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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 J1.4.III ("The Black Gate is Closed"); OS 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*); OS (*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.

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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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Credits

Pauline Baynes	Cover illustration
Steve Lines	All title pages save "Orchestras"
Lynn Close	p.16
Geraint Rees	p.20
Lynn Close: "Orchestras" title	p.21
Kirby Schroeder	p.22
Neil Loughran: Dragon	p.24
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Pat Wynn	p.47

THANKS

more the Editor would like to thank warmly the following people: Steve Lines for his beautiful covers, which I managed to receive in spite of the Post Office; Cotterill Office Stationers, Arches St., Halifax and more particularly their employees Marlene and Trent, who never once cringed when they saw me arrive and monopolise their system for a whole afternoon at a time, and for their coffee which did me a world of good; and Hanway Print Centre Ltd., 106 Essex Road, Islington, London N1, who received this MALLORN at the last moment, no thanks again to the Post Office.

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Editorial

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Welcome to MALLORN 26, the biggest ever, filled to the brim with quality material. I hope you will find food for thought inside, and that its contents will induce you to send me further articles to make of MALLORN 27 an even better issue. Please take note of the Deadline for MALLORN 27: May 31st, 1990.

You may have noticed that, on my address just beside, I have included my telephone number. This is deliberate, for it has been thought that you might want, for one reason or another, to get in touch directly with somebody on the committee, and I will try to help whenever possible. However, I am not responsible for such matters as sales etc., so do not ring me about them. Feel free to ring me: I trust you will not abuse the confidence I place in you.

It has been decided that, since MALLORN has now become an Annual, we would add a new feature in our columns, namely a long(er) essay. As you know, there is little space at present for articles of that size in any Tolkien Society magazine, and it has been thought necessary to remedy this gap. It sometimes happens that one requires more space to express one's ideas or that, maybe, academic essays have been written for universities or other such places, few of which will ever again see the light of day after their assessing. Of course, it may happen that some become 'recycled' into articles of more manageable formats, but for the most, they have outlived their purpose and curl up their edges at the back of a drawer. Now there is a space for them so please, submit them as soon as possible. I already have a possible candidate for next year: Iwan Rhys Morus' "Uprooting the Golden Bough: Max Müller and Tolkien".

This year's is Madawc Williams' article on Michael Moorcock, a fervent Tolkien Basher. I trust you will enjoy as much as I did Madawc's essay. Madawc is a long-standing member and is a very active participant to Northfarthing Smial.

John Ellison's article was presented at last year's Oxonmoot and I am particularly glad to include it in this issue, for it relates to that strange period of "the Phony War" which is presently remembered everywhere. John, too, is a very active member of the T.S. and an organiser of Northfarthing Smial. He is a remarkable contributor both to Mallorn and to the Workshops/Seminars and is famous for his "Yes, Mr. Frodo" series. He is a staunch Wagnerian and knows opera inside-out.

Peter Buchs is Swiss: he has been living and working in England for a year, but is now back in that pleasant "Mountainous Shire", which Tolkien visited in 1911. I found his poem quite poignant and on a subject which is little touched upon in our pages.

Alex Lewis' tale is quite light-hearted. It apparently began as a serious essay but Alex turned it into a story where he gently pokes fun at a great many things we know. He is by no means disrespectful and light relief is always welcome.

His short article began as an echo of Verlyn Flieger's Splintered Light, and I would welcome your comments on it, as well as on any other features of this issue.

I am delighted to include Ronald Kyrmse's article, for it very timely ties in with the newly released Treason of Isengard. His map occupies the centerfold of this issue. Ronald lives in Brazil and is a regular contributor to QUETTAR.

Timely too is Ted Nasmith's article, which coincides with the publication of the 1990 Tolkien Calendar, for which he contributed all the illustrations. A review of his Calendar appears on p.49. He lives in Ontario.

Wayne Hammond, too, presented his article at last year's Oxonmoot. He is internationally acknowledged as a great Tolkien scholar. He is Assistant Librarian in the Chapin Library of Rare Books, Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts. His most recent publication is "All the Comforts: the Image of Home in The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings" in MYTHLORE 51. With Douglas A. Anderson he is writing a descriptive bibliography of Tolkien's works.

Michael Hickman's article surveys systematically for the first time the nebulous field of Religion in LOTR, and is quite illuminating. I hope to be able to bring you further instalments of his survey in forthcoming issues. Michael has been Head of Religious Studies at Dorothy Stringer High School, Brighton, for 16 years and has been a member of the T.S. for more than 10 years.

Lynne Elson also appeared in last year's issue. This time again she has illustrated her own poem. Lynn Close studied archeology at Durham University. She is a member of Amon Sûl Smial.

Kirby Schroeder, too, is a member of Amon Sûl. However he is also American and having lived in England for 2 years he has had to return to the U.S.A. to continue his studies. He presently lives in California.

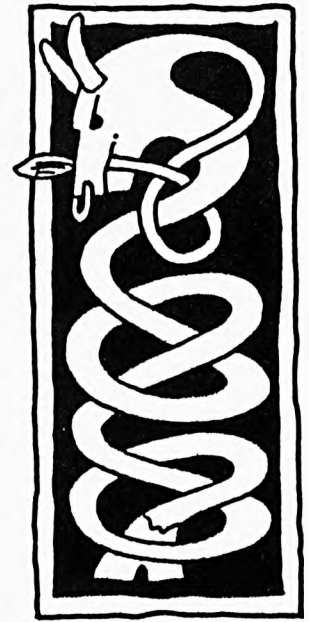
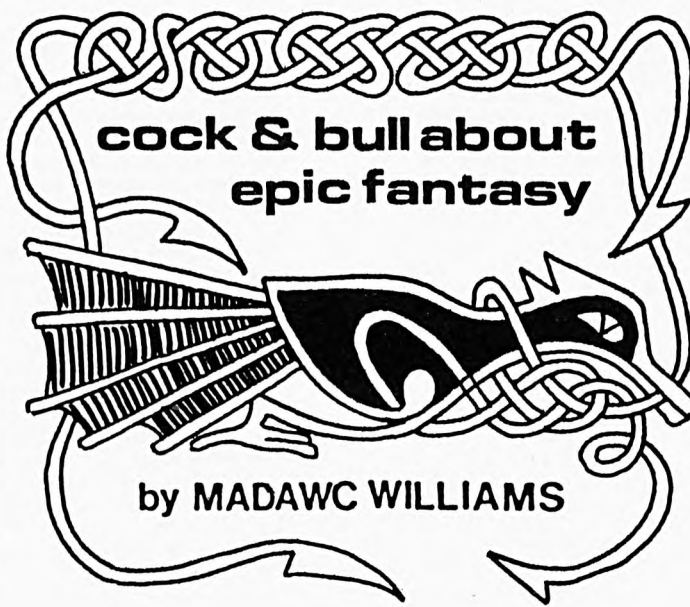
Neil Loughran is a long standing member of the T.S. He is a professional photographer and illustrator.

Karl Carmichael lives in Hull and a friend of a friend. I find his 'Gandalf' marvellous.

Pat Wynn is American. He is an outstanding contributor to Mythopoeic Society magazines and a professional illustrator. He particularly affectionates Celtic art.

Good reading to All! Denis
Eriondil Málion, Vanimandil of the Vanyar.
Ἐριόνδιλ Μάλιον, Βανιμανδὶλ τῶν Βανυάρ.





Michael Moorcock has a well-established reputation as a writer of fiction. In Wizardry and Wild Romance he enters a different field; trying to set himself up as a literary critic. For the most part, he seeks to lay down the law about what is and is not good literature in a field which he labels "epic fantasy". The Lord of the Rings is included in this category, but evidently fails to match Mr. Moorcock's criteria for good literature. In fact he denounces it fiercely.

I do not regard LotR as above criticism. I do regard it as a major work deserving of serious and well-informed criticism. And Moorcock has simply sneered at Tolkien without knowing what he is talking about. He is one of those people who approach every subject with an open mouth!

LotR is in fact a shallow work; the ramblings of a light-weight thinker with a fairly average knowledge of literature. But Moorcock's popularity as a writer will undoubtedly make it influential; widely known and widely quoted. This article can only do a little to undo the damage that Moorcock's foolishness will undoubtedly do. But even that little is surely worthwhile.

Defining the Terms

Firstly, does "epic fantasy" actually exist as a single body of literature that can usefully be considered in isolation? It seems to me a completely artificial category. Modern fantasy and modern science-fiction have never been two sharply distinct traditions - at least not in English-speaking countries. Even H.G. Wells strayed across the boundaries, in short stories like The Man Who Could Work Miracles and The Magic Shop. Telepathy and paranormal powers occupy a broad border country between the two.

Is science-fiction necessarily more realistic than fantasy? Some basic science-fiction concepts, such as faster-than-light spaceships or time travel, are flatly against all accepted laws of physics. "Death rays" are a concept that existed long before the laser was invented; and in real-life lasers are not in fact very much like death rays, even though this aspect has caught the public imagination. Anti-gravity, a nineteenth-century notion, is not remotely possible according to current ideas about physics; the "fifth force", if it exists at all, is far too weak to be significant.

Moreover, the social context of science-fiction is often highly unlikely, and has less to do with real life than the better sort of fantasy story. Galactic wars between barbarians in spaceships strike me as a much more improbable concept than Tolkien's Elves. Likewise far-off and strange civilisations where everyone behaves like a 20th century American.

Then again, some works generally recognised as great literature contain elements that



CORRIGENDA

Please accept my apologies for forgetting to number the notes to John Ellison's article. Here is the numbering, for you to write down in the relevant spaces:

- 1 Page 17, line 3, between 'diary' and the full stop.
- 2 Same page, par. 2, l. 4, between 'issue' and the comma.
- 3 Page 19, 1st column, par. 2, l. 4, between '1934' and the comma.
- 4 Same page, same column, par. 3, l. 3, between 'kind' and the full stop.
- 5 Same paragraph, l. 17, between 'Tolkien's' and the full stop.
- 6 Page 18, 2nd column, par. 2, l. 16, between 'suicide' and 'in'.
- 7 Same paragraph, following line, between 'Catholic' and the full stop.
- 8 Page 20, 1st column, par. 2, l. 11, between 'book' and 'he'.
- 9 Same column, par. 3, l. 12, between 'says' and the comma.
- 10 Same page, 2nd column, after the text's last word.

By this time you should have noticed that pp. 18 and 19 have been reversed. So please read the right hand page before the left hand one.

Further apologies are made to John Ellison whose article has been the victim of these mistakes on both occasions.

The Editor.

would be regarded as typical fantasy in other contexts. In both Hamlet and Wuthering Heights a ghost is central to the plot. Magic and spirits are crucial to The Tempest. In Macbeth, there are witches, a ghost and two "fairy-tale" conditions that have to be fulfilled before Macbeth can be killed. A Midsummer-night's Dream is almost pure fairy-tale, concentrating on the relationship between mortals and immortal yet imperfect spirits. Likewise one has The Merry Wives of Windsor, in which someone says "I smell a man of middle earth", (though the "magic" in this case is deceptive, not real).

To take a wider view, Nietzsche's Thus Spake Zarathustra is normally to be found among works of philosophy. But you could equally call it a novel with a strong philosophical content. Or you could place it as a work of science-fiction or fantasy or imaginative literature. You find quite a lot of similar works under these categories - though generally without any hint of Nietzsche's depths of vision and imagination.

The various categories - mainstream, science-fiction, fantasy, historical fiction, thrillers, detective novels, westerns, horrors, love stories, ghost stories, etc. - have meaning only in so far as the publishers believe them to be real, and in so far as the public will accept them. The marketing of books is much easier if they can be sold under one general label or another.

But writers tend to cut across these categories, in so far as commercial pressures will allow. For instance, Robert E. Howard wrote historical romances as well as the "fantasy" Conan stories, and also one western. These various works resemble each other far more than they do other works in their respective marketing categories. Many science-fiction writers also write fantasy and other sorts of novels.

Some "mainstream" writers have also got in on the act. Doris Lessing made her reputation in the mainstream, but her Shikasta series is basically science-fiction, with overtones of fantasy. (Zone One and Two of Shikasta seem to be inhabited by dwarves and elves).

It is notable that Doris Lessing seems to have ignored all the "sophisticated" or "literary" science-fiction. Instead she has picked up and developed the crudest sort of space-opera, as well as some silly UFO and Atlantis mythology.

In my view, her Shikasta books are an interesting mixture of the sublime and the ridiculous. And the good bits are miles ahead of anything Moorcock and his ilk can come up with.

A serious study of any sort of literature should look at what actually exists, instead of what the critic thinks ought to exist. Critics, of course, may try to play down works that seem not to fit - or else to re-interpret them so that they do fit. Moorcock's great weakness is that he seldom even does this much. Facts that don't fit are simply ignored.

Hundreds of thousand of books get written. A few dozen in each century may in time come to be regarded as great literature; a few hundred more as good or serious literature. It is easy to concentrate on the good or great works, a huge and tedious task to look at the typical book of any particular era. Yet it is the typical books that create the actual literary environment in which good or great books get written.

Defining the Undefinable

Critics may draw up categories and draft complex definitions. But actual literature has a totally anarchic character - people write what they are inspired to write. In so far as one work of fiction inspires another, the inspiration is as likely to cut across categories as to be within them. Science-fiction and fantasy is only a real category because large numbers of people choose to define themselves as being part of it (or not, as the case may be). But Tolkien, though he has been highly influential on the science-fiction/fantasy world, does not seem to have been much influenced by it. He was certainly not a part of its social structure, unlike many other writers whose works usually get lumped with his.

In point of fact, Moorcock fails to fully define "epic fantasy". He does say

"I am referring specifically to that body of prose fiction distinguished from myth, legend and folktale by its definite authorship and because it does not genuinely purport to be a true account of historical or religious events. Therefore the Nibelungenlied, La Chanson de Roland, Le Morte d'Arthur by Malory or Le Cid by Corneille are

not fantasy fiction."

Moorcock does not say why each particular work is excluded. Both La Chanson de Roland and the Nibelungenlied are epic poems - though most of us will know the latter only in translation. In point of fact, Moorcock does mention various poetic works later on, ignoring his own criterion of prose fiction.

Definite authorship is also a problem. The original edition of Le Morte d'Arthur, (which is prose), gives its author as "Syr Thomas Maleore knyght". It is generally accepted that this individual was indeed Sir Thomas Malory, as we would put it in modern spelling. Records of the period do mention a Sir Thomas Malory of Newbold Revell; a rather unruly knight who was at various times charged with crimes such as attempted murder and breaking into a Cistercian Abbey. This individual was specifically excluded from the General Pardons of 1468 and 1470; and if he was the man, he was a much more colourful character than most authors.

Then again, it could have been another man of the same name. A future literary critic could get very confused by identifying William Morris, the author of News from Nowhere, with William Morris the Founder of Morris Motors.

In any case, Malory was working with older material. For parts of the work, he draws heavily on French verse versions of the tales; he is halfway between being a translator and an original author. And no one can have any idea whether he viewed his work as fiction, history or something in between. He certainly made his own changes and interpretations of the ancient tales.

To pretend to give an account of actual events is a common enough literary device. For instance, Tolkien treats LotR as a literary creation in his Foreword and as an historic account in his Prologue. In my opinion the Foreword gives his true view - but a good argument against this could be made on the basis of some of his other writings, (The Lost Road, for instance).

An even more complex case are Norse legends. Our main source is the works of Snorri Sturluson, who wrote centuries after Iceland had accepted Christianity, and who very probably did not believe in the literal existence of the Aesir and Vanir. But he makes use of the work of earlier authors, some of whom probably did regard the gods as real and the legends as essentially true. Others may have been using myth as a basis for their storytelling - as authors today may retell or adapt a Greek myth. The line between myth, legend, folktale and fantastical fiction is in practice impossible to draw. Tolkien's concept of "the Pot of Soup, the Cauldron of Story" comes much closer to describing the reality.

Moorcock tries to separate "fantasy" from myth, legend and folktale. In fact all of these things are intimately connected. As for the distinctions between epic fantasy and the remaining (non-epic?) forms, one is left guessing as to just what Moorcock has in mind. One might have thought that epic fantasy ought to have included fairy-tales like Jack the Giant-Killer. But these are not included.

Moorcock's Confusion

Moorcock ends up declaring that the term "epic fantasy" is meaningless.² But, he says, we know roughly what is described by it. Indeed we do - but that does not make it a useful category. Works by authors with names beginning with M is a real and definite category, but also a blatantly artificial one. "Epic fantasy" is just plausible enough to be misleading. It cuts modern fantasy off from science-fiction, and then arbitrarily divides "epic" fantasy from other closely connected forms. It tries to link the literature of a great many separate times, but excludes the substratum of myth that is the strongest real connection between them.

A proper study of the various works and schools of writings considered would be vastly more complex than Moorcock's work. It would have to recognise that there are at least as many connections with mythology, religion, philosophy, historic fiction, adventure stories, serious literature, poetry, etc. as there are between the works he chooses to lump together.

"Fantasy" writings may have many diverse and unexpected connections. Elements that went into Tolkien's work include World War One, Welsh, a Dutch doll, flying dinosaurs, a picture postcard of a mountain spirit, the French revolutionary calendar, the rise of Hitler, Finnish and a spider that bit Tolkien when he was a young child.

But it is not only the category that is false.

Moorcock is a good writer, and one might have hoped that he would give some insights into what it is that makes a good story work. Or perhaps he would provide some fresh and original insight into some well-known tales. Unfortunately, he does very little of this. He gives you opinions, but not reasons. The logic behind his likes and dislikes is far from apparent - though he does have a fondness for shallow fantasy-world imitations of one type of mainstream literature.

Moorcock ignores the possibility that fantasy and science-fiction could have their own logic, quite different from the aims and purposes of the mainstream novel. Stained glass does not follow the same rules as oil-on-canvas paintings; bronze statues have a form and logic that is different from that of stone statues. Moorcock has picked up a rag-bag of notions from one or two types of mainstream literary criticism. He applies them mindlessly to a very different area.

Moorcock is fierce in his denunciations. Thus William Morris is "naive and silly but essentially good-hearted"³ for instance. And Gore Vidal is a "provincial American literary snob".⁴ Don't ask me what Gore Vidal is doing in a book about epic fantasy. His A Search for the King could quite reasonably be regarded as sophisticated sword-and-sorcery, though I have never seen it marketed as anything other than a "mainstream" novel. But there is no indication that Moorcock is familiar with this work. Gore Vidal simply pops up, and is denounced, for no reason that I could follow. Another of Gore Vidal's work, Messiah, is usually classed as Science-Fiction. But it is definitely not a work of Epic Fantasy.

Mr. Moorcock seems to have great confidence in his own knowledge, taste and judgement. So let us look in detail at some of his attempts at analysis.

Robin Hood and the Hobbits

Moorcock says:

"The appeal of the shire has certain similarities with the appeal of the "Greenwood" which is, unquestionably, rooted in most of us ... There is no happy ending to the Romance of Robin Hood, however, whereas Tolkien, going against the grain of his subject matter, forces one on us - as a matter of policy:

'And lastly there is the oldest and deepest desire, the Great Escape: the Escape from Death. Fairy stories provide many examples and modes of this But the "consolation" of fairy-tales has another aspect than the imaginative satisfaction of ancient desires. For more important is the Consolation of the Happy Ending' (J.R.R. Tolkien, 'On Fairy Stories')

The great epics dignified death but they did not ignore it, and it is one of the reasons why they are superior to the artificial romances, of which Lord of the Rings is merely one of the most recent."⁵

I can't really see why Moorcock sees the appeal of placid hobbits in their tidy Shire as being similar to that of Robin Hood and his tough and dangerous outlaws in the depths of the untamed forest. But let it pass. The central point is that Tolkien's essay On Fairy Stories is just that; a description of the fairy-tale tradition as it actually existed, and not an attempt to lay down the law for imaginative literature in general. Tolkien draws a careful distinction between fairy-stories and such things as beast-fables, for instance.

Now it is a fact that most fairy stories do have a happy ending. Tolkien felt that there was a fundamental difference between Little Red Riding Hood as we have it and Perrault's story in which the wolf eats her. The fairy story derives from Perrault, but needed such a change before it could succeed as a fairy story.

On Fairy Stories is a serious analysis of a complex matter. Moorcock's criticism is ill-informed and completely misses the point of what Tolkien was saying. He takes a description of what fairy stories actually were and treats it as if it were intended as a general rule for "epic fantasy", a category that Tolkien never used and would probably not have accepted. Moorcock then notes that some great epics (which no sensible person would ever class as fairy-tales) do not follow Tolkien's rule. That's about as sensible as refuting the Highway Code by pointing out that drivers in France drive on the

right!

What Tolkien says about fairy stories is valid for fairy stories. And it is worth noting that even Shakespeare seems to have followed "fairy-tale" rules in those cases where fantastical material is central to a play. Both The Tempest and A Midsummer Night's Dream have entirely conventional happy endings. In a sense, so does Macbeth. It's not happy for Macbeth, of course - but then neither fairy-tale rules nor the rules of tragedy would allow it to be. But the bold hero MacDuff gets his revenge, the good prince Malcolm wins back his father's throne, and the wicked usurper Macbeth is duly punished. Remarkably enough, the play works equally well if you view it as a tragedy or a dramatised fairy-tale.

(Tolkien, of course, did not think much of Macbeth. That's a matter of taste - and on this point I do not agree with him.)

Robin Hood is not a fairy-tale. It can't even be classed as a fantasy, in the normal sense of the word. The various tales about him are fairly realistic. They take place in real geographic locations - Sherwood Forest and Barnsdale. The social setting of outlaws, sheriffs, monks and knights existed as an historic reality. Allowing for some dramatic exaggeration, the deeds are all perfectly possible. There are a scattering of historical records that may have been references to Robin Hood the outlaw, though both "Hood" and "Robin" were very common names. He may very well have lived and done at least some of the deeds he is credited with. If not, men very much like him lived similar lives during the period the stories are set in. The familiar elements of a fairy-tale are absent in the oldest versions known.

What Moorcock calls "the Romance of Robin Hood" was realistic at the time the stories were first composed; at least as realistic as a modern James Bond story. (And like the Bond tales, one can find similarities to myth and legend, as a sub-structure below the realistic details of the setting.)

It was also a collection of tales. It grew over the centuries, from an original core which did not include either Maid Marian or Friar Tuck. Most of the "core" tales are to be found in the "Geste of Robin Hood", which is thought to have been composed using separate works by earlier authors. There is also a 14th c. reference to "rhymes of Robin Hood" in Piers Ploughman, where they are implicitly denounced in much the same terms as modern adventure tales are often condemned by modern moralists. What we read are particular versions of a very old tradition.

What one has is not a single story but a cycle of stories. Most individual tales of Robin Hood do indeed have a happy ending - though that does not make them fairy-tales, since they include no magic and no fabulous beasts or places.

The "Geste" ends with his death, of course. Such an ending is normal with the tales of mortal men. In fact, it ends with Robin being betrayed and killed by treachery. So, indeed, do most tales about heroic outlaws. It seems to be a part of a standard pattern, though whether the legend of Robin Hood created it, defined it or simply conformed to it is a moot point.

Tragedy and the "Happy Ending"

"The great epics dignified death, but they did not ignore it", says Moorcock. Indeed they did - and one of the best we have is Beowulf, of which Tolkien had a very high opinion. His tastes included both fairy stories and tragic epics, and elements of both found their way into his writings. The Hobbit is not exactly a fairy-tale; it has a predominantly happy ending, but it also includes the tragic and heroic death of Thorin Oakenshield. The Silmarillion is predominantly tragic. Morgoth is defeated in the end, but only after most of the brave elves and men are dead. The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth, Beorhtelm's Son is even more gloomy; the plundering Vikings slay him and his followers and get clean away.

LotR has a subtler mixture of tragedy and happy ending. Sauron is overthrown, but the High Elves have to leave Middle-earth. So does Frodo, who is wounded beyond any normal cure. Gollum, who might have been saved, is not. Even the tale of Arwen and Aragorn ends in death and tragic parting.

Clearly, though Tolkien made use of the fairy-tale tradition, he did not allow it to confine him.

Also, does a fairy-tale happy ending really ignore death?

What Tolkien actually says in On Fairy Stories is:

The consolation of fairy-stories, the joy of the happy ending . . . is not essentially 'escapist', nor 'fugitive' in its fairy-tale - or otherworld - setting, it is a sudden and miraculous grace: never to be counted on to recur. It does not deny the existence of dyscatastrophe, of sorrow and failure: the possibility of these is necessary to the joy of deliverance; it denies (in the face of much evidence, if you will) universal final defeat. . . ."

Only a fool would have failed to notice that the greedy and powerful often do win out. But there is a basic moral sense in most people that makes one want to see them lose. Songs are sung about the man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo; the bank that broke the man is too familiar and does not deserve celebration.

Moorcock, of course, tends to admire those writers who assume that "universal final defeat" is inevitable, and then moan about it in a fairly pointless way. Some of these writers are well worth reading, indeed. But Moorcock seems to think that any other view of the world must be based on naïve ignorance.

Moorcock is a rather narrow-minded character, in fact, even though his narrow-mindedness centers round an unconventional set of beliefs. He seems to have decided to be a literary pessimist while still a teenager. The Golden Barge, published in 1958, expresses this view in quite a sophisticated form. His hero follows a golden barge down a river, having various adventures on the way. The golden barge represents some sort of higher truth. When it reaches the sea, and it seems dangerous to follow it further, he give up.

Moorcock was one of those people who was ready for the transformations of the 1960's before they started happening in society at large. Or rather, he had acquired a pattern of thinking that was marginal at the time he acquired it," but was later to become widespread and powerful.

For most people the sixties were a time of transition. Most of those who went through it have since transformed into something else. Into a great variety of different things - Yuppies, hard-line Leninists, pacifists, Bennites, Kinnockites, right-wing Libertarians, mystics, Greenpeace activists, etc.

Moorcock, however, has hardly changed at all. He remains essentially the same man he was in the late 1950's. Society at large moved close to his viewpoint in the 1960's, and then moved on. Like the clock that is right twice a day, he was in tune with a large section of society at that time, but not before and not after. (Except that societies, unlike clocks, never really repeat themselves.)

For many people, the direction of the changes since the 1960's have been tragic. Not for Moorcock. He has always been a pessimist, regardless of what might be happening in the world at large. Whatever had happened, he would have found reasons for moaning about it. He had decided in advance that there was no point in hoping for a better world. It is hardly surprising that his magazine NEW WORLDS failed in the long run - Moorcock was already prepared for defeat even before the battle had begun.

Tolkien and Tragedy

When Tolkien spoke of tragedy, he knew what he was talking about. Life gave him a very rough ride during his early years. His father died when he was four. When he was eight, his mother was rejected by most of her relatives after her conversion to Catholicism. (In those days there was a bitter cold war between Protestants and Catholics. Each side was likely to view the other side as doomed to damnation and hell). Then when he was only twelve, his mother died, leaving him orphaned.

As a teenager he fell in love, but his guardian, Father Francis Morgan, disapproved and forbade him even to communicate with his beloved until he was twenty-one. He did as he was told, and in the interim gained admission to Oxford University. At twenty-one he resumed contact with the woman he loved. The following year they were betrothed. Unfortunately, the year in question was 1914.

The effect of World War One was utterly shattering on all those who were caught up in it. Not only was it horrific in itself - for most of those who fought in it, it was also utterly unexpected. Many people had

been expecting a war, but not the sort of slow static mechanical butchery that actually developed. And the young men who went through it were far less prepared for it than anyone could be today, when most of us have grown up with graphic and hideous pictures of war, and with the ever-present prospect of a nuclear holocaust.

(Moorcock, of course, has written about the way the world of the early 20th c. was disrupted by the war. But it doesn't seem to occur to him to make the connection between this and Tolkien's work.)

Tolkien completed his degree course and then joined the army, as did most young men of his generation. And most of them perished. Tolkien survived - mainly because he had the relatively good fortune to catch "trench fever" after taking part in the Battle of the Somme. But his closest friends from school all died.

A sense of tragedy was always a part of his make-up. But he refused to surrender to it.

"Superb Countryside"

Tolkien, like a great many other writers, protested against the way in which industrial society had created ugliness on a massive scale. Moorcock takes great exception to this.

"Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, at least, people have been yearning for an ideal rural world they believe to have vanished - yearning for a mythical state of innocence (as Morris did) . . . this refusal to face or derive any pleasure from the realities of urban industrial life . . . is a fundamental theme in popular English literature. Novels set in the countryside probably always outsell novels set in the city." 7

19th c. writers regarded the new cities created by the Industrial Revolution as ugly, polluted and unhealthy. Factual accounts and statistics indicate exactly the same thing. 19th c. Britain contained slums quite as bad as the worst slums of the cities of the present-day Third World. The countryside was no bed of roses, but the 19th c. cities were a recognisable step down. Literature tended to reflect this.

I'm far from sure that it's true that "Novels set in the countryside probably always outsell novels set in the city." He could be right, but he offers no facts to back up his assertion. The 19th c. novels that are still in print today have survived because they were good novels. Some were not at all popular in their own time, and they are a very tiny sample of what people in those days actually read."

Nor do "novels set in the countryside" always have the faults that Moorcock notes. (The faults that writers and critics have been noting for more than a century.) One might cite the works of Thomas Hardy, for instance, which were popular in his own time and remain popular today. Moreover Hardy's work often extended a little beyond the true countryside; into country towns and into cities like Oxford ("Christminster"). There are a great many novels that are neither definitely "city" nor definitely "country", as well as a larger number set in some foreign country, or in some real or imagined past.

The most common attitude to cities in the 19th c. was that you went there to make a living, and with luck to grow prosperous. Those who did grow prosperous almost always chose to return to the countryside, or to live in the country and work in the city. If Mr. Moorcock is not aware of this he might do well to study the works of Dickens. Dickens was well able to face "the realities of urban industrial life", he'd grown up with them, and was well aware of both the pleasures and the all-too-frequent miseries.

"If I find this nostalgia for a "vanished" landscape a bit strange it is probably because as I write I can look from my window over twenty miles of superb countryside to the sea and a sparsely populated coast." 8

Which is very nice for him, no doubt. Myself, as I write I'm looking at a wall made of breezeblocks. But I'd count myself as a fairly fortunate person. As well as living in a reasonably nice part of London, I am able from time to time to visit the superb countryside of the Black Mountains in South Wales. This part of the world is also sparsely populated - because a large part of the population, including my father, had to go

elsewhere to get jobs. It has remained superb countryside because there was no coal or iron under it. Unlike the mining valleys further south, where the landscape has been ruined and the mines are now being closed.

Mr. Moorcock doesn't give the location of the "superb countryside" that he's been enjoying, though a later remark indicates that it is in Northumberland. He seems to think that because he himself is able both to enjoy it and to earn a nice living as a professional writer, all must be well.

"This country, like many others, has seemingly limitless landscapes of great beauty and variety, unspoiled by excessive tourism or the uglier forms of industry."¹⁰

Well, it isn't in fact limitless. It would be quite possible for industrial society to destroy all the remaining wild places and places of great natural beauty. If this is unlikely to actually happen, it is only because a continuous battle has been fought to preserve such landscape, by people who did not share Mr. Moorcock's smugness about the matter. And even so, a great deal has been lost, and is still being lost, that could and should have been saved.

If someone were to propose destroying the works of Mervyn Peake, on the grounds that there is a seemingly limitless supply of well-written books by good authors, I dare say that Michael Moorcock and others would protest very loudly. But each individual landscape, each place within a landscape, is just as unique and irreplaceable as an author. Perhaps more so.

Beauty and Ugliness

Now let's look at what Tolkien actually said about the ugliness of industrial society.

"In Faërie one can indeed conceive of an ogre who possesses a castle hideous as a nightmare (for the evil of the ogre wills it so), but one cannot conceive of a house built with good purpose - an inn, a hostel for travellers, the hall of a virtuous and noble king - that is yet sickeningly ugly. At the present day it would be rash to hope to see one that was not - unless it was built before our time.... Many stories out of the past have only become 'escapist' in their appeal through surviving from a time when men were as a rule delighted with the work of their hands into our time, when many men feel disgust with man-made things."¹¹

Tolkien protested against the unnecessary ugliness that industrial society had created. You could take him to be rejecting industrial society in general, though this is less clear. He did not reject advanced technology as such - he was quick to see the merits of the tape recorder, for example.

In any case Tolkien was a philologist and a writer, not a politician or a propagandist. Unlike C.S. Lewis, he did not publicly express his feelings on wider social matters. The basic feeling - that useful things should not be ugly, and that beautiful things should not be destroyed - is a fairly general one, compatible with a great range of social and political views. (Moorcock himself mentions William Morris, who was one of the pioneers of socialism in Britain, and who is claimed as a forerunner by most of the different varieties of anarchism, socialism and communism that exist today.)

A fondness for Tolkien need not imply a rejection of progress - it may or it may not, depending on each individual's viewpoint. Tolkien fans range all across the political spectrum, with varying degrees of interest or indifference to current events.

An appreciation of LotR is certainly quite compatible with an ability to cope with the modern world, and to enjoy it where possible. As it happens, Tolkien is remarkably popular among people working in the computer industry, the most modern and dynamic part of present-day industrial society. I heard of a case where some people were setting up their own computer company, and wanted to use a Tolkienian name. The first 30 they thought of were already in use!

One final point. In the passages I quoted, Moorcock sounds broadly progressive - indeed, progressive in a rather naive and panglossian way. But in some of his other writings - Byzantium Endures, for instance, or The Golden Barge - he seems to take a very different view, regarding progress as something to be sneered

at. Don't ask me to explain this contradiction. I get the feeling that a great variety of incompatible notions are able to co-exist happily within his brain!

Eric Pooh

"Fiction about kings and queens is not necessarily royalist fiction any more than fiction about anarchists is likely to be libertarian fiction. As a writer I have produced a good many fantastic romances in which kings and queens, lords and ladies, figure largely - yet I am a avowed anti-monarchist."¹²

Thus speaks Moorcock, in Starship Stormtroopers, another attempt at literary criticism. This work covers much of the same ground as Eric Pooh, the relevant chapter in WJR.¹³

Now it is indeed true that fiction about anarchists is not necessarily libertarian fiction. But it can be expected to reveal something of the author's view of anarchists. Anyone reading Dostoyevski's The Possessed might quite reasonably guess that Dostoyevski did not either like them or agree with them.

Joseph Conrad's The Secret Agent is not so hostile - indeed, the author says, that while writing it, he sometimes saw the world from an anarchist point of view. Yet it is not a work that could have been written by a convinced anarchist any more than Chesterton's The Man Who Was Thursday could have been. On the other hand, Ursula Le Guin's The Dispossessed is clearly sympathetic to a variety of anarchist ideas. (I'd be interested to know if the title was intended as a reference and reply to Dostoyevski).

Rulers and Governments

And what about writing about kings and queens, princes and nobles? Many traditional fairy stories are actually about social mobility (though without any threat to the established order). For instance, Cinderella is about an ordinary girl who marries a prince. In many other tales, the youngest son of a poor peasant sets off and ends up marrying a princess and inheriting a kingdom. These, of course, were tales told by and for the lower orders. At court and among the nobility, the heroes and heroines were much more likely to be given a long and impeccable noble pedigree.

Modern authors have varied in their attitudes. One strong viewpoint is expressed in Brecht's The Caucasian Chalk Circle, in which the nobles and hereditary rulers are mostly contemptible. Then again, in Robert E. Howard's Conan stories, the hero is the son of a barbarian blacksmith, and yet is far superior to any of the hereditary nobles and royalty he has dealings with. He usurps a throne, displacing an unworthy but legitimate predecessor. From their different viewpoints - German Communist and American Individualist - they both condemned hereditary aristocracy.

And what was Tolkien's attitude? He seems to blend and combine a number of different elements. The Hobbits have something in common with the heroic peasants who set off and do great deeds. But the hereditary and legitimate element is also present - Aragorn, descendant of Beren and Lúthien, Tuor and Idril, in an enormously long and unbroken line of descent; and Gandalf, an emissary from beyond Middle-earth.

Forms of government also vary. The Shire has a mixed government: the elected Mayor and Shirriffs, together with hereditary leaders like the Thain of the looks and the Master of Buckland. Bree seems to have no hereditary ruler; possibly it manages without any ruler at all.

Yet another pattern is seen among the Ents, who have a basic and structureless democracy; an assembly in which everyone has an equal voice. Treebeard as the eldest Ent can do no more than suggest what could and should be done.

Even in the kingdoms of Rohan and Gondor, custom is superior to the will of the ruler. And, for all we know, these kingdoms might include a large number of basically self-governing democratic communities. Bree and The Shire are included in the restored Kingdom of Arnor, without having any hereditary rulers selected or imposed upon them. The same thing could be true elsewhere. It is only in places like Mordor that everyone is regulated and regimented.

In The Hobbit there is an even more interesting case. Lake-Town has a non-hereditary master.

"In the Lake-Town we have always elected

masters from among the old and wise.'¹⁴

In fact the Master of Lake-Town at the time of Smaug's assault proves to be cowardly and corrupt. Bard the Bowman gets the chance to overthrow this system and set himself as king. He refuses, and instead becomes king of Dale, to which he has a hereditary right. And Lake-Town chooses for itself a new and more worthy Master.

This is significantly different from C.S. Lewis' approach. In The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, the hard rule of the Governor of the Lonely Isles is replaced by an hereditary dukedom. Tolkien and Lewis influenced each other, but their views were by no means always the same.

Class and Kingship

In point of fact, Tolkien is close to the reality of medieval and pre-medieval kingship than most writers who have touched upon the subject. It is usually assumed - even by left-wing writers - that a dominant hereditary monarchy is the norm. But in fact, the Swiss Cantons and the various free or semi-free cities were just as much a part of the medieval European world as kings and nobles.

Nor was there any fixed rule about how kingship was passed on. There were a mixture of notions - that a king was in some way chosen by the people, or was appointed by the chief men of the realm - as Harold Godwinson was - or was selected by the previous king.

Primogeniture - kingship passing automatically to the eldest son of the king - took a long time to get established. It might seem just as logical that a younger brother of the king should take over. This was the earliest system in some countries - and Tolkien uses it for the Elven High Kingship in The Silmarillion.

Tolkien was well aware that kings and nobles could not exist without a lower class or peasantry. He recognised the social realities - though he saw nothing inherently wrong with such a system.

Moorcock has no such awareness. His view of history is one in which the common people do not even exist - or at best are part of the scenery. His heroes are all of ancient aristocratic stock - often, indeed, of a different and superior race! When he writes about kings and nobles, he seems to forget that there are other types of people in the world, apart from a few criminals, servants and hangers-on!

Authors and Politics

Most people can and do enjoy works by authors whose politics they do not agree with. For instance, I dare say that many of those who like the poems of Milton would not agree with his support for Cromwell, his arguments for divorce or his justification of the execution of Charles the First. And Karl Marx liked the works of Balzac, who was on the far right of the politics of his day.

But what is offensive is writers who fly false colours, who proclaim principles that they do not try to live up to. Moorcock has pretensions to be an anarchist. Personally I think that these are no more than pretensions, because he shows no sign of trying to present anarchism as a reasonable or attractive alternative to the present social system. To summarise his view, one might adapt a remark by Karl Marx and say "The point is not to change the world, but simply to moan about it in various ways." Sometimes the moans sound left-wing, sometimes not. But there never seems to be any serious purpose behind them!

Pure Literary Methods

Not only does Moorcock admire aristocrats - particularly sleazy and selfish aristocrats. He also sneers at "the lower order", in a way that does not square with his claim to be a left-wing anarchist. Thus in Byzantium Endures, he has the following:

'I wispered in English to Mrs. Cornelius. "Why do they shoot them so mercilessly?"...She said seriously "They're bloody shit-scared, Ivan. Leo an' the ovvers... They can't get ther stopper back in..." She screamed with laughter all of a sudden. "Pore buggers!" ...

She sighed. "Well, it woz fun while it lasted...."¹⁵

In a book that poses as Moorcock's rendering of

a multilingual journal by a Russian exile, why is it only the speech of a Cockney woman than is rendered phonetically, that is full of "comic" mispronunciations?

Just imagine writing something like this:

He switched on the radio and listened to the BBC announcer reading the news:

"Gud mawning. Hear iz thi nuzе.

"tu wimmin hu whur trapt on an i'land faw neerli ait 'owers wer brawt tu safti bie thi ayr si reskew servis juzd a fhew minits agow. Wun ov them iz sed to bi suffering from expozure, bud bawth ar sayf.

"In the Hawse of Comuns yestaday, the Chansellor ov the Exchecker sed he thawt that the reasent bugit had proved to be a grate suksess. But sum ekonomists hav carst dawt on hiz fawcasts of a stedi drop in the numba awt ov wurk.

Meenwile, thi Bridish Pryme Minizter and thi Eyrish TeaShark hav had furtha lawks in London abowt thi Anglow-Eyrish Agrilment. And tu bombs explowded owtside a Polees Stashun in Newri."

The rest of the news did not interest him. He began to cook supper.

No one does this to BBC English, of course. It is only ever done to dialects of English, and then only as a way of mocking and sneering at such dialects. Usually, it is done against poor people or against some sorts of foreigner.

This method has been widely criticised in recent years. Its basic absurdity has been pointed out many times, especially by people on the political left. Most writers have now stopped doing it. But not Mr. Moorcock, despite his radical pretensions.

And in fact, his rendering of Cockney isn't even really based on specific East End pronunciations. Everybody pronounces "was" as "woz". And "poor" and "pore" are pretty much the same word, when spoken with a standard English accent.

Orcs United?

'...but once again I saw all the old arguments being aired: Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Frank Herbert, Isaac Asimov and the rest, bourgeois reactionaries to a man, Christian apologists, crypto-Stalinists, were being praised in IT, FRENZ, and OZ and everywhere else...I started writing about what I thought was the implicit authoritarianism of these authors and as often as not found myself being accused of being reactionary, elitist or at very best a spoilsport...'¹⁶

'...Sauron and his henchmen are the old bourgeois bugaboo, the Mob - mindless football supporters throwing their beer-bottles over the fence...'¹⁷

'...there is Tolkien and that group of middle-class Christian fantasists... whose villains are thinly disguised working class agitators!'¹⁸

'Tolkien...sees the petite bourgeoisie, the honest artisans and peasants, as the bulwark agaainst Chaos...solid good sense opposed to a perverted intellectualism!'¹⁹

Moorcock has evidently picked up the style of one variety of left-wing literary criticism. The style, but not the substance. The words and phrases he uses are expressions of a definite view of the world. But Moorcock's own view of the world is indefinite and ever-shifting.

Moorcock is not a leftist. He is parasitic upon the left; picking up phrases and stray ideas, but giving nothing back. He neither accepts nor rejects the standard left-wing view of the world; he simply messes about with it and makes it totally incoherent.

Would it be pedantic to point out that football hooligans, trade union militants and perverted intellectuals are three essentially separate groups of people? Or that the Orcs do not greatly resemble any of these, being largely based on the traditional image of brigands, bandits or evil goblins?

In point of fact, while Lewis and Tolkien were indeed Christian, (though not of the same denomination), Asimov is Jewish, and Herbert has a personal faith that owes more to Islam and Zen Buddhism than Christianity.²⁰

For that matter, how can anyone be a "bourgeois reactionary" when "reactionary" indicates a desire to return to an earlier form of social order, and Britain and America remain bourgeois, in the normal sense of the term?

Nor can I see why any of those he mentions should

be be regarded as Stalinists, "Crypto-" or otherwise. To the best of my knowledge, none of them have ever claimed to be Marxists of any variety. Nor has anyone ever described them as such.

Perhaps Mr. Moorcock is applying Humpty Dumpty logic: he does not like Stalinists; he does not like these authors; therefore these authors are Stalinists! Q.E.D.

Faceless Men

To be fair, one must also mention one place where Moorcock shows some insight about Tolkien. Speaking of an evil character in a Gothic novel, he says:

'Throughout this long book Melmoth can also be seen as the Faceless Man of our dreams, the unknown aspect of ourselves which is symbolised as well in the figure of the cowed monk or the shadowy, omniscient spectre. He appears in many modern fantasy tales - Leiber's Sheelba of the Eyeless Face in the "Gray Mouser" stories, Tolkien's faceless villain in The Lord of the Rings, Paul Anderson's Odin in The Broken Sword... There is a link, too, perhaps, between the unknown aspect and the "evil" aspect of ourselves in that we sense the presence of the unknown aspect and fear it, judging it evil. Robert Louis Stevenson might have experienced such a process... in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.'²¹

Now this is quite perceptive. Had Moorcock only developed this line of thought, one might be willing to forgive him a great deal (including anglicising Poul Anderson's names).²² The "faceless villain" in The Lord of the Rings might be a reference to Sauron, to the Witch-King or to one of the other black riders, but I would judge it to be a valid comment in any case.²³

Ursula K. Le Guin says somewhere that Sam, Frodo and Gollum are, in a sense, different aspects of a single individual. It had occurred to me even before I read Moorcock's remarks that perhaps Sauron was also part of the process. Frodo sees the danger of becoming like Gollum; he is also tempted by the thought of becoming like Sauron. I was surprised to find the same notion in Moorcock's book, in a broader and better-developed form. Doubly surprised that Moorcock could see so much in one chapter, and so little in the passages that I quoted earlier. It's as if the Moorcock who wrote about faceless men never talks to the Moorcock who wrote Epic Pooh.

A Sideways look at Lovecraft

Moorcock is a muddled writer, who can have a good insight at one point and then forget about it elsewhere. The concept of the "unseen self" might also seem highly applicable to Lovecraft's Mythos. But Moorcock does not see it this way. In WuR he sneers at Lovecraft, and in Starship Stormtroopers he says:

'In a writer like Lovecraft a terror of sex often combines (or is confused for) a terror of the masses, the "ugly" crowd. But this is so common to so much 'horror' fiction that it's hardly worth discussing... Lovecraft appeals to us primarily when we are ourselves morbid. Apart from his offensively awful writing and a resultant inability to describe his horrors (leaving us to do the work - the secret of his success - we're all better writers than he is!...)'²⁴

If Lovecraft were not a good writer, how is it that he has survived and remained popular when most of his contemporaries are out of print and forgotten? As Moorcock says, sexual fear has a part in a great many horror stories.

Moorcock speaks of "terror of the masses". He does not say quite what he means by this. He could be referring to the theory that Frankenstein's Monster is rooted in a fear of the "lower orders". But the same analysis makes Count Dracula a representative of the ruling classes and exploiters.

Accepting that a class analysis is valid for some monsters, that does not make it valid for Lovecraft. Stretching a point, one could see the Shoggoth as a sort of unpleasant arcane proletariat. But the class basis of Cthulhu, the Mi-Go or Yog-Sothoth is by no means clear to me.

Moorcock mentions the obvious faults in Lovecraft, and misses the interesting fact that Lovecraft does successfully create a sense of cosmic horror; creatures that seem to have a real existence beyond the scope

of the human imagination.

I would not claim to know how Lovecraft does it. It's hard to see how a writer can ignore so many of the basic rules of good writing, and yet produce a sense of unease for a high proportion of those who read him. But it is undeniable that this is the case.

Actually, Moorcock's own remarks about the "faceless man" give a clue. Part of the trick must lie in letting the reader attach his or her own fears onto the horrors that Lovecraft hints at. But if that were the whole of the method, then any hack writer could write stories as enduring and popular as Lovecraft's.

Lovecraft is clearly not to Mr. Moorcock's taste - not even in his morbid moods. But Mr. Moorcock's personal feelings are not a reliable definition of universal truths. No writer is so great as to be admired by everyone, or even by all persons of good taste. For instance, Tolstoi argued that Shakespeare was actually a bad and worthless writer, but most people continue to have a high opinion of both Tolstoi and Shakespeare.

Literary criticism is plagued by theorists who develop a theory to explain why certain well-admired works of literature are good, and then use this theory to argue that other well-admired works of literature are bad. Not everyone does this. Some are wise enough to see that a theory that offers deep and genuine insights into some works may not work at all for other works that are equally good. But far too many writers and critics confuse partial truths with absolute truth.

Moorcock follows this tradition - but he simplifies it. He does not develop a theory; he simply makes assertions. He does not like Lovecraft's works; therefore Lovecraft is a worthless writer; therefore all those who find something singular and disturbingly powerful in Lovecraft's works are fools!

Damning Dunsany

Moorcock also sneers at Dunsany. He accuses him of prose inspired by railway journeys and composes a poem to emphasise the point:

"Up from the platform and onto the train
Got Welleran, Rollory and young Iraine.
Forgetful of sex and income tax
Were Sooranard, Mamolek, Akanax;
And in their dreams Dunsany's lord
Mislaid the communication cord."²⁵

The names have a rhythm; railways also have a rhythm. It is doubtful that there is any deeper connection. Most poetry has a rhythm, though rhythm and rhyme are out of favour with some modern poets. (As indeed is reason).

It is easy to play the same games with Moorcock's own creations:

A trip along the railway
With torturer and sleezy ley
(Past peasants full of resignation
And no ideas above their station);
With Jerry, full of gloom and ire,
Gloriana's unholy Quire;
Un-grey Dorian, Corum true,
Erekoze, Elic - Elic too?
To Ianelorn, where shadows leak
(for Melniboné, change Mervyn Peake)
Being a single person
They can get a cheap excursion!

Dunsany was a pioneer. It is easy to compare him unfavourably with later writers in a field that he helped open up. Moorcock stamps round well-trodden ground. There is little in his work that was not already present in the works of James Branch Cabell, for instance. Except that Cabell knew a great deal more, and was much less pretentious.

Who Dares, Whispers

Moorcock seems to have a strange hang-up about Winnie-the-Pooh. He really hates the Pooh stories. One might have thought that the Pooh books are fine for the young children who read them. If children start off with stuff like Pooh, there are more likely to read the world's great literature later on. The stories are limited, of course, and somewhat soft. But after all, what sort of literature is likely to be enjoyed by small children? Would you read them Doszoyevski, maybe?

Moorcock sees a similarity between Pooh and the Hobbits. The similarity is a very minor one. Both draw on the English fairy-tale tradition, but they use it in

very different ways. Tolkien used it to create the Hobbits' Shire, which served as a useful stepping stone to the stranger and more epic-heroic events of the War of the Ring.

Moorcock says:

'The humour is often unconscious because, as with Tolkien*, the authors take words seriously but without pleasure:

"One summer's evening an astonishing piece of news reached the Ivy Bush and Green Dragon. Giants and other portents on the borders of the Shire were forgotten for more important matters: Mr. Frodo was selling Bag End...Just why Mr. Frodo was selling his beautiful hole was even more debatable than the price..."²⁴

Unconscious humour, Mr. Moorcock? If you can't see that the author is well aware of the comic absurdity of much of what the Hobbits do, then you have understood very little. And do you suppose a writer who took no pleasure in words could come up with a name like Sackville-Baggins? "Sackville" is of course a pseudo-French rendering of Baggins.²⁷

Or what about the Proudfoot family? In his farewell party speech, Bilbo refers to them, quite correctly, as Proudfoots. But one of them shouts out that it should be "Proudfeet". This is a moderately good joke; it also points out the complexity of English plurals. (Myself, I have always wondered why we have mice infesting houses, rather than mouses infesting mice.)

Perhaps Tolkien's humour is too subtle for Michael Moorcock to follow. Moorcock's own writings tend to run to weird extremes. He has a talent for the wildly improbable and extra-ordinary, but very little for the sort of not-quite-real settings that Tolkien used so well.

Mr. Moorcock adds the note that:

*The Silmarillion (1977) is, of course, the finest proof of his argument."²⁸

This would be surprising, to anyone who hadn't worked out that any bit of evidence will be treated as proof by Mr. Moorcock, once he has made up his mind on a matter.

In fact, we know from The Silmarillion that Tolkien began with tragic and epic-heroic works, starting with The Fall of Gondolin. But he found that most people failed to understand them; in those days, myths and stories based on myths were much less familiar than they are today. Tolkien's works were too far away from the normal world, and from fictional writing as it existed then. He worked on The Silmarillion as a labour of love, with little hope that it could ever be published (let alone bring him fame).

The Hobbits provided a bridge between the familiar world and the world of The Silmarillion. Tolkien was not at first sure that the two were connected. He did not set out to write stories of little people in an almost-familiar world having adventures in some grand remnant of the epic wars between Morgoth and the High Elves. That's just how it came out; The Hobbit has an echo of the world of The Silmarillion, and LoTR developed as a hybrid of the epic and the children's story.

Nowadays, any writer can leap right into an epic-heroic world, with some hope that the reader will accept this and not get completely confused. Partly, this is because of all the stories in this vein that have been written since The Hobbit: not just the superior ones we can still read today, but also the well-forgotten trash. The idea of an epic-heroic world is now almost commonplace.

Even so, part of the strength of The Hobbit and LoTR comes from the very fact that we start off among the Hobbits, who are perhaps just one step away from ourselves. The tale leads us another step, and then another, into less and less familiar territory. And because the journey is gradual, we are less inclined to view Elves and Orcs and the like as unreal. Tolkien has made for us a road to Middle-earth!

Moorcock the Pretender

Moorcock says:

'The little hills and woods of that Surrey of the mind, the Shire, are 'safe', but the wild landscape everywhere beyond the Shire is 'dangerous'. Experience of life itself is

dangerous. The Lord of the Rings is a pernicious confirmation of the values of a morally bankrupt middle-class."²⁴

Firstly, the Shire and the surrounding lands are based on real landscapes in and around Oxfordshire, which was where Tolkien lived much of his life. Moorcock should know this; enough people have pointed it out. Surrey - much less rural, and on the other side of London - is something completely different.

Secondly, wild or semi-wild landscapes are dangerous. Any countryside can be dangerous. Even simple activities like hill-walking or pony-trekking require that you treat the land with some respect - if you want to come back alive, that is. Even soldiers on training exercises, fit young men with a knowledge of survival techniques, will sometimes get themselves killed by not treating a wild or semi-wild environment with as much respect as it deserves.

For that matter, experience of life is also dangerous. If you leave the settled and conventional ways, you may see strange and wonderful things, but you will also pay a price. You may think that the journey was well worth the price - as does Bilbo when he returns to Bag-End. But to suppose that experience of life will not be dangerous is sheer deception.

It was with good reason that Nietzsche said "Live Dangerously". Moorcock pretends to be someone who lives dangerously. But I don't think he is, really. He presents himself as a bit of a radical, which is perfectly acceptable in conventional literary circles. To be a substantial radical might make you unpopular. To be a serious conservative might also make you unpopular. But to play trivial games with radical or reactionary ideas, as Moorcock does - that's fine. And it's about as dangerous as swatting flies!

To speak of one group of people as "morally bankrupt" implies that there are other groups who are morally sound. But there is no sign that Moorcock sees anyone or any group as being sound or hopeful. Once again, he is using bits of simplistic left-wing jargon, without in fact accepting the beliefs that lie behind the jargon.

As for serious Marxist or radical analysis of literature - that seems to be quite outside his range. Given the hash he has made of the simple stuff, this is probably just as well.

High Art and Low Art

There have been various attempts to make science-fiction and fantasy conform to what are regarded as good literary standards. Moorcock follows this trend, as well as he can. But even when it is done with real learning and scholarship, I would regard it as a doubtful practice.

Even the best literary criticism can only describe what has already happened. Most of it concerns literary forms that have been fully analysed, digested and assimilated. Works of fantasy and science-fiction tend not to conform to these norms. Sometimes because they are low-grade and crude, other times because they are developing in interesting new directions. And both these things may be true at the same time.

In the Elizabethan age, high art was poetry. Drama was seen as vulgar. And indeed, a lot of it was vulgar, and trivial, and of interest only because of its connection with more substantial works. It was the vulgar drama that created the environment in which Shakespeare could develop. Educated opinion at the time rather looked down on plays; and in many cases had rules for proper drama that Shakespeare quite often broke. What he was praised for were his narrative poems Venus and Adonis and Hero and Leander; works that hardly anyone bothers to read today. There is nothing wrong with them as poems, but nothing particularly interesting about them either. They lack the human insights of the plays.

Shakespeare himself seems not to have viewed his plays as anything very important. He took no steps to preserve them for future generations. We have as much as we have, because some of his friends had the First Folio published. It is generally agreed that not everything in it is by Shakespeare. And it may not include the full text of all the plays that Shakespeare wrote. For instance, it has been argued that a substantial chunk of Macbeth was left out, and is now lost for ever.

When plants grow, they tend to produce a lot of dull roots, stems and leaves before they ever put forth

a flower or a fruit. Likewise with new cultural forms.

When the modern novel was developing, educated people knew that it was not to be compared to the essay, the serious literary form. And indeed, a lot of early novels were so bad that no one nowadays reads those books except to get an insight into how the Novel developed.

Cinema was low art in its early days; it was only later that people realised that it could be used for serious drama that would go well beyond the limits set by live theatre. Television began as a vulgar younger brother to the cinema; it was only later that people realised that it was an art-form in its own right.

I suspect that a similar process of evolution is happening with computer adventure games. At present most of them are crude and repetitive: full of orc-slaying and dungeon-searching. But some of the possibilities have been explored by Douglas Adams (author of The Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy, itself now adapted as a computer game). I doubt if he will be the Shakespeare of the computer game - but he may help clear the ground for some such development. Over the next two or three decades - who knows what will happen?

While I was working on this article, it suddenly occurred to me that some of Moorcock's early works - in particular the Jerry Cornelius novels, which I actually never much liked - could be seen as straining against the limits imposed by the conventional book; and as needing a form like the computer adventure to enable them to be properly expressed. But as far as I know, Moorcock has never tried anything along these lines. Indeed, his more recent works no longer strain against the limits. He has mostly gone back to methods of writing that were well established in the 19th c., with a single narrator and a single narrative thread.

Gollum as Stream-of-consciousness

Stream-of-consciousness is a 20th c. term for a method that had in fact been used in earlier times, an attempt to represent something of the process of thinking, instead of setting it out in neat and tidy forms. Thus instead of saying:

'John went to the market square to meet Mary. He was a little worried not to find her there. To pass the time he had a cup of tea. After an hour he was very worried indeed.', one might say:

'Going along to the market square; Mary must be there; hell she isn't; wait about for a bit; where is she? have a cup of tea, rotten tea, overpriced tea but does it matter where is she; it's been an hour now where is she?'

Now consider Gollum. His thinking, like that of other characters in The Hobbit and LotR, is described in fairly conventional terms. But his speech, his endless monologue, does have some of the elements of stream-of-consciousness. I'm far from sure whether Tolkien did this deliberately. It could be that he was poking fun at more fashionable forms of literature - as Lewis did in his interesting short story The Shoddy World. Or it could be that he would have denied any such connection, had someone suggested it. It's hard to know.

What I would say is that Tolkien could probably not have created Gollum's odd monologue unless he had come across "stream-of-consciousness". It is Gollum's mode of speech which defines him and makes him the most memorable character in both The Hobbit and LotR. That is perhaps more important than Tolkien's attitude to the literary method (which can make a normal story more or less unintelligible if it is used with too much enthusiasm).

Home Movies of the Soul

Moorcock says:

'Epic fantasy can offer a world of metaphor in which to explore the rich, hidden territories deep within us. And this, of course, is why epic romances, romantic poetry, grotesques, fascinated painters and illustrators for centuries, just as fabulous and mythological subjects have always inspired them, as representations of this inner world.'³⁰

There is only one use of fantasy, and not necessarily the most serious or productive one. People usually find their own "inner world" fascinating. Others may not share this feeling - at least unless it ties into some aspect of their own "inner world".

Orson Welles in Citizen Kane builds the whole film

around an enigma. The man had said "rosebud" just before he died; what did he mean by it?

Within the framework of the film, the investigators can not resolve the matter. "Rosebud" could be a reference to hundreds of different things; they cannot deduce what it meant in Kane's personal symbolism. The audience would be equally baffled, except that the solution is suddenly given at the very end of the film. A very unexpected solution - it is in fact the name of a toboggan. But it is not trivial; in a way that I won't try to summarise here, it ties together the disparate elements of the film and illuminates the complex character of Kane.

These days you get a lot of books and films that leave out the essential explanation, that never bother to fill out the meaning behind their personal symbols. They expect the audience to know. But symbols do not have a single meaning. A picture of a glass of red wine might suggest Holy Communion to one person, a nice meal in a restaurant to another, drunkenness and oblivion to a third. If the film-maker in fact intended it as a reference to the wine-adulteration scandals that happened a few years back, the audience is likely to get very confused!

Explorations of inner worlds tend to become baffling, trivial and subjective; home movies of the soul. There are few things more fascinating than one's own home movies; few things more dull and boring than other people's home movies.

At the risk of sounding rude, I quite find that writers who set out to "explore the rich, hidden territories deep within..." seem totally self-obsessed, eventually vanishing up their own back passages. It is their right to do this, of course. But pardon me if I am reluctant to follow them there!

This sort of thing is in any case hardly new. Mainstream literature has done it already, at least as well and probably much better. "New Wave" Science-Fiction was a borrowing of some very old waves from other parts of literature and the arts. For instance Robert Graves once said of the poetry of his times: "By the Forties, Nature had gone out; the inner recesses of the soul took her place. Revelations of these tended to be dull, one soul recess much like another - as you may also say about coal-cellars."³¹

The Role of the Artist

The simplest link between the "inner worlds" of two different individuals is via the "external world", which everyone has access to. And there will be a stronger link if the experience is of the same parts of the "external world". The thoughts of a doubting Catholic are most likely to be of interest to another Catholic, or to an ex-Catholic. Likewise the thoughts of a doubting Communist are most likely to be of interest to another Communist, or to an ex-Communist. Meditations upon the validity of transubstantiation (or of the dialectic) will mean little to a reader who barely knows what transubstantiation (or the dialectic) is supposed to be about. It will probably not interest a reader who is indifferent to such questions.

On the other hand, fantasy writing can and does work for people whose "inner world" is quite different from that of the author. Kafka's work, for instance, is without doubt rooted in his experience of being Czech and of being Jewish. It may also owe something to his having suffered tuberculosis: a fatal illness in that era. Fellow sufferers who read The Trial reckoned that this was its true meaning. But it is nevertheless a fact that Kafka's writings can be appreciated by readers who are not Czechs, who are not Jewish and who do not have tuberculosis.

I think that a concept from Tolkien's On Fairy Stories gives the answer. The writer creates a secondary world. This secondary world owes something to the primary world or "external world", and something to the writer's own "inner world". But it is not the same as either.

Now a secondary world is real in its own terms. It may correspond closely to something in the primary world. Kafka's The Burrow is at one level coherent enough for one to get a good picture of the narrator-creature, something like a badger, perhaps. This does not detract from the stories' role as an exploration of a state of mind. Rather, it enhances it; makes it less specific to any human place or time.

Secondary worlds may be quite different from the world of our own experience. Orcs, elves and dragons seem to be absent from our own world. But similar patterns of behaviour are not.

Equally, in the world of the *Star Wars* films, sound seems able to propagate through a vacuum. This is nonsensical in terms of the laws of physics, but necessary for dramatic effect. For the Death Star to detonate in total silence would seem a terrible anti-climax, and might sharply remind us that what we are actually witnessing is the destruction of a small special-effects-model.

Secondary worlds work because they are both more comprehensible and more generally valid than slices of the writer's own "inner world". Done properly, they are shared between the author and the reader. And the author has a responsibility not to be rude or inconsiderate; to remember that the reader also has a stake in the "secondary world".

Secondary worlds can also have interesting connections with the outside world. *LotR* is in part derived from Tolkien's own experience in World War One. It is also a commentary on both world wars. Thus, it ties into major events in the "external world" (which will thus be a part of everyone's "inner world", in one form or another). But equally, the derivation is not simple or straight-forward. *LotR* can be enjoyed by a range of people with very different views of the matter.

Had Tolkien simply given us a slice of his own "inner world", it would mostly be of interest to people whose views and backgrounds were similar to his own. In fact, the secondary world of his writings is appreciated by a great diversity of people. Tolkien was very popular among hippies - a human type that did not exist at the time he conceived *LotR*. And he was - and still is - no less popular among people who are not at all like hippies, or who have a definite lack of fondness for hippies. This is the strength of good writing; of writing that goes beyond the author's immediate experience and creates a secondary world that has a wider meaning.

Moorcock describes only half of the process. And his own writing, though at times very good, is limited by his inability to step beyond his own familiar environment. No matter how strange or alien the setting, his characters have a strong resemblance to sixties' hippies play-acting in fancy dress. What he thinks very superior is actually no more than half-baked!

Inner Worlds and External Worlds

The reader may have noticed that I have been using the terms "inner world" and "external world" without trying to define exactly what I mean. This is unavoidable; it ties up with the most complex, controversial and fundamental questions in philosophy. Rather than get diverted too far onto these matters, I will say simply that I assume that there is an "external world" that is by and large independent of our own immediate will, and an "inner world" in each person which is compounded of their own experience of the world, their perception of that experience, and of what they wish to do (which will often be frustrated in the "external world").

I do not want to get involved in the respective merits of the strictly materialist view (in any of its versions), of the Kantian thing-in-itself, or of the views of Bishop Berkeley (who held that the world does not exist at all, but is simply an illusion that God maintains for our benefit). These are complex matters, and not really relevant to a discussion of Tolkien and Moorcock.

I simply want to say that, for all ordinary purposes, the world has an existence independent of our view of it. This is relevant, since a lot of Moorcock's thinking seems to be rooted in a confused notion that one can somehow change the world by changing one's view of it.

Lots of people favour some version of this view, although they tend to shrink back from its full implications. It would mean, for instance, that tyrants who killed the messengers who brought them bad news were acting on sound philosophical principles; the news could be seen as having been created by the message, rather than existing as a separate and unalterable fact.

Quantum mechanics is sometimes cited in support of this view. It does seem to imply that the behaviour of an electron can be influenced by the observer's view of it. On the other hand, no physicist supposes that an electron's charge can be influenced by the observer's perception of it. Nor can the speed of light, or many other basic physical constants. And for everything from a dust-mote up to a galaxy, normal rules of cause-and-effect apply.

I would prefer the view of Omar Khayyam:

The moving finger writes; and, having writ

Moves on. . . 32

It is notable that we often discover things in the material world that are both more complex and more wonderful than anything we had expected. The moons of the outer planets turn out to be far more remarkable and diverse than even the science-fiction writers had imagined. The rings of Saturn had been perceived as several large rings and they unexpectedly turned out to be a huge number of very much smaller rings, and quite against expectations, the other outer planets also turned out to have rings. At the time of writing, Neptune has not yet been reached: I suspect that it also will surprise us.

To take another example: it is possible to grab hold of a hairy black spider, mistaking it for a blackberry. But the spider will assert its identity as a spider, even though you perceived it as a blackberry. Your own will and perception can not turn it into a blackberry.

This is not to say that perception or view of the world is unimportant. Once you have grabbed the spider, and discovered that it is in fact a spider, your actions will depend very much on your perception of spiders. You may drop it with a scream of horror, crush it in your fingers, drop it and stamp on it, flick it away, study it as an interesting specimen or put it gently back where you found it. This all depends on how you perceive the spider: as unclean, dangerous, unimportant, interesting or a creature with its own right to life. Your perception will determine its future; whether it remains alive or becomes a crushed and dead spider. (And there are even people who would eat it, perceiving the spider as just as edible as a blackberry!)

To link back to Tolkien. Tolkien had a fear of spiders, probably because of the poisonous spider which bit him when he was young. In his "inner world", spiders had a significance which other people might not agree with. But in the secondary world that he created, his feelings about spiders were actualised in monsters like Ungoliant and Shelob. These work fine as monsters, even for readers who do not share Tolkien's feelings about spiders in the primary world.

Tolkien created secondary worlds. Moorcock's creations are muddled mixtures, half-formed secondary worlds combined with lumps that derive directly from his own "inner world". And Moorcock is now looking more dated than Tolkien, as the world continues to change. I suspect that it is Tolkien's vision that will prove the longer lasting.

Fantasy - Origins and Categories

Earlier, I objected to Moorcock's attempts to define "epic fantasy". I am suspicious of all such attempts. This is not say that all categories are wholly unreal. There can be whole groups of stories that are strongly influenced by each other, and not much influenced by anything else. Fairy stories were a fixed tradition which lasted for several generations, became bogged down by clichés, and has largely been abandoned. There are very few modern fairy-tales, though there are many works that owe something to the fairy-tale tradition.

Other traditions are still alive and active. Sword and Sorcery, for instance. Or westerns, which mostly include exactly the same distortions of the actual way of life of the 19th c. American Midwest, but "epic fantasy" is an absurdly broad term, which includes several quite separate traditions and a great many works that belong to no single or definite tradition.

The distinction between fantasy, science-fiction, and mainstream fiction is basically arbitrary. The romance in the broad sense of the term, tales of adventure long ago and/or far away, is a far older form; a form common to a great many highly diverse cultures.

The modern novel represented a break with this tradition. Novels tended to be contemporary, indigenous and socially extended. That is to say, they were about the present or the fairly recent past; and were about places and people familiar to their readers. This went along with the developments of new methods of writing, a vast increase in the amount that was written and the creation of some outstandingly good literary works (together with a much greater number of lesser works, and enormous amounts of worthless and forgotten trash). Our current idea of the mainstream derives from this. But the "mainstream" has always included a few works that used the methods of the novel for the wider subject-matter of the romance.

Tolkien made use of the many literary methods that had been developed for the novel. I have already mentioned stream-of-consciousness. It could also be said that *LotR* is a socially extended fairy-story. And the *Hobbits* Shire, though it is not actually part of the world we know, is very close to the sort of contemporary and indigenous environment in which a conventional novel might be set. But he also drew on the various epic and mythological traditions. Tolkien was Tolkien; there is no wider group of writers that he can sensibly be lumped with.

"Epic fantasy" is not in any sense a continuous tradition. Medieval romances were the "mainstream" of their time. Some of the Icelandic Sagas - *Njal's Saga*, for instance - were realistic descriptions of a fairly recent past. In some ways, the best of the Sagas anticipated the modern novel. But as far as I know, there was no direct link - sagas were only re-discovered after the modern novel had established itself, and were then seen as the basis for an alternative type of fiction.

There are many other cases. Gothic tales were an independent line of development that occurred in parallel with the development of the novel. In the 19th c., various authors wrote or re-told fantastical tales using the literary methods of the novel. The bulk of modern fantasy writing exists as an outgrowth of science-fiction - though there are numerous individual works that have quite different origins. Kafka is probably the most notable example.

The basis of modern fantasy is not an abstract category but a science-fiction and fantasy sub-culture. This has tended to be socially distinct from the mainstream, even from mainstream authors who used similar subject-matter. (At least - this is the case in Britain and America. I doubt if these categories are valid for all literary cultures).

At present, the barriers seem to be breaking down. Moorcock himself has played a part in this. But he seems unable to get any further than the notion of science-fiction and fantasy imitating what has already been done very competently in experimental forms of "mainstream" literature. It has been left to other writers - Ursula K. Le Guin for instance - to show that science-fiction and fantasy can say things that mainstream writers could not express.

Moorcock says, boldly imagining the viewpoint of a literary critic five hundred years hence:

'As the Gothic lost popularity and passed its lasting qualities into the general mainstream of fiction so, for instance, will the Science-Fiction Romance leave its mark only on juvenile adventure stories and on the range of techniques available to the writer of non-category fiction.'

But the "mainstream", the conventional novel in all its many forms, did not really exist before the 18th c. It only became the mainstream, the dominant literary form, in the 19th c. And it is a moot point if it will remain so. Large parts of the "mainstream" seem to have become a "mainswamp", full of stagnation and elegant futility. It seems just as likely that in the long run science-fiction and fantasy will merge with the "mainstream" on a more or less equal basis, re-creating the traditional romance on a wider and deeper basis.

Notes

1. Micheal Moorcock: *Wizardry and Wild Romance*, Victor Gollancz, pbk. ed. 1987, p.21. (Henceforth referred to as *WWR*.)
2. *WWR*, p.142.
3. *WWR*, p.137.
4. *WWR*, p.138
5. *WWR*, pp.125-126.
6. Tolkien, *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*. George Allen & Unwin, 1983, p.155.
7. *WWR*, p.126.
8. In *Writing in Society*. Raymond Williams gives a list of the 10 best-selling books of 1848. Eight of them are by authors that no one today is likely to have heard of. *The Country and the City*, by the same author, would greatly improve Mr. Moorcock's understanding of "novels set in the countryside".
9. *WWR*, p.126.
10. *WWR*, p.126.
11. *The Monsters and the Critics*, p.151.

12. *Starship Stormtroopers* originally appeared in an anarchist magazine. It has been re-published, along with some short stories, in *The Opium General and Other Stories*, Grafton pbk. 1984, p.285, and is henceforth referred to as *StS*.

(I apologise for keeping on quoting from paperback versions. To quote the hardback edition would be more scholarly, of course. But limited time and money force me to rely on whatever I can get hold of. Besides, this article is more likely to be read by people with personal libraries, than by scholars with access to expensive hardbacks).

13. *Epic Pooh* appeared much earlier as a pamphlet produced by the British Fantasy Society. A shortened version of it appeared in the now-defunct *LONDON DAILY NEWS* under the charming pen-name of Torquemada. Several members of the Tolkien Society wrote in letters to the *London Daily News* pointing out that "Torquemada" had made numerous errors of fact. Some of them were published, and were left unanswered. But Moorcock, of course, did not let the fact get in the way of his opinions. He repeated exactly the same errors in *Wizardry and Wild Romance*.
14. *The Hobbit*, Chapter 14.
15. Moorcock: *Byzantium Endures*, Fontana Paperbacks, 1982, pp.285-286.
16. *StS*, p.282-283.
19. *WWR*, pp.123-124.
20. Tolkien was of course a Roman Catholic, and Lewis an Anglican. Moorcock seems to be under the impression that both of them were Anglicans. Frank Herbert draws ideas from Islam, but goes against such fundamental Muslim principles as the Unity of God.
21. *WWR*, p.40.
22. This seems to have been corrected in later editions.
23. To judge from his remarks in *Epic Pooh*, Moorcock has only read a few scattered passages from *LotR*. He certainly seems to be vague about some of the details.
24. *StS*, pp.284-285.
25. *WWR*, p.122.
26. *WWR*, pp.123-124.
27. For a good analysis of Tolkien's linguistic humour, see T.A. Shippey's *The Road to Middle-earth*, George Allen & Unwin, 1982.
28. *WWR*, p.122, footnote.
29. *WWR*, p.125.
30. *WWR*, p.17.
31. *Poetic Craft and Principles*, Cassel & Company Ltd., 1967.
32. This is Fitzgerald's translation, of course. Whether or not it is true to the original, it is this work that has been influential on English-speaking readers.
33. *WWR*, p.24.



FINROD'S

Farewell to Beor

"Dear friend, my breath is heavy.
It is time, I think, for me to go.
Whither? I do not know."

"Friend, dear friend, what happens to you?
I've heard of Man's Fate - Yes, I have.
But who am I to understand?"

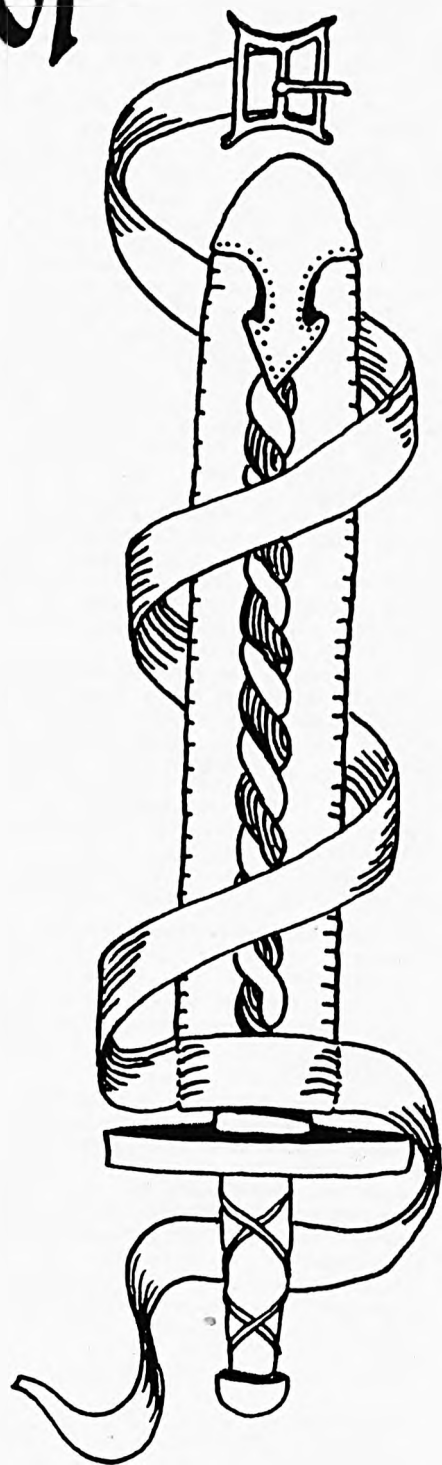
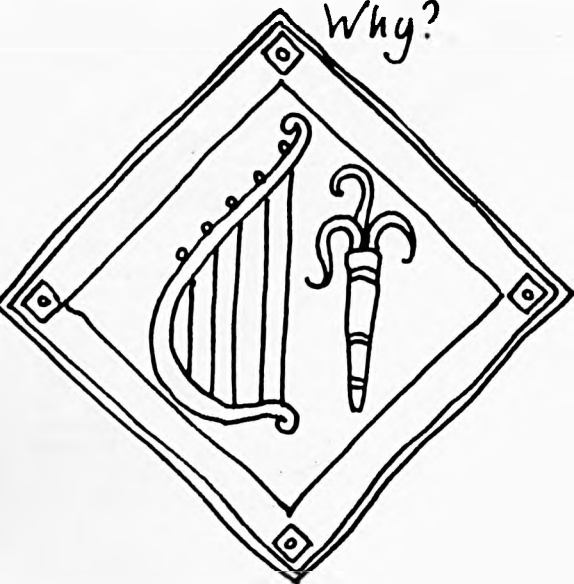
I have lived so many years,
I have fought the enemy a thousand times.
But I have never known either fear or fatigue.

You are like me in so many ways,
Valiant, determined, unyielding.
How can you be so unlike me now?

You were so strong all your life,
And now, untouched by sword,
On your bed you lie, dying. I can't see why.

We need you sorely, indeed we do,
And now you go, never to come back.
How can it happen? How can it be?

Friend, dear friend, why don't you stay?
Why do you go so far away
To be found no more until the world's break?
Why?

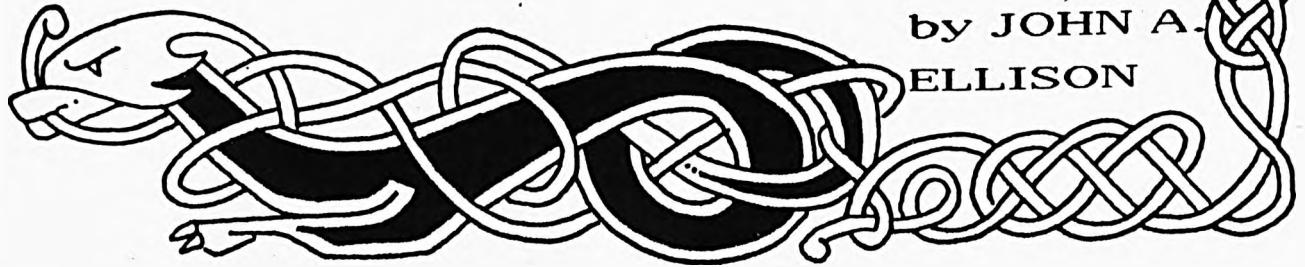


peter buch



"The Legendary War and the Real One" The Lord of the Rings and the Climate of its Times.

by JOHN A.
ELLISON



On November 12th, 1949 Major Warren Lewis, who had just finished reading The Lord of the Rings in the MS, recorded his impressions of it in his diary. "A great deal of it", he wrote, "can be read topically - the Shire standing for England, Rohan for France, Gondor the Germany of the future, Sauron for Stalin, ... etc." Critical reviews, he thought, might assume lines such as, "this political satire would gain greatly by compression, and the excision of such irrelevant episodes as the journey to Lothlórien." Tolkien himself reacted unfavourably to specific or allegorical interpretations of his work, as is well-known. So much so that in the foreword to the Second Edition of LotR (1966), he tried to dispel once and for all any impression that could remain that his work could have any relationship to the events of the Second World War, or of the period leading up to it. "The real war," he wrote, "does not resemble the legendary war either in its process or in its conclusion." Yet the impressions left on such an intelligent and sympathetic reader and observer as C.S. Lewis' brother are clearly genuine and spontaneous. They can hardly be dismissed out of hand.

C.S. Lewis himself was no doubt as sensitive to impressions as his brother was. Perhaps he had become aware, though, as a result of conversations with Tolkien, of the latter's dislike of having his work looked at in this kind of light. The comments attributed to him on the issue, show him dealing with it more circumspectly. "These things", he said, "were not devised to reflect any particular situation in the real world. It was the other way round; real events began, "horribly, to conform to the pattern he had freely invented." This looks plausible enough, but actually it evades the issue, however ingeniously. There either was or was not, a relationship of one kind or another, between the events in the book and those in reality. There is no meaning in a kind of pseudo-relationship arising subsequently.

Another statement by Tolkien himself on the topic occurs in the course of LotR itself. "The Mirror shows many things," says Galadriel, "and not all have yet come to pass. Some never come to be, unless those that behold the visions turn aside from their path to prevent them. The Mirror is dangerous as a guide of deeds." There, presented in the language of metaphor, is the true nature of the relationship LotR seems to bear on the history of its times explained. The Mirror appears to function as a kind of sampling device: it tests and reacts to the atmosphere around it arising out of all that is passing in Middle-earth; and from it it produces a reflection of current events and a forecast of possible outcomes. In the same way an artist or author responsive to memories and impressions from all kinds of sources, is bound to react to the climate of its times, the

course, been often obliged to fight to maintain themselves in a hard world; but in Bilbo's time that was very ancient history." This is exactly the basis of Bowling's nostalgia for England as he felt it to have been before 1914. None of the inhabitants of the little Oxfordshire town in which he lived at that time, says Orwell, could conceive of a state of affairs when "things were different." The threat posed by the dictatorships of the 1930's was, of course, widely seen in individualistic, as well as in nationalistic terms. Bilbo Baggins and "Fatty" Bowling are particular manifestations of a general trend, already well established in its hold on popular imagery. The novels of Franz Kafka, The Good Soldier Schweik, the films of Charlie Chaplin, all represented, in their own way, variations on the theme of the "little man" confronting power and authority in all its forms, totalitarian or otherwise. It was a fruitful subject for cartoonists, political or more general in their aims. Orwell's last "hero", Winston Smith, takes it to its logical conclusion.

There is no single episode in LotR, however, which is as suggestive of analogy with contemporary, "real", events as are the Númenórean chapters of LR. The whole picture is more diffuse and generalised. There is and must be an element of subjectivity about the comparisons any one person may feel inclined to make. Other people may be able to suggest or adduce equally valid ones different to those made before. A start has been made above by comparing, through another author's work, the fictional state of the Shire just before the War of the Ring, with the actual state of Britain at the end of the 30's. Perhaps one may continue by remarking on the odd but diverting impression of amateurishness pervading much of The Fellowship of the Ring; not on Tolkien's part, one hastens to add, but on that of the participants. "And you are lucky to be alive too, after all the absurd things you have done since you left home", says Gandalf to Frodo at Rivendell. He too, though, has been markedly "slow in the uptake", in reaching vital conclusions about the Ring, in the light of all the evidence that he had had available to him. If there is really a war in progress, being fought in order to meet and destroy a deadly menace of world-wide proportions, is not this a somewhat casual way of preparing for it, and carrying it on? Tolkien himself remarked on the evident contrast of tone between the bulk of FotR, and LotR as a whole. Does this not faintly recall the wholly distinct atmosphere that pervaded the early months of wartime; the sense of unreality that acquired the nickname of "the Phoney War". A sense of unreality that, in the months before Churchill became Prime Minister, arose from indications apparent to everybody of general unpreparedness, incompetence in high places, and military bungling of this and that kind. It was not long, of course, before this sense faded from everyone's consciousness as the total dedication and professionalism with which war came to be carried on, took over on all fronts and at home. "Total war" came to mean concentration on everyone's part, in or out of the forces, on the single objective of the defeat of the Axis powers to the exclusion of everything else. The latter course of the War of the Ring seems to reflect this attitude of mind, as much in regard to Gandalf as in any other respect. When he reappears, to the astonishment of Merry and Pippin, amid the débris of Isengard, he has changed in a way they find difficult to understand. He act as a briskly professional commander in the field; with, "ten thousand orcs to manage", he has no time on his hands for acting as a father-figure for a pair of rather puzzled hobbits. In a similar fashion the "Strider" of the earlier stages of the "History of the War of the Ring" becomes more impersonal and remote as "Aragorn", as the nature of his role changes, and becomes, as the war moves towards its final issues, concentrated on leadership in the field, and in battle.

To say all this is not to fall into the error of trying to invent parallels with "real" events or personalities. It would be nonsensical, for instance, to attempt to see Gandalf, or Aragorn, or Éomer, as fictional counterparts, say, of Churchill, or Eisenhower, or Montgomery. All the same, there is a genuine correspondence between one particular aspect in reality, and the "heroic" personalised outlook on warfare that is an essential part of romance. There is always a quasi-mystical aura of prestige that attaches, in popular imagery and belief, to great leaders in wartime. In terms

of a "heroic", or legendary war like Tolkien's, one hundred Riders of Rohan, say, simply represent a force of that particular strength. Put Théoden, or Éomer, at their head, and immediately their significance as a fighting unit is enlarged hundredfold. Once again, truth resides in myth as it does in reality. From just this kind of collective state of mind there arises a phenomenon like the fanatical devotion and loyalty Montgomery inspired in the troops he commanded in the field.

The chapters which cover the hobbits' stay in the "Prancing Pony" at Bree offer a different sort of suggestion or echo. Frodo, who has been alarmed, first by the appearance of several of the Men in the Common Room of the inn, and then by his conversation with Strider, and the hints dropped by the latter, is sufficiently alarmed to start wondering if all the Bree-landers are not in league against him, and "to suspect even old Butterbur's fat face of concealing dark designs". The result is that Strider faces a distinctly cold reception from both Frodo and Sam when he subsequently makes his appearance in the parlour where they had previously held their supper; and Sam's hostility continues after the arrival and reading of Gandalf's letter. Anyone old enough to recall it will remember the national obsession with spies and "fifth-columnists" that was particularly prevalent in the early years of the war; and how a suspicious atmosphere was inclined to accumulate around any person whose status or antecedents were not readily apparent or explainable. National advertising was promoted to encourage it, as though the most trivial remark was liable to be relayed to some office or operation's room in Berlin. "Careless talk costs lives" was a slogan for the times which could as well fit the mood of Strider's hints and warnings to Frodo and the others, following the Common Room episode. Of course the significance of impressions such as this lies in the "applicability" of the fictional tale, as Tolkien would have put it. The episode in question might equally call to mind the parallel of "Reds Under the Bed", or any other instance of national or public scaremongering.

There is one particular episode in LotR which, perhaps, illustrates its relationship to "real", contemporary events more clearly than any other one. As everywhere else, the relationship is seen, not in any resemblance between the fictional events, and those that had taken place, or were taking place, at the time they were set down, but in the associated imagery. The episode concerned is that of the madness and suicide of Denethor, and the distinguishing feature of it is the severity of the author's treatment of him. He is not, like Boromir, allowed to redeem himself at the last; he rejects the opportunity or possibility of doing so. "Your part," says Gandalf, "is to go out to the battle of your City, where maybe death awaits you. This you know in your heart." Denethor's moral collapse ends with the only suicide in LotR; a "mortal sin", in Tolkien's eyes as a practising Catholic. The passage continues with one of the rare indications in LotR of the existence of a system of religious belief. "Authority is not given to you, Steward of Gondor, to order the hour of your death ... And only the heathen kings, under the domination of the Dark Power, did this, slaying themselves in pride and despair, murdering their kin to ease their own death." Denethor's determination to cling on to what is left of his power to the last, and at the price of his own destruction, suggests that he is wholly enslaved by the Ring, even without possession of it. "I would have things as they were in all the days of my life ... but if doom denies this to me then I will have naught, neither life diminished, nor love halved, nor honour abated." The implications are shocking; the words seem like an approach towards the nihilism of the Nazi Weltmacht oder Niedergang. The method of Denethor's suicide, by self-immolation on a pyre: "we will burn like heathen kings before ever a ship sailed from the West", seems to recall the popular imagery that became associated with the death of Hitler. He apparently welcomes and relishes the prospect of the holocaust that he sees as about to overwhelm the West: "Against the Power that now arises there is no victory ... The West has failed. Go back and burn!" One can recall, in the light of this, that in the last weeks of the war Hitler determined that what was left of Germany would be destroyed with him; that he tried to ensure the destruction of all heavy

currents of opinion and popular feeling that surround him" as they do everyone else. The result, if one can employ another metaphor of Tolkien's, is to impart a particular flavouring to, "the Soup".

For Tolkien, it is clear, was no cloistered academic, naively unaware of what was happening in the world outside as he wrote. An entry in Warren Lewis' diary, made as early as 1934, describes experiences reported by one of his brother's pupils who had returned from a visit to Germany, and who bore news of the methods the Nazi apparatus of terror was employing to establish its hold; the deaths in the concentration camps; arrests and disappearances; Himmler and the Gestapo. It is easy to imagine Major Lewis discussing these appalling tidings with his brother, and with others in his circle. When Tolkien came, two or three years later to write the "Númenórean" chapters of *The Lost Road*, he must have been quite aware of the possible realities of life under a dictatorship. Here, more plainly than in any passage in *LotR* itself, we seem to be looking at the history of the times "reflected by the Mirror". Númenor, in the years immediately preceding its annihilation, has become a fascist-style dictatorship displaying all the distinctive ingredients of such. Militarism is dominant; youth is regimented; informers and secret police are everywhere; unexplained disappearances happen; "torture chambers" are rumoured to operate; a minority is persecuted. Over it hangs a pervasive atmosphere of retribution - of a coming holocaust and the dissolution of the existing fabric of life. Tolkien was of course writing against the background of the Stalinist terror in Russia, as well as against that of Nazi Germany. He would, as a devout and practising Christian, have felt a special antipathy towards the atheistic nature of Soviet communism, as he would have seen it.

The subject-matter of much of the writing of George Orwell, principally, of course, 1984, obviously offers a comparison of a kind. "The Party", and "Big Brother", exercise power for its own sake; like Morgoth and like Sauron, they require no ideological 'rationale' for their policies or their activities. "If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face - for ever", says O' Brien to Winston Smith; and that is no more and no less that what would become of Middle-earth if Sauron were to recover the Ring and, "cover all the lands in a second darkness". But Orwell and Tolkien were viewing the phenomena of power, as they were visible in the world in the 1930's, from very different standpoints; Orwell's stance as a non-believer and a socialist, joining the Republican side to fight in the Spanish Civil War, was poles apart from Tolkien's. There seems to be such a wide gulf separating them, that it would seem both superfluous and impossible to try to compare them in any more detail. In reality, however, this is not so. There is a very definite link between them; a shared consciousness of, "Englishness", not in a nationistic or jingoistic sense, but in the way both of them look back on and draw inspiration from, the land and landscape of their forebears. Orwell's writing frequently betrays a grief and distress over the rape of the English countryside by the products of development, industrial or otherwise, that recalls Tolkien's. There is one particular novel of Orwell's that has special significance in this direction. This is, *Coming Up for Air*, his last pre-war book, published a few weeks before the actual outbreak of the Second World War. It was written, in fact, at the very time *LotR* was beginning to take shape as we see it doing in *The Return of the Shadow*, and like it, it is concerned with the public impression produced in a small, "offshore", country, by a threat of continental, or world-wide dimensions. For those who have not read it, a brief outline may be helpful.

The story is told in the first person by George "Fatty" Bowling, a lower middle-class insurance salesman who lives, with his querulous wife and two children, in an undistinguished London suburb. (Perhaps if Orwell, and not Tolkien, had conceived of Bilbo Baggins, he would have been rather like this). On a day spent away from work, he indulges himself in reminiscences of his childhood and adolescence. He was brought up as a small shopkeeper's son in a little town in the midst of the Oxfordshire countryside (shades of "The Shire", indeed!). His memories are all of days in summer, spent in fishing, or in similar pursuits, with his friends, others like him. He went to school in the town, and then to work in his father's shop. And then, in August 1914, his way of life came suddenly to a stop. The outbreak

of war came on him, and on all the local inhabitants, with total unexpectedness. Bowling joined the army, and this marked a complete break with his past life. Other than to attend the funeral of his mother, she having died not long afterwards, he never returned to the scene until 1938, the "present-day", time in which the novel itself is set.

The picture of pre-1914 rural life which Orwell draws is not idealised in any way. The hardships faced by people of that class are made plain. Bowling and his boyhood associates behave like the unpleasant little "horrors" that they are, and that so many small boys have always been. But although the author is not trying to "glamorize" the past, it is clear that he views it with a kind of nostalgia, and is not in the least ashamed of doing so. The appeal of the vanished rural England is as real to him as it is to Tolkien; he would have understood exactly what Tolkien felt about Sarehole and its mill, for instance. Bowling, in the end, insists that he is "not being sentimental about it." "I tell you it was a good world to live in," says he to the reader. "I belong to it. So do you."

Later on in the book, Bowling contrives to absent himself from home for a few days, in a mood of frustration engendered by the realities of his existence in 1938. His wife later discovers that the explanation he has given for his absence is fictitious, and presumes that he has been with another woman, but what he in fact intends to do is to revisit the scenes of his early life. When he does so he finds them transformed and vandalized. In his case, though, there is not to be any "Scouring of the Shire". The small country town has become the nucleus of a suburban sprawl; the woods and fields that once surrounded it have been buried under speculative housing developments; new factories have been opened all the way around its outskirts. The hardest stroke of all comes when he discovers that the place which was his particular preserve, the secluded pool among trees with the special fish in it which he always dreamed of catching, has not been destroyed, but still exists in isolated preservation, in the midst of an "upmarket" housing development as a "Pixy Glen". All that he can do is return home, his dream shattered, to face the wrath of his wife, and his own fear of the impending catastrophe. "It will happen in 1941, they tell me," says he, and he pictures to himself the aftermath of totalitarian occupation; food queues; "police shooting out of first-floor windows" and other images of the same sort as make up the "Oceania" of 1984. The whole story is overshadowed by Bowling's expectation of the approaching war, and especially, of his terror at the prospect of bombing raids. This is dramatically symbolized in an episode towards the end of the book, in which an R.A.F. aircraft on a training flight accidentally drops a bomb on the town, killing a number of people, while Bowling is staying there. Orwell's narrative is wholly realistic, but remarkably, he succeeds at the same time in erecting a kind of "myth", regarding the vanishing English countryside and way of life, around it. He seems to be saying that both attitudes of mind, the "realistic" and the "mythic", are quite consistent one with the other, each representing an aspect of the truth. One presents the realities; the other concerns itself with the way these realities impress themselves on the popular imagination, with our collective attitude to the past. This is a profoundly important consideration in relation to Tolkien's work, which will be looked at again at the close of this essay.

Any reader of *LotR* will easily draw a parallel between its early chapters and much of the above. A small and insignificant land, contented with its way of life, and also perhaps a trifle complacent about it, becomes aware of a vague and distant menace, not properly understood or entirely comprehensible. "The land of Mordor ... like a shadow in the background of their memories ... ominous and disquieting ... away from east and south there were wars and growing fear. Orcs were multiplying again in the mountains. Trolls were abroad, no longer dull-witted, but cunning and armed with dreadful weapons. And there were murmured hints of creatures more terrible than all these, but they had no name." It is evident that the Hobbits' satisfaction with their way of life largely arises out of their sense that its conditions have always been what, as the story of *LotR* opens, they are. "In olden days they had, of

industry, and that he turned on and railed at the German people, who as he said had failed him and forfeited their claim to "historical greatness".

Of course Denethor's death is not the same as Hitler's; his end is tragic and pitiful because of what he was originally. There was nothing tragic or pitiful about Hitler's end, as everyone knows: he killed himself with Eva Brown in squalid circumstances, and the bodies were then hastily burned in order to conceal them from the advancing Russians. The facts were established, so far as was possible, by H.R. Trevor-Roper (now Lord Dacre), the officer appointed by the Allied authorities, at the end of the war, to undertake this task, and they were related by him in the well-known book he subsequently wrote, in which he set out his findings as to the circumstances surrounding Hitler's death, and described his search for the evidence relating to them. His purpose as historian was to destroy as effectively as possible the myth or myths that were, at the time, expected to accumulate around the events of the last days of the war in Berlin. This he achieved successfully, but it is rather remarkable how, in the book, a kind of "mythic" outlook on events seems to arise as a kind of by-product, independently of the facts being established. History never lost anything by being "good box-office", after all; and the extent to which the story of Hitler's last days embraces the imagery of the half-insane ruler surrounded by his court, immolating himself to the accompaniment of the sacrificial deaths of his servants and adherents, does nothing to lessen its readability. "Those whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make mad", a popular enough 'quote', at any time of crisis or catastrophe, was never more popular than at the end of the war (it makes its appearance in the original foreword, by Lord Tedder, to Trevor-Roper's book), and it equally befits Denethor's tragic end. Myth and reality share in the embodiment of truth; the popular imagery surrounding events, and its resulting effects on the climate of public opinion, are as much historical fact as the events themselves.

If it be accepted that Tolkien was influenced - unconsciously one presumes - by contemporary events, or rather, by the views and feelings of his contemporaries, it can still be argued that this was, after all, only one of numerous influences or sources of inspiration available to him. We are all aware of the various literary sources that contributed to the formation of Tolkien's world, and of LotR, but in the last resort it is the product distilled from them that interests us: the cake rather than the ingredients. Tolkien would not have had it otherwise: "he", as T.A. Shippey says, "did not approve of the academic search for 'sources'." But this particular source is exceptional; its significance, which is bound up with the collective response of Tolkien's readership, is different from that of any of the others.

When LotR first appeared, in the 1950's, the response to it was powerful and immediate. Its success clearly came as a surprise to its publishers, George Allen & Unwin, maybe also to Tolkien himself. Its first readers, or nearly all of them, were people who had had the Second World War as a central part of their experience. This took all kinds of forms of course - service in the fighting forces; living through air raids or the blitz; or simply the humdrum discomforts and frustrations of wartime "on the home front". The attitudes and emotions of wartime, fed by news and propaganda, whether directed at the enemy, or at the Allies, or at one's own people and one's friends, conditioned everyone's experience. When that experience was over, and for a number of years afterwards, people everywhere, who had been buoyed up through the war years by a vision and a hope of the new and better world and the new and better Britain expected to follow it, fell into a trough of anticlimax. Tolkien, again in the foreword to the Second Edition of LotR, refers to the notion which had gained some currency (absurd though it no doubt was) that the degradation of the Shire under Saruman was intended to reflect conditions in Britain under the Labour government elected in 1945. (If it reflects anything at all, it is much more likely that the knowledge of the experience of the countries that suffered occupation during the war provided some kind of background). All the same, leaving aside any political stance, there is truth of a kind in the comparison. This sense of anticlimax, a feeling of "this is not what we have just spent six years of our lives fighting for", would have been there whichever party had been in

power after 1945, and whatever policies it had followed, and of course the situation had been much the same after 1918. The parallel was drawn because many people felt that here, at the end of LotR, just as everywhere else in it, they saw embodied the truth of their own experience, both their hopes and their fears, for the present and future. And though the surface pattern of world events has assumed differing and varying forms in the years that have followed, succeeding generations (and, to take a notable instance, the one that came to maturity against the background of Cuba and Vietnam) have found the truth of their own experience reflected likewise. It seems more than likely that succeeding generations will continue to do so. Tolkien's mode is that of fantasy, but the message it carries is as "realist" as the most intentionally realistic of fiction. Fantasy is simply "the continuance of realistic narrative by other means."

Notes

- 1 Brothers and Friends. The Diaries of Major Warren Hamilton Lewis, ed. C.S. Kilby and M.L. Mead. Harper & Row (San Francisco), 1982, p.231.
- 2 By Humphrey Carpenter in J.R.R. Tolkien. A Biography, George Allen & Unwin, 1977, p.190.
- 3 The Diaries of Major W.H. Lewis, p.162.
- 4 For an extended comparison between LotR and 1984, see Mason Harris, "The Psychology of Power in Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings, Orwell's 1984 and Le Guin's A Wizard of Earthsea", Mythlore 55, (Autumn 1988), pp.46-56.
- 5 This is not to imply that Tolkien's "politics" can be defined in any particular way "right-wing" or otherwise. However his sympathies as regards Spain were clearly on the side of the government, or rather, the Church. See The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien (ed. H. Carpenter), George Allen & Unwin, 1981, (n° 83, pp. 95-96).
- 6 Other than the collective act of "creatures of Sauron", following the downfall of Barad-dûr. (LotR, Bk.VI, Ch.4, III, 1).
- 7 For a more sympathetic view of Denethor's end and the events leading up to it, see "Sméagol" Dealing with Denethor in Amon Hen, n° 83, pp.17-18, and subsequent correspondence arising from it. The present writer is, however, not able to accept the plea that Denethor was "not responsible for his actions".
- 8 H.R. Trevor-Roper, The last Days of Hitler, (originally published by Macmillan, 1947), re-edited and reprinted many times.
- 9 The Road to Middle-earth, George Allen & Unwin, 1981, p.220.
- 10 "War is the continuance of diplomacy by other means". (von Clausewitz).





By Alex Lewis

Upon an Age of the Sun, a Maia descended to Arda seeking music. It seemed within the scheme of things, this powerful being pondered, that if Ilúvatar began the making of Arda within the Music of the Ainur, then surely there would be music inherent within Arda and it was the Music of Old which he sought.

This Maia was known amongst the Northern peoples as Klemperer, and he appeared unto them in a dark satin-like apparel, bearing a short white staff made from ash, and many told that he had two dark tails though the times we speak of are long, long ago and mostly forgotten, when the world was young and there was less noise and more laughter, less people and more wonders. He always appeared as an old man; none could ever remember seeing him in any other form, and upon his face was engraved the extasy and torment of the beauty of the Music of the Ainur, for he had experienced the extasy in the beginnings of time, and knew the torment of losing it and seeking for it once more and for all time thereafter. But he could not find the Music outside Arda and so he descended into this jacinth world, and after seeking counsel with those in the West, he came to Middle-earth to search for the race that could provide him with a good-sized and well trained orchestra. He wanted none of your village bands or madrigal singers, but a good eighty piece symphony orchestra with which he could tour Middle-earth and raise perhaps the sponsorship to go from there yet further afield. For he had a vision of going out and perhaps bringing all evil beings to their knees by playing marches by the maia Souza at them, day and night, until they finally capitulated.

Upon his arrival on the marges of the Great Sea in a White Ship, it is said that Círdan the Shipwright came to him and that he recognised the power and majesty that Klemperer possessed, and so he gave to him a podium made of the beechwood beloved of mariners. Its railings were white as the full moon and its beams were polished and burnished with infinite care. Upon this he could stand and survey the peoples whom he intended to discover whether they possessed the qualities necessary for his purpose in mortal lands.

So it was that Klemperer came in his small cart drawn by a solitary mule, riding through the soft valleys East of Lindón, and strayed first of all into the lands of the Halflings, known also as the Shire.

Here he found music, taught to them it seemed by some other race, for the Halflings who called themselves Hobbits did not invent much on their own, being agricultural folk and peaceful, but had been taught many things by those with whom they came into contact. But the music he found was that of the simple village band, rustic and unsubtle. There were some crudely made instruments of dubious tone and lowly manufacture, mostly fiddles (how he detested that word!) and pipes of various sorts, and also some ageing trumpets and trombones made by other, more skillful hands, though few of the Hobbits could tell him much of their origin.

"We's got 'em for years an' years!" said one old fellow, squinting to see the being who stood before him. "You some conjurer or other? We got no room for that sort about the Shire. Had about enow of it! Good plain honest folk we are, and we wont abide queer things going on. If yer wants songs, yer better off go an' seein' if yer can find that Baggins that lived down yonder on the Hill. He were always listenin' ter Elves and the like. Bit crazed of a day.... But he's not about these parts no longer."

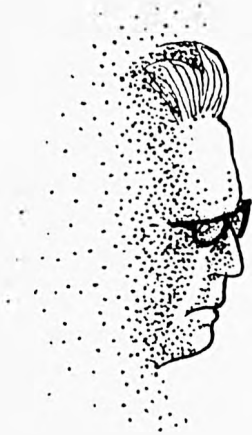
"But where do you think these instruments came from, old fellow?" asked Klemperer patiently.

"Foreign parts, I'd say. Not as they dont blow a good tune on them on a summer fair! Oompah, oompah!" he said, mimicking the slow plodding gait of the local village band.

Klemperer discovered that the fellow Baggins was always travelling as far as the locals around the Hill knew.

"Keeps disappearing off now and again," they told him as he stood at the bar in the Ivy Bush standing rounds of good beer. "Bit mad, if you know what we mean!"

"But all I want to know about are the instruments you use in the village band. Where did they come from?" he asked them.



"They do say that they came from somewhere called Dale, though where in the Wilds that is, no one in the Farthings will be able to tell ye," they responded, draining their mugs and smiling again. "Queer uncouth places with bigfolk and trolls and worse, they do say!"

"No doubt, no doubt," remarked Klemperer, waving his white staff irritably - a move that made several of the Hobbits closest to him back away timidly; a wizard, after all, was a wizard, and not to be trifled with.

"But can any of you, wise folk, tell me which way this Dale lies?"

"Away East, they say," said one old fellow. "Probably where that Mad Baggins goes to, I'd not wonder. To visit the Elves, he says."

"So the Elves might have fashioned these instruments of yours?" asked Klemperer hopefully.

"It is possible, though no one knows for sure. Try and find Dale, if you've the stomach for it. You'll probably find out more there. But mind you! It is a tidy way away. At least a week's journey from what we've heard tell... An a thirsty one!" they added meaningfully.

Klemperer decided to ignore their broad hints and left the Ivy Bush. And so the Maia set out with his old cart bearing his podium along the Great East Road, and came in due course and without adventure to the town of Bree, where both Halflings and Men still lived at that time in peaceful coexistence.

Here, he came to an inn and sat in the evening listening to snatches of song and scribbled frantically the odd rhythms and off-key melodies of the native singers, making a mental note to check once he went home whether these were related to the first, second or third themes that were propounded in the Music, in the time before time began to be measured. This,

he thought, would make quite a good learned article for some erudite publication.

But of instruments he found precious few. Here the violin was still derisively referred to as a 'fiddle' (much to Klemperer's annoyance) and, apart from a shrill tin whistle, an old tin kettle and a few spoons, there was a sad lack of anything grand. It seemed odd that whereas the Shire had had at least a glimmer of something greater than mere noise, these people seemed to lack even that slight concession to civilisation.

Praising the landlord's ale, and promising to send him a tuning fork, Klemperer set off once more to brave the Wilds, leaving behind both the Hobbit and Mannish inhabitants of the town of Bree feeling slightly bemused as to the motives of the strange old man with a podium, sat upon a cart drawn by a mule.

"I bet he isn't writing a book on folk songs!" muttered the landlord. As he moved onwards, Klemperer whistled a few bars from some symphonic bagatelle that he had heard when beyond the bounds of Arda.

"Da, da, da, da! Da, da, da, da! Now how did it go?" he muttered to himself. He shrugged. His memory was not at all what it ought to have been. Perhaps the terrible journey into Arda had muddled his senses. He certainly wouldn't have chosen the face he was landed with, and it seemed here on Middle-earth he couldn't elect to change his form as he used to of old. The cart creaked under the weight of the podium and he glanced at it wistfully, wondering if he might ever manage to find a use for it, in this Vala-forsaken place.

He came at length to a river crossing; an old bridge, and then shortly after the road came to another crossing which was merely a ford across a busy river. The weather, which had been fine for this time of year, began to turn wet and nasty.

He looked this way and that and then struck along the road towards the secret valley of Rivendell. It seemed strange to him that a valley that was supposed to be so secret should have such a good road leading straight towards it. But soon enough, he was walking along the edge of a ravine, looking into the depths where the soft light of the autumn stars was glimmering magically.

"Hm! Smells like Elves!" Klemperer whispered to himself.

"Hm! Smells like an old conductor!" mimicked the Elves in high voices.

"Oh tra la la lally, come down to the valley!" they added in a chorus of harmonised thirds and fourths.

"Oh, do shut up and take me to the Last Homely House!" retorted Klemperer with an irritated waving of his white wand, seeming for all the world as if he were a cat switching his tail in annoyance.



"Isn't it deliciously small, my dears?" said another Elf from behind a bush.

"I'll show you how small it is if I manage to catch up with you!" he replied angrily. He rushed forward, brandishing his wand, but of course he forgot that he was at the edge of a precipice, and stepped over into very thin air, and was dragged backwards by his tails by the Elves with a laugh and a jest, he responding basso profundo with a curse and an expletive. But at last the Elves of Rivendell brought Klemperer to the Last Homely House, which as has been said many times before, is a place where one can find anything in pleasant mixture, or do nothing at all. If applied to a symphony orchestra, it would have been sadly the latter of the choices, as was soon apparent. Klemperer found the librarian Erester most helpful, but sadly unable to help him. Their Lord Elrond had but lately departed, and it was not known if he might ever return.

"Here we use plainsong for the most part, with perhaps a light touch of a harpstring here and there."

"But the Elves surely have some deeper knowledge of music, other than plainsong?" he said.

"Our tastes are very orthodox, if you will," replied Erester with a sad smile. "No loud or complex music. None of your modern rubbish here."

"Then where am I to find it, if not in Rivendell?" he asked. "How about Lórien and the Lady Galadriel? Does she and Lord Celeborn not sponsor an orchestra? Is there no Orchestre des Montagnes Brumeuses? Or Philharmonie du Bois d'Or....?"

"Sadly not. There is not much call for it, I am bound to say," he replied. "The Lady Galadriel left with our Lord Elrond to search out whoever it was they were going to visit, and then head West. Beyond that, you will find the plainsfolk of Rohan are an untutored bunch, content with posthorns and tally-hoes, and with a few fanfares. The Men of Gondor in Minas Tirith seem no better, perhaps electing to brandish an occasional trumpet or trombone, and maybe conceding to use a flute or a harp or a viol. As for Dunlanders, they are mere philistines when it comes to a well-crafted tune; and I would not try any musical theorising with the Púkel-Men if I were you, unless you want a lot more than you bargained for. Good drummers, it is said, but not worth the aggravation. But there are some good travel books here somewhere, that perhaps might be of some help to you," he said, fishing about amongst his dusty shelves. "Ah, here they are!"

Erester drew out three large red leather-bound tomes and put them down heavily upon the table before Klemperer.

"The Red Book of Westmarch?" he said to the librarian in a bemused tone. "There and Back Again, or a Hobbit's Holiday? What is all this rubbish? I don't want to know how to get around Middle-earth on two silver pennies per day, if that's what you think!"

"No, no; not at all, not that sort of thing. We had an old Hobbit who lived with us and he did some translating and travelling in his time," said the librarian, dusting himself down fastidiously. "He left us copies of his books before he left for his homeland with Lord Elrond as company."

"A Hobbit that went beyond the boundaries of his land? That is a feat in itself!" commented Klemperer.

"Yes, and what was more, four others came not long after this one arrived here, and they went off and helped in the war it is said, though—reading these books it does seem to me that they went off to gather more information on travelling conditions around Middle-earth rather than contribute to the actual war," the librarian Erester said to him warming to his subject. "These books are absolutely full of interesting stuff about many parts of Middle-earth you and I are unlikely to get to. I haven't read all of the volumes myself, so don't take them out for too long, there's a good fellow. Three decades is our borrowing limit, else you get fined for overdue books by Rivendell library authorities," (by which he meant himself).

"Ah, then these books might help me to find my orchestral musicians and instrument makers!" he responded eagerly.

"They might well do that, master," said the librarian. "If anything can."

So that evening under the blue stars of a warm autumn night's sky, as the Swordsman of the skies crept out in full majesty, Klemperer sat quietly, ignoring the interminable singing all around him, and read systematically through the three volumes of the Red Book of Westmarch, and learnt much about Middle-earth

and its peoples.

He found that the Elves were hardly a very good place to try and find any orchestra, for they preserved the old traditions and wanted nothing new. It was plainsong with the occasional harpstring. Thranduil's folk in the Greenwood sang and played harps, but that is all that Bilbo Baggins told of their musical soirées, or gatherings, and there was very little different to speak of in Frodo Baggins' detailed account of Lórien. Bilbo also mentioned seeing no instruments in the heart of the Misty Mountains in Goblin Town, where the Hobbit and his friends were taken when they were captured. The later writings of his heir Frodo did not mention any instruments in Minas Tirith, other than a few harps, viols and flutes of early chamber groups perhaps, nor any in Edoras, nor amongst the Ents of Fangorn Forest, nor in the East in Mordor. The Men of Laketown to the East, according to Bilbo Baggins had some bands, but did not show themselves to be capable of making or playing anything more than the simplest of things, including a few harps and fiddles (he did detest that word!), and certainly nothing more complex. These people it seemed were, some time in the recent past, influenced by others. Dale, the city of Men near the Lonely Mountain, also made some instruments of its own, but mostly under licence.

"So, who holds the licence and patents on well-made instruments, I wonder?" asked Klemperer.

The answer was, surprisingly, the Dwarves.

There, overlooked by him as he skipped through the first pages of Bilbo Baggins' adventure, was the account of the Unexpected Party.

Fili and Kili had brought violins to the Hobbit's home. Balin and Dwalin brought viols, Dori, Nori and Ori brought flutes, while Bifur and Bofur brought clarinets. Bombur played the drum and Thorin Oakenshield was a harp player of no little virtuosity, it seemed!

That Bilbo Baggins recognised these instruments was indicative of the Dwarvish traffic that used the main road through the Shire. Their influence was quite profound upon the stay-at-home Hobbits, though they were ill equipped to develop it. Frodo Baggins sang his song in the inn at Bree unaccompanied. Why did he do so if there was even a possibility of an instrument at hand? There was none of course, for the Breelanders were not used to anything more than the crudest of instruments, as he had himself found out.

The trumpets, horns, pipes and flutes coming out from the crackers brought from Dale to the last party of Bilbo's in the Shire were probably of Dwarvish design, for they were described as small in size but of excellent tune. To have travelled so far and in such packaging and still stay in tune was a great achievement in instrument design, indicating that the designers were capable of very advanced construction techniques.

It all seemed to fit!

It was the Dwarvish songs that moved Bilbo greatly, not those of the Elves; one-hit wonders that you forgot within a week.

The Dwarvish halls underground in fine stone were built with acoustics in mind; the ringing of hammers and echoes of Dwarvish voices raised in their deep songs. The caverns and vast empty places where an audience of thousands could be seated in comfort and out of the reach of the elements in air-conditioned halls with soft lanterns lighting up the stage.

In the Lonely Mountain, it was Fili and Kili who found many golden harps strung with silver that were magical and therefore still in tune. Indeed, these two young nephews of Thorin's were multi-instrumentalists, for they could play the harp and the violin.

Bilbo Baggins even commented that the dragon Smaug could hardly have had an ear or inclination towards music. Dragons were practically tone deaf.

As the siege of the Lonely Mountain progressed, the Elven King brought forth his singers and his Elven harpers played, but Thorin's company brought forth harps and many other instruments to cheer up Thorin Oakenshield.

Yes, yes, an anvil song! A hall of the mountain kings! A night under a bare mountain! His mind was afire with the possibilities.

"Where are the Dwarves now?" he asked the librarian the very next morning.

"They used to live in the Lonely Mountain, but I think perhaps a lot of them might have gone to Moria, or Khazad-dûm, as it is known. Now that they have removed the Balrog that infested the lower levels, it has become a desirable abode once more; so they tell

me," he replied.

The Erebor Symphony Orchestra! The Aglarond Symphonia! The Khazad-dûm Philharmonic! How he would drive the Dwarvish players and musicians to the very pitch of excellence and virtuosity! But the voice of Erester broke the surge of his thoughts and drowned his hopes.

"But you would need special permission to get into Moria, master, and I doubt you will get it," said the Elf sadly. "They are suspicious, these Dwarves, and it is said that their gates will not let any through unless they know the secret password. Now it has come to my notice that the Dwarves seem to have changed it since they returned there, because some curious old wizard managed to discover the secret command of opening, and told an Elf or two what the old password was. As far as I know, they have told no one what the new password is. Knowing the Dwarves they have probably forgotten it themselves by now, and so they are likely to be stuck in there unable to leave the nasty place. Serves them right, of course."

"But someone should know the way in. I shall depart and seek out Elrond and Galadriel, and the Hobbits Frodo and Bilbo Baggins, for they may help me to enter Moria, as they were friends of the Dwarves, according to the Red Book," said Klemperer, stroking his chin and looking to the West. "Perhaps they have a pass or something."

"You shall have to hurry then, master," said the librarian. The last White Ship is due to depart very soon."

"The last White ship...?" said Klemperer, hollowly. "There is only one White Ship! The rest were scrapped due to cutbacks. I came in that White Ship and it is anchored off the shore at the Grey Havens waiting for me!"

"Not for much longer, I'd say!" responded the librarian shutting the doors to his library for his mid-morning tea break.

"But I chartered that White Ship personally! I paid all monies in advance!" said Klemperer loudly. "It is supposed to wait for my return!"

"Ah, but a two-way paying fare is better than one,

and the ship's captain would rather be getting back home, I've no doubt. He was probably persuaded that you had run off and wouldn't be returning. Anyway, he gets more money for carrying more people, and there is livestock on this trip too."

"Livestock? What livestock?" asked Klemperer aghast.

"A horse I believe. It belongs to Mithrandir and he hopes to return and run it in the Aman Sweepstakes next season," replied the librarian, walking off towards the canteen from where the musical clinking of crockery came. "A lot of money in horse-racing nowadays."

"Mithrandir? Is he also known as Olórin?" asked Klemperer, hard at his side and looking pale.

"Olórin, yes, that he was, but in the West when he was younger, they say, and also Tharkûn among the Dwarves, and Gandalf to Men," said the librarian.

"That old trickster!" grumbled Klemperer. "I wouldn't trust him as far as I could throw him! Never trust anyone with so many names!"

Well, well; that can't be helped now. The White Ship is almost certainly gone by now. What is the date? The twenty-second of September? Ah, yes. I think she sails tonight."

"Then I have been fiddled! Fiddled!" said Klemperer with a curse.

Erester handed him a steaming mug of tea.

"There, there, old fellow; don't work yourself up so!" he said, patting the Maia on the shoulder, which only served to infuriate him all the more.

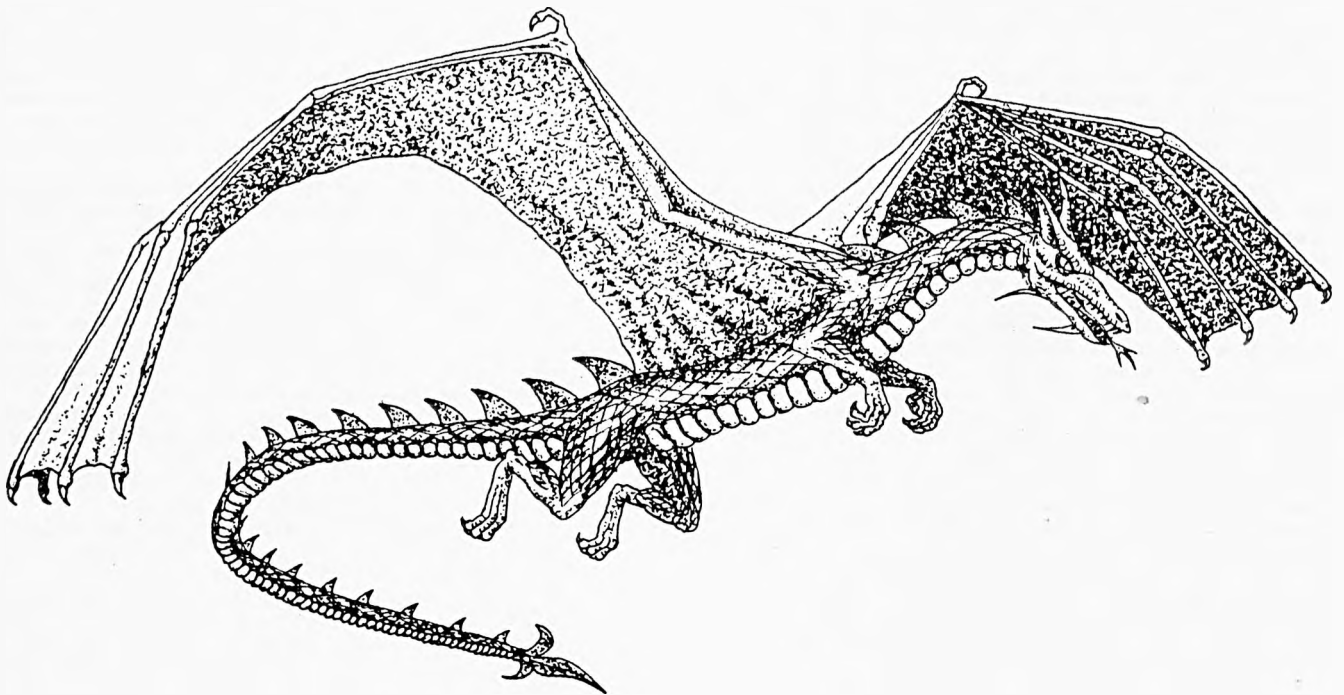
"Old fellow, indeed!" he snorted. "What's the use?"

"Use? Well, we can probably use you, if you would care to conduct our choir every now and again," Erester suggested hopefully.

"Plainsong for eternity? I'd rather burn in Mordor!" he responded angrily.

And somewhere upon the Western margins of mortal lands, a White Ship set sail onto the Straight Road as the evening came like a grey tide to nestle in the Gulf of Lune.

The End.



RONALD E. KYRMSE

the geographical relation between beleriand and eriador



In what follows I shall try to achieve a concordance between two regions: Beleriand and adjacent lands on one hand, and the north-west of Middle-earth after the drowning of Beleriand (mainly Eriador) on the other. My main sources of cartographic information are two maps:

- A. the second "Silmarillion" map in Appendix III to LR;
- B. the map of the west of Middle-earth at the end of the Third Age in UT.

Map B agrees well with that in LotR as to scale; both are consistent with A, the only "Silmarillion" map with a useful scale indication (the 50-mile squares). The same squares, although without any clue about scale, are also present and in good agreement on the first "Silmarillion" map in SoMe, as well as the latter's west- and eastward extensions.

The proposed concordance between maps A and B is possible because of certain geographical features that appear on both:

- the Hill of Himling (Himring), corresponding to the island of the same name in B;
- the chain of the Ered Luin with the outstanding feature of Mount Dolm (Dolmed), corresponding to an unnamed spur just north of an extensive wooded area in Forlindon.

The following passages from IS - chapter 14 "Of Beleriand and its Realms" - give indications of distances, all consistent with A. Quotations in () brackets are from the Quenta Silmarillion in LR - chapter 9 with the same name as above. A land league, let it be remembered, equals 3 statute miles, or 5,280 feet.

((...the Iron Mountains bent back northward and there was a hundred leagues between them and the frozen straits at Helkaraksë.)) [Not in TS]

... Dorthonion ((...)) stretched for sixty ((a hundred)) leagues from west ((West)) to east ((East)) ...

... the ((this)) mighty river Sirion ... plunged through the pass ... flowed ((down)) south for [a comma instead of 'for' in LR] one hundred and thirty ((one hundred and twenty-one)) leagues ... until ... he reached his ... delta in the Bay of Balar.

((...West Beleriand, at its widest seventy leagues from river to sea ...)) [Not in TS]

... the River ((river)) Narog ... flowed some eighty leagues ere he joined Sirion in ((the)) Nan-tathren ...



... East Beleriand, at its widest a hundred leagues from Sirion to Gelion and the borders of Ossiriand ... [Same text in LR]

... some twenty-five leagues ((seventy miles)) east of the gorge of Nargothrond Sirion fell from the north ((North)) in a mighty fall below the Meres ((meres)) ... and he issued again three leagues southward ... through ... the Gates of Sirion.

From the meeting of his arms he flowed south for forty leagues before he found his tributaries; ((then joining his two arms Gelion flowed until he found his tributaries some forty leagues south of the meeting of his arms.)) and before ((Ere)) he found the sea he ((Gelion)) was twice as long as Sirion ...

The discrepancies in the width of Dorthonion and of West Beleriand are discussed by Christopher Tolkien in LR, where the earlier values are discounted as being "simple errors". One possible explanation for the puzzling figure of 70 leagues given for West Beleriand 'from river to sea' is that the river in question

is Narog, not Sirion - through some oversight, no doubt. The distance from the coast near Mount Teras to Narog just south of Ivrin is indeed some 200 miles!

The map I have constructed joining A and B uses the same numbering and lettering convention as A, extended south- and eastward. I have only sketched in some features appearing on neither A nor B:

- the lower course of Gelion, to account for the statement that its total course was twice as long as that of Sirion; I have taken this as an approximation, and have not made it quite as long as it might be, in keeping with the course of what (judging from its eastern tributaries) is clearly Gelion in Map V of *The Ambarkanta* in *SoMe*;
- the coastline of Middle-earth south of the Bay of Balar, according with the same Map V;
- the southern end of Taur-im-Duinath, which judging from the published maps seems to narrow down south of the Bay of Balar;
- the extension of the Ered Luin (submerged) west and south of Eryn Vorn, continuing its eastward curve already evident in B and even clearer in Map V.

I might of course have extended the map further southward and eastward beyond Fangorn and the issuing thence of Onodló, but I thought this would add little or nothing to our knowledge of the lands in question. My main interest lies in the mid-longitudes of the combined maps, where A and B are joined.

I find it not unfair to point out the disagreement between these measurements and the distance indications in Strachey's *Journeys of Frodo*. She shows an east-west distance of over 372 miles between Hobbiton and Rivendell, which according to B should be about 440 miles. The north-south distance between Hobbiton and the outflow of Onodló - some 380 miles - furthermore appears on her maps as 250 miles. Thus, quite unaccountably in view of the cartographic evidence already present in *LotR*, her scale seems to be compressed by factors of about 85% in the east-west and 65% in the north-south directions.

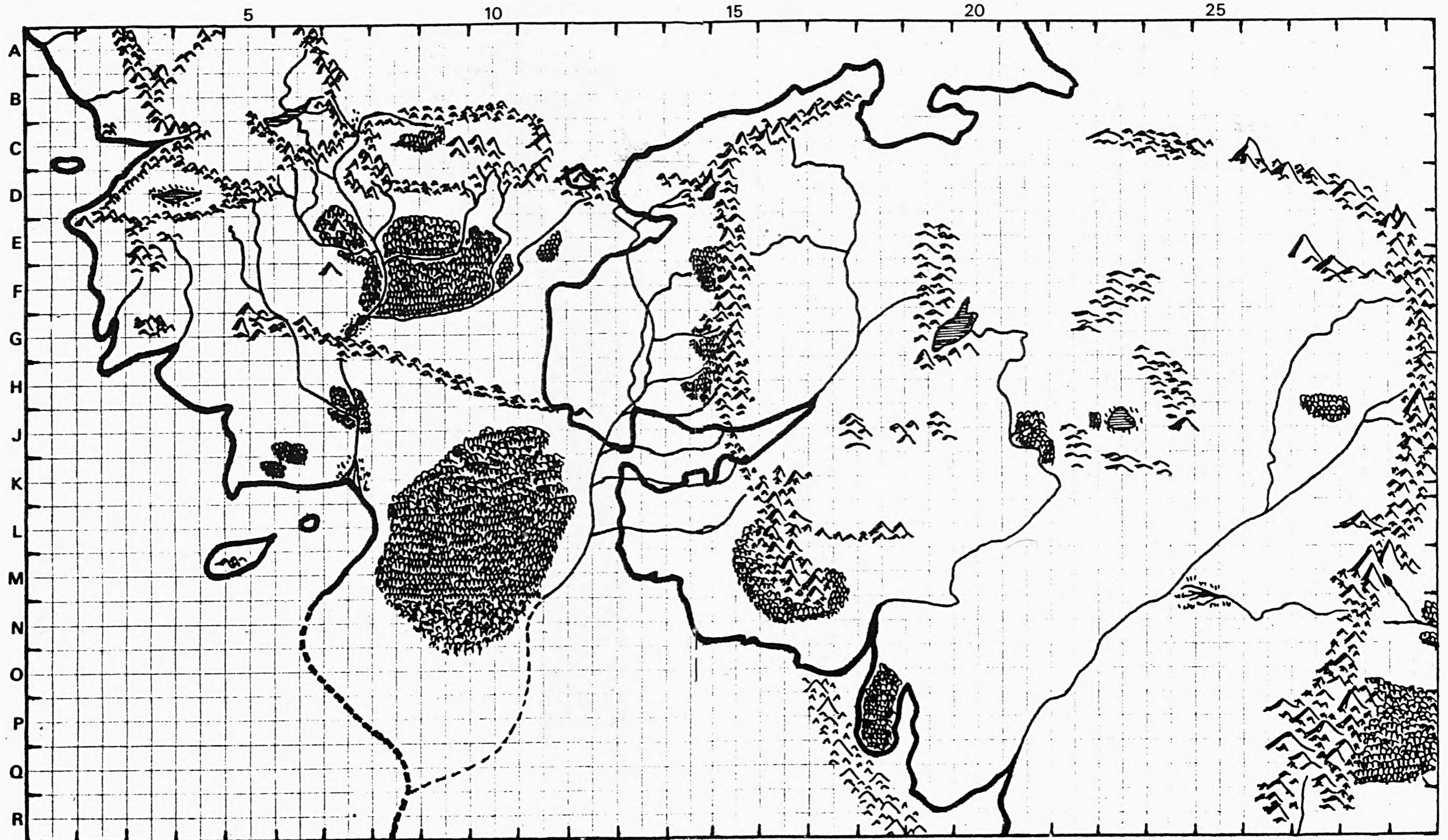
Doubtless many refinements remain to be added to the present work, such as adjustments to the spherical shape of the earth and fixation of the latitudes - if not longitudes - involved. A point may be made for

putting Hobbiton - and therefore Imladris as well - at about 50°N, which agrees with the statement by J.R.R. Tolkien in *UT* - note 9 to *The Disaster of the Gladden Fields*:

At the date of the disaster [30 Yavannië, or late September], in the latitude of Imladris ... there were at least eleven hours of daylight in open country; but at midwinter less than eight.

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on illustrating tolkien

by TED NASMITH



In *Amon Hen 72*, Kathleen Jones wrote very interestingly on the question of Hobbits' ages, their relationship to our ages, and the difficulties this brings to the illustrator. This has prompted me to present some of my own thoughts on this subject, which originally I thought would add only a little to Ms. Jones article. It has grown somewhat though, taking rather longer than expected consequently. In the first part I'll explore the tendency to portray hobbits like children, and then go on to examine just what information is provided on hobbits, as well as what isn't. Lastly I'll take a look at the challenges presented by other characters and some of my solutions to those problems.



In defence of some of the less careful renderings of hobbits, I can point out that since hobbits are equivalent in size to our small children, that is, anywhere from two to four feet in height, it's all too easy to portray them as child-like. Consider that their beardless rosy-cheeked jollity and curly headedness is so easily associated with healthy, rosy-cheeked children, who historically would often have long curly locks of hair, whether boy or girl. The distinctions between a hobbit and a child become somewhat subtle, demanding certain intuitive and technical powers of the artist who would overcome these difficulties. Thus it is that the artist, before more carefully reading the text, may easily form an erroneous initial impression of hobbits, which certainly was the case with me. Drawing them at this stage was based mostly on this 'impression' having not as yet absorbed the specific information available. Eventually I had to work consciously to correct this problem, and do even still. And I may have persisted in it somewhat longer had I not sent some photos of my early work to Tolkien himself (during the summer of 1972). He thanked me for my interest and complimented me on the work. But he also remarked that my Bilbo (from 'The Unexpected Party', 1972) was too child-like, causing me, naturally, to review my concept of Bilbo, and by extension, hobbits in general.

Unfortunately, it seems that even among the most widely published interpretations of Tolkien there is this persistent tendency to misconceive hobbitry. This includes the hobbits of Ralph Bakshi's 'Lord of the Rings' film; the Bilbo of the new edition of 'The Hobbit' illustrated by Michael Hague; and, most notorious for me, the hobbits of the Brothers Hildebrandt, particularly Merry and Pippin. But here is a case in point. These two hobbits in particular give, I think, the strongest childish impression, though it's easy to see why:

Both their names sound somewhat juvenile compared to 'Sam' or the purely hobbitish 'Frodo' or 'Bilbo'. Both characters are significantly younger than Sam and Frodo. At the start of

the quest in September of 1418, the respective ages of the four companions were: Frodo 50, Sam 45, Merry 36, and Pippin 28. By hobbit standards then, Pippin is a virtual adolescent, and Merry has not long come of age. Pippin is 22 years the junior of Frodo while Merry is 14 years younger than Frodo. Pippin, in particular, displays somewhat immature behaviour, and despite all that happens, these two never quite seem to 'grow up' in our minds. Somehow, because of their nonchalance and pluck in the face of the terrors they survive (with but a few exceptions) they come away with their unsober youthfulness intact. Consider that when they are met at the ruined gate of Isengard, Gandalf, when he sees Merry about to wax eloquent on the origins of pipe weed to Théoden, interrupts, "You do not know your danger, Théoden. These hobbits will sit on the edge of ruin and discuss the pleasures of the table, or the small doings of their fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers, and remote cousins to the ninth degree, if you encourage them with undue patience." Here perhaps is the nub of it. Merry and Pippin really typify the comic parochialism of hobbits, and it is Frodo, and to a lesser extent Sam, who are uncharacteristic, though this risks oversimplification. Even poor old Bilbo remains hopelessly but endearingly absurd when all is said and done. This I'm sure is a key factor in why the image of hobbits as juvenile is so powerful. And maybe there's another factor, speaking of Bilbo; the fact that 'The Hobbit', which sets the tone as far as the nature of hobbits is concerned, was written for children. It has often been one of the criticisms of 'The Lord of the Rings' that the transition from the opening chapters set in the Shire to the rest of the tale is unnatural, the lightness of Bilbo's party giving way to the weight of the Ring. For others, of course, this is exactly what constitutes the genius of the book, being quite essential to its appeal and its inner meaning.

But none of this helps the artist who wishes to draw hobbits, unless, somehow he or she can reconcile these apparent opposites. When we see only the quaintness of hobbits it is easy to equate that with cuteness. And many, if not most artists, apparently don't see any need to bridge that 'cuteness' with the weight of the book's theme in their images of hobbits. But if we do want to find a more faithful artistic interpretation, with all the above in mind, how should it be achieved?

Unfortunately, it's more than merely following a detailed description, since despite Tolkien's penchant for minutiae, he isn't at all exhaustive about describing most of his characters' looks. (If he was, we'd all know whether or not Boromir was bearded!) One must assemble all information about, in this case, hobbits, and particular ones, and then interpret it in the light of an intuitive over-view. How well, or in what way, you understand the story, and even the story's roots in myth and literary tradition, will determine the result of this largely subjective task. Obviously, set on the scale it is, LotR means many things to many people, and artists. In my experience people seem to know what a hobbit should not look like, but can there be substantial agreement on what one should look like?

Earlier I mentioned Frodo and Sam as being atypical of much of hobbitry. In Frodo's case I think there's particular significance. If hobbits and the Shire are out of phase with the grand scale of the rest of Middle-earth, then it is Frodo who represents a bridge. He is deeper than the others, and being perhaps better educated, understands more quickly the nature of his relationship to the larger scheme of things. Frodo, we somehow know, can 'fill the shoes he will have to wear'. (figuratively!) The overwhelming image of Frodo is quite uncharacteristic of hobbits. He is a loner, greatly burdened with wisdom beyond his age. His lighter side is much less glimpsed or felt. He, whatever is true of hobbits generally, is 'big' enough for the role he must carry. And given this it wouldn't do to have just an average 'common or garden variety' hobbit as his companion: enter common gardener Samwise, whose image is more than a little rural British. He is Frodo's foil. Frodo is 'master', while Sam is his loyal companion and guardian. Frodo is, for a hobbit, high born, educated, refined, coming from a distinguished bloodline, whereas Sam is of a less illustrious lineage, down to earth (literally!) and unworldly.

But what Sam does have is a good measure of hobbit sense, an outstanding sense of loyalty, much quiet courage, and despite or perhaps because of his self-denial

and self-scolding at times, is a hobbit of great hidden dignity. But how to translate that visually?

Kathleen Jones, in her Amon Hen 72 article, questions the older looking Sam that I have drawn. Although it's a matter of degree and artistic license, I see Sam as necessarily appearing ruddier than Frodo or the others. He is a gardener and I would argue that he is regularly exposed to the elements. Combine that with the 'homely' image he evokes and I think the result would be a face that looks older than its years. Frodo, however, has particularly good looks for a hobbit, making him look younger than his 50 years.

Unfortunately it gets even more complicated, for surely we should consider also the effect of the Ring on him, and its arrest of aging. But how can that be shown while trying to show the wearying effect of it upon him? And does he remain youthful-looking always? Is it really desirable to render him without any apparent external changes from the time he inherits the Ring to the day he departs at the Grey Havens? I'd like to explore these questions and others in the next part of this essay. Just what does Tolkien have to say about his hobbits?

* * * * *

Having consulted the Prologue in LotR, the following information is given regarding the general physical aspect of hobbits. (Forgive me for re-stating the obvious). Hobbits, it says, are "little people, smaller than dwarves, less stout and stocky... when they are not actually much shorter. Their height is variable reaching between two and four feet of our measure, though they seldom now reach three feet. Their hair is commonly brown." They "had skilful fingers... [and] could make many useful and comely things."

Their faces are "good-natured rather than beautiful, broad, bright-eyed, red-cheeked with mouths apt to laughter." Of course hobbits fall into three groups: Harfoots, Stoors, and Fallohides. The Harfoots comprised the majority of the Shire, to which Bilbo, Frodo and Sam belonged, and are described as: "browner of skin, shorter, beardless, bootless, with hands and feet neat and nimble."

The Stoors in turn were broader, heavier in build, feet and hands larger, and can grow beards [or at least "down... on their chins" Ed.]. Gollum began his life as one, though few, if any traits survived his degeneration. Lastly are the Fallohides, considered fairer of skin and hair, taller, slimmer than their cousins, lovers of trees and woodlands. Merry and Pippin belonged to this group.

Along with a good deal of other information, including preferred colours (yellows and greens) and types of clothing, there is a brief discussion of hobbit dwellings. When these took the form of houses or cottages they are said to have been of wood, brick or stone, were long, low and comfortable. Some were smial-like, being bulgy and thatched. Of course the dislike of stairs and height is generally known, as is the preference for round windows and doors.

Also worth quoting is part of Letter #27 in Letters. Regarding hobbits and in part Bilbo, Tolkien says precisely: "I picture a fairly human figure, not some kind of fairy 'rabbit' as some of my British reviewers seem to fancy: fattish in the stomach, shortish in the leg. A round, jovial face, ears only slightly pointed and 'elvish', hair short and curling (brown). The feet from ankles down, covered with brown hairy fur. Clothing, green velvet breeches, red or yellow waistcoat, brown or green jacket; gold (or brass) buttons; a dark green hood and cloak (belonging to a dwarf). Actual size... about three feet or three feet six inches."

So there we are. There are, of course, several other clues to appearance, whether general or specific, spread throughout the book, but I don't feel it necessary to set out all of that here. Following the above carefully would provide all one needs to avoid the several misconceived sorts of hobbits. A key phrase like: faces "good natured rather than beautiful", is of enormous value in understanding Tolkien's vision of them, while individual interpretation is still given considerable leeway. (Two artists who for me 'see' hobbits clearly are Kay Woollard and Joan Wyatt, both of whose work I admire).

Returning a moment to hobbit attire, despite what is provided on this, it still is unclear to what certain articles would have looked like, and what variations there might be. I have, I admit, not had much success

when seeing books on costume which contain such clothes in detail. One minor mystery I would like to solve, is that it's not at all clear how a provisions pack can be worn with a hood and cloak. If worn externally then where do the straps fit? Beneath the cloak results in a bulge under it. I confess the solution has ever eluded me (and I'm fairly sure there is no clue to this in the books), though it is doubtless answerable.

Problems from minor ones like that to much more challenging ones confront the illustrator of Tolkien, whose very special brand of imagery we find so compelling. Certain of his characters in particular, and/or their circumstances, present considerable difficulty, and for my part, as I've continued to deal with Tolkien, I've arrived at many conclusions and solutions. The following are some examples.

Earlier in this discussion some of the problems to do with Frodo's appearance as a Ring-bearer were posed. The Ring, as is clearly the case with Bilbo, arrests physical aging considerably, although the bearer, in time, wastes away in a peculiarly subtle fashion, as did Gollum and the Ringwraiths. (One might say it was a kind of damnation, reserved only for those under the corrupting influence of the Ring's power-lust.) But what would that look like?

To deal with Frodo, described as having particularly youthful good looks, what would be the results? During the quest, exhaustion, thirst, exposure, hunger and Frodo's own spiritual burden would combine to leave an obvious effect physically; a maturing worldly wise imprint. The Ring's effect would be to preserve him against such aging as a hobbit would normally go through during the years of possession. However, two things are important:

- A. The Ring was in Frodo's possession a matter of only 18 years (and seldom used) and
- B. It was he who succeeded in destroying the Ring, and therefore its continued influence on him (as well, I imagine, as on Bilbo?) (Sauron also was released in a sense, but to his doom!)

Therefore I think it's reasonable to assume that in any post-quest portrayal of Frodo, one would see him as bearing the 'scars' of his ordeal, but also aging as any hobbit would (i.e. at the slower hobbit rate).

What about Gollum though? He is particularly problematic, given that he was invented for The Hobbit as merely a creature Bilbo encounters, but then later was elaborated on; given a past with origins as a hobbit. It creates rather an uncomfortable situation for the artist trying to reconcile it all.

It would perhaps have been easier for us if, when revising parts of Ch.V Riddles in the Dark of The Hobbit, Tolkien had eliminated the physical traits one is hard put to it to accept that any former hobbit could possess, particularly the large webbed feet and lamp-like eyes, even after years of subterranean adaptation. The greenish skin is not really a problem, I suppose, since we can assume that the effect of the Ring and the damp conditions and dark could render it thus corpse-like.

Tolkien, (ref. Letters, #109, #128) of course realised that the Ring and Gollum's role in possessing it were going to be hard to reconcile with the rapidly expanding LoTR. "The weakness is Gollum...", he states to Sir Stanley Unwin in a letter prior to revising Ch.V of The Hobbit (where Gollum in fact intends to give Bilbo the Ring if he wins the Riddle game, and in the end they part civilly. See Footnote 1 to #128 and #109). But such a weakness is Gollum that, even after the revisions, (which dramatically improved the story, regardless of the motive) he remains something of a difficulty.

Otherwise, of course, he is a brilliant creation, and for me, as I have come to see him, is best shown exactly as described, while keeping in mind his origins. That would mean that his skull and bone structure would not change, save developing a stoop, etc. The eyes and feet I simply ignore or play down, and I've come to prefer longish, stringy and unkempt hair, somewhat like the Mr. Hyde of the original 1920's silent film of Dr. Jeekyll and Mr. Hyde.

Then there is Gandalf. Of course there is little to disagree over with him (despite a surprising array of versions). However, if Tolkien were still with us, I would ask him just what he meant when he said Gandalf had "long bushy eyebrows that stuck out further than the brim of his shady hat." (The Hobbit, I, 8). I have

to conclude that Tolkien meant to be more entertaining than exact. Maybe if he'd said 'seemed to stick out...' or 'stuck well out under the brim...', it would make sense, but there it is.

With Aragorn I have essentially kept to the image he first evoked for me, merely refining it somewhat. That is, an aristocratic, archetypal 'hero' with a brooding Northern European set to his face. At the time of the quest he was 87 years old, but went on to live to the age of 210 years, which, long as it is, is not as long as most of his ancestors. Still, if we assume he lived perhaps twice as long a life as a normal Middle-earth man, then in appearance he could look the early to mid-40-ish we tend to picture him as.

Boromir, conversely, is harder to pinpoint than you'd think. It seems natural to portray him as brawny, bearded, grim and in quasi-viking costume. But while I agree with the first and third points, I disagree with the second and last.

Boromir was a Gondorian noble, if also a proud warrior, from a land the geographic equivalent of Northern Italy, that is, a moderate, sunny climate. According to Letters, (#211, 14), the clothing of peoples in Middle-earth was "much diversified in the Third Age, according to climate and inherited custom." Tolkien accepts a somewhat medieval look for the more northern areas but to assume that this went for the south, too, is to misjudge. He goes on to say that "the Rohirrim were not 'medieval' in our sense", citing the Bayeux Tapestry as a guide, and then says that "the Númenóreans of Gondor were proud, peculiar and archaic, and I think they are best pictured in (say) Egyptian terms." Yes, he said Egyptian, leaving the stock image of Boromir far off the mark! (An interesting footnote to this is that Tolkien toyed with the idea of how Middle-earth's history might link up somehow with 'true' history, hazarding about a 6000 year gap between the end of the Third Age and the present. This does suggest that for the artist there is a case for treating costume more exotically than has been generally tried, and not automatically placing the Third Age parallel to, say, the Dark Ages.)

For the balrog, as can be seen from the published illustration, (1987 Tolkien Calendar) I have taken some licence. Balrogs, for me, are bothersome. It's hard to 'believe' in them, for one thing, with their alien properties. Enveloped in darkness, indistinct; at times aflame; much is left to the whim of the artist, who must interpret as best he can. I have elected to show it as ruthless, intensely violent, somewhat traditionally demon-like, and I hope, a worthy opponent for Gandalf. And though there has been confusion on this point, for me there is no question that the creature is wingless, the term 'wings' clearly intended as a metaphor. Its plunge into the abyss should indicate something about any flying abilities!

There are other creatures and characters worth discussing too, as well as myriad other aspects of Middle-earth, and I hope in future to deal with these as I feel moved. (If Treebeard appears to be missing, it is only that I wrote about him in a piece to be found in Lothlórien #2). Affecting all of this, though, is the fact that whatever the subject is within Tolkien, little can be 100% defined, and heed to 'accuracy' must at times yield some to being 'true to the spirit', and the inevitable personal stamp left by any artist; the way the art says something about him or her.

For some, the joy is in using Tolkien as a point of departure for their own visions, and aren't seriously attempting to be 'correct', whereas for others, myself included, the joy is in seeing how clearly I can create a window into Tolkien that rings true, while still maintaining artistic integrity. My aim, whether or not it succeeds, is to capture something of the sophistication, mystery and grandeur of Tolkien; to create images which can truly compliment their source, and thereby attempt to express some of the universal yearnings his writing evokes.



splintered darkness

by ALEX LEWIS



n the same way that light was an essential force within Arda and was split into gradually lesser forms, becoming diluted, according to Verlyn Flieger's Splintered Light, so also I propose that Darkness and its manifestations were similarly split. Thus the balance of power between good and evil, light and dark were maintained. It is not sufficient merely to consider Light alone, for it cannot paint the whole picture. Flieger herself proposed that the most interesting of Tolkien's creations in The Silmarillion were the Noldor, who were Elves of the light who had turned towards the darkness and had a measure of both in them.

Yet I would add that to see Tolkien's work in a full context with the world he lived in, one must consider the analogous splintering of Darkness. For it was stated in the Ainulindalë: "To Melkor among the Ainur had been given the greatest gifts of power and knowledge, and he had a share in all the gifts of his brethren." And "Ilúvatar said: 'Mighty are the Ainur, and mightiest of all is Melkor.'" Yet one can trace how this mightiest of them all fell so very low in the end:

In the First Age, the struggles were titanic, and the shape of Arda was marred by Melkor who was at that time very mighty: the peer of Manwë, but no longer mightier than all the others. He overthrew the Two Lamps and scoured the lands. But all the Valar combined managed to contain the wrath and turmoil of Arda and, in the end, imprisoned Melkor with the chain Angainor. So just as none were greater than Melkor at that time, and only Manwë was his equal, no light was greater than that of the Two Lamps that he had single-handedly destroyed, a light too great for mortal kind.

When the Two Trees were raised, their light was lesser than that of the Lamps. It is interesting to note that when Melkor was released he had lost some of his powers of persuasion, for the Elves scorned him now and did not do his direct bidding. He had to resort to cunning instead and indeed, when he came to steal the Silmarils he brought with him Ungoliant to cloak them in secrecy and to sap and kill the Two Trees, for he was no longer able to do this alone. And at the end he was overmastered by her, frightened by her bloated powers and almost eaten himself, had it not been for the timely intervention of his Balrogs. This would simply not have been possible before the destruction of the Lamps. Could Manwë, his peer of the olden times for instance have been bested by a monstrous spider? It doubt this very much indeed, for the light of the Glass of Galadriel (a diluted form of the light of Eärendil's Silmaril shining from the heavens) managed to stop Shelob in her tracks. Therefore Manwë whose spouse was Varda, Kindler of the Stars, is hardly likely to have been too bothered by Ungoliant. If she had been that strong, she would have lain in wait and killed off the Valar as they each came nigh to her, but in fact she hid from them far in the South and was frightened

of them, as was her erstwhile Master. It is indicative that the Eagles certainly did not seem to be unduly worried by her or her brood in Nan Dungortheb, and they were Manwë's messengers.

Indeed in IS, Ch.9 "Of the Flight of the Noldor", Tolkien says: "But Ungoliant had grown great and he less by the power that had gone out of him." Then we see Melkor return to Angband and Middle-earth. The Noldor chase after him and fight his armies. But an important change has come about this Vala. And this change, for Tolkien, is measured in a change of name; not Melkor anymore, but Morgoth. Not "He who arises in Might", but "The Black Foe of the World". It is important to realise this, for Middle-earth is based on linguistic causal philosophy, and it is to be expected that such name changes herald actual change also.

For, not only is he unable to change shape anymore but, when Fingolfin in his great bravery challenged Morgoth to a duel, he came forth (though he felt fear - alone of the Valar) and was cut seven times and his face was marred by Thorondor, and he felt the pain of these wounds ever after; hardly the result he should have expected of such a combat if he had not dwindled and his darkness splintered. But what is the cause of this? That I shall come to in the final section.

Let us examine the history of Beleriand further:

Then Beren and Lúthien came to Angband, and Lúthien danced before him and sang a song that made him fall asleep; this in itself is remarkable evidence of how drastically Morgoth had dwindled. So they were able to cut a Silmaril from his Iron Crown. Yet another remarkable instance is in the steadfastness of Húrin when captured by Morgoth. He sneered at him and was not cowed at all; nor did Morgoth ever gain what knowledge he needed from that mere mortal by force. In the end he released Húrin unbowed, though embittered.

Even Maedhros realised the change, I think, for upon hearing of the prowess of Beren and Lúthien he formed the Union of Maedhros, and so brought about the Nirnaeth, when Elves hammered at the very Doors of Angband. Before, in their first strength, they had not come to its Gates, let alone through them in all the years of the siege. Morgoth's salvation came from the evil Men in his service, as is told in Ch.20 of IS: "... even then the Eldar might have won the day, had all their hosts proved faithful; yet neither by wolf, nor by Balrog, nor by Dragon, would Morgoth have achieved his end, but for the treachery of Men."

If one examines this statement, it is most definitive and unequivocal, and from such an exacting linguist as Tolkien one would expect it to mean what is said, namely that Morgoth plus all his hosts might have fallen had it not been for Men.

From then onwards Morgoth did not dare come forth beyond the Gates of Angband - a virtual prisoner of his own making - and he was recaptured after the War of Wrath and thrown through the Door of Night, to dwell beyond until the End of days.

This neatly parallels the splintering of light in the Ages of the Sun and Moon.

And what of Ungoliant? Such a powerful demon of darkness, but she too "consumed herself in her last misery", or so it was told. In her place, in the Third Age of the Sun, we have the lesser Shelob and the ridiculous, though numerous, spiders of Mirkwood, which even a 'mere' Hobbit like Bilbo can draw circles round. Splintered darkness at work once more.

Then we have the case of Sauron, Morgoth's lieutenant in Tol-in-Gaurhoth in Northern Beleriand: a being of great powers, able to shift his shape at will from bat to wolf to serpent to vampire and so on, as when Huan fought with him, able to fly and cast great spells. Yet, in Númenor he was unable to withstand the forces of nature and fly off to escape the drowning and destruction of his physical form. Only his spirit returned to Middle-earth to seek out his Rings.

There are sure signs also of revolt amongst his minions in The Lord of the Rings, just as in his lackey Saruman. See the talk amongst the Orcs in the Tower of Cirith Ungol, which Sam searched for Frodo, and the talk of the Orc-folk on their way through Mordor: they all speak of setting up on their own. Then the Dragons did not respond to his commands, as Gandalf obviously feared, as was explained more fully in Unfinished Tales. For there was not only Smaug in the North of the world: the withered Heath spawned many

more dragons, yet all so puny that none would be able to melt the Ring, as they might have done in days of old. Sauron's nine Ringwraiths were at the limit of their power when in the far land of the Shire and they failed him. Also Shelob was not under Sauron's control - paralleling the situation with Morgoth and Ungoliant. See the end of The Two Towers, when Shelob is finally introduced to us: his 'pet', he calls her but he owns her not, to paraphrase the description given us in 'Shelob's Lair'.

And just as with Morgoth and his duel with Fingolfin, Sauron fought in armed combat with Gil-galad and Elendil, and his son Isildur. Two heroes died but Isildur cut the Ring from Sauron's finger for unlike Morgoth Sauron was bested. This is another sign of how the darkness was splintering, losing its potency. Sauron fell when the Ring was destroyed, and his darkness was replaced by the lesser darkness of Saruman, who had tried to copy Mordor in Orthanc, and now tried once again on an even smaller scale in the Shire.

Note how Saruman fell to the knife stroke of a common Man. Yet Gandalf told Gimli, Legolas and Aragorn that he was as Saruman ought to have been and that normal weapons could no longer do him harm when he met them as Gandalf the White near Fangorn Forest. How the mighty had fallen, as Frodo commented himself. His cure was beyond the Hobbits, but Frodo hoped that perhaps he would rise out of the depths into which he had sunk.

As Light had splintered into ordinariness, from the deathless Godlike Light of Aman to the Middle-earth humanity of the Sun and Moon, so too Darkness and evil had come down from being a supernatural powerful and horrific thing into a skirmish between a gangster and his thugs on the one hand and the authorities of the order-loving, peace-seeking Shire and its Hobbits on the other. Without help they conquered Saruman, who had required the combined forces of the Ents, the Huorns and the Riders of the Mark to be vanquished before, during the War of the Ring. His darkness was diluted and splintered. His voice that had enthralled the Riders of Rohan could not hold the Hobbits, nor even Wormtongue, any longer.

So why was Darkness splintered thus?

It is my belief that, apart from the keeping of the balance of power of good and evil within the tale, the operating mechanism was that Darkness squandered its own strengths trying to create: a task far beyond its powers in reality, just as Ilúvatar had intimated in the Ainulindalë right at the very beginning. Let us for this purpose examine the so-called 'creative' processes indulged in by the forces of Darkness:

Morgoth formed the spirits of underworld into Balrogs, he twisted Elves into Orcs, made Trolls in mockery of Ents. He built Utumno, rebuilt Thangorodrim twice, and he nourished the evil spirit of Sauron and perhaps also of Ungoliant in the beginning. This must have sapped him of much of his native strength. Indeed Tolkien says as much in IS, Ch.9, Of the Flight of the Noldor: "For now more than in the days of Utumno ere his pride was humbled, his hatred devoured him, and in the domination of his servants and the inspiring of them with lust of evil he spent his spirit."

If one looks at the time before the battle with Fingolfin, Morgoth had spent hundreds of years fashioning Glaurung out of a fell spirit of his following, which was afterwards called Father of Dragons, and I believe that a lot of his native power went into this effort, as well as those required in multiplying the Orc races and building the Dragon monsters for the siege of Gondolin.

For Ilúvatar, such things as creation are easy to achieve, though much time and love go into their being, for all creative power stems from him. For the Powers of Darkness, it required a sacrifice of their own essential force to bring about the changes needed: a parting with some of their native strength, as is told of Sauron and the Ring.

Both Morgoth and Sauron showed the same signs of weakening. They were not able to alter their forms and shapes any longer towards the end. Power and time was running out for them both.

Examining Sauron in the same way as we did Morgoth, we see that:

He created the power of the Rings, held the Ringwraiths and many other minions, rebuilt Barad-dûr twice,

singlehandedly fought with Gil-galad and Elendil, killing them and being killed himself, after which Isildur cut the Ring off his finger. He fed and nourished the winged steeds of the Wraith-king, and also controlled the Watcher in the Water before the Gate of Khazad-dûm. He evidently tried to control the Balrog in Moria too. And all the time he tried to pierce the cloak of secrecy between him and his foes, the wielders of the Three. He had built Dol Guldur and then abandoned it. He used his power of persuasion upon Ar-Pharazôn to steer the Númenóreans towards destruction, but by that time found that some Men were not susceptible to his coercions, just as Melkor before him had found with the Elves.

He literally wore himself out in the end. The very same can be said of Saruman who called himself Ringmaker, and controlled a host of his own, with the Uruks a terrible new breed of bold and cunning Orc but, in the end, could not even control Hobbits.

In the final analysis, Tolkien realised better than many that, to create a world which is a precursor of our own, with larger than life forces at work, he had to scale down the terror to manageable levels for our own times towards the end of his chronology. That is, to humanise the fantasy and bring it down to a natural

man-to-man level. No more Dragons and Rings and ghost-like Wraiths for Middle-earth. Just gangsters and mean folk who would attempt to run the lives of others as in the real world; much as he had seen himself through two World Wars, and the horrors of daily living in this century.

Myth and reality meeting and merging into one, his seamless stitch created the English Mythos in one masterful stroke.

Bibliographical Note

In this essay I have freely used information to be found in the following books:

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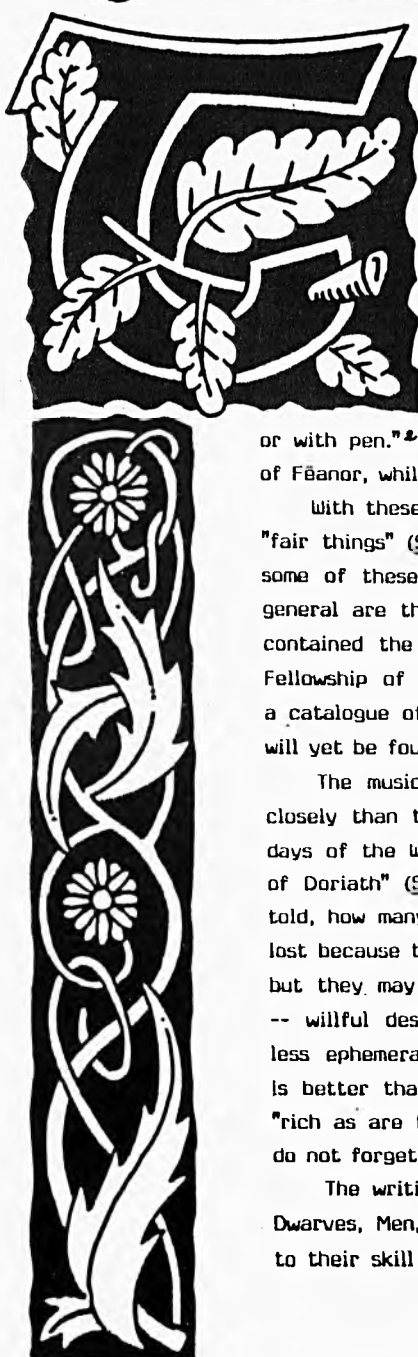






books, literature and literacy in middle - earth

by WAYNE HAMMOND



The history of books and reading, in the works of J.R.R. Tolkien as in our own culture, must begin with an account of writing, that "wond'rous mystic art... of painting Speech, and speaking to the eyes."⁴ In Arda it was an Elvish invention, no surprise from a people who named themselves *Quendi*, "the Speakers". We are told in *The Silmarillion* that in the Noontide of the Blessed Realm, when Melkor was enchained, "the Noldor advanced ever in skill and knowledge; and the long years were filled with their joyful labours, in which many new things fair and wonderful were devised. Then it was that the Noldor first bethought themselves of letters," and Rúmil of Tirion "achieved fitting signs for the recording of speech and song, some for graving upon metal and stone, others for drawing with brush or with pen."² The written forms (*tengwar*) were bettered, or largely re-invented, by the craft of Fëanor, while the inscriptional letters (*cirth*) were improved by Daeron of the Sindar.³

With these alphabets the Noldor made "poems and histories and books of lore" among many "fair things" (*Silm*, QS13, V, 2). At least, we may assume from the Noldorin love of craft that some of these were written works, and no doubt were beautiful to see. But how annoyingly general are the terms with which Tolkien describes them! Elrond's collection in Rivendell also contained the ubiquitous "books of lore", as well as "storied and figured maps", which the Fellowship of the Ring pondered before setting out (*LotR*, Bk.II, Ch.3, V, 2). If only we had a catalogue of some Elves' library, we could analyse their literature and lore; and maybe one will yet be found hidden inside an old exam-book somewhere in the Tolkien archive.

The music-loving Sindar made less use of writing than they did of song, adhering more closely than the Noldor to an oral tradition. The Sindar kept few written records "until the days of the War" against Morgoth, and "much that was held in memory perished in the ruins of Doriath" (*Silm*, QS10, III, 2).⁴ "Only in memory" is implied here. How many tales have been told, how many songs sung, how many languages spoken since the world began which have been lost because they were not preserved in writing?⁵ Books and documents are far from permanent, but they may be copied and re-copied, and so their contents take on a kind of immortality -- willful destruction, apathy and neglect notwithstanding. Under ideal conditions writing is less ephemeral than speech (or speakers), and the Chinese proverb applies: "The palest ink is better than the most retentive memory." Even for the Elves: as we read in *The Lhammas*, "rich as are the minds of the Elves in memory, they are not as the Valar, who wrote not and do not forget."⁶

The writing systems of the Elves were also a force for the civilisation of other peoples. Dwarves, Men, even Orcs adopted the *cirth*, altering it "to suit their purposes and according to their skill or lack of it" (*LotR*, Bk.VI, Ap.E, II, 4). We can only guess at what use Orcs made

of writing; for enlistment records? Maybe clerical Orcs were specially trained.

The Dwarves adhered to an expanded Alphabet of Daeron for their own (secret) tongue, and from the basically inscripational cirth developed written pen-forms. Otherwise, they "made use of such scripts as were current and many wrote the Fëanorian letters skilfully..." (LotR, Bk.VI, Ap. E, II, 5). They were prodigious writers, it seems. Unfortunately, we have no evidence to show what they used writing for, if anything, besides inscriptions and the keeping of their history. Tolkien mentions only one of their books: the Book of Mazarbul, a record of the colony in Moria. Gandalf turns its leaves, so that it was indeed a book -- that is, a codex, which by the Third Age seems to have supplanted the scroll in Middle-earth even as it did in our Western civilisation.⁷ And since the leaves "crackled and broke" and did not "crumble" as they were laid upon Balin's tomb (LotR, Bk.II, 5, I, 2), we may guess that they were made of parchment or vellum. Animal skin is (usually) more durable than paper and therefore may have been preferred by the sturdy Dwarves.

The word mazarbul, "records", by itself suggests a Dwarvish system of archives management. Indeed, in Moria there was a chamber devoted to the care of records. "In the rock of the walls" of this chamber were cut "many recesses" in which "were large iron-bound chests of wood", evidently for storing documents (LotR, Bk.II, Ch.5, I, 2). The arrangement recalls archival systems of ancient Egypt, whose wooden boxes containing papyri have been found in tombs, and in Rome, whose chests (or scrinia) were handily portable when the imperial court moved from place to place. The niche, or pigeon-hole, method of filing survives to the present day.⁸

It is said in The Silmarillion that "the Edain of old learned swiftly of the Eldar such art and knowledge as they could receive, and their sons increased in wisdom and skill, until they far surpassed all others of Mankind..." (Silm, QS17, V, 13). Then, presumably, was the gift of letters given to Men; but it was not equally appreciated. Men were not (and are not) uniformly eager to learn, or of like ability.⁹ In Númenor probably few except the loremasters learned "the High Eldarin Tongue of the Blessed Realm, in which much story and song was preserved from the beginning of the world," or "made letters and scrolls and books, and wrote in them many things of wisdom and wonder in the high tide of their realm..." (Silm, Ak., I, 9). And as that tide turned and Men became enamoured of wealth and war, books, (as it seems) became valued more as possessions or objects of veneration than as keys to wisdom and knowledge. It is distressing to note that the only writings mentioned by Tolkien as having survived the destruction of Númenor, "scrolls of lore written in scarlet and black", are described in The Akallabêth as heirlooms of the Faithful together with their "vessels and [their] jewels" (Silm, Ak., II, 38).¹⁰

This attitude towards books and learning continued, at least among the Dúnedain of the South. It is best expressed in The Lord of the Rings in Faramir's description of the archives at Minas Tirith: "we in the house of Denethor," he tells Frodo, "know much ancient lore by long tradition, and there are moreover in our treasuries many things preserved: books and tablets writ on withered parchemnts, yea, and on stone, and on leaves of silver and gold, in divers characters. Some none can now read; and for the rest, few ever unlock them. I can read a little in them, for I have had teaching" (LotR, Bk.IV, Ch.5, IV, 12). Gandalf tells the Council of Elrond that at Minas Tirith he was grudgingly permitted by Lord Denethor "to search among the hoarded scrolls and books... many records that few now can read, even of the lore-masters, for their scripts and tongues have become dark to later Men" (LotR, Bk.II, Ch.2, X, 13).¹¹ Isildur left records of the Ring in Gondor "lest a time come when the memory of these great matters shall grow dim" (LotR, Bk.II, Ch.2, 16), but he did not foresee the waning ability of Men to read what he had left.

Faramir speaks of books as treasure, and Gandalf uses the word hoard: clearly, the Stewards of Gondor included in their charge even the writings of their past, to keep them until the King should come again. On the face of it, this is a noble aim; but by accomplishing their goal the Stewards defeated the original purpose of what they preserved. Though books may be prized as objects or for their antiquity, the worth of their contents is lost as long as they are unread. Barred from the use of books, whether by treasure-house gates

or by the belief that the writings cannot themselves be "unlocked", only an exceptional person will not be discouraged from exploring the path of intellectual growth that only books can provide.

The long tradition Faramir mentions is evidently an oral one, or mostly oral, and the status quo. Beregon of the Guard tells Pippin, "in these days men are slow to believe that a captain can be wise and learned in the scrolls of lore and song, as he [Faramir] is, and yet a man of hardihood and swift judgement in the field" (LotR, Bk.V, Ch.1, XII, 4). Faramir himself remarks, "though we still hold that a warrior should have more skills and knowledge than only the craft of weapons and slaying, we esteem a warrior, nonetheless, above men of other crafts. Such is the need of our days" (LotR, Bk.IV, Ch.5, X, 18). It is not going too far to say that Faramir was one of the few men of Gondor who could, or would, make such an apology: a warrior himself, but with the soul of a scholar. As a Steward's son, no doubt he had a greater opportunity for what we would call "formal" education. He was taught by loremasters (including Gandalf) and had easy access to such books as he could read. Ultimately he developed an uncommon perspective: in rejecting their "scrolls of lore and song", in failing to retain even the knowledge of how to decipher them, his people had become less than they were: though their forebears were "the High, or Men of the West, which were Númenóreans", the people of Gondor (Faramir believes) have become like the Rohirrim, "the Middle Peoples, Men of the Twilight", who love "war and valour" more than "arts and gentleness" and who for the most part are unlettered.¹² This is not to say uneducated, or ignorant, or socially inferior (though Faramir's description of the Rohirrim is slightly condescending). We should not underestimate the heights that an oral culture can attain or the degree to which it can cultivate creative (or destructive) powers. Nevertheless, without writing (and a climate in which it can thrive), intellectual growth can proceed only so far. Unless fed by intellectual curiosity, a civilisation will stagnate if it does not fade and die.

We are not told outright if Gondor and Rohan escaped this dead end of anti-intellectualism and bibliophobia. I like to think that they did, in the years of "great glory and bliss" (LotR, Bk.VI, Ap.A, (v), V, 10) under Aragorn's rule, through the marriage of Faramir of Gondor and Éowyn of Rohan, and inspired by the education of the King, which was surpassed by that of no man. We may imagine, in a fit of romanticism, that King Elessar was a patron of books and learning no less than King Alfred or Emperor Charlemagne. But in truth we have little evidence to point that way other than a confident appraisal of Aragorn's character and the knowledge that even after his death there was a King's Writer at work -- Findegil, whose copy of the Red Book was the "most important" (LotR, Bk.I, Pr. Note 3-4).

* * *

Happily, we have much evidence with which to discuss our subject as it pertains to the Shire. The inhabitants of that pleasant corner appear to have been a mix of the literate and the semi-literate. On the one hand there were Hobbits who "wrote constantly to all their friends (and a selection of their relations) who lived further off than an afternoon's walk" (LotR, Bk.I, Pr.3, 5); who sent invitation cards written in gold ink (Bk.I, Ch.1, VI, 13); who had the leisure to keep diaries (Bk.II, Ch.3, VIII, 6; Bk.VI, Ap.D, Cal.IV, 2; etc.); who owned enough books to require a bookcase, and who would have them borrowed (and sometimes not returned) by the likes of Hugo Bracegirdle (Bk.I, Ch.1, X, 9). On the other hand, Hobbits "begin to learn the art" of cooking "before their letters (which many never reach)" (Bk.IV, Ch.4, VII, 4). How many are "many"? Hobbit-children knew (or thought they knew) what Gandalf's G-rune on his fireworks boxes stood for: "G for Grand!" (Bk.I, Ch.1, IV, 2). And there must have been some expectation that Bilbo's notice NO ADMITTANCE EXCEPT ON PARTY BUSINESS would be read and obeyed (Bk.I, Ch.1, VI, 3), and that the Shire-hobbits would know what was ordered in the lists of Rules Frodo and company found posted when they returned from their journeys (Bk.VI, Ch.8, II, 1).

Literate at least to a degree, then -- but as in Gondor, intellectually unambitious. In Bilbo's day "a love of learning (other than genealogical lore) was far from general among them (Hobbits), but there remained still a few in the older families who studied their own

books and even gathered reports of old times and distant lands from Elves, Dwarves, and Men" (LotR, Bk.I, Pr.1; III, 1). The words remained still tantalisingly look back to when a love of learning was indeed general among Hobbits: when they had learned their letters from the Dúnedain (Bk.I, Pr.1, III, 7) and the world was new. In time their curiosity waned. By the end of the Third Age a little learning was not only a dangerous thing but the common state of affairs.

Hobbits liked books, if they read them at all, "filled with things that they already knew, set out fair and square with no contradictions" (Bk.I, Pr.1, IV, 5). Did they fear the unknown so much, or did they merely wish to avoid feeling ignorant? "Rumours of strange things" were dismissed as "fireside-tales and children's stories" (Bk.I, Ch.2, IV, 4) opposing (perceived) fact to fantasy.¹³ Even Merry Brandybuck once put down "old bogey-stories ... about goblins and wolves and things of that sort" (Bk.I, Ch.6, I, 12). (No doubt he later changed his mind). Bilbo and Frodo, and Sam Gamgee, were among few who saw truth in old tales (Bk.I, Ch.2, IV). The Hobbit who loved lore for its own sake, or who delved into matters outside common experience, risked being labelled "queer" (Bk.I, Ch.1, III) or "cracked" (Bk.I, Ch.2, IV, 20). When Gaffer Gamgee publicly remarked that "Mr. Bilbo" had "learned" Sam "his letters -- meaning no harm, mark you, and I hope no harm will come of it" (Bk.I, Ch.1, III, 15, italics mine), he uttered a caveat that his listeners surely approved without dissent.

Tolkien described the Hobbit condition as "a mental myopia which is proud of itself, a smugness (in varying degrees) and cocksureness, and a readiness to measure and sum up things from a limited experience, largely enshrined in sententious traditional 'wisdom'".¹⁴ In this respect the Shire was not unlike England between the 15th and 18th centuries as it is described in Richard D. Altick's The English Common Reader (if we substitute script for Altick's print and written for printed). Literacy, Altick observes,

made little headway among the humble in either town or country. Their life still was lived according to the immemorial pattern.... Songs and stories were handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation, with never a page of paper intervening. The life of the imagination and the feelings was still attuned to the ear rather than to the eye. The popular tradition, rich in folk heroes and broad humor and proverbial wisdom and memorable events, ... was part of the very soil, and there was as yet no need for the printed word to supplant it. (p.29)

But there were books in the Shire, and some of them contained stories. Tolkien suggests in his preface to The Adventures of Tom Bombadil that Hobbit literature prior to the Red Book was transmitted mainly by speech.¹⁵ Frodo's comment in Mordor, however -- "'Shut the book now, dad; we don't want to read any more.'"¹⁶ (Bk.IV, Ch.8, V, 15) -- indicates otherwise. Some young Hobbits, at least, were read to, and were read tales. The better-loved "grown-up" stories and songs might have been written down also, though they remained most popular in oral form.

The Shire had some 300,000 inhabitants (to accept Ted Crawford's estimate¹⁶), some only semi-literate and with no innate love of books. There was no public education that we know of to require textbooks, no university to foster scholarship, no church to promote reading for spiritual gain. The most the Shire economy would have supported, therefore, was a very minor trade in books on the most popular (i.e. marketable) subjects. Gardening advice and cooking tips would have been "strong sellers" -- as indeed they still are. (1,001 Ways to Cook Mushrooms, by Mrs. Maggot?). Books made for sale most likely were written out by Hobbits who made their principal living otherwise: as law clerks, or by selling stationary to those who wrote constantly to all their friends, etc. A Hobbit who wished to own a work not available in the trade, or something of a scholarly nature, would have to write his own book or copy a borrowed text. The well-to-do, of course, like our Renaissance Kings of Naples and Dukes of Ferrara, could afford to hire scribes to do their writing for them.¹⁷

With the end of the War of the Ring, the Hobbits were awakened to "a more widespread interest in their own history; and many of their traditions, up to that time still mainly oral, were collected and written down. The greater families were also concerned with events of the Kingdom at large, and many of their members

studied its ancient histories and legends. By the end of the first century of the Fourth Age there were already to be found in the Shire several libraries that contained many historical books and records", copied at and brought back from Rivendell and Minas Tirith (Bk.I, Pr., Note, 1). This is a notable advance; but here again, we are dealing with the "greater families" rather than in the Shire population in general. Merry Brandybuck's best-remembered writings -- his Herblore of the Shire, the Reckoning of the Years, and Old Words and Names in the Shire -- reflect perennial Hobbit interests in agriculture and local lore. In contrast, the books kept at Great Smials that concerned Gondor and Númenor "were of less interest to Shire-folk" (Bk.I, Pr., Note, 6). In the history of the book as, in everywhere else, the more things change, the more they remain the same.¹⁸

I would like to conclude with a few remarks on physical aspects of the book as it was found in the Shire. Tolkien describes only one book of Hobbit make: the chief of ultimately five volumes of the Red Book of Westmarch. This was "a big book with plain red leather covers; its tall pages were now almost filled [when it was presented to Sam]. At the beginning there were many leaves covered with Bilbo's thin wandering hand; but most of it was written in Frodo's firm flowing script. It was divided into chapters, but Chapter 80 was unfinished, and after that were some blank leaves". Originally Bilbo's account of his journey to the Lonely Mountain, it had been expanded to include "the memoirs of Bilbo and Frodo of the Shire, supplemented by the accounts of their friends and the learning of the Wise, together with extracts from Books of Lore translated by Bilbo in Rivendell" -- so its title page informs us in fullsome detail (Bk.VI, Ch.9, VIII).

This description does not seem remarkable. Except that the Red Book is hand-written and leather-bound, in its physical form it is the ordinary sort of book with which we are all familiar. But if we read the passages more critically, it is very revealing. The words red leather covers indicate (among other things) a knowledge of dyes and of the binding of books in codex form. Tall pages suggests papermaking or the skill of preparing skins for writing. Most interesting of all, the book has a title page, an innovation not known in manuscripts in our history and in printed books only from 1476.¹⁹

We do not know if the leather covers were made by Hobbits or by Elves. Bilbo's diary was leather-bound before he left the Shire (Bk.I, Ch.1, VIII, 2, no colour specified), but it was given to Frodo at Rivendell with three other volumes also bound in red leather (Bk.I, Pr., Note, 2; Bk.VI, Ch.6, XII, 5). The latter three certainly were of Elvish make: their contents were compiled by Bilbo at Rivendell. The diary may have been re-bound there to match its companions, or maybe was originally a red-leather bound "blank book" given to Bilbo among Elrond's "small gifts" mentioned in The Hobbit.²⁰ In any case, we cannot be sure that there was no bindery in the Shire. Indeed, where there are books there are almost always bookbinders. "The only craft little practised among" Hobbits, Tolkien remarks, "was shoe-making; but they had long and skilful fingers and could make many other useful and comely things" (Bk.I, Pr.1, II, 3). Tolkien does not exclude other work in leather. Hobbits also could have bound simply in wrappers, or in cloth, or in uncovered wooden boards.

I am confident that the Red Book's "tall pages" were of paper. Paper of all sorts is mentioned by Tolkien so often that its manufacture must have been extensive. Hobbits could have prepared parchment, or possibly it could have been obtained from the Dwarves with whom the Shire traded (at least in boots for the Eastfarthing, Bk.I, Pr.1, IV, 2). But if our history is any guide, paper would have been by far the less expensive product and the most easily made.²¹

As for the Red Book's remarkable title page, lacking other evidence we may chalk that up to Baggins ingenuity.

I do not believe that Hobbits printed from movable type. Printing requires four elements: letter-casting, a press, ink, and some material on which to print. Paper, as already noted, was available in seeming abundance. Good black printing ink can be made from linseed oil (from flaxseed), turpentine (from pines or firs), and lampblack (soot), all substances within the Hobbits' ability to manufacture.²² A screw press for printing could have been adapted from the standing press used to squeeze out excess water in papermaking, or from the winemaker's press. The most difficult technological hurdle for the

Hobbits in printing from moveable type would have been letter casting, which involves the careful cutting of galleys, the making of a matrix for each character, the use of an adaptable mould for the casting of type in a mixture of lead, tin, and antimony, and various finishing operations. This is the sticking point. Even if we assume that a knowledge from metallurgy and metal-crafting came from the Elves, and metals themselves from trade with the Dwarves (entering that grey area Fred Crawford has discussed in relation to coins), the operation seems more complicated than Hobbits are said to have preferred (Bk.I, Pr.1, II, 1).

On the other hand, there is (slim) evidence for printing to have existed in the Shire, though it was not a Hobbit invention. When Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin returned to the Shire after the destruction of the Ring, they found "a notice and a list of Rules" on every wall in the guard-house at the Brandywine gate. If we infer that such notices were posted throughout the Shire, we may infer also some method of making multiple copies. Of course, these could have been reduced in manuscript by a few "lettered" Hobbits pressed into duty. But Saruman had "a mind of metal and wheels" (Bk.III, Ch.4, VII, 15). Could he have introduced printing into the Shire as a means to his authoritarian ends? Did his presses flood that country with proclamations and propaganda as his new mill fouled the water and the air? So we can easily imagine; and if so, the "Black Art" was then made very black indeed.

Notes

- 1: Uncredited verse, quoted in Fairbanks, A Book of Scripts, p.9.
- 2: The Silmarillion, QS6, I, 1.
- 3: Lord of the Rings, BK.VI, Ap.E, II, 3-4). References are to the corrected printing of the rev. 2nd ed.
- 4: In the Narn i Hîn Hûrin we read that in Doriath Túrin "learned much lore, hearing eagerly the histories of ancient days" (Unfinished Tales, Pt.1, II, 3, ii, italics mine).
- 5: The High-elven tongue, Quenya, disappeared from everyday use until it was no longer a "birth-tongue", but fixed in script it survived as a language of ceremony and learning (LotR, Bk.VI, Ap.F1, II, 2; UT, Pt.2, II, N.19). In The Lhammas it is said that the speech of the Laiquendi, though it has vanished from the earth, "was recorded in Gondolin, and ... is not wholly forgotten ..." (The Lost Road, Pt.2, V, a, 7, ii); and that "in Tol-eressëa are kept records of the ancient tongue of Ossiriand, which is no more; and also the tongue of the Western Men, the Elf-friends ... [which also] is no more" (ibid., Pt.2, V, b, 6).
- 6: LR, Pt.2, Va, 4, iii).
- 7: The codex, or book made up of gatherings (folded sheets), was invented circa 1st century B.C. and was the dominant format by the 4th century A.D. Its advantages over the scroll are that both sides of a sheet (or skin) may be written on, and long works can be accommodated in a space more compact than a scroll or series of scrolls can offer. The codex has always been the preferred format for Christian works; the Torah, however, remains by tradition a scroll.
- 8: See Posner, Archives of the Ancient World, pp. 86, 197.
- 9: Cf. the description of the Three Houses of Men, (Silm., QS17, V, 10).
- 10: "It is said that Aldarion ... wrote records of all his journeys to Middle-earth, and they were long preserved in Rómenna, though all were afterwards lost" (UT, 194).
- 11: In Appendix A of the 1st ed. of LotR (1954-55) is the remark (omitted in the rev. ed.) that Aragorn opened the records of Gondor to Frodo and Peregrin, who read in The Book of the Kings and The Book of the Stewards and The Akallabêth.
- 12: Faramir says of the Rohirrim that "of our [Gondor's] lore and manners they have learned what they would, and their lords speak our speech at need; yet for the most part they hold by the ways of their own fathers and to their own memories ..." (LotR, Bk.IV, Ch.5, X, 16). Théoden, and Éomer and Éowyn, were probably literate; possibly more of the Rohirrim could read and write than was revealed to outsiders. Runes were incised in the stone floor of Meduseld (LotR, Bk.III, Ch.6, VI, 1).

- 13: Cf. LotR, Bk.III, Ch.2, XIII, 33: "'Halfings! But they are only a little people in old songs and children's tales out of the North.'"
- 14: The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien, L.246, II, 1.
- 15: The Adventures of Tom Bombadil, Pr., 2. References are to the 1st ed., 1962 (ATB).
- 16: Some Light on Middle-earth, p.1.
- 17: Cf. comments in Goldschmidt, The Printed Book in the Renaissance, pp.1-3.
- 18: "Distrust of all Elvish lore" marked "the prevailing mood in the Shire at the end of the Third Age, and that mood was certainly not entirely dispelled by the events and changes with which that Age ended" (ATB, Pr., 7).
- 19: The Kalendarium of Regiomontanus (Venice: Erhard Ratdolt, 1476) includes a separate page giving title, author, place, printer, and date of publication. The papal bull of Aeneas Sylvius (Mainz: Fust and Schoeffer, 1463) earlier devoted a separate page to its title but without other details. Publication data in 15th-century printed books usually was given, if at all, only in a colophon at the end of the volume.
- 20: The Hobbit, Ch. XIX, 18.
- 21: See my "Papermaking in the Shire", Amon Hen 94, November 1988, pp.17-18.
- 22: It is easy to imagine Hobbits acting in the festive manner of the Germans, who even in the late 19th century ate bread roll fried in the very linseed oil being boiled for the making of ink! See Bloy, A History of Printing Ink, Balls and Rollers, p.8.
- 23: Crawford, pp.2-3.

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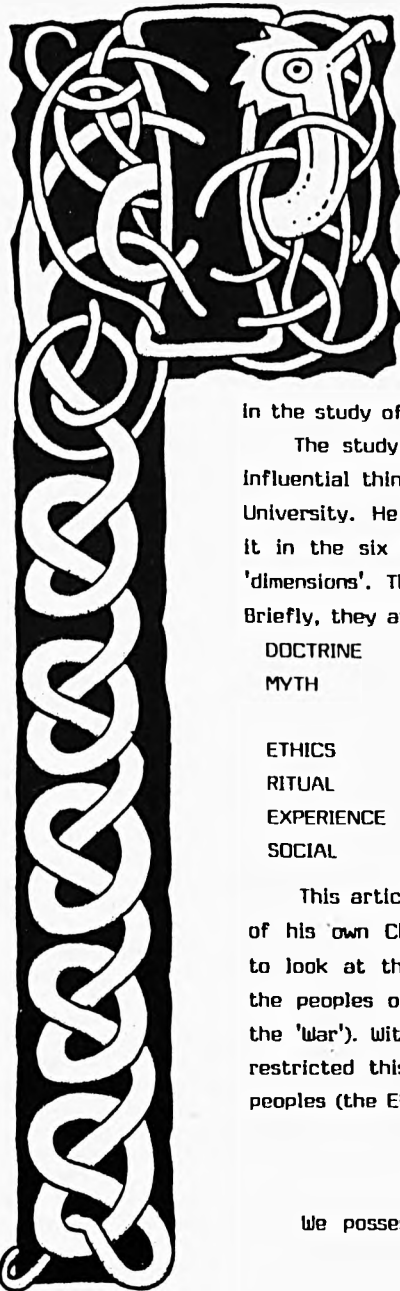
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the religious ritual & practise of the elves of middle-earth at the time of the war of the ring

by MICHAEL R HICKMAN



In a draft letter¹ written in 1954 Tolkien denied that there was any 'religion' in Middle-earth. However he was referring to the existence of an organised religion with buildings, priestly cults, etc.: in fact there is much evidence of religion in The Lord of the Rings. In The Road Goes Ever On Tolkien wrote about Elvish songs in praise of Elbereth, "The Elves sing hymns to her,"² and then commented, "(These and other references to religion in The Lord of the Rings are frequently overlooked)".³ In a small way I would like to remedy this 'overlooking'.

As a teacher of Religious Studies and as an avid reader of Tolkien's books I have often thought about studying the religious practices and beliefs of the peoples of Middle-earth by applying to them the techniques employed in the study of religion.

The study of religion has been transformed over the past few decades. One of the most influential thinkers in bringing about this change has been Professor Ninian Smart of Lancaster University. He developed a method of studying the phenomenon of religion by categorising it in the six major ways in which all religion manifests itself. These ways he refers to as 'dimensions'. They have become well known and are called Smart's Six Dimensions of Religion. Briefly, they are -

- DOCTRINE The teachings of a religion that are passed on as a series of beliefs,
- MYTH The common sets of stories/presuppositions that act as a cohesive force for followers of a religion,
- ETHICS The behavioural standards of right and wrong,
- RITUAL The practices by which people express their beliefs,
- EXPERIENCE The encounter with the 'divine',
- SOCIAL The interaction between one person or group and another.

This article, therefore, is not a study of the origins of Tolkien's thought or an exploration of his own Christian beliefs and how they influenced his writings. Rather it is an attempt to look at these writings in order to see what the religious beliefs and practices were of the peoples of Middle-earth at the time of the War of the Ring (hereinafter referred to as the 'War'). With the limitations of space and the amount and type of material available I have restricted this article to a study of just one of the six dimensions (RITUAL) of one of the peoples (the ELVES) of Middle-earth.

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We possess two types of material from Middle-earth. First, the hymns, invocations and

other statements of the Elves (and of the other peoples influenced by Elvish culture) as recorded by Tolkien; secondly, the rest of the text of Tolkien's writings which can be taken as a kind of commentary or record of the events and thinking of the time.

Elvish culture in Middle-earth by 3020 T.A. was in decline but because of their life-span and life-style it can be assumed that many of their religious beliefs and practices had remained relatively unchanged over several millenia and therefore evidence from writings other than The Hobbit and LotR can be used.

There were four main centres of Elvish culture in Middle-earth at the time of the 'War': the Havens, Rivendell, Lothlórien, and Northern Mirkwood. There are very few references to religious practice or belief at the Havens, and not many more to those at Lothlórien or in Mirkwood but most of the basic ritual was probably common to all these centres. This article is based upon the culture at Rivendell, which was basically a combination of Noldorin and Sindarin. Where there are clear differences, these will be noted.

BASIC BELIEFS

The basic Elvish beliefs are expressed in the three major hymns recorded in LotR: the pilgrimage hymn of Gildor and company¹, the hymn in the Hall of Fire at the House of Elrond², and the hymn of Galadriel (more personal than the others)³ on the departure of the companions from Lothlórien.

All of these hymns, called songs in LotR but hymns in RGEQ [see note 2], are addressed to Elbereth and they each refer to Elbereth's relation to the stars. They also speak of Elbereth's place far beyond Middle-earth, but the Elves clearly believed that their prayers could reach her. As such Elbereth is seen by the Elves as one whose power, although limited⁴, could be used for protection, or to influence or change events.

The Elves believed that there was only one God, Eru Ilúvatar, but in LotR that name is never used by Elves. It must be assumed that the name was too holy to utter and that, if misused, would bring about dire consequences for the user, as for Fëanor and his sons⁵. As a substitute in blessing and in invocation therefore they used the name of Elbereth or referred to the stars that she had kindled. Although the Noldor were taught many of their skills by Aulë, it is Elbereth as star-kindler who most attracted their devotion. There were opportunities, which will be referred to later (see under 'pilgrimage') for Elves to obtain visions of Elbereth.

There was a general belief in the ability to go over the Sea to Eressëa, indeed in the Noldor and Sindar it was a longing that could not be suppressed. Both Galadriel's lament⁶ and Legolas' song⁷ express this concept, one in sadness, the other in expectation.

The CALENDAR and the LITURGICAL YEAR

The only calendar that is recorded in LotR is the Calendar of Imladris⁸. However it is probable that this calendar is basically the same as that for other Elvish communities. It would be very unlikely for there to be different Days for the New Year⁹, or Midsummer Days. The length of the seasons differed and there may have been different festivals each according to local circumstances¹⁰, for example the Elves at the Havens may well have celebrated a festival connected with the Sea that would have been inappropriate in northern Mirkwood.

The calendar of Imladris included a week of six days, enquië (pl. enquier), which, as Tolkien comments, existed for "ritual rather than practical purposes"¹¹. The numbers 6 and 12 held special significance and they observed six seasons throughout the solar year.

The names of each of the days of the week were:

WEEK DAY	QUENYA	SINDARIN	
the Stars	Elenya	Orgilion	
the Sun	Anarya	Oranor	
the Moon	Isilya	Orithil	
the Two Trees	Aldúya	Orgaladhad	
the Heavens	Menelya	Ormenel	
the Valar	Valanya	Orbelain	The High Day

These show whom and what the Elves revere. As the names are recorded in both major languages they were almost definitely common to all the Elvish centres. The enquië existed primarily for ritual purposes therefore it can be assumed that rituals took place on one or more of these days, and definitely on the last day which was, "the chief day of the week"¹². Each day began at sunset, but it seems that the most important parts of the day were connected with the stars, 'tindómë' or star-fading and 'undómë' or star-opening¹³.

The differences between Elves and Hobbits in the timing of the start of the day can cause confusion when comparing calendars. It is possible to draw an Elvish calendar and compare it, day for day, with the Shire Calendar in LotR¹⁴. We are told that the Elves' New Year, "corresponded more or less with Shire April 6"¹⁵. However, we do not know whether Yestarë began at sunset on April 5 or April 6, both of which are possible. The effect of this difference will be seen later in the dating of the feast to celebrate the victory at the Ford of Bruinen.

The liturgical year had six seasons and included at least three major festivals or periods of festival which were:

- a two day festival incorporating the Last Day of the year, 'mettarë', which concluded the winter, and New Year's Day, 'Yestarë'¹⁶, which heralded the spring;
- Midsummer's Day, [which seems to have taken place on the 31st or 32nd day of Lairë, not the 36th] and
- a three day festival, 'enderi'¹⁷, at the end of Autumn, which was used as a day of thanksgiving (probably for the harvest).

There are no specific references to the last of these in LotR, but its existence and celebration can be inferred from the parallel on Númenor, where the three days of festival were the first days of Spring, midsummer and the end of autumn¹⁸. Its existence can also be inferred from the fact that Elves usually called the year 'loa', meaning 'growth', for in these matters they were primarily concerned with, "the seasonal changes in vegetation"¹⁹. The Elves relied for food, other than by trading for it, on growing, gathering and hunting and would undoubtedly have had some form of harvest thanksgiving in common with all similar communities today.

The ritual year, giving both Quenya and Sindarin, can therefore be reconstructed as follows:

	QUENYA	SINDARIN	TRANSLATION	DAYS	
Yestarë			New Year	1	NEW YEAR FESTIVAL
	Tuilë	Ethuil	Spring	54	
	Lairë	Laer	Summer	72	including the MID-SUMMER FESTIVAL (1 Day)
	Yávië	lavas	Autumn	54	
Enderi			Mid-year	3	AUTUMN FESTIVAL
	Quellë	Firith	Fading	54	
	Irivë	Rhîw	Winter	72	
	Coirë	Echuir	Stirring	34	
Mettarë		Year End	1		LAST DAY FESTIVAL

Once again, as this calendar is recorded in both Quenya and Sindarin, it can be assumed that its basis was followed by all Elves.

FESTIVAL RITUALS AND PRACTICES

Elvish society was hierarchical and led by hereditary kings or lords whose authority was both secular and sacred; this too was paralleled by Númenórean society. The senior Elvish line in Middle-earth was that of Finwë, represented by only two families at the time of the 'War', that of Elrond and Galadriel. In each society in which they lived these two individuals, and their families, were the leaders.

The Elf-lord had a number of ritual functions of which one of the most important was presiding at festivals. The president was sat in a chair²⁰ whilst minstrels sang. In TH it is recorded²¹ that Thranduil sat, "on a chair of carven wood", wore crowns of

different flora for the different seasons, berries and red leaves in autumn and woodland flowers in the spring, and, "held a carven staff of oak". This ritual decoration may only have been practised in Thranduil's realm but Galadriel at her last meeting with the Fellowship wore, "a circlet of golden flowers"¹⁵ in her hair. Given the Elvish love of trees and flowers it is most probable that similar rituals were performed in most Elf communities. In communities influenced by the Noldor prayers of praise and thanksgiving to Yavanna were likely. It also seems probable that in Thranduil's realm there were ceremonies at the New Year and at the end of the year when the king put on a new crown to the accompaniment of feast, dance and song.

The normal festival ritual seems to have been a feast, followed by drinking, singing and, according to TH¹⁶ dancing. These activities often took place in the open air. As the day started at sunset, the festival would presumably start in the evening and continue till dawn at least. The fact that the day started at sunset is the reason for TH¹⁷ referring to Midsummer's eve and LoTR¹⁸ to Midsummer's day. In Elvish terms it was one and the same day.

At the end of the feast there would have been some form of ritual liquid to drink, this is a normal conclusion to feasts. The Valar used such a ritual drink at their festival, the Eldar believed this to have been, "made from the honey of the undying flowers in the gardens of Yavanna, though it was clear and translucent."¹⁹ This drink was called 'miruvóre', which was the same name as that given to, "the cordial of Imladris"²⁰. Galadriel gave each member of the Fellowship white mead as a cup of parting²¹, the last and (only) meal that they had with Celeborn and Galadriel, and in her final lament she referred to miruvóre and posed the question, "who now shall refill the cup for me?"²²

The singing would include hymns to Elbereth, other hymns (or songs) of the Blessed Realm, and epic poetry recalling the mythic deeds of the ancestors. Another of the major functions of the Elf-lord was to be the repository of Elvish lore. There was no sacred text, being immortal such a collection of ancient stories was probably not required, but there were lore-masters and some collections of ancient stories were written down. These stories, such as the story of Tinúviel sung by Aragorn to the Hobbits²³ to lift up their hearts, were inspirational and thought-provoking. Their recitation would be an important event. It is no accident that the greatest of the lore-masters at the time of the 'war' was also one of the greatest Elf-lords, Elrond.

These celebrations did not take place only at the regular festivals but at any other time that was deemed appropriate, for example, the victory at the Ford of Bruinen. On that occasion a special room was used, the Hall of Fire. In Gandalf's words, 'Here you will hear many songs and tales -- if you can keep awake. But except on high days it usually stands empty and quiet, and people come here who wish for peace, and thought. There is always a fire here, all the year round, but there is little other light.'²⁴ From the reference to 'high days' it must be assumed that it was the place of the great festivals as well as the occasional celebrations such as the victory at the Ford of Bruinen.

On a comparison of calendars it can be calculated that, if Yestarë began on the evening of April 6 S.R., then this feast took place at the beginning of the high day of the ritual week, Valanya. If so, it may be that entering the Hall of Fire and singing hymns to Elbereth and other of the Valar on Valanya was the regular practice. However, this is very slim evidence from which to draw such a conclusion as it could equally be that it was the nature of the feast that led to the Hall of Fire being used rather than the day.

The only wedding involving Elves recorded in LoTR was that of Aragorn and Arwen. This took place on the festival of Midsummer. It is not clear whether this great day was chosen as it was such an important event or whether or not Elvish weddings would normally be celebrated on festival days. As Elves were in no hurry they could probably have waited until the next festival.

DAILY RITUAL AND PRACTICE

No Elf in LoTR would invoke the name of Eru Ilúvatar, (although on the most important occasions the head of the exiled Númenórean community was prepared to

do²⁵). Instead Elves both blessed and invoked using both the name of Elbereth and the stars. A common invocation at time of great peril was, "Elbereth Gilthoniel"²⁶ used by Legolas²⁷ as he saw the carrier of the Nazgûl, and by Hobbits like Frodo²⁸ under similar circumstances. Apparently such an invocation had great power, for even the Nazgûl were troubled by it²⁹.

Elbereth and the stars were also used in blessings, for example, Gildor's farewell to Frodo, "may the stars shine upon the end of your road!"³⁰ and "may Elbereth protect you"³¹, and Elrond's farewell to the Fellowship, "May the stars shine upon your faces!"³²

The Elvish love of the stars is reflected in what was probably a daily ritual. The Elves of Gildor's company, "all burst into song"³³ when the evening stars appeared (this was not on Valanya). This may have only been a Noldorin ritual as there is no record of Legolas doing this, or amongst the Elves of Lothlórien. The singing was followed by a meal around a fire.

The Silmarillion records that the returning Noldor under Fingolfin "blew their trumpets ... at the first rising of the Moon"³⁴ it also records that before the Fifth Battle, "the trumpets of the Eldar greeted the rising of the Sun ..."³⁵ and that "the people of Gondolin were upon the walls to await the rising Sun, and sing their songs at its uplifting, for the morrow was the great feast that they called the Gates of Summer"³⁶. However there is no mention in LoTR of any ritual connected with either the moon or the sun, nor is there any mention of the blowing of trumpets. The Elves in the Third Age lived a quieter existence.

It may be that the end of the First Age brought about a change in Elf attitude and the Elves of Middle-earth returned to their earlier devotion of the stars and of Elbereth. However the Elves of Lothlórien where the sun was very bright may well have continued such a practice. The other Valar are almost unmentioned in LoTR.

As the Hall of Fire was a place where one could go for peace and quiet it is likely that the Elves practiced some form of quiet prayer or meditation, but probably not on a regular basis. They were able, through song, to bring their thoughts to life³⁷ and were also able to 'sleep' by 'resting their minds' in a kind of deep, but open-eyed, meditation³⁸.

As far as I can calculate there is, with the possible exception of the celebration of the victory at the Ford of Bruinen, no record of the rituals concerned with the last day of the week but it is most likely that there were hymns and prayers to the Valar after whom the day was named.

LITURGICAL LANGUAGE

Many people have used ancient or archaic languages with which to pray, but it seems that the Elves used Sindarin mainly. The only recorded exception of a prayer in Quenya is Galadriel's Lament.³⁹ This was her birth-lament but hardly her usual one as there would have been very few Noldor in Lothlórien where a form of Sindarin was spoken. Galadriel may have used Quenya on this occasion as the particular prayer was so personal.

The hymn heard by Hobbits in the Hall of Fire was in Sindarin but of a form much influenced by Quenya⁴⁰ however this seems to have been the normal language of the singers if in rather archaic form. The pilgrimage hymn of Gildor and company was also in Sindarin, the name Elbereth is used rather than Varda. One difference between liturgical and vernacular Sindarin was the use of archaic pronouns such as 'thee'⁴¹; whereas the word 'thee' is not used in normal speech. Although there is no evidence it is quite likely that the Noldor would use Quenya on very important occasions and a 'high' Sindarin for other rituals. Sindarin Elves would probably have used 'high' Sindarin for all rituals.

PLACES OF WORSHIP

Buildings built specifically for worship did not exist. As Eru Ilúvatar alone was worshipped (the Valar were understood as intermediaries) any such building would have been thought blasphemous. This practice was paralleled by the Númenóreans⁴², both in Númenor and in Middle-earth. However this did not prevent any race from having sacred or hallowed places. These places were left open to the sky and there were no buildings.

Among their holy places the Dúnedain had Amon Anwar, 'the Hill of Awe' at the centre of Gondor where Elendil was buried⁵³ and other places such as the hallow on Mount Mindolluin where Gandalf led Aragorn to the sapling of the White Tree⁵⁴.

There is no mention of any such hallow for Elves, although by implication the burial places of Elvish kings and lords mentioned in *The Silmarillion* were treated in a similar way⁵⁴ Elves probably regarded the whole of Middle-earth as holy and were prepared to worship under the open sky wherever they were. This would have been especially appropriate as their devotion was expressed in hymns and prayers to the stars and other celestial objects and any building would have obscured this.

However there are two buildings mentioned in *LotR* that are associated with Elvish religious rituals. First, the Hall of Fire at Rivendell which has already been mentioned. This was a place both for private thought and public celebration. Secondly, the tower, Elostirion, built by Gil-galad for Elendil for him to put a Palantír in⁵⁵ The Palantír itself became a cause for pilgrimage.

Given the intense dislike of buildings for worship, the place and role of the Hall of Fire is not clear. It contained no images of any kind nor any cult object, only a fire there all the year around. It can only be assumed that such a building was not deemed to have contravened what was otherwise a strict prohibition.

PILGRIMAGE

Gildor's company was returning from a pilgrimage⁵⁶ to look into the Palantír on Eryn Beraid when they met Frodo, Pippin and Sam. This was a regular, if infrequent, event for the Noldorin exiles, especially those living in the area of Rivendell, it would have been a very difficult journey for any Noldo living in Lothlórien. On such a pilgrimage the pilgrim expected to see Eressëa and the Shores of Valinor and also hoped to have, "a vision, clear but remote, of Elbereth, as a majestic figure, shining white, standing upon the mountain Oiolosse"⁵⁷. From the text of the hymn of the returning pilgrims it seems that they had been granted such a vision which may account for Gildor's comment about the Elves being, "... little concerned with the ways of Hobbits, or of any other creature upon earth" and for immediately following this by saying, "In this meeting there may be more than chance ..."⁵⁸

CONCLUSION

As Tolkien indicated, there is indeed much reference to religion in *LotR* although many of the references are not immediately clear. The Elves were monotheists with angelic intermediaries who were the focus of their devotions, intercessions, supplications and thanksgivings. They had a well-constructed ritual calendar which, both weekly and seasonally, provided them with rituals and festivals to enable them to focus their thoughts and to celebrate. The rituals that they followed, daily, weekly and seasonally, had a discernable pattern, although much is still obscure.

They also undertook pilgrimages upon which they hoped to have an 'experience' of one of their angelic powers. They had no scriptures as understood by the term in Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition, but did have a large collection of poetry that was used for inspiration and reflection, rather like the great Viking and Hindu epics. Their leaders were leaders in both sacred and secular matters, in both war and peace and in festival and as repositories of lore.

They had a fully developed set of religious beliefs and practices similar in many ways to peoples in our world today, and it should not be thought otherwise.

NOTES

[Editor's Note: Owing to considerable textual differences in the various published editions of *LotR* as far as this article is concerned, references will not be to (Book, Chapter, part and paragraph), as is usual in these pages, but simply to the page numbering used by the author of the article when it is impossible to do otherwise. I apologise to readers who use other editions, both in English and in other languages.]

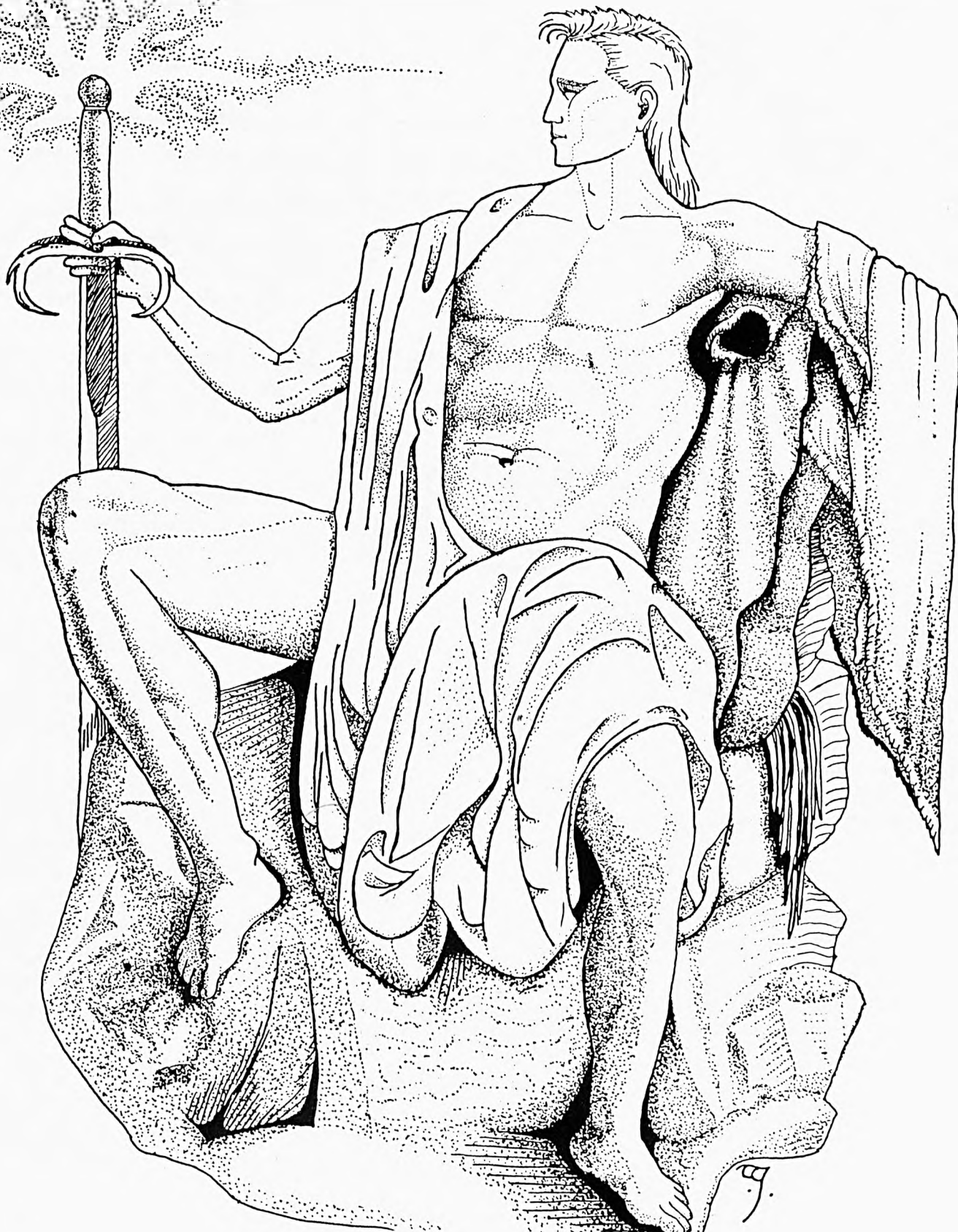
1 J.R.R. Tolkien, *Letters* (ed. H. Carpenter), London, Allen

& Unwin, 1981, (L.153, n.5). See also *Ibid* (L.156, Par.8). Tolkien is careful to write that, "they had no 'religion' (or religious practices, rather) for those had been in the hands of the gods."

- 2 J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Road Goes Ever On*, London, Allen & Unwin, 2nd edition, 1978, p.73. They are also referred to as hymns in the Index of J.R.R. Tolkien, *LotR*, London, Allen & Unwin, 2nd edition, 1966, Vol.III p.417, but as songs in the text itself, *Ibid* (Bk.I, Ch.3, IX, 21), (Bk.II, Ch.1, VII, 1), and (Bk.II, Ch.8, VIII, 2-3).
- 3 *RGEQ*, op. cit. p.73.
- 4 *LotR*, (I, 3, IX, 22-25).
- 5 *Ibid*, (II, 1, VII, 2).
- 6 *Ibid*, (II, 8, VIII, 4-8).
- 7 *Letters*, op. cit. (L.153, n.5).
- 8 J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Silmarillion* ed. C. Tolkien, London, Allen & Unwin, 1987, (TS, QS.9, II, 6), see also the conversation between Maedhros and Maglor (*Ibid*, QS.24, II, 8-12). The idea of not pronouncing the 'holy name' of the deity is quite common, the best example in contemporary religion being in Judaism where the word 'YHWH' is only ever pronounced 'Adonai' rather than as it stands. One of the reasons was the thought in the ancient world that to say a word meant to give it life and power and that if the name of the deity was uttered and then misused or abused the consequences would be death for the utterer.
- 9 *LotR*, op.cit. (Bk.II, Ch.8, V, 3-4 & VIII, 4-8). [Editor's Note: in the Index, these two songs are referred to as a single one, if in two parts, the 'Song of Eldamar'.]
- 10 *Ibid*, Bk.VI, Ch.4, IX, 4).
- 11 *Ibid* III pp. 385-390. All calendrical references in this section refer to these pages.
- 12 Celeborn and Thranduil met on the Day of the New Year after Thranduil's victory over the forces of Sauron, *Ibid* III p.375. As only one New Year of the Elves is ever mentioned in *LotR* it must be assumed that all Elf-centres celebrated it on the same day.
- 13 *Ibid* III p.385.
- 14 *Ibid* III p.385.
- 15 *Ibid* III p.388.
- 16 *Ibid* III p.389.
- 17 *Ibid* III p.384.
- 18 *Ibid* III p.390, n.1.
- 19 *Ibid* III p.386.
- 20 *Ibid* III p.386
- 21 J.R.R. Tolkien, *Unfinished Tales*, (ed by C. Tolkien), London, Allen & Unwin, 1980, (Pt.2, Section I, ii, 2).
- 22 *LotR* op. cit. III p.385.
- 23 e.g. Elrond after the feast celebrating the victory at the Ford of Bruinen "went towards the seat prepared for him" in the Hall of Fire, *Ibid*, Bk.II, Ch.1, IV, 3)
- 24 J.R.R. Tolkien *The Hobbit*, London, Unwin Hyman, 50th Anniversary edition, 1987, Ch.9, I, 5).
- 25 *LotR* Bk.II, Ch.8, V, 2).
- 26 *TI* op. cit. Ch.3, II, 45, "... then they went down to the water to see the elves dance and sing upon the midsummer's eve."
- 27 *Ibid*.
- 28 For example Aragorn and Arwen were betrothed on the eve of Midsummer, *LotR*, op. cit. III p.341 and were married on the Day of Midsummer, *Ibid*, Bk.VI, Ch.5, Last Par.
- 29 *RGEQ* op. cit. p.69.
- 30 This was undoubtedly the drink given to the travellers by Glorfindel, *LotR*, Bk.I, Ch.12, XIII, 3), and used by Gandalf in cases of great need as when the Company were attempting the Redhorn Pass (*LotR*, Bk.II, Ch.3, XVIII, 6). On none of these occasions was the miruvor used ritually, but it may have been made for ritual purposes.
- 31 *Ibid*, Bk.II, Ch.8, VII, 1-3.
- 32 *Ibid*, Bk.II, Ch.8, 8.
- 33 *Ibid* Bk.I, Ch.11, XII, 10-19.
- 34 *Ibid* Bk.II, Ch.1, IV, 2.
- 35 The oath of Cirion and Eorl, *UT* op. cit. Pt.3, II, iii, V, 2-4, which was renewed by Aragorn/Elessar with Eomer, using the same formula, *Ibid* Pt.3, II, n.44.
- 36 *LotR* op.cit. Bk.II, Ch.9, VI, 11.
- 37 *Ibid* Bk.I, Ch.11, Last Par.
- 38 *Ibid* Bk.I, Ch.12, II, 2).
- 39 *Ibid* Bk.I, Ch.3, Penult. Par.
- 40 *Ibid* Bk.I, Ch.3, XI, 22.
- 41 *Ibid* Bk.II, Ch.3, VIII, 5.
- 42 *Ibid* Bk.I, Ch.3, X, 3.
- 43 *TS*, QS9, Last par.
- 44 *Ibid* QS20, II, 7 - This was on Midsummer. Many Elf events took place on this day, they seem to have thought it auspicious.
- 45 *Ibid* QS23, II, 4.

- 46 'he (thought) ... he had received the gift of the Elf-minstrels, who can make the things of which they sing appear before the eyes of those who listen." LotR op. cit. III p.338.
- 47 for example Legolas, ibid Bk.IV, Ch.2, XVII, 18.
- 48 ibid, Bk.II, Ch.8, VIII, 4-7.
- 49 RCEO op. cit. p.72.
- 50 ibid p.72. The word 'thee' is also used by Gildor and company in addressing Elbereth. I do not know of any occasion of Elf usage of 'thee' in personal conversation.
- 51 UT op. cit. Pt.2, I, II, 2.
- 52 ibid Pt.3, II, ii.
- 53 LotR op.cit. Bk.VI, Ch.4, VIII, 1.

- 54 TS QS18, II, 10, the burial place of Fingolfin, and ibid QS23, II, 7, the burial place of Glorfindel. Both were buried in lonely, high places where flowers bloomed and were untouched by evil.
- 55 ibid RINGS, III, 17.
- 56 RCEO op. cit. pp.73-74. Here it is stated that Gildor and company, "live in or near Rivendell" but LotR op. cit. Bk.I, Ch.3, IX, 34, seems to imply that they are on their way to visit their kin in Rivendell. It seems that the former is correct.
- 57 RCEO op. cit. p.74.
- 58 LotR op. cit. Bk.I, Ch.3, XI, 20.





The high birds perceive him: A man
 Transcending loneliness
 And pain, whose lean face scans
 The forest, seeking rest.

A shimmer stirs. Entranced he stares
 Ahead with bated breath
 At one who was the fairest star
 To ever grace the earth.

The bitter years leave Beren's face,
 Transfigured by her song,
 Immortal in a timeless place,
 She glitters - and is gone.

An after-image of her dance
 Animates the shadows;
 Still muminous with her presence,
 The muted forest glows.

"Oh loveliness surpassing words"
 He sighed, "so briefly known,
 Elusive vision of the woods,
 Where has thy semblance flown?"

Thither he roves without respite
 Through untraveled glades;
 Uncounted pass the silvered nights,
 The unrequited days.

Straying shafts of starlight hound
 The emptiness, depart;
 Bled of leaves, the forest grows gaunt,
 Baring its threadbare heart.

Lonely for enchantment lost,
 He roams deserted groves
 Waggard with encroaching frost,
 The driven chorus of love.

'Til drawing to his destiny,
 A half-enslaved dream,
 Again he sees her poised to flee -
 He calls to her by name -

"Tinúviel! Tinúviel!"
 She gazes, ropt, and still.
 Silent falls the fateful spell:
 The legend is fulfilled.

Spellbound



BOOK REVIEW

THE RETURN OF THE SHADOW: THE HISTORY OF THE LORD OF THE RINGS, PART ONE.

J.R.R. Tolkien, ed. Christopher Tolkien.

Unwin Hyman, London: 1988. 497 pages. £17.95.

This book, the seventh volume of *The History of Middle-earth*, traces the initial phases in the evolution of the writing of *The Lord of the Rings*. The picture here of just how Tolkien set about constructing the story, as much a voyage of discovery for him as for his later readers, is of absorbing interest, perhaps even more so than the way the narrative itself grew and changed.

The as-yet untitled sequel to *The Hobbit* was begun in December, 1937, hard on the heels of Allen & Unwin's rejection of *The Silmarillion* (In fact, it was not exactly a rejection, but that is beside our present concerns). Tolkien thought he had said all he could about Hobbits in the earlier book, and writing another book about them was something for which he was quite unprepared. He began the task of making a sequel by considering what had happened to Bilbo some years after his earlier adventure. The first version of Chapter I ('A long-expected Party') had a virtually penniless Bilbo (he had just spent his last ducat) suddenly vanishing at his birthday-party - immediately after announcing his forthcoming marriage! Gandalf appears in the second version of the chapter; Bilbo has actually married in the third version, and has a son, 'Bingo'; and in the fourth version it is Bingo's birthday party that takes place (his older cousin Bilbo having previously disappeared). In some notes made at about the time of this version, the story starts to cohere and the narrative to gain some direction: Bilbo wants to be free of his 'money-wish', the result of possessing Smaug's treasure (an echo here, perhaps, of the baleful influence of the 'Nauglamír' in an early version of *The Silmarillion*), and wants to visit Elrond in Rivendell to ask his advice. One note has the suggestion that 'Elrond tells him of an island. Britain? Far west where the Elves still reign. Journey to perilous isle.' That Britain should be an island to the west of the Hobbits' country (called 'the Shire' almost from the beginning) recalls the 'pre-Númenórean' version of post-Silmarillion history in *The Lost Road*. Another note adds: 'The dragon-longing comes on Bingo. Also ring-lure', with another note speculating on the Ring's origin with the Necromancer. Thus, Bilbo's magic ring possesses an importance from the beginning, although its true significance is far from explicit. From this point on, there is no mention of 'dragon-longing', only of the Ring's influence.

The fourth version of the first chapter proved, for the moment, acceptable. Bingo Bolger-Baggins was established as Bilbo's adopted cousin, and Tolkien pressed on with him and his companions Odo and Drogo Took and Marmaduke Brandybuck exploring the Shire eastwards - doubtless with their creator.

Here, in an early draft of the following chapter, Gandalf riding his horse makes an appearance, and then is transformed with just a few textual alterations into the first appearance of a Black Rider. It is hard to see what prompted this change: perhaps Tolkien felt that the story required that the Hobbits be under pursuit by some unnamed enemy. Just possibly, the presence of an enemy on the Road seeking the Hobbits makes more dramatic their first encounter soon after with the party of Elves on the Road who sing to 'Snow-white'. (Is it too speculative to suggest that this scene is a remote descendant of 'Goblin Feet'?)

The 'first phase' of writing continues on until the party's arrival at Rivendell. Structurally, the story is remarkably close to the published work (and will not here be described in detail), and in some places is textually very close. The Ring grows in significance, as does its connection with the Necromancer, now known to be Sauron, its maker. It is now clear that it must be destroyed and that this can only be achieved by taking it to the fiery mountain where it was forged. A projection of the plot written just before the episode of the Hobbits' rescue from the Barrow-wight ends with: 'Consultation of hobbits with Elrond and Gandalf. The Quest of the Fiery Mountain' (which last would have made a good title for the book). Farmer Maggot and Tom Bombadil make appearances, as do the Barrow-wight and Barnabas Butterbur - and Aragorn, here a mysterious Hobbit called 'Trotter' whom the travellers meet in Bree.

A passage of great importance to the wider significance of the story at this point comes immediately before the attack on Weather-top: there, Trotter recites to the other Hobbits what is in effect a revised version of 'Light as Leaf on Lindentree', then tells them the tale of Beren and Lúthien, exactly as it is told in *The Silmarillion* as it then stood. This is important: up until that point, it would still have been possible to regard the new book simply as a sequel to *The Hobbit*. That book, although incorporating elements from the Mythology, was not seriously intended as a part of that Mythology.

But Trotter's tale seems to sound new depths of significance: it moves the world of the Hobbit-sequel much nearer to that of the Mythology. (At the same time, this might be put the other way around: once the world of The Hobbit had, because of the relation of the matter of The Lord of the Rings to the earlier Mythology, been made to fit in with that Mythology, then it could just as well be said that the World of the Mythology was made to fit in with that of The Hobbit.)

At the end of this 'phase' Tolkien paused to collect his thoughts on where the narrative was going, and on answers to such questions as, 'Why was Gandalf hurrying?' and 'Should the Elves have Necromancer-rings?' And he discovers the significance of the One Ring - because if the Dark Lord got it back, he would be the master of the wearers of the rings (the existence of other magic rings has by now been established), and 'control dragons, and know the secrets of the Elf-kings.' Here too the seriousness of the matter of the Ring itself seems to show a change in tone from The Hobbit.

The 'second phase' of composition restarts the story in Rivendell and again gets the travellers to Rivendell before slowing to a halt once more. Whereas the first-phase texts are given nearly in full, those of the second phase of composition are given much more selectively, with only significant passages quoted. The kaleidoscopic shifts of Bilbo's/Bingo's birthdays and ages, and of the names of the recipients of the birthday gifts, need not be described, but it is worth emphasising the fluidity of the narrative at this stage: many characters, names and roles underwent a great deal of alteration and mutual reassignment before their author was happy enough to allow them some stability. In the passage where Gandalf tells Bingo about the Rings of Power, there is a good deal of hesitation over how many Rings each race was given: the Elves had nine, or three; the Dwarves had seven, or nine, or seven again, and Men had three, or twelve, or nine.

The third phase of writing was in essence a fair copy of the previous manuscripts. 'Frodo' at last replaces 'Bingo', Sam Gamgee has taken his proper place in the tale (having come in with the second phase), and a 'Foreword' now makes its appearance. Both Men and Hobbits live in Bree (previously it was only Hobbits, although Trotter is still a Hobbit).

Even so, Tolkien did not have much confidence in what he had written, and there are several notes dated August 1939, in which he jotted down variant ideas for the plot. For a while he even considered going back to the original idea and making Bilbo the main character. Conversely, there is an astonishingly accurate projection of the end of the story when Frodo cannot bear to cast away the ring, and Gollum wrestles with him and falls into the Crack of Doom with it. There are here also glimpses of the 'City of Stone' and the 'Land of Ond' - or Gondor. Treebeard emerges at this time in a fragment of narrative as a hostile agent, in league with the Enemy.

What with all the textual revisions, and the notes and attempted plot-projections, one gets the impression that Tolkien could at first see very little of the way ahead; as the plot progressed he could see the road in front of his feet with increasing clarity, but farther off the view remained misty. Even so, he could sometimes, as with the fate of the Ring just cited, see some far-off patches of the distant landscape with great clarity, although the exact path by which he would attain those places was unknown; and conversely, near at hand the path could lead to the unforeseen. He later recalled '... I had never been to Bree. Strider sitting in the corner at the inn was a shock, and I had no more idea of who he was than had Frodo... of Lothlórien no word had reached my mortal ears till I came there... Fangorn Forest was an unforeseen adventure... Saruman has never been revealed to me, and I was as mystified as Frodo at Gandalf's failure to appear on September 22.' This says a good deal about Tolkien's creative approach, but implies the need for a vast amount of revision and adjustment to accommodate its results.

After these notes, the tale carries on from the meeting in Rivendell to Balin's Tomb in Moria. The company now consists of Bingo Baggins, Sam Gamgee, Faramond Took, Merry Brandybuck, Gandalf, Trotter, and Boromir of Ond. Boromir exists with that name from the beginning, but at this time is something of a nonentity.

And here the text stops. As this time, as he later recalled, Tolkien stood by the tomb of Balin for over a year before taking up pen again. However his recollection of the date was awry, as the manuscript

and other evidence indicates that it was almost certainly in 1939 that he halted rather than in 1940.

The Hobbit-sequel marks the first time that Christopher Tolkien, then about 13, had any active involvement in his father's writings: he was given passages to read and made comments on them. He was delighted by Bingo's discomfiture of Farmer Maggot by taking his hat while wearing the Ring, thus causing the hat apparently to sail through the air on its own (although he very astutely asked why the hat wasn't also invisible), and protested against the threatened removal of the character of Odo Took from the narrative. Portions of the typescript were delivered, via Tolkien's publisher, Sir Stanley Unwin, to Sir Stanley's son (and Christopher's contemporary) Rayner for his comments, the young Rayner being, in Tolkien's opinion, 'a very reliable critic'. Rayner's main criticism, however, was that there was too much 'hobbit talk' (which Tolkien tried to curb). It may be noted that this book is dedicated to Rayner Unwin.

To glance at a particular point, those who recall the fact that there are two Elves called 'Glorfindel' in Tolkien's writings, the one a native of Gondolin in the First Age, who dies fighting a Balrog, the other a dweller in Third-Age Rivendell, described as one who dwelt 'on the other side', will be pleased to learn that they really are one and the same person, so ending much speculation. Although the name was simply picked at random for the story from the already-existing Silmarillion-names, thereby indicating that they were no more the same character at first than the Elrond of The Hobbit was the Elrond of the Mythology, in a late note, written long after the publication of The Lord of the Rings, Tolkien stated that Glorfindel of Gondolin was released from Mandos and returned to Middle-earth sometime in the Second Age, becoming the Glorfindel of Rivendell. It is not said if his return was brought by means of reincarnation, a mode of Elvish immortality which Tolkien may have abandoned by the time he wrote the note.

The early versions of certain passages whose meaning is far from plain in the published Lord of the Rings shed some light on what was meant, at least at the time that they were first written. For example, where the final version describing the Eldar of Rivendell runs: 'those who have dwelt in the Blessed Realm live at once in both worlds, and against both the Seen and the Unseen they have great power', the original version was: 'They fear no Ring-wraiths, for they live at once in both worlds, and each world has only half power over them, while they have double power over both.' Tolkien probably changed this because he didn't want to retain quite so quantitative-sounding a statement, even assuming that he didn't want to change its meaning.

Another indication that Tolkien was moving towards making this story part of the Mythology (even if he may not have so far consciously considered the point) was the adoption of the 'Númenórean' chronological framework. Whereas, as noted above, the British Isles seem to lie somewhere to the west of Bilbo's country at the time of the earliest drafts of the opening chapter, by the time the travellers are on their way to Weathertop - this is still the first phase of the writing - Trotter alludes to the alliance between Gilgalad and Vandalil/Elendil to defeat Sauron, something straight from The Fall of Númenor.

The matter in this volume is slightly different from that in the preceding volumes of the History of Middle-earth which deal almost entirely with Silmarillion-related material. Here, Tolkien was not striving for the increasingly refined and coherent expression of the high matter of lore and legend; he was instead having to cope with the complexities of an adventure-narrative, and accordingly had to write in a way which was much closer to the surface-details of the everyday than the lore of the Elder Days; and, moreover, was writing specifically for near-future (as he then thought) publication. Although he was not unused to such things - witness the tales told for his own children culminating in The Hobbit - he found himself having to do so on a larger scale than before. The continuous revisions of the narrative enforced not least by the need for consistency show themselves in the phases of development given in the present volume. Small wonder that he confessed to finding only too easy to write opening chapters (there are six versions of the first in this book), but not so good at going beyond them.

These difficulties are quite properly reflected

in the present volume. Christopher Tolkien describes the textual complexities just about as clearly as they can be within a book of the present compass, but even so anyone wishing to follow the textual development of the writing of The Lord of the Rings would be well advised to pay very close attention to such descriptions.

It is unlikely that this book, along with the other volumes of the History, will be of interest to every

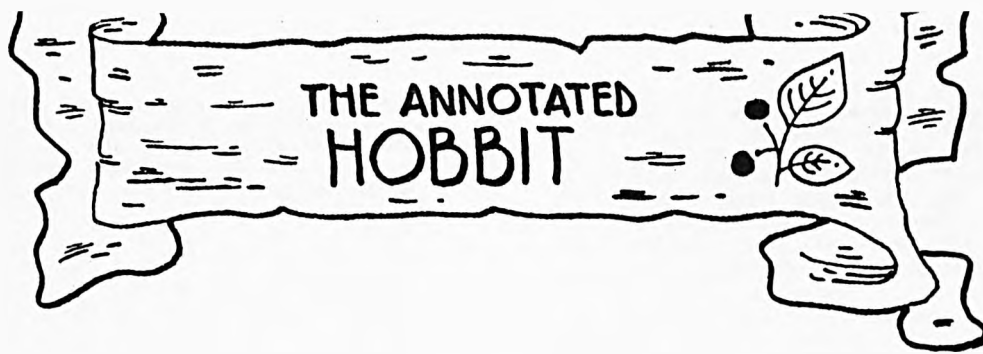
single reader of Tolkien; but for those with more than a passing interest in the matter of Middle-earth it will make fascinating reading. One is, as usual, grateful for the incredibly painstaking editorial scholarship of Christopher Tolkien in the making of The Return of the Shadow.

Charles E. Noad

Business as usual in Mordor...



Concept: Tom Loback; art: P. Wynne ©1989



J.R.R. Tolkien: introduction and notes by Douglas A. Anderson. Houghton Mifflin, Boston, Mass: 1988.
Unwin Hyman, London: 1989. 337 pages. £14.95.

In the style of The Annotated Alice, first published in 1960 with notes by Martin Gardner, Douglas A. Anderson (henceforth DAA) has produced an edition of The Hobbit, commissioned by Tolkien's American publishers and republished in the U.K. by Unwin Hyman, with the co-operation of the Estate of J.R.R. Tolkien.

The large format hardback comprises a preface, introduction, annotated text, two appendices and a bibliography. The text of The Hobbit is laid out close to the book's center-opening with large margins alongside, so that DAA's annotations accompany the text as Gardner's do for The Annotated Alice.

Whereas Gardner's edition is illustrated by the original Tenniel pictures, DAA's is illustrated by Tolkien's own illustrations (though colour plates have been reproduced on the text pages in black-and-white) and by a selection of illustrations from a dozen foreign translations, and other choice items displaying the work of Eric Fraser and Pauline Baynes.

The annotations usually avoid making connections with The Lord of the Rings, and so the Necromancer is not identified with Sauron. Some references to LoTR and The Silmarillion are included, but the annotations mainly concentrate on literary allusions, biographical elements, Tolkien's sources in mythology and children's literature, The Hobbit in relation to Tolkien's minor poetry, and relevant comments in The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien. The annotations well display the depth of DAA's scholarship and his dogged research. He does not even claim credit for his discovery of the poem "Progress in Bimble Town", published under a pseudonym in the OXFORD MAGAZINE.

As well as quoting in full a poem which most Tolkien fans will not have read, DAA supplies one of his most creative annotations to illustrate Thorin's dealings with the Master of Lake-town. DAA writes:

"The Master and his councillors may owe their inspiration to the Mayor and Corporation who rule the city of Hamelin in Robert Browning's poem 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin' (1842). Both the Master of Lake-town and the Mayor of Hamelin are niggardly, selfish, and aware of their constituents' interests in only the most self-serving manner.

Tolkien knew the Browning poem well - in fact he loathed it..."

Anderson goes on to point out that "Progress in Bimble Town" was dedicated to the Mayor and Corporation (of Filey, presumably, and ironically). We may note that Tolkien's satire is even more relevant today, when so few of Britain's beaches are clean enough for bathing...

The Annotated Hobbit is of particular value to new Tolkien collectors, in reproducing, with the Estate's permission, several out-of-print works like the Bimble Bay poem, works which would otherwise be very hard to acquire through the public library loan service. DAA also quotes the text of "The Root of the Boot" from Songs for the Philologists, the original versions of "The Dragon's Visit" and "The Hoard", and "Goblin Feet" with Warwick Goble's illustration. Thorburn's painting of the golden eagle (only in black-and-white, of course) appears side-by-side with Tolkien's illustration of Bilbo waking up, and in Appendix A all textual variants have been collated, including the original version of "Riddles in the Dark".

Some of DAA's annotations derive, with acknowledgement, from Shippey, e.g. the replacement of tomatoes by pickles, the source of the phrase "Misty

Mountains", and Beorn's similarity to other bear-like saga heroes. DAA might have added notes on the meaning of "baggins" and "auction"! His section on riddle-analogues, with Old Norse and Old English parallels, is useful.

In Mirkwood DAA reminds us of the Fairy Hunt in Sir Orfeo, and translates Attercop, Lob and Cob; he notes Tolkien's uncertainty about when the Sun and Moon rose, and where Dorwinion was located - south or East? He reminds us of William Morris' influence on Tolkien, and speculates on what Thorin meant by "the halls of waiting".

I was particularly pleased to find among his annotations material which was new to me, or which, though known, I did not already have in my collection. Extracts from S.R. Crockett's The Black Douglas are undoubtedly a source for the warg's attack; the illustration may have lingered in Tolkien's mind; and the scene ends, at daybreak, with the crowing of a cock, c.f. "The Siege of Gondor"!

Another close parallel is a scene from The Marvellous Land of Snergs, where one Gorbo climbs a Twisted Tree as does Bilbo in Mirkwood. Parallels with Francis Thomson are enhanced by a report of J.R.R. Tolkien's speech to the Exeter College Essay Club on Thomson in 1914.

I am also delighted to have a permanent record of so many foreign illustrations of The Hobbit, juxtaposed with the text and complementing Tolkien's art by providing close-ups of the characters. Especially good are the set which accompany "Roast Mutton"; the Estonian Great Goblin and Beorn; and the sequence to illustrate the barrel episode. Even the appallingly limp-wristed Elf-king from a German edition is of interest... DAA has also tracked down and reproduced Josef Madlener's painting Der Berggeist, which Tolkien carefully preserved in postcard form and entitled "Origin of Gandalf". DAA further relates this to the German Rubezahl, or mountain spirit.

It is clear when comparing The Annotated Hobbit to its predecessor The Annotated Alice, that DAA has found much less to say than Gardner. But then, there is far more in Alice, and Gardner had many decades of Carrollian scholarship to draw on. Alice, moreover, needs to be annotated from at least two perspectives, the literary and the mathematical. Yet if DAA had realised how many double-spreads would have passed without any annotations, would he have burrowed even deeper for further comment?

I have devised several further possible annotations, and would welcome reading further suggestions in the next issues of MALDRN. Here are mine.

DAA makes the point that Tolkien was influenced by George Mac Donald's Curdie books. I would then argue that The Wind in the Willows is also an influence on The Hobbit, and deserves an annotation or two. Both books are initially set in the Thames Valley, and three out of four of the main characters in Grahame's book are underground hole-dwellers, while the remaining character, Toad, is a self-satisfied, conceited and greedy person like Bilbo at the outset. All four main characters are, like Bilbo, rentiers - they do not work for their living, and Toad has inherited wealth, and, presumably, rents from his tenants. How did Bilbo get his living? A question raised by Ted Crawford, whose booklet is not cited here. When DAA points out the similarity of the Elvenking's butler to the king's butler in The Princess and Curdie, I feel impelled to add that the four friends in The Wind in the Willows achieve the liberation of

Toad Hall through a squeaky board in the butler's pantry, and to propose an article entitled "Butler's pantries in children literature"!

DAA tells us that the Dwarf-names and Gandalf's were taken from the Old Norse poem "Voluspá". Most of us know this, and it would have been better to quote the poem, in English at least, and there is plenty of room for the Old Norse as well.

On page 25, the simile "like the whistle of an engine coming out of a tunnel" is not annotated, but it should have been, as an example of the author speaking directly to his readers over the heads of his characters - for there are no railways in Tolkien's Middle-earth - or are there? One might also have quoted the reference to "an express train" in Chapter 1 of The Fellowship of the Ring.

On page 123, DAA raises the question of whether the Lord of the Eagles is the same eagle as Gwaihir the Windlord, and implies that he is not. In that case he might have quoted Gandalf's declaration after the last battle in LotR that "twice you have borne me, Gwaihir my friend" (i.e. from Isengard and Zirak-zigil) which obviously excludes the rescue in The Hobbit. Gwaihir is described in LotR as "swiftest of the Great Eagles" - he doesn't have to be Lord of the Eagles as well.

To make a substantial contribution to Tolkien scholarship, intellectual ability is, of course, essential. As well as that, one needs the persistence demonstrated by DAA in his trawl through the OXFORD MAGAZINE and Exeter College Magazines, looking for signed and anonymous pieces by Tolkien. Serendipity is also most useful: that book you found in a jumble-sale, that scrap of general knowledge passed on by your grand-parents, might elucidate a crux in Tolkien's writings. DAA is also possessed of serendipity, and yet leaves room for other contributors.

Several years ago, Rhona Beare and I corresponded on the matter of finding the right tunes to the Songs for the Philologists (SfLP). My mother had passed on to me a nursery-rhyme book with piano accompaniments, first published in 1915, and I found the correlation between the tunes specified for SfLP and the tunes in this book so high that I had to believe that there was a copy of this book in Tolkien's household. I asked Priscilla Tolkien if she remembered it, and she replied that she definitely remembered The Baby's Opera and The Baby's Bouquet (illustrated by Walter Crane) and another book, whose name she had forgotten. This third book might be the one I now have, and I give its title for others to seek out: What the Children Sing by Alfred Moffat (Augener, 1915).

I must write further about this book in a future MALLORN; I have cited it now in order to complete DAA's annotation for "The Root of the Boot" on the Caedmon record, which is correct: not the same version as appears in FoTR. DAA does not (even though he is addressing an American audience) point out that Tolkien sings "The Stone Troll" to the English tune of "The Fox Went Out". As printed in Peter Spier's picture-book The Fox Went Out on a Chilly Night, it is the American tune which has gained near-universal currency, thanks to the recording made by Burl Ives in the 1940's. Both tunes are in 2/4 rhythm, the English one beginning "soh-doh-soh-mee-soh" and the American beginning "soh-soh-mee-soh", and look to have been originally the same tune, but to have diverged widely since the Americans took the folk song across the Atlantic. The tune in What the Children Sing is of course the English one: the story ends with the fox being shot by the farmer, which is not the ending we usually hear.

[There are other traces showing DAA's American audience. On page 322, he writes "period" instead of "full stop". In the bibliography, The Annotated Alice is given with its U.S. publication dates of 1960 and 1974 only, leaving out the Penguin U.K. editions of 1965, revised 1970. As I have never read the 1978 "Fourth Edition" of The Hobbit, whether for pleasure or to check for misprints, I was amazed to learn from DAA how many errors had entered the text, and was glad to correct "hole" to "hold" in Chapter 3: - "in some hold in the mountains of old."

DAA inevitably tempts fate in setting out to "have a text which as perfectly as is possible represents Tolkien's final intended form". I only found one misprint, however, the common transposition of "e" and "i" in the word "besiegers" (p.291): N.B. "sieve" and "Tolkien" both have "i" before "e"!

In the annotations I found further misprints: "sorcerer-elf" on page 47; "behavior" on page 193 (an

Americanism?); and missing hyphens on page 252, resulting in this sentence: "This silver steel is also called Moria silver and true silver" whereas all three compounds were hyphenated in Tolkien's text (see FoTR for the latter compound phrases).

The Unwin-Hyman catalogue calls DAA "the U.S.A.'s foremost Tolkien scholar", though the book's blurb omits this ultimate compliment; even if true, it would be rather insulting to the other scholars, nearly all of whom are acknowledged in the Preface as giving helpful advice and criticism. What DAA has achieved, however, is not only seen in the annotations - which could have been produced independently in a chapbook - but in the book's appearance as a mainstream product for the commercial market. In terms of size and cost of production, I would reckon (contrary to a review in AMON HEN) that £14.95 for the British edition was good value; in terms of the unique material collected within, including the original version of the riddle-game, even more so.

Jessica Yates.

The 1990 Tolkien Calendar, illustrations by Ted Nasmith.
London: Unwin Hyman, 1989.

This year's illustrator is well-known of Tolkien Society members. He himself is a member and has for years contributed both to AMON HEN and MALLORN, and this issue even includes an article by him on his personal approach to illustrating Tolkien. He already has contributed illustrations to previous Tolkien Calendars, four to the 1987 Calendar (including the remarkable 'Balrog' one, and four more to the 1988 'Hobbit' Calendar. However this is the first time he has one all to himself.

Priding himself on the accuracy of his renderings of Tolkien's world, his work deserves closer scrutiny than would normally be customary.

January's, "Sam enters Mordor Alone" is suitably atmospheric and I have little to say on it.

February's, "At the Foot of Mount Doom", is very realistic and dramatic.

I did like March's "At the Sign of the Prancing Pony" which I found very pleasing, the inn-sign is a bit dull but I liked the cat at the entrance, which suitably gives scale to the approaching Hobbits on ponies.

April's "Wellington", struck me as very reminiscent of a similar one for August 1976 in the American Calendar, by the Brothers Hildebrandt, (convergent interpretation maybe), though his Treebeard, with the top of his head looking like a pollarded willow, is very much the better one.

I somehow didn't much like May's "Pursuit in Rohan", which seems strangely static, in spite of the speed they're supposed to be making, and I do not care very much for his 'Legolas'. However, seeing that this was painted in 1979, one may make allowances. Doubtlessly, his vision of Elves would have been refined since then.

June's "Rivendell" is my favourite of the lot, and it must be the publishers' too, for they have used it for the new cover of The Hobbit. Nasmith's Rivendell is so like Tolkien's own that one feels he must have visited the same place. Why did he change the architecture of the Last Homely House, though? His present version of it looks like a Gothic Revival Grand Hotel nestled in the Rockies, a bit as if Québec's Chateau Frontenac has been transported there. This quibble aside, it is a marvellous painting and I wouldn't mind having a poster-size version of it.

July's "Lúthien" is very pretty, but doesn't strike me as otherworldly entrancing. It is good enough to show her as a beautiful woman, but Lúthien is much more than that. In a way his "Lúthien" fails where his "Galadriel" succeeded several years ago. Why the latter has not be reprinted in a Calendar yet, I don't know.

August's "Nazgûl" is suitably creepy and menacing.

September's "Green Hill Country" is another beautiful one, if slightly unreal. I liked the glimpses one gets of Woody End, the Marsh, the Brandywine and Buckland in the far distance.

I have several unfavourable comments on October's "Oathtaking of Cirion and Eorl". First he makes a spelling mistake on the tomb, having written lambe, anna, lambe instead of lambe, ando, lambe, thus writing l,nn,lτ instead of l,nd,lτττ which are explicitly referred to in the text (UT, Pt.3, II, (iii), III, 4, and note 40). This is highly unfortunate, considering what Ted says about his concern for accuracy. Cirion's white beard makes him look more like a wizard than a Steward, and is all the stranger when one knows that the descendants of the Númenóreans were said to have very little if any, facial hair. Also, since he is to live a further 52 years after the arrival of the Éothéod in Calenardhon, should his hair be white already? A further point

is the wand he is holding: if it is (as it should be) the same one that Denethor held, it is described in *LotR* simply as "a white rod with a golden knob". Indeed, its appearance on the painting makes it look more glamorous even than the Scepter of Arnor, which is simply "the silver rod of the Lords of Andúnië". The Éothéod should certainly be more moustachioed and bearded, and dressed in the Anglo-Saxon-Frankish manner. As for who among them is Eorl, this is by no means obvious. Nasmith's mountain in the background reminded me of Mt. Robson in Alberta.

November's "Riders at the Ford" is another beautiful one. I suppose that the Black Riders are visible because Frodo could see them. Shouldn't Asfaloth have a headstall instead of a bridle and bit? Cf. *Letters*, L.211, where Tolkien says that "bridle was... carelessly used for... a headstall. ...Glorfindel's horse would have had an ornamental headstall, carrying a plume, and with the straps studded with jewels and small bells; but Glorfindel would certainly not use a bit."

December's "Minas Tirith at Dawn" is another favourite, very atmospheric.

All in all a fairly successful calendar, however errors which can be tolerated from someone like Roger Garland, are less easy to accept from one of your own, so to speak. Nevertheless, it is a very nice calendar.

I have some further comments on Nasmith's art in general. As ever with Tolkienian illustrators, his landscapes are best, and least controversial, though I think that his mountains are too "New-Worldly", particularly when one remembers that Tolkien's vision of mountains is strongly influenced by his memories of the Swiss Alps, which he visited in 1911, echoes of which can be read in Merry's account at the beginning of "The Muster of Rohan".

Much as I respect Ted's opinions, I am not very keen on his *Hobbits*: he gives them all an extremely prominent forehead and, granted that they don't look like children, he seems to give them a certain ugliness of traits which, I am sure, they do not have; maybe because we perceive *Hobbits* from above, like the Men we are and do not come down to their level to see them properly.

A more disquieting thought comes from the actual presentation of the artwork. It is not the first time I have noticed that published artwork, whether in books or calendars, is truncated, cut or otherwise tampered with, and I view this with dismay, considering that each artist has composed and constructed the artwork in a specific way to produce a specific effect, and that tampering with the format of the artwork alters the proportion, the balance of the picture and even, maybe, its meaning. This is noticeable in this calendar because Nasmith tends to sign his artwork near a bottom corner, and his signature is missing on several of them. I have great respect for artists and view this as a kind of artistic castration; surely the format is secondary to the artwork itself, or is it?

The Treason of Isengard, J.R.R. Tolkien,
ed. Christopher Tolkien, London: Unwin Hyman,
1989, 504 pages, £17.95.

This newest volume of *The History of Middle-earth* is even thicker than all the previous ones. Since it arrived while I was 'mallorning', I have only had time to dip into it.

However, even after this short glimpse, it is obvious that this volume contains, as ever, a wealth of marvellous information. I have noticed in particular the chapters called "Bilbo's Song at Rivendell: *Errantry* and *Earendilnwe*", in which the genesis of Bilbo's long poem on Earendil is slowly seen emerging from *Errantry*. "The First Map of *The Lord of the Rings*", which, for the first time situates the world of *LotR* in relation to that of *TS*, and was delighted to see that it validated Ronald Kymse's article on this very subject in this issue, and the marvellous "Appendix on Runes", which will be invaluable to all linguists and Dwarf-friends.

Of interest, too, is the fact that Saruman's ring, originally, was one of those made by Sauron and the Elven-smiths, and not one he had made for himself; also a quite illuminating comment that Treebeard makes, relating to Tom Bombadil; and the fact that, Arwen not existing at the time, Aragorn is meant to marry Éowyn, as Galadriel has prophesied. Remarkable too is the idea that the first 'Elfstone' in the story is none other than (surprise) Gimli, and that the gift of the lock of hair (which will emerge later) is here preceded by a brooch in which an emerald is set, hence the name. Thus does the Elessar first make its appearance at the throat of Gimli the Dwarf, though it is not yet endowed with any magical power. Even more curious is the strange thought that Tolkien entertained at one point, that the Balrog and Saruman might be one and the same! From this (short-lived) idea may thus have emerged the fact that Istari were in fact "Angels" i.e. messengers of the Valar and of like essence, since he already knew that Balrogs were demons, so that one might also be (or become) the other.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Few letters this time. In some ways it is fortunate, as I have little space to allot them, however, I would like to have at least a full page of letters in each issue, so please, put pen to paper to let me know your comments. After all your fellow members are also entitled to know what you think.

The first one is from Ian Collier from Brighton.

Pardon me, but I could have sworn that in *LotR*, the Company on entering Moria 'ascended' a flight of steps. This means that Mike Percival's article on 'Draining' Moria, contains an error. Fortunately though, the article shows that this is unimportant to the premise of the article. Therefore I would like to thank Mike Percival for an interesting thought-provoking article. One of the few I have read lately that doesn't beggar too much controversy. Except of course the subject of Dwarvish geothermal power. Surely, if the Dwarves cut air tunnels in coincidence with the 'windows' higher up the mountains, fans could have been installed whose rotation would provide motive power for a 'bucket-dredge' form of pump; a collection of scoops on a belt to collect the water would bring it up to a level point and then dump it into a drainage trough.

The next letter is from Lynda Cohannon of Australia:

I must say that 'The Survivor' by Kay Woollard in *MALLORN 25* was indeed fabulous. I, for one, certainly do not regret its inclusion but cheer it. I feel there should be at least one short story every issue of *MALLORN* - and, ideally, all of the quality of Ms. Woollard's.

I would also like to praise Lynn Elson for her wonderful poem 'Upon a Lost and Windswept Shore'.

I did feel that J.S. Ryan's article could have been expanded further and yet still keep within the Penelope Lively example. So to all those budding writers: get to work and start onto some great short stories. Show us your talent!

Lynda says exactly what I want to say: *MALLORN* needs your contributions, so don't be bashful.

The last letter is from Suzanne Stofel of Switzerland.

This is just to say how much I admire Kay Woollard's 'The Survivor' in *MALLORN 25*. I am sure others have written in and said the same, but I don't mind saying it all over again. As for what you wrote about it in the Editorial, I cannot imagine anybody who is at all able to appreciate a piece of literature - and this is one - objecting to its publication here. You wrote that life is not always fair. I might add that "Il faut de tout pour faire un monde", (Everything is required to make of the world what it is) and Tolkien who did make a world certainly knew it. Not accepting writing of this kind would not only mean doing injustice to the author, it would also mean doing injustice to Tolkien himself, to fantasy and the heights fantasy can achieve, and to this world which we didn't make but inhabit, and at any rate made what it is. It would be escapism of the worst possible sort.

It is my hope to be able to print more stories of that caliber, however, to publish them I first need to see them submitted to me first!

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 (available from main Post Offices), or a stamped addressed label (an envelope may be the wrong size in literature is being requested), are much appreciated and will hasten reply.

Correspondence and contributions for MALLORN (other than queries about subscriptions or back issues) should be sent to the Editor, *Denis Bridoux*

Correspondence and contributions for AMON HEN (other than queries about subscriptions or back issues) should be sent to the Editor, *Mike Percival*

Subscriptions and queries concerning them should be sent to the Membership Secretary, *Chris Oakey*. A full 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 UK and abroad may be found on the back of the current AMON HEN. UK members paying Income Tax can assist the Society by covenanting their subscriptions. Details of this, and information on Associate subscriptions, may be obtained from the Membership Secretary.

Details of periodicals subscriptions for Libraries and other institutions may be obtained from the Membership Secretary, *Chris Oakey*

Back issues of both MALLORN and AMON HEN, and information concerning their availability and price, as well as details of other Society Merchandise, can be had from the Sales Officer, *Malcolm Lindley*

General Enquiries should be addressed to the Secretary, *Debra Haigh-Hutchinson*

Bibliographical enquiries about the works of J. R. R. Tolkien should be addressed to the Bibliographer, *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 *David Doughan* 120 Kenley Road, London SW19 3DW.

A Lending Library is available to UK members only. For details, contact the Librarian, *Christine Davidson*

An Archive holding copies of all papers, books and other materials belonging to the Society is available for inspection subject to consultation with the Archivist, *Christina Scull*





The Tolkien Society



Founded in London in 1969, the TOLKIEN SOCIETY is an international organisation, registered in the U.K. as a charity, dedicated to the furtherance of interest in the life and works of the Late Professor J. R. R. Tolkien CBE, (1892-1973).

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. His daughter, Miss Priscilla Tolkien, became our Honorary Vice-President in 1986.

This is MALLORN, the Society journal.

The Society also publishes a bulletin, AMON HEN, which is published bi-monthly, and contains shorter articles, artwork, book news and reviews, Society announcements and letters.

The Society organises three international meetings in the U.K., the AGM/Dinner in the Spring, the Workshop where talks are given and discussed, and Oxonmoot, held in Oxford in early Autumn, where Miss 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 UK members only).

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