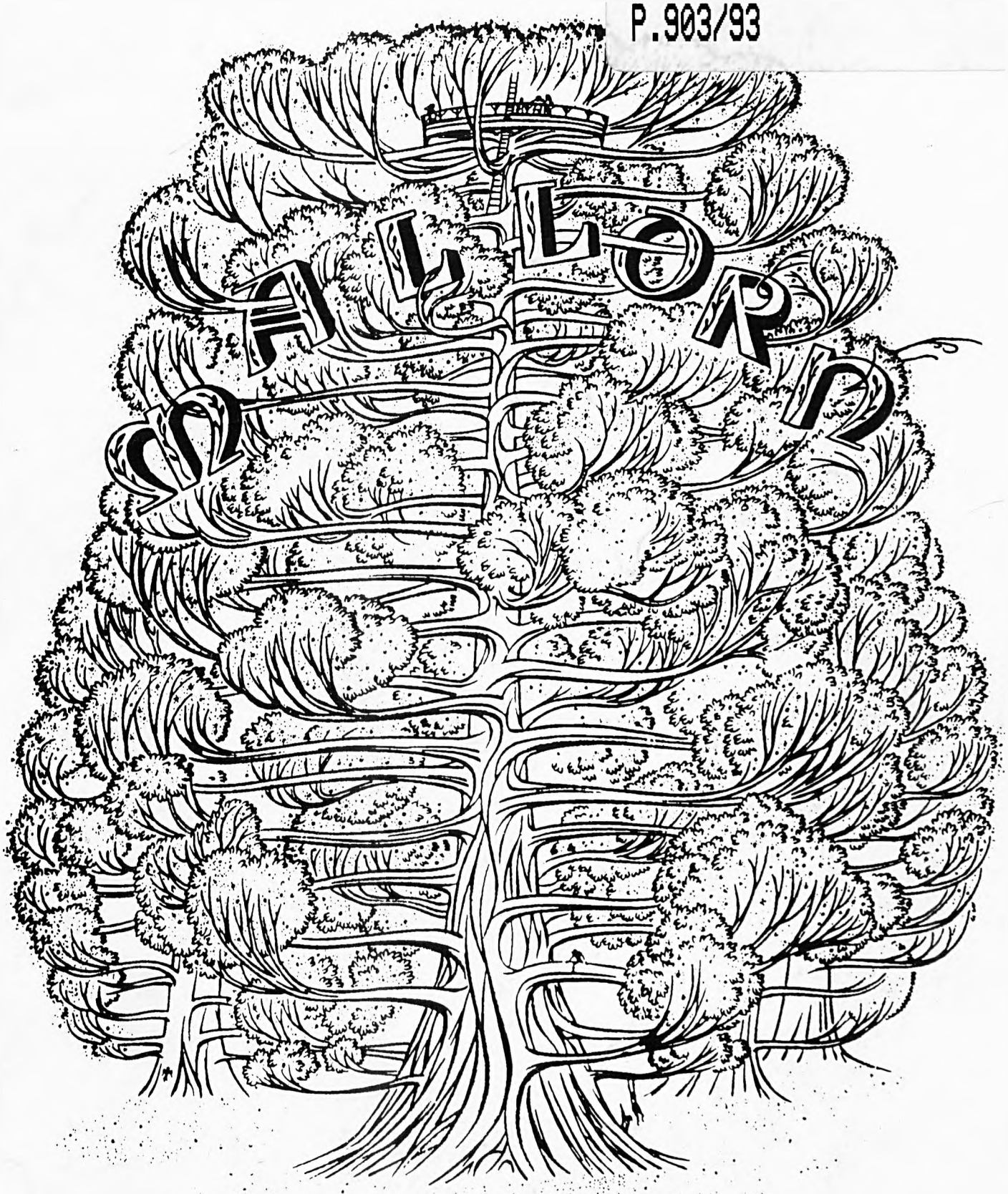

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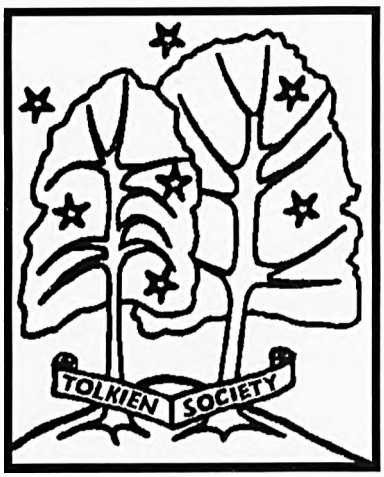
September 1997

The Journal of the Tolkien Society

ISSN 0308-6674



The Tolkien Society

Founded in London in 1969, the Tolkien Society is an international organization registered in the U.K. as a charity (No. 273809), dedicated to furthering interest in the life and works of the late Professor J.R.R. Tolkien, C.B.E. (1892-1973), who remains its President 'in perpetuo'. His daughter, Miss Priscilla Tolkien, became its Honorary Vice-President in 1986.

In addition to *Mallorn*, the Society publishes a bimonthly bulletin, *Amon Hen*. In addition to local gatherings ("smials"), there are three annual national meetings: the A.G.M. and Dinner in the Spring, the Seminar in the Summer, and "Oxonmoot", a celebratory weekend held in Oxford in late September.

For further information about the Society, please contact the Secretary: Annie Haward, Flat 6, 8 Staveton Road, OXFORD, 0X2 6XJ

Notes for Contributors

PROSE ITEMS (including fiction) should, if possible, be typed, double-spaced with margins a minimum of 3cm wide, and on one side of the paper only, with your name, the title and page number at the top of *each* sheet. **Even more acceptable are computer discs**: 3¼" or 5" (IBM compatible); ASCII, word, wordstar, wordperfect, or any version of Locoscript - your disc must be accompanied by a legible print out.

If your text includes any character which may not convert properly (including any with accents, as in, for example, "Manwë") , please substitute these with standard characters not used elsewhere in your text (e.g. %, $, & – "Manw%"), and enclose a table showing what they represent (the printout should have the *real* characters, not the substitutions). If your word-processor or typewriter cannot cope with characters which you wish to appear, please draw our attention to this.

Handwritten contributions will be considered, but should be, please, *extremely* legible, and should in any case be in the format outlined above. The editors may, with regret, have to reject the less than completely legible.

As a general rule, prose items should be between 1,000 and 5,000 words in length (including notes); authors of longer submissions may be asked to make cuts as necessary.

Quotations should always be identified. Citation should be made in the Harvard format, i.e. at each citation of a work you should include the author's surname, the date of publication, and the pages referred to. If any are not included in the text, they should be placed in the text in brackets – e.g.

Tolkien (1961, p.7) says that ...
And it was later said (Carpenter, 1994, p. 12) ...
The Silmarillion (Tolkien, 1977) contains ....

The references should be in the form
Author, date, title (journal and page numbers), place of publication, publisher.
in alphabetical order.

VERSE ITEMS, which should not usually be more than 50 lines, may be presented either in the format indicated above, or in calligraphed form, in which case the specifications for artwork given below should be followed. There is no restriction on the form, or the presence or lack of a rhyme scheme.

ARTWORK should be in black and white, no larger than A4 size, and either the original of the work or a high quality photocopy. The artist's name should be written *clearly* on the back IN PENCIL.

GENERAL NOTES: Contributors who want their material returned should provide a self-addressed appropriately stamped envelope, or TWO IRCs.

The editors reserve the right to reject any item, or to ask for changes to be made.

Please write a few lines for the contributor's page.

Contributions should be sent to: Pat Reynolds at 16 Gibsons Green, Heelands, MILTON KEYNES, England, MK13 7NH (email tolksoc@caerlas.demon.co.uk).

Copy date for MALLORN 36 is **30th May 1998.**

Mallorn XXXV

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Editorial

The literary event of the year that has passed since *Mallorn* last appeared, has of course been the run of success enjoyed by *The Lord of the Rings*, first of all in the Waterstones Handicap, and then in the Folio Society Stakes. We have all taken delight at the discomfiture of the so-called academic "pundits", and moaning Minnies who come out of the woodwork every so often to denigrate J.R.R. Tolkien and his writings with expressions like "infantile escapism", and such like, and who cling to the belief that the popularity of his works is simply a temporary aberration or passing phase.

The Folio Society poll, the result of which came out some weeks after the Waterstones result, attracted less publicity. But possibly it had more significance. The earlier poll invited readers to vote for, "the greatest book of the twentieth century", a concept meaningless enough in itself, but possibly taken to be the equivalent of, "the most enjoyable book of the twentieth century." That the moaners suggested that it had been "gerrymandered", by Tolkien supporters merely goes to demonstrate the paranoid nature of so much of the critical hostility generated. But it could have been argued, even if not very convincingly, that even the large population of readers who voted for *The Lord of the Rings* only represented a minority of the total, and these were precisely the ones who read little else.

The Folio Society result put this explanation out of court. Unlike Waterstones, its field was not confined to the twentieth century, and the Folio Society list covers a wide range of classic novels and literature generally, with perhaps somewhat of a bias towards the old and well-tried rather than the modernist and experimental. Folio Society subscribers are almost by definition well-read, and fairly catholic in their tastes; if one is to remain a member one has to acquire four books annually, and must cover at least a fairly broad field. Acceptance as a favourite book in such a circle signifies acceptance into the canon of works that have reached the status of classics.

How long does, or should this, take to happen? Some people would say that 40-odd years since the original publication of *The Lord of the Rings* is too short a time; a work's literary status can only be permanently defined after the lapse of a century or so. But perhaps the process may be related to the rate of change in society in general. It is difficult nowadays for anyone of mature years to avoid the impression that the rate of social change in Britain, in customs or values that are accepted or held acceptable, has considerably increased over the second half of the twentieth century as compared with the first. The two wartime periods probably had the effect of retarding change, because of the necessity of people's accepting unfamiliar temporary disciplines. Many of the values and moral imperatives that would have seemed second nature to Tolkien and his circle have come to seem out of date and even outlandish; but these are the values and moral imperatives that run through his works and inform the whole lives of his characters. The "classic", status of the works is evident from the fact that the works, and the characters, still speak to us directly and unambiguously, without the need for any explanation or translation.

The Balrog Report

By Hibernia (the Balrog)

"Balrogs are survivors." J.R.R. Tolkien [*Letters* 180]

Khazad Mansions stands in an ancient but genteel street inhabited mainly by the retired. I recognised it in the darkness of early dawn by its tall front doors and its unusual number of storeys. A little stream meandered along the gutter and fell, tinkling, down a drain. As I drew up before the doors, the drain cover lifted and a long, two-fingered arm snaked out, shook a dustpan into a nearby dustbin and slid back into the darkness. I could see Uncle Thsssp sitting a basement yard not far below, reading *The Daily Palantír* and quietly smoking. Politics has that effect on him. Balrogs belong to the 'Whips Only' party. It has no wings.

I called "Morning, Uncle Thssp" through the railings (wise Balrogs do not say 'good morning'), and indicated that I would take the lift down, rather than use the stairs. Balrogs don't like anything steep. Uncle let me in, drew the curtains and stoked up the fire. Out of an enormous pile of clutter [BTII 175, 189] beside his fireside chair, he rooted a charred paper which I recognised as my original letter. He muttered. "B***** reporters. B***** public. Argue till the *lv*s come home. Nobody ever asked us." Uncle Thssp knew Uncle Aarrggh before he fell off the Bridge. In fact, he moved into his apartment for a while before migrating to one of the upper basements. Balrogs tend to be named after their most notorious public statement. Balrogs mostly call their elders 'Uncle' or 'Auntie'. Older Balrogs call younger Balrogs whatever they please.

Uncle does not like other Balrogs, but he likes idle talk even less. He agreed to help me examine the documents responsible for the Balrog public image. Mind you, he left me to look up all the page numbers.

"Uncle", I said "What is a Balrog?"

Uncle sucked his teeth as usual, but his reply was unhesitating. "A Balrog is a Bane", he said. "Especially to *lv*s, and anyone called Durin [LR i371; HVII 257]." He turned over a card I had sent him: "'Sindarin *Balrog*, Quenya *Valarauko*, pl. *Valaraukar*, 'Demon of Might', [Sil 318] from an original root *bal-* , 'power', becoming *val-* [Sil 365] giving **bala*: Q *Vala*, a power or god [HV 350] (compare *Valar*, the powers, *Balar*, island of the vala Ulmo, etc.), from a root VALA '*Valar* or *Vali*'; in its older form related to a root GWAL, 'fortune, happiness', *Gwala* 'one of the Gods', etc. [BT1 272] Also a root RUK- 'demon', Q *rauko* 'demon', *malarauko* (**ngwalarauk*); N *rhaug* 'Balrog' [HV 384]. Compare NGWAL- 'torment' N *balch* 'cruel'; cf *bal-* in Balrog or Bolrog [HV350]; I'Malrog: *bal-* 'anguish' from mb-, *balc* 'cruel', *graug* 'demon'; Q [Qenya = early Quenya] *araukë*, *Malaraukë* = *malkanë* 'torture' from root MALA (MBALA) 'crush, hurt, damage' [BTI 250]. 'A kind of fire-demon; creatures or servants of Melko'. 'The relationships are obscure'. Obscure indeed! You don't often see the relationships between power, happiness and torture discussed. Did you write all this out, young Hibernia?" Uncle's whip was twitching, so I knew we were off to a good start.

"Yes, Uncle. See also: Sil 353, 363, 365; BTI 246, 250, cf 272; BTII 169, 336, 345, 372; HIV 209; HV 298, 350, 352, 377, 384, 404, 453; HX 79; HXI 415. The name is attributed to the *lv*s [BTII 169; HIV 82; HV 212; HX 70, 79, 159, 165] in its later forms [Sil 31], but there are signs that it was closely associated by Prof. J. R. R. Tolkien with Anglo Saxon [HIV 209]: OE *bealo*, *bealu*: bale, woe, harm, evil, wickedness (ON *böl*: bale, misfortune; Gothic *balweins*: pain, etc.); OE *bróga*: monster, fear, terror, dread and/or OE *wearg*: felon, monster, evil spirit, etc., cf ON *vargr*: outlaw; MHG *warc* monster; Eng. *wary*: cautious; earlier 'to curse'. Though it is believed that these forms are 'ingenious sound-correspondences' [HIV 209], 'bale' in particular looks like a jolly close fit."

"Yes," he countered swiftly, "but consider Norse *volva*, whence some derive a word 'vala', a seeress or priestess, the voice of a god; and also *bál*: a great fire or blaze. ON has also *róg*: slander, strife, discord; whereas OE has no rog- of known meaning. Consider also Latin *rogus*, a funeral pyre; by association, death and destruction." B*****. I riffled my notes and said respectfully "Compare Norwegian dial. *rogg*: energy; *rogga*: to set in motion, assoc. with Eng. dial. *rog*: to shake, cf. *rug*: something shaggy that needs beating." I did not add that *valr* could easily mean someone

dead, or even a Frenchman, or that Prof. Tolkien, who discovered orcs and Balrogs at about the same time, could well have derived *-rog* from OE *orc* (cf. OHG war*c*/ON var*g*r; OE h*o*rs/ON h*r*oss), giving an original 'bale-orc'. Uncle changed the subject.

"Your Prof. Shippey speaks of Ethiopians and the Sons of Muspell [RME 36]. B***** cheek, comparing us with humans." No doubt Old English homilists met few regular Ethiopians, but they had some lurid ideas about other inhabitants of the area. I did not think he was ready for *Sigelwara Land*. He does not have wings like besoms, nor is his beard down to his toes [Sig i189, ii109]. "As for the Muspells: can't handle bridges; collect used toe-nails; haven't a clue what to do with a whip." [ED] The standard Demonic attitude to elementals is a mixture of ignorance and professional jealousy.

"Humans have one-track minds," I confirmed. "What everyone wants to know about Balrogs ..." Uncle looked at me sharply. "... is what they eat." He relaxed. "Orcs", he said. "Easy to catch, breed like flies, got a bit of body. Not a good idea to eat too many on campaign. Dwarf is good. Rather slow breeders. Men are slippery and *lv*s are tasteless. We get good calimari here." In fact, as heartburn [Sil 47] is a normal state with Balrogs, they can eat almost anything, and do. What do they wear? "Anything black with a high flash point. Sable armour, mostly [HIII 295]. Protective headgear on duty [BTII 194]. Anything else?" "They want to know how we handle being hot and bad." "Idiots. Balrogs like being hot. If you get them too hot, they burst into flames. No problem. What d'you mean, 'bad'? Tell'em to see under 'hot'." Uncle spat into the fire, which flared up hastily. I appealed to his vanity. "Can you give the public a sketch of what a real Balrog looks like, when not on fire?" He looked at me suspiciously. Flames crept from his nostrils [LR i344]. "How badly d'you want to frighten them?" he murmered. "The public is eager for Truth, Uncle", I lied smoothly. He took a few puffs on his pipe, and his eyes glowed furnace yellow [HVII 197] as he pondered the glory of the Balrog race. "Ginger Baker", he said reverently. "The drums. The fiery mane. The high-speed transport. The teeth." I did not tell him that Mr. Baker had recently joined the fire brigade [Mojo June 1997, 10]. Fire-fighting is deemed a suitable career for modern Balrogs, but Uncle is old-fashioned. He sensed that I was withholding something, and snapped "What's this I hear about you carrying on with some wizard?" "Uncle, I married him." "Ah. Good. Well done." This qualifies as a vengeance upon Wizards, and he had to approve it.

"Remember our heritage, young Hibernia," he said. "Balrog is a name of power [cf Hebrew *Ba'al* 'lord']. Divine power. Our name is the name of the Valar. We are *vala* and *rauk*, and don't you forget it."

It is well known that Balrogs are highly strung. Apart from their innate combustibility, *yéni* of hunting and oppression have made them nervous [LR ii104; BTII 179, 194]. They are not cool-headed, yet during their earthly labours they learned the value of letting the orcs go first [cf. LR i344; Sil 107, 192; BTII 181; HIV 118; HVII 197; HXI 18]. This may help us to understand why the robust distilled fractions of petroleum quaffed by older Balrogs are now often topped up with firewater. After all, they reason, it works for Christmas puddings. So the ancient fire of the Balrogs has become tinged with a melancholy blue.

"But that is not the whole story, is it, Uncle?", I said. Uncle looked a bit shifty. Balrogs don't have the patience to be shifty naturally. It's something they learn from other species. "You have to be careful what you believe, young Hibernia. Look at the earliest reports (BTI/II 1916/7 ff): pick'n'mix monsters, giants, ogres, orcs [BTI 75, 236]. Dwarves! They think *we* come out of the ground. No-one told them that we came over the Walls." (Uncle was still Outside at that time, but Balrogs say 'we' as an English squire talks of the Battle of Hastings.) "But they gave the odd thing away – Valar and Úvanimor, mentioned in the same incident [BTI 75]. Sure, some of us 'came out of the ground' when the Valar tore the roof off Angamandi [BTI 237; HIV 93; HX 80-81] just to conserve a few *lv*s [HIV 12-13]. He sent us out to fight, but they blew us away [HXV 75]. That's good modern firefighting practice. We learned a lot from that. How to run fast, for a start. We became famous for it; something humans greatly underestimate [cf. LR i345; ii285]. But most of the Aunts and Uncles dug in and waited [Sil 51, 81; HIV 93; HX 81, 109, 161, 297]. They emerge from deep places when some b***** won't leave them in peace [cf HV 233; HX 297, etc.]. There was this chap Fankil, Fangli, Fúkil, on the loose with his dark shapes, perverting and estranging [BTI 107, 236-7]. No-one knew who he was; probably Gothmog: he reckoned he was Melko's get [cf. BTI 93, 237, 258, 260], whatever the official line is [HX 405]. But the

dwarves never followed him [cf. LR iii410; BTI 236]. They're stupid, but they're not that stupid."

"Already some suspected our significance [BTII 85], but we only got regular coverage as Melko's torturers [BTII 15, 34, 44, 156, 169; HIII 7, 36, 70, 99]. He didn't even have us in the throne room [BTII 169] till he had those silmarils to guard [Sil 167; HIII 296, 301-3]. He liked his dog better – mean b***** [HIII 288], take your hand off, soon as look at you. Took off one too many in the end!" Uncle laughed. It was a horrible sight.

"Gondolin changed all that. Our campaign made a real impression on the public [Sil 242-3; BTII 67, 144 ff; HIV 36]. We didn't expect it to be easy, but those little b*****s were hard, been in the big battle; not just women and children. They scratch and bite, too."

"Gondolin was not an altogether happy experience for Balrogs, was it?" I probed gently.

"What people don't realise, young Hibernia, is that *lv*es are ugly customers. They bite. They hit below the belt. So do their friends [Sil 174; BTII 178; 184, 194, cf. LR iii117; Sil 153, 222; HVII 431]. They started small [cf. BTI 233, 235], but some of them had ambitions to be tall [cf. UT 56, 286]. We were bigger [cf. LR i344; XVII 198-199, 202] but, being *lv*s, they just pushed us down, instead of picking on someone their own size. Nasty end for poor old Gothmog [Sil 242; BTII 183-4, 212, 215-6; HIV 144, 307; HV 142]." I could see Uncle trying not to smirk.

"Was Gothmog's revival in the Third Age [LR iii121; BTII 216; HIX 369] due to his distinguished service record?" I asked [Sil 107, 193, 195; BTII 176, 179, 183, 213; 215-6; HIV 22, 25, 101, 181, 282-3, 295, 321, 328, 338; HV 117, 249; HIX 372; HXI 18, 168-9]. "That's what they say. Can't quite see it myself. Why should Mandos let a Balrog out for distinguished service? More likely he saved up ciggie coupons and traded them in for a used demonic form. Second rate stuff. You'll notice that no-one calls him a Balrog by that time. He wasn't popular [BTII 67, 342, 344] – dreadful bore, always sounding off about his dad [BTII 67, 216; HV 359, 372, 406], though he was never very clear who his ma was [BTI 93; BTII 216]. Real Balrogs are laconic [*Letters* 274]. But at least it was annoying Sauron, having someone with better connections hanging around. We are Morgoth's people, first and last, not Sauron's. Always were [Sil 31; *Letters* 180; HV 117; HIX 79-80]. That bit about Sauron's malice getting Aaargh out of prison was a joke [LR iii353]. What did it do, send him a file? They would've killed him if they'd caught him, not shut him in the basement. Was Lungorthin really Gothmog? Nah, just some Lord of Darkness. No-one in particular [HIII 98, 102-3].

"The chronicles were a cunning plan to inflate our status as foes of the *lv*s while playing down our essential nobility and power. *The Fall of Gondolin* keeps saying how terrible we are and how no-one ever killed us before, but your individual Balrog had a pretty hard time. Your editor even feels able to claim that Balrogs were 'less terrible and more destructible than they afterwards became' [BTII 212]. Fact is, most of us are people you wouldn't want to meet on a dark night, but so were some of those *lv*s. Even Aargh, who was as tough as they come, got shuffled off by that accursed wizard (who wouldn't own up to it at the start [HVII 434, 441]). He should have strangled him in the Abyss [LR ii105], but Balrogs hate being cold and wet. Gondolin was one of our first battles to be reported (c. 1920), but it was one of the last pieces of serious damage we did. It was a hard nut – full of hard nuts. Mind you, Head Office had flattened nearly everything else by then.

"Anyway, that whetted the public appetite for bloodshed, and our deeds began to circulate (1926-30, *Sketch* HIV 11-75; 1930, *Quenta Noldorinwa* HIV 76-218). How we rescued Morgoth from Ungoliant [Sil 81, 121; BT1 161; HIV 17, 47, 93; HV 152, 233, 238; HVI 188; HX 109, 123, 297; HXI 110, 194]: Balrogs are handy with spiders. This was when most of us came out of hiding. How we snuffed Fëanor: Gothmog got most of the credit, but he had backup [Sil 107; HIV 22, 52, 101, 268, 282, 295, 328, 338; HV 117, 125, 249; HXI 18, 113-4]. They let slip that quite a few of us got killed that time [HIV 101], which blew open the story that no-one killed us before Gondolin [BTII 179]. How Morgoth brought us to the Parley of Maedhros: idiot tried to fiddle us, but we fiddled him instead [Sil 108; HIV 101, 172-3; HV 249]. He was very hung up about that. How we came to the big battle on the dry plain [Sil 192] and thinned out the *lv*s. Too many kings. We axed one of them [Sil 193; HV 137, 181, 311, 321; HXI 75, 168], which wasn't reported at first [HIV 118]; but we lost people too [HIV 119]. We left Húrin to Gothmog [Sil 195; HXI 169] and the orcs.

"I'll tell you about Húrin: Morgoth threatened him, had him smacked, mocked him, and offered him

a job as chief Balrog [HIII 7, 97-9]. He defied us, mocked Morgoth [Sil 197], foresaw our downfall [HIII 37, 97, 100-1] and turned down the job. Pity. I reckon he had it in him to be a first-class Balrog by the time they finished with him. [cf. HXI *The Wanderings of Húrin.*] He saw more than he wanted to in the end.

"But Ulmo – who oozes in everywhere – told the man Tuor to go to Gondolin, or *lv*s and men would never overcome us [HIV 36-7, 66, 142, 147, 202, 318]. They brag that their valour kept us out [Sil 152; HV 282] – I reckon a few hundred miles of mountain range helped. Their treachery is legendary [Sil 192]. But it was all rigged. Ulmo's vile plots paid off in the end. The destruction of orcs and Balrogs was much exaggerated. He fibbed blind about the orcs [HIV 36]. You can't get rid of orcs, they're like cockroaches. They told the public that we were destroyed in the 'Last Battle', quickly re-named the War of Wrath [HIV 160 and after] when they discovered that we escaped after all. They secretly banned us from showing our faces above ground [HVII 198], but they had to admit that some of the orcs got away, and at least two dragons [HIV 39, 157, 160]. It was only later that they confessed that Balrogs had escaped [HIV 150-1]. 'Quickly in pencil' – ha! When the Hobbit stories began to leak out [*Letters* 180; HIV 1], they could no longer suppress the truth. They failed to knock us on the head. We were too good at hiding."

"Uncle", I said, "It was not only our will to survive that they maligned, but our very nature."

Uncle tried to snarl with dignity. "They named us Morgoth's brood, as if we were Orcs [HIV 12, 82, 266, 288, HV 114, 122, 216]. He called us together, but there is barely a hint of it (AV/AV2, 1930-1937) [HIV 266, 288; HV 114, 122]. The Valar knew the truth, of course. The *Annals of Beleriand* say that we were 'brought forth' [HV 125], and they heap monstrosity on monstrosity by saying that he 'devised' us [HIV 295, 328, 338; cf. HIV 314; HV 148]. Both claim that we were destroyed [HIV 309; HV 144]. But the *Quenta Silmarillion* (QS, late 1930s and after) [HV 199 - 338], although it still calls us brood [HIV 216], admits that we were the first [Sil 47; HV 212, 216]. Later they lapse back into 'brought forth' [HVI 187-8]. I reckon they were confused." "Did Morgoth tell his followers to go forth and multiply?" "Yes, quite often, when he got fed up with the noise. I reckon that's where a lot of the confusion arose."

"Understand, young Hibernia, that stuff about 'broods' only applies to orcs." "But Uncle, in Angband ..." "Listen, there was a lot of hanging about in barracks. But we never did anything to order. Thing is, we weren't allowed to fight among ourselves all the time, and the work force can only take so much whipping. We had to find something else along the same lines." Some people believe that Balrogs are not interested in sex because they are spirits, albeit rather solid ones. Leaving aside the massive *non sequitur*, the real reason is far simpler: they just don't like other Balrogs. Balrogs were mostly recruited [Sil 31] – there's always a supply of spirits looking for a warm environment with whips. But everyone knows that there were times when more Balrogs came out of Angband than went in. One of them was Uncle Thssssp. I ventured further. "What was life like in Angband, Uncle?" "Very efficient. We had barracks and a drill sergeant like everyone else. No private apartments except for the Lords. Morgoth didn't like families." He pondered a little. "My ma taught me to play with fire. She knitted my first whip. My dad broke my nose. He shouldn't have done that. One of the Uncles should've done it, but we don't always obey the boss.

"Whatever they say, I reckon the Chroniclers knew we were there all along, and let it slip occasionally. 'Remarkable statement' your editor calls that bit about devising [HIV 314]. Mind you, he then says we were not conceived as rare or peculiarly terrible [HIV 322] in those days. Makes us sound like common orcs. We're rare *now* because they hunted us. We've been called more powerful than dragons (allegedly) [BTII 85], virtually unkillable, and not afraid of spiders. If anything, I would say the Opposition hyped us to make their people look good. Doesn't matter, we messed them up again.

"Take a look at the things they say. Claws of steel [BTII 169]. Long arms [HVII 197] – they mean that our reach is long. Fangs of steel – never a mention that Balrogs wrought mithril into spare fangs to replace ones lost round the house until they grew again. Red handed [HIII 296]; brazen-handed [HIII 99], unbreakable as steel [HVII 431]. Brazen and iron, they say [BTII 181; HIII 99], but they called Húrin "steel handed" too [HIII 97]. I prefer our encloaking darkness [LR i341, 344; Sil 47; HVII 199, 257; HX 159, 165], dark as a cloud. And our famous fiery manes [LR i344; *Letters* 382; HIII 296; HVII 197]. The yellow eyes and red tongue [HVII 197] must be the hang-over of evil [*Letters* 180]. Pliant as

a thong, strong as a strangling snake – that's us [HVII 431]. A thing of slime, sleek as ice [HVII 431] – that was poor Aarrgh after he fell in the water.

"Some have overlooked our fire [LR i344-5; ii105; Sil 47, 318; *Letters* 180; BTII 181; HIV 118; HV 212; HVI 187-8; HVII 197-8, 203, 257; HX 159, 165, 297] and some our power and terror [LR i344; Sil 318, 353, 365; BTII 85, 178, 181; HVII 197-8, 257; HX 159, 203] but no-one overlooks our whips [LR ii344-5; Sil 47, 121, 365; *Letters* 180; BTII 169, 179, 181, 184, 194, 213; HIII 7, 99; HIV 17, 82, 93; HV 212, 216, 233, 238; HVII 198; HX 159, 165, 297, 391; HXI 194]. True Balrogs love their iron whips, their flails of flame [HIII 99; HV 212], great for lassooing people [LR i 345; Sil 193; HVII 199-200]. We fight with swords [LR i344-5; BTII 184], even flaming ones [HVII 197-8], and axes [Sil 193], bows and slings and fiery bolts [BTII 178, HXII 421], but there is nothing to beat a whip." "Why, Uncle?" "What d'you mean, 'why'? Whips are what Balrogs use. They call us 'scourges of fire' [Sil 31; HX 203]. Don't ask stupid questions." "Why", I ventured "Do Balrogs whip left-handed? [HVII 196]" "Because we're sinister!" Uncle's whip was beginning to twitch impatiently. There is much to learn about whips, but I took the hint and changed the subject.

"Uncle, they call us demons," I said. Fire began to flicker out of his nostrils again. "They call us demons, in the same breath as orcs. An orc is just a cheese-and-onion-flavoured *lf." "Or human, Uncle [XI 421-2]." "That would explain the improved flavour. So maybe a few spirits went undercover as orcs [HX 410, 418]. What do they know about demons? Common demons can't tell a whip from a pitchfork. One minute they call us demons, the next minute they call us 'devised'. We can't get at them, and we can't sue. Something should be done about this foul abuse." "What's a gong, Uncle? [BTI 245]" "What we call orcs. Tap them on the head till it rings. Only way to get their attention." "The OED thinks it means a pile of ****, Uncle." "Well, he's right, then, isn't he?

"See, the truth leaked out of the *Quenta Silmarillion*, bit by bit. It looks as though our Chronicler got wind of Sauron's ring, and threw a new shadow on everything. He had to come out and say – not in pencil, this time – that Balrogs hid themselves in deep caves and escaped the final assault on Thangorodrim [Sil 251; HV 328, 336; HVII 262]. They didn't half make a mess of the landscape, rooting Morgoth out. 'He fled into the deepest of his mines', it says [HV328-9], as if he had the slightest idea where the deepest mines were. He wasn't the one down there at all hours whipping the labour force.

"Your editor believes this leak sounded the warning bell about our friend in Moria [HV 336]. Of course, the clever *lv*s quietly forgot about it till Aargh showed himself [*Letters* 180].

"In the *Annals of Aman* (AAm) [HX 47 - 138] the story is, of course, much the same, but there is some interesting detail. It admits that Morgoth, or Melkor as they called him, was recruiting support from among our own people, including that little lizard Sauron, as soon as he knew that his friends in Valinor were going to elbow him [HX 52-3, 66-7]. Some of us wonder why we left our comfortable voids, but it seemed like a good idea at the time. Of course, the Valar didn't notice. Half the time they can't see the shadows for the light [HX 53]. And even when they did catch on, he got away [HX 54]. The second part, which I believe was for more public consumption, still claims that Melkor 'wrought' the Balrogs [HX 70, 75-6, 78-9, 165], but we were not seen about because Oromë was on the prowl [HX 70, 79]. Oromë didn't bother us too much. We like horses. Balrogs never walk if they can ride something [BTII 170, 180-1, 184, 216; HV 280]. It was Melkor who was really afraid of the Valar because he had been beaten up once already. He knew he was outnumbered. The more he thought about it, the more it worried him.

"But the annals contradict themselves, because they already knew that Melkor could not make life of his own [Sil 50; HX 74, 78-9, 165]. The editor attributes this muddle to 'oversight' [HX 78]. Morgoth didn't discourage it – he liked them to think that he could do it all. But a little-circulated text of the time ['AAm*', see HX 64, 79, 165] summarises the facts then known to the brighter observers (like your Professor Tolkien, no doubt), including that we are evil spirits, and the chief of them. It still claims that He multiplied us. The chronicles call us 'broods' over and over again. Maybe that was part of His plan. He knows we get bored easily.

"The *Later Quenta Silmarillion* (LQ1, 1951; LQ2, c. 1957) [HX 141 - 300; HXI 173 - 247 no refs] still claims that He made us, but LQ2 admits openly for the first time that Balrogs are spirits who were the followers of Melkor – a new conception, they call it – and not long afterwards (*Valaquenta* Vq2, 1959?) [cf Sil 31; HX 165, 203] that they were true Maiar. Many

Maiar [Sil 31, 36, 47; HX 165, 203, 410-1, 414]. Old and powerful [HX 203]. Your author was never quite able to get rid of the idea that Melkor gave us our being and will [HX 391, 411] – strange, really. 'Friends [Sil 36]' I can just about stomach, but 'creatures' [HX 391, cf. 411 (Eru)] I draw the line at. As for 'piecemeal' – they'll have to catch us first." If anyone *wants* to catch Uncle, they just have to knock at the door. Mind you, they might get a surprise.

"Yes", he said, "They want the World to think that we are not a true power, that we never were a true power, and that we are gone. Look at the records, young Hibernia. Something is going on. In the olden days, we were a host [Sil 81; BTI 241; BTII 169; HIV 93; HV 56, 283, 290; HX 75-80; HXI 134]. The tale of Gondolin [Sil 242-5; BTII 144-220; HIV 144] records Balrogs by the hundreds and by companies, riding Morgoth's firedrakes [BTII 170, 178, 180-1] all through the streets of the city [BTII 182]; leading forces of orcs [BTII 183] to the tower of the king [BTII 186-7]. But many of us were killed. Can we be killed [HVII 80]? It feels killed at the time. They said that we were killed in marvellous numbers, but when you look at the head count, it doesn't fit. The man Tuor killed five and that little pest Ecthelion at least three [BTII 181] before he topped Gothmog. The king's party killed two score [BTII 184], and there were many others. But too many of us were already gone, and even the boredom years did not restore us.

"But Rog and the House of the Hammer of Wrath [BTII 174-5,178-80] are remembered even today by Balrogs as the worthiest foes we ever encountered. They were refugees from Melko's mines! They laboured in our caverns! [BTII 174] His name is a memory of our ancient name [BTII 45; 203]. They defied us! They turned our whips against us! When we cut them off, did they run? They fought till we turned the dragon on them, and perished hacking at us to the last man [BTII 178-9; HIV 144, 194]. Our armies saw and were afraid [BTII 180]. And what was their fate? What reward did they receive? Sacked! Sacked for not having a suitable name! [BTII 211]. Vanished from the earth [BTII 174] by the stroke of an editor's pen! Balrogs may dwindle in the world, but no fate that the Opposition has yet inflicted upon us has been as terrible as the fate of Rog and his household.

"When Morgoth took us to meet Maedhros, we were the more [HIV 101; HV 249, 256] but in time we became fewer or none [Sil 108; HIV 173; HXI 29,114]. At the great battle on the dry plain there were 1,000 of us [HIV 302, 321-1; HV 137, 256, 310, 314; HXI 74]. At Gondolin there were hundreds. Even so, we thought we had them cornered. But someone fouled up."

"Uncle, are we speaking of Uncle ZZzzz?"

"Ah, young Hibernia, there are things we sing not of. Particularly the fate of your Uncle Zzzz on the pass of Cristhorn; particularly at the bottom of it. No-one expected trouble so far from the City. Intelligence knew there was an escape tunnel, but not where it came out [Sil 243; BTII 177]. They guessed wrong, or they would never have posted ZZzzz there. It was a quiet spot [BTII 193]. He was having a little rest after a bout of sentry-tormenting [BTII 174] when this rabble of *lv*s came up the pass, wailing. Balrogs hate being woken up [LR i327, 331, 340ff, iii353; HVII 142, 188, 247; HXII 233, 275]. He left the orcs to fight and jumped in among the women looking for a snack, when this little yappy thing attacked him. ZZzzz was really upset. That damned *lf chopped his arm off, stabbed him in the tummy, got its curls tangled in his claws and knocked him off the mountain [Sil 243; BTII 194; HIV 37; HVI 214-5]. They say you could hear him yell right down in the valley. It frightened our people away, and the rest is history. When Ulmo threatened us with *lv*s and men, no-one thought he meant a sprog with a sailing fixation. Not long after that, they sent in the demolition squad, and only those who hid in the deepest caverns escaped [LR i371, iii353; Sil 251; HIV 309; HV 328; HVII 247, 263; HIX 391; HXII 233, 275]. But the seeds of our fame were sown [HV 336], and we rose again in might, albeit briefly [cf. LR ii344-5, iii353; HVII 195 ff]. But the foul conspirators spread rumours that there were only seven of us or three [BTII 212-3; HX 80; HXI 134]. Three! I call it a cover-up!"

"But Uncle," I said, "Our author brought Aarrgh's story to the glare of public attention in these later times. And that was a stranger story than any that had been told so far."

The background is this: Aarrgh's ability to remain inconspicuous was considerable even by Balrog standards. He had been living in Moria more or less since the fall of Thangorodrim [LR iii353], un-noticed by anybody on the Opposition side for roughly 7,321 years [LR iii368; HVII 142, 263; HXII 221, 222, 233, 249, 277, 383]. The Dwarves had been there since the first days [LR iii352], but they remained ignorant that he had crept in under their cellars until they woke him once too often with their

mining operations. They must have noticed that population growth was low, but Dwarves don't like to discuss things [HVII 188, 257]. You might hear 'Have you seen little Snóri? He hasn't been in for his tea since 1632', but they will say no more.

Uncle considered. "Aargh's love of peace got the better of his love for baby dwarves. He ate their current king, Durin VI [LR iii368] III [HXII 277, 286] or IV [HXII 383] c. T.A.1980 (sources differ by a few years), and his son Náin soon afterwards. After that, they wised up and left. He said that he regretted the roasts, but the noise was too much, and they were nicking all the mithril [LR i331, iii353; HVII 185, 188; HXII 233, 275]. They tried to break in again about 700 years later. They beat up the local orcs, but were too scared of Aargh to go through the door [LR iii369; HXII 249-50, 286, 356]. Until the dwarf Balin, of course. Big mistake. They still hadn't learned to keep quiet. They got themselves another Durin, eventually, and crept back, long after Aargh had gone [HXII 278]." "What happened to the last Durin, Uncle?" "Fell down a lift-shaft" he grunted. "Who says he didn't? The family's still around. Check the caretaker's name plate when you leave." (I did. It said 'Doreen'.)

"The Wise were clueless. The wizard wasn't expecting him [LR i344; HVII 186, 188-9]. The *lv*s of Lórien thought he was a recent arrival from Mordor [HVII 186, 247, 262-3], though they changed their tune smartish later [HVII 257]. Your editor says that the Wise can't have been mistaken, but I find it happens quite often. The first Hobbit story [TH 273] is a case in point [cf Brin Dunsire "There and Back Yet Again", point 17, *Amon Hen* 111 October 1991]. That Master Elrond of all people should have known better." He must have heard my eyebrows rumbling, because he shrugged. "OK, OK, perhaps he couldn't have known that someone was going to publish in the 20th Century and start the Wars up again. Load of trouble for everyone. Especially Aarrgh.

"It was AArgh's fatal scrap with the wizard that brought him to the attention of your author [HVI 462]. They thought he was either a Black Rider or Saruman to begin with [HVI 462; HVII 236, 422]. Serious dress-code confusion there. Then he seems to be some kind of washing powder [HVII 211]."

"You are making light of this, Uncle," I said, "but it is not only *lv*es and authors that do not know the sorrows of a Balrog's heart. Did not Aargh's last appearance reveal the deepest secret of the Balrog race?"

Uncle eyebrows rumbled at me. "Yea," he said. "Behind those doors was that which haunts our darkest dreams." He frowned at the fire. It cringed. His whip lay limp upon the hearth. After a while he sighed heavily. "He didn't expect someone to be there with a ruddy notebook, any more than the Wise did.

"Some say one thing, some say another. If you read the story forward, Aargh had shadows that looked like wings [LR i344]. If you read it backwards, Aarghh had wings [LR i345]. Humans read backwards.

"'OK', you say, 'If he had wings, why did he fall?' They say 'He couldn't use his wings in a cavern'. Now, the bridge was 50 feet across. The ratio of wingspan to body length in birds and bats is around 2 or 3 times including tail, 4 times ex. tail at most, usually less. A large Balrog tops out at around 13 foot – a bit more than twice your average-to-large *lf-height [UT 286; BTII 193; cf LR i344; BTII 179, 184; HVII 197-9, 202-3, 206]. Lucky number, see. So the max. wingspan would be about 50 feet, probably less. You might not go very *far* in a cavern with a 50-foot wingspan, even such a cavern far above the heads of mortals [cf LR i328, 342]; but you would sure as Hell get noticed trying. And how did Aarggh run up the stairs with 50 foot of wings behind him? The wizard said 'clutching at his heel' [LR ii105], not 'clutching several square yards of damp leather'. Consider your Uncle ZZzzz: full damage report, down to the last stab and totter, but not even a hint of wings. Both our people plummeted to their dooms, dragging their assailants behind them (the Opposition always manages to land on top [HVI 462]) with not so much as a flap to try and save themselves. AArgh hit the ground with such a smack that he broke the mountain [LR ii106].

"We are seen being withered by wind [HX 75], leading orcs, climbing, riding, fleeing, springing, pouring about breaches, being harried about by *lv*s and slaughtered [BT 174-94]; smiting, going forth, marching, standing, sitting [HIII 98, 100, 281]; more leading [HIV 145]; being driven and destroyed [HV 144]; rushing, leaping, racing, stepping, bounding [LR i344-5] lurking – we like lurking – [Sil 81; HX 297], sleeping [HIII 301, 303] and bursting into flames, and, rather often, falling [LR i345; Sil 243; BTII 184, 194; HIII 142; HVII 198, 200]. Sometimes we yelled in agony [BTII 184, 194; HVII 198] because some small, non-winged creature is giving us pain and sorrow that we cannot escape. We laughed,

but our laughter died the day that woman in the bat suit came in [HIII 296]. We can do anything the public wants, except fly. They crow that eagles are beyond us [HIV 23] and that no servant of Morgoth's assailed the air before the winged dragons came [HV 329], and that was at the end, in the War of Wrath. The dwarf almost mistook a Nazgûl for us, but what does he know? I could almost spare him for his faith in what he saw. Even he saw only the shadow [HVII 354]. The heart of the Hobbit, curse it, knew better [LR i404; HVII 354].

"They talk about us 'flying from Thangorodrim' [LR iii353] and our 'winged speed' [HX 297-8]. Our speed is the stuff that metaphors are made of [Sil 151; HV 280]. Even our ancient name signifieth speed [cf BTII 45 'Rog']. But they never say 'oh, it's a metaphor!'. Oh, no! The only persons described as 'flying' in the famous cavern scene [LR i345] weren't even flapping their arms. But as soon as someone mentions 'wings' around a Balrog, it's 'Oh look, Ma, it's got wings!' When the Noldor fly, they catch a boat. Why don't they just admit we went by public transport? Look, it says here – 'came Glaurung ... and in his train were Balrogs ...' [Sil 151; HV 280]." "But Uncle", I said. "Our author thinks a train is something that flies through the air and catches fire ... [LR i36]." He fell silent. "Never give a Spirit of Terror an even break," he muttered.

"Uncle", I said, "Is it not a tribute, even so? Is this not the noblest prose ever dedicated to Balrog-kind, even in their downfall [LR i 341, 344-5; ii105-6]? How the wizard comes – er – falls down the steps at the feet of his companions. The grace of the great bridge. The power and terror of Aargh, the fading of the light and the wreathing of the fire; his kindling mane, the flames' roar, the fire and the shadow." "Yes, yes," said Uncle, as his wrinkles relaxed a little. "I hear again the deep "whoof" of Balrog ignition. I see again the vastness of his shadows as he draws himself up. I hear the whine of his whip in the silence. When he falls, I see the darkness come down upon his foes, and I see them flee, filled with terror even by the void he left behind them."

Thunder rumbled outside as we spoke. Thunder reminds old Balrogs of ancient wars and being pushed off mountains [LR ii105; HIII 142; HVII 430].

"Uncle," I said, "Was it true about Morgoth and the eagles? [BTII 193]." Uncle spat again. "Balrogs with feathers," he said. "Disgusting idea. Nor dragons neither. Dragons are not your genetic quadruped. They were due to have wings. They were latent. Morgoth couldn't do that by himself. Even the metal firedrakes were Meglin's idea [BTII 169]." "And Balrogs? Are they latent too?" But Uncle fell silent again. Then he said: "They took away our ancient name. They always called us 'demons', but at the last they even took away our true name [HXII 379-80, 390]." "But thanks to the valiant stand of AArrgh and of ZZzzz, our name will be remembered, Uncle." I said. He snarled. "Horns", he muttered. "Horns, and the wings of bats; that's how they remember us."

But the truth is, I believe he was jealous. Balrogs dream of wings. Balrogs pose in front of the mirror with wings. Alone in the night, wrapped in their wings of shadow, Balrogs remember wings. But no Balrog this side of the walls of Arda has ever been able to fly.

I thought I had better cheer him up. "Let us have some traditional music, Uncle; something by Ginger Baker." Uncle perked up a little. "'Toad'?" he asked. "'Pressed Rat and Warthog?'" But reading the list backwards, I murmured thoughtlessly: "'A Mother's Lament'." Uncle, normally pliant as a thong, grew unbreakable as steel. "I warned you about that world out there!" he hissed. He hunched nervously in his fireside chair, his eyes darting. "Things with wings! Things with wings! Stay inside Arda, away from things with wings!" Real Balrogs come not beneath the sky unless very short of groceries [LR ii77], but young, reformed, neo-Balrogs want to see the sun again, preferably repeatedly. I knew that only my press connections had protected me so far from the stewpot, or part-exchange for a brace of baby calimari. Gathering my notes and quickly sliding a soothing copy of *Sounds from the Underground* (his favourite collection of mid-tunnel breakdowns and buffer collisions) onto the 16 rpm turntable, I thanked Uncle Thssp profusely for the assistance he had rendered Balrog kind, made my excuses, and beat one of those swift retreats for which Balrogs are inevitably famous.

Sources

LR (i, ii, iii) J R R Tolkien *The Lord of the Rings* (three volumes), second edition, Allen & Unwin 1966, 1970; **Sil** J R R Tolkien *The Silmarillion*, Allen & Unwin 1997; **UT** J R R Tolkien *Unfinished Tales*, Allen & Unwin 1980; ***Letters*** J R R Tolkien ed. C R Tolkien and H Carpenter *The Letters of J R R Tolkien*, Allen & Unwin 1981; **BT I** J R R Tolkien, *The Book of Lost Tales, Part One*, Houghton Mifflin

1984; **BT II** J R R Tolkien, *The Book of Lost Tales, Part Two*, Houghton Mifflin 1984; **HIII** J R R Tolkien *The Lays of Beleriand* Unwin Paperbacks (Allen & Unwin) 1989; **HIV** J R R Tolkien *The Shaping of Middle-earth* Unwin Paperbacks (Unwin Hyman) 1988; **HV** J R R Tolkien *The Lost Road* Unwin Paperbacks (Unwin Hyman) 1987; **HVI** J R R Tolkien *The Return of the Shadow* Unwin Paperbacks (Unwin Hyman) 1990; **HVII** J R R Tolkien *The Treason of Isengard* Grafton (HarperCollins) paperback 1992; **HVIII** J R R Tolkien *The War of the Ring* Grafton (HarperCollins) paperback 1992; **HX** J R R Tolkien *Morgoth's Ring* HarperCollins paperback 1994; **HXI** J R R Tolkien *The War of the Jewels* HarperCollins paperback 1995; **HXII** J R R Tolkien *The Peoples of Middle-earth* HarperCollins 1996; **TH** J R R Tolkien *The Hobbit*, third edition, Unwin Books (Allen & Unwin) paperback 1966, 1970; **Sig** J R R Tolkien 'Sigelwara Land', *Medium Ævum* Vols 1 (183) 1932; 3 (95) 1934 Basil Blackwell; **RME** T.A.Shippey *The Road to Middle-earth*, first edition, Allen & Unwin 1982; **ED** S Sturluson *Edda*, c. 1220 Everyman 1995; Linguistic clues: C T Onions *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, OUP, 1966, 1969; G T Zoëga *A Concise Dictionary of Old Icelandic*, OUP 1910, 1972; J Bosworth and T Northcote Toller *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* OUP 1898, 1973; D P Simpson *Cassell's New Latin-English and English-Latin Dictionary*, fifth edition, Cassell 1959, 1997; and, of course, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, second edition, OUP 1989.

Notes: All references are to the editions listed here. The *History* indexes are very reliable. Page numbering is largely consistent in volumes after *The Lord of the Rings*. For earlier titles, many readers will have to 'convert' to their own editions. I have not referenced every occurrence of every incident, but I believe I have referenced every entry for "Balrog" plus certain related entries in the Tolkien corpus at some point. "Our author" is, of course, J. R. R. Tolkien, and "Our editor" Christopher Tolkien. Opinions expressed are those of Uncle Thssp and other individual Balrogs, not those of the editors or the Universal Management, who disclaim all responsibility. I have entirely failed to answer the question "Why whips?". Another time. Any suggested historic sources will be welcomed. *Hibernia.*

Problems of Good and Evil in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*

Craig Clark

It is a frequent allegation made by detractors of the works of J.R.R. Tolkien that they present an oversimplified view of reality, through their depiction of a world in which good and evil are polarised antagonists, and in which good triumphs despite overwhelming odds. It is argued that good and evil are, in the real world inhabited by Tolkien and his readers, seldom so clear-cut as they appear in his works; that the heroic figures of Tolkien's fiction have no counterpart in a world where even the best of us are capable of acts of cruelty and violence; and that the lesson of history is that it is might and seldom ever right that inevitably triumphs.[1]

This essay will argue that such criticisms are made in ignorance of the very real nature of good and evil in Tolkien's world. Good and evil in Tolkien are indeed antagonists, but they are not polarised. Indeed there exist many "grey areas" between the two – as even the most cursory glance at *The Lord of the Rings* will show. What emerges on a closer reading is even more interesting – that *The Lord of the Rings* is a vision of a world in which good cannot destroy evil, merely force it into new forms.

To say that good and evil are not polarised is not to deny that they are absolutes. They are – but the absolute figures that originate them are, by the time of *The Lord of the Rings*, removed from the circles of the world. Ilúvatar, the originator of good, has intervened in his creation only twice since the Music of the Valar: before the awakening of the Elves, when he gave independent life to the Dwarves (Tolkien, 1977, pp.43-4), and at the time of Ar-Pharazon's assault on Aman which led to the downfall of Númenor (Tolkien, 1977, p.278). Morgoth, the originator of evil, has been expelled from the circles of the world at the end of the First Age of the Sun (Tolkien, 1977, pp.254-5). The opposed wills of both are executed by figures who, to the best of their abilities, attempt to carry out the designs of their masters. The Valar are the regents of Ilúvatar in the world, yet for all their wisdom and their comprehension of the will of Ilúvatar they are fallible – as their error in summoning the Elves to Aman illustrates (Tolkien, 1977, p.52). They are thus not wholly good. The same is true of Sauron. He is not wholly evil: as Tolkien notes in a letter to Milton Wadman, his initial motives in Middle-earth in the Second Age are "the reorganising and rehabilitation of the ruin of Middle-earth" (Tolkien, 1981, p.151). It is his lust for power (a point to which I will return) that leads him to evil.

Between the two – between the Valar with their flawed potential for good and Sauron with his incomplete capacity for evil – there lie the characters of *The Lord of the Rings*. Each is capable of both good and evil to an equal degree. Indeed as Ursula le Guin points out in *Dancing at the Edge of the World* (1989, p.??)[2], the "heroic" figures of the novel – Frodo, Aragorn, and Gandalf – each have a darker counterpart, a shadow-self which represents the potential for evil that they bear within themselves: Gollum for Frodo, Boromir for Aragorn, and Saruman for Gandalf. But even this is a more penetrating analysis of the nature of evil than is necessary to perceive how evil works in the novel. Were the heroic characters as pure in their goodness as Tolkien's detractors would have us believe, the novel would comprise three chapters. Frodo, having learnt the nature of the Ring in the second chapter, would surrender it to Gandalf who, borne aloft no doubt on the back of Gwaihir the Windlord, would have carried it away to Mordor and there consigned it to the Cracks of Doom. No need for quest or Fellowship, for Gollum or Saruman or the lust of Boromir and Denethor.

But of course this is not how the novel develops. It takes the form it does because the Ring appeals to one particular aspect of the evil that lurks within the

[1] Edmund Wilson's essay "Oo, Those Awful Orcs" (which originally appeared in *The Nation*, April 15, 1956, and was reprinted in *A Tolkien Treasury*, edited by Alida Becker, pp 50- 55), is a case in point. This essay has become the point of departure for most attacks on Tolkien's fiction.

[2] These comments are made in a review of *The Dark Tower* by C.S. Lewis.

hearts of most of the characters in the novel. Were Frodo wholly good, there would be no need for Gollum to seize the Ring at the climax: Frodo would not succumb to its power. Frodo's failure at the end of his quest is proof enough that he is imperfect. The same is true of each of the characters to whom Frodo offers to surrender the Ring: Gandalf, Aragorn, and Galadriel.

Upon being offered the Ring, Gandalf admonishes Frodo not to tempt him, adding that the way of the Ring to his heart

> ...is by pity, pity for weakness and the desire of strength to do good...The wish to wield it would be too great for my strength. (Tolkien, 1966a, p.71).

Later, at the Council of Elrond, Frodo offers the Ring to Aragorn as the heir of Isildur. Aragorn declines – but we still get a glimpse of what he might have become had he accepted when, after the Battle of the Pelennor Fields, Legolas thinks

> ...how great and terrible a Lord he might have become in the strength of his will, had he taken the Ring to himself. (Tolkien, 1966c, p.152).

The most significant of the three occasions on which Frodo attempts to surrender the Ring to another bearer occurs in Lórien, when he offers it to Galadriel. This passage, perhaps the most important in Book Two, is the climax to an ancient drama that began when Galadriel, moved by visions of vast realms to be ruled in Middle-earth, joined Fëanor in his revolt against the Valar. The ban on returning to Valinor imposed on the leaders of the revolt of the Noldor has not been lifted from Galadriel, who has never repented of her desire to rule and wield power. By the time of , she rules Lothlórien: Frodo offers her the chance to rule all Middle-earth. She refuses, strong though the temptation is, and is rewarded with the lifting of the ban: "I will diminish," she says, "and go into the West" (Tolkien, 1966a, p.381).

The fact that all three refuse the Ring – refuse temptation – is not the point. The crux of the matter is that all three can be tempted, because each is susceptible to the particular form of evil to which the Ring appeals. The only character in the novel to whom the Ring poses no threat is Tom Bombadil, over whom, as Gandalf notes at the Council of Elrond, the Ring has no power. Is Bombadil then not wholly good?

About Bombadil, nothing can be said for certain (he is, as Tolkien admits in a letter to Naomi Mitchison, a deliberate enigma (Tolkien, 1981, p.174)). One might surmise that he is of the order of the Maiar, perhaps of the following of Yavanna. What little else we can say we must base on the ambiguous hints of Goldberry and Bombadil himself. One point seems pertinent here. When asked by Frodo if Bombadil is the owner of the Old Forest, Goldberry replies that he is not: each thing in the Old Forest belongs to itself. Tom is "the Master" (Tolkien, 1966a, p.135). I believe that herein lies a clue to Bombadil's resistance to the Ring. He can resist the Ring because he does not desire power.

This is the nature of the evil to which the Ring appeals – the desire to wield power. We see this in the four characters who succumb one way or another to the desire for the Ring: Saruman, Boromir, Denethor and Gollum.

Saruman's desire is to supplant Sauron as ruler of Middle-earth. When he addresses Gandalf on his plans, he tries to conceal his intentions, claiming that he seeks only to control the excesses that Sauron might commit in his rise to mastery, but his real intent is clear enough:

> ...our time is at hand: the world of Men, which we must rule. But we must have power, power to order all things as we will, for that good which only the Wise can see. (Tolkien, 1966a, p.272).

Saruman's lust for power leads him into an alliance with Mordor, and later into betraying that alliance – by the time of his attempt to capture hobbits, and his assault on Rohan, he has become Sauron's greatest rival. At the end of the novel, he has transformed the Shire into a shadow-image of Isengard, which in turn was an image of Mordor. Dominance of other wills, the control of the lives of others, these are the "high and ultimate" purposes of which Saruman speaks to Gandalf.

Boromir desires to be a King and not merely a Steward like Denethor his father. Speaking to Frodo about his visions of how he would use the Ring, Boromir describes

> ...plans for great alliances and glorious victories to be; and he cast down Mordor, and became himself a mighty king, benevolent and wise. (Tolkien, 1966a, p.414).

This is echoed when Faramir recollects how, as a child, Boromir wanted to know how many years it would take for the Steward of Gondor to become a King if the King did not return (Tolkien, 1966b, p.278). Though he respects Aragorn while on the quest, he is sceptical about Aragorn's authenticity at

the Council of Elrond and, as Faramir notes, if he and Aragorn had become rivals in the wars of Gondor, it is unlikely that they would long have remained allies (the situation rather resembles that of Denethor in the days of his youth when he grew envious of the honour accorded to Aragorn, when the latter fought in Gondor in the guise of Thorongil (Tolkien, 1966c, p.335-6).

Whereas the influence of the Ring makes Boromir aspire to his own power as King of Gondor, Denethor is content to be a Steward, as long as Gondor remains the most powerful of all the realms in Middle-earth. The root of Denethor's distrust of Gandalf is that the latter openly admits to not placing the survival of Gondor above anything else:

> ...for my part, I shall not wholly fail of my task, though Gondor should perish, if anything passes through this night that can still grow fair...in days to come. (Tolkien, 1966c, p.30-1).

For Denethor, it is imperative that the political power of Gondor be preserved by whatever means possible, even if this means using the Ring. Thus he tells Gandalf that were the Ring

> ...in the deep vaults of this citadel, we should not then shake with dread under this gloom, fearing the worst, and our counsels would be undisturbed. (Tolkien, 1966c, p.87).

In order to maintain the power of Gondor against the superior military strength of Mordor, he risks looking into the *palantir*: to seek to learn the secret counsels of Sauron he will resort to any device. But it is not solely with the power of Gondor that Denethor is concerned. He is concerned with his own power as well, often to the detriment of Gondor. His final diatribe before his suicide illustrates the extent to which Denethor confuses his own power with the best interests of Gondor. He has guessed that Aragorn is coming to Minas Tirith to claim the throne of Gondor. He has, in his arrogance and thirst for power, little faith in the strength of the Line of Isildur to resist Sauron, and it is this, coupled to the knowledge that his supreme authority in Gondor is about to end, that pushes him over the brink into final despair. He is perhaps the only person in Gondor who lacks faith in the Line of Isildur or who does not want the restoration of the Kingship.

The power which Gollum desires is much what one might expect from a hobbit. In its own way it is reminiscent of the desire which Sam Gamgee feels when he dons the Ring and looks into Mordor from the high pass of Cirith Ungol, to turn Mordor and the whole world into a garden (Tolkien, 1966c, p.177). One is reminded in this instance of Gollum's dream of being Lord Smeagol, Gollum the Great, *The* Gollum, with fresh fish brought to him every day from the sea (Tolkien, 1966b, p.241). Both visions are fundamentally absurd, the simple visions of a hobbit grown into bloated megalomania. Tolkien's strategy of presenting the events of Books Four and Six mostly from the perspective of Sam does not allow us a glimpse of what form Frodo's lust for the Ring takes, but one suspects that it would be of equally small scale, though perhaps more noble (like Gandalf's) and less selfish. This is because he is a hobbit, a member of a race given to simpler pleasures and less lofty causes than those of other races. For this reason he is about as safe a guardian for the Ring as can be found – though again one might speculate about the Ring in the hands of Lotho Sackville-Baggins or Ted Sandyman, both of whom are susceptible to greed and the desire for power.

"'Oft evil will shall evil mar'" (Tolkien, 1966b, p.200), remarks King Théoden, and Gollum's attempt to seize the Ring leads to its destruction when Frodo succumbs to its lure. But does the destruction of the Ring mean the destruction of evil?

At no time does Tolkien ever claim that it does. "'Sauron is himself but a servant'", Gandalf tells the assembled Captains of the West (Tolkien, 1966c, p.155), and it is an essential feature of Tolkien's world that the defeat of the personal embodiment of evil does not mean that good is wholly triumphant. Those who perceive his work as a simplistic conflict between good and evil have not paid sufficient attention to the penultimate chapter of the novel, with its vision of the corruption of the Shire. And it is in this section of the book that we witness the darkest moment of the novel and see the final degradation of Grima Wormtongue.

What can we say about Grima son of Galmod, whom men name Wormtongue? His initial motivation in betraying Théoden to Saruman is quite clear: he too desires power, the rule of Rohan after Isengard has captured it, and power too over Éowyn, for whom he has long lusted (Tolkien, 1966b, p.124). But more can be surmised about Grima if we consider carefully his epithet Wormtongue.

"Worm" in this respect has its archaic meaning of "dragon"/"serpent"/"snake". The association is borne out by the description of Wormtongue's long pale tongue (Tolkien, 1966b, p.124) and his hissing voice

(Tolkien, 1966b, p.125, and (Tolkien, 1966c, p.299), and by Gandalf's description of him as a snake (Tolkien, 1966b, p.125). It also has implications of eloquence – particularly eloquent flattery, if one recalls Bilbo's conversations with Smaug – and when we first meet Wormtongue we are struck by this very quality. But the very serpentine implications recall another hissing voice – that of Gollum. And just as Gollum envisions power in terms of the satisfaction of a physical hunger, it is in satisfying hunger that Wormtongue at last manages to assert some power.

Consider for a moment his position in the Shire. He has fallen from the exalted position of trusted counsellor to the King of Rohan to being Saruman's lackey. Saruman has in turn fallen, from being the leader of the White Council and the head of the Order of the Istari, to being a fugitive and a renegade. The only place left for Saruman to command any respect is in the Shire, long occupied by his agents. They alone do not know of his fall. Once ensconced in Bag End, the only person around him who knows of his humiliation by Gandalf is Wormtongue. It seems inevitable that Saruman should seek to degrade Wormtongue, to make him the least of "Sharkey's men". Saruman, it seems, starves Wormtongue – certainly the creature that crawls like a dog (Tolkien, 1966c, p.299) after Saruman is far removed from the wise and cunning counsellor who sat beside King Théoden. In order to survive – both physically and psychologically – Wormtongue has had to degrade someone else. The most immediate victim – next rung on the ladder down from the least of Sharkey's men, as it were – is Lotho Sackville-Baggins.

But Wormtongue has done more than merely degrade Lotho. He has indeed become another Gollum in his resort to cannibalism. This most degraded of crimes recalls several other allusions to anthropophagy in Tolkien – to the Uruk-Hai, whom Saruman feeds on man's-flesh (Tolkien, 1966b, p.49), and to Gollum, who wants to eat Bilbo when they first meet in *The Hobbit*, and who is rumoured in Mirkwood to have abducted and devoured the infant children of the wood-men (Tolkien, 1966a, p.67). Both the Uruk-Hai and Gollum have this excuse: that they are corrupted, in one instance in consequence of their race, and in the other by the Ring. Wormtongue however is a Man, not an Orc, and he has never been under the power of the Ring.

Cannibalism has long been associated with megalomania, whether in the form of Grendel (the monster in *Beowulf*) or in the tale of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. In our own century, Stephen Sondheim has associated it with a vicious parody of Industrial Capitalism in his 1979 musical version of *Sweeney Todd*, while there are horrific real-life instances (such as Bokassar and Amin) of megalomaniacs who have dined off human flesh. The association between anthropophagy and power is made in by Gollum, who envisions the total power of Sauron in possession of the Ring in terms of his eating all the world (Tolkien, 1966b, p.245). Wormtongue's act is thus the product of an extreme lust for power – closer to that of Gollum or Sauron than to that of the Uruk-Hai. It is the lust for power normally associated with the Ring – except that Wormtongue has never desired, possessed or even come near to the Ring.

Does this mean that the evil of the Ring has escaped into the world after its destruction at Mount Doom? In order to answer this question, let us consider the Shire as it appears in the penultimate chapter of the novel.

The Shire which greets the returning hobbits is profoundly changed from the rustic utopia it was at the beginning of the novel. The shirriffs, once no more than hay-wards, have taken to spying on one another and arresting anyone who defies the Orders that come from above – from so far above that no-one knows who issues them any more. There are also the "gatherers" and "sharers", who supposedly redistribute equitably the produce of the Shire – though there is little enough sign of anyone other than Sharkey's men getting a fair share. And there are the Lockholes in Michel Delving, a prison for dissidents and anyone else whom the Shire's new masters do not like. A nascent secret police, a remote and autocratic bureaucracy, centralised and collectivised control of the economy, a concentration camp in its infancy – these are all disturbingly familiar features to Tolkien's readers. They are all hallmarks of a contemporary totalitarian regime. This is a jarring note in a novel that has hitherto seemed no more than an engrossing fantasy. These elements suggest that Tolkien intends his reader to make some connection between the world he has created and the world the reader inhabits.

This is not to confuse applicability with allegory, something against which Tolkien warns the reader in the preface to *The Lord of the Rings*. It would be incorrect to read allegorical significance into the novel and to see the Shire as a portrait of any particular Twentieth Century totalitarianism (be it Nazism, Stalinism, or any other such regime). Rather

we should contrast the Shire with Mordor and see how the lust for power can take different shapes.

Mordor, for all its being the dark shadow that looms so threatening over the world that Tolkien creates, is still a fairy-tale vision of evil, guarded by giant spiders and by towers with gates of iron. The corrupted Shire is not. It is a much more recognisable form of evil, one which (if we accept Tolkien's conceit that Middle-earth is our world in a distant past) has survived into the present day. The evil of the Ring has grown until not even the destruction of the Ring can contain it.

The pessimism of this vision is consistent with Tolkien's own nature: as his biographer Humphrey Carpenter notes, he was a profoundly pessimistic man (1978, pp.39 and 133). It also is in accord with Tolkien's own interpretation of Catholicism: in a letter to Amy Ronald, he writes:

> Actually I am a Christian, and indeed a Roman Catholic, so that I do not expect 'history' to be anything but a 'long defeat' – though it contains ... some ... glimpses of final victory. (Tolkien, 1981, p.255).

The same is true of the world which he creates – indeed Galadriel uses the term "long defeat" to describe the eventual end (the decline of her power, and indeed that of the Elves) which she and Celeborn have long fought (Tolkien, 1966a, p.372).

The imperfect knowledge of the Valar, teachers of the Elves in their youth, precludes us from any more certain knowledge, but there are references to the Last Battle "that shall be at the end of days" (Tolkien, 1977, pp.44, 48 and 279), to the remaking of Arda afterwards (Tolkien, 1977, p.44), and even to the Music of the Ainur being sung again, without the discord of Melkor (Tolkien, 1977, pp.15-6). These prophecies of apocalypse and the triumph of good are however as remote for Frodo as they are for us. At the time of Frodo's departure from Middle-Earth, good has still not triumphed, and has indeed lost a great deal. The elegiac tone of the last chapter of *The Lord of the Rings* derives from the fact that much which was good and beautiful must now pass from the world, and the world is poorer without it. We are forced at the end of the novel to recall the conversation on the road to Isengard between Théoden and Gandalf:

> '...may it not so end' [said Théoden] 'that much that was fair and wonderful shall pass forever out of Middle-Earth?' 'It may,' said Gandalf. 'The evil of Sauron cannot be wholly cured, nor made as if it had not been. But to such days we are doomed.' (Tolkien, 1966b, p.155).

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'The Hill at Hobbiton': Vernacular Architecture in the Shire

Pat Reynolds

Recently, as editor, I received a paper which contained a common misreading of Tolkien's watercolour drawing of 'The Hill at Hobbiton' (Tolkien, 1937, frontispiece). The author 'saw' "seven above-ground structures including three thatched barns and two structures that are large – i.e. the Mill in the foreground and what looks like a Roman villa in the centre of the picture to the left of the road".

I would like to offer an alternative reading of this picture, based on comparison with primary world architecture.

Firstly, 'three thatched barns'. These are, I believe not thatched barns but thatched hay-ricks. Hay ricks could be built in the field, or in a rick-yard. In Tolkien's illustration, the ricks are placed close to the farmyard, where the hay would be needed to feed over-wintering animals[1]. The stacks were thatched with wetted wheat or rye straw.

Secondly, 'what looks like a Roman villa': Hammond and Scull (1995, p. 104) have identified this building as The Old Grange[2], the farm which was torn down when the Mill site was 'developed' at the end of *The Return of the King* (Tolkien, 1955, p296).

It is possible to trace the development of The Old Grange through the earlier versions which Hammond and Scull (1995) provide.

In #92, 'The Hill: Hobbiton', there are three mid-ground buildings:

- a farmhouse with two associated buildings or extensions (these are situated directly above the sign-post on the far right of the picture, about half-way down);
- a three-bay house[3] with minor building or extension (above the weather vane, virtually in the middle of the picture), and
- a barn-like building with semi-circular opening (on the road from the mill to the 'farmhouse').

In #93 there is only one building. It could be the 'farmhouse', now seen from behind rather than from the side, as it has a long low extension running back from it, down the hill towards the mill.

In #94 the farm buildings have disappeared, and two round hobbit holes take their place in the composition.

In #95 the 'farmhouse' is back on the right, seen from the side, and is now faced by 'the Old Grange', a three-bay house with a dovecot behind (there are doves flying around it).

In #96 the Old Grange is now a courtyard farm, 'the farmhouse' remains, and another set of farm buildings, similar in form to 'the farmhouse' is placed just behind the mill.

The buildings in #97, the final form, are virtually identical to those in #96: the only change is that the dovecot is now located inside the courtyard of the Old Grange.

Readers who live in, or are otherwise familiar with England, will recognise the buildings and landscape in this series of drawings as being inspired by English countryside, and English vernacular architecture[4].

It is possible to view the drawings of Hobbiton as if they were drawn from life in some English village now unidentifiable, or swallowed by suburban sprawl and redevelopment, drawing inferences from the artist's record.

[1] During the 1800s, hay was increasingly grown as a cash crop: increasing use of horse transport, especially to service the growing urban populations called for a large supply of hay. Many towns had specialised haymarkets.

[2] According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a grange was originally 'a repository for grain', secondarily 'An establishment where farming is carried on ... usually the residence of a gentleman-farmer', and thirdly an out-lying farmhouse ... belonging to a religious establishment or feudal lord'.

[3] A bay is the principle compartment in the architectural arrangement of a building. It is marked by the main vaults, or principal rafters of the roof. In houses, each bay is often marked by an opening – a window or a door.

[4] Various definitions of vernacular architecture exist: they tend to include the idea of buildings which are traditional, built following regional styles, using local materials. Some definitions specify that architect-designed buildings cannot be vernacular.

Building Materials. Most of the buildings do not have clear indication of their materials. The mill is an exception. From its first inception (#91), it has been a stone building. Often, the corners of the tower have distinctive quoins – the stones are of a darker colour. Quoins are used when the general walling is of small stones which do not make neat corners, but here the stones are ashlar (fine squared blocks of masonry, that make good, neat corners) so the quoins are a purely fashionable choice. This darker coloured stone is also used for the windows of the mill, the other above-ground buildings, and Bagshot Row.

Cladding Materials. In the coloured plates, many buildings appear to be whitewashed, or stuccoed. The gable end of The Grange and some out buildings sometimes have parallel lines on their walls, which may indicate weather-boarding, or tile cladding. Whitewash, stucco, weather-board and tile cladding are all used to protect an inferior or unsightly material underneath. The buildings do not show the bulge-out at the bottom which is characteristic of whychert and other earthen walls, so I would guess that under their finish they are timber-framed with wattle-and-daub or brick infilling.

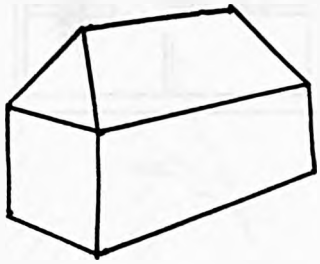
Roofing Materials. The different roofing materials are most clearly shown in #97, 'The Hill: Hobbiton Across the Water'. Three types of roofing are shown: one indicated by vertical parallel lines, one by horizontal parallel lines, and one by looping lines. I believe that the vertical parallel lines indicate pantiles. The horizontal lines might indicate ceramic tiles, slate, sandstone or limestone. The looping lines represent fish-scale tiles - these could be slate ceramic, or wooden shingles. In the coloured plates, the roofs are a bright brick orange, or a slightly yellower tone, showing that they are, in fact, ceramic. It is just possible that the tiles on some buildings with horizontal-line roofs are sandstone (such the calcerous sandstone of Northampton Sand, for example).

The angle of the gable roofs ranges from a little under 60° on the main building of the Old Grange to about 37° on the farm opposite. The roofing material dictates the degree of slope: limestone is never under 45°, but can go as steep as 65°. Sandstone is heavier, so only pitches between 50° and 55° are commonly used. Pantiles will be effective at pitches as low as 30°, and plain tiles as low as 40°.

The roofs of many of the buildings sag: this is associated with age, and the weight of a roof-covering such as limestone.

Building plans. The placing of chimneys shows where the fireplaces are situated, which in turn gives an indication of the layout of rooms.

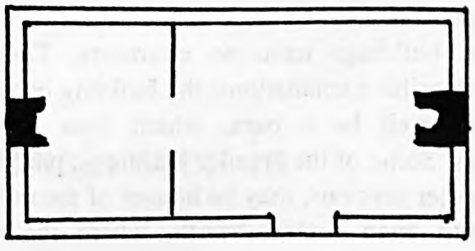
In Tolkien's pictures, chimneys are placed either in the gable walls, or in the cases where the roof is hipped, within the house, passing through the roof at



A hipped roof

the top of the hip. The former gives a well-known floor plan – Brunskill's type i, two-unit plan with cross-passage, and two fireplaces, which he describes thus (1978, p. 104):

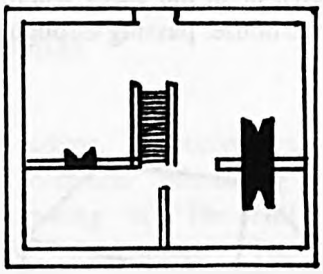
> consisting essentially of one structural cell divided by a partition into a larger and a smaller room ... [the larger] performed the function of the hall but was never open to the roof, having a bedroom or loft above; the smaller room acted as a private space ... Sometimes the smaller room had a fireplace, though this was more likely to be a later addition than an original feature.



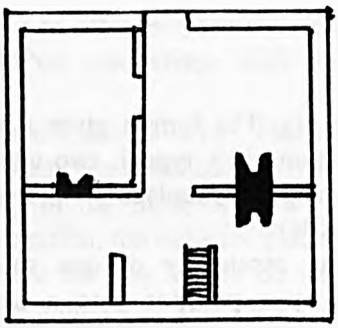
Type i
After Brunskill, 1978

A house with two chimneys is rather more commonly a feature of a 'double pile' plan, such as Brunskill's type d or e (1978, p. 113). Here the basic form is four

rooms, and moving the chimney from the gable walls to a more central position means that three or all four rooms may have a fire place.



Type d



Type e
After Brunskill, 1978

This plan was introduced at the top end of the social scale in the 1600s, and by the 1700s it had worked its way down to the level of cottage and small farmhouse which are shown in the Hobbiton drawings.

Some buildings have no chimneys. There are various possible explanations: the building behind the mill may well be a barn, which does not have chimneys. Some of the smaller buildings, particularly in the earlier versions, may be houses of the medieval type, with open central hearth, where the smoke simply escaped through gaps in the roofing material or through louvres. I can think of no reason why the Old Grange finally has no chimneys.

The courtyard plan of the Old Grange deserves a special mention. As agriculture became more specialised in the 1700s, more capital-intensive and less labour-intensive, more and more products, and processes, needed specialised buildings. These were, initially, grouped seemingly at random around a farmyard. Forming them into a courtyard brought advantages: cattle could then be turned loose into the yard, where they would trample the manure. Processes could flow from one building to another, without products having to be taken outside. In some cases, the products could literally flow, led by gravity from one stage to the next. Books of plans for model farms were published. One author (Evans, 1994, pp. 80-81) has noted that the courtyard plan, in Buckinghamshire, is particularly associated with estate farms. This may be a reflection of the capital expenditure that such a complex represents.

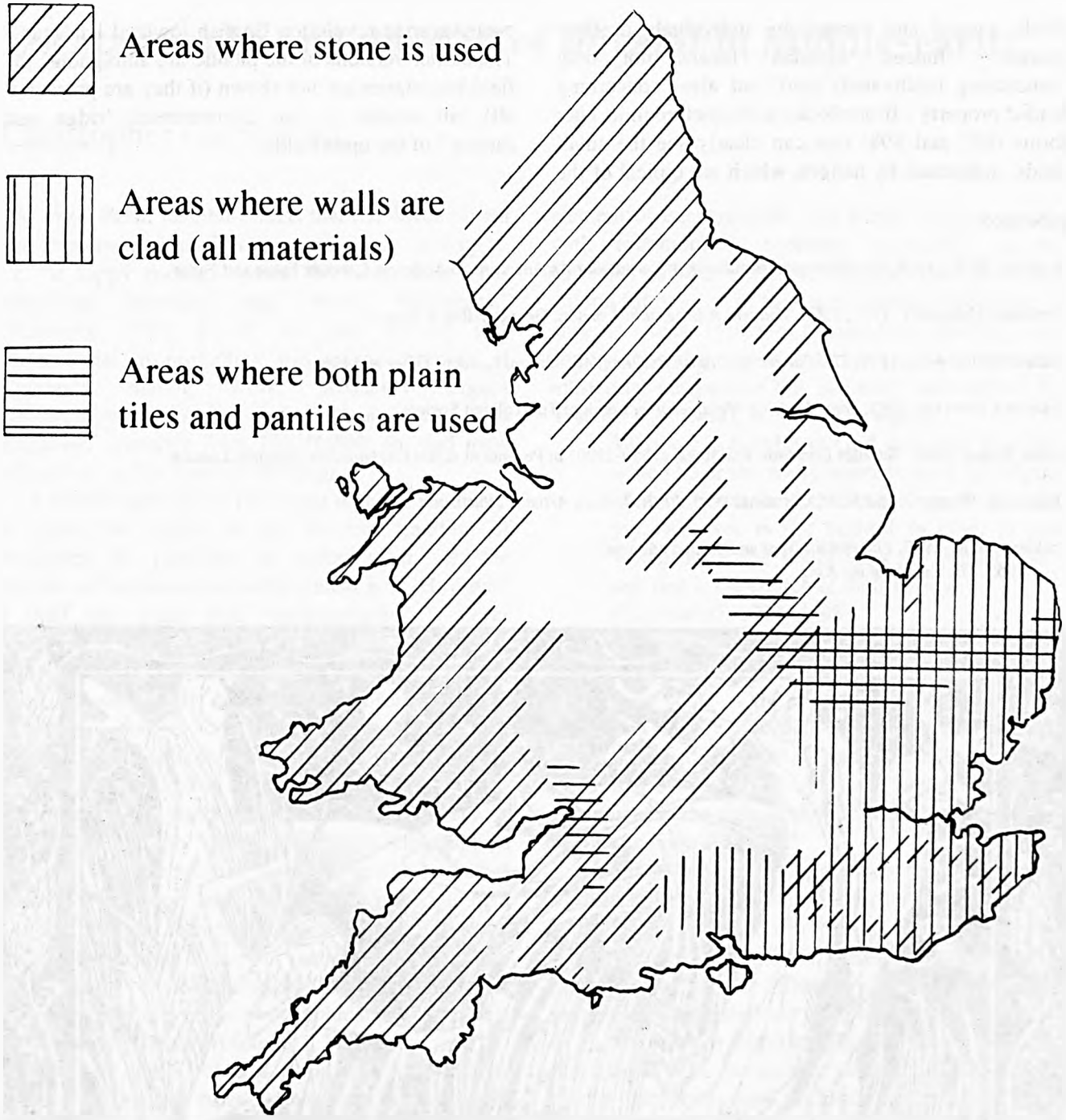
Windows. Many of the windows appear to be the small square kind which were used from the late 1600s to around 1750, and until around 1850 in minor industrial buildings.

Other features. The gable end of the building behind the mill has four small holes in it: these are ventilation holes or dovecot holes, which confirm the building as a barn.

If these were drawings of some unidentified English village, then the evidence of vernacular architecture could be used to indicate the part of the country where its location might be found. The map below (drawn from Brunskill, 1978, pp. 187, 193, 196) shows that there is no place in England where cladding materials, plain tiles and pantiles, and use of stone[5] coincide. I conclude that Hobbiton is not drawn from any one area – and certainly not from Oxfordshire, Worcestershire or Warwickshire[6], or even a combination of these – but rather that the artist has chosen attractive features of houses and other buildings found in various parts of south-eastern England.

The dating evidence from the pictures shows buildings no earlier than the 1700s, and possibly as late as the mid 1800s. The Shire is sometimes described with reference to the Industrial Revolution[7] which occurred towards the end of this span of dates, but I haven't found any references to the preceding Agrarian Revolution. At this point, dear reader, you may dimly recollect hearing the words 'Farmer George', 'Turnip Townshend', or 'Four-crop

[5] 'Stone' here refers to its use in vernacular buildings such as the mill.
[6] See Carpenter (1977) for information on Tolkien's association with these counties.
[7] E.g. Edward Crawford's *Some Light on Middle-earth*



Distribution of building materials seen in *The Hill at Hobbiton*

Rotation' in some long-forgotten history lesson[8]. In brief, the Agrarian Revolution changed the landscape of lowland Britain from open fields, farmed in common (and feudally owned) to small, enclosed

[8] For those of you who were asleep during the lesson, or for whom the Agrarian Revolution was not part of the curriculum: Farmer George was King George III, who took a great interest in the Agrarian Revolution, Turnip Townshend promoted the use of the turnip in England as part of the four-crop rotation, a new idea which removed the need for fields to lie fallow for a year, by using nitrogen-fixing plants.

fields, owned and farmed by individuals or their tenants. Indeed 'agrarian' means not only 'concerning (cultivated) land' but also 'concerning landed property'. If one looks at the picture in its later forms (#97 and #98) one can clearly see the small fields, delineated by hedges, which are typical of the post-Agrarian revolution English lowland landscape. The earlier versions of the picture are ambiguous: the field boundaries are not shown (if they are present at all) but neither is the characteristic 'ridge and furrow'[9] of the open fields.

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[9] 'Ridge and Furrow' are distinctive humps seen when earlier ploughed strips have been left under pasture. They look as if some giant had piped earth onto the field.

Eucatastrophe and the *Gift of Ilúvatar* in Middle-earth

Christopher Garbowski

The critic Brian Rosebury feels that the development and implementation of the concept of *eucatastrophe*, i.e. "a happy ending, against the odds, which has emotional intensity and moral fittingness," (Rosebury, 1992, p. 95 see also p. 64) was instrumental in promoting the artistic strength of Tolkien's mature work. Rosebury argues convincingly enough that eucatastrophe was employed primarily from *The Hobbit* on, and most effectively in *The Lord of the Rings*.

I would claim that to the extent that this is correct, it places the author in the Western tradition of accepting the principle of eudemonism, i.e. the pursuit of happiness as a valid ethical goal. However, I shall also argue that "eucatastrophe" is never complete in any major work by Tolkien. Or at least it is countered by the importance of "Ilúvatar's Gift to Men," in other words death as a theme for the author. Moreover, despite - or perhaps because of - the writer's Christian faith, Tolkien did not wish to offer any easy consolation in his treatment of death.

Eudemonism itself has had a varied career in Western tradition. Most ancient philosophers accepted it in one form or another. Christian moralists such as Augustine and Aquinas interpreted it in a slightly different fashion. To the extent that personal happiness plays an important part in Western culture and is rarely considered morally repugnant we might argue that it is one of the philosophical principles that has affected us most profoundly.

However, there remains an interesting question, what is the position of eudemonism in contemporary art? Although the matter requires study, one may perhaps say that happiness is not highly regarded in the literature of today. It might be claimed that Kant's conviction that morals and happiness come into different categories is fairly pervasive in fiction.

It should first of all be accepted that "happy endings" are no less real than sad ones; it depends on how far the events leading up to them are plausible, or, in fantasy, convincing. The fact that the one may occur more frequently than the other in life does not mean that either is more realistic than the other. The element of eucatastrophe that relates it most clearly with eudemonism, however, especially in the Christian tradition closest to Tolkien, is the necessary "moral fittingness" of the happy ending. Happiness in such an ethical system is obtained by directing your actions toward the greatest Good, i.e., God. From an existential perspective this is neatly summarized by Tomasz Węcławski, according to whom...

> Whoever is faithful to God is in this way that which he or she really wants to be in the depths of their hearts--and that is the source of their joy; whoever is not faithful to God, is that which he or she really does not want to be--and that is the source of their sorrow.
> (Węcławski, 1992, p. 98)

How is this manifested in Tolkien's fiction? Of course there is little overt indication of faith, unless we look at some of the versions of the *Silmarillion* (i.e. in the *History of Middle-earth*). Yet one can note in such an existentialist orientation of the greatest good, that becoming oneself to the fullest extent is a movement in the right direction; it is also, in a sense, becoming faithful to God[1].

Nor does ethical behaviour depend to any great extent on the expectation of external reward. As has been noted, Frodo carries out his perilous mission without any evident belief in life after death; although there may well be the influence of Nordic mythology present with its insistence on courage, which Tolkien is known to have admired. This, however, does not preclude a more personalist theistic attitude, which values the good deed in itself without its being directed towards a reward.

According to St. Thomas Aquinas every conscious and free act has as its goal some good end (see Olejnik, p. 1285). And such acts, it might be added, albeit indirectly at times, lead one to the greatest good. In the *Lord of the Rings*, the more conscious the characters, the more inclined they are to good deeds. Characters such as Saruman believe themselves to be conscious and free, but they are mistaken, and it eventually becomes obvious how they are fooling themselves. Richard Purtill observes

[1] St. Irenaeus, a second century bishop, stated that "the glory of God is Man fully alive."

that even the most powerful evil being - Sauron himself - can be called a slave of "his own fear and hate." (1984, p.57).

Why do we behave in a good manner? Tolkien had some interesting insights. The answer is partly found in the "strange gift of Ilúvatar," who willed...

> that the hearts of Men should seek beyond this world and should find no rest therein; but they should have a virtue to shape their life, amid the powers of the world, beyond the Music of the Ainur, which is as fate to all things else. (Tolkien, 1977, p. 41).

No rest in this world indicates a hunger for the transcendent. This is a key factor in human nature, according to Tolkien, whether we are cognizant of it or not. It contributes to our freedom, since with it, in time, comes the sense that we are actually incomplete and can thus "shape our life". Shaping our life is a great responsibility, however, and there is no guarantee of a positive outcome. In fact, many seem to move in the opposite direction. In Middle-earth the characters range from spiteful hobbits to haughty rulers (e.g. Denethor), not to mention ring wraiths, who at one point at least were free beings, etc.

Such restlessness implies that the prime motivation for humans is the search for meaning in life. Tolkien's major characters thus fall into line with the psychology of Viktor E. Frankl.[2] A protagonist who lifts him or herself "beyond the Music of the Ainur" can be said to be moving in the direction of self-transcendence. According to Frankl this means "that a man is a responsible creature and must actualize the potential meaning of his life." (Frankl, 1973, p. 175). This potential is never completely fulfilled, or rather, it expands with the person. Frankl does not discuss what the opposite direction would be, but self-degradation seems to be the logical conclusion. Gollum's career, for instance can be said to illustrate evil as being "live" spelled backwards. Egoism, therefore, is the greatest prison and freedom can be looked upon as a movement away from the ego.

Various topics and their relationship to human consciousness might be discussed here: the conscience, values, the cognitive power of love, and so on. Even geography can be said to be based on consciousness. In *The Hobbit*, along with its residents, Tolkien discovered the Shire, the archetypical small homeland, a geographical unit that characterizes the entire free Middle-earth of the Third Age. The geographical distances of the created world may be reminiscent of Europe (see Fonstad, 1992, p. x), but the social geography is based on what the Germans call *heimat*, the small homeland. Large as the kingdom of Gondor is, it actually constitutes a federation of relatively small states rather than a uniform one. The only large state can be said to be Mordor, which is centralist, to say the least.

Tolkien's focus on the small homeland is quite appropriate in the context of our discussion. For some, the *heimat* is considered to be an antidote for the alienation of today's society: Czesław Miłosz writes that in comparison with the state "the homeland is organic, rooted in the past, always small, it warms the heart, it is as close as one's own body." (Miłosz, 1983, p. 27). While in reference to the small state, Leopold Kohr points out two of the qualities it fosters: individuality and democracy; the latter because of the state's physical inability to overwhelm the citizen (see Kohr, 1957, p. 98).

The Shire most definitely qualifies as a state where the powers that be have no practical ability to overwhelm the citizen, as can be seen when the Shirriff's deputies "ask" Frodo and his companions to come with them. More interesting for us, however, is the small homeland as a human geography that fosters individuality, even in small details. The small homeland enhances the grounded individuality with a sense of place, not alienation, The healthy individual has values and convictions; witness the earnestness of the heroes of which Rosebury speaks.

The jocular nature of the inhabitants of the small homeland is one of the qualities Rosebury mentions. It indicates that life is a gift. For Bakhtin, this "gift" of life is a task. The *Lord of the Rings* has been called a quest or even an anti-quest story by Rosebury: an anti-quest is nevertheless a task. This brings us back to the question of self-transcendence; while working towards it the characters quite naturally orient themselves toward Simone Weil's good. For the French philosopher true "good" is fascinating and diverse (see Weil, 1968, pp. 60-61). We see this in Tolkien in the example of the small homeland; different homelands introduce genuine diversity, while the large state, whether benign or threatening, imposes uniformity.

Not that the small homeland is without faults. A well known one is the all too familiar division of "us

[2] Admittedly characters of a more fantastic nature form a separate category.

and them", where those who are from outside the community are the unwanted "them," to be treated with suspicion, sometimes with hostility. Hobbits, for instance, are rather disinclined to travel and suspicious of outsiders. Sam Gamgee is the most realistic of the major hobbit character in this sense. Much of the conflict between elves and dwarves arises in this way.

Another artistic expression of self-transcendence is the theme of life as a journey; a journey develops, or at least requires, openness and brings with it the risk of change. Yet the journey, in a way, often leads from one *heimat* to another. Other *heimats* enshrine values that often challenge the cherished beliefs of the traveller. An inn can be considered as the archetypical meeting place of the small homeland and the world. The "Prancing Pony" is a place of meeting and dialogue. Elrond's Rivendell is an elevated version of an inn.

Indeed, dialogue is one of the keys to overcoming the "us and them" dichotomy. In *The Lord of the Rings* dialogue is a precondition for the survival of the free peoples who must overcome their isolation if they are to deal with the danger facing them adequately.

Coercion threatens individuality. Violence is present in its most blatant form in *The Lord of the Rings*. An aspect of this evil, evident in Tolkien's writing is its destruction of identity. This is true at a physical level as well: in the siege of Minis Tirith the orcs catapult disfigured heads over walls with the resultant disfigurement. The Orcs of Morgoth and later, of Sauron, even when they have names are practically clones of each other. People who come under the sway of the malevolent sorcerer likewise lose their individuality, for instance the Black Númenórean at the Gates of Mordor, who simply presents himself as the "Mouth of Sauron".[3]

Although Tolkien has met with the criticism that, in *The Lord of the Rings*, the "evil" is not interesting enough, it might be counterclaimed that the evil in his works is quite realistic in Weil's sense (Weil, 1968), according to which real evil is actually monotonous and drab. Note that Sauron or any other evil character is never attractive as such. Gollum, Rosebury notes, might gain our pity, but "the state into which he degenerates (...) is genuinely frightening". This is no mean literary feat, as the critic concludes:

> [I]t is one of the triumphs of Tolkien's literary judgment in *The Lord of the Rings* that fully accomplished evil is represented by states of personality (or unpersonality) which no sane reader could envy.
> (Rosebury, 1992, p. 41)

Happiness in the sense of joy is transitory in the *Lord of the Rings*, but it nonetheless points to the lasting happiness which resides in the transcendent. Consciousness even in a limited way would be unlikely without the transcendent, and it is this strong feeling of purpose in Middle-earth, the sense that the journey of life is worthwhile, that points beyond the borders of fantasy to our own world. Frankl, (1973), indicates in accordance with common sense, that moments of joy, rare though they might be, are high points of existence that cannot be taken away from us.

Aside from the eucatastrophe accomplished in Tolkien's later work, it seems to me that one can also detect in the vision of Middle-earth indications of a higher order of eucatastrophe, a kind of "cosmic eucatastrophe".

In a sense she speaks for historical humanity as a whole, when, asked by Finrod, the High Elf about "Arda Marred" (roughly, the world corrupted) Andreth, the wise woman of "Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth," replies:

> ...even the Wise among us have given too little thought to Arda itself, or to other things that dwell here. We have thought most of ourselves; of how our *hröar* (body) and *fear* (soul) should have dwelt together for ever in joy, and of the darkness impenetrable that now awaits us.
> (Tolkien, 1993, p. 318).

For a start, let us explore some aspects of the problems of cosmology implied in Andreth's statement. Tolkien pointed out that his creation story differs from Biblical myth, which he calls his primary belief. Yet it may be suggested that the difference need not be considered particularly radical in the light of contemporary Christian thought concerning divine revelation. The Holy Spirit is thought to inspire a human author, who in turn makes use of his literary traditions and knowledge of the world to impart revelation.[4] Tolkien seemed to share such a view by referring to parts of revelation as Biblical myth.

[3] This point was first made in Rosebury, 1992, p. 40.

[4] This view was officially accepted by Catholicism, for instance, in 1943 in the encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu*.

From a religious perspective it is tempting in such a context to imagine how the Holy Spirit might inspire a contemporary religious author to write scripture. Moreover, as we shall subsequently see, Tolkien's art seems to embrace certain difficulties including relating "revelation" in a historical sense, with a modern world-view. Tolkien's handling of one leading instance of "Arda Marred", the cruelty of nature (related in its turn to evil in matter) is important and relevant in this connection.

Tolkien has stated that the wonder of the present world has inspired his Middle-earth (see Fonstad, 1992, p. ix); it is likewise evident in his art that its suffering has not left him unmoved. Much as the Biblical author has done, in the *Silmarillion* Tolkien also depicts a brief golden age, known as the Spring of Arda, at which time there are likewise no predators (See *Genesis* 1,30).

Golden Ages of this sort can be said to have a function similar to art in some aspects. One might say at this point that theology and art intersect in their use of desire. Both Golden Ages, for instance, contrasting as they do with known reality, might have been intended to evoke longing for a deeper cosmic harmony, in other words, to promote our dissatisfaction with the questionable "balance of nature." This all might be connected with evoking the longing for the transcendent discussed above.

But long before the Children of Ilúvatar come on the scene, the forces of destruction spoil the Spring of Arda. Herein lies the crux of the matter: Tolkien, unlike the ancient author, cannot evade the cruelty of nature or treat it as not existing until a stage of creation after the fall of man. His knowledge of evolution, which only the radical minority deny, informs him that nature was cruel long before the arrival of human beings on the scene. How then does he avoid a Manichean creation story, in other words, one in which creation itself is intrinsically evil?

Inevitably in Tolkien's case his cosmology moves closer to the Yahwist version[5] in which evil, in the form of the serpent in Eden, is already present in creation. Significantly, Ilúvatar does not reject Melkor's corruptive contribution to the Music of the Ainur, and decides to work it into his creative scheme.

On the whole this agrees with the Christian doctrine of evil being subverted good.[6] After all, Melkor was created "good". The important point here is that Ilúvatar, by allowing him to maintain his freedom; permits the Vala's course, and thereby evil, or the possibility of it, enters creation[7]. Albeit there is the promise that in the end this will be converted to the end of ultimate "good", and that too is significant. This "good end" may indeed be seen at times in the balance of nature's violent forces, as well as in the sense of wonder evoked by them.

Evil is thus present in the very fabric of creation, but it does not erase the sign of God's presence. This is manifest in one of the most effective prose passages of the book:

> Yet it is told among the Eldar that the Valar endeavoured ever, in despite of Melkor, to rule the Earth and to prepare it for the coming of the Firstborn (...). And yet their labour was not in vain; and though nowhere or in no work was their will or purpose wholly fulfilled, and all things were in hue and shape other than the Valar had first intended, slowly nonetheless the Earth was fashioned and made firm.
> (Tolkien, 1977, p. 22)

This passage is on the verge of being dualistic as the forces of good and evil struggle within creation - it represents, in fact, a qualified dualism. But it cannot be said that either good or evil is supreme in any one sphere. Manichism seems to be overcome, since matter itself, although marked by evil, is fundamentally good. Creation is life-sustaining, awe inspiring, and displays a host of other qualities. Perhaps, in such a reading of *Genesis*, Tolkien approaches the ultimate meaning of the original revelation of creation as "good": not denial of the evil intrinsic in it and plain on the surface, but the evidence of the work of a good Creator still present within it. Such a revelation implies the existence of evil within creation, otherwise it would be redundant; revelation does not need to state the obvious.[8]

Tolkien's cosmology apart, this vision of the universe as a suffering organism is also reflected in

[5] In *Genesis* there are two creation stories stemming from different literary sources, i.e. the so called Priestly and Yahwist versions.

[6] C.S. Lewis, in his preface to chapter 10 of *Paradise Lost* wrote: "God created all things good without exception. (...) What we call bad things are good things perverted." Quoted from Shippey, 1992, p. 209.

[7] This could be seen as an expansion St. Augustine's suggestion that the violence of nature and the resultant evil might be an expression of the freedom of Satan; see Sweetman, 1995, p. 26.

[8] John Habgood points out that for the ancient inspired author to write "God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good" "required a high degree of faith in a world where much was mysterious, painful and threatening"; see Hapgood, 1983, p. 129.

his developed Middle-earth. Although the hobbits encounter with Old Man Willow is frightening, Tom Bombadil tries to help them understand the tree being's pain. Likewise in the *Silmarillion* Yavanna tries to defend her trees from the abuse of the Children of Ilúvatar. The theme of vegetarian heroes, such as Beren becomes, is also significant.

Within Ilúvatar's love of the Earth lies its hope. This introduces an important theme; is "Arda Marred" to be "healed" or "remade"? Manwë is convinced that Eru will heal Arda, and that it shall be "greater and more fair than the first" (Tolkien, 1993, p. 245). A clue of what this might entail can be found in Andreth's words: "Many of the Wise hold that in their true nature no living things would die." (Tolkien, 1993, p. 314) She imagines nature as being freed from its Darwinian struggle. Andreth's words, although she is actually referring to Arda's origins, relate its fate to that of the Children of Ilúvatar. Moreover, her idea resembles the theological one of "apocatastasis", or universal salvation, which operates both on a cosmic and on a personal level. The cosmic level, which is less open to theological debate, concerns the ultimate renewal of creation by God at the end of time.

Hence, if Arda is marred, what about Man marred? Sin is present in Middle-earth in elves and men and is a substantial component of their "self-degradation." Of course Arda Marred, or nature spoiled, does not necessarily lead to sin, which is a matter of free will, but it does provide the natural habitat of sin. Where there is sin, or self-degradation, there is the possibility of salvation.

Gollum represents an interesting case of the limits of salvation. One of the most touching scenes in *Lord of the Rings* is where the degenerate hobbit comes upon Frodo and Sam sleeping on the stairs of Cirith Ungol in *The Two Towers*. Was Sam to blame for this lost chance of Gollum's conversion? Yes and no: it was not Sam who placed the idea of betrayal in his antagonist's head; the events that led up to Gollum's death are his own fault. Yet the question arises of what the ultimate fate for such a pitiable villain might be. Can it in some way be connected with our discussion of Arda Marred and Arda Healed?

As mentioned above, apocatastasis has both a cosmic and personal aspect. The Polish theologian Waclaw Hryniewicz writes: "An eternal hell (...) would be the consummation of a frightful dualism of the entire creation, it would constitute an eternal sign of discord, internal disharmony and alienation; an incompleteness of the act of creation itself. (...) An eternal hell would likewise be a hell for God, a hell for divine love, and a cruel condemnation for God himself." (Hryniewicz, 1990, p. 103). Furthermore hell, although the doctrine of its existence is upheld, is not eternal and ultimately represents a purgative experience.

Ilúvatar says of the Aftercomers, or Men, and their misuse of his gifts: "These too in their time shall find that all that they do redounds at the end only to the glory of my work." (Tolkien, 1977, p. 42). Gollum has no such awareness at the point he leaves the story, although his action inadvertently helps in attaining a good end.

The passage echoes an earlier one with Melkor in the first Music of the Ainur; Melkor "shall see" and men "shall find" the truth of Ilúvatar's plan. Admittedly, this can be understood as meaning that they may be forced to "see" when it has become too late for such illumination. This, however, I believe would ring false to Tolkien's vision. Finrod's reasoning may be cited here: "If we are indeed the *Eruhin*, the Children of the One, then He will not suffer Himself to be deprived of His own, not by any Enemy, not even by ourselves." (Tolkien, 1993, p. 320).

The last words "not even by ourselves" whether or not they are so intended, can easily be applied to counter the free will argument of the existence of Hell. According to this line of thinking the existence of Hell is one of the ultimate symbols of our freedom: the freedom to deny God completely. In this view in our heart of hearts we either accept God, or deny Him, to our ultimate shame, and in the latter choice condemn ourselves. One could so interpret the scene in Tolkien's fellow Inkling C.S.Lewis' *The Last Battle* (from the Chronicles of Narnia) where the condemned animals simply cannot look the godhead figure, Aslan, in the eyes and turn away from paradise as if on their own.

The universalist reply implied in Finrod's words is that the God of love can find a way around our disastrous misuses of freedom without imposing any constraints on freedom itself. This is the radical freedom of God; the freedom of Ilúvatar is referred to a number of times in the mythology of Middle-earth. Apocatastasis is not explicit in Tolkien, but the hope of it seems to be strong. As the elves would say, the feeling that "something right or necessary is not present" (Tolkien, 1993, p. 343) is evoked. Perhaps it is significant that there is no indication in the brief

passage concerning the Second Music of the Ainur that anyone shall be excluded from participation. It is to be hoped that "*all*", whatever their past, however tragic or misguided they have turned out to be, "shall then understand fully [Ilúvatar's] intent in their part, and each shall know the comprehension of each," (Tolkien, 1977, p. 16 [my italics, C.G.])

The price of this understanding is not stated. The episode with the Dead Men of Dunharrow in *The Lord of the Rings* is a kind of parable of purgatory; in a sense Isildur's curse was necessary for the salvation of the oath breakers. One might surmise that the Last Judgment is omitted but understood in the "Ainulindalë" and is necessarily pedagogic in nature; full comprehension of God's intent for individuals and of all their fellows is gained. Moreover, what makes it a modern vision of paradise is its dynamic quality. Bliss is not considered a static state, but one in which sentient beings partake in perhaps the most exciting of divine activities, i.e. creation (or sub-creation?).

The kernel is already present in *The Book of Lost Tales* in the earliest version of the Music of the Ainur (see Tolkien, 1983, p. 53). It may be seen as the seed of "hope" which eventually bore fruit in the eucatastrophe of the *Lord of the Rings*. Certainly the major elements of a theistic eudemonism are implied here as well, in that people perform conscious and truly free acts in harmony towards a divine end.

Nonetheless, much as Christian theologians, for instance, argue for and against personal apocatastasis, (and it is far from established doctrine), cosmic eucatastrophe is a matter of hope. Death is the present reality – Morgoth may be defeated in the *Silmarillion*, but as yet he cannot "see." Moreover, "his lies live on."

Death is a theme of Tolkien's that has not escaped the critics' attention, I shall start by looking at its relationship to suffering. Few of the author's characters have suffered as Morwen, Túrin Turambar's mother has done, not only through the curse laid upon her and her children by Morgoth and the ultimate suicide of the latter, but also perhaps, through recognizing that her rashness and pride were not absent in the fulfilment of the curse. Tolkien seems to imply that her suffering was not in vain. He honours Morwen in a peculiar way. The very ground where Húrin had made a grave for her corpse survives the havoc of the wrath of the Valar as Tol Morwen, and stands "beyond the new coasts that were made" (Tolkien, 1977, p. 230): the sole monument to the First Age.

Before Morwen dies, she longs to discover how fate has permitted her children to meet so tragically. Her husband possesses this dreadful knowledge and in typical human fashion wishes to spare her further torment. And when she dies it seems to him "that the lines of grief and cruel hardship were smoothed away." (Tolkien, 1977, p. 229). Is she simply "unconquered"- as Húrin suggests - or "resting in peace."

Our answer, however, may be as pessimistic as Andreth's would be. For Andreth, death is both the swift hunter and "impenetrable" darkness. The reality of death proves the dualism of creation. Like classical dualists the wise woman uses the imagery of light and darkness, but whereas the former distinguished the immortal spirit from matter, which they disdained, Andreth sees life as light and death as darkness. This idea in part seems to stem from the Judeo-Christian body and soul linkage; since creation is ultimately "good," the body is not merely a prison to be discarded. Note that Andreth does not wish for the spirit to survive the body.

At one level Andreth's arguments are not effectively countered anywhere because it would seem that Tolkien views them as an accurate description of the human condition. Rather, in part, the author proposes the artistic construct of the elf beings themselves who demonstrate the shortcomings of deathlessness. Tom Shippey suggests that:

> The *Silmarillion* (...) seems to be trying to persuade us to see death as potentially a gift or reward (...). [Moreover,] the elvishness of the elves is meant to reflect back on the humanity of man.
> (Shippey, 1992, pp. 210-211).

This might partially be understood in the sense of death as a rest from a world full of suffering; ultimately does not offer a complete answer.

Yet in "Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth" Tolkien adds another twist. Since the life span of the elves is linked to the duration of this world, the problem is simply shelved. In modern terms, Finrod's arguments can be summarized thus: "what's a life span of a few billion years in the face of eternity?" The problem of death thereby seems to be aggravated by deathlessness in this world.

Let us return to the problem of death as a gift, a gift of Ilúvatar to be precise. Before we discuss the gift, what can we say about the Giver? Ilúvatar is a

different concept from one modern idea, closely associated with Eliade, which replaces God with the concept of the "sacred" where good and evil are two sides of a great mystery (see, for instance, Moran, 1972, pp. 186-203). A significant clue is provided by Finrod when he talks about "Estel" or trust in relation to Ilúvatar. This dialogic ingredient of faith is given priority. Why is this important? Belief, the element barely mentioned, is cognitive: "you believe in something" with whatever combination of intellect and intuition you possess about the object of belief. Belief in this sense partially objectifies God. On the other hand, it is only possible to trust someone, and that implies a personal God.

Trust is paramount in the "gift". Tolkien gives a less conventional (but nonetheless orthodox) reading of *Genesis* in that the Fall is not the cause of death, which was already present before the Fall; the Fall is rather the inability to accept death - which can be understood as a lack of trust in God. This not only refers to a single moment of our history, but is constantly repeated, for instance, in the story of the downfall of Númenor.

What might the content of that trust be? Among other things, in "Laws and Customs" Manwë reminds us that this trust is founded on the belief that Ilúvatar "is good, and that his works shall all end in good." (Tolkien, 1993, p. 245).

When Frodo approaches the sacred shores of Aman at the conclusion of *The Lord of the Rings*, he sees light; back at the Grey Havens Sam only sees a deepening darkness. Night also closes round Húrin as he holds his dying spouse. One might say this darkness is symbolic of the darkness Andreth speaks of: it seems to be all that is given to human reason.

After meeting with such darkness it is possible, as Húrin does, to wander off in his personal darkness vengefully, and in the end aimlessly. In the case of the hapless hero this response is in some ways understandable. On the other hand, one may regain momentum, as Samwise, Peregrin and Meriadoc do when, after a period spent in darkness, they break out spontaneously in song; admittedly their darkness is of a different kind. One might even say they become enriched. This is the way of trust.

Perhaps in Morwen's expression is a sign that she has received the answer to her questions - and more - through her personal meeting with Ilúvatar. The words of Finrod quoted above, "If we are indeed the (...) Children of the One, then he will not suffer Himself to be deprived of His own," support such a hope. Implied here is an ultimate return to Ilúvatar.

This the readers must decide for themselves. If Morwen's questions are indeed answered, then her expression gives an idea of the light on which this trust is based; it is a different light than Frodo's since it is one that the readers on their part might share in. The "gift" of Ilúvatar in such a treatment is turning a necessary evil, death, into the opportunity to see the truth clearly, that which often we do not get a chance to do in life. Truth may even seem to be against us, as in the story of Húrin and Morwen and their children - nor would we obtain it fully through mere deathlessness, as is illustrated by the example of Tolkien's elves. An encounter with full truth is the key to true happiness, since truth is imparted by a God who is Love.

One might ask whether Tolkien says anything more directly about the key issue of immortality as such. The author deals with human immortality rather obliquely. It is said on the one hand that men "die indeed," yet on the other hand, they "take part in the Second Music of the Ainur"; to paraphrase the Gospel: the "dead" could not possibly take part in such an event. Thus immortality can be said to be taken for granted, the more interesting question for the artist is that of the healing or remaking of creation. As we have seen Tolkien's is not a static afterlife. If he is right we will have yet to understand our parts fully and each other as well to share in the effort of bringing about the final eucatastrophe.

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Reviews

Lembas Extra 1995; *Lembas Extra 1996*; edited by Sjoerd van der Weide. Tolkien Genootschap "Unquendor", Leiden 1995/1996. available for £5.00 each from Unquendor, c/o René van Rossenberg, Hoge Rijndijk 195, NL-2314 AD Leiden, The Netherlands.

The two most recent volumes of English language articles from the Dutch Tolkien Society Unquendor are full of good things. In each volume I especially enjoyed an article of literary detective work investigating Tolkien's sources, both conscious and unconscious, and I will place discussion of these last in each of my reviews

Lembas Extra 1995 contains 'Sex in Middle-earth' by Annemarie van Ewijck, a forceful and often amusing piece which states that although there are no sex scenes, and neither real nor metaphorical sex is part of the matter of Middle-earth, yet if suppressed on the surface it will emerge elsewhere. After all, sexual reproduction is the normal mode of continuing the species, and the great driving force of sexual desire set in motion the Tale of Beren and Lúthien. Tolkien was of course a writer of his period, but he shows people driven by love and desire: Beren, Thingol, Éowyn, Aragorn (who was banned from Rivendell once Elrond found he was in love with Arwen). Rose Cotton is praised for telling Sam she has waited long enough; while Sam and Frodo are considered to share a deep, non-sexual love, ironically taboo today.

Brian Stableford's 'Writing Fantasy and Horror' is a welcome reprint from the BSFA writers' magazine *Focus*, with sub-headings added according to Lembas's house-style. However, it was a two-part article, and so the source given should have been issue 26 as well as 25. The relevant parts discuss Tolkien's and Carter's theories of Secondary Worlds. Fantasy and magic are a way of trying to shape life's events. "The real utility of magic does not lie in the practical arena of human endeavour but in the theatre of the psyche ... Institutionalised magic builds confidence and morale; its operations are of a purely symbolic value, but it nevertheless opposes defeatism and despair, and conserves hope." I believe there is a misprint in the next sentence, for the original reads "causal", i.e. "at the beginning" rather than "casual", i.e. "accidental", so I shall correct the misprint: "Magic – or some psychological substitute – is vital to all human endeavour at a causal level, because confidence may be a necessary condition of success, and despair is generally a guarantee of failure." I take it Stableford means, in our society, such habits as carrying mascots to exams., saying prayers, touching wood, rituals before sports matches and wearing special clothes for weddings.

Stableford then continues to characterise horror fiction, its difference to fantasy and why readers are so hooked on it – the mentality of the connoisseur. Returning to fantasy he emphasises the importance of the happy ending being brought about by the efforts of the leading characters rather than the *deus ex machina*, even though magic could be employed arbitrarily ... "the central characters' ... human attributes must have made some crucial contribution to their salvation". Here I think that "casual" is the right word: "Casual miracles, even if they are permitted at some hypothetical metaphysical level, certainly do not work at a narrative level."

"It is a literary axiom of the fantasy genre that obtaining a eucatastrophe is hard work, and that the hard work in question must not only be done but seem to be done. It frequently transpires that three volumes is hardly enough to make a start." Thus writes the witty Stableford, who is of course a respected British critic and genre novelist.

René van Rossenberg contributes 'Tolkien's Golem. A study in Gollumology' on the parallels between the Jewish Golem myth and Gollum. As the tool of the Ring, Gollum is like the Jewish Golem; the Golem is made of mud and earth; the Ring was found in the mud of Anduin. It is fascinating to compare the independent overlap between this article and one by J.S. Ryan 'Gollum and the Golem: a neglected Tolkien association with Jewish thought' (*Orana* 18/3, August 1982).

The leading article in *Lembas Extra 1995* is 'Tolkien and the West Midlands: the roots of romance' by Tom Shippey. Shippey opens by claiming Tolkien's contribution to 20th-century literature is uniquely great: the revival of romance, the fantasy trilogy, Dungeons and Dragons ... In this article, first given as a speech at King Edward's

School in Birmingham to celebrate Tolkien's centenary, Shippey emphasises Tolkien's nostalgia for his Birmingham childhood: his mother, school friends (two of whom died in the War) and his forbidden romance. Then his philological studies showed where his heart lay: the *Ancrene Wisse* indicated that there was a place where a descendant of the Old English tongue was spoken and written, and that was "the Shire"; and "the Mark" would have been the Midlands English for "Mercia", the Old English kingdom which enclosed both Oxford and Birmingham, with its White Horse at Uffington.

Shippey finally pulls off an amazing coup by taking place-names with which we have long been familiar and demonstrating their Middle-earth connections: Birmingham from *Beorninga-ham, "the home of the followers of Beorn"; and incredibly Sarehole Mill is the place where *Saru lived: Saru's Hole! Shugborough Hall, the House of the Hundred Chimneys, probably takes its first element "shug" from Old English *scucca* – a goblin or demon – perhaps originally the hall was inhabited by elves!

Lembas Extra 1996 begins with 'Tolkien's languages: aim, scope and function', by Jan van Breda. For Tolkien, the aesthetic appeal of his invented words was the most important factor in creating a word-stem: the pleasant and evocative combination of sounds, or euphony. However, Elvish is a limited language, and those who claim they can write in it are misleading; they probably use the script to transliterate their native language. For Tolkien, invented words led to the creation of a mythology linked to the language.

Ben Koolan, a graduate in theology, provides two complementary articles on Tolkien's Roman Catholicism, both as a private individual and in his writings. In 'Light from an invisible lamp' Koolen shows Catholicism in *The Lord of the Rings*: the weakness in the good characters, the potential for good in the wicked characters. 'Leaf by Niggle' illustrates the doctrine of purgatory. 'J.R.R. Tolkien, catholic' describes the role of the Church in Tolkien's upbringing: his mother's conversion, his guardian Father Morgan, and the Birmingham Oratory founded by Newman. There is a lot of useful biographical material here, expounded by Koolan who has specialised theological knowledge.

'The unprepared war' by Sjoerd van der Weide sets into chronological order the events of "the last Alliance" recounted in *The Silmarillion*, the text and Appendices of *The Lord of the Rings*, and elsewhere. This is a useful synthesis of a key campaign which is often neglected by readers because it is retold in several brief flashbacks. Our author points out that Tolkien's statement in *The Silmarillion* that there were living creatures fighting on both sides at Dagorlad, apart from Elves, must be wrong, as Orcs would not have fought for the Alliance.

My imagination was caught by 'Who are you, Master?' by Ron Pirson. Of the two kinds of theories about Tom Bombadil, that he is a nature-spirit; or that he is a Maia or even a Vala "gone native", Pirson comes down firmly on the side of the "retired" Vala. Tom's physical description parallels that of one of the Valar; and since the Ring has no power over him, he must in this respect be more powerful than the Maiar Sauron, Saruman and Gandalf. Also consider the visions seen by the hobbits and especially Frodo under Bombadil's influence: the Dúnedain and Aragorn; Frodo's dream of Valinor, and of Gandalf's escape from Orthanc. how could Frodo dream true of Valinor unless Tom had been there, and Frodo picked something up from his sleeping mind? Then there are two parallel naming passages: Elrond lists the names given to Bombadil; and Faramir lists the names given to Gandalf. If Gandalf is a Maia, maybe Tom is also one of the Ainur. Pirson even suggests that the Barrow-wight episode was "set up" so that the hobbits could acquire those important short swords.

As for Goldberry, the Vala whom Pirson has in mind does have a wife, whom he wed in Middle-earth "before the Dark Lord came from Outside". It must be seen, however, as there is no evidence in the *Letters* for Pirson's theory, that J.R.R. Tolkien the author was unaware of Tom's "real" identity; though there is a telling comment in *The Return of the Shadow*, from Gandalf on Bombadil: "he belongs to a much older generation..." I am delighted to accept Pirson's detective work as uncovering the "real" Tom Bombadil.

Jessica Yates

Defending Middle-Earth - Tolkien: Myth & Modernity.

Patrick Curry, Floris books, Edinburgh, 1997, £15.99.

Defending Middle-Earth started life as a paper for the 1992 Tolkien Centenary Conference, but (as with all the best books) once Curry had started he found he couldn't stop. Each thought provoked more questions, paragraphs lengthened into chapters and eventually this book emerged.

Curry seeks to answer the riddle of why a book that consistently sells well around the world, is amongst the most popular borrowed from libraries, and has repeatedly been voted "best book of the century" or indeed "of all time," should be so slated by the critics? What are the readers getting out of it? Many of the literary critics may be written off as literary snobs, who have written off all stories as being for children and the emotionally immature, lack the imagination to understand speculative fiction, or are simply obsessed with being, as one is described here, *the Adult in the room*. Dismissing the shallower Tolkien critics, however, is easy, and no real answer. What is it about *The Lord of the Rings* that has led the book not merely to stand the test of time, but to grow steadily in popularity?

One of the commonest criticisms of LotR is that it is reactionary. Curry argues that it is instead antimodernist, anticipating the modern Green movement rather than looking back to the Luddites. He is perhaps oversimplifying the case when he suggests that modern scientific rationalism was invented by Descartes and had few detractors until first Ruskin, and then Tolkien came along to herald the rise in our own generation of ecological awareness. In his definition of Modernity, Curry also lumps centralized government together with capitalist finance and heavy industry, neglecting to consider the ways that differing forms of power and greed have always been aligned. He is on safer ground when suggesting that Tolkien was helping to restore a sense of Wonder, which is all too frequently lost in the bustle and confusion of everyday city-dwelling life.

Curry compares the way the Shire is embedded in the wider world to differing levels of awareness of the world around us. The Shire to him represents the social realm, embedded in the natural world of Middle-Earth, which is in turn surrounded by the Sea (Spirituality). As we move from the Shire towards the sea, so we grow in awareness of our surroundings, at first physical, later spiritual. The happier and more moral of the races of Middle-Earth are firmly rooted in their environment - consider the elves of Caras Galadhon or the Ents of Fangorn Forest. Conversely, evil is shown as springing from a love of power and a callous disregard of life for it's own sake.

The level of destruction of our countryside that Curry describes is deeply disturbing. He cites one example, no doubt dear to all our hearts, that of mushrooms. 70 European species are now extinct, and a further 600 are now getting scarce. There are no easy solutions to our problems, but Tolkien's books at least give us hope that an answer exists, and remind us of the importance of striving to find it.

Curry also considers responses to Tolkien's depiction of good and evil, and the conflict between them. Many of the critics who have been most strident in accusing Tolkien of oversimplification have, Curry shows, themselves demonstrated an extreme inability to accept the existence of evil. He cites one example of a critic who cannot use the word *Evil*, even when talking of the Dunblane massacre or the Holocaust. As with the destruction of the environment, there is no simple solution to the problem of evil, but *The Lord of the Rings* at least gives us reason to hope.

This book is essential reading as a counterblast to Tolkien's critics, and effectively demolishes their weak and ill-thought out arguments. In his description of the modern Green movement, Curry is much weaker, depending on an overly shallow summary of its history and occasional woolly thinking. However, this is not a political tract and wisely does not attempt to be. What Curry does do, and extremely well, is demonstrate why environmental activists have adopted Tolkien as their own, and give us at least some understanding of why *The Lord of the Rings* has been so repeatedly voted Book of the Century.

Sarah Wells

J.R.R. Tolkien (Series: "Writers and their Work")

Charles Moseley, Northcote House Publishers (in association with the British Council), Plymouth, U.K., 1997, £7.99. ISBN 0-7463-0749-7

This little book is one of a series designed to offer critical appraisals of individual writers' works within a limited compass. The interested general reader who encounters an author's, in this case Tolkien's, work for the first time can assess his or her reactions to it in the general context of his or her understanding of literature the format conveys a slight sense of having been designed with the requirements of a 'lit-crit' study course in mind. It shows itself in the book's division into bite-sized slices headed with rather misleading titles, of which the opening one "The Man" is the most depressing, if the least inaccurate. There is familiar biographical material here, with some useful emphasis on the gap between the social mores of Tolkien's day and those of the present.

A discussion of Tolkien's concept of the storyteller as myth-maker follows, as exemplified in the essays of the 1930's, particularly, "On Fairy Stories", concluding that his claims for the essential truth of myth in a Christian context represent a culminating expression of a philosophy of literature traceable back via Coleridge and Milton to the fourteenth century. Familiar ground for the serious student, no doubt, but probably valuable to the interested general reader as a starting point for further investigation.

The central chapter of the book, "The World of Words", provides a more extended commentary on Tolkien's sources, content and style. There are a number of pertinent observations on such topics as the variety of Tolkien's sources and the multiplicity of styles he adapted or adopted to suit his purposes. The author is critical of the latter, if understanding of the difficulties presented by the material, but it is just here that the limitations of his principally 'lit-crit' approach to the surface and lead him astray. According to Moseley, Tolkien's descriptive writing is thin and limited, and relies on his maps to bolster it; the delineation of scenes or objects by means of descriptive detail is unconvincing, because Tolkien is not very much interested in it, but only in the broad narrative sweep. This is plausible, one may suppose, if one relies on picking out some individual passages or examples for adverse comment, where the use of simile or metaphor, for instance, is conventional and unremarkable. But to use such examples as the basis of a broad conclusion that Tolkien's descriptive resources are inadequate is as though one was to look at Middle-earth through the wrong end of a pair of opera-glasses. The scenic panorama that constitutes the setting of *The Lord of the Rings* is conceived on the grand scale, and, interestingly, the evocation of it is often at its most effective when it takes the form of straightforward reporting, without "literary" embellishments.

The author takes the same view of characterisation, which he views as being, as a whole, elementary and not very illuminating; only a few persons are characterised "in a normal sense", and the reader is left "to do a lot of the work". Certainly the central characters, the hobbits, are presented most fully, in close-up, as it were, and some others appear more as background figures. However, the true test of Tolkien's method of character presentation is its effectiveness. The enduring popularity of the works implies that the characters are widely found to be convincing and believable.

After this there is not much left to come. A chapter very grandly titled "Imperium and Cosmos" (wow!) tries to define the moral and ethical values Tolkien's writing embodies, but does not really lead anywhere in particular. A final chapter, "Responses", summarises the post-publication history of the works and the various critical and other reactions to them, but this will be a familiar story for most of us.

The serious student of Tolkien will therefore not find anything particularly new or original here, and Tom Shippey's *The Road to Middle Earth* remains the essential vade-mecum, supplemented by Brian Rosebury's more recent *Critical Assessment*, if an alternative, "modernist" literary view is looked for. At whom, then, is the present book directed? Perhaps to the uncommitted, if there be any, who like the church of the Laodiceans, are "neither cold nor hot", where Tolkien is concerned? There is another well-known series of guides which might provide a hint for a suitable title; *Bluff your way in Tolkien*?

John Ellison

Tolkien's Trees

Claudia Riiff Finseth

Anyone who has walked in a forest knows there is no better place for adventure. Snow White knew it, so did Hansel and Gretel. Trees and forests, with all their branches and paths, hollows and hiding places are perfect for suspense, surprise, enchantment and danger.

In his writings J.R.R. Tolkien gives us all kinds of forests and groves in which to find adventure – and he does more. He ascribes to his individual trees and forests a fantastic variety of meanings and possibilities by drawing from and adding to the rich symbolism of trees that has developed throughout the history of literature. Tolkien describes the trees with which we are familiar – oak, birch, willow – so that we see them with a fresh eye. He creates new trees for us such as we have never seen growing on our earth. He gives us a chance to look at things from a treeish point of view, which is to say a fresh point of view, and from there he can give an added dimension to his human characters, who define themselves in part through their attitude towards trees.

To speak of J.R.R. Tolkien and trees in one breath is to speak of a life-long love affair. From the time he was a boy and played among the trees in the countryside at Sarehole in Warwickshire at the turn of the century until his death at Bournemouth in 1973, Tolkien was, as Galadriel says of Sam the hobbit, a "lover of trees" (1966a, p. 486). Humphrey Carpenter in his biography (1977, p. 24) says of Tolkien,

> ... And though he liked drawing trees, he liked most of all to be with trees.
>
> He would climb them, lean against them, even talk to them. It saddened him to discover that not everyone shared his feelings towards them. Once incident in particular remained in his memory: 'There was a willow hanging over the mill-pool and I learned to climb it... One day they cut it down. They didn't do anything with it; the log just lay there. I never forgot that.'

As a lover of trees and a man who abhorred the needless destruction of them, Tolkien the writer often defined his characters as good or evil in part by their feelings about trees. Many of the evil peoples in his stories are tree-destroyers. The orcs heedlessly and mindlessly hew away at the living trees of Fangorn; Saruman destroys the beauty of the Shire by erecting buildings from its trees; and Sauron's evil presence turns Greenwood the Great to the black and decaying boughs of Mirkwood and makes Mordor so sterile that a tree cannot grow there (Tolkien, 1937, p. 310; 1966b, pp. 308-309). Conversely, among the good peoples of Tolkien's world are many tree-lovers; one could almost say it is one of the hallmarks of Tolkien's good people. Galadriel (1996a, p.434), Legolas and the whole host of Elves show a deep regard for trees, almost as brethren; the Ents and Huorns tend and guard their forests as shepherds protect their sheep (1966b, p.105); Samwise the hobbit-gardener cherishes the soil of Galadriel's garden (1996c p. 374), using it to restore his own devastated Shire; Aragorn, rightful king of Gondor, takes as his banner symbol the White Tree (1996c, p.150); and Niggle desires nothing more before he dies than to finish his painting of a tree, Tolkien's metaphor for one's life work, for his own writing.

Tolkien's life was filled from boyhood with the rich symbolism of the great trees of literature. The stories that "awakened desire" in him as a child included "above all, forests". As a devout Catholic, he knew Christ's metaphor of the vine and the branches, and perhaps even heard the legends of the tree that became the cross[1]. As he grew older he discovered medieval literature, which became his speciality, including the cross-tree in the Anglo-Saxon poem "The Dream of the Rood", and the *Poetic Edda* of Norse mythology with its World Tree,

[1] There are many legends of the cross that identify it with a certain tree. In one such legend the cross is made of an Aspen. when the tree realizes the use to which it is being put, its leaves begin to tremble, thus the Quaking Aspen. In another legend, when the trees learn that Christ is to be crucified, they agree not to let their wood be defiled in this way, and splinter apart at each touch of the axe. But the holly, realizing the inevitability of Christ's death, out of pity permits itself to be the instrument of the Passion. Another legend tells that the cross is made of the tree that rose up over the bones of Adam after Eve planted a branch of of Knowledge from the Garden of Eden on his grave. (Ferguson, 1961, pp. 13, 16 and 21; Eliade, 1952, pp. 43-44).

Yggdrasil.[2] His concept of trees as growing, living, conscious, feeling beings was nurtured by all of these. Through these he began to see the literary value of the image of the tree.

One of the earliest literary uses Tolkien makes of trees is in an episode of *The Hobbit* (1937, pp. 109-111) where Bilbo, Gandalf, and the Dwarves, fleeing the orcs of the Misty Mountains, are suddenly surrounded by wargs – evil wolf-like creatures. Luckily they are in a glade of trees. Jumping into the branches and climbing high, they find refuge and safety as they cradle in the boughs. Even when orcs come and, discovering them above, set the trees ablaze, the topmost branches of the trees provide a miraculous escape. For, only there atop the trees could Gwaihir, the Windlord, Lord of the Eagles, see them as he circled to investigate the smoke. Summoning his Eagle lords, they pluck the frightened travellers from the burning trees. The trees are refuge, escape, and finally sacrifice for Bilbo and his friends.

These themes of refuge and sacrifice blossom into fullness in Tolkien's forest of Lothlórien (1966a, pp. 432-491). This piece of heaven on Middle-earth is an enchanted land, sustained by the magic of the Lady of the Elves, Galadriel. In Galadriel's land grow the loveliest trees of all – the Mallorn trees. Their green' leaves do not fall in the autumn, but turn golden and sparkle on their silver branches the whole winter through.

Tolkien's Silvan Elves set their dwellings, their watchtowers, and even the palace of Galadriel and Celeborn in these glorious trees. The trees are not only their refuge and safety, but all that to them is home and comfort. And Tolkien tells us that the secret of the beauty of the Mallorn trees is that they are beloved by elves (1981, p. 419).

Lothlórien's Mallorns also give refuge to Frodo and the Company of the Ring in their first night out of the dark and dangerous mines of Moria, and protect them from the avenging orcs (1966a, p. 444-447). The power to protect has been ascribed to other trees in history, most notably the cross. The cross is said in lore to have the power to ward off evil or harm. The cross is also the great symbol of sacrifice and it is not, I think, by chance that the Mallorn trees resemble the shape of a cross with their tall, straight trunks from which the main branches grow almost perpendicular before turning up. At the top the main stem divides into "a crown of many boughs" (1966a, p. 444), just as Christ wore a crown of thorns on the cross.

With Frodo's quest, the question of sacrifice comes to the forest of Lothlórien. Whether good or evil avail, the enchanted land and its Golden Wood are doomed now that the Ruling Ring has been found. If the Ring falls to the enemy he will use its power to destroy Lothlórien and all else that is good in Middle-earth. If Frodo succeeds in destroying the Ring, Galadriel's power will fade, for her power, held in one of the three Elven rings, is tied to the one Ring. The bitter irony is that Galadriel dare not try to use the ruling ring herself, for though it would sustain Lórien for a while, eventually it would hideously corrupt her and all she has made beautiful. Galadriel therefore chooses to sacrifice Lothlórien and its Golden Wood for the chance that the rest of Middle-earth might be saved (1966a, pp. 472-474).

To Tolkien, trees are a way to define beauty and life in his terms. It is not just outward appearances, as we discover through Frodo's experience on the hill of Cerin Amroth in Lórien (1966a, p. 455):

> As Frodo prepared to follow him, he laid his hand upon the tree beside the ladder: never before had he been so suddenly and keenly aware of the feel and texture of a tree's skin, and of the life within it. He felt delight in wood and the touch of it, neither as forester nor as carpenter, it was the delight of the living tree itself.

Tolkien is redefining life for us. It is not to move, to eat, to breath as we know such things. Intelligence is not simply the ability to talk. The Mallorn do none of these things and yet through Frodo's touch we sense they are vibrantly alive and keenly aware of all around them. These do not DO, but simply ARE, and in that fulfil the definition of "alive" more than many of the beings on Middle-earth who through speech and action bring destruction, despair and death. Our modern Western world, with its emphasis on mass and fast production, often lacks this value, and Tolkien lamented it.[3] Elisabeth Kubler-Ross (1969,

[2] The most widely distributed mythology for the centre of the universe is the Cosmic Tree. Usually it holds all three spiritual planes – heaven, earth, and hell – on its axis. Mircea Elaide describes it as "roots plunged down into Hell ... branches reaching to Heaven." (1952, p. 44).

[3] In a 1944 letter to his son, Christopher, serving in WWII, Tolkien wrote, "I wonder how you are getting on with your flying since you first went solo – the last news we had of this. I especially noted your observations on the skimming of martins. That touches to the heart

p. 7) says this is much of the reason for despair in our world, since our value is in what we do, not who we are, as we grow old and lose our abilities, we lose our sense of meaning and purpose.

Through Frodo's experience of touching the Mallorn tree, Tolkien also tells us the living, growing tree is more beautiful than anything that could be carved or crafted from it. For Tolkien beauty is in being alive and healthy and whole, in being nurtured and nurturing in return, in the interchange that can be had only between one living thing and another. The trees of the Golden Wood are as beautiful inside as they appear on the outside; they are consistent; they are true. Each green or golden leaf, each yellow flower in spring, each uplifted, branching bough is most beautiful there, on the tree, where it is natural and a part of the whole of living creation. This beauty is apparent in Tolkien's translation of Treebeard's Entish description of Lothlórien (1981, p. 308);

> The valley where the trees in a golden light sing musically, a land of music and dreams; there are yellow trees there, it is a tree-yellow land.

In sorry contrast stand the Middle-earth forests of Mirkwood and the Old Forest. In these the presence of evil has destroyed all that was live and beautiful.

Mirkwood – the name, Tolkien tells us, is a "Primitive Germanic name ... black, and from the beginning weighted with a sense of gloom" (1981, p. 369) – was once Greenwood the Great. But Sauron settled there for a while, disguised as the Necromancer, and his evil poisoned the great green wood until it was black and dangerous – a place of eternal decay. In Tolkien theology only contortion and perversion result when beauty and life are used for evil purposes, as the evil Ring of power has transformed Sméagol from a hobbit-like being into a hideous and pitiful creature, Gollum. These are echoes of the Garden of Eden, where again trees are centre stage, the Tree of Life and the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Like Gollum, Adam and Eve gained power but lost innocence because of their inability to refuse the forbidden fruit (they were not as strong as Galadriel), and could never go back to their innocent state. The Garden of Eden was forever closed to them.

Trees with knowledge of good and evil are, in a way, the theme of the Old Forest. Frodo and his friends plunge into the Old forest to escape pursuit by the nine ringwraiths, only to find a different danger awaiting them (1966a, pp. 165-169). This forest's knowledge of man's (and hobbit's) ways has turned it's "heart" to hatred, and hatred seems always to lead to evil. We learn from Tom Bombadil (1966a, p. 181):

> Tom's words laid bear the hearts of trees and their thoughts, which were often dark and strange, and filled with a hatred of things that go free upon the earth, gnawing, biting, breaking, hacking, burning; destroyers and usurpers.

The trees of the Old Forest have come to hate free creatures as the enemies who destroy them.. Their hate is long-learned; some were ancient trees that were lords before man walked the earth and began destroying. Tolkien says in a letter that "The Old Forest was hostile to two-legged creatures because of the memory of many injuries" (1981, p. 419).

Tom Bombadil tells us that the Old Forest is under the dominion of Old Man Willow (1966a, pp. 168-169), (inspired by an Arthur Rackham drawing – Carpenter, 1977, p. 181) who has great cunning and a rotten heart. His power spread "like fine root-threads in the ground, and invisible finger-twigs in the air, till it had under its dominion nearly all the trees of the Forest..." (1966a, p. 181).

Here malice is in the forest itself, personified by Old Man Willow, and not an outside influence like Sauron. Sauron has never been here. Tolkien, complaining about a BBC broadcast in which Old Man Willow was described as an ally of Mordor, wrote "Cannot people imagine things hostile to men and hobbits who prey on them without being in league with the Devil!" (1981, p. 228). Tolkien felt there is a malice implicit in the cosmos itself, of which Sauron is only one part. This is reminiscent of the cold and brutal world of Norse mythology, which Tolkien knew well (Carpenter, 1977, p. 72). The

of things, doesn't it? There is the tragedy and despair of all machinery laid bare. Unlike art which is content to create a new secondary world in the mind, it attempts to actualize desire, and so to create power in this World; and that cannot really be done with any real satisfaction. Labour-saving machinery only creates endless and worse labour. And in addition to this fundamental disability of a creature, is added the Fall, which makes our devices not only fail of their desire but turn to new and horrible evil. So we come inevitably from Daedalus and Icarus to the Giant Bomber. It is not an advance in wisdom! This terrible truth, glimpsed long ago by Sam Butler, sticks out so plainly and is so horrifyingly exhibited in our world wide mental disease that only a tiny minority perceive it. Even if people have ever heard the legends (which is getting rarer) they have no inkling of their portent ... I will forgive the Mordor-gadgets some of their sins, if they will bring (this letter) quickly to you ..." (1981, p. 89).

undertones of Ragnarok, the final war of the world in which the Norse heroes will lose to the evil frost giants, is always present, lending a certain dark pessimism to Tolkien's own mythology. Even though in his version good ultimately triumphs, his hero is irreparably wounded. His mythology also deeply influenced by Christian doctrine: for though his hero is wounded as a sacrifice to save Middle-earth, there is a resurrection of sorts waiting for him beyond the Grey Havens; a heaven and eternal life, if you will, beyond the westering seas.

Unlike Mirkwood, the malice of the Old Forest trees is not thoughtless, their hate is not unjustified. And yet this wood is, after all, evil. Evil because it has let its sorrow and pain be turned to malice, hate and destruction in turn. It has become no better than those who would destroy it, and can even no longer differentiate between those who mean it ill and those who simply want to pass through, like Frodo and his companions. Its prejudice is blind. This is a sad commentary on what bitterness can do, and in men as much in trees. There is many an Old Man Willow in the human world, who instead of gaining wisdom and understanding from his trials, has gotten only a rotten heart. The trees of the Old Forest have not only become evil, but they have become unnatural. They do untreeish things that go against the laws of nature, even in Middle-earth: they move about, they stifle the air instead of replenishing it, they trap people inside themselves as if they had become carnivores (1966a, pp. 159 and 166). What is more, these trees have become unnatural in a moral sense; they go against the laws which pertain to moral rightness or justice by preying on innocent hobbits with singularly cruel intent. They no long resemble trees except in appearance; a sharp contrast to the true heart that Frodo feels within the Mallorn tree of Lórien.[4]

Ages of trial and sorrow have brought wisdom and understanding to one forest on Middle-earth: the small and peculiar forest of Fangorn near Rohan. Here reside the Ents and of all Tolkien's marvellous creations, the tree-like Ents are arguably the strangest and most wonderful.

Ents are the oldest of the mortal races that walk Middle-earth. Although at first glance they are easily mistaken for trees such as oak, fir, or rowan, they are in reality a tall troll-size creature that can move about. (Trolls are counterfeits made by the Enemy in the Great Darkness in mockery of Ents.) They have two legs and two arms which sprout long toes and fingers, very stiff but bendable joints, and "all the same eyes ... with the same slow, steady, thoughtful expression, and the same green flicker" (1966b, p. 119). Some Ents have grown sleepy and treeish, and are known as Huorns. The Ents are the shepherds of Fangorn forest. Although old, old and musty, it is not an evil forest, for the Ents are not an evil kind. They are one of the four original races of free people: Elves, Ents, Dwarves and Men. Legolas, who can sense good and evil intuitively, tells us of Fangorn (1966b, p. 119):

> 'I do not think the woods feel evil... No it is not evil; or what evil is in it is far away. I catch only the faintest echoes of dark places where the hearts of the trees are black. There is no malice near us, but there is watchfulness, and anger.'

Treebeard, the oakish[5] Ent, is the guardian of Fangorn and the eldest of all his race. He seems to be not centuries, but millennia old. Treebeard has suffered much sorrow in his long life. He has seen the Entwives disappear from the face of Middle-earth, and he grieves for them and the Enting offspring which will never be. He has watched Saruman hack and destroy the trees he has lovingly tended. Like Old Man Willow, he has reason to distrust two-legged creatures, but Treebeard has not let it turn to blind hate, and so he spares the lost hobbits Merry and Pippin when he sees they are not harmful beings, even though he is close to the boiling point over

[4] Treebeard describes it this way: "... you find that some (trees) have *bad* hearts. Nothing to do with their wood: I do not mean that. Why, I knew some good old willows down the Entwash, gone long ago, alas! They were quite hollow, indeed they were falling all to pieces, but as quiet and sweet spoken as a young leaf. And then there are some trees in the valleys under the mountains, sound as a bell, and bad right through. That sort of thing seems to spread. There used to be some very dangerous parts in this country. There are still some very black patches." (1966b, p. 89).

[5] As Merry and Pippin look upon the Ents at the Entmoot, the great gathering of the Ents, they note: "... the variety that they saw: the many shapes, and colours, the differences in girth, and height, and length of leg and arm; and in the number of toes and fingers (anything from three to nine). A few seemed more or less related to Treebeard, and reminded them of beech-trees or oaks. But there were other kinds. Some recalled the chestnut: brown-skinned Ents with large splay fingered hands, and short thick legs. Some recalled the ash: tall straight grey Ents with many-fingered hands and long legs; some the fir (the tallest Ents), and others the birch, the rowan, and the linden. But when the Ents all gathered round Treebeard ... the hobbits saw that they were all of the same kindred, and all had the same eyes: not all so old or so deep as Treebeard's, but all with the same slow, steady, thoughtful expression, and the same green flicker." (1966b, p. 105).

Saruman the wizards's desecration of his trees (Helms, 1974, p. 99). He eventually spares even Saruman out of his great regard for the sacredness of life, refusing to kill anything or anyone hastily. Pippin describes Treebeard for us by looking into his eyes (1966b, p. 83):

> One felt as if there was an enormous well behind them, filled up with ages of memory and long, slow, steady thinking; but their surface was sparkling with the present: like sun shivering on the outer leaves of a vast tree, or on the ripples of a very deep lake. I don't know, but it felt as if something that grew in the ground – asleep, you might say, or just feeling itself as something between root-tip and left-tip, between deep earth and sky – had suddenly waked up, and was considering you with the same slow care that it had given to its own inside affairs for endless years.

Treebeard's wise and generous refusal to act hastily is one of the great traits of the Ents. At first, though, it seems merely a humorous characteristic. Treebeard's constant chiding of the impetuous hobbits "not so hasty, now!" (1966b, p. 85) makes us laugh. When the Entmoot, the council of the Ents, carries on for days and all that's been accomplished is the introductions, we begin to think, like Pippin and Merry, that they will never finish in time to help the quest. This Entish abhorrence of hastiness; the slow, steady, day-long, night-long deliberation of the Entmoot; even the deep, melodic "Hrum, hoom" of Treebeard, all embody the antithesis of modern society with its emphasis on speed and mass production – things that troubled Tolkien. In fact, Treebeard sounds very Tolkienish when he says of Saruman, "He has a mind of metal and wheels, and he does not care for growing things" (1966b, p. 96).[6] Contrary to modern society, Tolkien did not equate slowness with ineffectiveness, nor technology with wisdom or moral superiority. In a paradoxical twist that illuminates the tragedy of our machine age, Tolkien makes modern man seem strangely immobile and incompetent compared with the Ents once they have made a decision to act. As the Entmoot's ends, we begin to see a power in the Ents that surprises us – an emotion that humbles us. As he and Pippin watch the Entmoot they discuss whether the Ents will be able to aid in the fight against evil, Merry says it in this way (1966, p. 107):

> But I have an odd feeling about these Ents: somehow I don't think they are quite as safe and, well, funny as they seem. They seem slow, queer, and patient, almost sad; and yet I believe they could be roused. If that happened, I would rather not be on the other side.

Of all Tolkien's creations, perhaps Treebeard is most like him. Tolkien himself disputes this, claiming in one of his letters (1981, p. 190), "Treebeard is a character in my story, not me..." But nonetheless, Tolkien was, at this time, a man who was feeling the years of his age ring around him even greater. He did not know or understand the latest technology, nor did he want to. His life was that of a bygone day, his memories of simpler times, like that of Treebeard. There is perhaps in Treebeard's lament for the days of the Entwives not just a little of Tolkien's own philosophy on life: At the death of his friend, C.S.Lewis, on whose booming voice Tolkien had modelled Treebeard's way of speaking, Tolkien wrote to his daughter, "So far I have felt the normal feelings of a man my age – like an old tree that is losing all its leaves one by one: this feels like an axe blow near the roots." And like the old, wise, slow and careful tree-loving treebeard, Tolkien had spent decades painstakingly and lovingly creating the mythology that would become his books. Most of all similarities, though, Tolkien also loved trees.

Whether an extension of Tolkien himself or not, Ents and Huorns, as living, walking relatives of trees, bring us more closely in touch with trees, as if through Ents we might begin to understand trees as the living things they are. Although we first view them as comic, we grow to love, and finally respect, even fear and be in awe of, the Ents. In this way Tolkien cultivates in each of us a little patch of his great love for trees. Carpenter (1977, p. 219) calls Treebeard "... the being who was the ultimate expression of Tolkien's love and respect for trees."

The suffering and sorrow of the trees of Middle-earth echo a tradition in literature of trees that have the capacity for pain and joy. The Anglo-Saxon poem *The Dream of the Rood* from around the eighth century, tells of how the cross shared Christ's passion. Forced to be the instrument of Christ's death, it suffered the nail wounds, spear thrusts and drenching bloodstains together with the Saviour to fulfil God's will. The idea of a tree that can feel compassion was not new, even then. Yggdrasil, the

[6] In fact, Treebeard's compliment to Gandalf is that he "is the only wizard who really cares about trees" (1966b, p. 105).

World Tree of the Norse Edda, "suffers more than men know," (Olrik, 1930, p. 33) having its roots constantly gnawed by creatures below, its leaves eaten from above (Hollander, 1962, p.60 stanza 36). What is more, it nourishes gods and men with the life-giving honey-dew that it drips; it shelters and gives birth to new life. The suffering and sacrifice of these trees is surprising. Yet though men are often ignorant to the suffering of trees, the trees of Middle-earth often know and feel the suffering of the free-peoples. They are healthy and strong where the free-peoples prosper, and wither where there is death (Ferguson, 1961, p. 39). Their fate is linked to the people's fate, like Yggdrasil, source of unborn souls (Davidson, 1969, p. 112). It is an inter-connection that has since been born out by modern science, the delicate balance of the ecosystem.

Such is the life of the White Tree of Gondor. When Gondor flourishes under a rightful and true king, the tree flourishes; when Gondor declines, the tree withers away (1966c, p. 408). Thus the tree becomes something of a barometer of whether things are right in the land. If you can learn to read the trees, you can learn to read the hearts of the people, or at least the leaders, of the land. The White Tree of Gondor is so sensitive to human conditions that it will not flourish simply if a good man rules, but only if that man is the bloodline heir to the throne – the One Rightful King. The real test for Aragorn, heir apparent, is not his courage in battle, nor his powers to heal, nor even his wisdom to rule; Aragorn waits and watches for the withered tree in the Court of the Fountain to blossom once again (1966c, pp. 307-309). Aragorn trusts in the tradition of the sign of the tree, showing anxiety at the thought that the tree might not return, but never doubting it to be the final confirmation of his kingship. (Men, after all, do not posses the patience of the Ents.) Why does Aragorn trust so in the tree? Maybe because he is a Ranger, who has lived in and studied nature his whole life, and who in so doing is more in touch with living things than most men. Perhaps it is the Elven blood that runs in his veins, for Elves coexist in a deep bond with nature. It is also because he is wise.

When, finally, Gandalf takes Aragorn up into the mountains and shows him a slender white sapling in the snow, a sense of fulfilment wells in us all. The tree is found, the world is right for now. The first sign that the time is imminent is the Elven-woman Arwen's gift of a banner with "seven stars and seven stones and one white tree" (1966c, p. 27), sent as Frodo nears Mount Doom and the last battle approaches. When Frodo's quest is over and Mordor has been defeated, the last sign that is awaited to indicate the world has been set right is the return of the living White Tree to the courtyard.

The living White Tree is the final symbol of recovery for Gondor, a country that looked at one time as though it were in its last decline. This is significant to Tolkien's theory on the importance of fantasy in general. Tolkien saw fantasy as a potent form of art that, through the powers of sub-creation and enchantment, could provide readers with the healing gifts of recovery, escape and consolation. These are all gifts that Tolkien's trees bear to Middle-earth. As Hans Christian Anderson said, "green is good for the eyes" (Lewis, 1981, p. 91), so Tolkien might have added: for the heart.[7]

Tolkien saw trees and his art of fantasy as closely resembling each other, so closely that Tolkien found the tree the perfect metaphor for his art in two short stories, *Smith of Wootton Major* and "Leaf by Niggle". In fairyland Smith glimpses the King's Tree, which "Bore at once leaves and flowers and fruits uncounted, and not one was the same as any other..." (1966d, p. 28). This is the same tree that Niggle, in his story, tries to paint, each leaf the same and yet totally different. In Niggle's story the tree is an allegory for writing, for story-telling – for Tolkien's own writing, and in a broader sense for the Tree of Tales. In his essay "On Fairy-Stories" (which together with "Leaf by Niggle" makes up a volume Tolkien titles *Tree and Leaf*), Tolkien gives encouragement to the would-be writer of fantasy in this way (1966d, p. 76):

> It is easy for the student to feel that with all his labour he is collection only a few leaves, many of them now torn or decayed, from the countless foliage of the Tree of Tales... Who can design a new leaf? The patterns from bud to unfolding, and the colours from spring to

[7] Hans Christian Anderson, like Tolkien, explored the theme of natural vs unnatural in his stories, with the idea that natural is intrinsically better, even redemptive. "The Nightingale" is one of his most famous examples. In that story the more subtle beauty of the real bird flourishing in its natural freedom is juxtaposed against the gaudy man-made mechanical bird. Anderson is commenting on man's sad but constant desire to improve on the natural by creating the unnatural, or to possess the natural by domesticating or caging it. The song of the free bird cannot be improved upon. It is a gift.

autumn were all discovered by men long ago. But that is not true...

He goes on to say that, although season and leaves – and tales – may be very similar, no two are every exactly the same, and one particular one may touch some in in a way that all similar ones just can't quite.

Except for Andersen's lovely metaphor of The Tree of Poetry in "The Goblin at the Grocer's" (Lewis, 1981, p. 160), Tolkien's use of the tree as the representative of his art was unique for his time. This tells us perhaps more than anything how very much he loved trees. He chose them to symbolise the art that was the very purpose of his life. To Tolkien art was alive as trees, and trees as precious as art. He looked upon both as gifts and friends.[8]

Tolkien said "In all my wars I take the part of trees as against all their enemies" (1981, p. 419). He saw this feeling for trees as an awareness of universal man's deepest desires: "to hold communion with other living thins, survey the depths of space and time, and to explore strange languages, glimpses of an archaic mode of life, and, above all, forests" (Helms, 1974, p. 14). To understand this desire and to yield to it is to gain the wisdom of wizards, who "believe that the wise man is one who never sets himself apart from other living things, whether they have speech or not" and "learn what can be learned, in silence, from the eyes of animals, the flight of birds, the great slow gestures of trees" (Le Guin, 1969, p. 82). In his love for trees Tolkien shared in the wisdom of the wise. Through his art he endeavours to share that wisdom with us, hoping that we, like Niggle's friend Parish, might find ourselves more aware of trees as living things, as works of art and beauty, and as sensitive and feeling in their own way. If then, we catch ourselves listening suddenly to the rustle of leaves or the creaking of branches, noticing the subtle change of colours through the passing of seasons, or the especially pleasing symmetry of the crown of an oak, perhaps even nodding a smile to the occasional sway of a bough in our directing, Tolkien would approve.

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[8] Of *Leaf by Niggle* Tolkien wrote: "One of its sources was a great-limbed poplar tree that I could see even lying in bed. It was suddenly lopped and mutilated by its owner, I do not know why. It is cut down now, a less barbarous punishment for any crimes it may have been accused of, such as being large and alive. I do not think it had any friends, or any mourners, except myself and a pair of owls." (1966d, pp. 31-32).

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The Shire & Notting Hill[1]

Michael Foster

As writers and theorists of fantasy, as English Catholic authors, as lovers of books, beer and argument, G.K. Chesterton and J.R.R. Tolkien can seem to be suited with clothes cut from the same bolt, although Chesterton would have required quite a few more yards.

Yet they are unlike as much as like. Chesterton came from prosperity; Tolkien from near-poverty. Chesterton's family was comfortably bourgeois; Tolkien was the orphan of a bank manager. Chesterton was no scholar; Tolkien always was. Chesterton was a famous journalist whose fame came early; Tolkien was a little-known Oxford don till fame came late.

Significantly, both men were gifted visual artists from an early age. Their juvenile art is prodigal, and each was his own best illustrator. Perhaps that accounts for the vivid descriptive detail featured in their best writing.

Both were successful with popular readers, perhaps more so that with the so-called intelligentsia.

While Tolkien certainly read – indeed, reportedly memorized – some of Chesterton's vast corpus, Chesterton could not have repaid the compliment. He died in the summer of 1936, when Tolkien was revising and completing *The Hobbit*, which was published in 1937. It is an appealing vanity to say that Chesterton would have liked that book, for its songs, its warfare, and the littleness of its hero all seem to ring true to the Chestertonian chord.

One can also argue that Tolkien fulfils many of "The Ethics of Elfland"'s mandates for a moral philosophy of story in his works, most perfectly in his masterpiece sequel to *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*.

So The Shire of Tolkien and the Notting Hill of Chesterton and the stories that take place in them are at once near neighbours and far removed.

Both realms are unmistakeably English, but the former is the rural England of the Shires and the latter the congested heart of London.

Both evoke an era untrammelled by the curse of the Machine, when the sword, the bow, the pike, and the axe were the tools of war. But in Tolkien, the war is a necessity that ends in heroism, whereas in Chesterton, the wars are follies born of royal whim that end in tragedy.

Both wars determine the fates of kings. But Tolkien's Aragorn is a true King, descended from the long line of Elendil, whereas Adam Wayne, the warrior-king figure, is a ruler of a realm because of the caprice of a cynical prankster, the "true" King Auberon Quin, himself proclaimed king by arbitrary fiat, no more a prince than Mark Twain's Tom Canty and perhaps even less suited for the throne. Auberon's rule was, in many ways, an irresponsible disaster. Aragorn's would not be.

Both writers are generally viewed as conservatives, yet they write powerfully of rebellion here and elsewhere; thus both are that seeming oxymoron, the radical conservative. The independence of the Shire from not only the rule but the presence of the King is the whole point of the long-unpublished epilogue chapter of *The Lord of the Rings*, found in Marquette University's library archives, and now printed in *Sauron Defeated*[2]. In both Notting Hill and the Shire, local rule with the approving consent of the King who would otherwise govern the "rebels" is the remarkable conclusion.

Both works champion "Little England":
"A man chooses to have an emotion about the largeness of the world' why should he not choose to have an emotion about its smallness?" Chesterton wrote a few years later *Napoleon of Notting Hill* had glorified that emotion. Tolkien concurred, and *The Lord of the Rings* is an anthem seconding that emotion and the common man, or hobbit, as it may be, who harbours it. Though events move the hobbits far from their native Shire, its simple life is the beginning and the end, the heart and soul, of the quest of the Fellowship. Homecoming is the whole

[1] First presented at the Midwestern Chesterton Society, 28 June 1996, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
[2] The version on pp. 114-119 of *Sauron Defeated* is close to, but not identical to, the Marquette chapter. The differences are primarily linguistic.

point of journeying. The last words of the book are, "Well, I'm back."

Tolkien and Chesterton can also be seen as two of England's great Catholic writers. In *Fantasy, The Bomb and the Greening of England*, Meredith Veldman argues eloquently that Tolkien and his fellow Inkling C.S. Lewis are also authors in a continuing tradition of Romantic protest that also includes Chesterton.

She writes:

> At the core of Chesterton's beliefs rested his faith in the common man... [his] political views led him to embrace Christianity, eventually as a Roman Catholic, because he believed that the Christian world taught the essential sacredness of every human being and the goodness of the world of everyday experience... [He] insisted that human beings had to look to the past for alternatives to industrial capitalism.
>
> (Veldman, 1982,pp. 32-33)

One can certainly see, as Dr. Veldman does, how Tolkien's work continues that tradition.

Both men were converts to Roman Catholicism, but one as a boy and the other as a middle-aged man. Tolkien was baptized at age 8 in 1900 along with his widowed mother and younger brother. Throughout his life he was devout and devoted. A letter to a Jesuit priest, Fr. Robert Murray, assures him that:

> *The Lord of the Rings* is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work, unconsciously at first, but consciously in the revision. That is why I have not put in , or have cut out, practically all references to 'religion' ... the religious element is absorbed into the story and the symbolism,
>
> (Tolkien, 1981, p. 172)

Tolkien certainly practised this odd oxymoronic practice as preached. Only at one well-hidden point in Appendix B dealing with dates can a link to Christianity be seen in *The Lord of the Rings*, however evanescently: "December 25: The Company of the Ring leaves Rivendell at dusk." (Tolkien, 1965b, p. 373)

In a rare note to himself in an early holograph draft page of the events leading up to the departure of the Fellowship, Tolkien uncharacteristically writes this self-direction: "They must leave Rivendell Dec. 25"[3] This underscores the significance of that date.

The Quest of that Company is fulfilled three months later on March 25, a date medieval chroniclers had fixed as that of the original Good Friday (Zemler-Cizewski, 1992). It is a Sunday in Tolkien's tale, when evil is vanquished and a new age begins: Easter in Middle-earth (Beare, 1983).

While the link between the Fellowship's redemptive journey and Christ's is here semi-explicit, the Marquette manuscripts show that a reference to Elrond of Rivendell as "kindly as Christmas" was deleted from *The Hobbit*.

So Tolkien hid his religion in his fiction, perhaps as a prudent English Catholic or an author wary of pigeon holes should. Yet he assures us it is there.

In contrast, Chesterton came to Catholicism in middle age "only after a long intellectual struggle as an adult in his thirties," in Thomas M. Egan's phrase (1983, p. 45). After his conversion at age 48 in 1922, little of Chesterton's religion was "subsumed" in his writing: it is more often explicit. But *Napoleon of Notting Hill* predates that conversion by 18 years. Searching it for Catholic traces is moot. Indeed, it is possibly Chesterton's least religious work.

Comparing the two writers in the September, 1982 issue of *VII*, Egan wrote:

> Both felt the sharp loneliness of their religious situations in a non-Catholic, often hostile, English culture. Both were fervent believers. Without being fanatics, both felt that their Catholicism should form the basis of their total life. Chesterton's works all testify to this...
>
> Tolkien's position is more complex. He believed, in common with Chesterton, that the enemies of ordinary decent life were the enemies of the Faith... Both saw the West as a marred and hidden Christianity of independent nations. In both, religious enthusiasm was mingled with a fierce local patriotism, a pride in ethnic heritage. Both loved the "little England" of rustic shires, small towns, with their eccentric customs and laws, their sense of propriety, their lack of ideology, their loyalty

[3]Tolkien, Series 3, Box3, Folder 8, p. 27B, mss. from Ch. 3 of Book II "The Ring Goes South"; Marquette University Libraries, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, J.R.R. Tolkien Collection; available for viewing at Marquette as Slide #5 "Dec. 25th note. Caradhras" of a series of slides of Marquette mss. pages created by Charles Elston to illustrate my 1987 paper "In The Ring-Maker's Hand: How J.R.R. Tolkien Revised the Manuscript of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* presented at the Mythopoeic Conference in Milwaukee.

> and love of hearth and home. In all this both saw moral and religious values deeply embedded... Yet Tolkien could not bring himself to undertake the kind of public apologetics in which Chesterton constantly indulged.
> (Egan, 1983, p. 45)

"The sharp loneliness" Egan notes seems especially true of Tolkien. After Mabel Tolkien's swift death of diabetes in 1904, when Tolkien was 12, he believed his 'own dear mother to be a martyr indeed,' as he wrote in a letter nine years later, adding 'and it is not to everyone that God grants so easy a way to his great gifts as he did to Hilary and myself, giving us a mother who killed herself with labour and trouble to ensure us keeping the faith' (Tolkien, 1981. p. 31).

Mrs. Tolkien's conversion had alienated some family members; Tolkien's guardian from her death until his majority in 1913 was a priest, Fr. Francis Morgan. Tolkien would always take his faith most seriously.

Adam Schwartz (1996) wrote of the role of religion in Chesterton's and Tolkien's work that:

> what both found compelling about Roman Catholicism was what they deemed its resolute defiance of modernity, as well as common conceptions of fantasy, for both championed it against realist and modernist literature precisely because they thought it upholds the norms that they saw threatened by contemporary life and letters... Each one's faith shaped his intellectual vision... expressed [in their works by] Tolkien more subtly, Chesterton much more overtly, yet both were clearly committed to a Christian (and Catholic Christian) criticism of life.

As noted before, Tolkien certainly read some Chesterton: *Orthodoxy* and *Outline of Sanity* show up in his letters and in "On Fairy Stories", his longer version of "Ethics of Elfland". *The Ballad of the White Horse* turns up in this 1994 letter to son Christopher:

> P[riscilla, the youngest Tolkien] has been wading through The Ballad Of The White Horse for the last many nights; and my efforts to explain the obscurer parts to her convince me that it is not as good as I though. The ending is absurd. The brilliant smash and glitter of the words and phrases (when they come off, and are not mere loud colours) cannot disguise the fact that G.K.C. knew nothing about the 'North', heathen or Christian. (Tolkien, 1981, p. 92)

Tolkien would attempt his own version of that ballad of the North with his own King of The White Horse, Théoden, and the poetry of Théoden's realm, Rohan, can be seen as Tolkien's view of how such English heroic verse, here spoken by Éomer, should read:

> *Out of doubt, out of dark to the day's rising*
> *I came in the sun, sword unsheathing.*
> *To hope's end I rode and to heart's breaking*
> *Now for wrath, now for ruin and a red nightfall!*
> (Tolkien, 1965b, p. 122)

I wrote to George Sayer, a friend of Tolkien and C.S. Lewis and moreover Lewis' best biographer, asking if he recalled anything Tolkien had said about Chesterton. That "most unselfish man" (as Lewis describes Sayer in his *Letters* (p. 446)) responded generously that he could not think of anything but invited us to lunch during our English visit on 29 May 1996; he wrote, "my memories will revive."

Indeed they did. Before a convivial dinner in his Malvern home, Sayer first said he could be of no aid; he could not recall anything Tolkien had said of or about Chesterton. "I'm afraid I rather brought you here under false pretences," he said.

This was not atypical of Tolkien, who was much less likely to praise other writers than C.S. Lewis. Lewis, Sayer noted, "admired Chesterton immensely and often spoke of him. He owed a great deal to *Orthodoxy* and *The Everlasting Man*. He thought there was some great poetry (1996).

So, maybe, did Tolkien. For Mr. Sayer's revived memory recalled that Tolkien delighted in and knew by heart a number of poems from *The Flying Inn*, including "The Song of the Quoodle", "The Song Against Grocers", and "The reeling English drunkard made the rolling English road", whose refrain Mr Sayer and I chanted in unison: "The reeling English drunkard made the rolling English road." Tolkien also was fond of reciting "Lepanto", Mr. Sayer added.

Mr. Sayer's sudden recollection was more than a twopenny epiphany: poetry plays an integral part in both Tolkien's hobbit tales and *The Flying Inn*. Bilbo Baggins and Adam Wayne are both poets. Those who hear echoes of Chesterton in Tolkien's poetry may not be hearing things. Bilbo's bath-song sung by Pippin at Crickhollow, for instance, could have been penned by Gilbert as easily as Ronald:

Sing hey! for the bath at close of day
That washes the weary mud away!
A loon is he that will not sing:
O! Water Hot is a noble thing!
...
O! Water cold we may pour at need
down a thirsty throat and be glad indeed;
but better is Beer, if drink we lack,
and Water Hot poured down the back.
(Tolkien, 1965a, p. 111)

Before our Oxford visit, I had also written to Priscilla Tolkien asking her to please recall what she could of her father's reading of Chesterton.

Wrote Miss Tolkien (1996):

> "... I can at least confirm that my father greatly admired G.K. Chesterton and from my memory he had copies of 'The Ballad of the White Horse', 'The Man Who Was Thursday', 'Orthodoxy', and 'In Coloured Lands' in his library. I also remember his introducing me to 'The Battle of Lepanto'.

The last story in the collection *In coloured lands*, "Homesick At Home" is the six-page tale of White Wynd, who leaves his Shire-like home in the White Farmhouse to wander the world. Alas, his journey begins in bitterness, laziness and anger at his wife and children, not in a sacrificial quest to save his homeland. He seems to go mad and leaves his home in a quest for home. His quest transforms him: "It seemed that God had bent back his head by the hair and kissed him on the forehead" (p. 235)

So he sees the whole wide world in the fellowship of vagabonds, sailors, workmen, fishermen, and suddenly he wearies and longs for the White Farmhouse by the river. The story ends with his return:

> It was his home now. But it could not be his home till he had gone out from it and returned to it. Now he was the Prodigal Son.
>
> He came out of the pinewood and across the road. He surmounted the low wall and tramped through the orchard, through the kitchen garden, past the cattle-sheds. And in the stony courtyard he saw his wife drawing water. (p. 238)

Were his first words to her, "Well, I'm back."? To this reader, the last paragraph of this short tale seems to pre-echo the last paragraph of Tolkien's long tale.

But let us leave the fantasy fiction of these two writers to picnic briefly in their fantasy non-fiction. As noted earlier, some of the lumber in Tolkien's notable "On Fairy Stories" lecture delivered at St. Andrews's University on 8 March 1939 was first hewed by Chesterton in his "Ethics of Elfland" in 1908. This is one of Chesterton's finest essays. Tolkien may have shared my admiration.

In "On Fairy Stories" he also quotes from *In Coloured Lands* approvingly "For children are innocent and love justice: while most of us are wicked and naturally prefer mercy." (Tolkien, 1980, p.152).

And again, from *The Outline of Sanity* "Long ago Chesterton truly remarked that, as soon as he heard that anything had "come to stay," he knew that it would very soon be replaced – indeed regarded as pitiably obsolete and shabby." (Tolkien, 1980, p. 169).

A third allusion both praises and quibbles:

> Of course, fairy stories are not the only prophylactic against loss. Humility is enough. And there is (especially for the humble) *Mooreeffoc*, or Chestertonian Fantasy. *Mooreeffoc* is a fantastic word, but it can be seen written up on every town in this land. It is Coffee-room, viewed from the inside through a glass door, as it was seen by Dickens on a dark London day; and it was used by Chesterton to denote the queerness of things that have become trite, when they are suddenly seen from a new angle. That kind of fantasy would seem wholesome enough; and it can never lack for material, But it has, I think, only a limited power; for the reason that recovery of freshness of vision is its only virtue... Creative fantasy ... is trying to do something else (make something new ...) (Tolkien, 1980, p. 166).

According to Tolkien scholar John Rateliff, a fourth Chesterton quote in the original St. Andrews's speech was excised when Tolkien edited the essay for publication in *Tree and Leaf* in 1964.

"On Fairy Stories" is longer; 68 paperback pages to "Ethics of Elfland"'s 18. Personal, witty, and entertaining, it is also a model of rhetorical definition, specific, scholarly, and in its epilogue, unequivocally Christian. Tolkien speaks of fantasy writers Sub-creating as God created: The Christian writer "may now perceive that all his bents and faculties have a purpose which can be redeemed." (p. 180)

Of the Evangelium, he writes:

> I would venture to say that approaching the Christian Story from this direction, it has long been my feeling (a joyous feeling) that God

> redeemed the corrupt making creatures, men, in a way fitting to this aspect as to others, of their strange nature. The Gospels contain a fairy-story, or a story of a larger kind which embraces the essence of all fairy stores... The Birth of Christ is the eucatastrophe of Man's history. The Resurrection is the eucatastrophe of the story of the Incarnation. The story begins and ends in joy. It has preeminently the "inner consistency of reality". There is no tale ever told that men would rather find was true, and none which so many sceptical men have accepted as true on its own merits... God is the Lord, of angels, and of men – and of Elves. (Tolkien, 1980, pp. 179-180).

Compare Tolkien's conclusion, above, to the final paragraph of Chesterton's "Ethics":

> ... I came to feel magic must have a meaning; meaning must have someone to mean it. There was something personal in the world, as in a work of art; whatever it meant it meant it violently... I thought this purpose beautiful in its old design, in spite of its defects, such as dragons ... the proper form of thanks to it is some form of restraint: we should thank God for burgundy and beer by not drinking too much of them. We owed, also, an obedience to whatever made us. And, last and strangest, there had come into my mind a vague and vast impression that in some way all good was a remnant to be stored and held sacred out of some primordial ruin: man had saved his good as Crusoe saved his goods: he saved them from a wreck. All this I felt, and the age had given me no encouragement to feel it. And all this time I had not even thought of Christian theology
>
> (Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, p. 65)

Although Tolkien makes the link between man's sub-creation and the Creator explicit, Chesterton's work perhaps catches the sense, the home truths, of fairy stories in fewer, more memorable words; thus I assign gobbets of Chesterton's essay to my fantasy literature students on the first class day to inform early discussion, a function it admirably serves.

The Tolkien essay is assigned a latter course late in the semester, , i.e. after the drop date[4], for by then the students are, so we hope, more experienced readers of and writers about fantasy literature, and can benefit from that work's longer, deeper look at the subject.

By then, too, students have discovered that Tolkien follows many of Chesterton's mandates for "the ethics and philosophy" of fairy stories:

> There is the chivalrous lesson of "Jack The Giant Killer"; that giants should be killed because they are gigantic. It is mainly mutiny against pride as such. For the rebel is older than all the kingdoms... There is the lesson of "Cinderella" which is the same of that as the Magnificat – *exaltavit humiles*. There is the great lesson of "Beauty and the Beast"; that a thing must be loved *before* it is lovable. (Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, p. 50).

The first two of these admonitions – that pride should be given a fall and that the humble shall be exalted – can be seen as realised in all of Tolkien' fiction , from the first – *The Hobbit* and *Farmer Giles of Ham* – to the last *Smith of Wootton Major*. The two are apotheosised in *The Lord of the Rings*, for rarely has literature presented a mightier foe than Sauron or humbler heroes than the hobbits. Adam Schwartz (1966) observes:

> [I]t is the humbler, especially the hobbits and/or common people who are preservers of the permanent things grounded in locality and who are the agents of rebellion against imperial pride. Sauron's underestimation of the strength of humble hobbits is what produces his downfall, just as it is the willingness of each London borough to resist Notting Hill's hegemony that ruins its expansionist schema.

The true climax of Tolkien's work, the hobbit rebellion of "The Scouring Of The Shire", especially illustrates how the humble lay low the proud. Indeed, the humblest of all the hobbits, Samwise, is the most exalted by these events.

Tolkien wrote "On Fairy Stories" at a crucial point. *The Hobbit*, a family bedtime story never intended for publication, had been solicited by a publisher's scout sent by Lewis, read and recommended by ten-year-old Rayner Unwin, published by his father's firm, and released to success. Allen & Unwin wanted "a new *Hobbit*". Tolkien had begun it, and in "On Fairy Stories" he wrote a primer for himself to follow. In every way, especially in its illustration of Subcreation, Escape, Recovery, and Consolation, *The Lord of the Rings*

[4] US College slang: the point, usually 12 weeks into a 16-week semester term, past which students may not withdraw from a class with "W" grade without professional permit.

follows its authors mandates even as it does Chesterton's. He just raises the stakes of *The Hobbit* to the highest level, and a ring becomes The Ring as a fairy story becomes The Fairy Story.

As to Chesterton's social philosophy, Tolkien could be viewed as advocating distributist rebellion in the conclusion of *The Lord of the Rings*. In "The Scouring Of The Shire" a corrupt dictator, the aptly named Sharkey, is the non-local owner of factories that have destroyed the rural agrarian lifestyle and landscapes of the hobbits' homeland. After a relatively unbloody one-battle revolution, he is deposed and destroyed and his tyranny is displaced by a restored rural democracy of hobbits, with the humblest, Sam Gamgee, exalted to the high post of Mayor by election. Thus, true to Chesterton's dictum: "the terribly important things must be left to important men themselves; this is democracy and in this I have always believed." (Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, p. 47). Like the White Horse of Chesterton, the Shire of Tolkien gets its needed scouring.

The Flying Inn is evoked again in the beginning of that chapter, since one of the first sour fruits of the rule of Sharkey is the banning of beer. It seems safe to say that both authors were anti-Prohibitionist as well as democratic; indeed Tolkien likely had less faith in democracy (if not beer) than Chesterton did. But yet his work ends with the common folk's triumph, Chesterton's with their downfall.

David Doughan points out that

> "Notting Hill is about politics but in all of Tolkien's work politics occupies at best a secondary role. Tolkien was pretty cool toward political systems in general, and considered any attempts to create an ideal system to be akin to creating God's Kingdom on Earth, and thus doomed from the outset." (1996)

The world of Notting Hill seems far more fallen than that of the Shire because it is: a local populist democracy has become imperialist.

But the essential point is the Happy Ending so sacred to fairy stories.

In the Shire, most live happily ever after.

In Notting Hill, they do not.

I first read Tolkien over twenty years ago and have re-read many of his works regularly, blessed as I am with a necessary opportunity to review them every fall when I teach a public college course on the author.

But Chesterton wrote so much more, and I have read so much less, as doubtless is evident. I first read *Napoleon of Notting Hill* in 1984, the year of its setting. As it happened, I was then sweating through a touch of the "local rule" fever that is encouraged, both by that book and the "Scouring of the Shire", in a political campaign against an unneeded county airport that was finally rejected – the only such war I've ever won. I remember the home-rule sentiments of Chesterton's tale appealed to me then.

But re-reading it was disappointing. Rather like Tolkien, this second reading "convinced me that it is not as good as I thought." The story is incredible, and that is no compliment. By the time the oak tree episode in the last battle is reached, willing suspension of disbelief is no longer possible. It skips about, especially at first. Characters come and go and come again, more disagreeable than agreeable ones. The two protagonists are hard to like because of their extremes, one of fanaticism, one of cynicism.

Though it certainly fulfils the first three of its author's dicta in "Ethics of Elfland", it is not in fact a fairy tale: there is no magic, no elves or dwarves or dragons or necromancers. Adam Waynes's climatic uprooting of the oak is not magical, merely unbelievable.

The story is a futurist fantasy, rather, where the future has become like the medieval past. One fairy-tale element it has: commoners become kings. But there is no dragon to be destroyed or princess to be rescued, only a crown arbitrarily proffered.

Not a single woman appears in the book, as indeed there are none in *The Hobbit*. *The Lord of the Rings* is mostly male, yet memorable female characters like Goldberry, Arwen, Galadriel Éowyn and Rose Cotton play important roles.[5]

Furthermore, in *The Hobbit*, the male relationships are mostly of schoolboy camaraderies, rivalries, and acceptance, as Bilbo goes from outsider to group leader in a parable any schoolboy would love.

But Chesterton's tale is the playground at its fiercest; the antagonism, the senseless fighting, the cynical mockery that all good children deplore.

As for *The Lord of the Rings*, it is a fairy tale for

[5]An illuminating summary and commentary of *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* can be found in Chapter 5, "Mapping the Artistic Terrain: 1907-1907", pp. 54-74 in *G. K. Chesterton: explorations in allegory* by Lynette Hunter, St. Martin's, New York, 1979.

grownups, so of course romantic love of the noblest and the meekest natures animates it as it so often animates the lives of real grown-up men and women, the Sams and Roses of the world no less than the Aragorns and Arwens.

Instead, in Chesterton the warmth of man's blood is wasted, running in the gutters of Notting Hill. The tale is very violent, seemingly more so because the "villains who are victims have names like "Wilson of Bayswater" rather than "Grishnákh". The ending is tragic and sad, and the Happy Ending may be, as Tolkien writes in one of his essays, one of the most hallowed and important elements of the fairy story.

More trivially, the chronology is confusing. When Auberon dashes Adam Wayne's ideals in their mutual death scene by admitting that his creation of the many cities in one London was "a vulgar practical joke on an honest gentleman, a vulgar practical joke that has lasted twenty years" (p. 160), a backward glance at pages 45 and 139 suggests thirty to be the correct number.

Conversely, Tolkien was obsessed with such details and spent much time revising so as to keep moon-rise in phase and weather and even one stray sunbeam consonant in three different stories as he drove the trifurcated narrative of *The Two Towers* and *The Return of the King*'s first thirteen chapters forward. Without judging, it is fair to note that Tolkien had a greater – indeed, a niggling – attention to consistent detail than Chesterton.

But comparing these two books is unfair: *The Lord of the Rings*, as most if not all of Tolkien's readers would agree, is his finest work. If a ballot asking Chestertonians to name the single best Chesterton opus were to be polled, I daresay *Napoleon* would get some but not the most votes.

Still there is much to admire and also sentiments Tolkien may have shared. When Adam Wayne cries out, "What is sacred if a man's youth is not sacred?" (p. 60) its suggests a Tolkien motive, for the Shire his hobbits dwell in is the English midlands where the author dwelt after moving from South Africa with his mother at the age of four until going up to Oxford at 19.

As to Notting Hill, my wife Jo and I made a pilgrimage there in May, 1996. Charles Noad of the Tolkien Society met us at the Tube station and took us to Pembridge Square, pointing out where the mythical Pump Street would have been before adjourning to a nearby pub, The Slug and Lettuce, for a Northfarthing Smial innmoot. Even now there is a palpable neighbourhood feel to Notting Hill, though any would-be young Adam Waynes would likely be packing carbon steel, not wooden blades.

Like *Peter Pan*, which had its stage debut late in the same year, 1904, *Napoleon of Notting Hill* begins with a cocky boy at swordpoint with a grown-up. Unlike Capt. Hook, Auberon Quin is delighted and sets in motion a train of events which leads to consequences both good and bad that follows.

There is vivid visual description, especially the catalogue of the courtly garments and pomp and circumstance in Chapter II. But that pomp is punctured and the circumstance shattered by the fuming, angry men trapped inside those robes, who think the raiment silly and "hot as hell". Compare this to the coronation scene in "The Steward and The King", where the pageantry is taken more seriously but perhaps described less well.

In Tolkien, moral ambiguity is rare: good is good and evil is evil.

More complex and troublesome are the events described in "The Great Army of South Kensington" where King Auberon, as Pinker, leads the villains – Barber, Buck, and all – against the seeming hero, Adam Wayne. As exasperatingly, Auberon allies with Wayne at the story's end, the equally disturbing conclusion of "The Last Battle". What was once a just cause is now an unjust cause, but yet Adam leads the forces of Notting Hill on what he believes is the wrong path because it is their will to be so led. And his King joins him.

Though the Marquette manuscripts show that Tolkien added a few more bodies to the dead (of Men, from 20 to 50 to 70; of Hobbits, 11 to 19) and wounded (of Hobbits, 20 to 30) in "The Scouring Of The Shire" with each revision, the Battle of Bywater is nothing like the bloodstorm at Notting Hill. At the end, Adam's sword is broken in a foe's body: "Nothing was left of him but a wreck; but the blade that had broken him was broken. In dying he snapped the great sword and the spell of it; the sword of Wayne was broken at the hilt" (p. 155).

In crucial contrast, the re-forging of the sword of Aragorn at Rivendell precedes the quest that ends in his triumph. This story ends with sword, realm, provost and king destroyed. It is a tribute to Chesterton that this ending is unsatisfactory: he gives us a cause and characters who embrace it and at the end, he crumples cause and characters and casts them away like an empty fish-and-chip paper. He first makes us care; he then breaks our hearts.

So do many great writers, bless them all. So does Tolkien. One of the most poignant scenes in *The Lord of the Rings* is found not in the text, but rather at the end of Appendix A. v, telling of the love story of Aragorn and Arwen, which preexists the story, through their deaths long afterwards. Six-score years after the heroic events that defeat the Enemy and restore Aragorn as King, old age finally claims him at 207; he was a remarkably spry (one could say Paul Newmanesque) 87 years old during the Fellowship's quest. Now he must bid farewell to his Queen Arwen who thus at last, elf that she is, understands death. She says:

> "For if this is indeed, as the Eldar say, the gift of the One to Men, it is bitter to receive."
>
> "So it seems," he said. "But let us not be overthrown at the final test, who of old renounced the Shadow and the Ring. In sorrow we must go, but not in despair. Behold! we are not bound for ever to the circles of the world, and beyond them is more than memory. Farewell!"
>
> "Estel! Estel!" she cried, and with that even as he took her hand and kissed it, he fell into sleep."
>
> (Tolkien, 1965b, p. 348)

Clyde Kilby, of Wheaton College's Wade Collection, said that Tolkien told him in 1966 that he disliked the idea that Sam was the true hero of the tale: Aragorn was, Tolkien insisted.

Just before the final banquet at the 1983 Marquette Tolkien conference that was my last meeting with Prof. Kilby, Darrel Martin uttered a line that was an in-pub epiphany: "Aragorn was the son King Arthur should have had." Arathorn was indeed Aragorn's father name, close enough to hint at the relation. The story of Arthur and the story of Notting Hill are chronicles of great kingdoms built on grand concepts: The Table Round and the Neighbourhood. Both kingdoms finally fail. There are no survivors.

Tolkien thought the King Arthur story imperfect, as indeed it is, for it lacks a happy ending: a bloody Good Friday with no Easter. So he perfected it as the Aragorn part of the grand whole of *The Lord of the Rings*. We can not assume that he even read *Napoleon of Notting Hill*. Yet "The Scouring of the Shire" perfects Chesterton's imperfect version of the idea of loving one's home turf enough to fight – even die – for it.

All writing grows from the leaf-mould of the mind, Tolkien said. Chesterton's vast forest shed some leaves into that mould. What grew out of it is one of modern English literature's greatest trees.

By giving these defining English myths of the Table Round and The Neighbourhood happier, if not completely happy, endings, with Sauron and Sharkey defeated instead of Lancelot and Arthur or Adam and Auberon dead, J.R.R. Tolkien wrote a happy ending to England's finest fairy tale.

Perhaps G.K. Chesterton helped him see how it should be done.

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What have we brought on ourselves?
Tolkien and Space Travel - Part Two

Mark Appleyard

This story is set far in Middle Earth's future, in the age of Man. I apologise for writing here about a subject so unlike most Tolkien-inspired matter, but the Great End is a part of his mythology, and I felt that the possible events leading up to it need exploring.

We await the great battle which has been gathering, all too likely the Last Battle and the End of Days. Men unknowing awoke the forces which are gathering for this battle, in which I fear that little of the world of Men as we know it will survive. Whether or not my account will survive it, I record what I know.

I used to read the old stories about when there were other sentient beings than Men on Earth. They talk of immortal Elves, who long ago departed, or faded until now they need a great effort to become visible to Men, and few Men believe that they exist. They talk of Dwarves, skilled smiths and miners who lived four times as long as Men. They talk of evil beings called Orcs and Trolls and dragons who they say were hunted out long ago. But I have seen none of such beings, only Men, and reports of ancient huge or deformed skeletons which are as likely to be remains of irrelevant animals or strange bygone races of Men. They talk of long-lived mighty part-Elvish men called Dúnedain, whose blood is now completely mixed with that of other men, and their identity is lost. And they talk of Valar, and Melkor who became Morgoth. I thought little of tales of such beings - but now Men all too well know otherwise.

It happened when Men felt confined within the realm of Earth, and wanted to travel further. At first fictional characters travelled among the stars which real men had no hope of reaching; reading such stories satisfied many, but in some as they looked up at the stars it awoke the space-longing even more, and in the end drove them to make it as real as they could at great labour and cost. Huge fuel-greedy craft which could only be used once laboured to get a few men into near-Earth orbit, and later to try to reach the Moon. The effort faded as men saw at last that it was leading to little of practical use, and would soon have died out, when a man called Aniwa discovered a power that makes spacecraft much smaller and far farther- and faster-travelling. How he discovered it, working alone, he never revealed, but it works, and men can copy it easily, and one such drive unit can activate another, and now with little trouble Men can quickly and routinely travel far across space. One such drive unit can activate another - some wondered who or what had activated his first unit.

What we did when we found the Earth englobed in that strange invisible hard barrier, is what started it. When we found that our new craft fitted out to travel far and fast for months were shut in like caged falcons unable to go more than a few hours' flight from Earth, a few remembered old tales of the 'Walls of Night' and their making, and saw an end of our plans and that Men belong on Earth where they arose, and many said that we should have listened to them; but others called for breaking out of the cage despite any natural or supernatural consequences. The barrier withstood unmarked all that we used on it, and many in our crews repented and said we should return home and scrap our spacecraft and leave the Outside alone to Those who made it; but while those who thought so talked with us one of us made a blasting weapon out of a spare Aniwa drive unit that we had. Before it the ancient barrier started to melt at last. The stuff, whatever it was, was abominably hard to cut, and often resealed itself, or went into weird shapes, and many times we found another layer of it behind what we could see; but at last we got through it, and learned how to deal easily and quickly with any other such barriers we might come across. We left a radio beacon there, and flew out through the weapon-melted breach in that ancient defence, and away from it, away from Earth, out of any appointed ordered realm that the barrier defined into the ownerless void beyond, and knew not what we had done.

After the dread deed, men came and went routinely through that gap and others that we made later, until an exploring party of three spaceships found Him, first as a distant radar echo. Aniwa, who

was with us, had directed us to explore that particular region of space, and persuaded us to investigate that particular echo, but would not say why. Finding the being caused a sensation,and what we now know to be the truth went unnoticed among many strange theories as to what he was. After what others have written, suffice it to say that we shot his chains off him, and taught him our modern language and how events had passed in our world.

He had been chained cruelly, doubled with his head against his knees, with the chain welded not only to manacles and leg-fetters but also to an iron collar, and it was years before he could easily straighten fully unaided; and he was very weak. The collar was of ordinary steel, unlike the other pieces, and ultrasound scans in an onboard workshop found buried in it mangled ornamentation and remains of three round attachment points as if it had been forge-hammered from something else long ago; one of us thought he recognised what it had been made from, and in alarm quoted ancient legends, and we should have heeded him. The being endured patiently the ordeal of being pulled nearer to straight by a powerful constructor craft's grapple-arms and fitted with a spring-loaded orthopaedic back-harness; making it found a better use for cut pieces of the vast chain that we had rid him of.

We healed him as we could of the effects of his ordeal of long captivity, and of a bad face scar and a foot crippled by a wound (he said from a workshop accident). He thanked us, and helped us much to develop space technology. Then he left us, he said, to return to his people, carrying a deadlier light than the three jewels that we now know caused him long pain of old, and a deadlier load than the chains which we shot off him, for all too disastrously deceived as to his identify and true intent, we gave him a power and propulsion unit like those in our larger armed spacecraft, strapped to his back, also connected to and serving to feed and rebuild his body's natural power system.

There is a small spaceship that we cannot trace to anywhere we know of that builds or services them. We come across it occasionally in space. It carries an extremely bright light which can be seen like a star from far away, and has to be very carefully shielded out when it is near. Sometimes its light can be seen from Earth, as a distant moving star – and some remember that such a moving star has been seen long before Men flew or went into space. There is one man in it, or through its cabin windows he looks like a man, and he has onboard radio, but he cannot understand our language, nor we his. Its outside bears writings in an alphabet that we do not know. We tried to follow him down to his homeworld once, but somewhere inside the Barrier he gave us the slip among a strange invisible force field and vanished. The being that we found chained adrift in space told us that his old home is hidden there.

What is happening when Earth-born Men 'break the bounds set on them long ago by the Valar and crossing Eä reach other Ardar which some say should have been allowed to develop in their own time' (as some put it), is all too much like the past. I apologize for talking like old legends, but all too well we now know that many things they tell of are true, just as few modern men believed that Númenor had existed until submarines found its remains. Likewise few believed in Valar or anything like them, until a spaceship found Him. So men explore, in craft much faster and farther-travelling, and more powerful with the improvements that the being taught us, and see strange things, and take what they will from other worlds, or settle among those born and bred there, shooting through any defences that they find on or around them. Or they find a world with no sentient beings, and call it free for the taking; but it belongs not to Men but is in trust for whatever sentient beings will arise on it as natives in future ages. High ideals fade.

I will tell of a planet that we found. Its natives look similar to Men, but different enough to show that they are not of our world. Their society, all over the planet alike, was in fixity of obeying the words of One who had died so long ago that they no longer knew how long ago he lived, preserved in a Book from whose language their current spoken language had far evolved. Their priesthood tightly controlled belief and observance, and quickly summoned squads, or armies, or fanatical mobs to suppress what little innovation ever arose. They held that their religion established its rule in heroic war against a vast alliance of corrupt oppressive kings and evil monsters; but archaeology later seemed to show that, having already spread widely, it covered the rest of that world, first by using, and then suppressing, the start of a revolution in technology. Their inhabitable lands are not scattered as on Earth but grouped close, and routine contact stopped them from evolving in different ways in different places, and so no local independencies or individualities returned. Only on

one remote island group in their big ocean did we find natives with other gods and language. But that religion kept their society ordered and stable - until we landed and sought contact with them.

Some at first welcomed us, but their priests warned them against us and tried to exorcise us, and said we were the Enemy from Outside, who had rampaged for a while, but had been driven out when their religion was founded at the end of the Time of Darkness when their world was young. When in their unquestioning obedience they attacked in endless hordes, our ships' weapons consumed them as they came, and their bones and swords crumbled under many bulldozed Hills of the Slain, until they had to leave our landing-grounds alone: and they knew that their priests' and Book's millennia-backed assurances of victory were false. Having no other recourse, some again contacted us, and we took control over their planet, and taught them things other than those that their Book and priests had let them hear, and their minds opened to many things. When we had finished, their ancient and one Belief was split into a dozen irreconcilable variants, and many of them rejected all such belief, and we taught them our science and technology; and they gave themselves and their children many names that in the old days would have been utterly forbidden. Now they easily explore the depths of their oceans, and in need of supplies they slay beasts and enter land that belief and legend had for ages kept sacred, and some of them fare across space with us, and thank us for breaking them out of their long stasis; we get much supplies and help from there. But they and their world are troubled by many things that did not afflict them before we came; only a remnant follow their old belief or try to re-establish its old power.

On that planet, as in many such conflicts new and old, those who held to their old belief vowed that their gods would fight against us, but nothing came of it, or else whatever is there stays hidden and will choose its time. We joked that some time one such set of native gods would prove to exist and would offer effective resistance: until on one world it actually happened.

We landed there and contacted some natives. Nearly all worshipped the same gods, although they spoke many languages and their continents and islands are scattered widely across oceans; an unchanging ruling priesthood kept tight watch and control over them. As we learned some of their languages, some were friendly, and some were hostile; holy men stirred up trouble against us. War started, and those who supported us asked us to defend them. Our bases on that world were in danger and seemed like to be overrun by the fury of numbers aided much by weapons and armour that we had not expected from unmechanized people, working by means unknown to the people who used them. As war swayed back and forth many times, we heard tell of a place in one of their oceans where few sea-ships went, where winds and currents flowed strangely; the holy men, urging their people to resist us, said that help to secure victory would, as always before, be sent by something in there. The natives bowed towards the place as they appealed to their gods. It was said that very rarely someone from outside was allowed in there and back out to his people, and that he told varying tales of wonders waiting for those who died in rightful battle; but there are many such beliefs and word-tricks to get warriors to fight harder. We sent a craft over the sea to look at the place described; the craft took damage from something hidden, and it was said that the Gods would indeed defend their own. Many sided with us, for the holy men and local lords who aided them were dominating and enforced many heavy taxes and petty rules, intending the best but causing murmurings and dislike, and many natives saw in us at last another help than uselessly appealing to the Gods against the Gods' own agents.

We explored in force, expecting to find likeliest nothing at all or a patch of rocks and rip-currents, or perhaps a hidden sea-ship base or the like. As we got near, what seemed like a great wind threw our ships aside with mighty power. Some said that we should have left it alone, but others were unwilling to leave something so powerful unknown and reported to be hostile behind our lines, and warlikeness drove us. What had seemed to be a small dangerous sea area where matter and sailors' compasses behaved strangely turned out to our amazement to be a ground-level space-warping hiding a large hidden area: it was as tales had told. By then we knew how to tackle that sort of defence, although with difficulty. We gathered all our craft. The barrier pushed all things round itself, and distorted vision and weight ever more as we pushed into it; madness and great weariness dwelt there. Our ships' drives strained, and their autopilots barely coped with the random blows that pushed us about. Nothing of ancient tale could have travelled that road. But we got through the hardest part of the barrier. A voice warning us off

seemed to come from nowhere in particular, but we ignored it, and got through.

Even we felt wonder seeing the large well-ordered land hidden behind the ancient mighty barrier. Friendly natives who came with us looked at it and our deeds there with dread, for their oldest legends spoke of that land; one of them said "Then it is true! The Gods live there. Once long ago they were open to all until the evil arose and They fenced themselves off and from there at times send secret aid. I hoped to go there after death; I fear to tread on it unbidden in the body.". The oldest legends of Earth mention similar hidden lands, but such tales were not our concern, and we heeded them little.

At first we fully intended merely to explore and make contact and come to terms; by then we knew their main languages. But They who ruled in there formed up against us, and hurled the gale and the lightning, and power blasts that seemed to come from themselves and not from anything they wielded; we in the haste of battle did not know for certain, and when all was over we had no way of finding; they said that we had no permission to use our ships' type of drive power, and ordered us to surrender our ships, and threatened to pursue fast and far. No good came from such words as we and they managed to exchange. It was the seat of their ancient might, inaccessible to all for thousands of years, and we had broken into it. Awe at seeing such mighty Beings should have stopped us, but instinct to fight back drove us on, and we were not in a mood to flee; we had little trust that after fleeing, and being pursued far many of us would escape alive, or that we could escape through the barrier at all; we were shut in there with such defence as we had brought with us. Someone in one of our ships ignored orders and fired back. The Beings replied in full force, and we had to fight back to save our lives.

I will not weary the reader with a long list of destruction wreaked by both sides. Battle swayed back and forth, but with our ships' new weapons we were as powerful as Them, and we demolished the forts and collapsed the cave-holds as we converged on Their capital; ancient forests of huge trees burnt. After a sharp dangerous final fight They withered in our energy beams as we cleaned their last stronghold out. Our ships needed long refitting and repair before we could have fought that battle again; but we had won. The Fence round that land vanished. One of Them had been seen to try to escape upwards, and may have got away to seek help. The feeling of their presence that even through our ships' metal hulls we had felt somewhat, was gone. Something very ancient and fair perished because it opposed us, brushed aside as routinely as our ancestors in a colonial war several generations ago felling an ancient tree for its wood, or shelling a breach in a stone city wall which in previous centuries could have withstood a long siege heroic in story.

We and our local allies landed, and there was nothing any more to resist us or to keep outside natives subject. Those who had been privileged to live there at the feet of their Powers and serve them directly and know some of their secrets, had shared in defeat and disaster and could only look on. That which for ages had been merely a distant name of worship and hope was visible to all, wrecked beyond redemption. The deep caverns where the souls of that world's dead were said to go, were collapsed and filled with fallen mountains. The Blue Hall on top of that land's highest mountain had been an awesome unreachable name in countless sacred songs and oaths; now it was an immense unsafe ruin for us to blow up to clear the site for a communications and radar station. As ruler of its site, from the King of their Powers to a construction foreman with a two-way radio was a pitiful comedown, but we had brought it about. He nicknamed the site 'Taniquetil', idly taking a name from childhood tales - and knew not what that name meant in its full import.

Remote rule from high with little hope of appeal, however well intentioned, had brought on the Rulers the inevitable result, many ten thousand years delayed, but at last it had happened. Some say that men do need a god or gods, whether real or not, as a focus of loyalties, and as an alleged author of rules needed to keep society orderly. From what those beings, or whatever they were, said to each other in our hearing, it seems that even they, mighty in strength and skill, believed in a god who they said made them and the universe. The one who we had found and unchained had complained to us that even among them there was rule by order from the top and lack of opportunity for individualism, and thus he had been chained and exiled long ago.

Some legends say that such beings once ruled the Earth. If so, they have gone or remain hidden, and their ability to see and know and rightly decide all things is less than some claim: in the 'First Age' whatever the souls of the dead going to Mandos (as They said was their fate), and the 'Eagles of Manwë' and suchlike, told the Powers, the Powers did not act

on it of their own decision, but Eärendil the sailor had to struggle to their land through fearsome sea-obstacles with much news that was not known there before, and prod the Powers into coming out and intervening.

To that once-hidden land sea and air routes now run straight for all as to other lands. Men and natives land or settle there and use whatever they find there, with less and less respect for 'ancient legend come to life' as each year passes. They plant commonly and unconsideredly on roadside and park many kinds of trees once precious, many found in the Hidden Land only, some of those even there rare, forcing them by technology to propagate in plenty when the Powers had made them otherwise to keep them scarce and sacred - even as our 'White Tree', once famed in legend and a treasure of Kings, when crudely dosed in flower with an anti-riot gas in a time of disorder seeded heavily and became common. They treat the desolations of battle as a natural part of the Hidden Land; to a former sea-hold of the immortal Powers, now melted out into a huge energy weapon crater where wild vegetation now unaided by Her named the Fruit-giver struggles to hide the marks of violence and the burnt-out forest about, men and technologically aware natives now come to sail and scuba dive on rest days, and treat the crater-harbour as a natural part of the scenery.

We found remains of devices and skills of the Powers, and knew that by now Men had duplicated all of them. There we have a new main base, where we and the natives build and service aircraft and spacecraft and build up technologies in the land of Those who denied them such 'forbidden arts' for countless thousand years. They study whatever remains of the former Inhabitants' marvellous buildings and constructions, and sometimes try imperfectly to reconstruct one of them. They explore with us and thank us for overthrowing the Powers who dwelt there and the priesthood through which They enforced the ancient rule and stasis, but others regret the death of what had been there before we came, and by force of habit still bow towards that land when they thank or appeal to their gods.

I have seen what we and they made of the Hall of Judgement, formerly allowed to be named only in a few special ceremonies. It, and the area about it, survived the battle nearly intact, and those who had lived there had sought to keep it; but it became the centrepiece of a technology area which obliterated with unattractive new non-matching buildings the nearby open-air Ring of Judgement of ancient legend and oath; their builders felled timber where they would. It was renamed after a native who had died two centuries before for discovering and teaching forbidden technology. Such things we and the natives did in what was once the Land of the Deathless, and cared not that some of the natives who went into the mountains behind the site to commemorate said that a shapeless presence, the ghost of a ghost, still clung to the five-mile-wide melted-out hollow where that world's Powers had made their last stand.

Long ago the Númenóreans deforested and plundered Eriador, and lesser men who lived there fought back in vain or sought aid from Sauron, say old tales. Now it is the same again, and there have been betrayals and changings of sides, and it has been said that the same servant of the Being whom we unchained had remained hidden on Earth, with little power left after long-ago defeats, down the ages until he at last found Aniwa able and willing to listen to him, and to give us and him the means of reaching and freeing his master, regardless of what else might come of it. Of such origin we now know is the power in our spacecraft, with their names of onwardness and far travelling that have broken Men out of the world of their origin but it is too late to go back and start again.

Armed men and their native allies in armoured spacesuits drive powerful vehicles out of spacecraft and bulldoze anything in the way aside to make roads and fortified camps. Men by the thousand, each in a propulsor spacesuit with its own long-trip life-support system, descend on faraway worlds and take over, and when they unsuit after months on end in one of those suits they smell like stale sewage and are proud of it as a symbol of hardy far travelling in rough conditions as in holy streams and springs they wash their spacesuits and undersuits, or make burlesque of that or another world's native sacred rites and tales, or steal sacred things, or shoot at anything they will. Men gouge out areas of land in search for metals, pushing aside whatever or whoever dwelt there before. Men waste time trying to establish contact with what prove to be nonsentient animals, and then fail to recognize actual sentient beings. Failure to understand on contact leads to enforcement and conquest, and arming people who should not be armed. The power of Earth has grown great, as the power of Númenor had, for the beings that the legends called Ainur scattered across space have been slow to gather and to summon and arm allies and to

be persuaded to leave their own worlds, and not quickly has come the gathering of the armies for the Last Battle and the End of Days. But it is coming.

Contributors

Anthony Appleyard lives in Manchester and works for UMIST as a computer assistant and programmer. He scuba dives. He was given a copy of *The Hobbit* in childhood, but his interest in Tolkien started properly in 1956 when he found a copy of *The Lord of the Rings* in a library. Since then he has had a few articles published in Tolkien-associated periodicals. He is in the email group TolkLang.

Craig Clark lives in the Province of Kwa Zulu/Natal in South Africa.

John Ellison's interests include music (classical, romantic and early twentieth-century), some kinds of literature (but not others) and drawing and painting in watercolours.

Claudia Riiff Finseth lives in Tacoma, in the U.S.A. She has only just joined the Society.

Michael Foster Prof. Michael Foster took his BA and MA degrees in English at Marquette University and began teaching at Illinois Central College, East Peoria, in 1971. He first read *The Lord of the Rings* over Christmas holiday, 1974, preparing for the first offering of his Fantasy Literature class the next term. His study of the Marquette Tolkien mss. began in 1977; since 1978 he has taught a Special Studies in J.R.R. Tolkien at his college every fall term. Ironically, both of these course will be taught for the last time this year due to state of Illinois community college transfer credit guidelines, unless he can persuade the state university powers that be that Tolkien falls under Ethnic & Minority Literature – elves, dwarves, and hobbits, don't you know? – or Feminist Literature – Galadriel, Goldberry, and Rose Cotton, as one can clearly see.

Christopher Garbowski is based in the Institute of English at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland. He gave a paper at this year's Tolkien Society seminar at Manchester University and has recently had an article on Tolkien published in his university's philology yearbook.

Hibernia is a fearful wight. We don't discuss her late at night.
By day she's surely sound asleep, in attic tall or basement deep.
But Helen Armstrong claims she's seen, encloaked in darkness on the green,
Observing some elusive star (in Leighton, where the Buzzards are).

Sergei Iukhimov lives in Odessa in the Ukraine. He has created more than two hundred Tolkien illustrations, mostly in colour.

Gordon Palmer is a self taught artist. His reason for this illustration was to try and find a different view point than that used by Ted Nasmith and John Howe. For the kids:- not too well hidden within the illustration lies a Ring of Power. Can you find it? (*no prizes I'm afraid – ed.*)

Pat Reynolds Keeper of Social History at Buckinghamshire County Museum, and a member of the Vernacular Architecture Group.

Sarah Wells BA was the founding president of Taruithorn, and now works as the editor of the Fantasy & SF Book Club.

Jessica Yates
a former Secretary of the Tolkien Society, has been a member of the Society for 25 years, and belongs to the Northfarthing Smial in London. She is a school librarian an has two children. She wrote the commentary for Joan Wyatt's paintings *A Middle-earth Album*, and apart from Tolkien studies, specialises in reviewing children's SF and fantasy.