following article is not specifically a refutation of Mr. Stubbs's opinions, but I hope will provide ammunition for Tolkien Society members whose parents and teachers tease or even bully them for reading fantasy as opposed to 'realistic' literature - or even for reading anything at all.

One important point which was not made clear in Mr. Stubbs's first article, but which could have been inferred from the context, and the title of the magazine *The Use of English*, contributed to our mutual misunderstanding. Mr. Stubbs was speaking primarily, though not exclusively, of the study of fiction *in the classroom*, and of the teacher's choice of books to read to the children and to set for study. He was *not* speaking as a would-be censor of children's private reading. However, the tone of his remarks, especially as regards Garner and Tolkien, might well have persuaded teachers with little or no knowledge of their writings to discourage children from reading their books altogether. Hence my indignation, which Mr. Stubbs assuaged in his second article.

It is a sad but necessary fact of life that it is insufficient to

justify the reading of fiction (not just fantasy) with the reason that it is a pleasurable activity. Teachers must find concrete reasons to explain to headmasters and parents that reading for fun is not a waste of time, and deserves a place on the school time-table. To do him justice, Mr. Stibbs makes a brave, if pompous, attempt at providing the defenders of fiction with such reasons. Fiction is of value, both in one's personal, and one's social and even political life.

"I ascribe a moral value to exercising of the imagination through reading and teaching literature . . . attending to particular complex and sometimes uncomfortable realities . . . is a guard against those immoral acts . . . which spring from apprehensions of reality contaminated by the self - acts of laziness, self-deception, vanity, or self-pity . . . It is for celebrating and teaching such attentive realism that we so value the novel."

So good novels, such as Jane Austen's, may help us improve ourselves by demonstrating faults of personality which we may then discreetly try to correct.

Fiction also makes us aware of political and social problems, which, again, we might strive to eradicate in real life. Prime examples of these might be *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and 1984. Of this second aim of fiction, Stibbs says: "The imaginativeness which English teachers *should* educate rejects the untrue and the impossible . . . and should help pupils to avoid commercial and political exploitation and corruption." However, Stibbs thinks that reading some supernatural fiction could blind children to real evil. "Supernatural-mongers . . . are teaching pupils to live in a dream world and to see themselves as powerless . . . I want to teach children that we cannot escape by flying and that we must not treat evil as supernatural."

Stibbs is also concerned that some fantasy fiction fails to arouse the reader's imagination and sympathy for other people's problems. "The subjects of such imaginativeness are possible worlds, not fairy lands; human feelings, not inhuman feelings; and events consistent with the evidence of our senses, not flying in the face of it."

In the rest of this article I expand my original letter in order to provide examples of fantasy fiction which fulfil Mr. Stibbs's criteria for good fiction i.e. either shedding light on aspects of human personality, or on political and social problems. In the first category I concentrate on the children's fantasies of Ursula le Guin and Diana Wynne Jones, and in the second,

Lord of the Rings, which came in for particular criticism from Mr. Stibbs. Although I shall be quoting from this criticism later, I should here quote from his second letter, to show that I am not continuing to attack him in print, and that he conceded that my examples were well chosen.

"I was not . . . attacking fantasy as a genre . . . like Ms Yates I admire the Earthsea trilogy - and admire it for its realism."



Fantasy is a diverse literature: it can be an epic of war, such as *The Lord of the Rings*; allegory like Dante's *Inferno*; a mixture of science fiction and politics like Ursula Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*; or a family story like Nesbit's *Five Children and It*. All the stories have in common the impossibility of their events occurring in 'everyday' life.

Mr. Stibbs does not mention these works, to do him justice, he attacks English teaching about "ghosts, ghost stories, spells . . . a termly theme on 'The Supernatural'". Like him, I deplore the exploitation of children's fascination with witchcraft and the occult simply to keep them interested in schoolwork. In common with Mr. Stibbs, I dislike second-rate supernatural thrillers. But there are good fantasy alternatives to sensational ghost stories. On the one hand, myth, legend, folk-tale, the heritage of the Celtic, Norse, Greek, Egyptian, Indian and African races, all in excellent modern editions. On the other hand, there *are* children's fantasies just as good, as human, as realistic, as thought-provoking and well-written as *Carrie's War* which Stibbs so much admires. In such as these, children are not "taught to live in a dream world and see themselves as powerless". On the contrary, the young heroes and heroines *do* think of others, *do* exercise power, and *do* win through.

Let me suggest that for some children - and every child is unique - the approach made by realistic fiction is often too near the bone. Children and adults with domestic problems may find the necessary solace and strengthening of their personality in metaphorical treatments which fantasies provide. Stibbs is not alone in rejecting Alan Garner's earliest books, which Garner himself now despises, but Garner has corresponded with many teenagers and adults whom *The Owl Service* has 'helped' (if we

must see the novel as a kind of medicine!). Stibbs's casual reference to "the fairy worlds, replayed myths or red shifts of his earlier novels" makes me wonder if he has even read *Red Shift*, one of the great adolescent novels of our time, a powerful story of teenage sexual awakening, which deserves considerable attention from anyone claiming to be a literary critic. However, *Red Shift* is not a children's book and neither is *The Lord of the Rings* - one wonders what place a critique of either of them should have in an article about 'Children's Fiction'.

One should not dismiss the genre of children's fantasy without considering the very best, such as the work of Joan Aiken, Ursula Le Guin, and Diana Wynne Jones, and the combination of science fiction and fantasy in Peter Dickinson's "Changes" trilogy and Rosemary Harris's *Quest for Orion* sequence. Mr. Stibbs's criteria for good children's books, "The best books are realistically subtle, detailed and quirky" must surely include the work of the above authors.

Le Guin's 'Earthsea' trilogy, despite being set in a world of magicians and dragons, does illustrate "human feelings, not inhuman feelings". *A Wizard of Earthsea* may be read as a lesson against pride; and shows how our worst enemy may lie in ourselves, but that we can conquer our flaws. As a parable of growing up, it certainly does not teach young people to "see themselves as powerless". *The Tombs of Atuan*, which deals with religious mania and intolerance, illustrates kinds of evil that we find in the real world. *The Farthest Shore* is about Life and Death. All three "Earthsea" fantasies are studies of young people growing up, making decisions, "attending to particular complex . . . realities".

Diana Wynne Jones represents the domestic side of the fantasy genre, as opposed to the epic tradition of Tolkien which Le Guin follows. She employs the Nesbit tradition of fantasy as a metaphor for family tensions: as children learn to control their magic powers, they solve their personal problems too. Her stories are based on universal themes which children have always enjoyed and needed: the Quest, for instance, and the Ugly Duckling syndrome. We may find "attentive realism" in *The Ogre Downstairs*, in which five step-siblings learn to live together, and a commentary on racial intolerance in *Power of Three*, in which a seemingly perpetual war to the death between two races is ended by the heroic efforts of three groups of children who ought to have been mortal enemies. In several books, including *Dogsbody*, *Charmed Life* and *Eight Days of Luke*, she describes the difficult lives of orphans living with their relatives. Space forbids

a further discussion, but I do recommend you to read *Drowned Ammet* and *The Spellcoats*, which are her best in my opinion.

This utilitarian analysis of my favourite children's fantasies is frustrating! I would far write about the beauty of the writer's style, the excitement and originality of the story, the feeling of private communication between teller and listener. I would like to quote from a colleague of mine within ILEA, Gillian Klein, who says:

"The idea is becoming increasingly accepted that children's books should be relevant to, and should even reflect, their readers. To think that books must therefore be just like life is to misinterpret this philosophy sadly. The world doesn't always afford excitement to children and it would be a dull library that didn't extend horizons beyond the probable to the possible, and then to the impossible. For their joy alone fantasies are invaluable; there is also research which shows that fantasy often provides children with an avenue by which to approach particularly prickly realities." (ILEA Contact, 14 September 1979).

Such a piece of research was reported in the *Library Association Record* for October 1980, and in the editorial of *Books for Keeps* 5, November 1980. Evidence from Germany suggested that "Children who are told fairy tales are more intelligent, calmer, mentally more balanced, and more open-minded than those who are not."



I also found some pertinent comments in *Screen Violence and Film Censorship* by Stephen Brody (HMSO 1977) in which he tackled the question of whether what we read, and particularly what we view, can influence our actions in real life:

"A theory about the importance of fantasy and day-dreaming for personality formation has been developed by the psychologist J.L. Singer . . . Day-dreaming is seen as an adaptive mechanism, a dimension of human skill and competence . . . Another function of the imagination is to stand as a protection between states of arousal and the need to engage in impulsive and potentially damaging behaviour by making possible delays in, and deferment of, gratification. Individuals lacking imaginative resources are thus much more likely to express aggressive and other feelings in overt and immediate action rather than

by fantasy gratification or by transferring aggression through imaginative reconstruction into other channels . . . imaginative individuals appear to possess greater self-awareness of their own limitations and emotional difficulties and are consequently more able to deal with them, although they may suffer more worry and anxiety as a price for this advantage." (p.64).

This does not surprise me. As a school librarian I have often noted that enthusiastic readers of Tolkien and science fiction turn out to be, as likely as not, more mature, sensitive to other people's feelings, gifted, resentful of stereotyped labelling, active against injustice, politically aware and keen to serve the community, as well as receptive to various genres of literature. Readers who choose to read 'realistic' books, on the other hand, often refuse to read any other kind. But we may see by the space fantasy films which have become the craze, and the Tolkien cult before that, that if the mythic element is missing from one's literary diet they will instinctively seek for it elsewhere, whether in the cinema, in radio and television soap operas where they treat the characters like J.R. and The Archers as real people, or in the world of pop music.



Before I come to Tolkien I want to remind you of the two functions of fiction - in one's personal and political lives. This distinction is brought out in an essay on Science Fiction by Robert Conquest, printed in his anthology *The Abomination of Moab* (Temple Smith, 1979). "Western literature, as it has been in the last two hundred years or so, is a very special and eccentric sort of thing compared with any other. What distinguishes it is the extraordinary, dominating position of the novel of character. Literary taste has therefore involved acceptance of the conventions implicit in this . . .

There have always been two sorts of imagination in literature. One has been fascinated by the variations of human feelings and actions . . . the other is inclined to take the human behaviour largely for granted and to be interested more in environmental changes . . . There is now this inclination to hold that the *psychological* interest is somehow higher and more important than the other . . . this is a self-perpetuating process. Introspective literature attracts introspective critics who create introspective canons and anathematize what does not

appeal to them."

Mr. Conquest continues in praise of science fiction, but what he says might equally be applied to *Lord of the Rings*, and its reception by conventional critics. It is not a novel of character, although it contains human feelings and conflicts; it is primarily a political work about human aggression and how to cope with it, when manifested in war.

And now I come to Tolkien, and here I must quote Mr. Stibbs. "Both the unrealism of the impossible (the unrealism of the undisciplined imagination) and the unrealism of the collective (the unrealism of the inattentive imagination) characterise Tolkien's (sic) pseudo-sagas."

Although *The Lord of the Rings* is an imitation, or pastiche, of Norse sagas, it is a much better pastiche than William Morris managed. Many 20th century writers employ pastiche, for example James Joyce and John Barth. Far from insulting Tolkien for reviving a style of the past, I want to praise him for connecting the long-severed strands of English literature, since *Beowulf* and the alliterative romance were lost to literary tradition. In the epic tradition, most great epics imitate a fore-runner: a chain leads back from Keats' *Hyperion* to Milton, Dante, Virgil and Homer. Tolkien looks back to the Norse sagas and *Beowulf*, and to our youth, deprived of their roots by timid teaching which avoids the classic works of literature and music for fear of being labelled "imperialist" and "elitist" - to our youth, Tolkien may be the only "roots"-type experience they receive in their adolescence. If we all have a right to our roots in this multi-ethnic society, Tolkien provides a modern synthesis of Celtic mythology, the Arthurian legend, the Norse sagas, and Old English culture, plus in the person of the hobbits, a view of the English peasantry.

In criticising modern children's fantasy, Stibbs claimed that it was irresponsible and unrealistic to invite children to "engage with characters who . . . fight supernatural (and frightening) Dark Forces and Wild Magics caused by no human responsibility? . . . Contemporary pseudo-myths are fundamentally trivial and unreal where their prototypes were fundamentally serious and realistic." (He must be getting at Susan Cooper - who does deserve some criticism, I think.)

I do not think that this is fair criticism of *The Lord of the Rings* (again, one must remember that it was not written for children). The Dark Lord is a metaphor of evil which can be present within us all, and we can all

become petty Saurons. But in his epic Tolkien describes a completely realistic situation when lust for world domination overtakes a country's ruler. Although we may not call such people totally evil, because they are human beings, by their deeds shall we know them, and our duty is to end their tyranny. Maybe we protest; occasionally we go to war.

The situation of a conscienceless warlord determined to conquer as far as possible is no fantasy - it has occurred all through human history. Advances in 20th century technology only make their powers more frightening. The question of whether evil is supernaturally caused or not is irrelevant when the scientifically invented weapons possessed by both super-powers might just as well be magic for all we can do individually to destroy them. In the present international situation Frodo had a better chance with the Ring than we do with the Bomb and the rest of the military apparatus which threatens the hobbits of this world. Sauron is indeed a character from real life. However, we must not make the mistake of identifying him with any one political leader today, or deceive ourselves by thinking that a Sauron could never arise to lead our own country. Similarly, Sauron's soldiers, the orcs, are symbolic of any enemy soldier, policeman or anyone who uses military or uniformed authority unjustly to massacre or torture civilians. When states are at war, Tolkien does not endorse the solution of battlefield conflict, where the unjust side might win by force of numbers, but somehow to neutralise the warlord or ideology which keeps the aggressive war going. The destruction of Sauron meant the disappearance of orcs as a fighting force. Remember that in his Letters Tolkien clearly stated that in the real world there were no orcs - nobody could be so totally evil.



Returning to Mr. Stibbs's criticism of *Lord of the Rings*, I note that he has not concentrated on Sauron and the orcs after all, but on Saruman's 'ruffians', where, failing to attend to the context of the passage, he calls Tolkien's attitude to them as shown by Merry and Pippin, "unrealistically snobbish, narrow-minded, and aggressive". He quotes the passage in "The Scouring of the Shire", from "The ruffians had clubs in their hands" to "The sword glinted in the westering sun" and comments:

"The reader who has got so far in the trilogy has read nearly three volumes written from the hobbits' point of view,

and may find it easy to forget that it is they who are the 'bullies' . . . For are they not bullying the 'ruffians' with their superior weapons and insults and their Royalist authority? . . . To write *The Lord of the Rings* from the anti-hobbit point of view might be a morally commendable exercise of the imagination."

I pointed out in my reply that he had ignored the context of the quotation. The four hobbits had, after all, been fighting for freedom elsewhere, and on their return they found their homeland invaded by an alien force of gangsterism. Food was collected and taken off to storage and export, nobody was allowed to move far without permission, and anyone who protested was imprisoned on a starvation diet. In short, a totalitarian regime: a police state, without any legal Power to legitimise it. Now, if we look back at what Mr. Stibbs claims is one purpose of fiction, it is to be "armed and educated . . . to avoid commercial and political exploitation and corruption". The lessons learned by the hobbits, therefore, are exactly those which Stibbs wanted fiction to teach! Perhaps they are better taught and learned in the powerful metaphoric setting of epic fantasy, or science fiction, than in the novel of character which concentrates on personality development!

There is a certain schizophrenia of the intellectual establishment in this country. They applaud freedom fighting in colonies of the Third World, but are more ready to attack their own country's legal framework than to consider what freedom fighting might mean in defending themselves. I am not accusing Mr. Stibbs particularly, but must point out that he dislikes 'Royalist' authority. It seems to be a cliché of left-wing children's book criticism that any novel about kingship brings automatic disapproval because good socialists are assumed to be good republicans too, and nobody takes the historical context into account. Certainly you cannot accuse Tolkien of claiming that hereditary kings or queens must be good rulers - see the Appendices. In Middle-earth there are good kings and bad, and Aragorn wins to the throne as much by proving his worth as by hereditary claim.

The left-wing critic Bob Dixon exemplifies this kind of approach. In "Catching them Young", volume 2, *Political Ideas in Children's Fiction*, he utters the following, about the epic fantasies of Tolkien, Lewis, Le Guin etc.:

"Another very striking feature of this group and one which links it strongly to the religious tradition of the past is class antagonism and manipulation . . . this feature appears as a sense of hierarchy. This is especially noticeable in Tolkien and Lewis and reference to 'blood', 'race' and 'stock' take us, especially in

Lewis, to the fringes of racism. In several of the writers there's a strong sense of elitism . . . and in Lewis there's great and constant stress on royalty". (p. 147).

"evil . . . is not seen as originating in social relationships and conditions. Therefore, these are not seen in need of any change . . . The effect of this kind of literature . . . is to divert people from the here and now and persuade them that it's not possible to do anything about the problems of this world . . . *Lord of the Rings* isn't an allegory but of course it does have a meaning . . . It says a lot of things about power and hierarchy - aristocratic notions are very much in the forefront and there's a great love of ceremony." (p.149).

However, Tolkien is not so easy to pigeonhole as that. You can argue that *Lord of the Rings* is a book about "the problems of this world" and that hobbit society at least is not hierarchical. 'Royalist' authority does not equal authoritarianism, but simply a system of law and order designed to protect the weak against the strong. It is legally necessary for the hobbits to invoke the King's power, as this gives them the legal authority to rouse the rest of the hobbits and drive out the ruffians. The evil described in "The Scouring of the Shire" is typical of crime in Britain today: muggers, kidnappers, gangsters, murderers, protection rackets - all appear in our daily newspapers, and children need to be aware of the dangers.

Mr. Stibbs, in his second article, writes that he took exception to the language of the quoted passage rather than its ethics, and says: "Ms Yates is right to put the passage in its narrative context, and I do not dispute that the story has a different suggestiveness from the one I pick out from the language . . . And maybe my prejudice against the 'snobbery' and 'aggression' I said I found in Tolkien has blinded me to the effectiveness of his presentation of 'The higher creativity of Good'.

That last phrase was quoted from my reply, and this is how I ended my defence of modern fantasy. There are different kinds of evil abroad in the world, and sometimes, as with the gas chambers and mass murderers, we are faced with metaphysical evil costing millions of lives which we must oppose with all our might. At other times there is wrong on both sides: then, we should not over-react but negotiate, admit our faults and strive to avoid violence. Tolkien did not see the only solution as lying in all-out battles: his Good forces would have lost if that were so. His solution lay in the higher creativity of Good to devise a way of winning without using evil weapons. In his Foreword to the second edition of

The Lord of the Rings he suggests that a correlative to the present world situation would be a corrupt West facing Saruman, both possessing Rings of Power. If we don't use the higher creativity of Good, the prospect will be a bleak answer to Frodo's question: "Shall there be two cities of Minas Morgul, grinning at each other across a dead land filled with rotteness?"

There are still evils loose in the world, in West and East, often hidden by effective propaganda, and people are deaf to what is going on, just as once they refused to believe in the gas chambers. But literary works which can inspire their readers to fight political evils may be found in many genres of literature. I would urge readers not to dismiss, but to look again at the best in children's and adult's fantasy.

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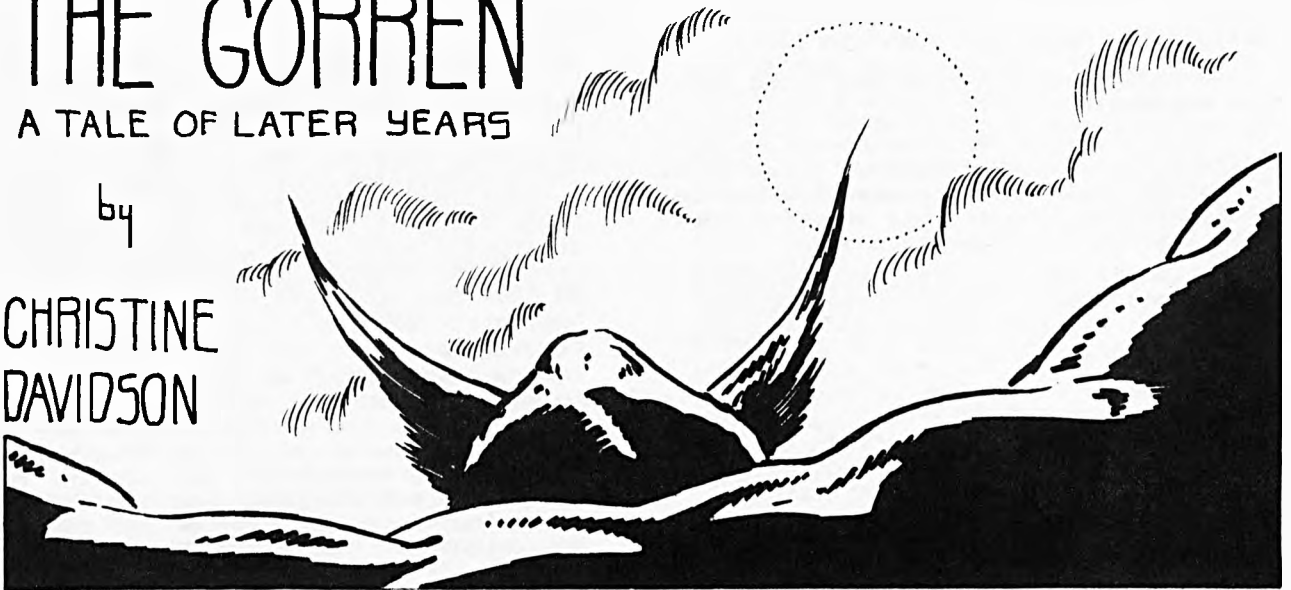
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THE GORREN

A TALE OF LATER YEARS

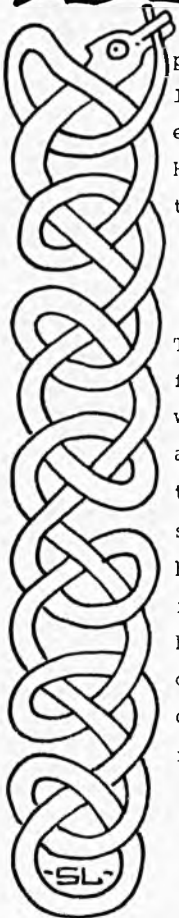
by

CHRISTINE
DAVIDSON



Long after THE PASSING OF Middle-earth, evil still walked in the world. In the annals of the Kingdom of Logris (where later the Lord we know as Arthur rid the land of all such terrors) it is told how herdsmen of the Eastern dales were troubled by a fell creature, against which they had no remedy. But at the house of the old herder Kenfig were met three travellers, whose separate paths by chance, or perhaps by fate, had led them there. One was Garvan, Prince of Balgonar, cousin and ally to the royal house of Logris; the second Zar Ironsmith, a dwarf from the northern mines; and last but not least, Holtworth of Bardina, a yeoman that despite his rustic background had won renown as a knight. These three agreed to lead an expedition to seek out and destroy the beast that ravaged the herders' flocks; and Garvan, whose sword-arm had previously been wounded, asked Holtworth to command in the field, since his former exploits had earned him the rank of Captain.

Before dawn the company assembled in the space before the stockade gate. There were ten of Garvan's men with their horses, booted and spurred, youthful warriors but well armed and grim. They had looked Holt over curiously when Garvan had declared he was to lead them, but his name was known to them and they seemed willing to accept his command. The rest comprised some seventeen of the hill-folk, Kenfig's neighbours, weaponed only with bows and short hunting knives but all, from the ruddiest youth to the whitest elder, hardy and wiry, accustomed to hardship, and determined to sell their lives, if need be, in defence of their own. Old Kenfig went among them with handclasps and gruff words, thanks and good wishes for their enterprise. His daughter Linnuis followed him with a journey-cup of hot ale-punch. Lastly, to one side stood the dwarf Zar, his silver beard knotted and tied up to keep it from harm, mail on his back and an iron casque on his head, leaning on a



mattock too heavy for a man to lift.

Kenfig came to Garvan and spoke to him earnestly.

"Take blinkers for your horses, and scarves for your own mouths," he advised. "I cannot tell what this creature may be, basilisk, lamia, gorren or boa; but certain its venom will be deadly."

Linnuis held out the journey-cup to Zar. "Good speed to you, Master Dwarf, and a safe return," she said. "Will you have to drink?"

"Ay, maid, in thanks for your good wishes," Zar answered. "But I care not what charm you have laid within the cup. A dwarf may trust more in stout mail and his own right arm than in any maid's magic."

"There is no magic," Linnuis said gently. "It is but good punch, with a good word set on it. Drink." Zar took the cup in both hands, drank ceremoniously, and handed it back with a stiff bow. Linnuis received it with equal courtesy, and proffered it next to Holt. He thanked her and took a draught of the hot brew, welcome in the raw morning. He gave back the heavy cup, and she brought it to Garvan. "You are the last, my lord," she said. "Will you drain the cup? It is said to bring good luck."

"It is not I, but rather these others, that need good luck," Garvan said. "With this arm, my part must be small."

"Yet your fortune is the fortune of all, my lord," Linnuis said. Garvan reached out his uninjured hand, and grasping one handle of the great cup lifted it without effort and drained it to the last drop.

"Strong must be your sword-arm, lord, when it is whole," Kenfig said. "But Captain Holtworth's arm is also strong, and these others. Good speed to you all, Masters, and success to your enterprise. We will await you." The company began to file out of the gate, the cavalry first, led by Holt, followed by the herders, commanded by Garvan, on foot. Donath and Penarc, Kenfig's sons, brought up the rear. Kenfig and Linnuis stood by the gate and watched, until the cavalcade passed behind a boulder and was lost to view.

By noon they had come to the place of the beast's last slaughter, and picked up the trail. By evening they were among frowning mountain-walls, but how far from the beast's lair they could not tell. They made camp in the open so as not to be taken by surprise, but those that watched saw nothing. At first light they moved on, penetrating ever higher and deeper among the bleak and winding dales, over which it seemed a shadow lay; a shadow now at last dispersed, perhaps.

Soon they came near. Great sloughs

of the beast's slime and filth lay all about, and the stench was such that already some of the younger herders were pale and shaking. Of them all, only Zar appeared unmoved. They halted behind a jutting buttress of rock, while two of Garvan's men went onward, on foot, following the putrid furrow that led to the creature's den. After a few words with Garvan and Penarc, Holt followed them. As they came in sight of the place, a huge black worm-hole opening among the crags, one of the men turned sick and faint, unable to go on. Holt ordered him to make his way back as he could, and pressed on with the other. Soon they were going more on all fours than walking, not entirely because of the terrain. They came to the entrance and remained there some minutes, but did not enter. Then Holt signed to his companion and they returned. The way seemed long, and both were staggering as with weariness when they gained shelter once more beneath the buttress.



Garvan was seated on a stone, with the rest of the company lying or sitting about him. Several were by the young knight of Balgonar who was forced to turn back, now sitting with his head between his knees. Holt's other companion saluted, then sank thankfully to the ground at Garvan's signal. Holt remained standing, but he wiped the sweat from his brow and moistened his lips before he spoke.

"We believe the creature is within, sir, and probably asleep," he reported.

"So we might take it sleeping," Garvan said. "But you have been close. What do you recommend?"

"Not to go in, sir," Holt replied. "The creature lies deep. In the dark, not knowing even what like it is, our disadvantage would be grave. That is, even if any of us could come to it. I would not care to answer for myself in that place."

"We must force it into the open," Garvan said. "Penarc?"

"Old Hamar here, sir, has smoked out as many foxes as I have shorn sheep," Penarc said.

"Then Hamar shall direct us," Garvan decided. "Let us make haste, to draw the beast out in daylight."

They gathered grass, brushwood and green fronds of bracken, placing them in two great piles to the windward side of the cavern, according to Hamar's instructions. The old man could bear the place better than most, after a lifetime breath-

ing his noisome smoke, but many were overcome, some unable to carry even one load to the cave-mouth. These Garvan sent on Hamar's advice to search for other exits, but all returned within the hour having found nothing within half a league. So all was done at the one entrance. "We shall trust the beast will find no other way of escape," Garvan said to Holt. "If it does, I daresay we shall know of it before long."

Soon all was ready. They kept the horses behind the rock-buttrass, blinkered and tethered fast. It was already plain they would be no use in the combat, for the stench had set them shivering with fear. Holt would have trusted Dapplegrim, but decided not to mount alone. The horses might prove useful later, to pursue the beast if it showed speed in flight.

They took up their positions under Garvan's direction. Those that could bear it were stationed near the cavern; the rest, further down the valley beside the beast's path. All had wound scarves about nose and mouth, save the dwarf, who scorned such protection, saying it would be shame for one of the Rockfolk to falter at a bad smell. Holt hoped he would not have cause to regret his decision later. When all were in their places, Hamar kindled his fires. At first they burned with a clear flame and little smoke, but once the green bracken was added began to produce choking fumes. Blown by the wind and fanned by Hamar's cloak, these began to penetrate the tunnel to the beast's lair.

For some time nothing happened. The smoke billowed up and was swallowed in silence by the black hole. Then the stones began to shake at a distant sound. The noise grew, until the crags trembled, rocks began to tumble and bushes shivered like aspens. Several of the men threw themselves on their faces and covered their ears. Suddenly the cave-mouth was no longer black, but filled with hideous light. With a trumpeting scream that emitted a cloud of venom, the beast came. It poured from its hole like some huge obscene slug, greenish-black above like mouldered walls of a decaying house, toadstool-pale beneath. It had no legs, but moved on its belly like a snake. Its mouth opened wide to show the cruel grinding plates and glutinous black tongue ready to grasp its prey; its eyes were furled upon the jointed horns. As it emerged the horns began to lengthen.

"It is a Gorren!" Donath shouted. "Now Oron preserve us! Beware its eyes!" The men scattered, all but three who remained in its path, transfixed with horror perhaps, or overcome by its vile breath. Lightning rent the air as the Gorren unsheathed its eyes. Brilliance unbearable glared upon the rocks, and even those that fled stumbled. The three who

stood near fell blasted to the ground. The Gorren gave a hissing roar, as though a serpent might have acquired the voice of a lion, but did not pause to seize any of the fallen. It sought not prey, but vengeance to exterminate these small vermin that had dared pollute its rest. There would be time for feasting when all were slain. It ploughed on, crushing the body of one man that lay in its path, pursuing those that fled, covering their eyes, in among the crevices of the rocks.

Holt, stationed further down the valley, signalled to his men to remain in cover until the beast had passed. Then he led them out to assault its flanks. Garvan, seeing what he was about, heaved a sigh of relief, and betook himself to the wounded. Shortly, those that had fled found their way back. A few that were hurt or shocked past recovery he kept with him; the rest he sent after Holt, now pacing the beast as it raged down the valley. Of the three men who had fallen, one was dead, crushed under the Gorren's onslaught; the others were past hope, the skin burned off their faces, and both were blind.



Something over an hour later, Holt took stock of the situation. They still pursued the same tactics, harrying the Gorren on all sides but the front; each group in turn retreating as the beast made towards it. Yet they had made no apparent impression, while their own numbers were considerably lessened. The Gorren's hide was smooth and slippery. Neither sword nor arrow could penetrate it, even Gulcris skidding harmlessly off the creature's exuding slime. Several times now they had tried for the mouthparts, which seemed the only vulnerable place, one party trying to draw the beast's attention while the other slipped in beneath. But the Gorren's eyes could move independently, and its venom burned like fire. The last attempt had cost them dear: three men blinded and two killed. Holt gave a bitter sigh at the recollection, and tried to think what was to be done. They were nearing the foot of the narrow valley, where at least they could contain the Gorren and prevent it from turning. Once it gained the open it would easily escape, or, more likely, pursue them each one until all were slain. Then no herdsman's cot would be safe. It was a grim prospect.

Holt called to Penarc, and voiced his thoughts to the cool-headed herder. Penarc agreed with his assessment but had

no fresh ideas to offer. Zar saw their anxious frowns, and came over.

"It is time, methinks, for one to attempt the Gorren's eyes," he said, leaning on his mattock and thrusting out his underlip.

"That would be certain death," Penarc protested.

"To face death is sometimes necessity," Zar said.

"I don't dispute that," Holt said slowly. "But such an attempt would be futile. A man would be blinded before he came within striking distance."

"A Man, yes," Zar said. "But a Dwarf's eyes are strong. In my forge I can bear the blue fire of fusing metal, whose secret only we know, and I wear no mask. I will go."

"That is a noble offer," Penarc said.

"Maybe," Zar grunted. "What says the Captain?" He looked keenly at Holt, who stood silent, wishing the choice were not his. But Garvan was more than a mile away up the valley.

"You know why I hesitate, Zar son of Zerín," he said. "The death of your kinsman is already laid at my door."

"Not by me," Zar said. "He chose freely; as do I. Give the word, Captain, and I will go."

"Go then, with all our thanks," Holt said. "We will be close at your back."

Zar stumped off to a vantage-point among the rocks. Holt called to him the men on his side of the valley, and sent Penarc to work his way round to those on the other side, to explain the plan. He set marksmen, the best, to shoot for the beast's mouth as it turned towards them. The rest he gathered together to follow Zar in along the beast's flank. Across the valley he saw Penarc making similar dispositions. But the Gorren had become impatient and suspicious at the lull. Its head swung from side to side, questing, and those closest covered down and hid their eyes as the Gorren's fell glance flickered over then like the flash of some deathly beacon. Suddenly the creature gave its thunderous hiss and made for the Dwarf. Zar saw his chance. "Now!" he shouted, and leaping down pounded it seemed straight into the creature's jaws. The valley walls shook and echoed to the war-cry of the Rockfolk, a sound from the deeps of Time to make the strongest adversary quail, as Zar raised it in a great voice and drove in to the attack.

The Gorren did not quail. It lowered its head to deal with this impudent assailant, uncurling its prehensile tongue. But this was what Zar needed. He sidestepped the groping tongue, swung his mattock like a hammer-thrower and smashed it into the Gorren's eye upon its lowered

horn.

A scream rent the air like the cry of many tortured souls. The Gorren reared up, thrashing, and a foul stench arose, choking even those who had become something accustomed to its vile odour. Pale viscous fluid began to ooze from its shattered eye. Its tongue lolled. Now was the moment to drive in for the kill. But the creature's second horn was flailing this way and that, dealing its lethal sparks in all directions, while Zar lay prone upon the ground where the Gorren's violent spasm had thrown him. Before he could rise the beast gave another dreadful scream, and its tongue had seized him about the waist.

From the shelter of the Gorren's blind side Holt saw, and was sick. But a thought came. "Give me your scarf," he demanded of the man next to him. The man stared, then quickly unwound the scarf from his mouth, and put it into Holt's outstretched hand. Holt bound it hastily about his brow, pulling the thick folds down over his right eye. Then, before any had guessed what he was about, he leapt in after the dwarf.

The eye-horn came down towards him as he leapt. Even as its terrible light seared his own exposed eye he struck up at it with Gulcríst, and felt the magic blade bite deep. Then he stumbled, for he could not see, and fell into a stream of venom that burned his hands and face. The Gorren howled as though to wake the dead stones with its agony, but Holt lay still, and Zar half in the Gorren's jaws lay still, and mist began to gather about the valley walls like a cloud of death.

But the others who fought were valiant. When they saw that both the Gorren's eyes had lost their power they swept in from each side, finishing the work the two heroes had begun, hacking at the foul tongue until Zar was freed, pulling Holt away from the pool of venom. Both were carried swiftly to a distance of a few yards, their venom-soaked scarves and clothing torn off and all traces of the vile stuff wiped away. Both were burned, Zar the worst, for he had lain many minutes in the Gorren's jaws. Both were unconscious, their eyes closed. None doubted but that both were blind.

They drew off when the Gorren lay, its vast bulk twitching a little, unable to move. It was not yet dead, but powerless for the moment to do any harm. One was sent for Garvan, but he was found close at hand, making his own way down the valley to see what was afoot. When he saw Holt lying senseless among the wounded, he momentarily covered his face with his hand. But there was much to be done. Once the wounded were made comfortable, and those at the head of the valley brought down, he set all who were fit to



felling a young pine, and trimming it to make a great stake. This they heated in the fire until it began to burn, then thrust it in between the Gorren's jaws until only a few inches were left protruding. So the Gorren was slain, and carrion birds from miles around began to flock in black clouds to that place.

No more could be done that day. It was decided to return later, when the carcass had rotted, and roll stones into the valley until the remains were covered. For the time being, they removed some distance from the place and camped for the night, bearing the dead and wounded upon stretchers of woven branches. By morning another man was dead, and several

in bad case, Holt and Zar among them. They had not wakened, though sometimes they cried out in their sleep.

The next day they wended home. Some decided to make for their own steadings, bearing their dead and leading their blind with them. But most returned first to Kenfig's dwelling, for he and his daughter were noted healers. At evening of the second day they came to the farmstead. Linnuis stood at the gate, wrapped in a sheepskin cloak and bearing a lantern. She looked on the face of each one that was borne through, and over some she made the sign that the herd-folk gave to the dead, but the others she touched with her hand; those that were conscious

smiled at her, and some of the others seemed eased. Last but not one came Holt, with Garvan walking by his stretcher. Linnuis laid her hand upon his brow, holding her lantern high, then looked up into Garvan's troubled face.

"Can you do aught for him, mistress?" he said. "This is my fault. How shall I face his lady, if he dies, or if he is blind?"

"You bear a noble heart, Lord Garvan," she said. "It has led you to tend him well. I will do what I can."

Those that were whole or not too badly hurt were lodged in their former hut; the dead in another. But those sorely wounded, some seven of them, Linnuis directed to be brought into the main hut, where she and old Kenfig tended to them all that night, and for many days afterward.



Linnuis sat by the fire-pit, still as a statue carved in dark wood. It was dim as always in the hut, though outside the summer evening was still bright; the fire had been let to burn low, for the day had been warm. Her cheek resting on her hand, the girl watched the two that lay sleeping close by. The others were gone, sufficiently recovered to return home. Now only Holt and Zar remained. The Dwarf bore no bandages, the new skin where his burns had been giving him an odd blotched look. Holt's burns likewise were healed, more thoroughly than the dwarf's, but bandages were swathed about his eyes.

Zar stirred, rolled over, and woke. At once he sat up. "How do you, Master Dwarf?" Linnuis asked with a smile. "You have slept well."

"Ay, maid," he replied, looking on her kindly. "I am well, I thank you." He began to comb and braid his beard. Linnuis rose and went to a small table where stood bowls and bottles.

"Is it time for more of the Captain's potion?" Zar asked. "Now there is physic of which I would take more, if I could. Would I knew where he had it. I could make my fortune."

Linnuis poured a drop from the black flask of Celbrethil into a flagon of water, stirred it, then filled a small bowl which she brought to Zar.

"This is the last you shall have," she said to him. "You need it no more. Indeed, little is left. But the Captain when he left it with me directed me to

use it as I thought best. Some owe their lives to it."

"As well he gave it you," Zar meditated. "Else when he returned unconscious we should not have known of it. Then neither he nor I would be as we are now, recovered, without weakness or fever. Yet I thank you also for your care, mistress. That too we needed."

"You are courteous, Master Dwarf," Linnuis said, smiling a little.

"My people give gratitude where it is due," replied Zar. "I owe you much, mistress. I will not forget."

The door curtain lifted, and Garvan entered. His arm was whole now, and he had been helping Donath in the byres. He greeted Linnuis and Zar, then drew up a stool and sat by the fire, glancing down at the pallet where Holt lay.

"He sleeps long," he said, looking to Linnuis.

"I gave him a draught this morning," she answered. "It is best he should sleep, as long as his eyes are covered."

"And when they are uncovered?" Zar asked. "What then?"

"I do not know," Linnuis said. "The others were all blind. Even his potion could not restore sight. I have hope. More I cannot say." She glanced quickly where Holt lay. With his eyes bound, it was hard to tell if he were awake. But he did not stir.

"My hope is yours," Garvan said. "If wishes and prayers might aid him, he will see. When do you take away the bandage?"

"Tonight," she said. "It serves no purpose to wait longer. But I do not relish it."

They fell silent. After a short time Holt woke, stretched and sat up. Linnuis went to him at once with a bowl of Celbrethil's liquor, and helped him raise it to his lips. She removed it when he had done and he turned his head this way and that.

"Garvan is here, I think, and Zar," he said. "Not Kenfig, for I cannot hear his dog. You see how sharp my ears have become." Garvan winced silently at his words.

"It is time to remove the bandage," Linnuis said. "I will do it before the others come in to supper. It would be as well, Lord Garvan, if you walked outside awhile."

"Willingly," Garvan said. He rose.

"I will come too," Zar said. "A breath of air will do me good. I will see you anon, Captain, and you will see me, I trust." He stumped off to the door. Garvan paused before Holt, somewhat awkwardly.

"It seems - not fitting, to wish you

good fortune," he said. "But you know what I would say."

"Lord Garvan," Holt said. "You hold yourself to blame, I think, for my state. You must not. I tell you what the Dwarf said to me: I went freely, of my own choice."

"It is generously said," Garvan answered. "I would expect no less from you, Holt. But I owe you a debt beyond payment. If ever you or yours are in need, call upon me. I and my kin are yours to command." He went out.

Linnuis had fetched tapers, and lit them from the fire. She placed them so that they cast light in all corners of the hut. Then she knelt by Holt, and took his hand.

"Now comes the test," she said. "Are you prepared?"

"I suppose so," he said. "What shall I expect, mistress?"

"Darkness or light," she answered. "I cannot say. Your left eye was seared like the others that looked on the beast. Some can tell day from night; no more. Your other eye inflamed with its fellow, though you had covered it. I have tended you with all my skill, and daily burned sweet herbs to Airmest who guards the sick. Your potion may have had good effect. But the time for hope is past. We must essay."

"Do it then," Holt said. He clenched his hands in his lap as she began to unwind the bandage. Soon only the two pads were left that covered his eyes.

"The left, first," Linnuis said. Lightly she held the other in place, and lifted the pad from his left eye.

It was dark. But he had expected no more. He thought there might be a faint glow where the fire was. Then a sudden flicker made him turn his head.

"I moved my hand," Linnuis said. "You can see movement, a little. It is well. Now the other."

Holt blinked, and points of light danced before him. He held his eyes open, and saw the interior of the hut, as when he first came. For a few moments all stood out clearly. Then it grew dim, and the lights wavered, their outlines lost in haze. But it was only tears. He bent his head, blinking them away. Linnuis rose and slipped quietly behind him.

"You can see," she said softly. "I am glad."

Steps sounded, and the door-curtain was raised. "Garvan," Holt said, stretching out his hand.

"You see me?" Garvan demanded eagerly.

"As clear as I ever did," Holt assured him. Garvan came forward, clasping his outstretched hand, and for some moments neither spoke. Then Zar entered, the tails of his beard blown over his shoulder by the wind, and Holt laughed, and Garvan with him, and Zar chuckled also, until their mirth spilled over into silence and they sat awhile together, glad only to be alive and in good company with one another.

THE DARK PALACE BENEATH THE SEA.

*I have walked the sands of unknown shores
On moonless nights when the North Wind flows,
I have seen the gleams of the Dark Palace
Beneath the wine-red seas,
And heard the call of the Siren,
To lure me from my woes,
And bring me to the Table of the Dark Lord
Beneath the restless waves.*

THOMAS M. EGAN.



THE TREE OF TALES

by
DYLAN RGH

-SL-



he TREE of Tales, the myths of Good and Evil, making and breaking, Light and Darkness, is a great tree, with roots spread out well into the past; a strong trunk which forges through the human psyche; and a wide canopy of leaves and blossoms which

cast the light of those myths on the present.

Perhaps, though, it should be called the 'Forest of Tales', for it is itself full of trees, which have long played a great role in the world of myth. Trees are strong and long-lived; and a man could see a tree, which was an old giant when he was born, seemingly unchanged as he lay on his deathbed.

So, to man, they soon came to be symbols of immortality. Evergreen trees, which hold their leaves even through the coldest winter, were thought never to die, and so achieved a religious status. Deciduous trees, which appeared to die in winter, burgeoned again with leaf and flower in spring, and so were a sign of resurrection, a sign that life truly was indestructible.

Man, of course, wanted to communicate with them. He wanted to learn their secrets, and desired understanding of 'the proper languages of birds and beasts and trees' (*Tree & Leaf* p.22). Natural phenomena held secrets, and while man could not talk to the thunder or lightning, there was always the chance of seeing, and even talking to, the stone giants who cause it. He may even return alive!

And, just as thunder and lightning

have always surrounded man, so have woods. Europe was once blanketed in dark, murky woods. It is said that in Saxon times a squirrel could travel from the Severn to the Wash without once setting foot on the ground; and there was all one wood from Fangorn 'to the Mountains of Lune' (*LotR* II.3.14. "Treebeard")

TREE SPIRITS

So man was constantly surrounded by trees, and as well as food, warmth and shelter, they provided him with the inspiration of life, not only now but for ever. And we have seen, too, how he would try to communicate, to learn their secrets and their changing moods. A wood could be open and friendly one moment, in the light of the sun - as when Pippin felt he almost liked Fangorn - but dark and sinister the next.

As he learned more about the trees their spirits, with whom he tried to communicate, became more independent. The hamadryad, the wood nymph who lived and died with the tree with which she dwelt, developed into the dryad, with a more independent existence, nearer to man, and thus more open to communication.

So the tree inched its way into the myths of mankind and, as with so many other aspects of Faerie, Tolkien wove the patterns into his own myth, that of Middle-earth. Each group in human society has its own leaves on the branches of the Tree of Tales, its own branch of blossom, yet each branch can give access to the whole tree.

It is beyond the powers of any man to portray the whole tree in its full glory, and equally impossible to show properly the inner workings. "Myth is alive at once and in all its parts, and

lies before it can be dissected" (*The Monsters and the Critics* p.15). But Niggle discovered, in the end, that a single leaf can be pictured, and can give some idea of the glory of the whole. Tolkien knew this only too well, and within the structure of Middle-earth many different single leaves of the Tree of Tales are hidden. Their detail is often hidden, but they play their part. The story is "not about [these things] but it receives part of its life, its vividness, its tension from them" (*The Monsters and the Critics*: "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" p.73).

"The seed of the tree can be replanted in almost any soil" (*Tree and Leaf* p. 57)

ORDINARY TREES

Though many of the references to trees in Middle-earth are rooted in myth, much of the time their appearance is merely descriptive, setting a scene. Even here, though, it is an indication of Tolkien's care to see how wisely they are chosen. Though there are 'strange, nameless trees' in the Old Forest, and other named trees, such as mallorn, which we no longer know, most of the trees of Middle-earth are familiar and homely.

In the Shire the trees are those native to the North - oak, ash and beech. As Strider and the hobbits approach Rivendell and enter the hill country these give way to birches, firs and pines, natural mountain-side trees. And as Frodo and Sam come South to the woods of Ithilien, they find cedars and cypresses, olives and bays, trees of warmer climes. These are a natural part of the landscape of Middle-earth.

But in Middle-earth the trees also seem to have a greater share of life - the hamadryads and the dryads of Middle-earth are still alive, and to a greater degree than are those in our trees.

We have seen how the spirits of trees developed into characters, and slowly grew to be more independent of the tree in which they dwelt. So we find, in Middle-earth, that in the older forests the spirits are still hamadryads - they have not escaped from the form of the tree. They are the rotten heart of Old Man Willow, and the Huorns. In their highest form they truly can communicate with man, for they are the Onodrim, the Ents.

But the dryads, the spirits which have become independent of tree form, are still closely associated with the trees, just as were the dryads of Greek myth. They are the Woodland Elves of Mirkwood, the long gone Elves of Eregion and, especially, the Galadhrim of Lothlórien. They are independent, and yet as dependent on the mallorn as is that beautiful tree on them.

These are the immortal trees with which man desperately desired communication; and in the Faerie land of Middle-earth that desire is granted.

THE FAMILY TREE

Myth is one of the unifying factors in society, one of the ties which binds it together from one generation to the next. It is small wonder, then, that the diagram which indicates descent and parentage is a 'family tree' and that we cling to our 'roots'.

Indeed, the world itself is held together by a tree. In Norse myth Midgard, the known world, or Middle Earth, was held together and unified by a mighty Ash tree, called Yggdrasil, whose roots extended to the Underworld and branches to Heaven. Indeed, in Norse myth the first man was created from an ash. In Teutonic myth the first woman, Embla, was also created from a tree. Man owed his life, and his future, to the tree.

We find in Tolkien a tree which is the symbol of the Family of Man, also - the White Tree of Gondor. It could almost be said that the realm of Gondor was created from this as man was from the first ash. Its health is a sign of the health of the Line of Kings, and Aragorn is instructed to plant any fruit that the Tree might produce, that the line shall not die out.

But this vision of trees as the ancestors of man, and also of the success of their future in as much as they are a symbol of immortality, has resulted, in many lands, in penalties for harming or killing trees. An early Irish poem, the "Triads of Ireland", calls for the sacrifice of a living creature in payment for felling an apple. In ancient Germany, anyone found damaging an oak was put to death. And even today, in many primitive tribes, someone who has to cut down a tree to make a canoe or build a house, will first apologise to the spirit of the tree, and often leave a sacrifice to placate it. It is hardly surprising, then, that Treebeard gave a dark glance at Gimli's axe, and that Gimli had, earlier, been given strict instructions to 'cut no living wood' for it was "perilous to touch the trees" of Fangorn (*LotR* II.3.II, "The Riders of Rohan").

THE LIGHT OF THE TREES

There also runs through the tapestry of Middle-earth a twin thread of silver and gold, the light of the two Trees of the Valar, called Telperion and Laurelin. Though they were killed, and drained of their light by Ungoliant, not all was lost, and their light was still shining down on Frodo and Sam in the darkness at the end of their quest. The light of these trees is shed over all Middle-earth, a memory of the Undying Lands from which all men and elves are sundered.

So too, it is a reflection of the light of those other two trees from whose light we have been sundered. In the Undying Lands of the Garden, eastward in Eden, were two trees, the Tree of Life, and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Man's misuse of them led to his exile from the Garden, yet, as in Middle-earth, the light still shines upon us, for hope.

The general qualities of trees, of resurrection and immortality, can be seen to be tightly woven into the fabric of Middle-earth, just as if they had been unwound from the older myths and the yarn re-used by Tolkien when he wrote. Or, perhaps, more as if seeds had been taken from the Tree of Tales, and sown in the fertile soil of Middle-earth, aided by the dust from Galadriel's little box.

But many trees developed individual characteristics of their own, which have passed into folk-lore, and these too have made their way into the lands east of the Sea.

INDIVIDUAL TREES

The willow has an ancient association with death, and mourning. In ancient China coffins were made with willow, and the Jewish exiles in Babylon sang their songs of grief beneath the willows. Could it be mere coincidence that it was at the song of a willow that the hobbits almost came to grief while traversing the Old Forest? (*LotR* I.1.VI. "The Old Forest"). Willows do not sing their songs of grief for naught - but then Old Man Willow may have been a 'Crack-willow', if anyone had asked Merry and Pippin.

Or was it more than mere wanton destruction that caused Saruman's hordes to cut down trees and leave them lying, especially when it was the trees of Quickbeam, the rowans, which were most sorely treated? For, in Celtic lore, the rowan has long provided protection from evil, and was often planted around houses to keep away witches and demons. Did Saruman know this? Were the rowans a barrier to his evil ambitions?

And finally, the holly. Holly more than many trees was a symbol of immortality, the triumph of life over death. It bore its glossy drak leaves all year round, and its bright red berries in the darkest depths of winter. The Romans used it to decorate their houses at the mid-winter festival of Saturnalia, from where it has migrated to general use at Christmas all over Europe.

What better to symbolise the unmeasurable life of the Elves and of their kingdoms than the tree of Eregion? Hollin, one of the chief realms of the Elves, even took its name from the holly tree. And, even when the Elves of Eregion were long gone, the two great holly trees at the gates of Moria still stood, the greatest trees of their kind.

Maybe the most poignant aspect is the uprooting of these trees after the entrance into Moria of the company of nine. For their mission was to destroy the Ruling Ring, and when that was accomplished all that was wrought by the Elves beneath its shadow was doomed to dwindle and fade. So the trees has stood, for so long a memory of the Elves, passed along with them. There was none but the mallorn to remember the Firstborn, another tree which, bearing colours through the winter, could be a symbol of immortality.

But, though the hollies were uprooted; Fangorn, with no Entings, dwindled; and Lothlorien faded, the Tree went on. The White Tree of Gondor was replanted, and the Party Tree, so wantonly cut down, was replaced by the only mallorn 'West of the Mountains and East of the Sea'. The world changed.

But the Tale goes on, and the Tree of Tales still bears fruit.



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—Where to Write—

This is a list of frequent topics of correspondence, and the people to whom such correspondence should be sent. (In most cases only names are given, as the addresses will be found on the back cover.) In all correspondence, appropriate stamps or International Reply Coupons, or a stamped addressed label (an envelope may be the wrong size if literature is being requested), are much appreciated and will hasten reply.

- Correspondence & contributions for Mallorn (other than queries about subscriptions or back-issues) should be sent to the Editor, Jenny Curtis.
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- Subscriptions and queries concerning them should be sent to the Membership Secretary, Lester Simons. A single annual subscription confers membership of the Society, and entitles members to receive all issues of Mallorn and Amon Hen published during the year of membership. Full details of subscription rates for the U.K. and abroad may be found on the back of the current Amon Hen. U.K. members paying Income Tax can assist the Society by covenanting their subscriptions for four years. Details of this, and information on family subscriptions, may be obtained from the Membership Secretary.
- Details of periodicals subscriptions for Libraries and other institutions may be obtained from the Membership Secretary, Lester Simons.
- Back-issues of both Mallorn and Amon Hen, and informations concerning their availability and price, may be had from the Sales Officer, Jeremy Morgan
- General enquiries should be addressed to the Secretary, Anne Haward.
- Bibliographical enquiries about the works of J.R.R. Tolkien should be addressed to Charles Noad.
- Linguistic enquiries about the languages or writing systems invented by Professor Tolkien; and enquiries about the Society's Linguistic Fellowship and its Bulletin, should be sent to the editor of Quettar, Michael Poxon, 7 Clarendon Road, Norwich.





The Tolkien Society



Founded in London in 1969, THE TOLKIEN SOCIETY is an international organisation, registered in the U.K. as a chairity, dedicated to the furtherance of interest in the life and works of the late Professor J.R.R. Tolkien CBE.

The Tolkien Society has members all over the world, and is in contact with many allied Societies interested in Tolkien and related fields of literature. In 1972, Professor Tolkien agreed to become our Honorary President, offering any help he was able to give. Since his death he remains our President 'in perpetuo', at the suggestion of his family.

This is *Mallorn*, the Society journal. The Society also publishes a bulletin, *Amon Hen*, which comes out approximately bi-monthly, and contains shorter articles, artwork, book news, poetry, Society announcements and letters.

The Society organises two international meetings in the U.K., the A.G.M./Dinner in the Spring, and Oxonmoot, held in Oxford in early Autumn, where Miss Priscilla Tolkien has often been our guest and hostess. In many areas, both in the U.K. and abroad, there are local groups or 'smials' which hold their own meetings. (For further details of these, see *Amon Hen*.) The Society also has a reference archive and a lending library of fantasy fiction (available to U.K. members only).

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