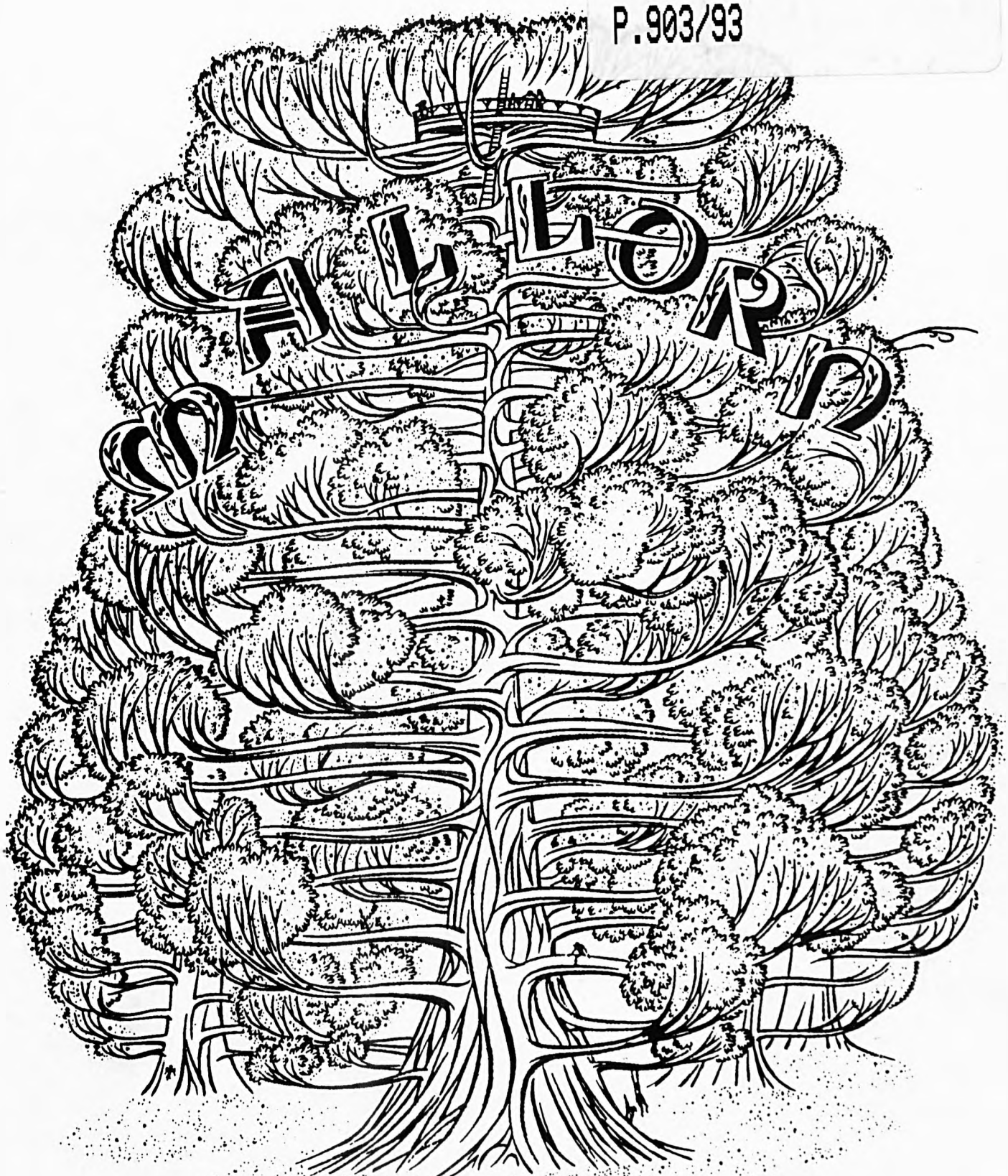

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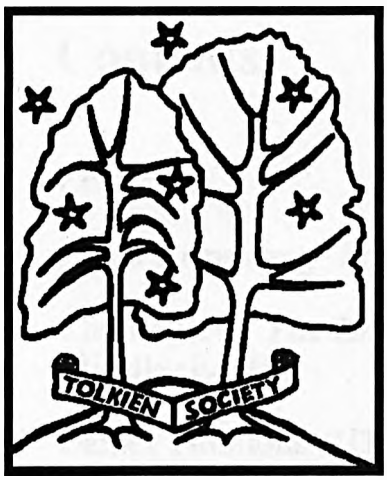


The Tolkien Society

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 annual national meetings: the A.G.M. and Dinner in the Spring, the Summermoot and 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: Sally Kennett, 210 Prestbury Road, Cheltenham, Glos. GL52 3ER or visit the Society's homepage: http://www.tolkiensociety.org

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. Please contact the editors for details of acceptable digital submissions.

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 numbered format, referenced to the explanatory line giving the author's surname, the date of publication, and the pages referred to. The references should be in the form
Author, date, title (journal and page numbers), place of publication, publisher, and numbered in text 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: 92 Perrymans Farm Road, Ilford, Essex, IG2 7NN

Copy date for *Mallorn* 37 is May 31st 1999.

Mallorn XXXVI

Contents

Editorial

This is, very unusually, not an editorial largely written by John, who is blaming a broken shoulder for a lack of inspiration.[1]

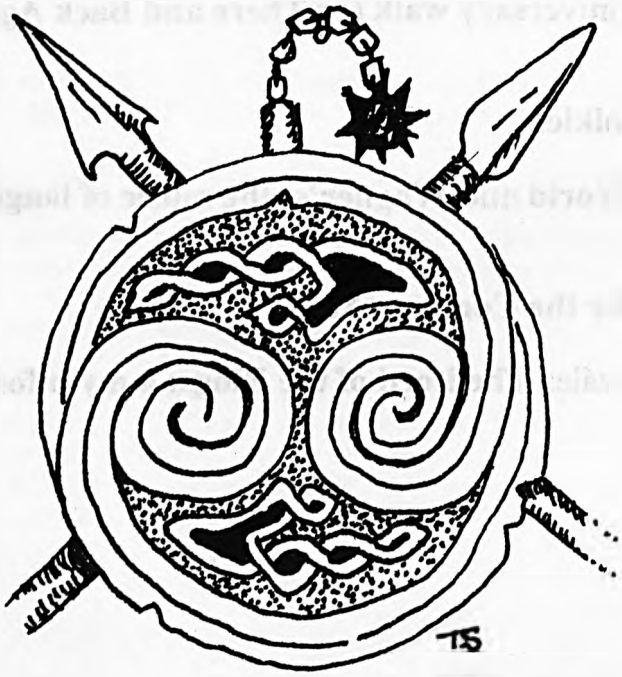
I will take as a theme *serendipity*, or *coincidence*. While reading submissions, I was not particularly surprised to read in a paper about music, a reference to Tolkien's fondness for Weber (not that I knew this, until reading the paper, of course). But imagine my shock when, months later, a paper with nothing to do with music[2], which made reference to the same thing.

But a greater coincidence was about to occur. Much as I love Tolkien, sometimes I find myself reading Lewis. Perhaps it is my recent move to Surrey. Surrey (unlike my previous county of Buckinghamshire) is not a 'Tolkien' county (Lewis stayed with a private tutor here).

As I write this, my last editorial for *Mallorn*, I am reminded of the discussion of good and evil in Lewis' *Perelandra*[3]. Here, Lewis expounds the theory that evil is not the opposite of good, but that which results from clinging to one good when one should be moving off in pursuit of a different good.

This is admirably demonstrated by a coincidence in real life: I decided that while being *Mallorn* editor was a good thing (in Lewisian, and *1066 and all that* terms, there were other good things I should be doing[4]). Len Sanford, the Tolkien Society Archivist felt similarly, and as a result between this *Mallorn* and the next, we are swapping roles. I hope that Len finds the hours in the day, much as I suspect he hopes that I find space in the box room.

There is, of course, a profound difference between the roles of archivist and *Mallorn* editor: the archivist worries when fat envelopes, carrier bags, and strangely shaped parcels arrive, the *Mallorn*-editor worries when nothing arrives. While contributions to *Mallorn* do get passed in the fullness of time to the fullness of the archivist's house, nevertheless I ask that you support your new editorial team by writing and illustrating. Equally welcome are fully rounded pieces, letters sketching out ideas, and general offers to illustrate and review.



[1] Anyway, he could not write for several weeks.

[2] unless the harmony of marriage is counted as music.

[3] Don't expect a reference, or even an accurate remembrance - all Lewis, like all Fiction, and all Journals, is in boxes filling up our hall, waiting for new bookcases.

[4] Fighting for the continued funding of Buckinghamshire County Museum, looking for a new job, moving to a new job and moving house were not among those I envisaged, and I don't know whether they are all 100% good things, but nevertheless they took up time when I should have been editing *Mallorn*.

There Are Two People In This Marriage

Helen Armstrong

The meditation in this paper originally arose out of a reading of Christine Barkley's 'Point of View in Tolkien' in the *Proceedings of the J.R.R. Tolkien Centenary Conference*, which reached the UK in the spring of 1996. It was an accidental result, for it does not take issue with any of the valuable points raised in Christine's paper. Much of the *Part of the Tale of Aragorn and Arwen* can only have been told originally by Aragorn. Both the *Tale* and the *Lay of Lúthien and Beren* sung in *The Lord of the Rings* are tributes to Aragorn and Arwen's love. But the paper threw a switch. I suddenly had that feeling that I had forgotten something. Groping for a clue, I found that the light was there, all right, but I had taken it so much for granted that I had never even dusted it.

In examining the impulses behind Aragorn's telling of the *Lay of Lúthien and Beren* and the *Part of the Tale of Aragorn and Arwen*, Christine writes:

> ... we cannot assume Frodo or any hobbit translated, transcribed, or wrote from memory this tale ... I prefer to think that it was written, dictated, or related by Aragorn himself – certainly dialogue is included between Aragorn and his mother Gilraen, between Aragorn and Elrond, and even between Aragorn and Arwen which only he would know. And also the story continues beyond the death of Aragorn to that of Arwen as well, so the court scribe as narrator seems more likely, but I will refer to Aragorn as the narrator in the same way I called Gandalf the narrator of "The Quest of Erebor" since (other than a little harmless flattery of Aragorn) the scribe does not seem to interject his own world view or observations.

With many significant dialogues between the hero and his family, by far the greater part of the *Tale* tells of Aragorn's early life, Aragorn's coming of age, Aragorn's feelings and motivations, his love for Arwen, his relationship with his mother and with Elrond his foster-father; his heritage, his career, his victory, his long and happy reign, and his departure. We see the meeting of Arwen and Aragorn through his eyes: it is her grace, and the turnings of her head, and her laughter that are described, but only his feelings are stated. The feelings of Arwen, Gilraen and Elrond are recounted at other points, but they are, through most of the *Tale*, nested within the story of Aragorn's life.

The Prologue to *The Lord of the Rings* gives Faramir's grandson Barahir as "writer" of the Tale, "some time after the passing of the King", and "Findegil, King's Writer, IV 172" as the scribe who made in Minas Tirith the copy referred to, but Aragorn must, within the story, be the ultimate source of much of the material, as it includes very private conversations between himself and Elrond or Gilraen. Aragorn is called "the King" at the start, which is not how he is normally introduced in *The Lord of the Rings*. (Having done so, it settles down again to calling him Aragorn.) The whole *Tale* is related in quote marks, a sign that the story is being quoted, probably by a scribe, and probably verbatim, from another source. (The quote marks are in some ways the most curious thing about it, as they continue right to the end, where the final valediction must have been written in the north, and not in Minas Tirith.) If you were to come first to the *Tale* in Appendix A, rather than straight from the narrative of *The Lord of the Rings* as I did, it would be clearer that the material is probably being quoted, in its Red Book context, by an ongoing chronicler, presumably from an earlier source. Throughout Appendix A, some material is quoted, like the story of Helm Hammerhand; and some is not, like the interpolated commentary. It is not stated when the Great Smials copy was sent back to the Shire, but the copy (IV 172) was made 50 years after Aragorn died. It would be, by the time it appears, by far the latest piece of writing in the Red Books, apart possibly from some Hobbit gossip which does not in any case appear in the Appendices.

The *Tale* has many of the characteristics of a chronicle or history, and chronicles are often compiled from diverse sources and written down by learned people who were not part of the action. Another well-known assumption about chronicles is that some of the material will be speculative at best, or even the product of the chronicler's vivid imagination. And indeed, the Tale must have been at least partly compiled, for it relates private conversations, and events after the death of Aragorn, who had been witness (in some cases the only witness) to most of the contents.

As for speculation, *The Lord of the Rings* is a work in which the reader can accept reported events as "true" within the story. Therefore I accepted that the events reported at the end of the *Tale* are intended

to be "true", and not, for example, the dramatisation of an annalist, even though the end explicitly allows for no witnesses.

And all these factors conspired to disarm me for 20 years of the questions: "Who saw these things? Who knew them, and who told them?"

So, we assume that the material of the story came from a reliable source. And, being as how most of it reads like his biography, and he having outlived most of the other possible sources, it is inevitable that the primary interviewee must be Aragorn, although he was not the writer. But my inner elbow was telling me that I was missing something (I wish it would do that more often), and I started scribbling in the margin, as I often do. It was my scribbling that spotted it.

"It is not a story told by Aragorn - altho' most of the personal material must have come from him OR ARWEN" said my pencil, desperately trying to get my attention, and then it arm-wrestled me viciously and underlined it, just in case I missed it again. (I wish it would do that more often.)

"Or Arwen", it said.

Or Arwen. Well, of course, *some* of the material must have come from Arwen, as she was the only one there and alive at the time. Presumably the chronicler (being conscientious) had interviewed everyone involved. But what's the point of assuming that Arwen was the teller of the *Tale*? And does it matter?

I had always made the assumption, despite the statements (which are not part of the *Tale* itself) about scribes, and the quote marks, that the primary voice of the *Part of the Tale of Aragorn and Arwen* was that of our author, J.R.R. Tolkien. My main reasons for this were two: the marked difference in style between the body of *The Lord of the Rings* and the *Tale*, and the sharp register-shifts of viewpoint at the end, which I will come back to.

In short, I took it that at this point he put down the Red Book and began by degrees to tell a tale he knew himself, in his own voice. The Appendices themselves are presented as a mixture of extracts from Annals, Tolkien's own editorial, and (in the case of the "unquoted" sections) what I take to be Red Book editorial (say, chiefly by Bilbo or Frodo). At the end of the *Tale*, the voice of the internal chronicler and the voice that must be at last the voice of Tolkien the storyteller, slide one into the other, the shift obscured only by the quote marks, which enclose the entirety. He does not devise an excuse or explanation for describing what he says no-one saw. He allows the story to take over.

The omniscient view is the one that he must adopt, at that point, if he is to report faithfully that Arwen came to Lórien at the end of her life, and lived alone there, and accepted her death upon Cerin Amroth.

So what with Tolkien telling it and Barahir grandson of Faramir doing the interviews and the writing-up, I did not stop and meditate that someone within the story might personally have related most of this tale at one go. I am not exactly making that claim now, but I am holding up for consideration, because the voices I hear in it have altered, diverged and unified, and begun to make a new kind of sense.

It is not as if this change is a giant step. Whoever the storyteller is, the last part of the story moves the focus gradually but relentlessly away from Aragorn and onto Arwen. The parting of Arwen and Elrond is recalled in the very moment of victory, and Arwen's death is foreshadowed even before her reign is described. Clearly Arwen is the only witness to her last conversation with Aragorn - his ability to relate events ceases here, as he drops dead. And yet, until now, although she was the last and, at the last, the only witness, it did not occur to me to think of her as a narrator. With that shift came the ability to see her as, substantially, the narrator of the whole of the *Tale*, from its beginning to its end: "... all the days of her life ..." All the days, that is, that the busy Men of Minas Tirith and Oxford Town had time to write down in their chronicles.

With that shift a new light appears over a number of things. Seen through Arwen's eyes, the descriptions of Aragorn's appearance are no longer the respectful dramatisations of a chronicler, but the response of the only person left alive who had seen him in his youth, and knew those who also knew and loved him. And the (much fewer) references to her own appearance become words that Aragorn himself spoke to her, and in all likelihood to their children and other close friends, during his life with her. And who could report that "her face was more grave, and her laughter now seldom was heard", while Aragorn was absent in the wild, except Arwen herself? Perhaps even Aragorn did not know that this was how it was with her, before they were betrothed.

Then there is that statement she makes when she first meets him. She says, in effect, that she must not be mistaken for Lúthien Tinúviel, "Though maybe my doom will be not unlike hers." What an odd thing

for an elf-lady to say to a young Man at first acquaintance! To anyone who knows the *Lay*, it is likely to convey a selection from "'I might just run away with a mortal, argue with Mandos and die'" But Arwen is not any old Elf-lady; she is one of the Halfelven, the family of Elrond, who have been given special dispensation to choose between the life of the Elves or the Doom of Men. It is quite likely, I conclude, that this is (on the face of it) simply a conversational way of jogging the memory of a new acquaintance about Lúthien's descendants. Were her interlocutor any kind of Elf west of the White Mountains, he would certainly have responded "Ah! You must be Elrond's daughter!"

And yet it seems rather too allusive a remark to spring on some young Man she has never met before. Do Elves normally greet Men they don't know with crossword clues?[1] It is just possible that, in the moments of meeting, she does not realise that he is not an Elf. And it is quite clear, further down the conversation, that he has not quite internalised the fact that she *is* one – even though she looks like Lúthien and has already told him that she is Elrond's daughter. Aragorn is, within the constraints of his dignity and intelligence, in goldfish mode.

As for Arwen, the famous fate of Lúthien, as we have seen, was that she eloped with a human and died as a result. But I do not think that was what Arwen intended to convey to Aragorn. That would be a little previous for a lady in her position. Aragorn certainly doesn't draw that inference (or he would not have been so depressed on the next page). But that, intended or no, is the meaning of her words. Not only will her doom be not unlike Lúthien's, but it will be for the same reason, and a lot sooner than she had imagined.

And herself? Did it touch her mind at that moment? Unlike Aragorn, she iss not conspicuously afflicted, but there must be some reason for calling Elves "wise", and a much lesser wisdom than Arwen's would have seen clearly, somewhere between the moment that she made that remark and the moment that she realises that Aragorn is deeply confused about what he is experiencing, the arrival of the goldfish. She would have watched it orbiting gently round, mouth opening and shutting with nothing sensible coming out, before she stepped in to bring him down gently: she is 81.25% Elf, and carries her years well, but she is old enough (by roughly 1084 times) to be his mother[2]. And yet, in those few moments, Arwen and Aragorn, despite the differences of age and species, meet each other as girl and boy, reacting to the moment for just long enough to give both of them something to think about.

For she looked into his eyes, where he saw her nature. Perhaps she did not pay enough attention to the songs about her ancestors. Perhaps she did. She was wise, but you are never wise enough to know what will happen to you. But apart from that moment, there is nothing in this first meeting to suggest that Arwen made any connection with Aragorn other than an amiable conversation with a distant cousin.

It is Aragorn who calls after her, hurls the gravest and most sincere of compliments at her feet, fails to understand what he is hearing and turns pink. Shortly afterwards, his mother extracts his secret and warns him that he is barking up the wrong birch of many summers. Aragorn, chin firm, replies "Then bitter will my days be, and I will walk in the wild alone." Adrian Mole would have been proud of him, and yet such is the nature of the *Tale* that this is literally true, and Aragorn simply serves to remind us that, young, we are all Adrian Mole at heart, unless there is something very wrong with us.

Shortly after that (and unsurprisingly), Arwen's father tells him gently that his dilemma is obvious, and that it is time he threw himself into his work, instead of thinking about girls. Elrond betrays no hint that Aragorn's feelings might be in the smallest way reciprocated; he implies the opposite, yet he is clearly an anxious man. Be that as it may, during the next 29 years, although Aragorn must have visited Rivendell from time to time if only to see his mother, he and Arwen do not meet again. Even her gravity in Lórien could as well be a sign of the times as an uneasy heart. But when she sees him again, she falls in love and engages herself to him, and the thread is picked up as if it were never in doubt.

Yet there is no sign that Arwen felt a mission to follow the fate of Lúthien, or that she had spent 2710 years of single life waiting for her Beren to come. On the contrary, her immediate family tended to take

[1] I am very much afraid that the answer to this may be "no and yes".

[2] This is, of course, a data-based interpretation. What she actually says is "Do not wonder! For the children of Elrond have the life of the Eldar." As if Aragorn didn't know that. But he clearly needed reminding. The other equation that he has temporarily overlooked is: Elrond = (around for a long time/has two sons) x (wife conspicuous by absence for several centuries/still alive = no other wife culturally permissible) = any daughter will be several centuries old. At least.

their time about marrying (even Elwing and Eärendil waited until their parents left home), and for a Lady of Rivendell she seems to have spent a great deal of time in Lórien, where the opportunity for meeting mortals was statistically insignificant. She bore the *epessë* Evenstar, and was no doubt aware that her own people's time in Middle-earth was past its zenith. This is pure conjecture, but it may be that she had no desire to start a family unless something in her people's situation changed decisively in the direction of flourishing and growth. Despite her own relative security, there was no sign that this would happen in Middle-earth. It was unlikely that she connected any such change with Men, as they had a fairly consistent history of destruction rather than renewal, particularly in Arnor. She has seen Men come and go, and she has a cool attitude towards the old Númenóreans for carelessly throwing away their island paradise and much else. This coolness probably did not extend conspicuously to the descendants of Elendil, who had not taken part in the fatal rebellion (but who had nonetheless messed up in a number of ways. Isildur, for example), and who were in any case relations. But it is clear that once she starts considering the practicalities, she finds separating herself from her people the Elves, and from her family, very hard indeed.

"Maybe my doom will be not unlike hers", she said, and yet her doom was unlike Lúthien's in so many ways. No rebellion. No family rows. No personal confrontations with major demonic forces or private recitals with the Keeper of the Dead. Instead, long waiting, little news, an uncomfortably clear knowledge of what the outcomes could be for her and her family, and a great deal of needlework. Then, a settled and happy marriage, family, comfort, admiration, authority, and no holy flesh-eating jewel to wear her away out of the living world.

And yet these words might be spoken by a lady who knew, at last, that she resembled Lúthien Tinúviel only too well, lack of jewel-thieving and tower-demolition notwithstanding – a lady, maybe, recently widowed, who was relating the story of her life with her husband to a family friend as one of the last actions of that life.

Perhaps this is what happened. I hope so, because the story of Lúthien tells three important things, which the Elves clearly held to be truth: that she fell in love with a mortal Man, that she objected, as strenuously as she could, to being parted from him, and that the Powers that Be listened, and did not part them. This is the comfort that Aragorn does not seek to comfort Arwen with in his last moment, but which we know he knew how to sing, and must have sung to her often:

> The Sundering Seas between them lay,
> And yet at last they met once more,
> And long ago they passed away
> In the forest singing sorrowless.

And Aragorn – at the last, he seems to believe that Arwen still has the ability to leave the mortal world and rejoin her own people, if she chooses to do so. But she says emphatically that it is too late. This has excited a great deal of comment over the years – which one of them is right? Yet the Tale emphasises this fact no fewer than three times: looking forward, at their betrothal: "her choice was made, and her doom appointed"; at the time of Elrond's departure: "But Arwen became as a mortal woman ..." and, looking back, at his deathbed: "Nay, dear lord ... that choice is long over ..." [3]

So there is no contradiction in the text. Arwen gave up her immortality purely through her choice, but the change in her nature took place when Elrond left Middle-earth[4], not when Aragorn gave up his life. There was no more choice. And she knew this. But it seems that he didn't.

I like that. It shows that she didn't nag.

The last part of the *Tale* dismisses all eyewitnesses and tells what no-one saw: Arwen's last days in Lothlórien. Barahir might have reported that she went away, but the narrative is specific that she lived alone in Lórien, and then laid herself to rest on Cerin

[3] The existence of tripled events, symbols and characters in ancient European literature is well established, as is Tolkien's occasional use of the same. The three Elven-rings and the three Elven-houses are the most obvious examples. I think it unlikely that the triple emphasis here is accidental. It's as plain as Skuld, Urd and Verdandi (though not in that order).

[4] Speculatively, you could build a case, based on the sacred Elven (and presumably Númenórean) marriage tradition, unbreakable outside death, for thinking that the consummation of the marriage itself compelled her nature to take on his. This would, of course, apply only to the Halfelven family of Elrond, who had been given a free choice.

If this was the case, then Elrond, in marrying Celebrían of Lórien, would have confirmed his nature as Elven. Yet there is a sign, late in time, that Tolkien missed Elrond, too, and tentatively tried to renew his human option. (Sorry, I have completely lost the reference. It's in one of the later Histories.) However sound his instincts in wanting Elrond back with us, and whatever the biology of it, he apparently hadn't got round to looking at it from Celebrían's point of view.

Amroth (babe-in-the-wood-like) as the leaves were falling. We could slide round our author and postulate shadowy servants, trusted and faithful, invisible to the story as servants so often are; an escort across the leagues between Gondor and Lothlórien, someone to watch over her from a respectful distance and then return. Or maybe there were still a few locals in Lórien to pass on the word. Or maybe she left her parting thoughts on a folded mallorn leaf in a forked stick, and they were found by passing hikers and carried faithfully south in a backpack until they reached Minas Tirith. Maybe Barahir mounted a research expedition to Lórien many years later and found her memorial inscribed in the bark of a mallorn tree. But I think this is beside the point. We are told that she was alone in Lórien, waiting for winter. "*and the land was silent*". Who says? For a paragraph or two, we see as it were through our own eyes the silent woods and the distant forgetful future. This is the end of the story. (It really is. When Tolkien tried to pick up the threads of Middle-earth history a few years later, he found that he could not do it.)

But he made a fitting conclusion. The final line says: "this tale, as it has come to us from the South." The voice of the storyteller has twanged back into the Tale and landed again, not in Minas Tirith where the tale was written, but back in the North, where the Red Book began, with Tolkien (and ourselves) and the Hobbits.

Arwen is two people. One of her is very old; a little under 3,000 years, thoughtful, knowledgeable, queenly, knowing many things that the years bring. But she is not a queen. Dividing her time between her father's house in Rivendell and her granny's tree in Laurelindórenan, Lady of Imladris and of Lórien, but not in a complete sense Lady of either, she seems in her moments of crisis to be completely vulnerable. What she saw in Aragorn at that first meeting, who knows? All we know is that, after she met him, Elrond her father feels compelled to talk seriously to Aragorn and cannot rule out the possibility that his daughter might fall in love with his foster-son. So it falls out. We have no indication that Arwen considers her relationship with Aragorn as a divine calling. This is the comfort that Elrond offers to himself. As for Arwen, she sees Aragorn again after a long absence, fed and clothed by her grandmother Galadriel, and she chooses him, not without fear. At this second meeting, it is he that is seen through her eyes, and it is her inner thoughts, not his, that are told.

Her life makes a turn then, and afterwards, as she waits for him, her greatest fear seems to be that the victory may not be achieved, not of the vast renunciation she must make to be part of it. She was in love, and Aragorn's welfare, not her own, was her main preoccupation. The hope she experienced was also bound up with the war against Sauron and the welfare of her world. But she cannot have forgotten that if her hopes came to pass, she would not only lose her long life, but her father and brothers, and would never see her mother again. Did Elf-ladies in Middle-earth keep diaries for family overseas? "Dear Mother, If I should not make it Home to Aman – " In the way that young men do in war, or young mothers for their tiny children when they find themselves facing illness and premature death.

Before *The Silmarillion* was published, I assumed that Lúthien was the elder of the two, old and powerful and long-lasting, and that Arwen was the younger one, drawn on by her love, but desperately unsure of what was ahead of her. Then we find what we find so often, that the truth is the opposite of the obvious: Arwen was old and wise, and Lúthien was the green girl. The hair-cutting, the fleeing, the father-defying, the breaking-and-entering – none of that is in *The Lord of the Rings*. It is not so much that it is hard to imagine Arwen cutting off her hair and shinning down Hírilorn, but that it is hard to imagine anyone wanting to send her up there in the first place. She is, almost, Juliet: entirely sincere, but not, despite her resolution, prepared for what comes after. This is why she is still young. It is almost impossible for her to go into this, the other side of her family destiny, with her eyes open.

After 25 years and XXII volumes of the Histories, I am now less sure than ever what it was our author saw in Elrond's daughter, who appeared at a late stage in his creation and was called Finduilas till an even later one. Frodo sees her, and his reaction is to go pink, look somewhere else and start concentrating on his food. (Fortunately, he did not resolve to marry her.) She dresses in grey, speaks softly but frankly, laughs and sings, and makes her quiet plans for Frodo's welfare. We know that she is beautiful, and that she and her father (unlike Lúthien and Thingol) are able to talk together about serious things without falling out.

But her last recorded words are an argument. Aragorn appears decisive, as indeed he must be if he is to go first and steadily, carrying the vast responsibility that he has taken upon himself in

marrying her. He says: it is time for me to go. There is nothing to be done about it. Now you must choose. One day, things will be better. She answers that she has no choice, any more than any human has, and she must abide the Doom of Men whether she wishes to or not. "If this is indeed the gift ..." she says. "Hope ..." she cries, and hope dies.

Who carries the argument? Not Aragorn, steadfast as he is. Not Arwen. The answer is not in their hands, or even in Tolkien's.

Aragorn speaks for hope, for what, as a Man, he believes of what he has been told about the Creator's intentions for the World. It is Arwen who appears to despair. Odd, that, is it not? Her people have been fostered by the servants of Eru since the World was young. They live long lives not subject to death and decay. But they too accept that this will change one day, and that the ending of their World is part of Eru's plan. Even the Exiles remain essentially Unfallen, in that, although they are not without sin or error, they continue to believe unequivocally in their Creator and put their trust in him. Unlike Men, they have never turned away from that Creator willingly to follow Melkor or his agents. And as a Halfelven, Arwen herself is descended from at least two people who chose human nature freely (not to mention one who chose Elvishness reluctantly). So she seems well fitted to come to terms with a human destiny. But it turns out that she was no better fitted for it than the rest of us. Elves and Men have one important thing in common (apart from their general outward appearance, of course): they don't like being dead.

Tolkien was a Catholic, and my modest understanding of Catholic death is that the spirit moves immediately to some form of judgement; to heaven, hell or purgatory. Many believe that there will be a place in the new kingdom when it arises for those who lived honourable lives before the time of Christ; who must, however, wait for the Day of Judgement to learn their fate. If the story of Arda reflects on one level Tolkien's personal beliefs – and I think he has made it clear that it does – then we must take it that he had this in mind for his pre-Christian people. I am not going to discuss details of doctrines or belief – apart from anything else, the fine detail is not relevant here, for reasons I will come to – but I must try to sketch out the personal context in which Aragorn and Arwen confront each other at Aragorn's deathbed.[5]

In the story of Arda, Mandos is the keeper of the halls of the dead; we are told that Men do not stay with him, but that they have in Mandos a "time of waiting"; else Lúthien would not have caught up with Beren there. Death here is not like going under an anaesthetic and waking up a few multimillenia later saying "what time is it?" If there is loss and silence, then there is an experience of loss and silence. And yet those words would stand very well for the annihilation that people often fear. "The spirit of Lúthien fell down into darkness" said Tolkien, of her experience of dying.

It has been said that Aragorn and Arwen's exchange is on one side an intimation of Christianity to come, knowing its saviour, and on the other side an honourable paganism, holding its head up in the face of darkness. This may be as good a way of describing it as any that can be found, although it describes the exchange, not the speakers, who share the same cultural background. Aragorn in some way "knows" enough to trust that all will be well. Arwen, despite ancestors and traditions shared with him, and much closer to boot, is at that time unable to cleave to that assurance. But why is this? Arwen is the great-great-grandaughter of the woman who negotiated directly with Mandos and got her husband resurrected; the brother's daughter of Elros Halfelven, who opted to be a Man when he could have been an Elf; the granddaughter of Eärendil who, when offered immortal Elvenhood in Aman (that desirable residence for the sake of which an entire continent was toppled into the Sea when the locals tried to relocate) said, OK, he would do it if his wife wanted, but he would much rather be a Man. None of these people seemed to lack assurance of the ultimate Gifthood of the Doom of Men. But Arwen does. Because she too is now Man, on the verge of mortality. Not any old mortal Man, either. She is our author, John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, and all the rest of us. This is not (as I think we all come to know) an argument between two beliefs or even two experiences, but the inner voice of a Man, meditating on the hardest thing that Man has to consider.

The quiet, carefully certain voice of Aragorn says: "I speak no comfort to you, for there is no comfort for such pain within the circles of the world ... In sorrow we must go, but not in despair" He tells her the truth as he knows it. We know he is speaking the truth, because he is an honourable man, and if his

[5] I recently read a theatre review in which the hero "confronts his mother on her deathbed". Three days later, a note corrected this to "comforts his mother on her deathbed".

belief was of a more pessimistic nature, he would not have drawn her into his fate. But his words are the considered words of resolve, for him and for her. He can hope or despair, so he has made an informed choice and opted for hope. But the voice of Arwen is still on the razor edge between resignation and the despair of a cornered living thing, and she speaks directly from that experience: "I must indeed abide the Doom of Men, whether I will or I nill – but not till now have I understood the tale of your people and their fall. As wicked fools I scorned them, but I pity them at last. For if this is indeed, as the Eldar say, the gift of the One to Men, it is bitter to receive."

For Arwen is an angry woman; she is angry for Aragorn's sake and her own. And maybe she is angry with him too. Many people experience unwilling anger towards a dying or departed parent or partner, however much loved and blameless, even knowing that their anger is only their own helplessness in a situation that it cannot comprehend.

Arwen was not born to die. Even though she "became as a mortal woman", there is no sign that she aged much in her lifetime. Aragorn himself, ageing as he was, was still hale. Let's get technical: if at their wedding she had a biological age of about 20, then she was biologically about 60 years younger than him, and genetically part-Elf to boot, whatever her official fate. Tolkien is quite specific that she was not yet weary of her days, as Men may eventually become. But, young or old, most people die when they would rather live, and it was only because she did what many a woman does, and chose her man and threw her lot in with his trials and travels and all that followed. Did he think, when he was writing Arwen's *Tale*, of his mother's trials, maybe of his wife's family church, maybe even of her piano? Who knows? He lived with Aragorn for quite a long time, and then he came near the conclusion of the story and found Arwen. This very old, very young woman, whom he doesn't know terribly well, is speaking for him.

Unable to repent of her choice of mortality, Arwen in her humanity makes a confession and repentance of another kind. "... not till now have I understood the tale of your people and their fall. As wicked fools I scorned them, but I pity them at last ..." One need not deny the badness and arrogance of Ar-Pharazôn's invasion of Aman to realise that he was a desperate man, or blame his fears entirely upon the evil influence of Sauron. I doubt that Arwen had encountered the whisperings of Sauron ever in her life[6], but, blameless as she is, she is still afraid.

It has been said that Arwen is cold in this scene. I can only think: be there, come back and say that you were not cold. This scene has been very carefully set up. There is none of the allusiveness of Aragorn and Arwen's first meeting. There is a granite edge to it; they are not histrionic people, but in the formality of the exchange there is more than the measured tone of controlled emotion. They are at a point where explosive sorrow has no further purpose or meaning. (If it did, it took place, just off-stage, somewhere on the lower half of the previous page.) They must say to each other exactly what they have to say, for they do not have much time. We are excluded from both of them during this conversation, shown nothing of their inner thoughts, and seeing neither of them through the other's eyes. But there is a moment, just before it begins, when she is pleading for her life.

It seems almost to be Aragorn's voluntary death that upsets Arwen most. 'Voluntary' is also a gift, but not necessarily easier on the day. It was Lúthien, with the passion of youth and danger, who went after Beren into Mandos. She did not have to see Beren volunteer, or have her course defined for her in advance. Being grown-up is so much more organised. It brings the blessings of time and thought, but, in the end, we must fall off our perch, fortunate if there is someone to hold our hand. It may be a bit futile to draw parallels with Edith, because this was written nearly 20 years before her death, but I wonder if Tolkien thought of this, when he went back with her to live in Bournemouth. Arwen had to return to Bournemouth-on-the-Nimrodel by herself.

This is why I said previously that this is not the place to carve up the details of doctrines and beliefs. This is the time – the time that even the most assuredly faithful, I am told, come to at some point in their lives – when doctrines and beliefs fade out like the certainty of consciousness in the face of the complete unknown, and the only knowledge left is: *Help*.[7]

Many of you will remember "Tolkien in Oxford", shown on BBC2 first in 1968 and again in 1972, and again in the event of Tolkien's own death in September 1973. I saw it in 1972, not long after I had

[6] There are however possibilities in the direction of her mother's capture and poisoning by Orcs, and subsequent acute depression, incurable even by Elrond.

[7] Those who know it will recall that this is pretty much the point where Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle's *Inferno* gets going.

become a Tolkien reader. Part of the relevant clip is also in the video *JRRT: A Film Portrait of J.R.R. Tolkien* (Visual Corporation, 1992).

Tolkien says:

> 'If you really come down to any large story that interests people – holds the attention for a considerable time – stories practically always, human stories are practically always about one thing, aren't they? Death. The inevitability of death.
>
> I don't know if you'd agree with that, but anyway that is what I – there was a quotation from Simone Beauvoir (sic) in the paper the other day which seems to me to put it in a nutshell. May I – I think I'll read it to you. It is apropos of the untimely death of a music composer of whom I have myself always been extremely fond, Carl Maria Weber, who died in '39 of tuberculosis[8], and the man who [had] written his biography actually quotes these words of Simone:
>
> "There is no such thing as a natural death. Nothing that happens to man is ever natural, since his presence calls the whole world into question. All men must die, but for every man his death is an accident, and even if he knows it and consents to it, an unjustifiable violation." [9]
>
> Well, you may agree with the words or not, but those are the keyspring of *The Lord of the Rings*.'

I have a hunch that this was not what Tolkien or the Unwins had in mind when they encouraged him to write another book about Hobbits.

Nor is it intuitively obvious that Tolkien, who was said to write "boys' stories", and dislike all things French, would call upon a French feminist to describe the prime force of his great work.

And at last I am reconciled to that shifting voice at the conclusion of the *Part of the Tale of Aragorn and Arwen*. Arwen has spoken for him. It is only right that he should speak for her.

And it gives me pleasure to know that (thanks to our author) the days of her life are not forgotten yet, and that (always thinking of Lúthien, no doubt) elanor and niphredil still bloom in the spring.

References

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[8] The name is more usually Carl Maria von Weber. Weber died in 1826, at the age of 39.

[9] From *A Very Easy Death* by Simone de Beauvoir. English translation published by Andre Deutch, London, 1965.

The Lord of the Rings Tarot Deck: Not necessarily Middle-Earth

Charlie Betz

> Many things I can command the Mirror to reveal . . . and to some I can show what they desire to see. But the Mirror will also show things unbidden, and those are often stranger and more profitable than things we wish to behold . What you will see, if you leave the Mirror free to work, I cannot tell. For it shows things that were, and things that are, and things that yet may be. But which it is that he sees, even the wisest cannot always tell . . . – The Lady Galadriel

While John Ronald Reul Tolkien may have been a devout Catholic, there is little doubt that his stories of Middle Earth have been a common strand for the past thirty years throughout the counterculture's alternative spiritual tapestries. While few have sought to establish magical practice based explicitly upon his cosmology, JRRT's profoundly realized, non-Christian universe has been an important part of many a magician's earliest explorations. For thousands if not millions, *The Lord of the Rings* has been, and continues to be, a gateway mythology to varied alternative ways of mind, heart, and spirit.

It is also clear that this mythology is rich in symbol and archetype: Kings, Queens, Gods, Magicians, Warriors, and the rest. Much has been made of the Britannic, Germanic and Scandinavian roots of Tolkien's tales, uniquely European interpretations of universal human experiences.

Given this, the first surprising thing about *The Lord of the Rings Tarot Deck* is that it took so long for the idea to be realized. The next surprising thing is how badly it has been done. The art is generally good (if a little dark). But the associations – the choices of which characters or scenes from Tolkien are used to represent particular Tarot cards – range from the uninspired to the downright backwards, doing justice neither to the Tarot nor Tolkien.

For those readers completely unfamiliar with the Tarot, it is a deck of some 78 cards, frequently used by fortune-tellers in divination and also employed by pagans, magicians, and practitioners of alternative spirituality for a variety of purposes ritual, meditative, and contemplative. Divided into a Major and Minor Arcana, the Tarot encompasses a large (some would say complete) inventory of human experience represented in archetypal form. Well-known Tarot cards include the Magician, Fool, Emperor, Death, the Universe, Strength, the Hanged Man, and so forth – although the full meanings of these cards in traditional Tarot are often not obvious from their names.

Before I go too much farther I should note that this review represents a fairly conservative interpretation of Tarot. A significant tradition enfolds the deck, whose origins are shrouded in mystery; the first full deck dates to the Renaissance and there are older fragments. However, since the occult revival initiated in the mid-1800s and especially since the issuance of the noted Rider-Waite deck (still the most popular deck despite its overtly Christian imagery and debatable flaws of interpretation), there has been a general consensus on the meanings of most of the cards. While this consensus continues to be elaborated and refined, and has been punctuated by specific disagreements around particular cards, there is a very strong mainstream Tarot tradition that says (for example) the Three of Swords represents heartbreak and emotional pain, not a walk in the park. The Tarot is not a subjective, "anyone's-way-is-equally-valid" system for the majority of those who use it.

While there are decks (often topical or representing particular tendencies in spiritual philosophy) which have marked differences from the mainstream, the best of these decks (such as the feminist Motherpeace deck) have some guiding vision for their departures from tradition. However, I cannot detect any such vision in *The Lord of the Rings Tarot Deck*, just arbitrary and amateurish associations. I strongly believe that a Tolkien deck which paralleled the mainstream would have been far preferable to this idiosyncratic interpretation.

The mythos that Tolkien created is vast, and while *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are his most

accessible, fully-realized and justly famous works, Tolkien wrote great troves of lore covering tens of thousands of years of Middle-earth history. *The Silmarillion* is perhaps the best known of these, but there are some real gems in more obscure works such as *Unfinished Tales* and the 12-volume *History of Middle Earth.*

With such a mythos to draw upon, rich in archetype and image, this could have indeed been one of the best thematic Tarot decks ever devised. Unfortunately, the creators chose to limit the deck almost entirely to characters and situations from *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings.* Many of the primary characters are shoehorned into perplexing Tarot associations, and if that isn't bad enough the creators even made up a couple of episodes out of whole cloth.

Perhaps the most galling miscasting is Éowyn as The High Priestess. Now, the High Priestess is all about inner female power, esoteric and transcendent as opposed to exoteric and immanent. She is profound, dark, mystical, subtle, intuitive, and very feminine. The High Priestess does not lust after an unavailable man, and when spurned don the guise of a warrior and ride off seeking a glorious death in battle, as Éowyn did. This miscasting is not for want of a more suitable card. The Princess of Wands, for example, represents a young, impetuous, wilful person (of either sex) and would have suited Éowyn well. The Queen of Wands might have been an even more appropriate choice, as a more powerful but equally wilful individual, victorious in battle over a deadly foe. As Mistress of Ithilien, she could well have been represented by the Empress or Queen of Pentacles, both cards associated with fertility and growth.

There may be other associations which spring to the mind of readers familiar with the Tarot. But I do not think that any who are truly familiar with the Tolkien would associate Éowyn with the High Priestess, and this choice alone is enough to ruin the deck for me at least, since the High Priestess is one of the most important cards.

This miscasting is compounded by the existence of several much more appropriate choices for the High Priestess. Among other strong and magical women like Melian the Maia and Lúthien Tinúviel, my choice would have been the Elven-queen Galadriel. She did not oppose the Enemy through force of arms, but rather wove her profound power around her beloved home of Lothlórien, a feminine power of misdirection, enchantment, and protection, not a masculine power of aggression and projected force. Galadriel after Gandalf was the most powerful force for good on Middle-Earth, an immortal born in Aman who had seen eons pass, and the last of the great Noldorin exiles from Valinor. Her sanctuary, counsel and magic were critical to the victory over Sauron. Archetypally, I believe few Tarot traditionalists would argue with the interpretation that she *is* the High Priestess for *The Lord of the Rings.*

In an equally bad choice, the deck's creators chose Elrond Halfelven to represent the Emperor card. This card is traditionally associated with masculine power made manifest, lordship, dominion, and governance. But Elrond never ruled over a kingdom or committed great feats of arms; his Rivendell hold was simply called the Last Homely House, and his strengths were in lore, counsel and healing. With the returned King Elessar and all the great Elven and Númenórean Kings before him from which to choose, Elrond is profoundly miscast as Emperor.

As the Fool, we have Gollum, with the caption "Gollum, by a pool of water, considers the many possibilities open to him." Gollum was far too focused, cunning, and single-minded to represent the boundless spontaneity of the Fool trump. He never "considered any possibilities"; his life after losing the One Ring was a single-minded focus on getting it back. Perhaps the Eight of Swords, with its image of a mind fenced in by itself, would have worked for Gollum, or the Devil, or possibly the Ten of Wands – all cards represent forms of oppression and bondage. This association is even more incomprehensible given the presence of Tom Bombadil in the mythos, a tailor-made Fool if ever there was.

While the bad associations are too numerous to discuss completely, it must be said that a few cards are at least are provocative, if not inspired. Death represented as Gandalf and the Balrog is just about perfect; Gandalf loses his life, but it is only a transition to a higher plane. The Star represented by the Evening Star shining through Galadriel's Ring is perhaps my favourite in the deck.

Earlier I acknowledged that this is *The Lord of the Rings Deck*, and not *The Middle Earth Deck.* While that does address some of the things that were left out, it doesn't explain the things that were put in. The suit of Cups represents emotion, and its King represents emotional maturity, strong heart, and passion. Why on Middle-Earth the deck's creators

put a couple of Dwarves (not a notably emotionally mature race) on this card is beyond me. How about the great lover and warrior Beren for King of Cups?

Furthermore, and worse, the caption is "Thorin Oakenshield and Gimli the Dwarf resolve to work together." Besides being a very poor Tarot association, this is a highly unlikely scene: Gimli was just a young dwarfling to Thorin. He was considered "too young" to go on the quest of Erebor in which Thorin was killed. With so much material from which to choose, why make things up which did not happen in Tolkien's meticulous chronology?

The Dwarves are also miscast in that they appear nowhere in the suit of Pentacles (called in this deck Coins) which is the suit most closely associated with wealth and material works.

For the Four of Cups (the ennui card) the caption is "Frodo, Sam, Merry, and Pippin meet with Farmer Giles and become friends whilst out picking mushrooms." Hmmm. As *Farmer Giles of Ham* is a Tolkien short story completely unrelated to his Middle-Earth mythos, I suspect the creators meant Farmer Maggot. Even in this case there was no such scene in *The Lord of the Rings* (they weren't picking mushrooms, but rather being hotly pursued by Nazgûl). And even if the scene were real, how does it relate to the Four of Cups? I think that Bilbo's "thin and stretched" emotional state due to the Ring would have been a better Tarot choice, or perhaps his fat, comfortable, and bored existence just before Gandalf carved a thief's mark in his door and so began the Quest of Erebor.

While the deck has some interesting art and interpretations, a critical part of a Tarot deck is its consistency and integrity. Competent art can in no way compensate for naive and amateurish content. Card after card in this deck is puzzling, laughable, or even offensive to one with some knowledge of both mythologies. While the deck's creators may have had some knowlege of the Tarot, it seems that their study of Tolkien was rather superficial, resulting in a deck which is basically disrespectful of the symbols and archetypes JRRT created. With a little more research and discussion, I believe that an important synthesis could have been attained. Instead, in this deck both the Tarot and Tolkien have been cheapened.

The Men of the Land

Before the days of mortal men,
Under both blue and starry skies,
The Hills and forests were so new,
The mountains glazed with snowy eyes.
Winding rivers flowed pure and strong,
Through the valleys of green and gold;
When the Sun rose into the sky,
It chased away the darkness cold.

First came a race of learned Men,
From a land of distant sun;
They made their homes near mountains tall,
In valleys deep by river's run.
With auburn hair and bright blue eyes,
They wielded wisdom like a sword,
Growing forests by day and night,
Seeking no precious gems to hoard.

Then came the mariners, light-haired Men,
Who sailed by blue and starry skies;
They built a tower, strong and fair,
And gazed from hill with seagray eyes.
They settled near to ocean's shore,
And with wary and mighty lords,
Sought to broaden their realm by day
And by night, slept with readied swords.

Last arrived strong and fighting Men,
From lands where the sun seldom sleeps;
They raised a tower, tall and black,
By rocky hills and caverns deep.
With dark long hair and starstruck eyes,
They sought to build their mighty hoard;
Thus by day, spoke so smooth and fair,
By night fought with a fearsome lord.

Now are the days of mortal men,
Under both dull and blackened skies,
The hills and forests are now old,
The mountains peer with stormy eyes.
Twisted streams trickle, stained and weak,
Through the valleys of brown and black;
When the Sun rises in the sky,
It struggles to keep Darkness back.

Daniel Timmons

Too Deeply Hurt: Understanding Frodo's Decision to Depart

Karyn Milos

> "To encounter radical evil is to make one forever different from the trusting, 'normal' person who wraps the rightness of the social order around himself snugly, like a cloak of safety." – Jonathan Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*

Introduction

On the surface, the answer to the question "Why did Frodo leave Middle-earth?" seems simple: he was "wounded with knife, sting, and tooth, and a long burden" (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1026), which together had inflicted supernatural wounds beyond any power in Middle-earth to wholly remove. But perhaps supernatural wounds might find a cure in the supernatural realm. Such was the hope of Arwen, Elrond, and Gandalf; and so Frodo was offered passage to the Elvenhome in the West, beyond the sea:

> If your hurts grieve you still and the memory of your burden is heavy, then you *may* pass into the West, until all your wounds and weariness are healed.
>
> (Tolkien, 1993, pp. 1010-11, my emphasis.)

Yet it is important to note that even if his wounds continued to grieve him, Frodo also had the option of staying. The gift of passage over the sea was his "*if* you then *desire* it" (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1010, my emphases), an allowance, not a mandate. In focusing on the objective, supernatural nature of Frodo's wounds it is easy to overlook that his *response* to being irreparably wounded was very natural and very human, and a major source of his anguish. How he responded to his woundedness, rather than the wounds themselves, determined his fate. In this article I will consider the natural effects of traumatization upon Frodo and how the resultant progression of disheartenment led him to depart from Middle-earth.

The Aftermath of Trauma: Memory, Pain, Discouragement

According to the American Psychiatric Association, an event (or series of events) is considered traumatic to the person experiencing or witnessing it if it involves "actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others" and if "the person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror." (APA, 1994, pp. 427-28). In the wake of the trauma, the survivor typically experiences symptoms of intrusive recollections, numbing and dissociation, and hyperarousal that together comprise what was called "shell shock" in Tolkien's day (Herman, 1992, p. 20) and is now termed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Frodo's post-Quest life followed a typical course for the aftermath of trauma: Initial surprise and relief at simply surviving are followed by the recurring intrusion of memories, emotions, even physical pains, associated with the trauma. The hope of returning to life as usual is replaced with the realization that one has been permanently changed by the trauma, that "there is no real going back" (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1026) to the old life, indeed, to the old self. (Matsakis, 1992, pp. 232, 235; Shay, 1994, p. 185.) This is particularly true of people who, like Frodo, have suffered repeated, chronic trauma: "Long after their liberation, people who have been subjected to coercive control bear the psychological scars of captivity." (Herman, 1992, p. 95.) Upon this realization that one has been deeply damaged in ways that will not simply go away, discouragement and depression set in.

We can see this pattern in Frodo's own experience. His first response to awakening when he had thought himself dead was to assure Sam with a laugh, "Yes, I am all right otherwise." (Tolkien, 1993, p. 988.) But in the weeks and months that followed the memories of his ordeals resurfaced and persisted, and Frodo grew increasingly troubled by them. (Tolkien, 1981, p. 327.)

Anniversary Illnesses

Frodo's disquiet was intensified by anniversary illnesses in which he would mentally, emotionally, and physically relive the most traumatic experiences of his Quest. This phenomenon of recurring pain and

intrusive memory, often triggered by significant dates or other reminders of the traumatic event, is a central characteristic of post-traumatic distress. (APA, 1994, p. 428; Herman, 1992, p, 37.)

On each anniversary of his woundings at Weathertop and in Cirith Ungol, Frodo slipped into dissociative states in which "his eyes appeared not to see . . . things about him" (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1026) and "seemed to see things far away" (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1063). To Farmer Cotton, chancing upon Frodo during his first March thirteenth illness, Frodo "seemed half in a dream" as he lay on his bed clutching the white gem from Arwen. (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1062.)

These mental agonies were accompanied by the recurrence of physical pain in his wounds. "It is my shoulder," explained Frodo in reply to Gandalf's solicitous inquiry on the first October sixth after the Quest. "The wound aches, and the memory of darkness is heavy on me." (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1026.) Even during the Quest, the pain of Frodo's knife wound would be triggered whenever Ringwraiths were near: During the boat ride down the Anduin River, when one of the Wraiths flew overhead, "there was a deadly cold, like the memory of an old wound, in [Frodo's] shoulder" (Tolkien, 1993, p. 407), and likewise at Minas Morgul, "The old wound throbbed with pain and a great chill spread towards Frodo's heart." (Tolkien, 1993, p. 733.)

Likewise, and also typical for a trauma survivor, other reminders of his past trials caused Frodo great discomfort. On top of the illness triggered by the anniversary date of his stabbing, simply approaching the Ford of Bruinen, where Frodo had narrowly escaped the pursuit of the Ringwraiths, disturbed Frodo enough that he "seemed loth to ride into the stream." (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1026.) And when the company passed Weathertop some days later,

> Frodo begged them to hasten, and he would not look towards the hill, but rode through its shadow with head bowed and cloak drawn close about him.
> (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1026.)

Discouragement

Apart from the anguish of physical and psychological pain, these illnesses disheartened Frodo, shadowing his expectation to simply get on with his life and put the past horrors behind him. (Tolkien, 1981, p. 329.) He found it more and more difficult to take heart in the fact that the dark days did pass, shifting his focus instead to the fact that the dark days seemed determined to recur.

After his first anniversary illness, on October sixth, Shire Reckoning 1419,

> the pain and unease had passed, and Frodo was merry again, as merry as if he did not remember the blackness of the day before.
> (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1026.)

Yet an undercurrent of depression lingered; when he and his companions approached the Shire, Frodo remarked that going home felt "more like falling asleep again" (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1034), which suggests that doubt about his future had begun to settle into his heart. Still, there was the hope that the illness would not return.

That hope was dashed on March 20, 1420. From that point on, Frodo became increasingly withdrawn. Though "the fit passed" and Frodo "had recovered" (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1062), Frodo subsequently "took to a quiet life," "dropp[ing] quietly out of all the doings of the Shire," and habitually fingered the jewel which Arwen had given him to help alleviate the grief of his memories. (Tolkien, 1993, pp. 1063.) He seems to have given up on life that summer, yet his despondent moan to Sam in October 1420 that "I am wounded, wounded; it will never really heal" (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1063) reveals that even then, with his mind all but made up to depart, he had still been clinging to a thread of hope that the pain and memory would cease to return. Even so, it is again pointed out that Frodo recovered and "was quite himself the next day." (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1063.) But by Frodo's fourth illness, on March 13, 1421, the emphasis has shifted from the passing of the illness to its agony while it lasted; we are told that it was only "with a great effort" that Frodo concealed it from Sam (Tolkien, 1993, pp. 1063-64) and no mention is made of the recovery that followed.

As is typical of a trauma survivor (Hybels-Steer, 1995, p. 105; Matsakis, 1992, p. 136), the repeated assaults of traumatic memory and remembered pain caused Frodo to despair that he would ever "really heal." (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1063.)

Saruman's Last Stab

Frodo's distress was undoubtedly exacerbated by the memory of Saruman's parting shot:

> But do not expect me to wish you health and long life. You will have neither. But that is not my doing. I merely foretell.

(Tolkien, 1993, p. 1057.)

On the surface, this seems to have been but a foretelling that was borne out by later events. However, a closer analysis strongly suggests that it was actually Saruman's last act of vengeance, an attempt to destroy Frodo by planting seeds of doubt that would grow and choke off what little hope Frodo yet clung to.

Saruman was a deceiver. His powers of persuasion were most dramatically demonstrated in Gandalf's confrontation with him at Orthanc (Tolkien, 1993, pp. 601-607); but even after Gandalf had broken his staff, stripping him of power and position, Saruman's smooth speech remained a snare to the unwary. En route from Minas Tirith to Rivendell, when Gandalf learned that Treebeard, thinking him rendered harmless, had freed Saruman, Gandalf expressed his fear that

> this snake had still one tooth left, I think. He had the poison of his voice, and I guess that he persuaded you, even you Treebeard, knowing the soft spot in your heart.
> (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1016.)

Seen in this light, Saruman's claim to be "merely foretelling" seems distinctly disingenuous: Far more likely is that he perceived Frodo's unspoken fears and griefs as a point of weakness and shaped his deception accordingly.

Ironically it was Frodo himself who warned his fellow Hobbits against the power of Saruman's voice: "Do not believe him! *He has lost all power, save his voice* that can still daunt you and deceive you, if you let it." (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1056, my emphasis.) And yet what Frodo could see clearly with regard to others he was blind to regarding himself. Saruman, having failed to stab Frodo with his knife, resorted to stabbing with words that could not help but insinuate themselves into Frodo's vulnerable mind, haunting him and magnifying every memory and every pain into a portent of doom.

"Unreasoning Self-reproach"

For another torment was at work beneath the obvious burden of horrific memories and bodily pains. Tolkien wrote that Frodo suffered from "unreasoning self-reproach" for having claimed the Ring on Mount Doom: "he saw himself and all that he [had] done as a broken failure." (Tolkien, 1981, p. 328.) This phenomenon of "survivor guilt" is another symptom typical – "practically universal" (Herman, 1992, p. 53) – among trauma survivors.

His self-reproach would have been compounded when Frodo realized he had been permanently scarred with a temptation to desire the Ring and regret its destruction. "It is gone for ever," said Frodo in his March thirteenth delirium, "and now all is dark and empty." (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1062; 1981, p. 328.) Upon recovering from his illness Frodo was undoubtedly horrified with himself and, since this illness was pivotal to his ultimate decision to sail (Tolkien, 1981, p. 329), considered himself condemned: He had claimed the Ring and so had forfeited all hope of ever being free of the desire of it and, like Gollum, of ever finding peace in life again.

Yet the true judgment upon Frodo was one of grace, not condemnation. (Tolkien, 1981, p. 327.) Both Gandalf and Frodo expected that taking the Ring by force would break Frodo's mind and drive him mad (Tolkien, 1993, pp. 74, 972), but when the Ring *was* taken from him, quite forcibly at that, Frodo was "himself again; and in his eyes there was peace now, neither strain of will, nor madness, nor any fear. His burden was taken away." (Tolkien, 1993, p. 982.)

It is true that Frodo did not give up the Ring of his own accord, and because of this the part of him that was capable of desiring it remained unconquered, hence his temptation to yet desire it. (Tolkien, 1981, p. 328.) On the other hand, neither did Frodo fully will to yield to the Ring's power; a part of him, overpowered but apparently not destroyed by the Ring, still wanted to destroy it. Because his true will, beneath the overbearing force of the Ring, was to be rid of it, the destruction of the Ring was as the releasing of a burden to him. Of the Ring itself and its power Frodo was set free; but the scars which the Ring inflicted upon him remained, perhaps irrevocably. He was deeply scarred, but he would live.

In addition to his "failure" to cast away the Ring, Frodo also had to live with his "failure" to salvage Gollum's good side. As trauma specialist Judith Lewis Herman observes, witnessing any death, let alone the death of someone in whom one is emotionally invested, can provoke "especially severe" guilt feelings in a survivor. "To be spared oneself, in the knowledge that others have met a worse fate, creates a severe burden of conscience. Survivors of disaster and war are haunted by images of the dying whom they could not rescue." (Herman, 1992, 54.)

So rather than taking comfort in the fact that he had survived, Frodo quite probably felt that he did not deserve that grace: Not only had he been unable to "rescue" Gollum, his own survival had been bought at the price of Gollum's fall and death. Furthermore, had Frodo immediately cast the Ring into the fire, Gollum might have been spared, perhaps to another chance to be turned to the good. Gollum died because Frodo failed. Such, at least, would be the reasoning of a mind tormented by self-recrimination.

"Not For Me"

Yet another area in which Frodo appears to have felt the burden of unreasonable guilt was regarding his "failure" to preserve the Shire from harm. Frodo accepted the burden of bearing the Ring because he wanted to save the Shire:

> I should like to save the Shire, if I could . . . . I feel that as long as the Shire lies behind, safe and comfortable, I shall find wandering more bearable: I shall know that somewhere there is a firm foothold, even if my feet cannot stand there again.
> (Tolkien, 1993, pp. 75-76.)

Seeing that the Shire had suffered harm in spite of his sacrifices would have been a terrible blow to Frodo, made worse by learning how his own insistence upon seeing Bilbo first, "whatever happens" (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1021), allowed Saruman opportunity to turn toward the Shire, get there ahead of the Rivendell-bound companions, and top Lotho's petty tyranny with the worst of the destruction. (Tolkien, 1993, pp. 1050; 1056; 1132.)

Most telling are Frodo's words to Sam in the Woody End. When Sam protested, "But I thought you were going to enjoy the Shire, too, for years and years," Frodo replied, "So I thought too, once. But I have been too deeply hurt, Sam." (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1067.) Too deeply hurt to keep living in the Shire? No. Too deeply hurt – as Frodo perceived it – to *enjoy* living in the Shire. "For the preservation of the Shire he has sacrificed himself, even in health, and *has no heart to enjoy it.*" (Tolkien, 1992, p. 129, my emphasis.)

But it was not only living with unhealed wounds and recurring illness that disheartened him. Frodo's next words to Sam reveal another dimension to his diminished enjoyment: "*I tried* to save the Shire, and *it has been* saved, but not for me." (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1067, my emphases.) It is no coincidence that Frodo spoke of the actual saving of the Shire in the passive voice. As he saw it, he tried, but failed, to protect the Shire from harm, and the Shire was saved not because of him but in spite of him.

Note how, despite his growing disquiet and the aftershock of his first anniversary illness on October sixth, Frodo still managed to speak lightly and with his characteristically sharp, ironic wit when he entered the Shire with his friends. But as they rode through the Shire and the extent of the damage unfolded before their eyes, Frodo grew "silent and looked rather sad and thoughtful" (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1040) while the other three companions chatted on merrily.

From this point on Frodo is shown with a consistently subdued and humourless disposition. Every utterance is sober, even remote, and no trace of levity or wit remains. Clearly the sight of the Shire's violation contributed significantly to the depression that eventually drove Frodo to give up hope for finding a happy life there.

Exile and Atonement

It also seems likely that Frodo, burdened by a sense of failure, believed that he did not *deserve* to ever again enjoy life in the Shire. Over the course of the Ring Quest Frodo gradually lost his longing for home and resigned himself to a doom of self-sacrifice for the saving of the Shire. By the time he reached Mordor, he expected to die. After the Ring was destroyed and he and Sam lay amidst the destruction on Mount Doom, Frodo felt a sense of restored peace only because he believed that he was about to die. (Tolkien, 1981, p. 327.) By sacrificing his life for the sake of the Quest, he had paid for his "failure" in claiming the Ring.

Except that he did not die. And gradually, once the initial euphoria at finding himself alive wore off, the disturbing memories and the sense of guilt crept back into his awareness and began to haunt him. (Tolkien, 1981, p. 327-28.) It was in connection with this guilt-born depression that Arwen made the offer of the sea passage to Frodo. It is not hard to see how Frodo, in this state of mind, might have come to see the Elvenhome as not only a hope for healing but also as a last chance to redeem himself as a hero: Passing over the sea was an alternative way by which he could sacrifice his life, an exile which he could (perhaps even should) impose upon himself in atonement for claiming the Ring.

Seeking Safety

To an objective observer, these feelings of self-reproach may indeed seem to be "unreasoning." But on a subconscious, emotional level, survivor guilt is actually the trauma victim's attempt to regain a sense of safety and order in a life shattered by danger and chaos. "To imagine that one could have done better may be more tolerable than to face the reality of utter helplessness." (Herman, 1992, p. 54.)

Restoring a sense of safety is the first and most fundamental challenge in the process of recovery from trauma. (Herman, 1992, pp. 155, 159.) And herein lay a positive appeal of the Elvenhome over the sea: It was utterly safe, the ultimate escape from all evil and distress. As Frodo said to Sam in Cirith Ungol, "Only Elves can escape. Away, away out of Middle-earth, far away over the Sea." (Tolkien, 1993, p. 946.)

In contrast, the breached Shire was no longer a haven for Frodo, a safe place where he could retreat into forgetfulness of the evil he had seen in the wider world.

"I knew that danger lay ahead, of course," Frodo had said to Gildor Inglorion at the outset of the Quest, "but I did not expect to meet it in our own Shire. Can't a hobbit walk from the Water to the River in peace?" To which Gildor had replied, "The wide world is all about you: you can fence yourselves in, but you cannot for ever fence it out."

"I know," answered Frodo, "and yet [the Shire] has always seemed so safe and familiar." (Tolkien, 1993, p. 97.)

What Frodo really wanted to do, in the wake of the Quest, was to regain his lost innocence, to recapture the old sense of safety and security that he had once known in his homeland. As Tolkien wrote in one of his letters (1981, p. 329), Frodo wanted "just 'to be himself' again and get back to the old familiar life that had been interrupted." But on his way home, as Frodo was weighed down with his first recurrence of pain on October sixth, it struck him:

> There is no real going back. Though I may come to the Shire, it will not seem the same; for I shall not be the same.
> (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1026)

And, as it turned out, neither would the Shire itself be the same.

Obstacles to Reintegration

"No going back." What, then, about going forward? Once the trauma survivor has recognized and acknowledged the fact of irrevocable change, and mourned what has been lost, he or she is faced with the challenge of reintegration, of putting the pieces of life back together and carrying on with that rebuilt yet permanently altered life. (Baures, 1994, pp. 203-205; Hybels-Steer, 1995, pp. 105, 107; Herman, 1992, p. 196; Shay, 1994, p. 55.) It is this process of rebuilding oneself and reintegrating into the community that constitutes "healing" for the survivor of trauma.

Apart from whatever role the supernatural side of Frodo's wounding may have played, several wholly natural psychological and social factors hindered him from achieving reintegration: his own isolation and silence about his suffering, his lack of honour from his own community, and his strong attachment to Bilbo.

In order for inner healing to occur, it is imperative for the trauma survivor to "tell the story," not merely as a dry recitation of facts but allowing others to know and share the burden of the trauma's emotional impact upon oneself. (Shay, 1994, p. 189.) Frodo, however, did quite the opposite: Although he privately set down a narrative of the War of the Ring, about the effects of the War upon himself he kept silent, going out of his way to hide his suffering from others. During his first illness it was not until Gandalf specifically asked, "Are you in pain, Frodo?" that Frodo reluctantly admitted that yes, he was. (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1026.) About his second illness Frodo "said nothing about himself" (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1062) to Sam, who had been away at the time Frodo was ill. The manner in which Sam finds Frodo secluded in his study the following October sixth suggests that Frodo was probably attempting again to conceal his illness; a frank admission that he was wounded and suffering was immediately followed by brushing the matter aside: "But then he got up, and the turn seemed to pass, and he was quite himself the next day." (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1063.) And again, when Frodo was ill the following March, "with a great effort he concealed it, for Sam had other things to think about." (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1064.)

It may have been the way of Hobbits to make light of their troubles (Tolkien, 1993, pp. 480, 904), but from the standpoint of current research on trauma and recovery, saying nothing of himself was the worst possible course for someone who had endured traumas of such magnitude as Frodo had experienced. Frodo's silence and withdrawal hindered his ability to

recover from even the natural effects of having been wounded.

Intensifying Frodo's sense of isolation was the lack of recognition he received from the people of his own land. "Sam was pained to notice how little honour [Frodo] had in his own country." (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1063.) As Judith Lewis Herman observes (1992, p. 70), veterans have always been acutely sensitive to how they are received upon their return home; whether or not a veteran's sacrifices are recognized and remembered by the people at home is crucial to whether or not that veteran succeeds in healing from the wounds of war and finding a place again in the community.

True, Frodo was honoured on the Field of Cormallen with an impressive ceremony, yet this type of formal ceremony "rarely satisf[ies] the combat veteran's longing for recognition" (Herman, 1992, p. 70). The type of recognition that heals is personal, empathic, attentive listening to not only the veteran's experiences but the emotional impact of those experiences upon the veteran. (Shay, 1994, p. 189.) But even had Frodo been willing to talk, "few people [in the Shire] knew or wanted to know about his deeds and adventures." (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1063.) Communalization of the trauma, essential to reintegration, was thus hindered not only by Frodo's silence but by his community's lack of interest in listening to what he had been through.

In the indifference of the Shirefolk Frodo found reinforcement of his image of himself as insignificant, merely "a broken failure." In contrast, as Frodo rode to the Grey Havens "the Elves *delighted* to honour" him and the other Ring-bearers (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1067, my emphasis). Presumably further honour awaited him in the Elvenhome; yet Frodo's charge to Sam to

> read things out of the Red Book . . . so that people will remember the Great Danger and so love their beloved land all the more
> (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1067)

reveals an unassuaged desire for his *own* people to recognize and appreciate the hardships he had endured on their behalf.

Following Bilbo

Finally, Frodo's strong attachment to Bilbo provided added incentive for him to sail. Bilbo was the person Frodo loved most (Tolkien, 1981, p. 328), and Frodo's remark that "the Ring-bearers should go together" (Tolkien, 1993, p. 1067) may have reflected Frodo's reluctance to part with Bilbo, as well as a distorted perception of himself as doomed to sail, rather than a true requirement of a former Ring-bearer.

A neglected but, I believe, significant wound of Frodo's was the loss of his parents in a tragic accident when Frodo was going on twelve. (Tolkien, 1993, pp. 34-35; 1136, 1138.) At a very tender age, particularly for a Hobbit, Frodo experienced one of the deepest losses possible. Some years later Bilbo took Frodo under his wing and became a surrogate parent to whom Frodo bonded very strongly, only to lose him when he left the Shire upon Frodo's coming of age. For the next seventeen years, though Frodo "was quite happy" (Tolkien, 1993, p. 56), he also missed Bilbo and became increasingly restless as the years passed.

Still, Frodo harboured a secret hope that he might someday find Bilbo again. In knowing Bilbo in his days when he possessed the Ring, Frodo had experienced an illusory cheating of time and decay. Bilbo was seventy-eight years older than Frodo, yet looked like a Hobbit in the prime of his life. Hence Frodo apparently had no difficulty believing, long after reason would have suggested otherwise, that Bilbo was still alive (Tolkien, 1993, pp. 55, 76), waiting for Frodo to follow after him and find him someday.

But when Frodo did find Bilbo at Rivendell, the old Hobbit was no longer untouched by time. Seeing Bilbo showing his true age and frailty, hovering on the edge of death, certainly had to have been a shock to Frodo. For the first time Frodo was confronted with the reality that someday Bilbo would be gone for good, beyond the hope of eventual "finding."

When Frodo yearned during his Quest to be back in the Shire, his memories turned to the days in which he lived with Bilbo at Bag End. (Tolkien, 1993, pp. 335-36.) But those days, Frodo gradually saw, would never return. And in a way, the Shire without Bilbo, without even the prospect of being able to visit Bilbo at will, was not really *the* Shire that Frodo loved.

Tolkien wrote (1981, p. 328) that the mortals who passed over the sea would eventually have to die, but it is not clear whether Frodo himself understood this. Even if not a full escape from death, at the least the sea passage was a postponement of final separation from Bilbo. Perhaps in the Blessed Realm time and death could be cheated a while longer and Frodo could recapture a semblance of the idyllic days of memory, dwelling contentedly at Bilbo's side in the

one place where the promise of paradise remained: "'Arda Unmarred,' the Earth unspoiled by evil." (Tolkien, 1981, p. 328.)

Conclusion

Wounded, weary, torn with doubt and self-condemnation, Frodo based his decision upon only two options: Either his wounds would go away ("really heal"), in which case Frodo, absolved, could stay, or his wounds would not wholly go away, in which case Frodo, condemned, would have to leave.

Ironically, then, Frodo chose the sea not because he "desired" it but because he believed he had no other choice. Because he could not recover the "old familiar life," or more precisely the old, innocent state of mind in which he had enjoyed it, Frodo concluded that he could never again enjoy any sort of life in the Shire.

Frodo's deepest wounding, in the end, lay precisely in his *sense* of woundedness, in his realization that in Middle-earth he would never again be what he once had been. It was a knowledge that he could not bear to live with.

"I explain," wrote trauma specialist Mary Baures (1994, pp. 18-19), "that by healing I don't mean that the loss doesn't still hurt or that it disappears, but that there is a way that people can find some meaning in a catastrophe so they can go on with their lives."

"Being healed," replied Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, "is when the wound is no longer there."

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Too Deeply Hurt

Summer melts
    into autumn's gold
The wind turns cold
Waiting
Awaiting
    the twilight embrace
He bids his
    silent good-byes

Sunlit morning
    warm reprieve
And would he leave
    the infant smiling
The sun ascending
On golden curls gleaming
Glances off

    It strikes

He wavers
Wonders
    if truly he heard
Another spring
    whispered faintly
in summer's dying breath

Trembling
He reaches
    almost touching
gaze falling
    to his hand ---

Wounded.

It falters.
It falls.
It reaches no more.

Karyn Milos

A Pre-history of Hobbits

Ruth Lacon

In the Prologue to *The Lord of the Rings* we are told that by the end of the Third Age the Shire-Hobbits preserved no knowledge of their original home and little enough of their history. Nevertheless, from the scanty remarks there and a few additional comments in the tale of years, it is possible to construct an 'asterisk-history', a theory of the origins and wanderings of hobbits.

The exact origins of Hobbits, like those of mortal Men, their closest relatives, are lost in the mists of the First Age. Being a small and peaceful people. Hobbits in their beginnings would have been less attractive to the emissaries of Morgoth who came to Men and seduced them. With such an ill influence on their larger cousins, Hobbits might soon have found themselves despised and oppressed and parted company from the Big Folk, fleeing in search of peace and freedom. Whether any took other roads we cannot tell; our first glimpses of hobbits show them dwelling "in the upper vales of Anduin, between the eaves of Greenwood the Great and the Misty Mountains." It is in fact possible to refine this and say that most hobbits probably dwelt between the marches of Lórien and the Gladden valley. Accounts of their relations with other peoples, and the time at which they left the vale of Anduin, suggest they were concentrated at its southern end, where the climate was no doubt kinder but where they were vulnerable to events in the wider world.

From the earliest days Hobbits seem to have been split into three branches; the Harfoots, Stoors and Fallohides. The most numerous by far, the Harfoots are said to have "had much to do with Dwarves in ancient days, and long lived in the foothills of the mountains." This suggests they dwelt close to Khazad-dam and were at that time settled farmers, though no doubt after much simpler fashion than the sophisticated 'high farming' practised in the Shire two thousand years later. At that time, though, the Harfoots may have had more to do with the wide world in general and dwarves in particular than ever again. No Dwarf ever tilled the soil or kept animals, so we are told; the great mansion of Durin's Folk may well have relied on the hobbits at its doors for the most part of its supplies. The Harfoots would be able to trade foodstuffs and other farm products such as cloth, leather and charcoal to the Dwarves in return for tools and metalwares. While they "preferred highlands and hillsides" it is quite likely that there were Harfoots also on the eastern bank of the Anduin, and in the country between the mountains and the river. It is said that the Harfoots had the "ancestral habit of dwelling in tunnels and holes." which they long retained. Their preference for rougher terrain must have reflected this habit and ensuing ned for banks to burrow into. While they dwelt in the Vale of Anduin, such holes were no doubt simple burrows indeed, of but one or two rooms with one window or none, perhaps shared by hobbits and livestock. Such crafts as they had, such as woodworking, tanning and weaving, would however often need more light and air or more headroom than a hole could offer. this would lead to the building of rough sheds and workshops, perhaps no more than lean-tos of thatched wattle, perhaps more complicated structures. Borrowed Dwarvish knowledge might help in this, but simple timber architecture can readily be evolved from first principles and basic skills, and Hobbits are far more likely to have built in timber than in stone at this date.

The second most numerous group of Hobbits, the Stoors, were a more heavily built tribe, preferring plains and riversides, and less shy of water than most hobbits. Their ancestral homeland seems to have been the flood-plain and marshy banks of the Anduin, country in which hole-dwelling would be difficult for want and often dangerous too, in time of flood. They appear to have been fishers first and farmers in a small way after, and may from an early date have been much more given to building above-ground than most hobbits. It is said that they were less shy of Men, and this may have been due to contacts with traders on the river. In such situations the Big Folk and hobbits could meet on almost equal footing, hobbit nimbleness and skill with the bow outweighing the size difference when afloat.

The third and smallest tribe of Hobbits were the Fallohides. They resided to the north of the others, perhaps to the north of the Gladden; they preferred wooded country and they were little given to farming.

Before the migration west, they may have largely relied on hunting and gathering, with perhaps some keeping of livestock. This lifestyle may well be reflected in their bolder nature and smaller numbers, and lack of interest in handicrafts. Hunters and gatherers, in such an environment must have had to move often to take advantage of seasonal resources and could accumulate but few possessions. Many skills practised by settled folk would simply be beyond their reach, such as pottery or weaving; their recorded skill in language must reflect a highly portable culture. The Fallohides are said to have been friendly with the Elves, given the likely range of these hobbits the elves in question must have been Thranduil's people in Greenwood, the Great Silvan folk, they were no doubt more at ease with fellow wanders in the woods than settled farmers and clearers of trees.

At this time, given the enduring importance of kinship in hobbit society, it is likely that the Harfoots and Stoors were organized in simple clans after the pattern best known in Europe from the Celtic fringes. Whether these clans were patriarchal, matriarchal or even involved some element of double descent is very hard to say, though this author would favour the first alternative. The descendants of some founding ancestor would live close together, acknowledging the relationship to each other and the headship of the eldest descendant in the direct line. They may well have helped each other in farming, though I doubt hobbits ever followed the Anglo-Saxon pattern and dwelt in villages, farming communally in the open field. Beyond this, the Harfoots and the Stoors may have been linked by traditional ties, enabling both groups to make best use of the resources of their country (Stoors trading fish or perhaps imported salt in return for Harfoot grain, for example) and to deal with the outsiders who flanked them. Few such simple communities are truly self-sufficient, and what they lack they must somehow trade to meet.

The Fallohides would most likely also be organized in clans, splitting up at certain times of year, coming together at others as resources permitted. They may well have been linked to the same trading system as their southern brethren.

At this time it is likely too that Hobbits spoke a Mannish language closely akin to identical to that of the ancestors of the Rohirrim, who dwelt in deed not far from the Hobbits. This conclusion is supported by the later relationship between hobbit dialects of Westron and the Rohirric tongue.

Hobbits first appear in the historical record in 1050 T.A., when the first Harfoots appeared in Eriador. Harfoots are said to have been the readiest to settle of hobbits but they are also the first to move. this seeming contradiction can be explained by the falling of the Shadow on Greenwood as Dol Guldur became a stronghold of evil. No doubt the change did not happen overnight, and there may have been trouble to southern Greenwood and the neighbouring lands for many long years before any Gondorian chronicler took note. As the Shadow deepened on the forest the hobbits must have faced the same hazards of orcish raids and fell beasts that the Woodmen knew at the end of the Third Age, and would have been much less able to defend themselves. While we are told that they would fight at need, lightly armed hobbits can have been no match for orcs and wolves, and it is not recorded that hobbits ever built even the simplest fortifications. Under such pressure, and no doubt seeing too many of their kinsfolk slain each year, first the Harfoots east of Anduin and then those dwelling near the river on the west would eventually be driven to flee in search of safer lands. It must have been a bitter decision with years of fire and slaughter by night behind it to make such settled farmers chance flight into the unknown, and Eriador would offer no secure refuge for many years to come. It is likely that the migration did not happen in one wave, but that successive clans or groups of clans, each in turn forced to move by long attrition or sudden disaster, followed an increasingly well-worn trail over the Mountains. there is some suggestion that at first the Harfoots settled mostly in eastern Eriador, in the foothills of the Misty Mountains perhaps seeking lands like those they had left. The lords of Khazad-Dum must have been worried at the thought of losing their most important suppliers and their main local market east of the mountains. If they ever tried to encourage Harfoots to settle Eregion, though, they appear to have failed.

About a hundred years after the hobbitic Age of Migration began, things had reached such a pitch in the Vale of Anduin that the Fallohides and Stoors also appeared in Eriador, whether en masse or gradually we cannot now tell. It is just possible that the Fallohides had sufficient tribal structure to move all together. Very likely they knew from elvish report and their own explorations that they faced a hazardous crossing of the Misty Mountains into the wild and thinly populated lands held mainly by the ancestors of the Hillmen of Angmar. They took a

northerly route, coming down by an otherwise unrecorded pass to the headwaters of the Hoarwell and following the river south. If they did move as a unit, once in Eriador the Fallohides appear to have largely split up, mingling with their brethren. It is said that, "being somewhat bolder and more adventurous they were often found as leaders or chieftains among clans of Harfoots or Stoors". No doubt their skill as hunters and knowledge of the wild was as valued as their leadership amongst hobbits who had much rather settle if only they could find suitable lands. Eriador in those days was torn with strife between the three parts of old Arnor, and life must have been hard for hobbits. If they made any settlements in those days, they were afterwards deserted and lost to history. Indeed, the third tribe of hobbits, the Stoors did not come into the north of Eriador at all. They may well have had advice and help of the Dwarves when they too chose to leave the Vale of Anduin, for they came over the Redhorn Pass hard by Khazad-Dum and settled not far off, in the Angle between Hoarwell and Loudwater or on the borders of Dunland. Here they seem to have dwelt in peace for many years. It is quite possible that they practised less fishing and more farming in those parts, and took over the role the Harfoots once had, of supplying Khazad-Dum with foodstuffs in return for metalware and perhaps protection. The longevity of their settlements in Dunland suggest that the hobbits, or perhaps the Dwarves on their behalf, reached some agreement with the people who dwelt thereabouts. At that time also Tharbad was still held by Gondor, then at the zenith of its power, so the Dunlendings were no doubt wary of casing any trouble that might lead the Dúnedain to interfere in their lands.

For some two hundred and fifty years or so matters continued in this wise. At this time the hobbits of Eriador were most likely farms when they could settle safely, hunters and gatherers and perhaps keepers of sheep and cattle when they could not get arable land. They would no doubt try to keep as much of their ways and customs as they might, but that too would depend on being able to settle and lead their lives in peace. Since hobbits were now living amongst peoples who spoke Westron, it was likely here that they abandoned their old tongue and took to the Common Speech.

Around 1300 T.A., though, hobbits were on the move again. An increase in orcs and the founding of the Witch-Realm of Angmar are recorded against that year and no doubt lie behind the westward migrations of hobbits at this time. Once again, they would be a weak and vulnerable people driven to seek safer land and kindlier lords. Many are said to have settled in Bree at this time. It is also said that there was a worsening in the weather of Eriador about the fourteenth century of the Third Age, and this as much as dread of Angmar and the wars drove the Stoorish hobbits of the Angle to flee their homes. Some went west, perhaps to Bree, perhaps to southern Dunland. Others again returned east over the Mountains and dwelt by the Gladden as fisherfolk. The dread of Angmar must have been great indeed to make them risk the crossing of the now orc-infested Misty Mountains and settle in lands they had left once already in fear. The hobbits who returned east eventually dwindled and diet out, so far as may be guessed, but in its own way, the move was a sound one. By the Gladden the Stoors remained for at least seven hundred years, passing into the folklore of the forefathers of the Rohirrim but otherwise forgotten and unmolested.

West of the Mountains, Arthedain was in all likelihood the last refuge of hobbits north of Eriador. The power of its kings kept Bree safe for many years, and at last in 1601 King Argeleb II decided to settle the no doubt numerous hobbits on their own lands. He chose a rich area, left deserted as his people dwindled, and gave it to Marcho and Blanco of Bree and their following. With the founding of the Shire, hobbit history properly so called begins, and this article ends.

A fiftieth anniversary walk (or There and Back Again, an academics day out)

Alex Lewis

When Ted Nasmith came to visit and attend Oxonmoot in September 1997, he had a great idea for something to do after Oxonmoot was over, as he was staying on for another week. How about recreating one of the walks that Tolkien went on?

Intrigued by the idea, I looked into this, and found that places mentioned were Worminghall, Brill, Charlton on Otmoor, Water Eaton, Wood Eaton and Islip. Tolkien went to these – which are all around Oxford – with his children on walks. However, and more interestingly, Tolkien and the Lewises went on two walking tours – one was to the West Country, walking around the Quantocks in 1937, and on the second they went to Malvern in 1947 according to *The Inklings*.

'Great idea, Ted!' I replied. 'But must we smoke pipes too???!!'

Then we came down to the practicalities of these various destinations for our purposes: Worminghall to Charlton on Otmoor would be quite a trek via Brill (or Bree-hill, as it is somewhere expanded – even though Brill is worth a visit in itself – being very hobbitish countryside, eminently suitable for constructing smials). My guess was that these places were walked around on separate visits, not on a one-day trip. Islip and Woodeaton (there was no sign of Water Eaton on my modern map) are along what is now a very fast and busy 'A' road with little or no protection for pedestrians – I knew it quite well, as I used to drive it often as a short cut to avoid the Oxford ring road when I lived in Yarnton – so that would not be enjoyable for a walk in this day and age. Then the Quantocks: They are a bit off the beaten track from where I live – they look fabulous, but are way away from North Shropshire, and without stopovers in a B&B for a couple of nights it would be difficult to get to them. But what *did* prove to be well within striking distance were the Malvern Hills, which lie south-west of Worcester. I rang the Great Malvern Tourist Information Centre, and they suggested we come in and look at their maps to get a good idea of where we wished to walk. At Oxonmoot, Priscilla was able to add that her father and the Lewises had stayed with George Sayer in Great Malvern; this proved to be extremely helpful to us in finding where to plan our walk. So after Oxonmoot we set out early one morning by car and came to Great Malvern where a most helpful person in the Information Centre helped us plan a decent walk. It turned out that there was really only one place that you could easily get to, knowing what we knew about the preferences of the Lewises and Tolkien, and the conditions at the time in 1947.

So, we went on what turned out to be a wonderful walk which Jack (C.S. Lewis) and Tollers (J.R.R.T.) did with Warnie (Lewis's brother) and George Sayers in 1947 in the Malvern Hills. It was, if you like, the "Jack and Tollers Show" – and we took fresh apples and pears from my garden and other refreshments, and drove down for a good day's walking around the hills. The surprising thing was that it hadn't changed much since the time the Lewises and Tolkien walked it from what I could tell. Nothing could be built on the top of the ridge of hills, due to steepness, and also thank God, it is a beauty spot so I guess it would be forbidden to spoil it by development. If you have never been there, it is a bit like the top of Shotover Hill in Oxford where my old school used to run the annual cross country runs for the whole school.

The villages and towns surrounding the hills on the plain below are many hundreds of feet beneath you, and it seems as if you are in a balloon looking down at them, so tiny do they appear. The villages may be larger nowadays, but they are ancient ones, and would have been there in 1947. The pasture-lands and meadows may contain different crops now to then, but they still retain the old irregular Saxon boundaries that have been there over a thousand years, not bulldozed by modern Euro-farmers, chasing hand outs from Brussels. There are only two inns on the walking route, which runs about 3 miles end to end, with meandering pathways through the hills and trees and gorse covered slopes. The first inn, at one end, and near the Beacon Hill that we went to was the Malvern Hills Hotel. This is an old hotel, dating from perhaps 1800 or so, no doubt modernised since Tolkien's time, but it must have been there, and the bar would have been very much as in his day judging from the decor and furnishings. The second, at the other end of the walk, at a great cleft in the rocks that the hills are made of, was the Wyche Inn – again, an old pub, perhaps mid 1800s, but difficult to

tell – it looked as if it hadn't changed since 1947 from the outside. Most unfortunately, we were unable to look inside as it was closed for the afternoon up to 7 p.m., and we had to drive home before then. We could just imagine Tollers and Jack sitting there in the Wyche Inn, maybe discussing the etymology of the word 'Wyche' – would it have anything to do with wicaian, perhaps? Or 'wike', pliable, weak... A concentration of pipe-puffing, wreathing everyone around in a haze of smoke. Then, maybe one of the others might have come up with some other connection, the association with the elm, maybe.

The reason we know for sure that we walked where the "Inklings Ramblers Society" had gone before us, was that George Sayers, who invited them up, lived in Great Malvern, as Priscilla had explained to us. In 1947, neither Tolkien nor C.S. Lewis had a car, and so, since Great Malvern is on the train line from Worcester, they would have taken a train from Oxford to Worcester, and then to Great Malvern. They stayed with George Sayers during the trip, and went out for walks – so they would most likely not have driven off into the countryside first and walked from some remote spot, but experienced the famous walks around Great Malvern itself. It would be the most obvious thing to do, especially in post-war Britain with austerity, rationing and so on – petrol was a rare and expensive commodity, and so they would have gone on foot. The actual walk across the ridge and the five hills including the Beacon Hill at the far end may be just over three miles, but from Great Malvern one would have to walk up to where it starts – we drove to the starting point, and that drive alone is three miles each way, making a walk that would maybe extend from 12 to 15 miles (24 km) – a respectable distance for a day's walking. It may even have been done in two separate walks, one to each drinking hole, using the ridge as a main walk.

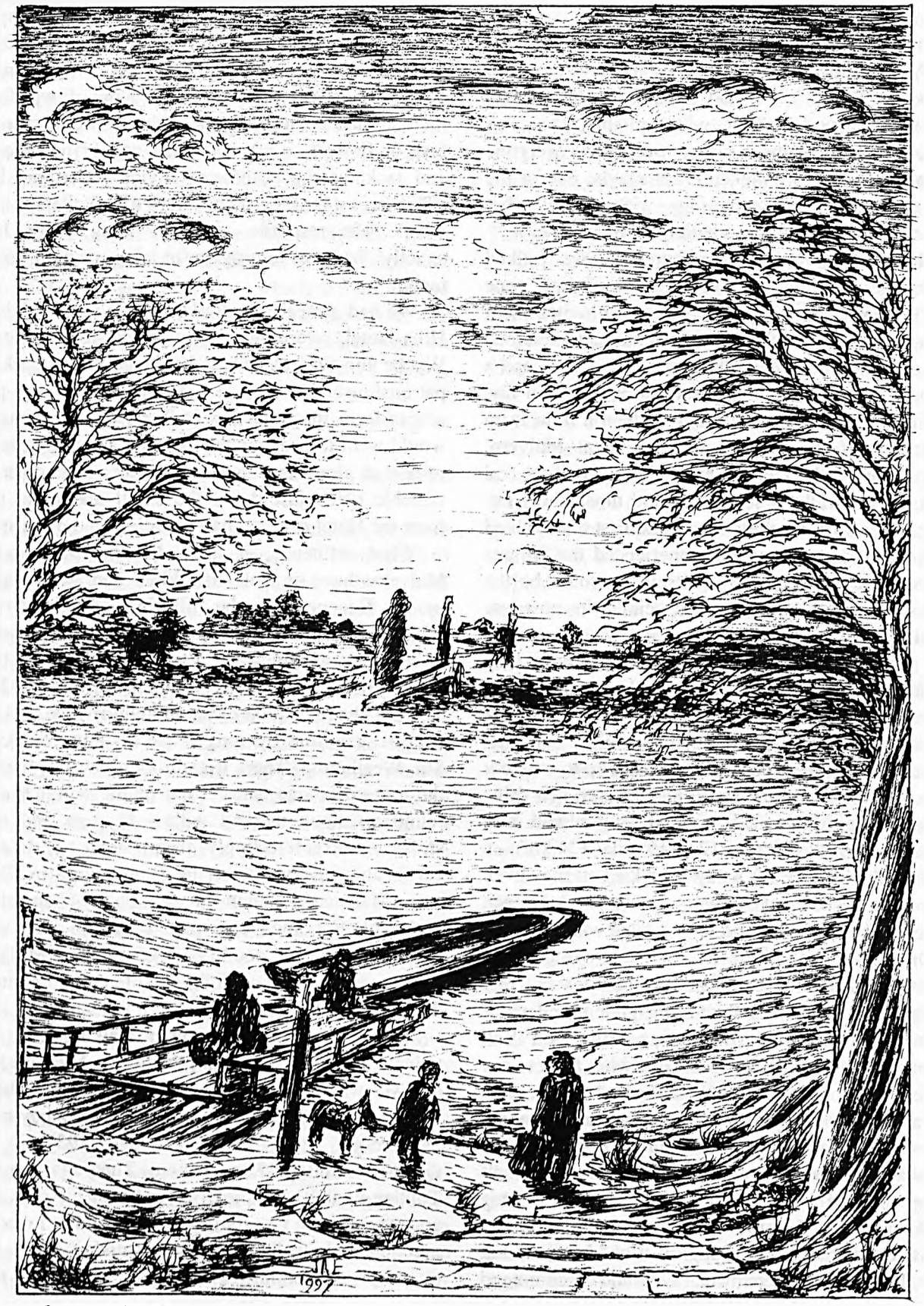
On the day we chose to do it the weather was bright, warm and sunny, if a bit breezy – but that brought out a small band of hang-gliders and para-gliders and a small fixed-wing-glider too and although they might have been somewhat alien to our predecessors tastes, if one imagined they were perhaps kites being flown by children, they formed a part of a backdrop that was quite acceptable. The pathways were excellent, for you could lose yourself along one and not see other walkers for quite long spells at a time. Sensible shoes were quite sufficient at that time of the year, though if it had been raining and the ground were wet, I would recommend walking boots. In some places the trees surrounded everything and their branches extended overhead as an unbroken canopy. In other places, you were waist high in a sea of bracken and gorse. A very unspoilt place. You can stand there on the ridges of the five hills, as we did, and imagine Tollers complaining to Jack that they really ought to slow down for a moment and come and look at this particular type of fern or flower, or whatever had caught his interest, and Jack turning round and saying something like; "This isn't a biology school field trip, Tollers – it's a walk". The response, perhaps, being; "Yes Jack, exactly! Walk, as in progress at leisure – not a forced march."

We had a meal and drinks (twice) at the Malvern Hills Hotel, returning to it when we found that the Wyche Inn was closed. It has a good car park for patrons' use. There is a pay and display car park across from the hotel for walkers, but why anyone would wish to use it is beyond me, as parking is not restricted along the approach road, and choosing a sensible place just down the small and quiet road from the Hotel is more than sufficient and quite safe.

What influence, if any, did the walk in the Malverns have on Tolkien? When Ted and I walked up the Beacon Hill, the hillside was riddled with rabbit burrows. We thought it would be easy enough to see these as smials (in a hole in the ground there lived a rabbit??) – such as perhaps at Brandy Hall. The hill above is quite bleak and windswept, and as a beacon, gave me a strong sense of being on Amon Sûl, Weathertop. There is even a hollow just beneath the top where one can get out of the wind! But we found no stone marked with a G rune and three strokes. Also interestingly, from *Peoples of Middle-earth*, an early name for the Brandywine in Elvish was Malevarn, which the hobbits changed to Malvern! For the rest, one soaks in the sheer atmosphere and the countryside of the West Midlands that was such a part of Tolkien's life embodied in the descriptions of the Shire.

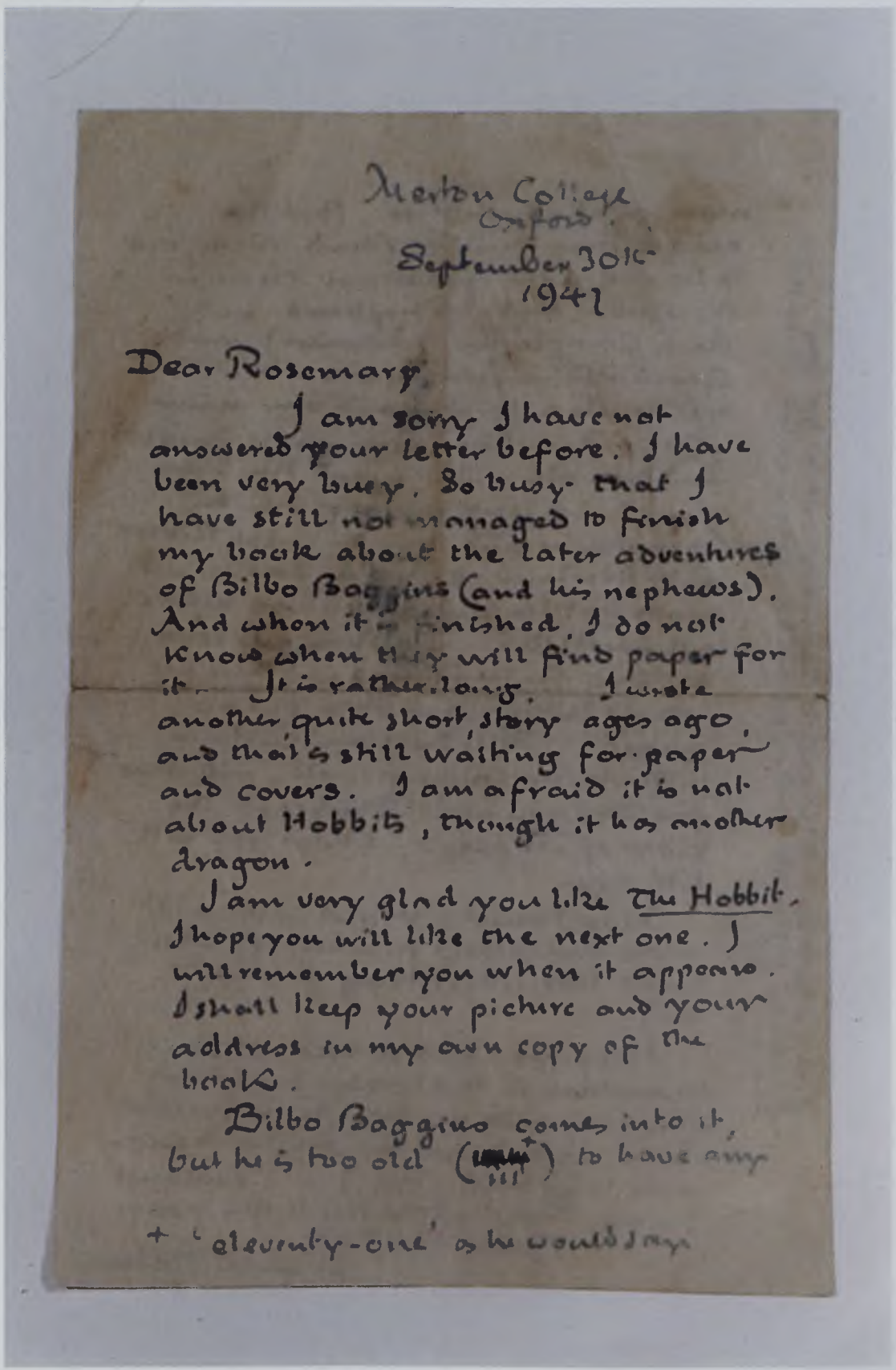
Tolkien went on a summer walking tour only twice with the Lewises, and this to the Malvern Hills in 1947 was the last they went on together. Maybe, had it not been for the Second World War, they might have done other walks between 1937 in the Quantocks and 1947 in Malvern. Then again, maybe Tolkien would have preferred to go at his own pace and experience the things he especially loved on more leisurely walks. It was very satisfying to be able to sample something of the magic of one of these

places, and perhaps we might get to visit the Quantocks in due time – hopefully in less than ten years! It is to be highly recommended to all Tolkien and Lewis lovers everywhere.



The RIDER BY The FERRY

The FELLOWSHIP I-V



Merton College
Oxford.
September 30th
1941

Dear Rosemary,

I am sorry I have not answered your letter before. I have been very busy. So busy that I have still not managed to finish my book about the later adventures of Bilbo Baggins (and his nephews). And when it is finished, I do not know when they will find paper for it. It is rather long. I wrote another quite short story ages ago, and that is still waiting for paper and covers. I am afraid it is not about Hobbits, though it has another dragon.

I am very glad you like The Hobbit. I hope you will like the next one. I will remember you when it appears. I shall keep your picture and your address in my own copy of the book.

Bilbo Baggins comes into it, but he is too old ([illegible]+) to have any

+ 'eleventy-one' as he would say.

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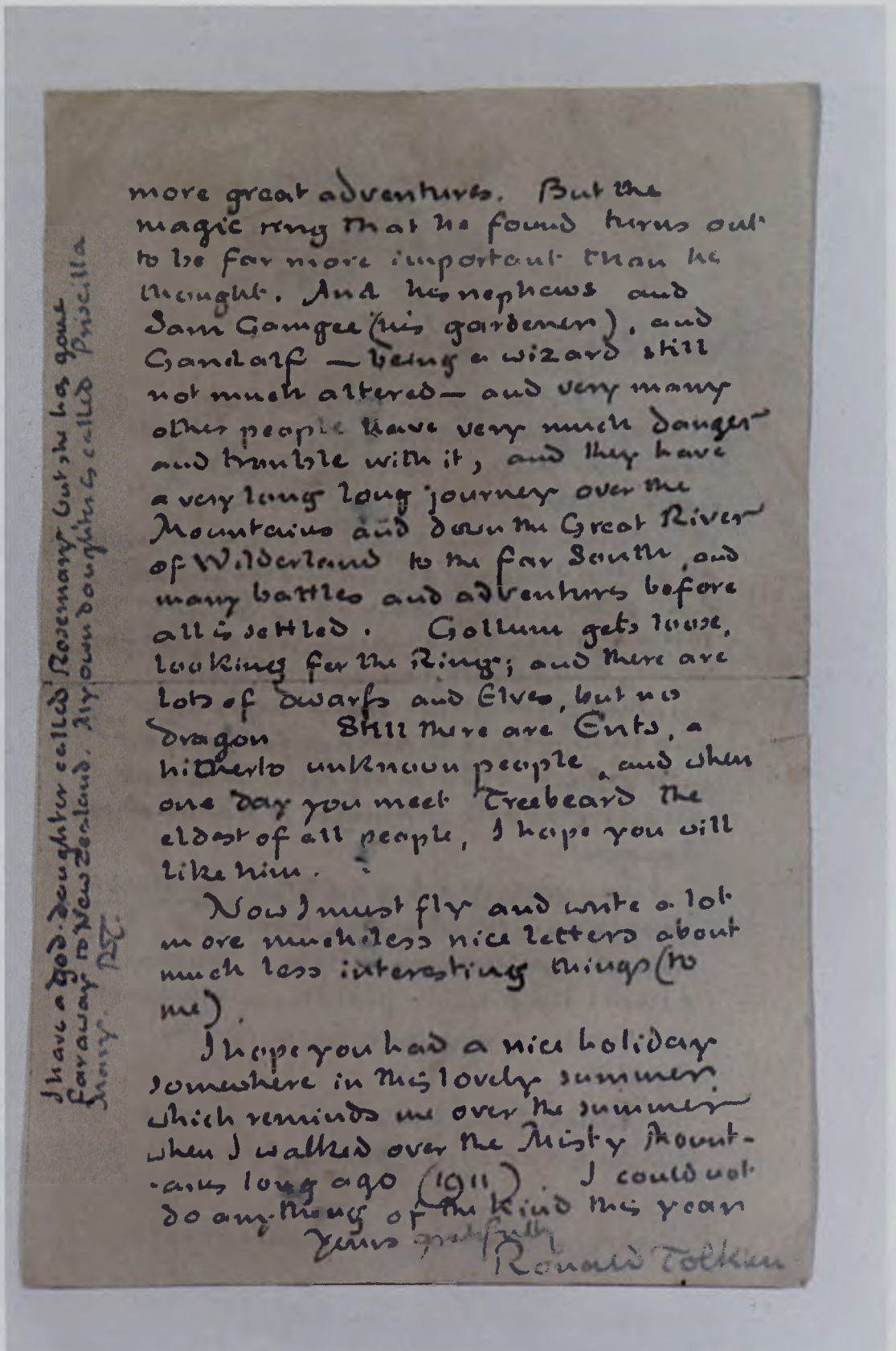


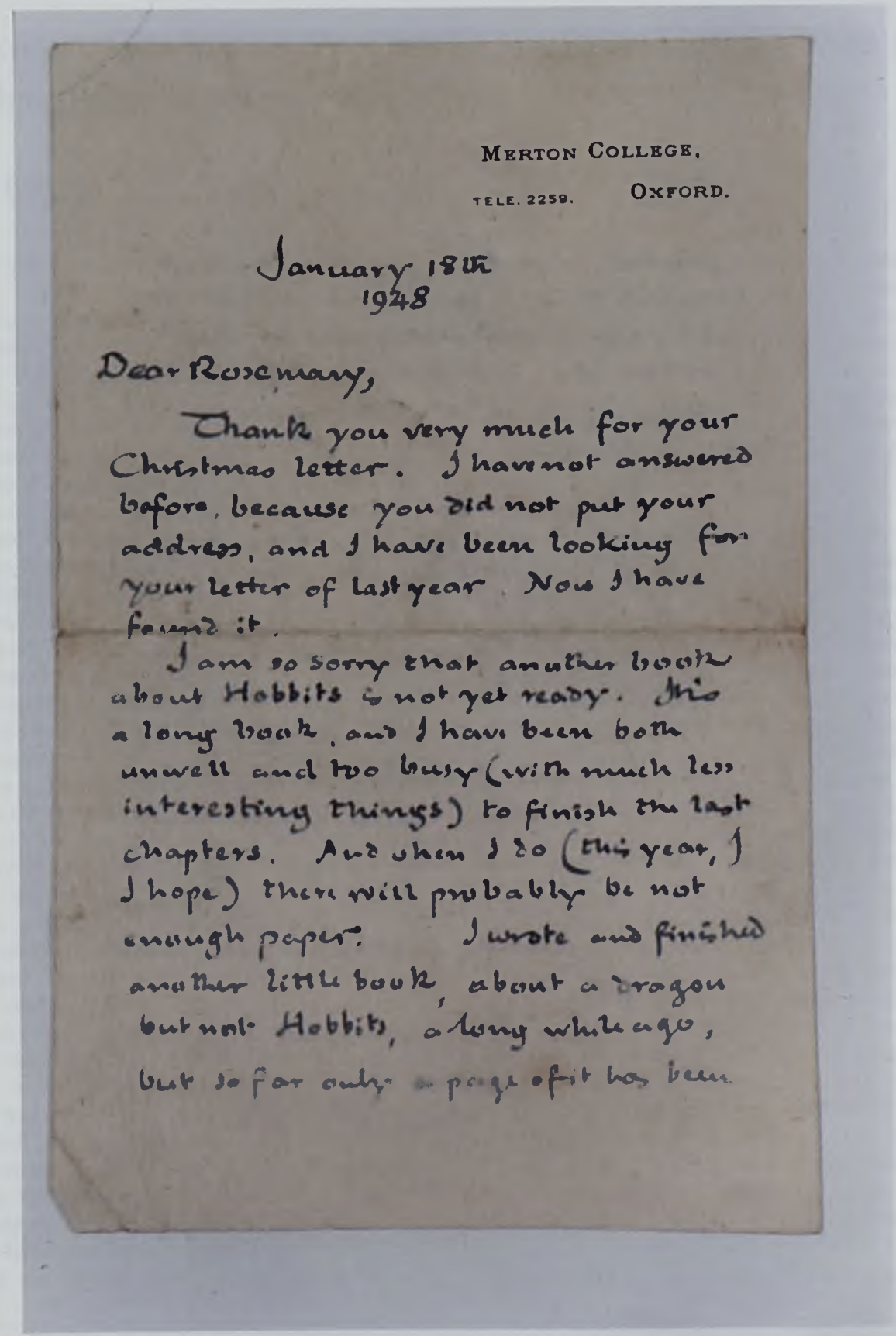
more great adventures. But the magic ring that he found turns out to be far more important than he thought. And his nephews and Sam Gamgee (his gardener), and Gandalf — being a wizard still not much altered — and very many other people have very much danger and trouble with it, and they have a very long long journey over the Mountains and down the Great River of Wilderland to the far South, and many battles and adventures before all is settled. Gollum gets loose, looking for the Ring; and there are lots of dwarfs and Elves, but no dragon. Still there are Ents, a hitherto unknown people, and when one day you meet Treebeard the eldest of all people, I hope you will like him.

Now I must fly and write a lot more mucheless nice letters about much less interesting things (to me).

I hope you had a nice holiday somewhere in this lovely summer which reminds me over the summer when I walked over the Misty Mountains long ago (1911). I could not do anything of the kind this year.

Yours affectionately
Ronald Tolkien

I have a God-daughter called Rosemary. Out she has gone far away to New Zealand. My own daughters called Priscilla Mary. RET



MERTON COLLEGE,
TELE. 2259. OXFORD.

January 18th
1948

Dear Rosemary,

Thank you very much for your Christmas letter. I have not answered before, because you did not put your address, and I have been looking for your letter of last year. Now I have found it.

I am so sorry that another book about Hobbits is not yet ready. It's a long book, and I have been both unwell and too busy (with much less interesting things) to finish the last chapters. And when I do (this year, I hope) there will probably be not enough paper. I wrote and finished another little book, about a dragon but not Hobbits, a long while ago, but so far only a page of it has been

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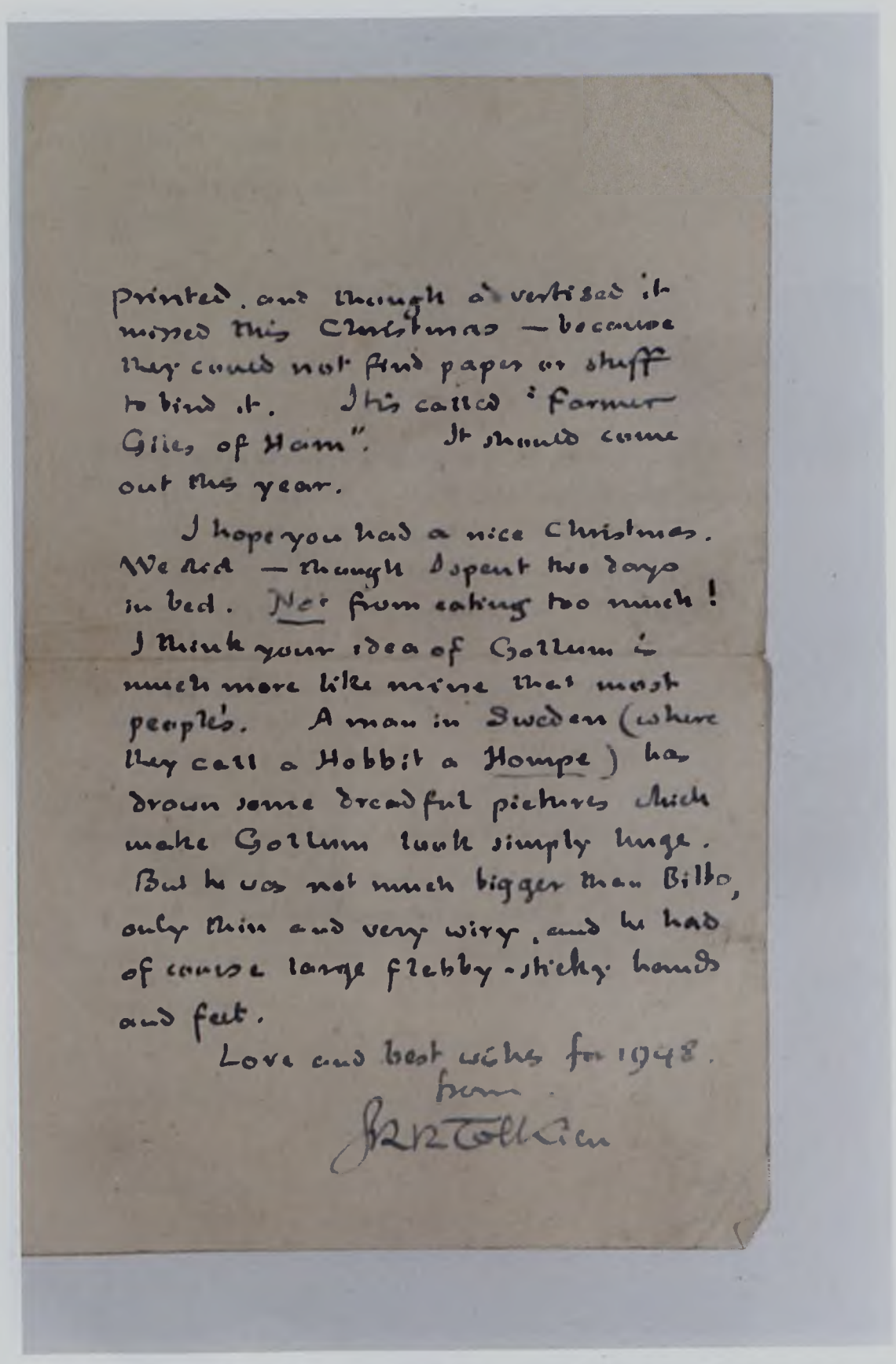

printed, and though advertised it missed this Christmas — because they could not find paper or stuff to bind it. It is called "Farmer Giles of Ham". It should come out this year.

I hope you had a nice Christmas. We did — though I spent two days in bed. Not from eating too much! I think your idea of Gollum is much more like mine that most people's. A man in Sweden (where they call a Hobbit a Hompe) has drawn some dreadful pictures which make Gollum look simply huge. But he was not much bigger than Bilbo, only thin and very wiry, and he had of course large flabby-sticky hands and feet.

Love and best wishes for 1948.
from
J.R.R. Tolkien

Tolkien's World and Wagner's: the music of language and the language of music

John Ellison

Writers and commentators on the life and work of J.R.R. Tolkien almost always discount any comparison of Tolkien's world with Wagner's, as represented by the "Ring", cycle of operas.[1] The topic is discussed, for instance, by Tom Shippey (Shippey, 1982, p. 220 and 1992, p. 296) in, *The Road to Middle-earth*, but there, as apparently everywhere else, the comparison seems to be thought of solely in terms of the respective relationships of Tolkien and Wagner to the original sources, the Old Norse and Germanic mythologies. Certainly there do not seem to be any fruitful grounds for comparison in purely literary terms; likewise there is no evidence whatever for thinking of Wagner's work as an "influence", of any kind as far as Tolkien was concerned. The extent to which Wagner adapted and transformed the material for his own purposes departed a long way from the spirit and atmosphere of the sagas and the Nibelungenlied themselves.[2].

Quite a different picture emerges if Wagner and Tolkien are thought of as artists whose importance in part lay in that they reflected the events, background and spirit of their own times, the romantic nineteenth century and its twentieth century aftermath. In this light it can be seen that both of them deal fundamentally with themes which relate to those times, and also very much to the subsequent periods up to our own time. In their handling of such common themes – power and the corruption inherent in the exercise of power – the despoilment of the natural world by mankind – the inevitability of change and death – they can be seen often enough to cross each other's paths, and sometimes to coincide. I dealt with this topic in a paper given at Cambridge in 1988 at the Tolkien Society's annual Seminar (or "Workshop", as it was then called). I also suggested that a large part of a comparison between them, perhaps the greater part, lay in looking at the respective ways in which they deal with the object of creating a, "Secondary World", of the readers', or listeners', imagination. Wagner's world being created mainly by way of the resources of his huge orchestra, the comparison involved considering the scores of the operas, rather than the texts, the libretti. Such an inquiry could not be followed up within the limits of the 1998 paper, and is attempted in the present article, which constitutes a pendant or sequel to the earlier one.

At this point I intrude a personal note. Many lovers of Tolkien works look back to their first reading of *The Lord of the Rings*, as a special, life-determining experience. The same applies to many Wagnerians in regard to the first time of seeing the "Ring", cycle performed as a whole in the theatre. In my own case the two experiences came close together, and may have overlapped. I saw my first "Ring", at Covent Garden in the spring and early summer of 1955. Two volumes of, *The Lord of the Rings*, had appeared by then, the last volume following in October of that year. I cannot be too precise about the date, but clearly recall the impression that passages from *The Fellowship of the Ring*, and *The Two Towers*, made on me (and the rest of my family), in the summer of that year.

I was fortunate in the performances, which in those years were of a quality that has rarely been equalled since, and perhaps the parallelism would not have struck me so forcibly if I had had to face the kind of musical failings and eccentricities of staging and production that, in more recent years, have bedevilled a good many performances of the operas. Well may many people nowadays retreat from the perils of live theatre, in favour of recordings, where the listener, like the reader of Tolkien, can build up the imaginary world in his or her own mind. I am of course assuming that the reader, if interested enough

[1] The four operas, in order. are *Das Rheingold*, (The Rhinegold) (composed 1853-4); *Die Walküre*, (The Valkyrie) (composed 1854-6); *Siegfried*, (composition between 1856-7 and completed 1869-71); and *Götterdämmerung*, (The Twilight of the Gods) (composed 1869-74).

[2] For Wagner's own handling and adaptation of the original material see Deryck Cooke's unfinished study of the "Ring" cycle. *I saw the world end. – a study of Wagner's Ring.*

to have read this far, will be acquainted with at least some of the music of Wagner's "Ring" (beyond the so-called "Ride of the Valkyries"!), and will have or be able to obtain, access to one or other of the (nowadays) quite numerous recordings, one of which is sung in English.[3] This may assist those for whom the original German text (Wagner's style is highly idiosyncratic) represents a stumbling block.

When one speaks of Wagner's music in, "The Ring", as establishing a "secondary world", in Tolkien's sense one is implying that music is capable of creating, or illustrating, ideas and images outside itself.[4] The development of its expressive powers in this sphere had been taking place for a century and more before Wagner began to compose the music for "The Ring", and has sometimes occupied a chapter in this or that history of music under some such title as "the rise of programme music." A key text, perhaps *the* key text, is Beethoven's "Pastoral", symphony, first performed in 1806, especially with reference to Beethoven's own description of it as, "more an expression of feeling than painting." That is to say, the musical fabric of the work as a whole illustrates nothing but itself, but the emotions it arouses equate with pleasurable thoughts and feelings about the countryside. Set amongst the musical fabric are a number of illustrative touches or passages which represent sonic imitation or parallelism – two solo 'cellos in the slow movement suggesting the rippling of a stream; the bird-song imitations at the end of this movement; the comic village-band imitations in the scherzo, and finally the storm itself, and the shepherds piping after it has died down. These passages and illustrative touches act so as to focus and interrelate the musical material and structure of the symphony as a whole, so that its portrayal of the countryside in its various aspects appears quite complete and wholly satisfying descriptively and emotionally. SO one might compare Turner's capacity for transforming, with a few flourishes, a seemingly abstract "watercolour beginning," into a vision of a ship afloat on a stormy sea.

The same capacity is displayed by Tolkien again and again in, *The Lord of the Rings*. A particularly good instance of it is the reference to the rustling of leaves in the surrounding trees that follows answering distant cries of the Black Riders as the three hobbits journey towards the crossing of the Brandywine. It seems an insignificant detail, and yet its effect is out of all proportion to its prominence; it concentrates and focuses the reader's picture of the scene, and completes the sense of heightened tension which the whole passage evokes. Interestingly, there is a close parallel in Wagner, not in "The Ring", but in *Tristan und Isolde*, (opening of the second act). The sound or rustling leaves suggested in the orchestra by the violins playing tremolando, "on the bridge" (thereby hardening the tone) acts in the context like a slight increase in the tension inherent in the situation already apparent on the stage.

In the case of Beethoven's "Pastoral" symphony the description or illustrative appeal depends on the manifestations of nature, or man amid nature, frequently being sounds themselves, a storm being the most obvious instance. The storm in the "Pastoral" symphony is only one, although the most famous, of a long succession of storms, both in opera and in concert music, extending from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth, and of which Wagner, in the Ring, provides two instances. From about this time onwards another important resource begins to be exploited by composers, namely the manipulation of orchestral tone-colour to produce specific illustrative or dramatic effects. Although available for orchestral music in ant=y form, it proved to be especially applicable and important in regard to opera an theatre music in general, and its most extensive and far-reaching applications were those of Wagner himself.

An outstanding example of the dramatic use of tone-colour, prior to Wagner's composition of any of the Ring operas, is of great interest in the present context, because Tolkien seems to have been aware of it, perhaps even to have picked it up directly. This is the music associated with Samuel, the Demon Huntsman, in Weber's *Der Freischütz*, (1821). Samuel's characteristic motive, three low A's on timpani and double-basses pizzicato, looms through a haze of string tremolo and low sustained notes for clarinets in their lowest register; evoking the dense forest which is the opera's physical background, and the superstitious awe and terror it evokes. The numerous appearances of the motive create the sense of a mysterious and ever-present hostile power. Tolkien once in an interview referred to Weber's music as a counterpart of his own imaginative world, and remarkably, he likens Treebeard's voice to the sound of, "a very deep woodwind instrument",

[3] The recording, taken from live performances, by the English National Opera, conducted by Reginald Goodall.

[4] For a general discussion of this topic, see Cook, 1959, pp. 2-6.

implying the same kind of tone-colour as evocative of Fangorn, and forest depths in general. The simile is a remarkable one because no one without some knowledge of nineteenth century orchestral music is likely to have thought of it; an author less aware musically would probably think of such a sound as that of an organ. Weber was writing in terms of the very limited theatre orchestra of his day. Wagner enlarged the orchestra, for the purposes and requirements of "The Ring", to a hitherto unprecedented size, and developed its resources of tone-colour and texture to match the scale and complexity of his own imagined world. The portrayal of forest depths likewise pervades the first two acts of *Siegfried*, the third opera of the "Ring". Much of its effectiveness lies in the extent to which Wagner emphasises the middle and lower registers of the orchestra, and avoids high-lying writing for strings and woodwind, but from time to time lightening the texture and providing flicks of woodwind colouring to indicate sunlight filtering through from above. Consequently, when, in the third act, Siegfried passes through the fire surrounding the sleeping Brunnhilde, and steps onto the mountain top where she lies, the violins alone, soaring up to the heights, create a powerfully vivid impression of wide open space and brilliant sunlight. At the heart of the forest is the cave where the former giant Fafner, now in dragon shape, lies on the Nibelungs' hoard; a looming presence made evident from time to time in the writing for the lowest brass instruments, contrabass tuba and contrabass trombone.

George Bernard Shaw, who could coin a phrase like no one else, referred to the sound and colour of the Ring scores as "that vast orchestral atmosphere of earth, air, fire and water." The primary image of all, as it is with Tolkien, is that of "earth." The first sound one hears is a low E flat sounded by 'cellos and double-basses as the cycle begins. From its origin here in the depths of the orchestra[5] the primary image is reinforced time and time again throughout the four operas by, "the rugged and massive ground bass," so often pervading the score, with, "the drums muttering the subterranean thunder of Nibelheim", by the cavernous depths of the lower brass, or the dark colours of low woodwind, the latter typically evoking, soon after the curtain has risen for the first time, the bed of the Rhine out of which the dwarf Alberich[6] emerges to set the drama in motion.

Tolkien creates his own world very largely out of sounds, both the sounds of his invented languages, and sounds portrayed or imitated in themselves. Nothing is more characteristic of him than the way in which he builds up the portrait of the cavernous depths of Moria out of sounds, beginning with the contrasting footfalls of the members of the Company after they have first entered the Mines. There follows the soft distant rhythmic figure that answers the "plunk" of the stone dropped by Pippin down the well ("tom-tap, tap-tom") a perfect counterpart for the quiet rhythmic figures for the timpani that Wagner so often uses to define moments of tension, great or small. The rhythmic under-pinning of course grows in weight and power, "drums, drums in the deep", "doom, doom", as the action is propelled forward to its (decidedly Wagnerian) climax at the bridge of Khazad-dûm and the long sad diminuendo that follows.[7]

The phenomena of fire and water, (the former an especially potent image of evil in Tolkien, as with the Balrog or the slumbering red glow of Orodruin), are more directly handled in music by parallelism; fire by the flickering restless music associated with Loge (Lokki) and culminating in the "Magic Fire", episode which ends, *Die Walküre*, water by the ease with which arpeggio figures can suggest the image of rippling water, emerging from the prelude to *Das Rheingold*, weaving their way through the opening scene in the depths of the Rhine, and finally joining with the imagery of fire as the cleansing forces of fire and water overwhelm the scene at the end of *Götterdämmerung*. "Air", on the other hand, can hardly be said to have any musical parallel in itself, unless it is set in motion as wind or breeze. The gentle movement of wind among the trees is suggested by the undulating figure that pervades the "Forest Murmurs", episode in the second act of *Siegfried*.[8] Violent movement, as in a storm is likewise suggested by the furioso rushing, up-and-down scale figure that starts off *Die Walküre*, (itself a descendent of the scale passages in the storm in Beethoven's "Pastoral" symphony).

[5] For acoustic reasons, although not indicated in the score, it is customary to double the opening pedal note on an organ.

[6] Actually, "Schwarzalberich" (Dark Elf). Wotan, Alberich's counterpart and principal opponent is, "Lichtalberich," (Light Elf).

[7] At the end of the chapter, as the drumbeats fade, the impression is decidedly Beethovenish; in this, as in so much else, Wagner's practice develops out of Beethoven's.

[8] This is the title of the once-popular concert arrangement of this episode for orchestra only.

Air in stillness becomes indirectly evident through Wagner's manipulation of space and distance. This is especially a theatrical device made possible by the positioning of on- and offstage sounds which can be made to appear to come from alternate or different directions. It is of course widely employed by composers of opera, especially Romantic opera, but Wagner's use of it is particularly individual and extensive. The indication of space and distance, and its exploitation by description, is likewise Tolkien's principle method of conveying the scale and geography of Middle-earth to the reader, and the scenes and distant prospects that surround the journeyings which make up do much of, *The Lord of the Rings*. It operates more straightforwardly in literary terms, because Tolkien can describe scenes and indicate distances directly, as eh does with the evocative power we all know.

In the theatre the simple device of placing voices or instruments off stage may achieve highly dramatic or evocative results. At the end of *Das Rheingold* the voice of the distant Rhinemaidens lamenting the loss of their stolen Rhinegold, by seeming to come from the depths below stage level, ironically underlines the hollowness of the triumph of the Gods as they enter into their newly-built Walhall (Valhalla), at curtain-fall. Several passages in, *The Lord of the Rings*, imply the same sort of distancing, as for instance the answering cries of the Black Riders, from nearer and farther-off locations, in the passage with, "the wind in the leaves", already mentioned; and of course the outstanding one is the cock-crow at dawn outside Minas Tirith, and the horns of Rohan echoing in the sides of Mindolluin coming as if in answer to it. This might be compared to a more complex usage, in which the "location", of the opening scene of the last act of *Götterdämmerung*, set in late afternoon sunlight by the bank of the Rhine, is established musically. The main element in it of course is the music of the Rhine itself, raised from its original E flat to F major (significantly Beethoven's principal key in the "Pastoral" symphony), coupled with a new, flowing theme in 9/8 time as the Rhinemaidens rise to the surface of the river and their voices enter. The setting already has its own atmosphere of the relaxed warmth of late afternoon, but it is counterpointed by the spacing of various horn calls, Siegfried's own, and those of Hagen and the chorus of the Gibichung vassals, heard in the prelude both from the pit of the orchestra and behind the curtain, and later on spaced out and answering each other and Siegfried onstage from different directions, echoing each other, followed by the distant voices of Hagen and the vassals themselves. The whole scene is thus placed precisely in its setting by the image of towering cliffs and wooded heights rising up on each side, which the whole group of echo-effects produces.

The relaxed mood in which this act opens is heightened by the extreme tension of the drama as it has developed in the act preceding it, and contrast is also a highly effective method of calling up impressions of space and distance. At the end of the opening scene of *Das Rheingold*, set in the depths of the Rhine, its saturated textures melt away into the base sound of two horns sounding the motive of the Ring, as the scene clears to reveal a wide open space on a mountain height, confronting the prospect of the newly built Walhall in the distance. Conversely, the storm that constitutes the first act prelude of *Die Walküre* gives way to the sheltering interior of Hunding's dwelling as the curtain rises; the contrasting atmosphere of warm firelit darkness is established by the orchestral colouring that pervades the music in the early part of the act, with its emphasis on the rich sound of strings in the middle registers supported by horns, and chamber music like scoring with solo 'cello prominent. Another kind of contrast is represented by the orchestral transition which introduces Nibelheim, and typifies its cavernous depths and stifling oppressiveness reaching a tremendous climax as the sound of eighteen anvils behind the scenes breaks in with the hammering rhythm of Alberich's slaves at their labour. The impression of cavernous underground space becomes almost palpable when the clamour is cut off, and replaced by the soft and mysterious sound of muted horns on their own with the motive of the Tarnhelm. The orchestral possibilities of Shelob's lair are fascinating, and Tolkien indeed uses a similar kind of clamour to "bring down the curtain", as Samwise is left apparently powerless outside the rear entrance of Cirith Ungol. The contrast of wide open space with confined closed-in space so characteristic of "The Ring", is of course present throughout, *The Lord of the Rings*. The narrative of the various journeyings, and the wide open lands traversed, is interspersed with "closed-in", scenes such as the firelit warmth of Elrond's house, the cave of Henneth Annûn, or the dim interior of Théoden's hall.

Perhaps Tolkien and Wagner are most closely comparable in regard to their mutual concern with, and attention to, the phenomena of time and weather.

They, both of them, are "Northern", artists, and so of course is J.W.M. Turner, of whom it might indeed be said that his principle subject matter is, "the weather." Wagner's first important opera *Der Fliegende Holländer*, (The Flying Dutchman), was coloured by his experience of an exceedingly rough and dangerous sea voyage from Riga to London, and a conductor of the opera once complained about, "the wind that whistles out at you wherever you open the score." Instances of the motion of wind, both as light breeze and raging storm, have been quoted above. On Tolkien's part, the meticulousness with which he indicates the state of the weather at every stage of the Ring's journey, and the dramatic and narrative importance of scenes such as the snowfall on Caradhras, or the storm in the Emyn Muil, are sufficiently clear, even more significant perhaps is the storm that passes over Edoras, followed by sunshine which underlines Théoden's waking to resolution and action. This exemplifies the especial Romantic tendency to equate the personal or psychological states of individuals with the physical nature of their surroundings, and in this sense both Tolkien's and Wagner's characters are very much at one with their environment. Wotan's rages in *Die Walküre*, are at one with the storms that rage around him, and Frodo's and Sam's progress across the desolate wastes of the Dead Marshes and Mordor is as much a spiritual journey as it is a material one.

The "plein-air," scenes of *Das Rheingold*, are full of musical evocations of weather and the passage of time, clearly perceivable as representing one single day from dawn to sunset: The string tremolos descriptive of the mist that swirls round the Gods as they age and wither after Freia's departure with the Giants; the sun breaking through the mist in the rising and arching line in the violins as the Giants return with her; the darkening of the sky at the apparition of Erda, lightening again as the apparition fades; the sultry heaviness in the air before Donner summons the mists and calls up the thunderclap that forges the rainbow leading the Gods to Walhall, and the light of evening in Walhall as the storm clears away; all those effects are realised with absolute precision in the score. The same kind of richness and detail in the observation of natural phenomena are manifest throughout *Die Walküre*, together with a time-scheme meticulously indicated, both in the original stage directions and as evident in the colour of the music. At the start of the opera it is, "getting on towards evening," and the storm in the prelude to the first act, rising inexorably to the clap of thunder at its climax, nicely counterparts Tolkien's storm in the Emyn Muil at the climax of the "prelude," to Book IV. In the second act the colour of the music makes the atmosphere sequence quite clear; full daylight as the curtain rises, becoming overcast as the act continues, until near the end the stage has darkened and the clouds have become, "so thick that the mountain pass is invisible; thunder and lightning break out with Wotan's departure in fury as the curtain falls. Foul weather continues for the earlier pad of the last act, but finally twilight falls, followed by night in the long final scene between Wotan and Brunnhilde, and Wotan's farewell as he leaves her on her fire-encircled rock.

Thee process of musical illustration, or parallelism, relates also, of course to the detail of stage action and gesture, notably in the scene of the forging of Siegfried's sword, where the various metallurgical processes involved all have their analogies in sound in the orchestra. At the simplest level, the "Sword motive", (one of the half-dozen or so most prominent and recurring "leading-motives"), is no more than a musical thumbnail impression of a man pulling a sword out of its sheath and holding it up in the air.

The interaction of musical illustration with stage direction and incident has one especially interesting application in a scene which is worth mentioning in some detail, as it conveys a very Tolkien-like impression of scene, place and time. This is the opening scene of the second act of *Götterdämmerung*, set at night on the bank of the Rhine in front of the Hall of the Gibichungs,[9] the interior of which has been the setting of much of the first act. Hagen, the "evil genius", of this, the last opera of the cycle, the son of the dwarf Alberich, sits brooding by the river-bank, and is suddenly confronted with the apparition of his father, demanding of him almost hysterically that he stays faithful to the goal of regaining the Ring for him. Alberich's total enslavement to the desire of repossessing the Ring (much as Gollum is enslaved) is vividly expressed in the music of the prelude, with its slow syncopated pulse and the harsh darkened harmonies grinding their way throughout it. As the curtain rises a solo trumpet in the orchestra provides a counterpart of the dim shape of Hagen outlined in the

[9] The Germanic tribe (known historically) conceived as having settled on the west bank of the middle Rhine in the fifth century AD.

darkness; it echoes the musical outline of Hagen's final words at the end of his monologue, "Hagen's Watch," in the previous act. A shaft of moonlight lights up the scene to a stab of colour in high woodwinds, and at once the violins play a rapid staccato transformation of the Ring motive which creates an image of Allberich, "flitting like a wraith," (as Tolkien might put it) through the shadows and now appearing in front of Hagen. the whole sequence takes up only a few bars from the rise of the curtain, and yet the pictorial quality of the scene is perfectly captured in this small compass. As the scene ends and Hagen is left alone, still sitting like a statue beside the river-bank, the approach of day is signalled, firstly by a new theme slowly unwinding itself on the bass clarinet over the slow pulse of the 'cellos, and then by the red glow of dawn spreading over the scene as eight horns, grouped in successive waves, take the theme up in a rich B flat major. Then the rich colour fades out in the music into the harsh cold light of day as Siegfried now enters and the next stage of the action begins. In much the same mode does Tolkien describe daybreak over Parth Galen as a prelude to the dramatic sequence of events leading to the breaking of the Fellowship, "The day came like fire and smoke. Low in the East there were black bars of cloud like the fumes of a great burning. The rising sun lit them from beneath with flames of murky red; but soon it climbed above them into a clear sky. The summit of Tol Brandir was tipped with gold." (Tolkien, 1966, p. 411).

One is left with the feeling that if Tolkien had been a composer, this is the way in which his operas would have been written. Of course the parallel between the holocaust that overwhelms Barad-dûr and its counterpart overwhelming Walhall and the Gods at the end of *Götterdämmerung*, hardly needs stressing.

Tolkien's world and Wagner's are structured worlds, as they have to be if they are to function at all. Tolkien's emerges out of his primary concern with words and out of his invented languages, and Wagner's world emerges in music as represented by the structure of "leading-motives," (*leitmotiven*) that runs through the "Ring" operas. Many other composers of course have used recurring musical themes or ideas as a means of recalling past scenes or events or as a means of characterization, but there are normally specific references presented to the listener's conscious attention. Wagner's method is a special case in that, firstly the network of recurring musical ideas or phrases is all-pervasive, and embraces the entire musical structure of the operas, and secondly, in that much of it does not operate in the forefront of the listener's mind. That is to say, while some of the motives (that of the Sword previously mentioned is a good instance) stand out and draw attention to themselves every time they appear, many others, continually re-appearing in new shapes or transformations, operate like an unconscious system of reminiscence and cross-reference, so that the relevant associations are set up in the background of the listener's mind without conscious awareness of them.

Such a process has a certain similarity to the operation and effects of Tolkien's languages, as evident in *The Lord of the Rings*, their principal outlet, of course, is in the form of nomenclature. Intruding a personal note once again, especially as a non-linguist, I clearly recall that one of the strongest impressions made on me by my first reading of *The Lord of the Rings*, was fascination with the sound of Tolkien's names for places, things or persons. Such names as Cirith Ungol, Dol Guldur, Carach Angren, Osgiliath, or Boromir, Faramir, Finduilas, Ecthelion, appeared to set up a network of associated ides arising out of the resonance and recurrence of the sounds comprising them. The explanation, of course, lay in Tolkien's mastery of words and language with the result that his, "invented," languages "work", as real ones. But further than this, there are even instances which offer a parallel to the workings of Wagner's leading-motives, a prime one being Tolkien's use of the element, "Morgul", with the meaning of, "sorcery". This is not simply used as a place name element, as with "Minas Morgul," equivalent to "the tower of sorcery." It appears on a number of occasions as a specific sound in its own right, independent of the actual sense of the context involved, as with "They tried to pierce your heart with a Morgul-knife which remains in the wound," (Tolkien, 1966, p. 234). The effect is to create the associated idea of, "sorcery", as an adjunct to or a component of the total sense of the sentence, in the mind of the reader. It represents a, "sorcery-motive," in old-fashioned Wagnerian terminology; in a Wagnerian opera it would be represented not in the words of the libretto, but as a specific musical phrase or idea, in appropriately sinister orchestral tone-colour, say, that of clarinets and bassoons in the lowest register, or that of muted brass. Another instance of the same thing is the recurrence of the

element, "dwim" ("an old word", says T.A. Shippey, for "nightmare", or "illusion", (Shippey, 1982, p. 99; 1992, p. 117)), as in, "dwimer-crafty", "foul dwimmerlaik", "Dwimorberg", "webs of deceit were ever woven in Dwimordene", in the various contexts setting up the mental association with the idea of "nightmare", "illusion", or "phantom".

A further aspect of large-scale structure needs to be mentioned by way of comparison and conclusion. This is the reader's, and the listener's, sense of onward progression towards a final resolution or catharsis. This is to say that Tolkien's and Wagner's structures are articulated in terms of a sense of time and the gradual heightening of tension inherent in its passage, which nevertheless can be stressed or relaxed as the occasion requires. C.S. Lewis put it succinctly, "the steady upward slope of grandeur and terror, (not unrelieved by green dells, without which it would indeed be intolerable)."[10] Frodo's and Sam's journey with the Ring, in terms of a sense of time, seems to become ever more agonizingly slow the nearer they approach Mordor and the Fiery Mountain, and the feeling is intensified by the predominantly fast pacing and crowded events of Books II and V, in which they do not appear. Nevertheless there are "the green dells," the principal episode of relaxation being the sojourn in Lothlórien, where time is totally suspended. Its counterpart in Wagner's "Ring" is the episode in the second act of *Siegfried*, in which Siegfried is left alone in the forest clearing by the dragon's cave, to relax amid the sounds of nature. Throughout "The Ring", as a whole the listener's sense of the onward progression of time towards catharsis is regulated by the underlying pulse of the music, and the shaping of successive scenes and complete acts as wholes in terms of a continuous process of symphonic development. At least that is the ideal, but unhappily there are very few conductors (fewer than once there were) capable of realising this effectively in performance. As has been previously hinted near the beginning of this article, a profound practical difference exists as regards the relative positions of the reader of Tolkien and the listener to or spectator of Wagner's "Ring", in that the latter is dependant on quality of performance and the former is not.

All of the comparisons that have been drawn up to now do not imply, and are not meant to imply, that all lovers of Tolkien's works and readers of *The Lord of the Rings*, will automatically find themselves on familiar ground if they find themselves suddenly confronted by or plunged into the midst of Wagner's "Ring" cycle. This is, after all, the largest and most complex musical structure ever planned and composed. Anyone who comes to it without some sort of experience of classical or Romantic music in general and the Viennese masters, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, in particular is liable to experience the feelings of one who, in the process of learning to swim, is "thrown in at the deep end." Nor is anything here meant to imply that Wagner is the only composer whose music may be recalled by *The Lord of the Rings*, or by Tolkien's writings in general. Tolkien's own liking for the music of C.M. von Weber has already been mentioned, and a number of late Romantic composers might also be suggested whose music could recall Tolkien's world, notably, to this writer, Dvorak and Smetana. We especially need to remember Elgar, a West Midlander like Tolkien himself. There are many passages in the music of Elgar which could very well convey Tolkien-like overtones to many listeners, in particular a little-known and rarely performed piece, the incidental music to W.B. Yeat's play *Grania and Diarmid* which features a funeral ode that chimes perfectly with the passing of Boromir.

We do not know whether comparisons of this sort ever occurred to Tolkien himself, beyond his recorded references to Weber's music mentioned above; his love of music in general is well known and frequently evident in his writings. He seems to have attended performances of one or other of the "Ring" operas at Covent Garden occasionally, before the second World War, in the company of C.S. Lewis.[11] We would very much like to know what were his reactions to the music, but presumably we never shall. But to compare Tolkien's achievement with that of another artist working in another medium – and an artist wholly different in personality – no two people could have been more *unlike* each other than Tolkien and Wagner! – provides a valuable way of looking at his work and his genius in a new and unfamiliar light.

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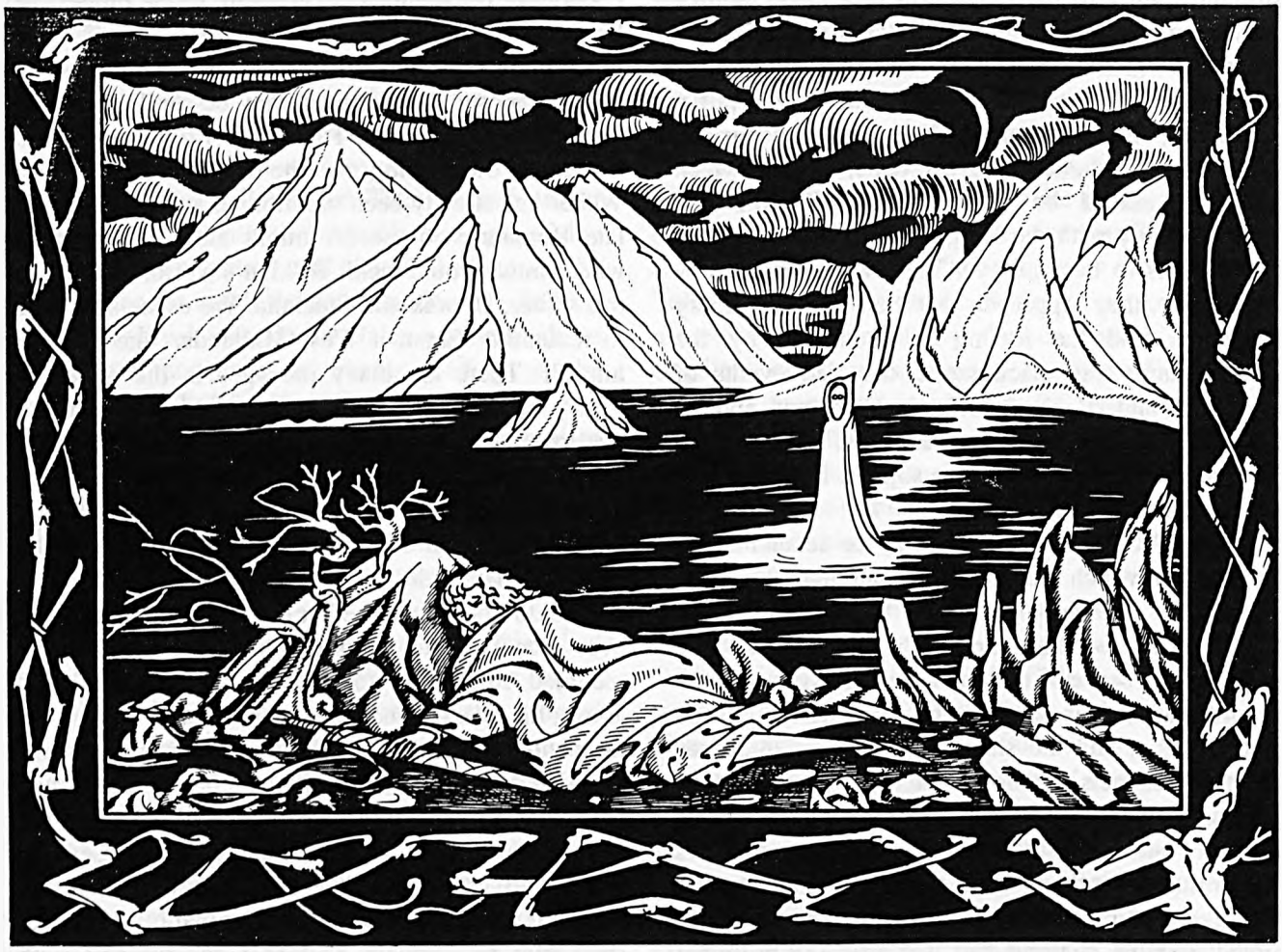

Fanfare for the Common Man

Len Sanford

Proud, bombastic and fatally flawed, the character of Boromir has usually enjoyed a pretty bad press among Tolkien aficionados, primarily, the author believes, for the inadequate reason that he isn't an awfully nice chap and is given to the odd bout of grand larceny. But there is a side to him that demands our attention and sympathy - he represents the weakness of Mankind.

Thesis

The tragically flawed character of Boromir is arguably the most ambiguous in *The Lord of the Rings*. The author kills him off at the end of book two, and Tolkien enthusiasts have been queuing up to plunge in their own daggers ever since. Certainly, if finding fault with a character makes any sense at all, which I doubt, Boromir's invites it. He appears to be a noble lord, but he lacks aspects of nobility. He has pretensions to long lineage, but is definitely 'trade,' compared to the 'upstart' Aragorn. We can believe in his strength, but not his strength of character; we can trust him to live up to his own ideals, but we cannot trust his ideals: above all he has a regrettable tendency to shoot himself in the foot with the canons of good taste. This excites a faint ridicule and goes some way towards explaining the persistent fashion to finish the job and assassinate his character too.

In all the Company every other character grows in stature; only Boromir diminishes. Gradually the author strips away his most prized possessions. He loses his horse at the ford, his dignity at the Council, his self-possession at the Gate, his self-confidence at Lórien, his nerve at the Argonath, his senses at Parth Galen and finally his horn and his life nearby in the woods. His one gain in all this, the gold belt, is a barely concealed insult from Galadriel, whose smug waspishness is nowhere else shown to better advantage.

Despite all this we don't feel much sympathy for him. By the judicious application of a few carefully chosen character traits based on the author's perception that most people give far more weight to a superficial weakness than a hidden strength, Tolkien has set him up to take the drop, a task the more difficult because among all the major characters Boromir most closely represents the reader. So how should the reader react? Perhaps we should react by looking a little deeper. Boromir gives us the opportunity to achieve the kind of empathy with others that comes from seeing our own reflection in a mirror.

Whatever our aspirations, we cannot readily imagine ourselves as Aragorn, who is too high born, or Faramir, who is too high-minded. Legolas and Gimli are emphatically not human, and if the author had allowed us to feel that we understood them too well he would have failed in his portrayal of what should be strange and mysterious characters, so different in kind to us that we should find them always elusive.

Gandalf of course is simply out of reach, except for those of us who habitually regard ourselves as demigods. The hobbits are a better bet - many Tolkien fans identify with them, all too often dress like them, and even more often share their eating habits and tastes. And we are intended to see ourselves in them; quaint, gentle rustic folk with simple tastes and pleasures, an innocent side to our character long since submerged by over industrialization and citification, one that we might often wish for its return.

They might be the kind of folk that we could have become, had our nature been less ambitious. But to role-play in the less demanding world of the hobbits is a fantasy of our own making, not the author's, although it is true that as hobbit characters grow in stature, they fill out and become more like our own idea of ourselves as humans.

Boromir is within reach. He is noble, but nobility of a kind flawed by personal ambition. This is not a characteristic associated with Aragorn, who represents selfless power, the agent of a greater power rather than a power in his own right. This we can respect more readily. Even when Aragorn flaunts his power and status, (which he does rather often, although in a characteristic genuflection to class Tolkien has his characters claiming that he doesn't) he never does it inappropriately, and he is just as willing to humble himself when necessary, as in the inn at Bree. Boromir however is first and foremost a great and courageous warrior, a professional soldier, but hasty and even perhaps reckless. He is dutiful, but

grudgingly so on occasion. He is lordly, but proud and haughty too. He is pragmatic rather than perceptive, and considerate on demand rather than kindly by nature. All in all, he sounds rather like an ordinary man, although he must do for women too. For who have women to identify with? Not Galadriel or Arwen, who are simply too magnificent. Not Rosie Cotton, who is too fleeting and excruciatingly narrow minded. Perhaps Éowyn, the Valkyrie who turns to womanly pursuits, although her royal blood is a problem, her role rather too heroic, and her destiny an affront to feminist principles. No, Boromir is our man. He is heir to a great kingdom but he fails the test of kingship.

Character development

Tolkien's realization of the Boromir character did not suffer a great many changes from draft to draft. Although his exact fate was unknown there are strong indications that he was intended almost from the first to present an ambivalent nature and to provide a microcosm within the Company itself - what C S Lewis, in his essay 'The Dethronement of Power' called the climax to Volume 1, 'the struggle between good and evil in the mind of Boromir'.

But, probably because of the pivotal nature of Boromir's necessarily contradictory character we are given a detailed picture of him, with clues being added during the creative process as the precise nature and complexity of his role became clear to the author. His role however did not undergo the great changes that we see in Frodo and Aragorn except in one short lived but spectacular outcome where in a sketch of future events ('The story foreseen from Moria',Tolkien 1989, pp 207 et sqq) he has descended wholly into evil, abandoned Minas Tirith out of jealousy for Aragorn who has been chosen as the new leader and gone over to Saruman. It is possible, although I think not likely, that some aspects of Boromir that survive to the final version contain vestiges of the man that ultimately he did not become.

In the first draft of 'Many Meetings' (LotR Book II) he is absent, and does not appear until the 'third phase' (C Tolkien). He is 'a Man of noble face, but dark and sad' (Tolkien, 1998, p395). Little is known of him but Tolkien (in an uncertain script) has him as the Lord of Ond or perhaps *from* the Land of Ond. If he was ever to have been a chieftain the intention soon disappears. Elrond introduces him with no ceremony, and with this we can readily concur, because what King would undertake such a journey in such a way? In any case the martial aspects of his nature are quickly established, as is his pride in Gondorian steadfastness. A sketch of events to come, contemporary with this draft, has Boromir now as a prince of Ond, and introduces the treachery motif, although not yet in association with Boromir: but in this sketch as an afterthought Boromir is added to the Company. Almost immediately is added the idea that Boromir's home lies on the way to Mordor; and the important codicil that (cf. Trotter) he is NOT a Númenórean. Indeed the nimbus of an idea seems to enter that this point, that of clumsiness as opposed to Númenórian grace, as the hobbits dismiss him as 'only one of the big folk, a bit stupid'. Soon this will develop into the important theme of social degradation - Boromir is the coming man, a Middle type between the High and the Low, a trend welcomed by Éomer, and regretted by Faramir as Tolkien himself regretted the descent from a nobler age.

Gradually, vital clues to Boromir's nature are added. His horn, along with all his horn blowing activities, has to wait quite a long time to turn up; but soon we find out (at Caradhras) that he is strong, good hearted and resourceful. He is the first to realise the Hobbits are in trouble in the snow, an idea that survives to the final version, and with Trotter still a hobbit, is landed with doing all the fetching and carrying that gets them out of trouble. Indeed at this stage he is also the leader and pathfinder in the tough stretches, possessing ranger-like abilities that eventually transfer to Aragorn. In early drafts of the Mines of Moria his hasty and quarrelsome side is apparent; but in these versions he is certainly not daunted by Gandalf's anger.

Once settled into the text, Boromir's character continues to develop even after his death in the reformed attitudes of his comrades. Boromir's last request of Aragorn, that he save Minas Tirith, of course comes true. And despite their continual rivalry Aragorn does not blame Boromir for the apparent chaos following his death - his heroism has completely exonerated him. And of crucial importance is that Boromir's death is the plot impulse that sets the evil forces working against themselves.

Plot and function

Boromir's character is formed almost entirely by his plot function at the centre of the pivotal point of the epic, the events at Parth Galen. Almost alone among

analysts Paul Kocher (1972) concentrates on *function*. He sees evidence for a belief in a designing Providence in the "long sequence of hairsbreadth successes stemming from Boromir's fall". Merry and Pippin are included in the Company at the last minute, allowing Boromir to redeem himself and thus ultimately to bring about the crucial interference of the Ents. One might reasonably comment that if Boromir is a tool of fate, then his fall is by no means a personal failure; but if he is allowed free will, then the workings of providence, which must wait on human decisions, are necessarily of a somewhat reflexive and improvised nature. It's no wonder there are so many apparent close calls on which hang the fates of nations - providence is a gal who just loves keeping us in suspense - because there is always a whole succession of back up positions yet to be invented by an infinitely resourceful Unseen Presence. But continuous references by the major characters, especially Gandalf, to such chains of events (Gollum's part in the fate of the Ring, the bands of orcs bringing Merry and Pippin to Fangorn, Gandalf's 'death' in mortal combat with the Balrog and reincarnation in more powerful form) leave us in no doubt as to the author's certainty about what his characters believe.

But in terms purely of dramatic function, Boromir's temporary fall into evil has brought forth good, a theme that repeats itself throughout the epic.

Character and character weakness

We find out quickly enough that Boromir is a great warrior, and a born leader who demands the leading role in all things, though by no means injudiciously, as his deference to Gandalf and Aragorn shows. But he is aware of his status as heir to the Steward, while his ambition leads him to hope for kingship. And, briefly, that hope is kindled by contact with the Ring, by whose power he believes he could achieve a new and greater royal lineage with the defeat of Sauron; and the author reinforces the theme that one who intends to use the Ring must 'become' Sauron.

Some analysts interpret this as showing Boromir's essentially evil nature. Jane Chance Nitzsche (1979, p29) refers to pairs of opposites such as 'Faramir and Boromir, Denethor's good and evil sons', and later to Boromir as the evil, or at least threatening, aspect of the Company; while Randal Helms (1974/1976) refers to the 'evil will' of Boromir. A more attractive explanation and in line with what we know of the author's mind is that it is the expression of an ancient Christian belief - that only the highest kind of mind is proof against exposure of its weaknesses to evil influence. Frodo himself actually does no better than Boromir when it comes to the final temptation.

Gradually we find that he has an impressive array of prejudices - against elves, wizards, the Lady (shared by other men in Minas Tirith) and against hobbits. But what to a modern mind might be interpreted as an inherent evil is in Middle Earth commonplace. The hobbits for example are are deeply prejudiced on their own account, believing men to be slow and stupid (reference Frodo at Rivendell talking of Boromir) although they will make an exception for Aragorn who seems to have dazzled them by his star quality from the first.

Shippey again; 'Kind as he is, one can imagine Boromir as a ring wraith; his never-quite-stated-opinion that the end justifies the means adds a credible perspective to corruption. The same could be said of his father Denethor, to whom Gandalf again makes the point that even unhandled the Ring can be dangerous.' (Shippey, 1982, p125).

Boromir is in a more abstract way central to the *The Lord of the Rings* plot line. As it develops, so does he. It was always easy to deduce, for anyone who had read The Hobbit, that *The Lord of the Rings* started out as another *Hobbit* and developed into an epic, because the marks of that transformation were not erased from the text. We now have Tolkien's own authority for this development, through his son's work on the Histories. It is typical of Tolkien that he contrives to turn that weakness into a strength. And it is evident that Boromir's character develops in the same way, as Tolkien changes his mind about the shape, scope and direction of *The Lord of the Rings*.

Any presentiment he has had about Boromir's future seems too vague to be useful.

Of course if Gandalf is Tolkien in Middle-earth, then he cannot be Christ figure that is often deduced: the notion seems to me representative of a deep lying misunderstanding of Gandalf's character and purpose, and it goes against instinct. There are similarities, it is true in his brought-low-among-men status, but he is a demi-god, not a god; he has no redemptive-for-all-time purpose. He is much more like an eminence gris; he is Tolkien walking about in his own story; but Tolkien feels instinctively that he should be absent at times, so as not to overdo the act. He is, in fact, too powerful to be ever-present.

As an agent of change

The Ring works on Boromir's weak point – his excessive patriotism – which is one with the temptations of others who come into contact with it. But in company with theologians down the ages we can never be sure whether Boromir's ordeal is a result of his own internal 'evil' or because he has had to deal with an evil external force, a point exactly mirrored in Boromir's conversation with Aragorn at the threshold of Lórien when Boromir distrusts Galadriel's designs as possibly hostile, while Aragorn warns about the evil a man carries within himself.

Shippey mentions (Shippey, 1982, p137) Boromir's perversity in claiming the journey to Rivendell clearly meant for Faramir, thereby changing his own and probably Middle Earth's history. Did Boromir really have the dream? We can't be sure, but we can be fairly sure that he wouldn't have shrunk from inventing it if he felt a great enough need. More than once, and this is an example of it, the Fates have to move to circumvent an act of human perversity, and whatever view we take there is little doubt that that was Tolkien's view. It is in part at least an answer to the philosophical problem of Free Will versus Destiny; humans have free will in so far as they can act freely within their own time; but a greater power, with a cool eye and a vast time scale at its disposal, may outwait and convert all attempts, accidental or deliberate, at deflecting it from its long term purposes.

As part of the Nordic tradition

Shippey sees Boromir as representing a stage of Frodo's development. His 'mere furious dauntlessness' is better than Frodo's initial inertia, but less than his later selfless and hopeless resolve (Shippey, 1982, p189) and is symbolized by his use of the horn inherited from his father. When he winds it at the door of Rivendell he is declaring his reckless indifference to whether the enemy (Evil) is greater or stronger than Good. Again this links Boromir strongly to us. His heroism is that heroism of the Nordic heroes, that Tolkien so strongly admired. It is the valour of the ordinary man. Uncertain of help from fate or the gods, unsure of the ultimate triumph of Good, adrift among and dwarfed by great powers capable of crushing human efforts with ease, nonetheless he fights on in the teeth of hopeless odds and trusting only in his own strength of will and sense of rightness. Éomer, Tolkien's Nordic leader of a Nordic race, would have understood this perfectly, as he crashed roaring over the battlefield of Pelennor toward the foes from Mordor, a red mist in his eyes.

Boromir belongs in that simpler world where people know their place and their destiny, where nobility means a glorious heathen end. Such ideas are seductive; it takes a pretty dull kind of pragmatist to deny their value; we dismiss such ideas at our peril; precisely the same cast of mind leads people to risk or give up their lives in attempts to save others, often strangers. It is worth noting that without Gandalf's intervention, Faramir may well have sacrificed himself in that way.

As a recipient of the Binary Opposites award

A device often employed in *The Lord of the Rings* for social commentary is what Anne Petty (1979) calls the pair of binary opposites. In one aspect of their characters Boromir and Faramir could be considered to represent the polarization of humans into male and female sides. Boromir, the more masculine side, is clearly his father's son while we are told that Faramir resembles more his mother. In this particular battle Faramir 'wins', that is he survives and goes on to greater things - in fact he inherits Boromir's place. But with survival as the prize, pragmatism, the female approach, and heroism, the male approach, each has its adherents. It is not hard to find females to ridicule male heroism as mere posturing, nor males to characterize pragmatism as moral cowardice. Both attitudes are equally valid, I think, and certainly equally shallow. But this analysis misses an important point. Actually Boromir's readiness to use any means at hand to gain what he considers a worthy end places him in the middle, between pragmatist and Hero. What then is a hero? I suppose heroes need some explaining nowadays. It is a person who acts, regardless of personal risk, on some high ideal, a principle adhered to before the fact and evidence of experience; and not from a short term expediency even for the good of others.

Class, status and physicality

The short and stocky muscularity of orcs as portrayed by most artists is traditionally associated with villains and the lower classes. Partly it is the old association with manual working, partly it is the association with animals, partly it is an aesthetic valuation based on a judgement about elegance of shape. Dwarves are lower class, but worthy - it's not their fault they are the illegitimate sons of Middle Earth. Hobbits are saved by their podginess and general middle class

well to do air. Still they remain insignificant ('all your stupid Bolgers and Bracegirdles') and only by enormous effort achieve greatness.

Slimmer longer limbs are associated with goodness and innocence, even hereditary greatness. *The Lord of the Rings* is shot through with this symbology. A graph of status against height would be a virtually unbroken straight line, an almost perfect correlation whether applied to races or to individuals.

Some artists have Boromir as a more slender figure, although Tolkien has him as tall (but shorter than Aragorn, naturally, to mark his slightly lower status) and more heavily built (the 'great arms' that clear away the snow) which denotes his lower status both as a species and on the aristocratic scale. Boromir even points to it himself ('bodies must serve (i.e. lower functionaries) when heads (i.e. leaders, intellectuals) have failed'). There is a note of derision in this little speech. In spirit Boromir one of us. Our leaders may know more than us, and we hope against experience that they are cleverer, but we still have to get them out of trouble once in a while. This clearly identifies Boromir with the masses. One could imagine that he has risen from the ranks, not a thinker but a man of action. Such a man might make mistakes, but they are understandable, the kind of mistakes we ourselves would make. In the end Boromir fails the ultimate test not through a lack of social status but because of his spiritual status - he is an ordinary man. A born noble would not have failed.

As a class symbol

'He is a valiant man' says Aragorn of Boromir. Translation - we went to the same kind of public school. Note that in earlier versions, while Aragorn was still Trotter of humble birth, it is *Gandalf* who has this line. The ambivalence about Boromir's true character is most apparent in his uncertain class. Nowhere else in this class ridden novel is there such a dilemma. The other main characters treat him like a naughty schoolboy (at the Departure from Rivendell, at the Moria Gate). But why is it in so off-hand a manner (Boromir mentions in passing that Denethor is his father) that we find out that he is an aristocrat from a ruling house? There is little evidence in his actions to support the idea of the 'lordly bearing', other than a mention of his rich but travel stained clothing. Nor can I find any evidence in the History that Tolkien ever intended his true status to be emphasised at this stage, although it is evident that his tetchiness at the Council was a later development, possibly dating from the moment the author realized Boromir's destiny.

But our leaders, Tolkien says, must be noble. Why? Because only the noble spirit is proof against the temptations of evil, both the great and the small, here represented by the Ring, which only works at all if partnered by a living agency. So it is a weapon that only works by the living on the living, which puts the responsibility squarely on us.

The theme occurs repeatedly in the Silmarillion and *The Lord of the Rings*, most immediately by Denethor's failure with the Palantir. Perhaps here again is a hint from the sponsor - true nobles would have withstood the Ring and the Palantir, as Faramir (the Númenórean) does; mere pretence nobles such as Denethor and Boromir fall short.

The argument (that nobility withstands temptation) still applies even if there is no tangible evil force to power it; life itself, existence itself, provides plentiful opportunities for evildoing; a point appreciated by medieval theologians and monks, even if they preferred to see the hand of the devil perverting the essentially and necessarily 'good' forces of life as created by God.

But this is one of Boromir's main dramatic functions, to demonstrate that when the mighty fall under the temptation and spell of evil, great terrors will follow. All the more reason then to emphasise Boromir's status. That it is not is still to me something of a mystery, although it may be all one with the ambiguity of his character. Tolkien simply could not bring himself to betray his own idea of the inherent nobility of the true aristocrat.

Boromir as a plot fulcrum

To the end of Book 1, Boromir has had a relatively minor role; perhaps it would be be more accurate to say, an understated one. But he is about to enter into his glory, at the garden of Parth Galen where he will be tempted, fail, rise to a last moment of triumph, only to be sacrificed.

But first he has an important part to play in unwittingly helping Frodo to make up his mind (and here again is the theme of evil working against itself). In effect he helps Frodo to clean out the chaotic attic of his mind and concentrate his thoughts by closing off certain choices.

Boromir is also psychologically pivotal. His death signals a change of emphasis. The story enters a new phase psychologically - the tone changes, there is a change of mood, of pace and of scope, as new and

grander themes rise to the forefront. So now we are no longer playing, we are in deadly earnest, and we are at the crossroads of the whole epic. Up to now the story has been linear and gently paced. But in the quiet woods of Parth Galen a plot explosion occurs. Fragments of characters and plotlines fly in all directions, and the new form emerges - three parallel courses finally converging on Minas Tirith.

Change of status

Boromir's significance grows as, with his death, his character switches between its two states. He is the subject of weighty conversations between Gandalf and Denethor in Minas Tirith, and between Frodo and Faramir in Ithilien.

In life he has been something of a muscular buffoon, an unthinking warrior best suited to shovelling snow or carrying boats or fighting off orcs. He is outspoken at the Council and is admonished by Elrond and Gandalf, although he is too stubborn to be kept to their way of thinking for long. He annoys Elrond at the Rivendell leave-taking, by blowing his horn and (presumably, although such an idea is absurd and unworthy of Elrond unless he suffers from a touch of paranoia hitherto unhinted at) compromising the secrecy of the mission. He annoys Frodo at the Gate of Moria by his petulant stone-throwing. He irritates Gandalf by belittling his efforts to open the Gate, and by his distrust of Wizards and Elves in general. He disparages Galadriel and is admonished by Aragorn. Gimli and Legolas seem to ignore him throughout. There is a strong hint that Galadriel sees something dark within him, but she doesn't trouble to share her suspicions with the Company until much later, confiding in Gandalf - while he is hospitalized in Lórien after the Balrog incident - that Boromir 'is in danger'. Gandalf himself is eventually told of Boromir's death and briefly mourns him; but he speaks of no significance in Boromir's existence, merely of his own inability to see inside his mind and of Boromir's final escape.

Aragorn expresses his own distrust by hinting that Boromir has 'brought evil with him' to Lothlórien, and later that he is deliberately obstructing the Company in its journey down the Great River. ('Do you not know Boromir or do you choose to forget the North Stair and the High Seat upon Amon Hen?')

At the Argonath he is somewhat cowed by the great statues, despite their significance as the boundaries of his kingdom, while Aragorn (naturally) derives strength and comfort from them. Here is another heavy hint from the sponsor, a foreshadowing of the Stewards' surrendering their office to the 'real' king.

Despite all this friction with his betters, his behaviour is actually brave and true throughout, except for his fall from grace at Parth Galen, immediately redeemed by his self-sacrifice. For example, he refuses to leave Gandalf's side when the Balrog attacks. This wide gulf between his words and deeds implies an ambivalence in the author's own attitude to him. Although he is an aristocrat he is also like the boy from poor 'umble beginnings who makes it to the top, only to reveal that flaw that to the class-conscious mind reasserts the natural right of the aristocracy to rule.

Interestingly, writers of the dramatized versions have (I think instinctively) followed Tolkien's purpose in spirit, although most certainly not in the letter, by making Boromir untutored and slightly coarse, instead of the aristocrat he really is. This has been occasioned by the filtering of Boromir's speech through a modern mind. In mediaeval times the badge of class that is refinement of speech was not so apparent.

Gandalf and Aragorn both sense the division in Boromir's character, as does Frodo, as evidenced mainly by his later conversation with Faramir. Clearly however the omnipotence of these heroes is illusory. Although Boromir is a clear threat, once the Ring gets hold of his mind, to the whole Company (Aragorn seems to have been the only Man in history to have come into contact with the Ring who is proof against its temptations) nothing is done to separate him from its influence.

We may reasonably deduce Tolkien's ambivalence from Gandalf's attitude to him. There is little doubt in my mind that Gandalf, in part at least, represents Tolkien in Middle Earth. When Gandalf speaks, often we are hearing Tolkien; and as his attitude to Boromir changes, so does Gandalf's. At first neutral but a little suspicious, then irritable, then admiring.

Boromir's fate

According to Helms Boromir had to die because in Tolkien's view he was the type of man that prevents the world from finding its way back to its proper path. 'The world (full of the new and very powerful temptations of technology)... requires ... death to the contemporary equivalents of Boromir'. Boromir is not idealistic enough - he embodies, in Shippey's

words, the credible face of corruption. In this he is Denethor's spiritual heir, future Man, somewhat crude, demanding, hasty - but above all not incorruptible enough to be allowed to lead.

But a more powerful reason seals Boromir's doom. Not a functional one - his death is dramatically unnecessary. His pride may make it necessary that Faramir, a prince who will not impede Aragorn's succession, displaces him as heir, but the plot does not require him to be proud. Boromir's pride (as distinct from patriotism) has been invented to make him expendable to the reader. He is a younger Denethor, and suffers the same fate. Boromir could have had the character of Faramir, in fact, and lived, and it would have created no dramatic or technical difficulty to the tale, so long as he was weak enough to fall temporary prey to the temptation of the Ring and therefore bring about the break up of the Fellowship. But although Denethor (and by implication Boromir) has in his own mind *replaced* the King, it is impossible to believe of Tolkien's creative powers that they both died merely to clear a path for Aragorn.

But it *is* dramatically desirable to have at least one death in the Company, (actually, by skilful management he arranges one death and two half deaths) and Tolkien provides us with the sacrificial victim, softening him up, as it were, for the kill, by making him proud, wilful, hasty, full of weaknesses of an all too familiar nature, and it is because of this that I feel the device fails to meet fully its dramatic intent. Not only is Boromir the most lifelike of the major characters, he has the added bonus of being the underdog, in the sense that he has 'victim' written all over him as soon as he appears. I knew as soon as he turned up at the Council without a tie, that he was for the high jump.

Tolkien has been accused, with some justice, of looking after his central characters too well. But Boromir is an exception, one of three (Saruman and Denethor are the other two) pointed out by the author in his letter to Naomi Mitchison as being uncertain of which side they are on. Always Boromir stands on the cusp of good and evil. We are *intended* to dislike him, because he is going to die. At Rivendell, and during the journey to Rauros Falls, we are allowed to see mainly his poorer qualities; he is impatient, arrogant at times, possibly untrustworthy, not often kindly; he doubts Galadriel, and in this we are supposed to see his own inner uneasiness; his heroic role in the battles against the wargs, and the orcs in Moria, is played down, while his key role in the escape from Caradhras is de-emphasised by over-emphasis of the one quality that is wholly adventitious - his great strength. But once he is dead, and we have gone through a (very brief) period of mourning, we are permitted to like him, a change signalled by the author's lavish praise. Boromir's funeral lament is by far the most lyrical, heartfelt and beautiful in *The Lord of the Rings*; compare it with Frodo's ridiculous doggerel about Gandalf, or even Théoden's lay.

There is reason to believe that Tolkien, exhibiting a mental feature of authorship that has many precedents, changed his own attitude to Boromir's character during its development. After his death, almost nothing but good is said of him; he is beautiful, noble and lordly. If these are the real feelings of Aragorn and Co. - why did not the author allow us a glimpse of them earlier? Perhaps Boromir has become better by being dead, in the same way that death transforms a politician into a statesman; but more likely we are intended to react to it without observing it; ultimately, by giving up his life, Boromir has passed the test of fire, has redeemed himself, has resolved any uneasiness we may have felt about his true character, and has been removed as a source of danger to the Company and to Middle Earth.

It is a pity that he is regarded so often not as the extraordinarily important plot component that he is but as a kind of blot on the perfection of the Company, whose death excites a certain *schadenfreude*. He does not represent merely one of the 'lesser adversaries described as leaders and kings' as Nitsche (1979, p6) interprets the matter, but as an adversary none the less - that adversary we carry around within ourselves. We do not need to like him, we do not need to sympathise with him. But for a full appreciation of *The Lord of the Rings* we need to recognise him.

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The Lord of the Rings: a myth for modern English*men*

Margarita Carretero González

On 25th June, 1996, I defended my Ph.D. in the University of Granada (Spain). Its title was *Fantasía, épica y utopía en* The Lord of the Rings. *Análisis temático y de la recepción* (*Fantasy, Epic and Utopia in* The Lord of the Rings. *Thematic Analysis and Reader's Response*). The second part of the thesis, as suggested in the title, focused on the analysis of *The Lord of the Rings* from the perspective of reader-response oriented theories. I wanted to collect as many interpretations as possible from readers who had a special interest in *The Lord of the Rings* and, accordingly, I elaborated a questionnaire which members of the British Tolkien Society and the *Sociedad Tolkien Española* received in September 1995. I offered to publish the results of my study in *Mallorn* but lack of time have prevented me from preparing it for publication in English until now. The lines that follow are the abridged conclusion of the second part of the Ph.D. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who answered the questionnaire for making this part of the study possible and to Gavin Sinden for his help with the computer (he made the questionnaire more attractive to look at than I could ever have done). To all of you, thank you very much.

The results obtained after analysing the questionnaires offer a very interesting vision of a group of readers of *The Lord of the Rings*. However, they can only be read as a sample of the millions of readers of *The Lord of the Rings* all over the world. Some of the answers given by the respondents might extend to other readers but we must avoid falling into the temptation of believing that these conclusions are applicable to all Tolkien readers. Nevertheless, they provide us with very interesting information and help us to offer an empirical answer to the question asked by Randel Helms (1974, p. 64).

> Why do certain contemporary readers seem to require so absolutely what Tolkien has to give to the extent that regularly, on completion of the third volume of *The Lord of the Rings*, they begin again on the first?

The first thing that stands out after the analysis is the fact that *The Lord of the Rings* is far from becoming in Spain the phenomenon that the book is in Great Britain. Previous to the distribution of the questionnaire among members of the societies in both countries, another questionnaire was distributed among students of Spanish and English Philology in the University of Granada in Spain. The results of this first questionnaire showed that, even though *The Lord of the Rings* (for us *El Señor de los Anillos*) was familiar by repute to most of the students, only a few of them had read it and even fewer could answer the questions satisfactorily. As regards the second questionnaire, only 18 members of the *Sociedad Tolkien Española* answered it, in contrast with the 181 who answered from the Tolkien Society in Britain, mainly consisting of British readers. This difference in number is quite a proportional reflection of the difference in members from both societies; the Spanish society had around 40 members by the end of 1995, in sharp contrast with the nearly half a thousand of the British Tolkien Society. Moreover, more that twenty years separate the founding of both societies, since the first official meeting of the Sociedad Tolkien Española was celebrated in February 1991. Definitely, the Tolkien phenomenon is in Spain, if a phenomenon at all, a very recent one and, for a number of reasons, I honestly doubt that *The Lord of the Rings* will ever reach the number of sales in my country that it has reached in Britain.

In the first place, it seems that fantasy is a more prolific genre in the United Kingdom than in Spain. We only have to go inside any book shop in both countries to see the room allowed in the shelves to the fantasy genre. What we call *fantasía épica* is quite a recent genre in Spain and, even though the number of readers grows progressively, this type of fiction does not seem to be written by Spanish authors since most of the books found in book shops are translations from British or American titles. Moreover, even though the main authors are translated, the sales do not go near the number they reach in Great Britain. According to the critic Susana Camps (1989, p. 84), this could be due to a difference in national character. For her, Spaniards have shown historically a much more grave and austere character

which leads them to condemn anything fantastic as a lie. Fantasy in Spain reached one of its greatest moments during the flourishing of the *novela de caballerías* – "chivalry novels" – like *Amadís de Gaula, Amadís de Grecia, Palmerín de Olivia* or *Palmerín de Inglaterra*, to mention but a few. This type of fiction presented a world of fantasy and adventure which was strongly condemned by ascetic and moralist writers and this attitude, according to Camps, is a characteristic feature of the disposition shown by Spaniards towards the fantastic.

This difference in national character may well be one of the causes for the disparity in the reception of *The Lord of the Rings* in both countries. This seems to be bourne out by the failure to publish Tolkien's works in Spain during his lifetime, mainly because publishing houses did not want to risk bringing out such a long book about a subject of which there was virtually no tradition in our country.[1] Nevertheless, it can also be argued that the fact that Spanish is not the language in which *The Lord of the Rings* was originally written may play an important role in the different receptions. The reader who has access to a work of literature through a translation does not receive the book directly from the author but through an intermediary, the translator, whose particular perception of the book is inevitably present in the translation. And yet, translation does not seem to have been an obstacle for the extraordinary reception that *The Lord of the Rings* experiences in other European countries. As is known, it was immediately translated into Dutch, only a year after the publication of *The Return of the King*, in a country where fantasy fiction was "an unknown entity in the fifties" (van Rossenberg, 1995, p. 302). The Swedish translation was completed in 1960 and, generally, of all the European countries into whose languages *The Lord of the Rings* has been translated, it is in those of the North of the Continent where it has experienced a better reception.

It seems, then, that reading the book through a translation cannot be used as the only reason to justify the different reception of *The Lord of the Rings* in Spain. We will find the reason in Tolkien's own words, uttered before *The Lord of the Rings* was published:

> [...] once upon a time [...] I had a mind to make a body of more or less connected legend, ranging from the large and cosmogonic to the level of romantic fairy-story [...] which I could dedicate simply: to England; to my country. It should possess the tone and quality that I desired, somewhat cool and clear, **be redolent of our "air" (the clime and soil of the North West, meaning Britain and the hither parts of Europe**; not Italian or the Aegean, still less the East), and, while possessing (if I could achieve it) the fair elusive beauty that some call Celtic (though it is rarely found in genuine ancient Celtic things), it should be "high", purged of the gross, and fit for the more adult mind of a land long steeped in poetry. [my bold]. (Carpenter (ed.), 1990, p. 230)

In writing his fantasies, Tolkien not only pretended to create an environment where his invented languages could grow but also to restore the epic tradition in England and offer a mythology that the English could recognise as their own. According to the answers given by some of the readers, his efforts were highly rewarded:

> It is a "Mythology for England" and reminds me of the best of England's character, culture and countryside with Northern myth.

In effect, even though *The Lord of the Rings* has become a mythology not exclusive to England, Tolkien's work appeals very directly to the imagination of the English readers who can recognise in the hobbits and in the Shire their own character and their own countryside. In many occasions, when asked what *The Lord of the Rings* evoked for them, readers mentioned the English way of life and the rural countryside, whose progressive disappearance was lamented, as it was by Tolkien himself, by many of them.

On the other hand, it is well known that the tradition Tolkien was most inspired by was distinctively English. *The Lord of the Rings* echoes the Anglo-Saxon period, Victorian medievalism and its idealisation of the Middle Ages, whereas – and here we find an explanation for its greater popularity in Northern Europe – Tolkien's own mythology is most directly indebted to its Northern equivalent. This aspect may partially explain the lesser popularity of *The Lord of the Rings* in Southern Europe, where the Classic mythological tradition is predominant. Both traditions share elements common to all mythologies but the atmosphere that Tolkien

[1] As explained by Francesc Parcerisas, who translated *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* into Catalan. (de los Santos *et al.*, pp. 51-56).

recreates in his works is undoubtedly that of the European Northwest and its mythology.

The second most outstanding conclusion extracted from the analysis of the questionnaires was the fact that *The Lord of the Rings* appeals mostly to a male audience. Only 28,72% of those who answered the questionnaires in the Tolkien Society were women, while in Spain the female representation was even smaller, 16,66%. Also the number of female members in both societies is inferior: one third in the British one and less than that in the Spanish one.

Whether we agree or not on the existence of certain types of discourse which appeal more directly to the female imagination, sensitivity or psychology and some that do the same with members of the opposite sex, the main reason why I think the book has problems in attracting a female audience so strongly is the scarcity of female characters that the female reader can easily identify with. As one of the respondents stated:

> I feel Tolkien has a weakness in his lack of women characters. It's well written, but I have no passion for the work, because, to me, this is a glaring deficiency too difficult to overlook. I get tired of reading of what are essentially boys' clubs (no girls allowed).

It is not true that there are no female characters, but it is true that they are scarce and their number is insignificant if compared with the amount of male characters. It is not true either that there are no strong female characters – we have Éowyn and Galadriel – or that all of them are, independently of their rank "the most hackneyed of stereotypes [...], either beautiful and distant, simply distant, or simply simple." (Stimpson, 1969, p. 18). In effect, a lack of psychological introspection is noticeable in most of the female characters but it is unfair and hasty to accuse Tolkien of being a misogynist, as Catharine Stimpson does, or of being sexist, as some of the respondents did:

> [...] it is [...] sexist (Éowyn – the only human female in the book – is treated as a spare wheel and although she has a moment of glory, is afterwards squashed down to being a housewife) [...]

There is no indication in *The Lord of the Rings* of the alleged misogyny of which Stimpson accuses Tolkien. On the contrary, the problem with women in *The Lord of the Rings* may stem from the fact that some of them are too idealised to allow any effective identification between character and reader. On the other hand, to accuse Tolkien of sexism would be to impute him an opinion of women as intellectually inferior to men, an opinion Tolkien never showed any sign of sharing. He had no problems in encouraging his female students and he collaborated eagerly with two of them: Simonne d'Ardenne and Mary Salu. He might have had a particular vision of women, inevitably conditioned by the times in which he lived and the essentially male atmosphere of Oxford, but the treatment offered to his female characters does not indicate that he considered them inferior to men.

Moreover, even though Tolkien devotes little attention to the psychological evolution of his female characters, Éowyn is the exception that confirms the rule and helps us to see to what an extent – a short one, though – Tolkien is capable of entering the female mind. The first description he offers of Éowyn's physical aspect corresponds to that of the female stereotype of the heroines in medieval romances:

> Grave and thoughtful was her glance, as she looked on the king with cool pity in her eyes. Very fair was her face, and her long hair was like a river of gold. Slender and tall she was in her white robe girt with silver; but strong she seemed and stern and steel, a daughter of kings. Thus Aragorn for the first time in the full light of the day beheld Éowyn, Lady of Rohan, and thought her fair, fair and cold, like a morning of pale spring that is not yet come to womanhood. (Tolkien, 1992b, p. 537)

However, even in this description, Tolkien offers a glimpse of Éowyn's strong personality; she is not also fair, but also sad, cold, strong. In the character of Éowyn we find a woman of action trapped in the conventional roles assigned to women, as she complains to Aragorn:

> 'All your words are but to say: you are a woman, and your part is in the house. But when the men have died in battle and honour, you have leave to be burned in the house, for the men will need it no more. But I am of the House of Eorl and not a serving-woman. I can ride and wield blade, and I do not fear either pain or death.'
>
> 'What do you fear, lady?' he asked.
>
> 'A cage,' she said. 'To stay behind bars, until use and old age accept them, and all chance of doing great deeds is gone beyond recall or desire.' (Tolkien, 1992b, p. 816)

The words that Tolkien puts in Éowyn's mouth fail to support the opinion that he portrays *all* women in the traditional roles of wife and mother. Éowyn is a shield-maiden who, as the rest of the Rohirrim, searches for honour in battle and is very far from being the traditional heroine who depends on men to see her destiny fulfilled. However, the reader cannot help to feel that Éowyn's role is that of an adolescent who must grow up and leave behind her role of shield-maiden to adopt the one traditionally assigned to women, that of a protector rather than a destroyer of life. Her stay in the Houses of Healing actually serves three purposes: the healing of the wound caused by the Nazgûl, that of the infatuation for Aragorn and, finally, the healing of her "shieldmaidenism". When Tolkien first introduced Éowyn to the reader, he compared her with a morning spring "that is not yet come to womanhood" and the finding of Faramir's true love during her convalescence will heal her and help her pass from shield-maiden to defender and protector of life:

> Then the heart of Éowyn changed, or else at last she understood it. And suddenly her winter passed, and the sun shone on her.
>
> 'I stand in Minas Anor, the Tower of the Sun,' she said; 'and behold! the shadow has departed! I will be a shieldmaiden no longer, nor vie with the great Riders, nor take joy only in the songs of slaying. I will be a healer, and love all things that grow and are not barren.' And again she looked at Faramir. 'No longer do I desire to be a queen,' she said. (Tolkien, 1992b, p. 1001)

After Éowyn's words, Faramir says to the Warden in the Houses of Healing: "'Here is the Lady Éowyn of Rohan, and now she is healed'", which may indicate that Éowyn needed to be healed in more than one way. It is thus easy to understand the complaints uttered by some respondents in relation to Tolkien's female characters, especially as regards Lady Éowyn, since her sudden abandonment of her role as shield-maiden is not at all convincing. Since this is the only female character of which Tolkien offers psychological introspection, it must not surprise us that some of the respondents complained of Tolkien's incapacity to enter the female mind. Tolkien conceived his female characters through his perspective of male observer and Éowyn's attitude would be frequently observed among most of the women he knew.

Due to the higher number of male characters and the deeper introspection that Tolkien offers of them, it is not surprising that *The Lord of the Rings* attracts mostly a male audience. In fact, there was no woman among the three favourite characters chosen by the respondents, which were Sam, with 28% of the votes, followed by Gandalf (25%) and Aragorn (16%).

For many of the respondents, Sam was the true hero of the trilogy. Most of them considered that, without his help, Frodo would have never managed to destroy the Ring and some of them also thought that the Ring had no power on him. Whereas Frodo eventually gives up and reclaims the Ring for himself, Sam apparently has no problem in rejecting the tempting visions offered by the jewel and is capable of recognising its tricks.

In effect, the common sense that characterises hobbits and that the respondents so much appreciated in Sam, prevents him from falling into the temptation of keeping the Ring on, but I do not think we can infer that it has no effect on Sam. We must not forget that Sam had been wearing the Ring for a short time and the influence exerted on him was still very weak. Frodo did not have any problem either in offering it to Gandalf as soon as he knew of its evil power, to Aragorn in the Council of Elrond and to Galadriel in Lothlórien, when he had already been exposed to its negative influences for months. Sam is not at all immune to the Ring; nobody is, as Gandalf assured Frodo in Bag End. The fact that his humility and simplicity prevented him from succumbing immediately to temptation does not mean that Sam is most resistant to the power of the Ring. We cannot know how he would have reacted if he had been under its influence for as long as Frodo had.

On the other hand, we cannot be sure either that the Ring had not started to act upon Sam when he found Frodo in the tower of Cirith Ungol. Tolkien says that when the moment arrived in which he had to give Frodo the Ring, "Sam felt reluctant to give up the Ring and burden his master with it again." (Tolkien, 1992b, p. 946) and offered to carry it for a while in order to help his master. This is one of the most moving passages of the book since the reader, who does not doubt Sam's good intentions, cannot help feeling sorry for the hobbit after his master's unfair reaction. This passage serves to see the extraordinary change that had taken place in Frodo, but we could also think that the Ring is beginning to act upon Sam who – let us remember Gandalf's words – is not immune to its influence since the Ring

can control anybody's will by appealing to their strongest feelings. For Gandalf, the way of the Ring to his heart was by pity, "pity for weakness and the desire of strength to do good." In the same way, the Ring could have found a way to Sam's heart by appealing to the great love that the hobbit feels for Frodo. I do not doubt of Sam's genuine intentions at Cirith Ungol but I do believe that the Ring would have known how to distort them if he had been wearing the Ring for as long as Frodo.

In any case, whether or not he is the real hero, Sam is undoubtedly a valuable helper. His love and unconditional dedication to Frodo as well as the courage with which he carries out the freely accepted task, made him especially attractive to the eyes of the respondents:

> [...] throughout the whole book, regardless of situations, meetings, happiness and sadness, he remains essentially himself and true to his cause, that of Frodo's bulwark.

Sam can be considered as the character with whom it is easiest for the reader to identify at an unconscious level. As one of the respondents said:

> Sam [...] is the most "ordinary" and down to earth. Never the one I imagined myself as, he is always the easiest to identify with.

In contrast with Frodo, whom someone found more grandiose and with whom, consequently, it turns out to be more difficult to identify, Sam is more credible, "the closest to 'Everyman' and through him we most fully participate in the journey." In the middle of the tense atmosphere in Rivendell just before the Fellowship of the Ring start their quest, Sam's worries are those which are familiar to us. Aragorn and Gandalf have very different matters in mind to those that worry Sam:

> Sam eased the pack on his shoulders, and went over anxiously in his mind all the things that he had stowed in it, wondering if he had forgotten anything: his chief treasure, his cooking gear; and the little box of salt that he always carried and refilled when he could; a good supply of pipe-weed (but not near enough, I'll warrant); flint and tinder, woollen hose; linen; various small belongings of his master's that Frodo had forgotten and Sam had stowed to bring them out in triumph when they were called for. He went through them all.
>
> 'Rope!' he muttered. 'No rope! And only last night you said to yourself: "Sam, what about a bit of rope? You'll want it, if you haven't got it. Well, I'll want it. I can't get it now.'"(Tolkien, 1992b, p. 297-8)

The character who took the second place as favourite was Gandalf and its main attraction lay in the aura of mystery surrounding him regarding his origins and his hidden power. The relationship of identification that is usually established between the reader and Sam is less likely to be found with Gandalf, although there are always exceptions, as it was the case of a 52 year-old respondent who justified his preference for Gandalf because he found it easier to identify with him as he grew older. His wisdom, power and temperance made him more frequently appear before the respondents as a protective figure, "the father type figure guiding his troublesome children" or "a stable force in an unstable situation", capable of offering the reader reassurance and hope. Thus, the reader experiences with the members of the Fellowship the same feeling of safety when Elrond announces that Gandalf will be one of its fellows, the same sadness and disorientation after the wizard's fall in Moria and an immense happiness when he reappears as Gandalf the White.

If we apply the archetypal models pointed out by Joseph Campell in his study of the monomyth, Gandalf interacts with the main hero, Frodo, in several ways. As he appears at the beginning, not only in *The Lord of the Rings*, but also at the beginning of *The Hobbit*, Gandalf fulfils the function of "herald", whose responsibility is the "calling to adventure" which constitutes the first step in the stage of separation:

> The herald's summons may be to live [...] or, at a later moment of the biography, to die. It may sound the call to some high historical undertaking. Or it may mark the dawn of religious illumination. As apprehended by the mystic, it marks what has been termed "the awakening of the self." [...] But whether small or great, and no matter what the stage or grade of life, the call rings up the curtain, always, on a mystery of transfiguration – a rite, or moment, of spiritual passage, which, when complete, amounts to a dying and birth. The familiar life horizon has been outgrown; the old concepts, ideals, and emotional patterns no longer fit; the time for the passing of a threshold is at hand. (Campbell, 1993, p. 51)

That is the way Gandalf appears to the hobbits in Bag End. In *The Hobbit*, he manages to get Bilbo into

an adventure without his realising exactly how, "without a hat, a walking stick or any money, or anything that he usually took when he went out." (Tolkien, 1992a, 38) and the same happens 77 years later, with Frodo. The calling of the herald constitutes an invitation to the hero to abandon his state of comfort and to embark on an adventure into the unknown. If the call is accepted, as it is in the case of Frodo, the hero will come out of the adventure completely renovated. Precisely, that is indicated by the answer of one of the respondents who chose Gandalf as his favourite character because the wizard "possesses great knowledge [and] wisdom, showing mankind part of his own potential and challenging him to wake up to this potential." Thanks to Gandalf, the hobbits leave the state of innocence offered by the Shire and grow up after the initiatory journey, thus being capable of solving all the problems on their own when they get back home.

Finally, Aragorn took the third position as favourite character. As happened with Gandalf, what seemed most attractive for the readers was the aura of mystery surrounding the character and his transformation in Aragorn, king of Gondor, from the scruffy ranger Strider. The nobility of his character, his perseverance and utmost patience as well as the secondary place that accepts, in relation to Gandalf and Frodo, were the characteristics pointed out by those who chose him as favourite character.

As the typical hero in heroic narrative, Aragorn appears more as a figure to imitate than a character we can easily identify with, since Tolkien does not develop his feelings and thoughts in as much detail as he does with his hobbits. Before leaving Rivendell, Tolkien writes that "Aragorn sat with his head bowed to his knees" and adds that "only Elrond knew fully what this hour meant to him." (Tolkien, 1992b, 297). The reader can imagine what Aragorn is thinking, the importance that the moment has for his future, but, as I say, s/he can only *imagine* it, as an external observer. Tolkien allows us to share Aragorn's feelings only to a certain extent, he does not give us direct access to his thoughts, as he does with the hobbits.

Whether or not some of the characters in *The Lord of the Rings* may appeal more directly to the archetypes conforming the masculine unconscious, the last conclusion extracted from this analysis is that Tolkien effectively managed to create a mythology for England. Myths all over the world fulfil the function of offering humans the necessary elements to unite them to the past and root them into the world. Generally, this is produced by the direct appeal to the archetypes that conform to our unconscious. As Joseph Campbell suggested, a common structure to all mythologies is that of the "hero quest", which offers the necessary elements for the audience to re-enact in their minds the initiatory journey made by the heroes. This structure is very clearly present in *The Lord of the Rings*, developed in such a way that it attracts readers independently of their sex. With the characters, but especially with the hobbits, the reader has the opportunity of taking an initiatory journey after which many of the respondents confirmed that they had come back completely transformed. In this sense, it should be pointed out that the average age when the respondents first read *The Lord of the Rings* was 16/17. At this age, the reader can see him/herself easily identified with the transformation experienced by the hobbits who can accompany him/her in passing from childhood into adulthood. This has led some critics to believe that *The Lord of the Rings* is a book about and for adolescents (Menzies, 1983, 56-72), a belief which cannot be sustained after one has r the answers to the questionnaires. Even though it is a book most frequently discovered in adolescence, *The Lord of the Ring* is appreciated not only at this stage of life. Many of the respondents pointed out that the book could be considered as a guide for life.

For many readers, *The Lord of the Rings* seemed to offer some sort of "roots" in this world, a function which is for myths to fulfil. Some respondents mentioned the strange familiarity they felt while reading *The Lord of the Rings*, in particular, one of them assured: "It makes me feel like I belong somewhere". This sensation of familiarity is undoubtedly caused by the "inner consistency of reality" of Tolkien's work, which allows the reader to see under the surface of Middle-earth, the mythic and legendary background to the Third Age. The twentieth century has been classified as an age hungry for myths. Part of the crisis which can be observed in human behaviour is due, to a certain extent, to the secularisation of society and the loss of faith in everything but empirical reality (Jung, 1995). In part, *The Lord of the Rings* was born precisely to satisfy this hunger for myths, offering readers a live mythology they can easily relate to.

Moreover, readers go back once and again to *The Lord of the Rings* because it fulfils the three functions which Tolkien assigned to fairy stories. It offers "escape", understood not as "the flight of the

deserter" but the "escape of the prisoner", since the way readers escape from everyday reality to enter that of Middle-earth makes them come back to the real world refreshed, capable of seeing that reality from a new perspective – what Tolkien called "Recovery" and someone compared to a religious experience:

> The Lord of the Rings puts things in proportion for me; it restores balance and sanity. When I read *The Lord of the Rings* I feel soothed, cheered, encouraged, uplifted – similar to the way I do in a religious service. Reading it takes me to 'Niggle's Parish' and enables me to glimpse 'the Mountains'. It seems to be what life is really about. It seems to go straight to the heart of what is important to me.

And, finally, it offers "the Consolation of the Happy Ending". Respondents found this eucatastrophic ending in the message of hope that permeates Tolkien's work, in the importance given to the values of friendship, unity and courage required to face any situation and, especially, in the feeling of final victory against the forces of Evil. This ending, however, is not a way of turning our backs on reality. Tolkien does not present a work where Evil has been forever eradicated since this victory is part of "the long defeat". However, even this "uplifting pessimism" – as it was wonderfully described by one of the respondents – carries a message of final hope that most of them received after reading the book, the same message received by Sam when looking at the distant star in Mordor.

The same problems present in our world have to be faced by the characters in Middle-earth and, in both worlds, hope is always necessary to avoid falling into the hands of Evil. The intimate relationship established by Tolkien between his sub-created secondary world and the primary one allows the reader to enter Middle-earth without feeling deceived. There is no need for the "suspension of disbelief" since the "inner consistency of reality" makes it unnecessary; disbelief does not arise even after the umpteenth reading. There are so many and so different unnoticed details of which we become aware in every new reading, so many and so different the experiences are narrated by every reader, that *The Lord of the Rings* can, indeed, be called a myth:

> A myth points, for each reader, to the realm he lives in most. It is a master key; use it on what door you like. (Lewis, 1989, p. 115)

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Reviews

The making of modern children's literature: J.R.R. Tolkien

(produced by Julian Birkett for a BBC TV series on the life and work of writers of children's fiction. First broadcast in February, 1998.)

Television 'documentary' employs a multiplicity of visual and aural impulses that distract rather than concentrate the mind. It is easy to assume that hectically spliced and layered 'information' is 'informative', but to discuss matters of emphasis and perspective, confusing hiatuses and missed opportunities *after the event* is a way of asking whether programme-makers have been consistent with their ostensible aims, or whether 'visualised' views, in several senses, wrap up our perceptions.

Aficionados know what's new, what's pasted in (not always very neatly), but the structure and emphasis of this programme's early stages support its intention to suggest how and why, in terms of Tolkien's background, interests and career, *The Hobbit* became a success. Janet Aubrey's presentation is cordial and free of insinuations, though cluttered with statistics. The intervening 'highbrow' assessments tend to be sweeping and unqualified: Carpenter, in a 'mediaesque' flurry, but never grudging, praises 'a mythology which enriches the cultural wasteland... [We] dream of something greater than ourselves': V. Flieger, astute and self-possessed, impresses the 'sense of the magic that lies beyond the everyday...'; and Shippey, down to earth as ever, comments so briefly on the linguistic and mythical bases that the uninformed would mistake them for red herrings. A glimpse of Tolkien penning an Elvish greeting, Christopher Tolkien's comment on the sound changes, and experts speaking Sindarin are too cursory to remove the illusion.

At the other extreme are the incoherent, if sometimes appealing responses of a narrow age range of children. Rob Inglis' sequence which evoked some of these does impress the narrative qualities of *The Hobbit*. But the most considered opinions are quiet and specific. Rayner Unwin comments on the difference between genuine popular appeal and 'established' acclaim, and endorses this in a delightful account of his first encounter with *The Hobbit*. The illustrator Alan Lee is one of the few voices that consistently acknowledges the impact of the text; and the environmentalist David Nicholson Lord substantiates earlier comments by saying that Tolkien 'reinvented a lost world (one free from the incursions of suburbia), and invested it with more significance'. His later response to the 'personality' of the landscapes is persuasive and atmospherically filmed. But he overlooks Tolkien's contention that Middle-earth is the world as we know it, 'discovered' rather than invented.

Merging Lee's Dartmoor with a (too lengthy) aerial tour of suburbia is another imaginative correlation of film to theme, but 'vitualising' mannerisms abound: ponderous pipe-lightings and clouds of smoke (it even wafts across Carpenter's final tribute to the narrative qualities); a grotesque tea-pouring episode supposed to illustrate homely things as the author's voice crackles on an old wireless; long, cold stares from statues in Exeter College after the debate on Elvish; and tendentious images of heavy shoes and sports jackets, fumblings over leather books, glossaries and beer-frothing pewter to represent the Inklings. The latter dilutes positive comments on the all-important foundation legends of *The Silmarillion*, and shows how facile projections dissipate the articulate 'audio' track.

Tolkien was initially announced as 'one of the great names of literature with a cult following.' But the 'greatness' is evidently established in the first third after which the dross tangled with the name dominates the 'visuals'. Phenomena make better TV than books. A view of The Black Riders (elucidated by a drama school Strider) reveals Tolkien in more forbidding territory after *The Hobbit*, though its sequel is primarily introduced as negotiation between author and publisher with incessant 'bytes' of antique typewriter and affectedly donnish authorial voice. I did have hopes that an office block with plate glass lifts might be an emblem of Sauron's dream, until it materialised into a laborious encounter with Livingstone's computer games empire: self-congratulatory, lurid and shallowly related to Tolkien's imagination, and made disproportionate to Alan Lee's thoughtful comments on the forbidding

imagery and vast odds ranged against diminutive heroic figures at the close of the ring saga.

At this point there's a failure to balance and analyse the 1955 press reviews, and Carpenter, who has already commended Gollum's groping as 'very sexual stuff', comments on the imbalance of sexual perspectives in Tolkien (obscurely linked to The Inklings). But worse follows: cliché footage zapped in as undemanding socio-historical 'relevance'. A surly comment from the author, and sociology from V. Flieger alone relieve a rambling connection of Tolkien to political and musical(?) '60s protest culture in North America, to British Hippiedom, *and* to Jenny Fabian, author of 'Groupie'. Sniggering at her own joke about finding no sex, she sprawls physically and verbally at a bar to recall a Covent Garden basement called Middle-earth where drug abuse authenticated the darker scenarios of Tolkien's saga. Shots of her acid-taking days merge with the prospect of the Beatles cashing in on the rage to make a film of the trilogy. Their biographer analyses each singer's potential rôle in more detail than any given to the books' leading figures.

One can infer the absurdity from Rayner Unwin's view of the impact of such hysteria on the author; but the programme is in itself hijacking Tolkien for sidekicks and incidentals. It tells us the Tolkien Society was founded to combat such idiocy, then marginalises Vera Chapman's endeavours and those of her successors, even in the context of a dignified graveside tribute. Without mention of their scholarly achievement, Wayne Hammond and Christina Scull are insulted with a dummy-like appearance. Yet to back the dubious assertion that *The Lord of the Rings* is the 'epic of the Green Movement', minimally qualified by an allusion to the ents, we must wait for feasting tree protesters to form a sentence and for a druid-like figure to energise himself.

There's none of the biographical muck-raking of other programmes in this series, but why not focus on Tolkien's appeal to children as part of his 'universality' rather than sensationalise his impact without cogent reference to his themes? His Catholicism and the link between his fiction and his rôle as a parent are ignored. *Mr Bliss*, *The Father Christmas Letters*, *Farmer Giles of Ham*, and *Smith of Wootton Major* presumably made no commercial news, and cannot be patronised like that quaint dinosaur, the unfinished *Silmarillion*.

Off-peak, budget watching; a dithering, piecemeal conflation that will have done little to counter prevailing ignorance about one of the century's most elusive and monumental literary figures.

Michael Tolkien

Fantasy Fiction and Welsh Myth: Tales of Belonging
Kath Filmer-Davies

MacMillan Press 1996 ISBN 0-333-65029-8

Kath Filmer-Davies is a woman after my own heart: someone who believes that at the heart of myth is truth. In this, we swim against the practice of mainstream English speakers, for whom *myth* is rapidly becoming a synonym for *lie*. This book is an argument against the new usage, an argument not rooted in pedantry, or a misunderstanding of the nature of linguistic change, but stemming from the author's conviction that myths (the things not the word) are *useful*, and *necessary*.

Perhaps over-influenced by Tolkien's denial of the influence of Celtic *stories*[1], Filmer-Davies skips over the powerful arguments voiced in *On Fairy Stories*, when she discusses the usefulness of narrative, especially fantasy (CS Lewis, Ursula LeGuin, and other fantasy writers do get included).

In the chapter on magic, Galadriel is examined as an example of the Great Mother. Filmer-Davies says that Tolkien is 'obviously antipathetic', but puts this down to being a *man* of his times, rather from any personal extreme misogyny. It is a pity that Filmer-Davies did not go further than this obvious point, and explore Tolkien's work against all the four kinds of "ancient magic" which she sees as the concern of Welsh myths: "the elements of Nature, Nature herself as the Goddess, the movement of time, the shadows of the past across present reality". Given my interest in Tolkien, I would have preferred Filmer-Davies had chosen *The Lord of the Rings* as one of the books to

[1] Filmer-Davies does note that the languages (sic) are influenced.

consider in depth in this chapter: I would like to read more of her lively, intelligent criticism (Filmer-Davies on L'Engle and Caswell[2]).

As an example of an interesting path left untrod: the example of Galadriel is placed as a bridge. It leads *to* a discussion about Nature as the Goddess, but leads *from* a discussion of the two-men-one-woman structure/situation which recurs in Welsh stories. The unasked question is: if Galadriel is the woman, who are the two men? Frodo and Sam? Legolas and Gimli? Aragorn and Boromir?

Given Filmer-Davies' perception of myth as truth, it is not surprising that she considers 'historical' novels alongside 'fantasy' novels. This allows her to look at traditional elements (such as the triangular relationships) which are used within historical novels. Filmer-Davies also goes beyond novels, to look at films such as *Braveheart* and the *Star Wars* trilogy.

As the sub-title "tales of belonging" promises, Filmer-Davies explores this powerful thread. She misses, however, the point that many of the great fantasy authors are outsiders, born outside Britain[3]: Tolkien born in Bloemfontain, Lewis in Belfast[4], Peake in China. Might it not be, for such people, more aware of Britain than the British, that the Welsh myths, with their absolute sureness of place, have an especial appeal? For Australian and other English-speaking writers in ex-colonies, where most writers are aftercomers, might not the tales of Wales have special appeal, for the same reason? This makes Tolkien's expressed antipathy all the more surprising, all the more worthy of investigation. 177 pages is far too short[5].

I do lament the lack of a bibliography. Most of us know the feeling of 'finding' other 'Tolkien people' (the exhilarating "What, you too?" which Glen GoodKnight described at the first meeting of the Mythopoeic Society). When one meets a writer who not only knows (and clearly loves) fantasy, but with whom the reader seems to have half a library in common (from Ford's translation of *The Mabinogion* to RS Thomas' *Welsh Airs* via George Borrow and Edith Pargeter) ... when one meets such a person, one does want to explore the other, unknown, half of her library!

Patricia Reynolds

A Question of Time: J. R. R. Tolkien's Road to Faërie

Verlyn Flieger

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This book represents an approach to Tolkien's world little explored previously, save by the author herself. who has discussed it in lectures and papers such as that given by her at the 1992 Tolkien Centenary Conference at Oxford, published in its Proceedings (Flieger, 1995). The interested reader or student may find it helpful to read or re-read this paper before tackling the book itself as it provides an outline of the more detailed commentary on "The Lost Road", and "The Notion Club Papers," the two principal landmarks in Tolkien's exploration of the possibilities of time travel into the past contained in this book. It also usefully summarizes the essentials of the "theory of time", as it appears in J.W. Dunne's *An Experiment with Time*, a book which Tolkien owned and read, and which he drew on as a kind of springboard for his own "experiments with time", as they might be called.

The author's argument in this book, then, is that Tolkien's writings in general, and especially *The Lord of the Rings*, fall to be interpreted in terms of a twofold handling of the dimensions of time; time both as a linear progression as in our day-to-day experience, and as a unity outside that experience, and comprehending it. In this latter sense, "the field of time" can be viewed, or, "observed", from progressively wider stances up to that of the, "ultimate observer". What is implied thereby is the ability of "the observer", at each stage to escape into, "other time", especially into the past, or into past times. The primary mechanism by which such,

[2] Madeleine L'Engle is probably known to readers of Tolkien, Brian Caswell is, I presume Australian. The book lacks a bibliography.

[3] A point well observed by Tom Shippey in "Tolkien as a Post-War Writer", in Reynolds and GoodKnight eds, *The Proceedings of the JRR Tolkien Centenary Conference*, The Tolkien Society/Mythopoeic Society, 1995

[5] I must add that I admire the restraint with which Filmer-Davies avoided the obvious trap of devoting too large a proportion to the matter of Arthur. Even so, it is too short.

"escape", is handled for the purposes of narrative is by way of dreams or dreaming, which Tolkien treats in a variety of ways. If in his desire to travel backwards into past time, or times, he seems to be appealing to nostalgia, in his tendency to view the present critically through the lens of the past he is, paradoxically, as much of a , "modernist", as other writers and artists who conventionally qualify for that title. The contrasting fates of Elves and Men, of the latter of whom it might be said that the past is their future, and the former of whom it might be said that their future is their past, typify this duality of feeling.

Tolkien was not, of course, alone in treading this kind of path. the author starts by tracing the evolving concept of, "escape into past time", in the work of writers both of the previous generation, and contemporary with Tolkien's formative years, writers as diverse as George du Maurier(especially the novel *Peter Ibbetson* (1891)), J.M. Barrie (whose work Tolkien knew, of course, and criticised), Henry James, and J.W. Dunne himself.

Tolkien's interest in the concept of "escape into past time", emerged openly in his agreement with C.S. Lewis whereby the latter would write a story about, "space travel", and he would do likewise as regards, "time travel". The immediate result was, "The Lost Road", with its proposed structure of time travel by successive stages into the increasingly remote past, the climax to be reached with the involvement of the, "travellers", in the purely legendary "downfall of Númenor". The chief difficulty was to find a means of effecting the entry into, and the departure from, another past or imaginary world in a convincing manner, and Tolkien in order to solve it sought to merge the states of dreaming and waking in a seamless flow. The scheme as we know was never carried through and remained with one of the intermediate stages sketched, and a scene laid in Númenor itself. Subsequently in "The Notion Club Papers", the plan was greatly refined and elaborated, and its dramatic potential as a story much enhanced, by being placed in a "near future", time, and in the context of a real-life Oxford. The "drowning of Númenor", is reflected in a tremendous storm, at the height of which the two principal, "travellers", vanish, only to reappear weeks later to recount their shared experience, "in the past". Once again however, the project was abandoned. It had become too complex, too intricate (according to Christopher Tolkien); does the author of this book feel, though she does not express such a view, that the scheme was incapable of full realisation; that the merging of present time with past time involved too many contradictions to be practical as simple narrative?

Ones suspicions in this regard spring from Flieger's discussion of the Lothlórien episode in *The Lord of the Rings*, which she places, not perhaps to the best advantage, in its chronological position between the two unfinished works. The sense of "timelessness" which the members of the Company experience while they are within Lothlórien needed to be reconciled, somehow, with the straightforward chronological sequence of the surrounding narrative. The difficulty surfaces most clearly in Sam's remarks about the appearance of the moon some days after the departure from Lothlórien, and the debate that follows. As Flieger demonstrates, the problem turned out to be logically insoluble, though Tolkien's drafts show him as trying out a number of possibilities. In the end he settled for a compromise; the dates of the Company's arrival and departure are part of the overall chronological sequence; in between these dates the travellers experience the sensation of time slowing down or stopping so that their awareness of the passage of external time is blurred. The dichotomy of "time versus timelessness" is implied, but not faced or tackled head-on.

The author stresses the significance of Eriol ("one who dreams alone") the originating *persona* of the entire mythology, also in his Anglo-Saxon *alter ego* as Ælfwine ("Elf-friend") in setting a precedent for the related names of the successive travellers and dreamers, the father-and-son pairs of "The Lost Road", Oswin/Albion, and Albion/Audoin ("Eadwine") Errol, and the subsequent father/son pairing of Edwin/Alwin Lowshaw of the "Notion Club Papers". The names act as a unifying motive underlying Tolkien's development and elaboration of the time-travel theme. Frodo Baggins, Elf-friend, emerges as the traveller- and dreamer-in-chief of all these personalities sharing a common "wanderlust", and ambition to attain "the other world". In the next stage of the book the author turns to considering him in this role, especially as regards the importance of his dreams at Crickhollow and in the house of Tom Bombadil.

What is perhaps less clear is the extent to which Frodo's dreams support the weight of argument and influence Flieger puts on them. It might be suggested that his role as dreamer-in-chief would have been clearer if we had been permitted a glimpse or two of

the content of dreams he may have had, at Rivendell, say, or later on during the course of the journey to Mordor. The visions in the Mirror perhaps make a partial substitute, but their significance for the present purpose is somewhat reduced by being juxtaposed with those of the down-to-earth, not at all visionary Samwise.

Frodo's dreams, for the purpose, are no more than three in number, and one of them, as it finally emerged (it was otherwise in the earlier drafts) is no more than a "mood piece", albeit a highly evocative one. In the other two – respectively the visions of Gandalf rescued from Orthanc, and of the coast of Aman "under a swift sunrise", he is certainly travelling, "in other time", backwards in the one, forwards in the other. But is he really doing so, "in the realm of Faërie", as Flieger would claim? To use her own expression, Frodo's dreams are "correlative", to the story rather than being structurally part of it, and "there's the rub". Once more we seem to be shying away from any attempt at resolving the contradiction of time versus timelessness; it is just here that the foundations of the book's structure begin to creak a little, and the argument to seem like special pleading. When Frodo and the other hobbits have left Gandalf for the last time, preparatory to their return to the Shire, and Frodo remarks that "it feels like falling asleep again", the author's argument that the entire experience since the original departure from the Shire represents "a waking dream", for him seems dangerously circular.

In the concluding chapters of the book the author turns to considering the negative aspect of journeying, "in other time", in the world of Faërie in other words; its perilous side is evident in the poem, "The Sea-Bell", which in its second mature version has the subsidiary title of "Frodo's Dreme", and relates to the "dark and despairing dreams", which visit Frodo in the Shire after his return. Flieger makes an interesting comparison between the returned wanderer's inability to communicate the reality of his experience to those he meets, and the inability of the returned soldier's after the First World War, Tolkien and thousands like him, to communicate to those who had not experienced them the realities of warfare and existence in the trenches – the comparison is between two extremes which nevertheless seem related. Finally, in *Smith of Wootton Major*, Tolkien, and we, have to face up to the truth that "escape", however desirable, has inevitably to be followed by a return to reality; no one can live a voyage permanently, "in other time", just as Smith must see his journeying in the world of Faërie come to an end and pass his inheritance on to his successor, in Tom Shippey's words "mortal men cannot wander in these visions all the time, without danger. They must give up and make their peace with the world". We are left to conclude that all along the reconciliation of "present time", with "other time", has been an unattainable ideal, but the justification for Tolkien's artistic career was the tireless search for it.

This book cannot really be called "an easy read"; the author's style is often rather dense and convoluted, and also somewhat repetitive at times; one sometimes has the sensation of being repeatedly hit over one's head with her arguments and conclusions, rather than merely being presented with them. Nevertheless the book does represent a major addition to Tolkien scholarship; it is full of valuable and illuminating observations on many aspects of Tolkien's life and art, and will more than repay the serious attention of everyone similarly involved.

John Ellison

References

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Contributors

Helen Armstrong reading *The Lord of the Rings* in a bookshop in 1970. She read the last two paragraphs. As a result, Arwen Evenstar was the first character she encountered. She began reading the *Proceedings of the JRR Tolkien Centenary Conference* straight from the envelope in 1996. This time she started in the middle, and read outwards, scribbling steadily. As a result, several pages fell out and were carefully stuck back in again. She recommends both works unreservedly.

Charles Betz is a student of both Tarot and Tolkien who lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He is willing to work with Alan Lee on an improved Tolkien Tarot deck anytime.

Margarita Carretero González PhD., M.A. is a lecturer in the English Department of the University of Grenada (Spain) where she lives. She wrote her doctoral thesis on *The Lord of the Rings*.

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.

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

Alex Lewis is a former Chairman of the Tolkien Society. He is the editor of *Nigglings*.

Ruth Lacon is an artist. Her previous publications include *The History of the Northern Kingdom*.

Karyn Milos is a long-time contributor to Tolkien lists on the internet, and is a recent recruit to the Tolkien Society.

Pat Reynolds has lots of books and little time.

Len Sandford is about to become *Mallorn* editor.

Daniel Timmons studies at the University of Toronto, Canada. He has written for *Mallorn*, *English Studies in Canada* and *The Journal for the Fantastic in the Arts*.

Michael Tolkien is JRR Tolkien's grandson. He is a poet.

Kay Woollard is an artist and illustrator. She is a honorary member of the Tolkien Society.