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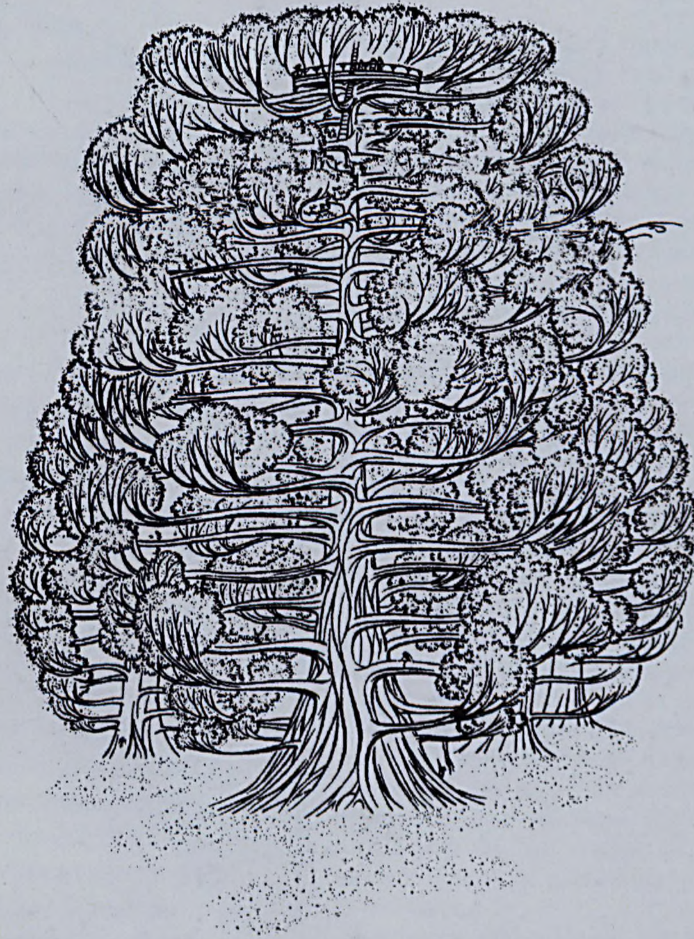
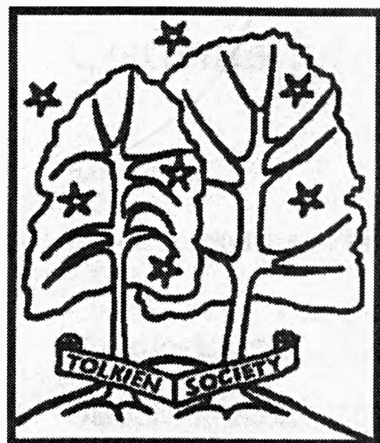
Mallorn



38

January 2001

The Journal of the Tolkien Society



The Tolkien Society

Founded in London in 1969 **the Tolkien Society** is an international organization registered in the UK 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 bi-monthly bulletin, *Amon Hen*.

In addition to local gatherings ('Smials') there are annual national meetings: the A.G.M. and Dinner in the Spring, Summermoot and the Seminar in the Summer, and "Oxonmoot", a celebratory weekend held in Oxford in late September. For further information about the society, please contact Sally Kennett, 210 Prestbury Rd, Cheltenham, Glos GL52 3ER or visit the Society's homepage:

http://www.tolkiensociety.org.

Editor L Sanford
Consultant editor J Ellison

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ISSN 0308-6674

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Mallorn XXXVIII

CONTENTS

About the authors 2

Editorial 4

Magic vs Enchantment 5
By Patrick Curry

"Queer lodgings" - gender and sexuality in *The Lord of the Rings* 11
By David Craig

Poetry
The Wool verses 19
John Ellison

Images of Evil in Tolkien's world 21
By John Ellison

Book Review
Recovery and Transcendence for the Contemporary Mythmaker: the Spiritual Dimension in the works of J.R.R. Tolkien. Christopher Garbowski. 30
By David Doughan

Realistic fantasy: the example of JRR Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* 31
By Nicholaos Koravos

Poetry
'Gandalf' *and* 'Aragorn' 36
Mary Dickerson

Letters to the editor 37

Artists

Pauline Baynes	Front cover
Lorenzo Daniele	20, 39
John Ellison	25, back cover
Octo Kwan	33, 38
Geof Jordan	2
Kay Woollard	1, 3

Mallorn XXXVIII January 2001

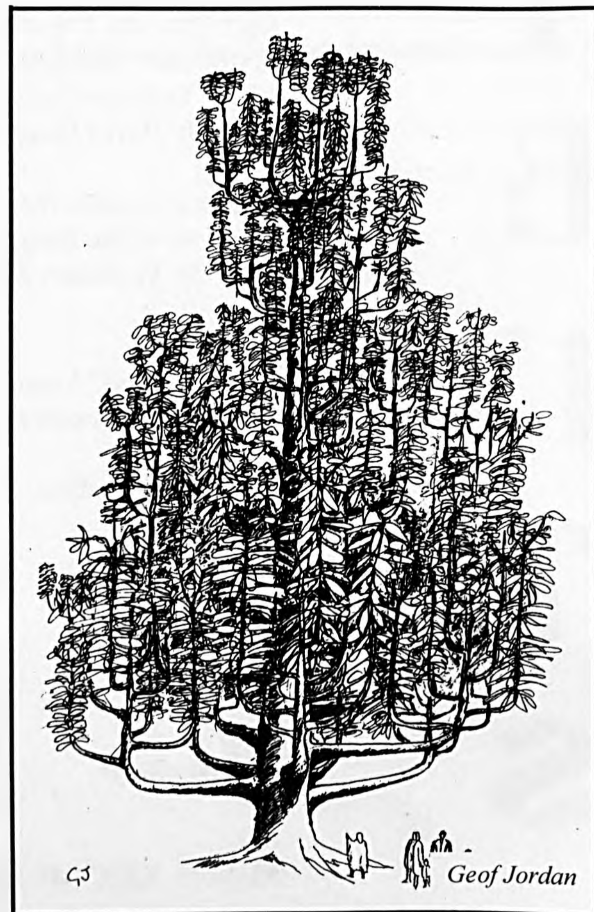
EDITORIAL

First it is necessary to apoligise for the lateness of this issue. It is our practice only to include material that has been submitted for consideration. But until end of December 2000 we still had only three articles under that heading. We were forced in the end to solicit a contribution. Fortunately a paper of the highest calibre became available with the result that we now have an edition of at least acceptable bulk.

It is becoming a matter of deep concern that scholarship in Tolkien, at least among members and those writers known to members, is noticeably diminishing. The total material available to the Seminar, to *Mallorn*, and to Oxonmoot is becoming less by the year, and will probably soon overlap, as we mine each other's material. The thought occurs that sometimes there is an end to such things, maybe a natural end. Is it really possible that the well is running dry? There seems little enough reason for it. We have The Histories, which have added greatly to the general understanding, but have also put an end to some speculations. We have the great body of critical and analytical material which now exceeds the original canon, giving rise to the rather grotesque sight of the criticism feeding on itself. And we have the membership itself, which has been prolific in the past. No one would be surprised if a static membership le to static collective thought processes, but we have new members, and we will have more during the next couple of years.

The new film is undoubtedly generating much public interest, mostly whipped up by the interested parties, and is certain to generate new membership, but does it follow that it will generate new opinions, new study, new scholarship? One sincerely hopes so. The longer standing members cannot be expected to produce new material indefinitely. Aside from the papers produced by students and academics, probably our best hope for the future of Society publications lies with the new membership, along with our hopes for the Society's continued health generally.

Although in the last issue we only asked specifically for ideas about the cover, the door is always open for other criticisms and comments, and we have had a few of those. Luckily the criticism, which you will find on the letters page, came leavened with much expert advice on publishing matters generally. As you can see, I have taken all these suggestions and criticisms on board, especially those that came from acknowledged expert writers and publishers, and the magazine is much changed as a result.
In the end, only six people actually expressed themselves in writing, although they wrote at some length. Unfortunately the space they took up has meant that a letter from Kensington Prallop had to be left out, for which I apologise, but never fear Ken, you will be first in the next issue.
Finally I would like to offer my sincere thanks and congratulations to the many contributors to this issue - the standard is of the highest. As a result we have a wonderful mix of poerty, learned articles and art, although it is true that those of you that find long articles indigestible will, I am afraid, need to get out the Andrews. In particular I would single out the artists. They have surpassed themselves, and the result is a collection of original, varied and unpublished art that is as good as I have seen for many years in this organ.


Geof Jordan

MAGIC vs. ENCHANTMENT

Patrick Curry

First published in The Journal of Contemporary Religion 14:3 (1999) 401-

According to William Blake, "To Generalize is to be an Idiot." As a compulsive generaliser with a weakness for the Big Picture, my only defence is that there is really no such thing; all generalising is a kind of more-or-less disguised particularising, with no special claim to universal truth. And I claim none here.

This paper is written in the spirit of Max Weber's meditiations on 'the disenchantment of the world', together with the critical theory of Adorno and Horkheimer and, more recently, Zygmunt Bauman. But my starting-point may be less familiar; it comes from an essay by J.R.R. Tolkien, 'On Fairy-Stories'.[1] In his attempt to define the nature of Faerie, Tolkien (1988:15, 18.) noted that it "may perhaps most nearly be translated by Magic - but it is magic of a peculiar mood and power, at the furthest pole from the vulgar devices of the laborious, scientific, magician." Instead, he wrote, "the primal desire at the heart of Faerie' is 'the realization, independent of the conceiving mind, of imagined wonder."[2]

In order to accommodate this difference, Tolkien (1988: 49-50) drew a powerful and elegant distinction:

> Enchantment produces a Secondary World into which both designer and spectator can enter, to the satisfaction of their senses while they are inside; but in its purity it is artistic in desire and purpose. Magic produces, or pretends to produce, an alteration in the Primary World....it is not an art but a technique; its desire is power in this world, domination of things and wills.

Elaborating slightly, we might now describe the domain of magic as that of power-knowledge; and that of Enchantment, as art.[3] But that would be simplistic, as we shall see. For one thing, Tolkien makes it clear that Enchantment, as (in his literary mythology) the art of the Elves, is intrinsically bound up with what we often think of something quite different, namely, nature. But nature is very often the object of Magic, too.

In what follows, I would like to point out the virtues of this distinction before considerably extending and refining it. I then consider the present world-historical situation of Magic and Enchantment, which suggests a new category – Glamour – and throws fresh light on the possibility of a 're-enchantment of the world'. Finally, I shall reflect on the special relationship of Enchantment to wonder and to nature.

Magic vs. Enchantment

The virtue of Tolkien's suggestion is most immediately obvious, I think, in the way it disentangles the two very different ways that the same word, 'magic', is commonly used: one to mean enchantment, as in: 'It was magic!' and the other to denote paranormal means to an end, as in: 'to use magic'. (There is a third common meaning, that of trickery or deceit, which is not relevant here.) What is important about the second meaning is not its paranormality, however, but its instrumentalism; for Tolkien's analysis also undermines the usual simplistic and misleading opposition between 'science' and 'magic'.

As a matter of philosophical, practical and historical fact, these two share extensive common ground - much more than what divides them. The principal goal of both is to engineer changes in the Primary world, and both try to amass knowledge in order to predict and control that world; both adhere to the idea of laws of nature which can be manipulated for human gain. That those laws are spiritual or occult in the case of magic and material in the case of science is a point of ultimately secondary importance. Nothing in Aleister Crowley's idea of magic – "the art of bringing about changes in conformity with will" – would greatly upset a contemporary scientist, except perhaps for calling it an art instead of a science.[4]

Historically speaking, a great deal of 'natural magic' went into the making of modern science in the late seventeenth century, when the latter absorbed, adapted and renamed much of the former. This is especially true of the Baconian programme, Newton's work, and the Royal Society, one of whose founder members, Elias Ashmole (1652: 445) defined magic as "the Connexion of natural Agents and Patients, answerable each to other, wrought by a wise Man to the bringing forth of such effects as are wonderful to those that know not their causes."[5] Specifying what kind of 'natural Agents' were involved was, and continues to be, a turf war internal to Magic. Nor has the popular incomprehension of science, which continue to render its effects "wonderful" to the public, changed much; how many people really understand telephones, let alone computers, or quantum physics?

Sometimes the magical nature of modern science is openly admitted, and even exploited: as with General Electric's corporate research laboratory, the first in the USA, which was touted as a "house of magic", staffed by white-coated "wizards".[6] More often, however, it is strenuously denied in a way that highlights the tendentiousness of the magic/science opposition. For that is to accept the dubious and self-interested claims of scientific spokespersons to have transcended states of magical enchantment - a.k.a. 'superstition', 'ideology', or 'false consciousness' - and by virtue of a state of disinterested and disenchanted reason,

1. The original essay was first delivered as a lecture in 1939, and first published, somewhat enlarged, in 1947. As Professor Shippey has pointed out to me, Tolkien may have been influenced to some extent by Frazier (1922, chapter 4: 48-60), as regards the common ground between magic and science; but his treatment of religion is quite different. For those interested in following up the Tolkien connection, see Curry (1997).
2. Independent of the conceiving mind, note; so we are not talking about 'willed suspension of belief', or a wilful projection of meaning.
3. The former term was originally that of Foucault, of course, but it can be aptly appropriated here in a general sense. In order to keep these particular definitions in mind, I shall retain Tolkien's upper-case first letters in this discussion.
4. Quoted in *Pagan Dawn* 124 (Lammas 1997).
5. See (for example) Webster (1982).
6. *New Scientist* (11 Oct. 1997) p. 50. (Thanks to C.J. Moore for this reference.)
7. See Feyerabend (1987).

to have seen and described the world 'as it actually is'. Thus[7] we pass all too easily from rationality to rationalism, and from science to scientism, the cult of scientific reason.

Tolkien's distinction between Magic and Enchantment undermines this convenient intellectual deception. It enables us to see that the tension between these two different ways of knowing and of valuing[8] exists within probably every major human discourse: in science, for example, between instrumentalist-utilitarian knowledge of the natural world enabling its exploitation, and deep appreciation of its extraordinary wonders. True, the former dominates; but there are sufficient exemplars of scientific wonder for its own sake (David Attenborough and Loren Eisley spring to mind) to show that it doesn't do so absolutely. Within magic too - whether the occult arts, New Ageism or neo-paganism – there is an ineradicable tension between the attempted manipulation of spiritual forces for power on the one hand and the worship of ultimate spiritual mysteries on the other. And by the same token, none of these domains can claim to be free of metaphysical, cultural or practical assumptions, or to have an exclusive franchise on the truth.[9]

However, Tolkien's definition of Enchantment needs some further unpacking. If it was simply cognate with art, the result would be to replace one stereotypical cultural assumption – magic vs. science – with another, namely C.P. Snow's "two cultures" of science (as Magic) and art. But I don't think this is the case. It is true that Enchantment "is artistic in desire and purpose", and usually involves the creation of a Secondary World; but its prerequisite is "the realization, independent of the conceiving mind, of imagined wonder". In other words, Enchantment must indispensably include an experience of wonder as a reality that, so far as the person(s) involved are concerned, could otherwise or hitherto only ever have been imagined. (Note that it need not have actually been imagined - ie., by the conceiving mind.)

Such an experience, which most of us have probably tasted at least once or twice in our lives, is indeed an essential goal of art, but it is not confined to art. Furthermore, art in this respect draws its provenance - perhaps even its meaning - from such experiences in and of the 'real' world, which it seeks to re-create; a Secondary World can only use the materials, psychological as well as artistic, of the Primary. Enchantment therefore cannot be confined to art; and this actually accords well with Tolkien's (1988:49) otherwise somewhat baffling equation of Enchantment with "Faerian Drama", the usual effect of which upon a human being "is to go beyond Secondary Belief. If you are present at a Faerian drama you yourself are, or think that you are, bodily inside its Secondary World .... To experience directly a Secondary World: the potion is too strong, and you give it to Primary belief, however marvellous the events."

In any case, Tolkien (1988: 36-7) is certainly right that Enchantment does not consist of a willed suspension of disbelief: you "believe it, while you are, as it were, inside. The moment disbelief arise, the spell is broken; the magic, or rather the art, has failed. You are then out in the Primary World again, looking at the little abortive Secondary World from the outside". This too is not an experience confined to art; think of the attitude of enthralled participants in sexual congress, compared to the disenchanted view of Lord Chesterfield: "The pleasure is momentary, the position ridiculous, and the expense damnable." The same gulf separates those who are 'inside' from those on the 'outside' of mystical experience, or even, say, a football game. True, it is possible to suspend disbelief, but that "is a substitute for the real thing, a subterfuge we use when condescending to games or make-believe, or when trying (more or less willingly) to find what virtue we can in the work of an art that has for us failed." And unlike Magic, whatever Enchantment may involve it is not the will (as such).

Complications

I am not suggesting that the divide between Magic and Enchantment is absolute; nor, by any means, that the former is necessarily bad while the latter is good. Indeed, it may well be that both modes are a necessary part of human life, in a way reminiscent of yang and yin in Chinese philosophy, or, relatedly, maleness and femaleness (in a way that includes but transcends biological gender). But I am also not positing unchanging metaphysical principles; indeed, I am going to suggest that the way they have constituted by and in context is why they now matter.

Magic and Enchantment overlap in complex, even paradoxical ways, as can be seen in various test-cases which clarify both their differences and their interplay. Take divination, for example; the new awareness that flows from an act of divination may - and paradigmatically, I believe, does - partake of (re-) enchantment, rather than a utilitarian usefulness as such.[10] However, one may well have a new approach to acting in the 'real' world afterwards, and thus an altered situation vis-à-vis power-knowledge. In other words, while Enchantment is not in itself an act of will intended to produce certain effects in the primary world, it may well have such effects indirectly.

Exactly the same applies to fiction - which is why both Shelley's boast about poets as the "unacknowledged legislators of the world" and Auden's lament that "Poetry changes nothing" are so unsatisfactory. Poetry, and fiction generally, cannot, by its nature, successfully set out to change things, because that is to leave Enchantment for Magic, and thus fail as the former; the raison d'être of imaginative literature, as opposed to a tract, is precisely to enchant. But that does not mean that it cannot make things happen in the Primary World, albeit not always in accord with what its author would have wished. The sad case of *The Satanic Verses* illustrates this point very clearly. It is one that Yeats understood well: "Did that play of mine send out/ Certain men the English shot?"

It also serves to demonstrate that Enchantment is indeed, in Tolkien's term (1988: 50), potentially "perilous". Although I'm sure it's not the sort of thing he had in mind, another example of its pathological possibilities - in a domain normally one of life's most delightful and life-affirming - is the (true) story of sexual Enchantment portrayed in Nagisa Oshima's film "Ai No Corrida", which ends in mutual obsession, insanity for one partner and a violent death for the other. Contrariwise, there is something fundamentally psychologically and socially healthy about the spark of human (relative) initiative and (qualified) independence - without which Magic would be impossible - nurtured in the pre-modern humanism of

8. Formally speaking, epistemologies and axiologies.
9. See (for example) Smith (1997).
10. See Curry (1992), Chapter 1.

Machiavelli, Montaigne and Erasmus. And at a more mundane though no less important level, when I go to my dentist I prefer a competent exercise of power-knowledge, rather than an experience of spiritual transport.

Other instances can further refine our distinction. Briefly, humour: if something strikes you as funny (a form of Enchantment), well and good; but if it doesn't, no amount of willing it to be so, or explanation of why it is (a branch of power-knowledge, albeit obscure), will make it so. Or take something as simple as going for a walk in the woods, or any other natural setting. As most of us know, an over-determination to arrange everything, externally and internally, so that nothing interferes with our enjoyment, can very effectively destroy the very Enchantment that was our motive in the first place. Which is to say, perhaps, that Enchantment rarely survives becoming a goal; and that although its conditions can - indeed, arguably must - be established by will and knowledge, it cannot be forced to occur.

Facile assumptions can be misleading here. As I have mentioned, science is not necessarily the domain of Magic alone. Goethean science, predicated on phenomenological participation in nature rather than its control and prediction – and therefore marginal to the Baconian-Galilean-Cartesian mainstream - is evidence to the contrary.[11] Some people think that quantum physics has the same potential. Or take another example: intercessory prayer, for the benefit of others, especially those in distress. There are certainly cases where this 'works' in the experience of those involved, and as it is intended to produce certain specific primary changes, such prayer qualifies as a kind of (spiritual) Magic. But it is a kind that happens to escape the modernist/humanist ambit.[12]

The Triumph of Magic

This brings us to a crucial point – and to something of a change of mode here, as we turn to the status and operation of these phenomena in the current world situation. Very briefly, at the close of the twentieth century - for socio-historical reasons that are none the less compelling for being ultimately contingent (rather, that is, than being essential or intrinsic to their natures) – Magic has achieved a global dominance to the extent that Enchantment seems to be seriously under threat. And if you further accept, as I do (and by no means without a great deal of evidence, although in a paper like this its production is not feasible) that this dominance is responsible for rapidly escalating and in some cases irreversible degradation in human, ecological and spiritual terms, then it follows that Enchantment has become uniquely precious and important as a resource for resistance, and for the realization of better alternatives.

The modernist project is analysable (as I have argued elsewhere) in terms of three interlocking domains: international capital, science and technology, and the nation-state.[13] In action, these three are now inseparable; and Magic lies at their heart. Indeed, the power of modernist Magic is such that via the media generally (and advertising in particular), it has given rise to what I would like to propose as a new, third category to supplement Tolkien's original two: namely, Glamour. Glamour is Enchantment in the service of Magic; Enchantment, one might almost say, enslaved.

'when I go to my dentist I prefer a competent exercise of power-knowledge, rather than an experience of spiritual transport'

Of course, since the wonder of Glamour is, with the greatest of pains, will and knowledge, engineered to particular and preset ends, it cannot, by definition, be genuine Enchantment. But if it is the only kind that most people are exposed to, in relentless quantities and with ever greater sophistication, how can the self-fulfilling disappearance of the real thing (as opposed, we might say, to "The Real Thing!") come as a surprise? This is not a frivolous comparison; not only does it capture the typical corporate displacement of what is (subject to the usual epistemological constraints) real by the blatantly artificial and interest-driven, but the Coca-Cola logo is now the most widely-recognized icon in the world, not excluding religious symbols. To be sure, the pseudo-Enchantment of Glamour is not necessarily driven by the profit-motive – recall how powerful was the spell of hero-worship engineered by Stalin, Hitler and Mao – but in these supposedly post-ideological days, it nearly always is. It was neatly if unintentionally summed up by a top fashion executive: "selling the dream". It is the conjunction of those two terms that constitutes Glamour.

Dis- and Re-Enchantment

In recent years, the subject of modernity has generated a vast amount of discussion, especially in terms of 'postmodernity'. I want to avoid that here, in the same way that Kolakowski (1990: 7) does, quite legitimately, when he writes that "the question so many of us have been trying to cope with is not so much when modernity started, but what is the core - whether or not explicitly expressed - of our contemporary widespread *Unbehagen in der Kultur* [cultural discontent]... And the first answer that naturally comes to mind is summed up, of course, in the Weberian *Entzauberung* - disenchantment - or in any similar word roughly covering the same phenomenon." Zygmunt Bauman (1992: x-xi) points to this when he invokes postmodernity as

> restoring to the world what modernity, presumptuously, had taken away; as a re-enchantment of the world that modernity had tried hard to disenchant.... The war against mystery and magic was for modernity the war of liberation leading to the declaration of reason's independence... [the] world had to be de-spiritualized, de-animated: denied the capacity of subject.... It is against such a disenchanted world that the postmodern re-enchantment is aimed.[14]

These authors, like Weber, are surely right about instrumentalist, utilitarian, bureaucratic disenchantment as the authentic hallmark of modernity.[15] That said, however, the Weberian thesis is seriously flawed - the version, at least,

11. See Bortoft (1996) and Naylor (1996)
12. On humanism (of the kind I mean), see Ehrenfeld (1978); on modernism (as the self-consciousness of modernity, not a particular cultural movement), see Toulmin (1990)
13. In Curry (1997), this three-fold analysis of modernity has been borrowed from Ekins (1992)
14. See also also Hassan (1992).
15. For a fascinating analysis, see Kontos (1994)

accepted by both modernists themselves and anti-modernists, in which disenchantment is (substantively as well as semantically) the opposite condition to enchantment, and is furthermore part of an inexorable and universal process. That is simply modernist ideology or, if you prefer, myth - not wrong on that account, by any means, but itself an integral part of the global modernization that needs resisting. Barbara Herrnstein Smith (1988: 179) has aptly described it as "the effort to identify the presumptively universally compelling Truth and Way and to compel it universally." That is why it is important to understand the modernist program as not really disenchanted (and by implication, somehow objective, disinterested, realistic and so on), but as saturated and driven by the ideology and metaphysics of Magic - notwithstanding that it strenuously denounces magic. And there is nothing necessary, complete or irreversible about its contemporary victory; here and there, if often, of necessity, secretly, Enchantment survives.[16]

It follows that if 'disenchantment' cannot be accepted at face-value, then neither can 're-enchantment'. Re-enchantment is not about re-introducing a former condition where it no longer exists; it must rather be a matter of recognizing, articulating and encouraging Enchantment - or more exactly, the conditions for Enchantment that exist now. But it is most definitely not about making it happen or enforcing it; for the potentially terrible irony is that a program of willed power-knowledge to create (re-) Enchantment necessarily becomes Magic, the very thing it set out to oppose. The terminus can then only be some kind of theocratic religious police – no merely hypothetical possibility, as the appalling case of contemporary Iran shows.[17] So if it be asked, 'Can you fight Magic with Enchantment?' the answer is, *pace* Weber's utter pessimism, yes: but not directly.

Wonder

I would now like to examine Enchantment more closely, first in relation to wonder, then to nature. Tolkien emphasized the centrality of the former in his definition, "the realization...of imagined wonder". "Realization" here hovers ambiguously but fruitfully between wonder at the world – that it is, what it is, and what is in it – or what Ronald Hepburn calls "existential wonder", and what makes it possible to realize that it is wondrous, or 'art'. In a perceptive and sensitive essay, Hepburn (1984: 140, 145, 146, 151) has analysed wonder in a way which strengthens the contrast with Magic that I have borrowed from Tolkien (without, I am sure, any direct influence) while refining the idea of Enchantment.[18] He shows wonder to be a "kind of knowing" which, although it overlaps with religious or metaphysical as well as aesthetic experience, is reducible to neither; nor is it merely "a prelude to fuller knowledge". Wonder "is notably and essentially other-acknowledging"; there is "a close affinity between the attitude of wonder itself – non-exploitative, non-utilitarian – and attitudes that seek to affirm and respect other-being." Thus, the "moral correlates" of wonder include respect, compassion and humility. These all involve "openness to new forms of value", as opposed to the attitude of '"We've seen it all"' (as in, for example, "When you've seen one Redwood Tree, you've seen them all").

'a life without boundaries, as any first-year psychology student should know, is not freedom but psychosis'

Here is another overlap with Weberian disenchantment, for the important thing about that, as he pointed out, is its monism and universalism: given a single reference point - whether spiritual (God) or material (scientific truth) – "one can, in principle, master all things by calculation" (Kontos: 1994, 242). Thus there is nothing new under the sun, for everything can, at least in theory, be fitted into the ultimate scheme somewhere. In contrast, enchantment for Weber was marked by a plurality of ultimately incommensurable spirits, values and/ or principles, in response to which wonder is a constant and appropriate possibility. As he realised, its enemies include both science and monotheistic religion. (This was strikingly confirmed only recently in Britain, when the arch-Darwinist Richard Dawkins and an Anglican bishop buried their differences for long enough to agree publicly on one thing: the iniquity of one of the most widespread forms of popular (re-) enchantment, namely astrology.[19]) Taken together with the paradox I have already noted, that programmatic Enchantment becomes Magical, the implication is unavoidable: any attempted return to theism would only add further to the contemporary triumph of Magic.

There are echoes in this post-Weberian argument of both the late Paul Feyerabend's epistemological anarchism (since ably developed by Barbara Herrnstein Smith) and Isaiah Berlin's value-pluralism. They are highly pertinent ones – again, not in terms of direct intellectual influence but as coherently related strands of argument. In all three cases, the values of Enchantment are seen as seriously jeopardised by a totalising monist and universalist reason the shorthand for which is sometimes 'the Enlightenment', but which I have called Magic.[20]

Hepburn (1984: 140) also argues that the "transformation of the merely threatening and daunting into what is aesthetically manageable, even contemplated with joy...is achieved through the agency of wonder." This resonates strikingly (although again, I think, coincidentally) with G.K. Chesterton's (1996: 3-4) rhetorical question, nearly ninety years ago: "How can we contrive to be at once astonished at the world and yet at home in it?.... We need to be happy in this wonderland without once being merely comfortable."

Hepburn (1984: 144) also shows convincingly that although by no means ruling it out, wonder does not depend on theism: "To be evocative of wonder, an object need not be seen as filtering the perfections of deity."[21] The irony is that the only other indispensable guide to wonder I have found is Chesterton, in his splendid chapter on "The Ethics of Elfland" in

16. For two very different books arguing (in their own ways) this point, see Latour (1993) and Calasso (1993).
17. And as Raymond Tallis (1997: 159) mentions, in attacking re-enchantment; but he conflates enchantment with religion, and specifically theism
18. See also his recent essay (1998).
19. BBC4, 'Moral Maze', 14 Nov. 1996.
20. One of the best guides to this territory is John Gray, in his (1995) and (1997).
21. *C.f.* Suzuki (1970: 61): 'The world is its own magic.' It is worth noting, however, that Tolkien ultimately would not have agreed

that classic of Christian apologetics, *Orthodoxy* (1995: 274-76). He is worth quoting at some length:

> The man of science says, 'Cut the stalk, and the apple will fall'; but he says it calmly, as if the one idea really led up to the other. The witch in the fairy tale says, 'Blow the horn, and the castle will fall'; but she does not say it as if it were something in which the effect obviously arose out of the cause. Doubtless she has given the advice to many champions, and seen many castles fall, but she does not muddle her head until it imagines a necessary connection between a horn and a falling tower. But the scientific men do muddle their heads, until they imagine a necessary mental connection between an apple leaving the tree and an apple reaching the ground....They feel that because one incomprehensible thing constantly follows another incomprehensible thing the two together somehow make up a comprehensible thing....
>
> The only words that ever satisfied me as describing Nature are the terms used in the fairy books, "charm", "spell", "enchantment". They express the arbitrariness of the fact and its mystery. A tree grows fruit because it is a magic tree. Water runs downhill because it is bewitched. The sun shines because it is bewitched....
>
> I deny altogether that this is fantastic or even mystical.... It is the man who talks about "a law" that he has never seen who is the mystic.

Despite appearances, perhaps, Chesterton is not actually guilty of hyperbole here. As I believe any true scientist would admit, no-one knows what gravity, electromagnetism or any such phenomenon actually is, and even physical laws can only be inferred in a way that leaves them permanently vulnerable to future revision. Furthermore, he vividly brings out "the sense of absolute contingency" (Hepburn, 1984: 140) that generates existential wonder. But we have already seen that science cannot be necessarily identified with Magic nor art with Enchantment. The point is that whatever form they take, Magic and Enchantment both lay claim to a special relationship to nature. The nature of that claim, however, couldn't be more different. The former brings all of nature under one rule, the rule of a set of universal laws to which there can neither exception nor appeal; whereas the latter sees nature as endlessly plural, particular and unique. (That is why real Enchantment, from the scientific Magician's point of view, is literally useless.)

Nature

Tolkien too emphasized Enchantment as wonder at nature, including specifically its perception, celebration and healing. Such a connection - or rather, identity - could be approached analytically in various ways. Perhaps Enchantment-as-art 'is' nature in the way that Hepburn (1984: 181-82) suggests when he writes that our values and experiences

> are essentially the result of a cooperation of man and non-human nature: the universe would not contain them, were it not for our perceptual-creative efforts, and were it not equally for the contribution of the non-human world that both sustains and sets limits to our lives. To realize that there is this cooperative interdependence of man and his natural environment checks the extremes of pessimism by showing our earth-rootedness even in our aspirations. There is no wholly-other paradise from which we are excluded; the only transcendence that can be real to us is an 'immanent' one.

If this seems rather general, recall that Hepburn also adduces humility as a moral correlate of wonder. Putting these points together makes sense of much: where Magic involves a 'tragic' (temporary, conditional, partial) defiance of limits, Enchantment evokes a profoundly 'comic' appreciation of our earth-rooted dependency.[22]

It may also be the case that, as William Blake bluntly put it, "Nature is Imagination itself". One way to grasp this is the idea of nature as cosmic art; for while art is 'conscious' while nature is supposedly not, I think modernity has encouraged us to overestimate the degree and importance of the former in art, while destructively denying (as Bauman has pointed out) nature's capacity as animate subject – except, in an ultimately patronizing way, within the limited ambit of aesthetic Romanticism.[23] A related suggestion is that of Gregory Bateson (1979) - another voice of sanity, and an admirer of Blake - who fruitfully analyzed mind and nature as "a necessary unity". Where I think Bateson's formulation falls down, however, is its dependence on the mystical idea (as Chesterton would have put it) of logical or transcendental necessity.[24] If there is to be any such unity, it must be forged in our experience, which is where it matters. But as I also mentioned, the juggernaut of modernist Magic has ever more strongly linked Enchantment and nature - equally imperilled as never before in human experience – or else impelled us to recognize their union; no hard-and-fast distinction between reality and our experience of it is possible here.

One interesting implication is that the (literally) dead art of Damien Hirst and his ilk, where this link has been severed, is not just unenchanted but actually an arm of Magic - and as such, no longer art. It might be replied that death and putrefaction is part of nature. True; but Hirst's art, like that of his mentor, Bacon, restricts nature to just that, in a nihilistic denial of animation, subjectivity and ineffability that is the acme of modernist sensibility. Nor is the patronage of a wealthy and decadent art establishment, knowing (and setting) the price of everything and the value of nothing, a coincidence; nature as dead, fully knowable and manipulable is a precondition for its full commerical exploitation.

By the same token, modernist/humanist Magic rejects natural limits. Applied to their ultimate instance – death - the result is exemplified by cryogenics. Both individually and collectively, we are to do 'whatever it takes' to get whatever we want. A recent advertisement I saw stated the following proposition: "To be truly free requires a life without boundaries. The passport to that future is technology." But a life without boundaries, as any first-year psychology student should know, is not freedom but psychosis – and in the ambition of such companies, not merely individual but global psychosis; not mastery, but mass slavery.

At the same time, however, the new awareness of art-as-nature (and vice-versa) radically extends the

22. See Elgin (1985).
23. Thanks to Nicola Bown for this point.
24. See Smith (1997).

possibilities of Enchantment, including 're-enchantment'. It has now become possible to value the Earth in new ways – which are nearly always also very old ways that have been re-discovered and adapted from indigenous peoples, whether of the past or elsewhere - that are simultaneously, spiritual, practical, and artistic (though they need not involve traditional artistic media). Indeed, it seems to have become possible to the exact extent that it has now become necessary. Although practically everywhere has its grassroots equivalents, in Britain there is no better example than the integrity, skill and humor of those resisting that exemplar of modernist madness, the road expansion program; and its heart is the realization of nature's wonder. (The huge motorway punched through the ancient hills at Twyford Down in Hampshire, where this movement began, is modern Magic. It's not a pretty sight.)

Signs of Wonder

What are the signs that might help us to recognize genuine contemporary re-Enchantment? It seems to me they are these:

(1) Wonder in and at the natural world, its places and its non-human people but actual ones, and not merely in the abstract (even as 'Gaia') – accompanied with a recognition and appreciation of their integrity and variety, independently of any use they may have to human beings. (This is the central insight of deep ecology, usually termed 'ecocentrism'.)

(2) As against the monism and rationalism of modernist Magic, a consistent pluralism in at least three respects: epistemologically as relativism, axiologically as value-pluralism, and politically as a project of radical and plural democracy.[25]

(3) An end to humanist/modernist (and postmodernist) secularism and its war on wonder, with the frank admission of a spiritual dimension of human experience that is not exhausted by institutionalised religion. In terms of (re-) Enchantment, its closest affinities are with popular animism, even more than with other sympathetic approaches: polytheism, pantheism or panentheism, and Buddhist non-theism. (It has to be said - and I am speaking here of discourses, not of individuals - that in this context, monotheism starts with some severe handicaps.)[26]

Actually, Enchantment is a result of right relationship with the Earth just as much as the reverse; more so, indeed, in the sense that we need the Earth, whereas it does not need us. This is a vital point to remember, if we are to resist its incorporation into a program of religious power-knowledge, or its corruption into the virtual enchantment of Glamour. But it is possible – and urgent – to encourage and sustain Enchantment. What does so is living life as nature's art; and the art of living in and with nature. This requires foreswearing the modernist dream of mastery. But slavery is not, as alarmists cry, the only alternative. The person "who allows himself to be 'free with' Nature" – but within nature – can, as Tolkien (1988: 55) noted, "be her lover not her slave."

25. On epistemological pluralism, see Smith (1997); on axiological, Smith (1988) and the work of Isaiah Berlin; on political, Laclau and Mouffe (1985).

26. On the subject of religious discourses, I am fully aware that particular individuals are capable of finding and drawing upon resources for ecologism in any of the major religious traditions; see Callicott (1994). I am also (obviously, I hope) not using the word animism in its classical anthropological sense of a teleologically primitive stage of religion.

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"Queer lodgings": gender and sexuality in *The Lord of the Rings*

By David M Craig

This paper was first presented at Oxonmoot 1999.

In June 1955 Tolkien sent a letter to the Houghton Mifflin Company, in which he corrected some errors that had appeared in a *New York Times Book Review* article. He noted two criticisms of his work that particularly annoyed him. The first was that it contained no religion. The second was dismissed in parenthesis: the claim that *Lord of the Rings* contained 'no women'. He thought this 'does not matter, and is not true anyway'.[2] There are of course *some* women in the book, but they are very few and often peripheral to the narrative. This might 'not matter' to the author, but it should matter to the critic and historian. What *Lord of the Rings* does contain is an abundance of male characters. It's a man's world and most of the central relationships are between men. But if any critic (perhaps W.H. Auden?) had asked if the book contained homosexuals, Tolkien would have certainly answered with astonishment that it did not. This paper is an attempt to explore in detail the representation and relationships of women and men in this novel. There is something 'queer' (in both the old and new senses of the term) about this problem. The exclusion of women from the narrative has important implications for the way men are presented. My argument looks both at the conscious intentions of Tolkien, but also at some of the more unintentional meanings present in the text. No author can fully control the ways in which a book is read, and meanings have a habit of slipping in through the back door.

The Lord of the Rings is not an allegory, but it is a myth with a purpose. That purpose cannot wholly be understood without reference to Tolkien's own beliefs and the culture of which he was a member. This is true of his presentation of both men and women. The inter-war period has generally been seen as a deep trough in the history of feminism. Despite a limited extension of the franchise to women in 1918, there were deep-seated fears that the social and sexual order was under threat. These were times when for conservative minded people the growth of communism and decline of Christianity demanded that traditional order was defended. Libertarian attitudes to gender and sexuality were held by only a tiny minority. But, at the same time, the inter-war period saw a rejection of the aggressive, masculine and military values of pre-war England. The simple, the ordinary, the decent and the quiet were now seen as virtues. England viewed itself as an isolationist and domestic nation. To quote Alison Light: 'In the ubiquitous appeal of civilian values and pleasures, ... the picture of "the little man", the suburban husband pottering in his herbaceous borders ... we can discover a considerable sea-change in ideas of national temperament.'[3] In other words although inter-war culture was conservative on sexual questions, by the standards of pre-war heroic and masculine values, it was rather 'feminine'.

> *'The Lord of the Rings is not an allegory, but it is a myth with a purpose'*

Tolkien distilled this inter-war culture into the Shire. The home of the hobbits was formed partially from Tolkien's childhood remembrances of the countryside, from how he saw rural England, and from the values present in the inter-war period.[4] Hobbits were English people as they liked to see themselves: jovial, kind, and primarily domestic creatures. They revelled in anti-heroic values, and their chief pleasures were food, drink and smoking. They were suspicious and dismissive of anything outside their own narrow existence, and this led them to reject things that could ennoble them. Ted Sandyman scoffs at Sam's lament that the elves are leaving Middle-earth: 'I don't see what it matters to me and you. Let them sail!'[5] But Tolkien was not uncritical of this projection of England. He thought that most hobbits possessed a 'mental myopia which is proud of itself, a smugness ... and cocksureness, and a readiness to measure and sum up all things from a limited experience, largely enshrined in sententious traditional "wisdom"'.[6] The pleasures of ordinary life could not exist without heroism, as is shown by the fact that the Shire was protected by the Rangers.[7] Indeed Charles Williams realised this when he said that 'its centre is not in strife and war and heroism ... but in freedom, peace, ordinary life and good liking.'[8] Tolkien noted that 'he agrees that these very things require the existence of a great world outside the Shire - lest they should grow stale by custom and turn into the humdrum.'[9] Frodo was to transcend the mental backwardness of the Shire (as I show later), but nevertheless for all his criticisms Tolkien saw the Shire as his home country.

The Shire is a traditional sexual order, much as Tolkien thought inter-war England should be. Hobbits invariably married and had many children.[10] The few women we encounter occupy such traditional roles. Mrs. Maggot and Mrs. Cotton are defined by their domestic and familial status. They are hearty home-makers who serve beer and prepare supper for their guests but rarely participate in the narrative. One reader was interested in the fact that Gollum's family was 'ruled by a grandmother', and asked if hobbits possessed a matriarchal family structure.[11] Tolkien suggested that this was not the norm. The heads of families were generally male, and although 'master and mistress had equal status' they had 'different functions.'[12] However if the master died first, then the wife assumed headship until her death, when it passed to the eldest male. Tolkien wrote: 'It could, therefore, happen in various circumstances that a long-lived woman of forceful character remained "head of the family", until she had full-grown grandchildren.'[13] The reference to *forceful character* suggests that women were not naturally designed for such a dominant role. This is evident in Lobelia Sackville-Baggins. Whilst she had a commanding presence she was

also an unpleasant character who hen-pecked her husband. These are standard images of the world turned upside down, the natural order inverted. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis had similar opinions on the place of women in the world. Lewis asked: 'Do you really want a matriarchal world? Do you really like women in authority?'[14] Tolkien, in a letter to his son, argued that men and women were by nature intended for different roles. A married woman quickly settles down into family life.

> Modern conditions ... have not changed natural instinct. A man has a life-work, a career... A young woman, even one "economically independent", as they say now (it usually really means economic subservience to male commercial employers instead of to a father or a family), begins to think of the "bottom drawer" and dream of a home, almost at once.[15]

This was how Tolkien viewed his own domestic life, and it was how England should be ordered. These beliefs were passed into his depiction of the Shire, in which married women happily occupied private roles. They had no call to the male concerns of the narrative, and so it passes over them silently.

Relationships between men and women outside the Shire are cast in terms of romantic love. Tolkien told his son that the romantic chivalric tradition of love was a noble ideal. 'It idealizes "love" - and as far as it goes can be very good, since it takes in far more than physical pleasure, and enjoins if not purity, at least fidelity, and so self-denial, "service", courtesy, honour, and courage.'[16] Despite some problems this tradition, Tolkien thought it had much to commend it. This language was used in his youthful romantic attachment to Edith. He adopted the role of sentimental lover with her and coated it with 'amatory cliché'. Lúthien was inspired by Edith, suggesting that Tolkien saw himself as Beren, a mere mortal man in awe of his noble and superior elven wife.[17] Although he believed that women were naturally designed for familial and domestic roles, he interpreted his feelings for his wife through the language of romantic love, and projected this onto her. This same language persists in the representation of 'noble' women in his writings, and the response of male characters to them. The place to begin is Luthien. In the final published version of *The Silmarillion* Beren comes across Lúthien dancing in the woods. 'Then all memory of his pain departed from him, and he fell into an enchantment; for Lúthien was the most beautiful of all the children of Ilúvatar.' Tolkien described her eyes, hair and clothes, and Beren became as 'one that is bound under a spell.' When 'she looked on him, doom fell upon her, and she loved him.'[18] A number of points should be stressed. Firstly, the basic description of women in terms of appearance is conventional and will recur repeatedly. Secondly, the term 'enchanted' is often used to describe the male response to a noble and beautiful woman. And finally there is nothing to indicate what attracted Lúthien to Beren. These themes are repeated in the accounts of Goldberry and Arwen. Goldberry was like a 'fair young elf-queen' who made the hobbits feel 'surprised and awkward'. Frodo felt 'enchanted' by her.[19] Likewise he feels 'surprised and abashed' looking at Arwen.[20] Aragorn too feels as if he had 'strayed into a dream' on their first meeting. No reason was given for Arwen's attraction to him.[21] It seems that Tolkien's accounts of the effects of noble women on men follow a similar pattern.

'Galadriel was both an object of religious devotion and of human love'

Is this idea of 'enchantment' sexual? Edwin Muir had noted the absence of sexuality in a review, and complained that the characters were all pre-pubescent boys who knew nothing about women. Tolkien snorted: 'Blast Edwin Muir and his delayed adolescence. He is old enough to know better'.[22] He told his son that there were three types of male-female relations. The first was purely sexual which was a grave sin, and the second was simple friendliness. In the third a man can be a lover, 'engaging and blending all his affections and powers of mind and body in a complex emotion powerfully coloured and energized by "sex"'. In its highest form this love was also religious. Romantic chivalric love would identify the object of love as a 'guiding star or divinity - of the old fashioned "his divinity" = the woman he loves - the object or reason of noble conduct.' The danger of this way of thinking was that it turned women who were also fallen into divinities. But when harmonized with religion it could produce the 'highest ideal of love between man and woman.' It was this same ideal which inspired devotion to the Virgin Mary; it was conducted in the same language and with the same emotion.[23] In other words ideal love between men and women was homologous to the love between man and the Virgin Mary. The 'enchantment' felt by male characters in Middle-earth is therefore a mythologised version of the highest form of love. It is religious and yet also contains what we would call sex, although in a non-corrupt form.

This is clearly evident in Galadriel. Many readers saw her as a symbolic Virgin Mary. She was the highest and noblest elf left in Middle-earth and the invocation of her very name inspired many characters in their darkest hours. Tolkien told Father Robert Murray that in his account of her he used 'all my own small perception of beauty both in majesty and simplicity', which was itself founded on the Virgin Mary.[24] Galadriel was both an object of religious devotion and of human love. To some characters this attraction makes her a suspicious character. Eomer thought that 'Few escape her nets, they say ... [perhaps] you also are net-weavers and sorcerers, maybe.'[25] Wormtongue called her the 'Sorceress of the Golden Wood ... webs of deceit were ever woven in Dwimordene.'[26] This language suggests that Galadriel was thought to use her sexual allure to capture men for her own purpose. One thinks of a black widow spider. But we know that her 'enchantment' is benevolent. It fuses religion and love. The crucial moment for the company is when Galadriel tests them: '[S]he held them with her eyes, and in silence looked searchingly at each of them in turn. None save Legolas and Aragorn could long endure her glance. Sam quickly blushed and hung his head.'[27] This is a moment when the divine penetrates the human soul, and only those characters closest to the divine (i.e. Legolas and Aragorn) can bear it for long. But it is significant that this moment is conducted by a female character; it is hard to imagine Tolkien using a male character in this way. It is therefore a gendered moment. Galadriel's physical and mystical beauty are fused together so that the male characters' response is at once divine and emotional. Afterwards the company were

reluctant to say much about their experiences, as if they were private moments between lovers. This is suggested by Sam's blushing, and his feeling 'as if I hadn't got nothing on.'[28] Galadriel knows that she has the power to make men desire her. In her fantasy of taking the One Ring she focuses on herself as an object of adoration: 'And I shall not be dark, but beautiful and terrible ... All shall love me and despair!' 'She stood before Frodo seeming now tall beyond measurement, and beautiful beyond enduring, terrible and worshipful.'[29] In other words she would use her power to be universally loved and desired, suggesting that there is a sexual component to how characters responded to her.

Galadriel has a transforming effect on the characters. Faramir says that men who pass through Lorien should 'look for strange things to follow ... few of old came thence unchanged.'[30] This was true of Gimli whose first encounter with Galadriel affected him dramatically, causing him to place his love for her above jewels and gold.[31] He asks for a strand of her hair, which was a traditional gift between lovers and will 'call nothing fair, unless it be her gift'. He feels wounded at their parting. 'Memory is not what the heart desires', he lamented, again showing that religious transfiguration and human love were blended in his response.[32] Sam told Faramir that he also was changed by the experience. 'Beautiful she is, sir! Lovely! ... Hard as di'monds, soft as moonlight. Warm as sunlight, cold as frost in the stars. [Y]ou could call her perilous, because she's so strong in herself.'[33] This description uses images of natural beauty to suggest the profundity and emotion of Sam's experience. In a rejected draft Faramir tells Sam that it sounds like he has been 'enchanted'.[34] Sam agrees that he has. It seems that Tolkien used Galadriel to convey the idea that the highest form of love is at once an experience of the divine but also of purified human desire.

The female counterweight to Galadriel is Shelob. In this 'female' character we see the corruption of all that was perfect in Galadriel. The darkness that Shelob represents is the antithesis of Galadriel's light. It is not merely the absence of light but its negation: it 'brought blindness not only to the eyes but to the mind, so that even the memory of colours and of forms and of any light faded out of thought. Night always had been, and always would be, and night was all.'[35] Only the radiance of Galadriel's star glass affects the monster, again drawing a contrast between the two females.[36] Just as Galadriel imagined being worshipped if she took the ring and became evil, so Gollum actually 'bowed down and worshipped [Shelob]'[37] Shelob is the lowest form of lust. On a number of occasions she is referred to simply as 'She', drawing attention solely to her gender.[38] As the hobbits try to escape they find a 'vast web', a 'great grey net' in their way. This recalls the images used to describe Galadriel by those suspicious of her. Applied to Shelob they are true; for the hobbits are trapped in the power of the monstrous 'female'. She is 'bloated' and 'fat' on hate and depravity. This takes a strongly sexualised form: 'Far and wide her lesser broods, bastards of the miserable mates, her own offspring, that she slew, spread from glen to glen.'[39] Her crimes are abominable and include incest, illegitimacy and infanticide, all crimes pertaining to sex. Her lust was to consume the world. In his letter to his son, Tolkien insisted that women's indulgence in sex alone was brutally depraving because it was alien to their nature. Some 'are actually so depraved as to enjoy "conquests", or enjoy even the giving of pain - but these are abnormalities.'[40] Shelob represents these thoughts taken to their limit, a female sexuality run rampant. Her attack on Frodo is a grim perversion of the sex-act, for he lay bound, face upward as she straddled over him. Even her 'punishment' has sexual resonances. Sam ran 'inside the arches of her legs'. 'Her vast belly was above him with its putrid light, and the stench of it almost smote him down.' This is an instance of what Natalie Zemon Davis has called 'women on top', a reversal of sexual norms, a disruption of the natural order. Following this idea it is Shelob that lowers herself onto Sam's raised sword. 'Now splaying her legs she drove her huge bulk down on him' and 'thrust herself upon a bitter spike'.[41] The depraved scene ends with an invocation of Galadriel and a hymn to Elbereth, showing that love and light have conquered sex and darkness.

'Shelob's ... attack on Frodo is a grim perversion of the sex-act'

I want now to turn to the triangle of Arwen, Aragorn and Eowyn. The tale of Aragorn and Arwen is a replay of Beren and Luthien. In both cases the women must make a sacrifice to be with their inferior men. But although Arwen is meant to be a Luthien of the Third Age, her story is a dilution of the original. Luthien defied her father to rescue Beren, and together they journeyed to Angband to take a silmaril from Morgoth's crown. Arwen does nothing and is no part of Aragorn's struggle.[42] It is his task to claim his inheritance alone before he can be with her. Part of the explanation is that Arwen did not exist for most of the writing of *Lord of the Rings*. She was invented simply to fulfil the logic of the narrative. A story about the return of a line of kings can hardly end with an unmarried monarch. Arwen was invented to solve this problem, but it was only decided she would marry Aragorn during the writing of 'The Field of Cormallen'.[43] If one wonders why she seems such a shadowy character in the book, it is simply because she did not exist until it was virtually finished.

Eowyn was invented long before Arwen appeared. Her character is complex because of the way that it evolved. Not long after she appears in the drafts it is suggested that she and Aragorn will fall in love.[44] His first meeting is described thus: 'Her face was filled with gentle pity, and her eyes shone with unshed tears. So Aragorn saw her for the first time in the light of day, and after she was gone he stood still, looking at the dark doors and taking little heed of other things.'[45] He is transfixed by her, and there is no suggestion that she is either a troubled or a stern woman at this point. In one scene (which was later rewritten to give a different impression) burgeoning love is suggested by physical contact. As Eowyn serves wine to Aragorn, their eyes meet and their fingers touch. At this point Tolkien thought the two characters would marry. But then he changed his mind, for 'Aragorn is too old and lordly and grim.' Evidently he thought Aragorn required someone on his elevated level rather than an (essentially) ordinary woman. Only once the marriage idea was abandoned does Eowyn's character change: 'Make Eowyn ... a stern amazon woman. ... Probably [she] should die to avenge or save Theoden.'[46] Only two roles are conceivable for Eowyn in the narrative: marriage or death. Having rejected the marriage option, Tolkien toyed with the warrior-woman idea, thinking that Eowyn might go openly

to battle, and that there was a precedent for this in the history of Rohan.[47] However when he returned to the story two years later he had made some decisions. Eowyn's love for Aragorn would remain, but she would be refused even when she begged him to stay or take her with him.[48] Tolkien also decided that she would go to war in defiance of her king, and disguised as a man, both of which emphasise her transgressions. This adds complexity to Eowyn and is supposed to highlight her despair. But it was still proposed that she die in battle destroying the Witch King. Once this was changed the overall shape of Eowyn was in place.[49]

In the final published version Eowyn is introduced as 'stern as steel'. Aragorn thought her 'fair and cold, like a morning of pale spring that is not yet come to womanhood'.[50] This suggests that she is troubled; her coldness is meant to indicate that something is wrong. The reference to her youth signals that she is too young for Aragorn. It also suggests that her attraction to him could be seen as a 'crush' rather than genuine love. Aragorn becomes aware of her attraction when she offers him the cup of wine. As he takes it he notices that her hand was trembling: 'his face now was troubled and he did not smile.'[51] When the host leaves Eowyn is dressed in mail and has a sword in front of her and she effectively confesses her love for Aragorn.[52] The reader is meant to notice that her feelings for Aragorn and her amazonian qualities are connected. When Aragorn returns to Dunharrow, Eowyn's eyes shine when she hears of the slaughter at Helm's Deep, suggesting that her natural womanly role has been disturbed. Her discussion with Aragorn centres on her desire to be a warrior, 'a shieldmaiden and not a dry-nurse?' Her ancestry, she argues, entitles her to fight, and she does not want to be a homemaker. 'Shall I always be left behind when the Riders depart, to mind the house while they win renown, and find food and beds when they return.'[53] These were the issues raised by early twentieth century feminists. For Tolkien, Eowyn wants to leave her feminine role and take on a male role. She tells Aragorn, 'All your words are but to say: you are a woman, and your part is in the house.' She feared only 'to stay behind bars, until use and old age accept them, and all chance of doing great deeds is gone beyond recall or desire.'[54] Although Eowyn is articulating ideas in which women take on different roles, the reader is meant to feel pity for her, and think with Aragorn that her desires must be the product of a deeply troubled and unhappy mind.

Aragorn's rejection only encourages Eowyn's desire to be a warrior. She wants to achieve glory, but this is forbidden to her as a woman. Therefore she has to become a 'man' and overturn the natural gender roles. Tolkien does not present Eowyn as a liberated women, but as someone both proud and unhappy. Dernhelm had the 'face of one without hope who goes in search of death.'[55] At the battle of Pelennor Fields she almost finds it in fulfilling the prophecy that no man may hinder the Witch King. It is interesting that her transformation from Dernhelm into Eowyn is presented as a celebration of the return of femininity: her hair was 'released from its bonds, gleamed with pale gold upon her shoulders.'[56] Although initially Eowyn was to die for her gender transgressions, Tolkien had decided that her restoration would be a central component of the story. Aragorn, Eomer, and Gandalf discuss the origins of her despair. Aragorn believed that her unhappiness was present before he met her, but Eomer disagrees. Gandalf, however, has the answer. Mentally Eowyn possessed the courage of her brother, and she came to resent her role waiting upon an aged king. Although this was her duty it did not seem worthy of her. This view was encouraged by Saruman through Wormtongue, who made her feel dissatisfied with her role: 'all her life seemed shrinking ... a hutch to trammel some wild thing in.'[57] Given that Saruman is presented in *Lord of the Rings* as a twentieth century progressive, it is fascinating that he is ultimately behind Eowyn's feminism. With this Tolkien clearly stresses that he does not support the feminism espoused by Eowyn. We are told that she will die unless her despair is healed.[58] Her realisation of her real love for Faramir leads her to embrace her long-forgotten womanly role. She sees in him both a great warrior and also tenderness, and this causes her to doubt her own stern coldness. '[S]omething in her softened, as though a bitter frost were yielding at the first faint passage of Spring.' The image of thawing represents a return to the feminine. She sheds a tear, and 'her voice was now that of a maiden young and sad.'[59] Slowly she realises that she truly loves Faramir, and she begins fully to return to her true nature as a woman. Faramir tells her that she loved Aragorn because she wanted renown and glory, and 'to be lifted far above the mean things that crawl on the earth'. Faramir then confesses his love for her and the thawing process is now complete: 'her winter passed, and the sun shone on her.' 'I will be a shieldmaiden no longer, nor vie with 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. ... No longer do I desire to be a queen.'[60] The references to healing and growing show that she has embraced the womanly role assigned for her, and that love and marriage are her destiny. The unnatural feminism which caused her pain and despair has been cured.

'Eowyn's ... feelings for Aragorn and her amazonian qualities are connected'

It should now be evident how Tolkien mythologised his own views about the place of women in the world. The true love between man and woman was a beautiful and divine ideal, but it did not mean that women should occupy the same roles as men. It is therefore ironic that Eowyn is the most developed female character, for it is her very deviation from her natural role that makes her interesting. The ideal for women was essentially private; marriage and family. It is well known that Tolkien and Lewis were great defenders of a strong separation between the worlds of men and women. Women were fundamentally different from men.[61] Lewis believed, for instance, that women were generally incapable of logic and art (one wonders if he changed his mind when the philosopher and Christian Elizabeth Anscombe destroyed the theological arguments of his *Miracles* with the ideas of Wittgenstein).[62] Nor were they capable of close friendship, and so it was important that friendship between men excluded women. In part this reflects Tolkien's all-male life at school and at university, and his long interest in clubability, so evident in the Inklings. This was a source of difficulty with his wife, but he thought it important: 'if worth a fight: just insist. Such matters may frequently arise - the glass of beer, the pipe, the non writing of letters, the other friend, etc etc.'[63] Tolkien and Lewis believed that male friendship was essential, and this is much in evidence in *Lord of the Rings*.

The history of male friendship is complex and it inevitably raises the question of homosexuality. Close friendship between men was common among all classes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, if only because women were excluded from so many public activities. From the scouts to the public school, from the training club to the pub, these worlds were generally men only. They allowed men to form close personal relationships which otherwise would not be possible. But initially there was no suggestion that male friendship had anything to do with homosexual attachment. Indeed between the Wilde trials and the Second World War, discussion of homosexuality was usually confined to medical and literary circles. Tolkien claimed that at nineteen he had not even heard of the word.[64] However as the discourse of homosexuality shifted from 'sinful actions' to 'types of person', a growing suspicion was cast on exclusive male friendship. It was increasingly thought of as leading to homosexuality. Lewis was a leading advocate of male friendship and it is interesting that as he grew older he increasingly felt it necessary to distinguish it from homosexuality. In the *Allegory of Love* he had argued that the deepest worldly emotions in the medieval period were between warrior and warrior. These were, to him, in no sense homosexual. The *Four loves* from 1960 makes this clear. 'All those hairy toughs of centurions, clinging to one another and begging for last kisses when the Legion was broken up ... all pansies? If you can believe that you can believe anything.'[65] Because Lewis insists on presenting homosexuality as weak and effeminate, he is able to distinguish it from the manly love and affection of the warriors. But this distinction collapses if we dismiss his crude typology. If we go further and abandon the idea that male homosexuality is a categorically different form of human behaviour which must manifest itself in specific ways, we can argue that what is called homosexual desire can be a part of male friendship. In effect I want to collapse the distinction Lewis was so keen to maintain.

Male friendship was an important mode of expression for men who felt themselves attracted to other men. Homoerotic poetry of the late nineteenth century celebrated friendship between men as the highest form of love. As Paul Fussell has shown, it influenced the poetry of the First World War. Representations of the tenderness of youth, or bathing soldiers were common during the war, and derived from this poetic tradition. This does not mean that all soldiers who bathed, or all people who wrote poetry describing soldiers bathing were homosexual, but rather that the boundaries between male friendship and homosexuality were somewhat fluid.[66] Another example of this can be seen in Anglo-Catholicism. It placed great stress on male brotherhood, even setting up quasi-monastic institutions, and consequently appealed to homosexual men. Although it was generally accepted that there was no sanction for sex-acts outside marriage, it was nevertheless possible to celebrate strong and emotional attachments to other men. Kenneth Ingram was an Anglo-Catholic who argued that homosexuality was 'a romantic cult rather than a physical vice', although by the 1940s he had decided that sexual acts between men were acceptable as long as both parties were truly in love. He believed that 'pure love, especially so intense a love as the homogenic attachment, is not profane but divine.'[67] It appears, then, that intense male friendship provided a language through which homosexual men experienced and explained their feelings, even to the extent of elevating them to a divine status. Lewis's rigid separation between male friendship and homosexual feeling simply cannot historically be maintained. (As a footnote, it is worth noticing that W. H. Auden who was an admirer and defender of *Lord of the Rings*, was also homosexual and an Anglo-Catholic.)

'as the discourse of homosexuality shifted from 'sinful actions' to 'types of person', a growing suspicion was cast on exclusive male friendship'

It is unlikely that Tolkien was aware of this side of male friendship. However he believed in the importance of the companionship of men, and it is possible that his experience of serving at the front in the First World War strengthened this. Recent work by Joanna Bourke has stressed that men expected to form close attachments during war, and often felt that they were fighting it for their comrades. They were in an all-male environment that necessitated taking on roles usually associated with the 'feminine', from cooking and sewing to nursing each other. Indeed some soldiers went as far as suggesting that women disrupted this natural male intimacy. Bourke writes: 'A world of men was opening up, revealing a wide range of roles played by males and exposing the fluidity between masculinity and femininity.'[68] Tolkien certainly found the company of N.C.O.s and privates more agreeable than that of stiff older officers, and later commented that he believed them 'so far superior to myself.'[69] The character of Sam was partly modelled on such soldiers and officers' servants. In a sense *Lord of the Rings* depicts the male companionship that was made possible during the war. The absence of women means that men have to take their functions. Bourke has argued that in pre-war scouting stories the men and the boys function in all the roles of parent, child and lover, leaving no role for women. The same is evident in *Lord of the Rings*: men take roles that would normally be assigned to women. Domestic tasks such as cooking and cleaning are performed, for example, by Sam who sheds tears at having to cast his pans away near Mount Doom.[70] But Fatty Bolger and Merry also take the domestic roles at Crickhollow, from running the baths to preparing supper.[71] These tasks would normally have been performed by women. The result is that the definition of masculinity is necessarily shifted because of the absence of women.

This is also evident on a deeper level. In a sense the book is a grand coming-of-age story. The early chapters stress the innocence of the hobbits. They are either children set free from their parents, or young adults released from their families or lovers. All their emotional energies are directed inwards. Sam gives no sign that he is missing Rosie. This is simply because she had not been invented when the early chapters were written. The lush descriptions of the landscape create a sense of pastoral innocence, a happiness in each other's company. The exuberance of bathing at Crickhollow is one example. Another occurs after their release from the barrow-wight when they run naked on the grass and lie in the sunlight 'with the delight of those who have been wafted suddenly from bitter winter to a friendly clime.'[72]

These moments of closeness are possible because of the absence of both mothers and lovers; they are moments of male bonding. When the fellowship sets out from Rivendell, a new all-male family structure is created. Gandalf and Aragorn are the parent figures. They are the guides through the quest of life and they offer knowledge and comfort. Gandalf scolds and punishes Pippin in Moria, but later softens his approach and tells him to 'have a sleep, my lad'.[73] Aragorn treats Frodo's wounds by Mirromere like any concerned parent. The hobbits are the children of this family. But like any family it is doomed to break up. The 'Breaking of the Fellowship' is caused by the treachery of Boromir, who functions as a duplicitous uncle (a common theme in literature). Aragorn as the parental figure elects to follow Merry and Pippin, and the rest of that part of the story is in part an account of their growing from childhood into manhood. Meanwhile Frodo and Sam are the lovers who leave the family, and the trajectory of their tale is a story of love in the face of adversity rather than of rites of passage.

Before turning to that love story, I want to consider the way Bilbo and Frodo are presented as exceptional hobbits in the Shire. I have stressed above that Tolkien was somewhat critical of the narrow-mindedness and parochialism of the Shire. The hobbits he was interested in transcend this. In 1963 he wrote that, 'We only meet exceptional hobbits in close companionship - those who had a grace or gift: a vision of beauty, and a reverence for things nobler than themselves, at war with their rustic self-satisfaction. Imagine Sam without his education by Bilbo and his fascination with things Elvish! Not difficult. The Cotton family and the Gaffer, when the 'Travellers' return are a sufficient glimpse.'[74] The four hobbits, and in particular Frodo, are transformed by their experience of nobility and beauty beyond the Shire. In this sense they are superior to and different from ordinary Shire hobbits. It is significant that Sam, Merry and Pippin all become community leaders upon their return. But Frodo does not: 'Though I may come to the Shire, it will not be the same, for I shall not be the same.'[75] His transformation is so extreme that he cannot settle back into Shire life. The nobility of Frodo has been noticed by Charlotte Spivack, who suggests it is strongly feminine, and that although *Lord of the Rings* lacks female characters, it 'exhibits decidedly "feminine" themes.'[76] Frodo, she argues, rejects the traditional masculine values of power and technology and therefore undermines patriarchal society. He is a 'feminine' hero. This is a valuable point, particularly when considered alongside how he and Bilbo are perceived by ordinary Shire hobbits. What Spivak sees as 'feminine' Shire hobbits see as 'queer', a term that recurs repeatedly in the early part of the book. Bilbo and Frodo's interest in tales and elves is viewed suspiciously, and the Gaffer worries that his son Sam is spending too much time hearing of such strange things. Sandyman agrees, and says that 'Bag End's a queer place, and its folk are queerer.'[77] Almost certainly Tolkien was using this word simply to mean something that was odd and best avoided. However it did mean 'homosexual' at the time. (For instance, in T.H. White's *The Witch in the Wood*, Queen Morgause decides that a character is 'queer' because she fails to arouse his interest.) Tolkien's use of 'queer' in relation to Frodo and Bilbo draws attention to their unusual 'feminine' values. It is also interesting that Tolkien decided that these values were incompatible with marriage for the hobbits. Neither has a wife. A very early draft had Bilbo running away to get married, but (inevitably, Christopher Tolkien thought) this was soon abandoned.[78] In *Unfinished tales*, Gandalf explained why he chose Bilbo for the quest to Erebor. '[H]e had never married. He was already growing a bit queer, they said, and went off for days by himself.'[79] Or in another version: '[H]e had never married. I thought that odd ... I guessed he wanted to remain "unattached" for some reason deep down which he did not understand himself - or would not acknowledge for it alarmed him.'[80] For Tolkien this 'queerness' derives from a desire to experience nobler and deeper things beyond the Shire, an essentially religious desire. But it is significant that to fulfil these 'feminine' desires Bilbo and Frodo cannot marry, which confirms their 'queerness'. Thus although Tolkien is not suggesting that the hobbits are homosexual, it is interesting that their desire for greater things is structured in the same way as a male desire for another male. Both are rejected as 'queer' by narrow-minded locals.

'Tolkien was somewhat critical of the narrow-mindedness and parochialism of the Shire'

The relationship between Frodo and Sam is the emotional centre of the book, because their love is spiritual. After publication Tolkien tried to present this relationship primarily in terms of master and servant. He spoke of Sam's 'service and loyalty to his master' and of the 'devotion of those who perform such service'.[81] But this hardly captures the depth of their relationship. There are two basic reasons for Sam's desire to follow Frodo. The first is his interest in something nobler, expressed in his desire to see elves: 'Elves, sir! I would dearly love to see *them*.' Sam craves some sort of religious experience. The second reason is Frodo himself. He cannot contain himself when he hears Frodo is to leave: 'And that's why I choked: which you heard seemingly. I tried not to, sir, but it burst out of me: I was so upset.'[82] He bursts into tears of happiness when told he can go. His desire to see elves is fulfilled early on, but he does not wish to turn back: 'I don't know how to say it, but after last night I feel different. I seem to see ahead, in a kind of way. ... I know I can't turn back. It isn't to see Elves now, nor dragons, nor mountains, that I want - I don't rightly know what I want: but I have something to do before the end, and it lies ahead, not in the Shire.'[83] Sam's quest is bound up with Frodo's. Indeed his task is to love Frodo absolutely, through thick and thin, for only through this can the quest be accomplished. His devotion to Frodo is expressed in quite physical terms. When Frodo talks with Gildor, he 'refused to leave his master ... he came and sat curled up at Frodo's feet.'[84] On Weathertop he sheds tears of concern for Frodo. When his master wakes in Rivendell, 'he ran to Frodo and took his left hand, awkwardly and shyly. He stroked it gently and then he blushed and turned hastily away.'[85] That this is a moment of physical intimacy is reinforced by Sam's embarrassment at it. The real bond between the two is developed after the breaking of the fellowship. Sam is deeply upset that Frodo tries to leave without him. He feels it as a moment of rejection, and brushes tears away at the thought. He tells Frodo, 'That's hard, trying to go off without me ... All alone and without me to help you? I couldn't aborne it, it'd have been the death of me'. Frodo tells him it will be his death if he does

come. 'Not as certain as being left behind', Sam replies.[86] He is indifferent to the prospect of death, and his only concern is being with Frodo.

The appearance of Gollum complicates Frodo and Sam's relationship. Whereas Frodo is able to pity Gollum, Sam cannot. Tolkien thought that this inability to perceive 'damaged good in the corrupt' was a major failing. He put this down to Sam's 'pride and possessiveness' of his master.[87] In other words Sam's exclusive love and fierce protectiveness of Frodo leads him to view Gollum as a threat. Essentially he is jealous. This is evident in the fact that Frodo and Gollum have a mental connection with each other through being ring-bearers. Sam is excluded from this. During the taming he notices that Frodo appeared as 'a mighty lord' and Gollum as 'a little whining dog.' 'Yet the two were in some ways akin and not alien: they could reach one another's minds.'[88] Sam was always on the lookout for the worst in Gollum, and hoped to get rid off him. He thought Frodo's pity for the creature was just a case of blindness caused by kindness, and could not therefore see that this pity was essential to Frodo's nobility of character, the very thing which Sam loved in him. For instance when Frodo is asleep in Ithilien, Sam noticed 'a light seemed to be shining faintly within; but now the light was even clearer and stronger. Frodo's face was peaceful.' Sam says to himself on seeing this, 'I love him. He's like that, and sometimes it shines through, somehow. But I love him whether or no.'[89] Sam loves Frodo's pity, charity and humanity, but cannot see that these are the reasons why Frodo treats Gollum as he does. This failure leads, for Tolkien, to the 'most tragic moment' in the story.[90] When Gollum returns down the Cirith Ungol stairs he sees the hobbits together.

> And so Gollum found them hours later, when he returned, crawling and creeping down the path out of the gloom ahead. Sam sat propped against the stone, his head drooping sideways and his breathing heavy. In his lap lay Frodo's head, drowned deep in sleep; upon his white forehead lay one of Sam's brown hands, and the other lay softly upon his master's breast. Peace was in both their faces.[91]

It is this vision of love between the two hobbits that could have caused Gollum's repentance. The gleam faded from his eyes, and he began to look like the sad old hobbit he really was. '[A]nd slowly putting out a trembling hand, very cautiously he touched Frodo's knee - but almost the touch was a caress.'[92] Love has the power to redeem even Gollum. But Sam awakes and his possessiveness and his jealousy prevent him from seeing what is really happening; he merely sees Gollum 'pawing at master'. The repentance is ruined by Sam, ironically because of his love for Frodo, the very thing which was about to transform Gollum. From that point onwards there is no hope of repentance, and as Tolkien said, 'all Frodo's pity is (in a sense) wasted.'[93]

Shelob's Lair could have been avoided but for Sam, and so Frodo's seeming death and capture is effectively a punishment for Sam's lack of pity. He is reduced to despair and loss at the thought of Frodo's death: 'night came into his heart'.[94] It is his love (and common sense) which prevents him believing the warrior fantasies the ring confers upon him. By risking himself to rescue his master he atones for his words on the stairs: 'His love for Frodo rose above all other thoughts, and forgetting his peril he cried aloud: "I'm coming, Mr. Frodo!"[95] The reunion is made poignant by the state to which Frodo has been reduced. He lies naked in a heap of rags emphasising his utter vulnerability. Frodo lies back in 'Sam's gentle arms, closing his eyes. ... Sam felt he could sit like that in endless happiness; but it was not allowed.'[96] This image of exposed, naked bliss makes Sam and Frodo supremely happy, but their danger ensures that it cannot last. Their love is made more moving because when the question of the ring is raised it seems to sunder them. The ring's effects are selfish, and destructive of love. 'Sam had changed before [Frodo's] very eyes into an orc again, leering and pawing at his treasure, a foul little creature with greedy eyes and slobbering mouth. But now the vision had passed. There was Sam kneeling before him, his face wrung with pain, as if he had been stabbed in the heart; tears welled from his eyes.'[97] Perhaps more strongly here than anywhere else we feel the evil effects of the ring. The final stages of the journey see the two hobbits drawn closer together, as the task becomes more difficult for Frodo. Finally Sam carries him. This final part of the story is deeply religious; it is about the ideal of love struggling against enormous odds, with only a slim glimmer of hope, and yet conquering. The intimacy and love between Frodo and Sam is the moral and emotional heart of the story which is capable of saving the world from evil, and of regenerating Gollum's own evil.

'Sam's exclusive love and fierce protectiveness of Frodo leads him to view Gollum as a threat. Essentially he is jealous'

Wrapping up the story required a return to 'normality'. But at the same time Tolkien did not want to abandon the love story between Frodo and Sam. It was too affecting and elevating to be denied. In the earliest projections of the end of the story, before Rosie and Sam's marriage was conceived, it was thought that 'Sam and Frodo [would] go into a green land by the Sea.'[98] (At the end of Forster's *Maurice* the two male characters retreat from society together and go into the woods). In other words neither would return 'home' to the Shire but would go somewhere together and alone. This cuts against what Tolkien said in 1951: 'I think the simple 'rustic' love of Sam and his Rosie (nowhere elaborated) is *absolutely essential* to the study of his ... character.'[99] Given that Rosie did not exist for most of the writing of Sam's character this sounds like a retrospective assessment. Nevertheless in the final version it was decided that Sam would return to 'normal' life and Frodo would not. This created a dilemma for Sam. When Frodo asks him to move in, he says that 'I feel torn in two, as you might say'.[100] This is also evident in final passages of the book. Frodo's decision to leave Middle-earth moves Sam to tears at the thought of losing him. In a letter from 1951 Tolkien described the dilemma of Sam: He 'has to choose between love of master and of wife.' Interestingly Tolkien says that Sam's last words were 'Well, I've come back.' Christopher Tolkien comments that no draft of the Grey Havens gave that particular reading, which is quite different from 'Well, I'm back'.[101] Whether or not this was merely a mental slip on Tolkien's part, it cannot but help reinforce the impression that Sam had to make a choice, even if the narrative could hardly end with Rosie and her child being abandoned. But as we know from the Tale of Years,

ultimately Sam does not have to make a choice between his loves. Rosie dies before Sam, and as his family obligations are now dissolved he too passes into the west. Thus at the very end Sam and Frodo are together again, 'in a green land by the Sea'.

Tolkien's own views of men and women and of love and sex are inscribed on every page of *Lord of the Rings*. Of course he used the whole range of 'northern' mythology available to him in crafting his book, and yet the meanings he gave to this material can only be understood by looking at the culture he inhabited. There is no doubt that *Lord of the Rings* is a religious work. More than that it is a Christian (and Roman Catholic) work. This lends it both its conservative and radical qualities. On the one hand it lacks female characters and views them in traditionally domestic terms. On the other it embraces a politics of anti-power and anti-technology which have been viewed as deeply feminine. It is a book about the heroic exploits of a world of men, and yet it challenges that very notion of masculinity. Ultimately it is a book about the religious ideal of love. We see this between Aragorn and Arwen, between Faramir and Eowyn, and we see it in Galadriel. But most of all we see it between Frodo and Sam. Their quest is held together by their love and it is an irony (though probably one Tolkien would deny) that the love which conquers all is the love which dare not speak its name.

With the exception of some very minor revisions this paper is the same as that given at Oxonmoot 1999. Pressures of time have prevented me from embarking on a necessary re-write, so there remain points that I would now wish to qualify. I am grateful to Colin Davey for comments in the initial process of writing, to David Doughan for various useful criticisms, and to Oxonmooters for other comments.

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4 Tolkien, Letters, 250, 288
5 Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, 3rd edition (London, 1983), p. 58
6 Tolkien, Letters 329
7 Eg, LotR 188.
8 Tolkien, Letters, 105
9 Tolkien, Letters 105-6
10 LotR 19.
11 LotR 66; Letters 289-96
12 Letters 29
13 Letters 293-4.
14 Carpenter, The Inklings 164
15 Letters 50.
16 Letters 48-49
17 Carpenter, Tolkien, 105.
18 The Silmarillion, 1st ed, 165.
19 LotR 138. Nevertheless Goldberry is still assigned various domestic chores.
20 LotR 243.
21 LotR, 1095-6, 1098.
22 See Carpenter, Tolkien, 226-7; Tolkiem, Letters 299-230
23 Tolkien, Letters, 48-9
24 Tolkien, Letters 172. For Tolkien's difficulties with this identification see Letters, 407. Also, Unfinished Tales, pp. 230-2.
25 LotR 453
26 LotR 536
27 LotR 376
28 LotR 377
29 LotR 385
30 LotR 692
31 LotR 375
32 See LotR 398-9
33 LotR 706
34 Tolkien, The War of the Ring, 163
35 LotR, 745.
36 LotR, 748
37 LotR 750
38 LotR, 659
39 LotR, 750
40 Tolkien, Lettera, 50
41 See LotR 755-6
42 It could therefore be argued that the conjectured expansion of Arwen's role in the forthcoming Peter Jackson film has precedents in the tale of Luthien, and is not out-of-keeping with the spirit of Tolkien's works.
43 Sauron Defeated, 52; also War of the Ring, 386, 425
44 Treason of Isengard, 390, 437.
45 Treason of Isengard, 445
46 See Treason of Isengard 447-8. After this decision Tolkien considered making Aragorn love Eowyn, and never to marry after her death.
47 War of the Ring, 243
48 War of the Ring, 406, 418
49 War of the Ring, 369
50 LotR 537
51 LotR 545
52 LotR 546
53 LotR 815
54 LotR 816
55 LotR 834
56 LotR 874
57 LotR 901.
58 LotR 901-2
59 See LotR 995-6
60 Lotr 1000-1001
61 Tolkien, Letters, 49
62 A.N. Wilson, *C.S. Lewis: a biography* (London, 1990), pp. 210-14.
63 Carpenter, Tolkien, 159
64 Carpenter, Tolkien, 3
65 Cited in Wilson, Lewis, 274
66 Paul Fussell, *The Great War and modern memory* (London, 1975).
67 David Hilliard, 'Unenglish and unmanly: Anglo-Catholicism and homosexuality', *Victorian Studies* 25 (1982), p. 204.
68 Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the male: men's bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London, 1996), p. 136.
69 Carpenter, Tolkien, 89
70 LotR 972
71 LotR 115
72 LotR 159
73 LotR 331
74 Tolkien, Letters 329
75 Tolkien, Letters 328
76 Charlotte Spivack, *Merlin's daughters: contemporary women writers of fantasy* (New York, 1987), p. 7.
77 LotR 36
78 Return of the Shadow, 14
79 Unfinished Tales, 323
80 Unfinished Tales, 331
81 Tolkien, Letters, 329
82 LotR, 77
83 LotR, 100
84 LotR, 96
85 LotR, 241
86 LotR, 426
87 LotR, 329
88 LotR, 643
89 LotR, 678
90 Tolkien, Letters, 330
91 LotR 741
92 LotR 742
93 Tolkien, Letters, 330
94 LotR, 758
95 LotR, 933
96 LotR, 945
97 LotR 946
98 Treason of Isengard, 212
99 Tolkien, Letters, 161
100 LotR, 1062
101 Sauron Defeated, 131-2

The Wool verses

Preserved among the major writings that have come down to us from Middle-earth, in particular the archives kept at Undertowers, are also, as is well known, lighter examples of Hobbit verse and balladry. We are pleased to present an interesting series of trifles, which seem to represent the marketing efforts of a wool trader of the Shire in advertising the virtues of his wares. Presumably they must date from some time after the end of the War of the Ring, and represent the renewed commercial prosperity of the Shire that followed it.

Bard's arrow pierced the dragon's hide:
The monster tumbled in his pride,
What gave this Bard his iron nerve?
His vim, his valour and his verve?
Said Bilbo "No one knows, unless
It was his all-wool battledress.
In winter warm, in summer cool,
There is no substitute for wool."

As Gandalf lay on Zigil's peak
The Eagle came: it paused to shriek,
"My friend!" said Gwaihir, "'scuse my screech,
That Balrog's left you not one stitch!
But help's at hand from Lorien's flocks
They'll clothe you down to shirt and socks.
The Queen of Elves is no one's fool
There is no substitute for wool."

The Hobbits fled for hour on hour,
From Cirith Ungol's gloomy tower.
Said Frodo, "Sam, I can't keep running,
The orcs have stripped my dwarf-boots' lining."
But Sam recked naught of stones and rocks,
"I've packed six pairs of woolly socks.
In Sauron's realm 'tis still the rule,
There is no substitute for wool."

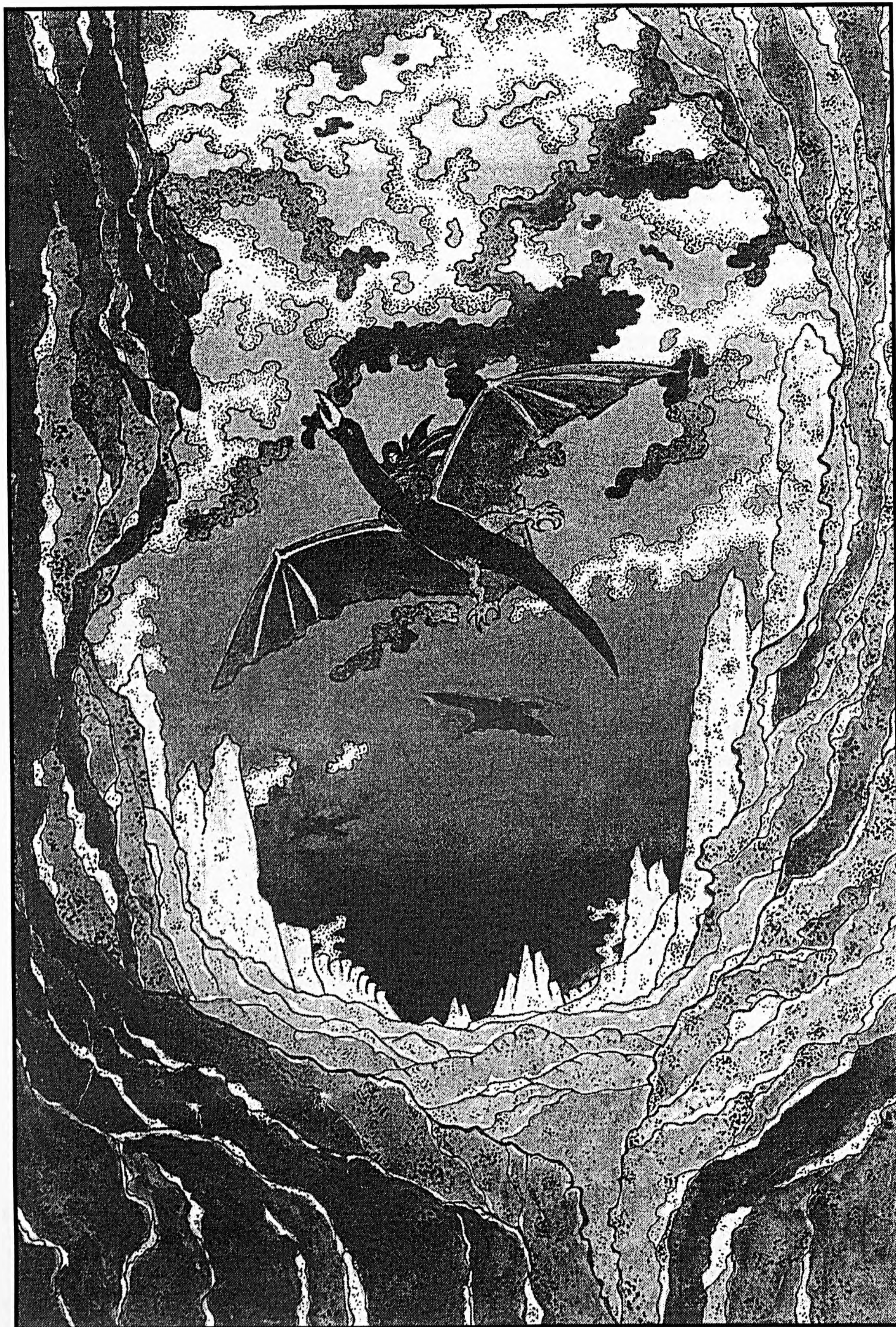
Poor Túrin froze in bitter cold
As Morgoth's spite engulfed the world
"His frosts hold Middle-earth in thrall
'A Dragon-helm's no use at all!"
Then Tuor came - a helpful bloke,
"I'll lend you my spare woolly cloak."
Thus Túrin learnt by Ivrin's pool
There is no substitute for wool.

The lament of the tame worm

Chrysophylax grew pale and wan
As winter storms raged on and on
"My fire won't light in your back yard,
'Tis hard, it is, it's cruel hard!"
But Farmer Giles took little heed,
"A knitwear duvet's all you need.
The Middle Kingdom's golden rule
There is no substitute for wool."

When Rohan's Riders went to war,
Their horns shook mountains to the core,
The host of Mordor ceased its jeers
Then stuffed its fingers in its ears.
For horses' heads from helpful Woses,
They bought six thousand knitted cosies,
And thus in battle proved the rule
"There is no substitute for wool."

John Ellison



Images of Evil in Tolkien's World

An edited version of a paper originally given to the Cambridge Tolkien Society, February 1999.

John Ellison

In the essay , *On Fairy-Stories*[1] and possibly elsewhere, Tolkien expressed reservations about the capacity of drama, as against narrative, for dealing with material of "fairy-tale," or fantasy nature. The impression of Tolkien's distaste for drama, or scepticism regarding its possibilities, has perhaps been fostered by his occasional barbs at Shakespeare's expense; it has also, more importantly, obscured the extent to which, *The Lord of the Rings* over and above Tolkien's other works, represents an art form whose nature is essentially dramatic. The oft-repeated complaint of the "literary establishment", that Tolkien's fiction is rooted in a simplistically conceived conflict of good and evil, arises because fiction is approached solely in terms of the novel, where such a clarity of moral vision tends to eliminate subtleties of observation and character development. There is no such problem attaching to drama, whether spoken, sung, or danced; characterisation can develop of its own volition within a clearly defined moral dividing line, which will resolve itself in a dénouement that satisfies an audience's expectations.

It is generally accepted that The Lord of the Rings is not "novelistic", in any real sense, but even though Tolkien himself said it, calling it, "a heroic romance, a much earlier form of literature", evades the issue. His reservations about drama really boil down to understandable intolerance of the technical limitations of stage representation in relation to "fantasy", or, "sub-created", material. Stage techniques, in and since Tolkien's lifetime have become vastly more sophisticated, but in any event "drama", in the sense that it is exemplified in, The Lord of the Rings, is independent of stage representation, other than, "the invisible stage," that is the mind of the individual reader. In this guise not only is it infinitely flexible; it can also present the clash of "good", and "evil", powers in many and diverse forms, all contributing to the make-up of a coherent structure. Relatively little seems to have been written about the various levels of presentation of these forces in Tolkien's world. In trying to look at the varied "images" of evil that it contains, I may perhaps accidentally clarify one or two aspects of, "righteousness", as well. If it would be a considerably harder task to approach the subject via "images of good", or of righteousness, this is perhaps due to one's feeling that the Gollums, Sarumans, or Denethors are more vivid and memorable, as characters, on the whole, than the Aragorns, Theodens, or Eomers. The devil, as the saying goes, has all the best tunes.

"Nothing is evil in the beginning", says Gandalf, (perhaps Ungoliant comes as near to it as one can imagine, but the lady's origins are shrouded in mystery). In terms of the stories themselves, however, certain beings, notably Sauron, are evil, *ab initio*, that is, when we first meet them, or hear about them, they have no redeeming qualities whatever. There is a basic, underlying distinction to be made between Tolkien's view of such beings, such as trolls, wargs, or the Balrog in Moria, and the way he presents them, and his entirely distinct presentation of the "human", characters in the story. The term "human", of course covers Elves, Dwarves and Hobbits as well as Men, all representing aspects of humanity. So, in their way, do orcs, but their ambiguous status is a real difficulty, to which I will come[2]. The "human", characters all relate, in their various ways, to the notion of power and its operation in the world. Power expresses itself outwardly in the desire to dominate; in its less harmful aspect, in the certainty, or imagined certainty, of knowing better than everyone else, and being able to order other people about. In its true unadulterated form, as Orwell puts it in *1984*, it expresses itself as power pure and simple, in making others suffer. Sauron, and Orwell's "Big Brother", need no ideological rationale for their activities, but they stand on the shoulders of those who have, or who have convinced themselves that they have. As will appear, all the characters on the "wrong", side of the moral fence, even the oppressed such as Wormtongue, relate to the idea of power, however variously they may conceive it..

The Hobbit, just as much as *The Lord of the Rings*, has been seen as embodying polarised concepts of good and evil, and, in consequence, potentially harmful to the minds of growing youth. This may have arisen largely as a result of the authorial interventions on Tolkien's part, whereby Bilbo's actions and thoughts are explained to the reader; later on Tolkien came to think of these as misconceived. From this point of view, "The Hobbit", indeed, might be said to partake of the character of a novel, unlike its successor, where the course of character development, especially Frodo's, has to be inferred by the reader from the totality of speech and actions, "on the stage". This might help, incidentally, in understanding the seemingly strange views expressed by some people, that *The Hobbit* is Tolkien's real masterpiece and that its successor is flawed and somewhat of an aberration compared with it. In relation to the later work, however the concepts of "good", and "evil" look as not fully developed, and even somewhat blurred.

The first, "image of evil", we encounter is that of the trolls. Somewhat disconcertingly, as far as the adult reader is concerned, they are presented as though they are figures of fun, comic burglars with a Cockney twang; one almost expects

1. *Tree and Leaf* George Allen and Unwin (paperback edition pp11-70) originally in *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*. (Oxford University Press 1947).

2. I am not concerned here with theological, or quasi-theological arguments about whether orcs do or do not have "souls", but just with the success, or non-success, of their presentation and characterisation as players on the stage of Tolkien's imagination and ours.

3. Might they, perhaps, owe their origin to an unconscious recollection; a short story by P.G. Wodehouse, "The Ordeal of Osbert Mulliner"? In this story a nervous young man comes home in the evening to find his dining-room taken over by a pair of comic burglars; as he watches from behind a curtain they quarrel, and beat each other to a pulp.

them to carry a large sack marked SWAG.[3] All the same Tolkien thought of them as fundamentally evil beings, as a passage in the letters makes clear.[4] They are, in their way, collectors and hoarders of treasure, and this is to become a recurring motive throughout the book, and a two-edged one; treasure is the purpose and object of the quest, but will also turn out to be, morally, a snare for all who acquire or desire it. In *The Lord of the Rings*, it is implied that trolls are, possibly, distorted counterparts of Ents, the the same way that orcs may be distorted counterparts of Elves. But Tolkien does not introduce any as characters; they only appear in Moria, and at the battle at the Morannon as "walk-ons." They have no speech, and this is true, mostly, of all the "static" non-human images of evil in the later work.

The goblins, whom we next meet, have their songs, and the Great Goblin, and his immediate entourage, have speech. They are defined as being fundamentally wicked, but, as with the trolls, it is a little difficult to take them seriously; I for one find the Great Goblin, "O truly tremendous one", faintly ridiculous. The goblin songs have a grimly humorous quality about them, but that very quality seems to exclude the idea of treating the role of goblins as symbolic of absolute evil. In *The Lord of the Rings*, the split between the symbolism, of fundamental evil, and their functions, as characters with roles to play, becomes more significant. There is less difficulty about accepting their allies, the Wargs, as "images of evil", as they are not characterized, and have no speech. The evil nature of goblins and wargs becomes more clearly defined in their absence, when we hear about Beorn's nocturnal activities, and towards the end of the book, when the whole tone of the narrative has altered, and become more serious and wide-ranging, the goblins at the Battle of Five Armies are genuine orcs, and have no speaking (or singing) parts.

The spiders of Mirkwood, of course do, unlike their senior colleague, Shelob. Ungoliant of course, speaks, but she is mythological in a true sense, and the older mythology places us in quite a different perspective as far as speech and characterisation are concerned - I will take this point up near the end. The Mirkwood crew of course are a genuine threat, and important in the story in that Bilbo faces them and deals with them, as he didn't manage to do with the trolls. But they still don't come across as needing to be taken too seriously; they would be much more frightening if they *didn't* speak. Bilbo himself doesn't take them too seriously, as his "Attercop" song confirms.

Finally, we reach Smaug, the principal villain of the piece. By definition he is fundamentally wicked, the books ultimate "image of evil". He of course, has plenty of speech, and a fund of what he recommends as "advice for your good." The trouble with Smaug is that you can't help rather liking the old (expletive deleted); his sardonic humour is so effective that you almost begin to see things from his point of view (one effect of conversation with dragons, of course). He reminds me of a description I once read of a certain personality in the world of the arts, now long dead, as, "an arch sh..., but charming company at dinner."

'The goblin songs have a grimly humorous quality about them'

Whereas no one could conceive of Glaurung as charming company anywhere. Glaurung of course is rooted in the earlier mythology, but one cannot imagine that there could ever have been a suitable place for the appearance of a dragon in *The Lord of the Rings*, mute or however characterised in speech.

The "human element", if one can call it that, in *The Hobbit* is concerned with those personages who are not, by nature, fundamentally wicked, but who succumb to temptation, or stand, as all men do from time to time, in danger of doing so, (and as Bilbo stands himself when confronted with the dwarves' treasure). On a small scale there is the Master of Laketown, who succumbs to "the dragon-sickness", steals treasure intended for the relief of the inhabitants, and dies alone in the wilderness; he is of course seen as duplicitous and untrustworthy from the moment he appears, and perhaps can be thought of as a Saruman or a Wormtongue in embryo. Thorin, whose susceptibility to the lure of treasure is symbolised by his pursuit of the Arkenstone (a small-scale reflection of Fëanor's enslavement by the Silmarils), is just as much a central character, a pivot on which the book's plot and argument turn, as is Bilbo himself. He is morally, "blinded", by this weakness, rooted as it is in dwarvish nature, (Smaug's hints are uncomfortably near the mark), and, having tried to retain the entire treasure in defiance of the just claims of the Men of Laketown, is, "dumb with amazement", when the Arkenstone is revealed to him. Yet in the end he shakes himself free of, "the dragon-sickness," redeems himself by his courage in battle, and dies nobly, declaring at the last that fellowship and good cheer are worth more than "hoarded gold", pronouncing, in effect, the book's motto-theme. A fallible mortal, prone like everyone to fall into temptation; the parallel with Boromir's fall and subsequent heroic end in *The Lord of the Rings*, is clear enough. The other dwarves are likewise seen as exemplars of, "the common man,"[5] (to borrow Len Sanford's - and Aaron Copland's - title); witness their behaviour when they leave Bilbo to face the descent into the Mountain on his own. Dwarves are, "ordinary blokes", like most of us, is the implication; decent enough people as long as you don't expect too much of them.

If the truly evil beings in *The Hobbit* are not thought out in depth, the power of evil, represented by the treasure and its effect on all who come into contact with it, is real enough. The moral complexity of the tale is neatly enshrined in the paradox which the Quest represents - the dwarves seek for the restoration of their birthright in the treasure, and yet the very thing sought endangers the moral fabric of the world. It represents power of a sort, but power still limited in its scope. Even Smaug is not a universal or worldwide threat - he has no designs on the rest of Middle-earth (or seems to have none), and is only roused to activity when his own particular territory, or what he regards aas such, is invaded. He's a lazy (expletive deleted), actually - a vice that perhaps - another paradox - represents his one saving grace?

The emergence of the concept of "the One Ring to rule them all," in the midst of the early and developing drafts for, "the new" *Hobbit*, "led inevitably to the vast expansion of the scope of the original tale. The notion of power expressed as simple possessiveness, the insistence on control of particular objects or

4. JRR Tolkien *Letters* no 153 p. 191.
5. L. Sanford *Fanfore for the Common Man* in *Mallorn* no 36 (The Tolkien Society 1998)

assets, or of a particular site or piece of territory, is gradually replaced by the notion of power unlimited and world-wide, power enjoyed for its own sake. The earlier concept of power does, however, survive for much of *The Lord of the Rings*, especially in *The Fellowship of the Ring*. The transition is seen in essence in the life-history of Gollum.

The reader may indeed have been wondering why Gollum has not put in an appearance before now. To begin with, we are faced with the first Gollum, the Gollum of *The Hobbit*, as it was originally written and published, and in this form he hardly seems to qualify as "an image of evil" at all. Like the familiar later one he is outwardly repulsive, a miserable creature, "lonely, sneaky and nasty" , catching as food fish, goblin and anything else on which he can lay his hands; the limitations of the available menu perhaps afford him a sort of excuse. He has had a predecessor of a kind, in a poem of Tolkien's, *Glip*, dating from his time in Leeds; a strange slimy creature who lives beneath the floor of a cave and has pale luminous eyes. His distinctiveness seems to lie in his oddity, rather than in criminality; in this first version he is prepared to hand over the ring following his loss of the riddle game, and he avoids cheating by showing Bilbo the way out of the goblin tunnels when he finds that the ring has been lost. The ring itself of course has no special significance at this stage other than its power to confer invisibility. It may be that Tolkien had not yet made up his mind about Gollum: "I don't know where he came from, or who or what he was," he says. Rather strangely, this remark survives in the revision, although by then he surely *did* know; does this perhaps represent a *lacuna* on his part?

The Ring's later enslavement of Gollum expresses itself outwardly in his attachment to his "precious", the lure of treasure, the insistence on possession of it, and the obsession with regaining if when it has been lost. During the course of *The Lord of the Rings*, however, the motive by stages is subtly transformed; it develops into lust for power and pursuit of it for its own sake. In his debased way, Gollum comes to display it as much as do other, outwardly greater personalities affected, and descends the same moral downward path as they do. He can therefore, serve as a bridge to lead us into the fully developed world of, *The Lord of the Rings*. In *The Lord of the Rings*, of course, he is not wholly evil *ab initio*, and possibly not at any time afterwards. Nevertheless his predisposition to evil is very strong; as soon as he is introduced, in Gandalf's narrative, "flashback", he commits fratricide. Is this the immediate effect on him of sight of the Ring? Or is it, rather, Tolkien's way of embodying in the story the concept of original sin? The reference to Cain and Abel, or any other mythological slaying of brother by brother is quite unconscious, no doubt, but seems plain enough. I am inclined to think, myself, that the crime is explicable in the traditional way, rather than in terms of the Ring's immediate effectiveness, as Gollum's subsequent moral deterioration, though real enough, is a very long-drawn-out affair. His conscience has not been silenced; according to Gandalf, the murder of Deagol haunted him, and he made up a defence to quieten the stirrings. His early use of the Ring, which gives him, "power according to his stature," may perhaps, before he is turned out of the grand-maternal hole, be thought of as mischievous in a nasty way, but not truly evil. Until he loses it to Bilbo, he appears to use it only to prey on the orcs and other wildlife underneath the Misty Mountains. As Gandalf says, a little bit of him succeeds in resisting the Ring's complete dominance; "as a hobbit might." He and morally his state seem to follow the earlier pattern of simple possessiveness; the urge to retain his treasure and subsequently to regain it at whatever cost.

'Gollum had visited Shelob in her lair ... does this not suggest a ghastly parody of Bilbo's interview with Smaug?'

All the same there are periodic indications, from his own words, that the lust to possess is gradually turning into something more sinister; power itself is beckoning him on. The process can be illustrated quite clearly:-

"The roots of those mountains must be roots indeed; there must be great secrets buried there which ave not been discovered since the beginning".[7] Why should Gollum want to discover such secrets, if not to make use of them in some way or other? It is difficult to believe that his interest in, "roots and beginnings", already aroused, was simply academic and directed towards scholarly investigation and research.

"Gollum had good friends now, good friends and very strong."[8] He had had, actually, some very painful experiences, at the hands of these "good friends", but the spectacle of real power in operation clearly fascinated him. (While hiding, together with Frodo and Samwise, near the Black Gate; Smeagol in dialogue with the "other", Gollum.)

"Then we shall be master, gollum! Make the nasty suspicious hobbit, make him crawl, yes, gollum!"[9]

(And again)

"Perhaps we grows very strong, stronger than Wraiths? Lord Smeagol? Gollum the Great? Eat fish every day.... etc, etc"[†]

(And finally)

"We'll save the Precious, as we promised. Oh yes. And when we've got it safe, she'll know it. Oh yes, then we'll pay her back, my precious. Then we'll pay everyone back!"[‡].

Of course it is impossible to conceive of Gollum actually making good boasting such as this. He had visited Shelob in her lair and bowed before her, but had vowed to himself that one day he would turn the tables. You might perhaps view this as one of Tolkien's unconscious symmetries; if you can imagine the scene for a moment, does it not suggest a ghastly parody of Bilbo's interview with Smaug; instead of the dwarves treasure, the "filth unnameable piled up within."? The actual sequence of Gollum's moral deterioration to which the above-quoted passages bear witness is so sensitively balanced that the B.B.C. radio serial, in the process (unavoidable as it was) of cutting the whole episode of the hobbits' journey from the Cross-roads to Cirith Ungol, managed to eliminate the motivation

6. H. Carpenter *Tolkien. A Biography*. George Allen & Unwin.
7. Tolkien: "The Followship of the Ring" (2nd ed. hardback 1966 p63
8. *Ibid.* p 66.
9. J.R.R. Tolkien "The Two Towers". (2nd edition hard back 1966) p 140
† *Ibid.* p 141
‡ *Ibid.* p 333

at this point - Gollum's plan to double-cross Shelob as well as the hobbits. The whole of Gollum's part, a dramatic part as much or more than any other one in the tale, needs to be considered both as a whole and in its details; in the latter, both separately and in sequence, the subtleties if motivation become plain.

Another notable feature of the characterisation is the way Gollum appears, not quite explicitly, but nearly so, as a kind of reversed mirror-image of Frodo himself. Frodo retains his "innocence," his symbolic attribute, only to lose it at the very end of the Journey. He displays the same resistance, "as a hobbit might," to the evil and the temptation inherent in the Ring, as Gollum has done in the past, and ironically might have done again and continued to do. The "mirror-image," is evocatively suggested by Frodo's disquieting visions of Bilbo (at Rivendell) and Samwise (in Cirith Ungol) as distorted images of himself, and reappears at the climax when the contrasted outcomes, of good turning to evil, in Frodo's laying claim to the Ring, and evil bringing forth good, in Gollum's final acts, balance each other.

Now that we are well and truly launched into the midst of *The Lord of the Rings*, we can first of all fairly briefly consider the title-role.[10] Sauron is, for the purposes of the story, wholly evil, *ab initio*, and indeed was so in *The Silmarillion.* He represents and personifies power in its most extreme form; the drive to world domination as an end in itself. But although he has, or can be said to have, the title role, he is not a *dramatis persona.* He never appears other than as a disembodied cloud following the collapse of Barad-dûr, and he has no direct speech, only a few reported words, *oratio obliqua*, in Pippin's palantir episode. The comparision with Milton's Satan, made by Edwin Muir in his original review of *The Fellowship of the Ring,* ("he has no room for a Satan both evil and tragic") thus misses the point entirely; the parallel (as previously remarked) is with Orwell's Big Brother. He exercises power via his servants and agents, and only makes his intentions and decrees known by means of the palantiri (Orthanc and probably also Minas Tirith), or finally, by the "Mouth of Sauron". As the name indicates, the latter is a mouthpiece only, and has submerged what individuality he had totally in his master's; a wholly fallen being, but not a "character", in the normal sense of the word.

The Black Riders, later the Nazgûl, like their master, are evil beings from the word go for the purposes of the story; they were corrupted and enslaved long before it began. They were once Mortal Men, proud and great; Tolkien as everywhere links the lust for absolute power, represented by the Nine Rings they have received at Sauron's hand, with the first and primal sin of pride, stemming from Melkor, the great original, "Evil One." Like the Mouth of Sauron, they are not, "characters," in the usual sense; they have no recognisable personalities and virtually no speech. The words of the Rider who encounters Farmer Maggot are reported speech, not direct; otherwise we have only their few words called out to Frodo in the face of his defiance of them at the Ford of Bruinen. Personally, I rather wish Tolkien had left those out; there is always a tendency for spoken words to lend a semblance of humanity to the speaker. On the other hand the absence of speech often increases the sense of terror inspired by the evil beings in the story, by adding the dimension of the unknown. I find Frodo's comment, while the hobbits are still in the Shire "There were words in that cry, though I could not catch them," most alarming; and likewise Butterbur's comment on the questioning of Harry at the West-gate, "he was white and shaking when they left him." The only other portions of speech allotted to a Nazgûl are those spoken to Gondalf and subsequently to Eowyn at Minas Tirith and at the battle of the Pelennor; these perhaps do little to characterise the Black Captain, and pertain rather to his role as commanding general of the besieging force, than to him as Nazgûl-lord.

The shift in Gollum's personality by stages from simple over-possessiveness to something like power mania corresponds to a decisive change in the tone and atmosphere between T*he Fellowship of the Ring* and its two successors. Tolkien indeed remarked on the change himself. That in "The Fellowship" we still stay to some extent within the world of *The Hobbit* is among other things indicated by the recurring "images of evil" encountered in its course, which continue to display the "static" nature of those in the earlier book; concerned with the defence or preservation of individual portions of territory, but not with the extension of the limits of such or of their influence beyond them; again they are mostly not individualised by speech. Old Man Willow, who to some extent seems able to commmunicate thought, appears as the centre of an evil, or at least hostile, aura radiating out through the Old Forest. The same aura of hostility seems to pervade Fangorn, or at least parts of it, and is reflected in Treebeard's comment about Saruman, "his heart is as rotten as a black Huorn's". Tolkien seems to be hinting, or rather more than hinting, that even his beloved trees are capable of giving way to corruption; that nature is at once benevolent and potentially hostile and dangerous is the outcome of Melkor's original assault on and perversion of the natural world. But Old Man Willow is tameable, and tamed by Tom Bombadil as Orpheus tamed the wild beasts, and the image is one that belongs to the world of *The Hobbit* rather than to the world of *The Lord of the Rings*.

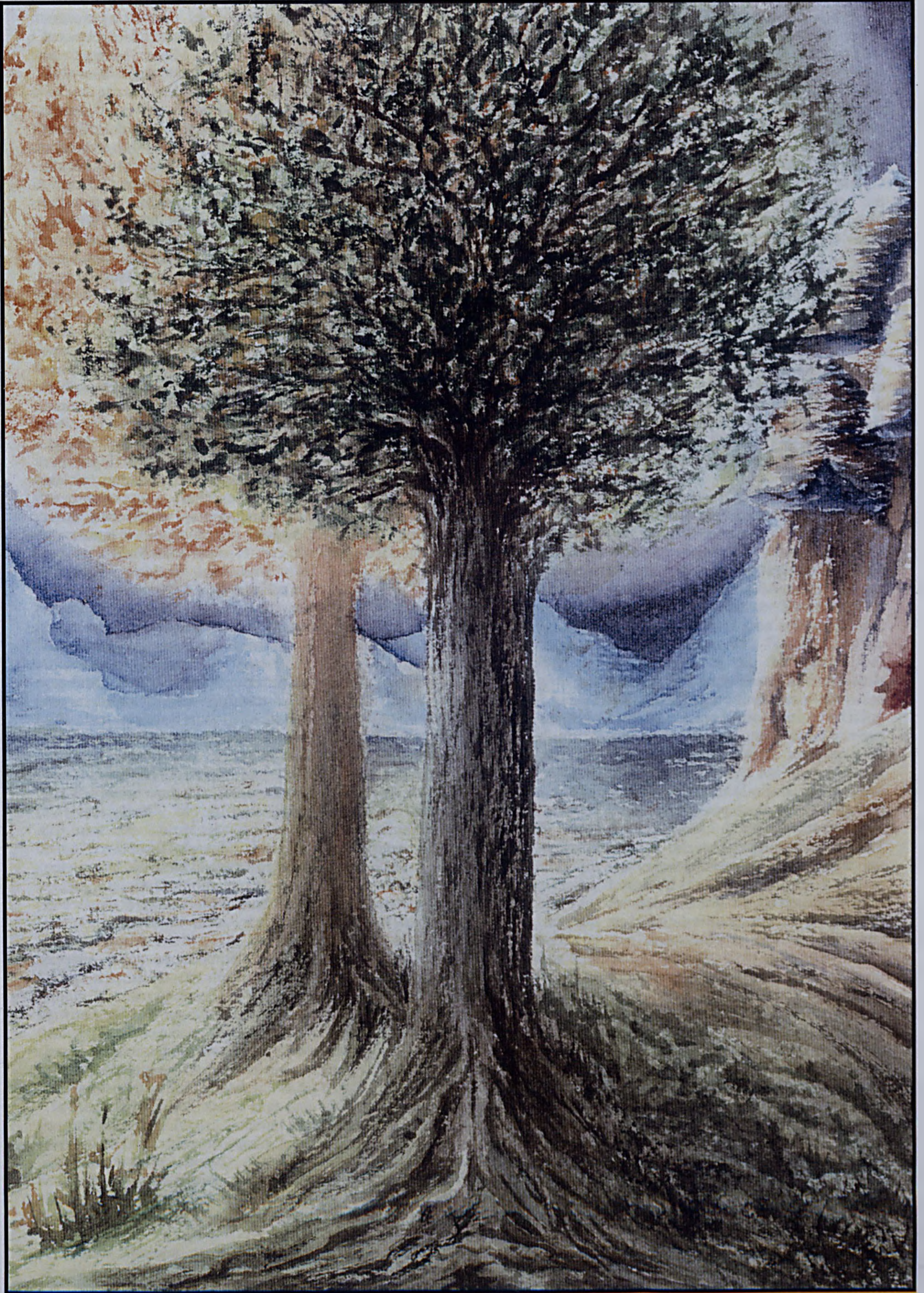
The Barrow Wight is an "image of evil" on quite a different level, but again appears purely as a local phenomenon, and, likewise at Bombadil's command, vanishes into the darkness "until the world is mended". Presumably it is to be identified as one of the evil spirits that came out of Angmar and Rhudaur at the time of the Plague. It does have speech after a fashion, but its utterance is incantatory, not conversational. The context links the Barrow Wight with Sauron ("until the dark lord lifts his hand") and the threat of Middle-earth ruined and devastated ("over dead sea and withered land"). The "guardian of treasure" motif makes itself evident in the description of the various *objets d'art* discovered in the barrow.

The most interesting feature of the whole episode is the description of the incantatory voice heard by Frodo in the barrow, before actual words become distinguishable. "The night railing against the morning of which it was bereaved - the cold cursing the warmth for which it hungered."[11] There seems to be a kind of implication that the condition of a,

10. This is perhaps rather debatable, in reference to Sauron, who is referred to as "The Lord of the Ring," (singular). But the Ring itself was made "to rule them all," and by implication Sauron is consequently also "The Lord of the Rings" (plural).

11. J.R.R. Tolkien *The Fellowship of the Ring* (2nd ed 1966 p 152).

12. The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien ed H Carpenter (George Allen & Unwin) 198 no 181 pp 234-5.



John Ellison

"lost soul,", as the Barrow-wight appears to be, is something to be pitied, not judged. Final judgment rests only with the One, with Iluvatar, "when the world is mended." There is the notable passage in the published letters, in which Tolkien comments that to essay to pass final judgment on Gollum, or to predict his fate in the hereafter, would be to invade, "Goddes privitee."[12] "As for me," says Gandalf, "I pity even his slaves." Somewhat of the same feeling is conveyed by the earlier description of the Rider's distant cry, back in the Shire, as the wail," of an evil and lonely creature." The Riders' state, trapped in a lifeless but still earthly existence, must be one of total misery, and therefore deserving of pity. The motive is to become increasingly important in the later stages of *The Lord of the Rings*; "Yet now I have seen him, I do pity him."

Bill Ferny and the southerners at Bree are the next of the "servants of the Enemy," to be encountered, but they are not characters of any significance; pawns in the power game, if it can be put that way. Other than in the subsequent appearances of the Riders, the next important group of "evil forces" are encountered on the journey as far as Moria, and within Moria itself; their scope once again is local and territorial, not universal and world-wide. It has been plausibly suggested[13] that the hostility of Caradhras, and the appearance of the wolf-pack (evidently spectral) that attacks the Company subsequently, are engendered, not by the long arm of Sauron, as Gandalf suspects, but by the Balrog in Moria, seeking to repel an infringement of its territory. If this is accepted, weight is added to the conclusion that manifestations, or "images", of evil at this stage, are local in nature, not linked to a threatened takeover of world power. Personally, I tend to take the view that the overflight of the *crebain* and the hostility of Caradhras do not have the sinister significance that Gandalf and Aragorn attribute to them. They are, simply, natural phenomena whose effect is to increase, for the Company, the apprehension felt by each one of its members, and for the reader, to heighten the tension that has begun to build up as soon as Rivendell is left behind. Caradhras is just a mountain peak, no more than that; simple common-sense would indicate that if you try to cross a high mountain-pass in mid-winter of course you stand a more than even chance of being snowed in. All of these manifestations, up to and including the passage of Moria - the Watcher in the water perhaps identifiable as the Balrog in an alternative form - are unaccompanied by speech; they are static images with no implication as regards character. The orcs and trolls who make their appearance at the climax of the passage through Moria and at the bridge of Khazad-dûm do not have speaking parts,[14] unlike the orcs who are their successors in, "The Two Towers", and "The Return of the King." It might have been easier for Tolkien, indeed, if he could have kept the orcs without speech throughout, and avoided the difficulties of characterisation that arose, although the further development of the story of course made this impossible. The orcs remain mute all the way through *The Fellowship of the Ring*, in fact; the encounter at Parth Galen taking place, "behind the scenes".

There only remain two, or perhaps three, of the impersonal "static", "images of evil," to be encountered, but one of them is the most repulsive, and most formidable, of them all; as Smaug does in *The Hobbit*, Shelob occupies a climatic place in the story. A further image, that of the Silent Watchers, is somewhat of a puzzle in its way, because their real nature is hardly explained. The triple-headed statues, like the fortress of Cirith Ungol itself, must be Gondorian work in origin, and their description as triple seated figures with heads rather suggests that Tolkien may have had some ancient, perhaps Near Eastern prototype in mind. We have to presume that evil spirits entered into them when Saauron re-entered Mordor, and that these rather than the stone figures themselves, are responsible for the horror which their appearance inspires. Their function is limited to their task as gate wardens. The dreadful aspect of the fortress of Minas Morgul, with "the black windows looking in on nothingness" no less an "image of evil", in its own way , comes under the same heading; the structure itself originated as Minas Ithil, the counterpart of Minas Anor, only subsequently falling under occupation by the Ringwraiths, whose "nothingness", the physical appearance of Minas Morgul, as beheld by Frodo and Samwise, seems to symbolise.

Shelob, the most powerful image of the class so far considered, represents Nature in its most hostile and horrific aspect; she is independent of Sauron's control, though a useful presence and asset from his point of view. Without speech, she still appears capable of communicating her desires and intentions in some way; Gollum has, "bowed before her and worshipped her", offering the hobbits as an obscene kind of sacrifice. But, strangely perhaps, Tolkien also lays stress on the absolute misery of her existence; light, the light of the phial of Galadriel, is torment for her, and is Samwise's chief weapon in his encounter with her; she recoils, "blasted with inner lightnings, her mind in agony." The imagery recalls a rare case in literature of characterisation as wholly evil; John Claggart, the villainous master-at-arms in Herman Melville's novella, *Billy Budd*, and Benjamin Britten's opera based on it. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness comprehends it and suffers." But there words and music enable the reader, and the listener, to look into the mind of the character, whereas here nothing like character or individuality can be discerned. But does Tolkien perhaps intend us to feel that even the most manifestly evil and repellent of these static "presences" is somehow pitiable?

The results of "evil will," expressing itself in the form of increasing hunger for power, have already been observed in the gradual reduction of Gollum to his final state. The other major characters in the story who "fall into evil" , are likewise affected progressively, though the descent takes several different forms. At their head stands Saruman, the leading case of moral decline and collapse in, *The Lord of the Rings*; having once been "of a noble kind we would not have dared to raise our hand against," in his pride he falls farther than anyone else. It is worth noting, by the way, that he is a fairly late entrant in the developing complex of drafts that eventually became, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, as we know it; Tolkien did not start to conceive him until 1940, by which time the basic

13. A Lewis. "Thoughts on the worth of a Warg" *Amon Hen* (The Tolkien Society) no 147 Sept 1997 pp 11-15. See also correspondence in this connection. H. Armstrong & P. Hobday Amon Hen nos 148-50 Nov 1997, January & March 1998)

14. Gandalf reports them as speaking among themselves, only the word *ghâsh* (fire) being distinguishable.

narrative as far as Moria and the Chamber of Mazarbul was starting to take shape.

The crucial passage is Gandalf's confrontation with Saruman in Orthanc, reported by him to the Council of Elrond - as it begins the extent of the latter's real moral collapse is still not fully evident; he is boastful enough to start with, but his opening gambit, "we must have power to order all things as we will, for that good which only the Wise can see."[15], suggests that his power mania has developed out of a genuine concern for "good government in Middle-earth," which has become entangled with a typical , "the man in Whitehall knows best", kind of bossiness; it might be Sir Arnold or Sir Humphrey talking. But almost at once he moves way beyond this, and speaks of a Power arising which, "we may join." "We may come to direct its courses," he says, "to control it, we can bide our time, we can keep our thoughts in our hearts, deploring maybe evils done by the way, but approving the high and ultimate purpose, Knowledge, Rule, Order, all the things we have so far striven in vain to accomplish ..... hindered rather than helped by our weak and idle friends. There need not be, there would not be, any real change in our designs, only in our means".[15] Self-deceit could hardly make itself plainer; the confusion of means with ends, the classic apologia of the fascist dictator down the ages. Tolkien's enquiry into the nature of evil here reaches its decisive stage.

At the same time one can observe that "the good", or at least good intentions, have contributed to thsi outcome. Gandalf himself has, to some extent, been at fault. Saruman's treachery has taken him by surprise; but perhaps it ought not to have done. He has also in a sense deceived himself, into inactivity. On his own showing he was culpably late in taking steps to identify the One Ring, despite his suspicions, and similarly he was remiss in his failure to realise that Saruman was deteriorating into a security threat. He suspected what might be amiss "but something always seemed to hold me back".

In the second confrontation between the pair, their relative positions are reversed - this displays another of Tolkien's characteristic, probably unconscious. symmetries. The most notable feature of this one is the effort Gandalf makes to save Saruman from himself, up to the point at which the latter's staff breaks, "perhaps you have things to unsay" "to turn to new things, perhaps, ... will you not come down?" For a brief moment it seems that he might turn one way or the other, "the anguish of a mind in doubt, loathing to stay, yet dreading to leave its refuge." He seems to shrink visibly after his staff is broken, and, "crawls away", from the encounter (like Wormtongue later on). When the prospect of redemption - or rehabilitation is again held out to him, by Frodo at Bag End, he has gone beyond being able to entertain or grasp the idea, and can only shrink back into himself; Frodo's pity hurts him more than anything else could, "Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven". The mist that rises above his body after his death is a clear recollection of the cloud that rises above Barad-dûr at the passing of Sauron.

The magnitude of Saruman's decline and fall is tellingly emphasised by being "run" hand-in-hand with a small-scale model of it - the parallel life-to-death descent of Grima Wormtongue. Although he was not, "great, once, of a noble kind," he was, at one time, a Rider of Rohan, and he "did you service in his fashion." When we first encounter him, he has become, of course, after the fashion of Monty Python's parrot, "an ex-Rider." He is, just as much as his new master Saruman is, an example of power-mania, but he is also, as Gollum is not, intelligent enough to realise that in himself he is simply not qualified to hold or retain anything resembling real power. He can only hope for a share of it indirectly by trying to influence someone stronger than himself. At first this is Théoden, but he soon turns to backing Saruman in secret, seeing the latter as the stronger power who will destroy Rohan. And as with Saruman's case at Orthanc, he is offered the chance to rehabilitate himself; Théoden invites him to ride with the force preparing to set off from Edoras, and to demonstrate his loyalty in battle, continuing to do so even after his exposure by Gandalf; the offer is rejected with as gross an insult as Wormtongue can make. The interesting feature of Wormtongue's subsequent existence is that even after Saruman's fall and exile, he persists in hanging on to his coat-tails, beaten and insulted though he is, and even when urged to leave him; Saruman represents the only source of power of which he can conceive. His penultimate and final acts are murderous (the final one admittedly under extreme provocation[16]); before he is exposed as the murderer of Lotho he hesitates in momentary doubt when offered the choice of remaining behind in the Shire, as his master has momentarily done when offered a corresponding opportunity in Orthanc, and like his master he shrinks physically, emerging "out of one of the huts crawling like a dog." Has he by his final act put himself put himself beyond any capacity for redemption? - at least we can only agree with Saruman for once and conclude that Wormtongue is "not really nice."

'the confusion of means with ends, the classic apologia of the fascist dictator down the ages'

There remain two other exemplars of power and the hunger for it, symbolised and stimulated by the One Ring; father and son, Denethor and Boromir; linked by the Ruling Stewardship of Gondor, the succession to it, and the power and prestige inherent in it and associated with it. As regards Boromir, relatively little need be said here, his personality and career having recently been so thoroughly dissected in the pages of this journal. There are two matters regarding him which need emphasising of which the first is his position in the moral structure of the tale, at the half way house between the heroic, "power-resistant," side of humanity represented by Aragorn, or Faramir, or (till the very end) Frodo; and the opposite tendencies seen in the life-histories of Gollum, Saruman and Wormtongue. In another way the four hobbits are also in this position, but they are protected by their inherent attributes of innocence and unimportance; they alone are independent of the two opposed power-blocs in Middle-earth. Frodo's resistance to the Ring carries him as far as the Cracks of Doom; Samwise when compelled to take temporary possession of it has little difficulty in fighting off temptation; neither of the others display any interest in it at all. This of course does not mean that they are exempt from ordinary human

15. Tolkien "The Fellowship of the Ring" (2nd ed 1966 pp 272-3).

16. The killing of Saruman may perhaps have been triggered, not simply by Saruman's treatment of him, but by a sudden realisation that Saruman had now lost any power to which he, Wormtongue, could attach himself.

feelings; Pippin's immaturity more than once has disastrous, or potentially disastrous, consequences; Merry's foolhardiness at Bree endangers all the others; Sam's fidelity and devotion to Frodo masks a heavy-handedness which cuts off Gollum's repentance before it can express itself and take hold.

The other important matter regarding Boromir, and his fallibility in regard to the Ring, and succumbing to the lure of it is that these are bound up, just as are his "heroic" qualities, with his consciousness of the dignity of his position as heir to the Ruling Stewardship; he sees the whole Middle-earth-wide situation and the objective of the Company's journey in terms of Gondor's pre-eminence, and the power and responsibility he will eventually have as Denethor's successor; in other words he lacks the gift of humility, the contrary of pride. It is because Faramir on the other hand has this quality that he emerges as the stronger character of the two, showing himself able to resist the lure of the Ring, in his encounter with Frodo, when his brother has given way to it. Faramir again, unlike his brother, feels no resentment at the prospect of Aragorn coming to claim the kingship and in the end willingly surrenders the Stewardship, which is at once granted back to him.

Boromir's consciousness of ancestry and sense of his importance as heir to the Stewardshiip is very much an inheritance from his father, who displays it almost to the point of arrogance. Théoden, "a kindly old man," can afford to dispense with the formalities just because he is a king - "very polite," says Merry. Denethor, a man of far greater power and lineage, though not called a king, cannot and will not. Tolkien, in a highly interesting passage in the published letters, refers to Denethor as "tainted with mere politics," whose prime motive was to preserve Gondor against an opposing potentate because the latter was stronger, rather than because he was ruthless and wicked. "He had become a political leader: sc. Gondor against the rest."[17] Denethor, indeed, resembles many a politician in today's world; he is in love with the externals and trappings of power as much as the reality, and cannot contemplate the prospect of giving them up. The Ring seems to be working on him even though physically he is never anywhere near it. Unlike Saruman, until we actually meet him, "onstage," he has not displayed any special symptoms of moral decline, but he has insisted, and continues to insist, that by virtue of his position he is the only person qualified to lead, or capable of leading and organising, the defence of Gondor. The advice neither of Faramir, nor of Gandalf, nor of anyone else who might offer counsel or assistance in this crisis, is of much value in his eyes; Pippin of course he doesn't take seriously. Consequently when the crisis really arrives he is left, psychologically speaking, without any defence. He reacts to the visions of the might of Mordor shown in the palantir rather as a present day Prime Minister might react to news of a catastrophic slide in the opinion polls; (were those visions all they seemed? one might wonder? You surely couldn't show a great deal in the space available in a palantir, and Sauron might simply have marched the same orc-troop past repeatedly, decking it out with a different device or set of devices each time!). Denethor throws up the sponge, morally speaking, abdicates responsibility for the defence of the City, and in his preparations for his own death attempts to take Faramir (and by implication as much else as he can), with him. This is a different "decline and fall", from Saruman's, but one just as complete. Tolkien, by making him commit suicide (the only one in *The Lord of the Rings* other than collective suicides among the host of Mordor-following the last Battle), as a committed Christian and Catholic, passes the severest judgment on him, suicide being "a mortal sin."

The "human," characters so far considered are all independent agents, that is, independent of Barad-dûr, but Sauron's own servants and agents (and a number of Saruman's) present a quite different problem. Once they are allowed to speak they start to display individuality and character of a sort, however nasty. So far the "images of evil" discussed have fallen into two clearly definable groups; static, often nature-symbols, primarily territorial, and wholly or predominantly without speech, and not characterized, and dynamic, not originally evil or wicked but in their various characters displaying the progressive effects of power-mania on personality. The orcs, from the start of *The Two Towers* onwards, fall somewhere in between the two groups. We have to assume that they are all inherently wicked with no redeeming qualities whatever, but if they display any kind of individuality, it is very difficult, as many have found, to do this quite satisfactorily. Their origin in the mythology, rather than in the history, of Arda accounts for the difficulty; in the former one can readily accept that they are "constructs," rather than individuals, "manufactured", not created, by Melkor. One may recall the early narration of the Fall of Gondolin, where the Balrogs seems like mechanical monsters rather than spirits - as somebody suggested, World War One tanks. They might today be thought of as "genetically modified Elves" - once again Tolkien's world discloses startling resonances with our own. And of course in the earlier mythology orcs only make their appearance collectively, and have no speech and no individuality. By accepting the convention, which underlies all Tolkien's fiction, that the Evil One, the Devil, or however he is called, can appear in the world as an incarnate being, you impliedly accept the convention that the hosts of Hell can do likewise. As soon as orcs are permitted to speak, and to behave and react as each situation demands, they acquire personalities and character of a sort, however degraded, and therefore they enter claims, however ill-founded, on the sympathies of the reader. Can Tolkien's resources of characterisation meet the challenge of endowing them with some semblance of humanity, even at the lowest level?

He was, no doubt, perfectly well aware of the problem, and did what he could to deal with it by giving different groups of orcs different levels of nastiness. The orcs of Mordor, quarrelling with the Isengarders in the course of Merry's and Pippin's forced march across Rohan, are obviously the more advanced representatives of evil and they wear their colours less conspicuously, and adopt a quieter made of speech; "That is a most interesting remark. I may have to report that." Human exemplars of "absolute evil" (assuming that such exist[18], which from a theological standpoint is, I believe, very doubtful) do not, or are not thought to, announce themselves to the rest of humanity by displaying goat feet or any other of the traditional symbolic props. Some of those persons who appeared by reason of the horror and enormity of their crimes, as monsters in human form, seemed to all outward appearance wholly undistinguished

17. Tolkien "Letters" no 183, p241.

18. Tolkien in any case did not, as he said "deal in Absolute Evil." "I do not think there is such a thing, since that is Zero.....I do not think that...any "rational being" is wholly evil." See "letters" no 183 p 243.

and unmemorable; "the banality of evil," as a popular journalistic phrase puts it. There is virtually no literary equivalent of this kind of phenomenon; how, for instance, would any writer of fiction try to portray, say, Eichmann or Frederick West? Tolkien presumably met a number of variously unpleasant people in the course of his life, but it may be seriously doubted if he ever came across any person who could have been taken as wholly or irredeemably evil, or that he would or could have recognised one as such if he had. In practice the orcish characters sometimes display a grim kind of black humour in expressions such as, "You'll get bed and breakfast all right, more than you can stomach", or "I don't suppose he's been in lovely Lugburz, so he mayn't know what to expect." And the mutual hostility, and quarrelsomeness of different groups, Mordovians, Isengarders, and Northerners, is wholly believable. Shagrat, Gorbag and Snaga, the principal representatives once the Mordovian border is crossed, are portrayed with a great deal of energy, if precious little subtlety, a quality admittedly not much required here, and the only query that might occur is that they could easily remind one of the traditional "Obersturmbannführer" character, the "narsty Nazi," hallowed by generations of documentary dramas, "Vee haf vaze of making you talk." What perhaps saves the orcs from too obvious staginess, is their universal distrust of anyone in higher authority, which seems to increase the further down the "lowerarchy", in C.S. Lewis' phrase, one gets. Tom Shippey always claims to find the two quarrelling orcs overheard by the hobbits in the Morgai quite delightful, and each of them would, clearly, be ready to set himself up on his own, "with a few trusty lads," if he ever got the opportunity. The last group of orcs we encounter, the troop that overtakes the hobbits on the way to Udûn, is a group of, "lesser breeds," "driven unwillingly to the Dark Lord's wars." Tolkien seems to be writing out of past experience in the first world war, displaying a certain sympathy with the rank-and-file of Sauron's armies, the "poor bloody infantry," and also giving a portrait of one or two very nasty N.C.O.s in charge. But this tendency to differentiate according to rank or status does not help us to conceive of all orcs as being wholly evil and beyond redemption. We can only assume that if they are, existence in a conscious and physical state in Middle-earth is torment and utter misery for them, and that death and total oblivion is the only release for which they can hope.

I have so far kept away, intentionally, from the earlier mythology, as principally represented by *The Silmarillion*, and have concentrated on *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* as representing storytelling in a straightforward narrative and dramatic sense. There are powerfully dramatic episodes in *The Silmarillion*, and still more so in the post-war writings dealing with the First Age, but if *The Silmarillion*, with its associated writings can be thought of, as a whole, as "drama", it must be in quite another sense. It could be staged (I can more easily imagine it so than with *The Hobbit*, and *The Lord of the Rings)*, but it would have to be a much more ritualised, hieratic kind of presentation, such as one would associate, say, with Aeschylus or Sophocles. Good and evil are dramatically opposed; Morgoth and Sauron, who speak on occasion, are powerful but one-dimensional figures. Fëanor is a very distant forerunner of Boromir in so far as he stands, morally speaking at the cross roads; in that position he provides the hinge on which the whole "morality" turns. But for him no possibility exists of his redeeming himself; the question is irrelevant. All he can do is to play out a role marked out for him in advance by fate; he is the victim of ANANGKE like the heroes in classical Greek drama. We can be moved by the story of Beren and Luthien, but when it is played out there remains a feeling that in no way could it have developed or ended otherwise; no actions on anyone's part, elvish or human, could have changed or made any difference to the outcome. Túrin Turambar, is the one whom many readers claim to find the most tiresome, or at least the most unsympathetic, figure in the whole mythology, but if one can state a case for him, it is that as a "heroic" figure, he has no reason for presenting himself in realistic terms; the element of freewill is wholly absent from his career and actions constantly hampered or denied by pitiless fate. All these people are too remote, too distanced from us, for us to feel for them and become interested in them as personalities.; this "remoteness," inherent in the earlier mythology, gives its specialist appeal apart from the more familiar "Third Age," writing, but also prevents many aficionados of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* from following Tolkien into the more rarefied air of the earlier mythology. In the post-war rewrite of the "Túrin saga", Túrin's career is traced in much fuller detail, but we still view him in the old way, despite the enlarged background and much more realistic treatment of such characters as the Petty-dwarf Mîm, and it consequently becomes even harder to accept him for what he is and to fit him into the centre of the tale. He is without the faculty of relieving his emotional side in song, and should really have had a major role in opera, like Verdi's Manrico[19]. In those terms he's a true *tenore di forza*, and behaves in a precisely similar, fate-driven way. The dynamics of mid-nineteenth century Italian opera do chime to a remarkable extent with the "Northern heroic", atmosphere and values exemplified in *The Silmarillion*.

The "remoteness" of the early mythology also resides in the sense the reader has of the dawn of "real" or true history, to its realisation in later Ages. The various, "nature-inspired," "images of evil," in the *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* have their origin in Melkor's induced distortions of the natural world following the birth of Arda. Correspondingly the mythological concept of the individual controlled and driven by fate evolves in Tolkien's maturity into that of the individual possessing freewill, responsible for his own fate, individual in his efforts or lack of them, to avoid or resist temptation. Many such individuals, "fail" in various ways, and on varying scales. That resistance is possible and essential in a "fallen world," is demonstrated, both by Frodo Baggins, who only "fails", at the last gasp, and by Aragorn, who in this way concludes the whole great history to the opening of the Fourth Age. An accident of birth has placed him in line for the kingship; but no fate determines his succession to it. The story of his life and errantries before he appears on the page as we read, reminds us that he has had to earn his throne by the most strenuous and long-drawn-out apprenticeship.

19 The lead tenor role in Verdi's "Il Trovatore".

Book Review

Recovery and Transcendence for the Contemporary Mythmaker: the Spiritual Dimension in the works of J.R.R. Tolkien *Christopher Garbowski*

Lublin: Maria Curic-Sklodowska University Press, 2000 ISBN 8322715129

David Doughan

This study of Tolkien's work covers more ground than most. First, the range is truly impressive. The author by no means restricts his discussion to the *Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, but refers frequently to *The Lost Road, The Book of Lost Tales, Unfinished Tales, The Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth, Beowulf, The Monsters and the Critics,* and *On Fairy Stories,* among many other works. Next, the number and variety of his references compels respect; these include not only such approved literary-critical names as Nietzsche, Adorno, Ivan Illich, Adler, Jung, Bakhtin, and above all Frankl (yes, the psychoanalytical approach plays a definite part in this), but additionally the less critically OK names of Aquinas, Auden, Chesterton, and of course Shippey and Flieger, and the downright unexpected, such as Frank Capra (for *It's a Wonderful Life*). The extensive and impressive bibliography is by no means just a list of academically-approved titles, but is testimony to the far-reaching research the author has put into this work. Those of us who are sensitive to sneers from the lit-crit establishment about Tolkienists' supposed lack of learning tend to wear our erudition on our sleeves; Garbowski's erudition requires a very long sleeve indeed. Equally impressive is the number and range of issues on which he touches - not just the expected mortality, the machine, the awful orcs, etc, but matters less frequently dealt with, such as the use of the colour grey, the "novelistic" time of the Lord of the Rings contrasted with the "epic" time of the Silmarillion, and even, on p. 193, the Japanese management theory of Entmoot ("extensive consultation makes for apparently slow decisions, but quick action once they have been made"). He takes a global view of Tolkien's work, particularly the Legendarium, and its literary and philosophical context. However, the diversity of issues and sources has its own dangers. Although the work does have a fairly coherent overall structure (roughly speaking, the first half deals with literary/aesthetic matters, the second with philosophical/religious themes), I found much of the writing episodic, not to say bitty - one topic is dealt with briefly, and another only tenuously linked follows it. I kept on wanting to know more, but just as my interest was being aroused, I was moved on to another question. This partly accounts for my mild sense of frustration with what I perceive to be the author's occasional tendency to go round issues without engaging fully with them. There is an especially interesting example of this in the discussion on pp. 31-32 of Tolkien's use of archaic, or archaising, language, where Garbowski accurately reports Tolkien's assertion in *Letters* No. 171 that a chatty modern style would ultimately he unable to cope with, for example, Theoden's speech to Grandalf, coming ultimately to grief over the sentence: "Thus shall I sleep better" - and it is this sentence that Garbowski actually omits, thus obscuring the point that this is not merely a matter of literary appropriateness to context, but of a modem inability in thought as reflected by language to comprehend Theoden's attitude to an honourable death.

I believe that LeGuin does rather better in her essay *From Elfland to Poughkeepsie* on this and other related points. The frustration is the more acute because when the author does really engage with an issue he definitely has things worth saying, especially when considering Tolkien's viewpoint as a Catholic, and his philosophical relationship to the concepts of "The Enlightenment", which, among other things leads to the discussion of the perils of the isolated narcissistic personality - a very stimulating exposition (if you can cope with terms like "the monologic self"). Also, the journey finally reaches a well-constructed conclusion about Tolkien's sense of recovery, and his position as a source of serious moral and religious thought within a postmodem context of pick'n'mix spirituality.

A danger of the academic approach can be excessive use of extreme technical vocabulary, aka jargon. Garbowski is not totally guiltless here. Terms like "axiology" and "panentheism" occur, and even I, who am fairly familiar with this sort of language, was sent scuttling to my dictionary to look up "apocatastasis". Still, in the main he writes good readable English, and uses specialist literary and theological terms relatively sparingly. Even so, this is not one for beginners in Tolkien, and even those who are well-versed in Tolkien but who are not used to this sort of terminology may find some of it heavy going. And while I'm grumbling: I was mildly irritated by the sloppiness of editing; misprints abound - for example, we are introduced to St. Catherine of Sienna, the fantasy author Alan Gardner, the tales of Baron von Münchaussen and "the Finrod-Albreth dialogue". The editors sometimes spell "eucatastrophe" as "euctastrophy". Some of the page references are incorrect and occasionally word-order seems to have been garbled. None of this is likely seriously to mislead those who know Tolkien's work and who have a broad literary background, and it certainly isn't in the *Mythlore* league, but it can be a source of annoyance.

Havng got all that off my chest, I can say that I generally found this an interesting and usefully thought-provoking work, if ultimately mildly frustrating. I had the feeling that there was here the (as yet unrealised) potential of a work which could vie with Curry, or even Shippey and Flieger. I look forward to reading more from this author. In the meanwhile, despite my reservations, I would recommend this to anybody interested in Tolkien's aesthetic and philosophical thought.

Realistic Fantasy: The example of J. R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*

Nikolaos Koravos

The Lord of the Rings, John Ronald Reuel Tolkien's best known work, was published in three volumes between 1954 and 1955. The effect was suprising. It became the first fantasy book to record such popularity. As Humphrey Carpenter reports[1], it became part of the sixties movement, with badges bearing slogans such as 'Come to Middle-earth' appearing on lapels. The appeal the book had and still has to the public is a phenomenon which raises several questions. What is the quality that keeps the readers' interest stimulated through eleven hundred pages? And, mainly, how can Tolkien's fantasy world harmonise with the minds of so many readers around the world? The answer is partially given by the author himself in his essay *On Fairy-Stories* which was first published in 1947. In this essay Tolkien explains his innovative theory about fantasy stories. He proposes that the writer should create a "secondary world which your mind can enter. Inside it, what he relates is 'true'. It accords with the laws of that world"[2]. The world of *The Lord of the Rings* is based on this very principle.

Tolkien included some other relevant ideas in his essay. According to him, a fantasy story can be successful only if it convinces the reader about its truthfulness, creating thus in him a kind of "secondary belief"[3]. As a result, he concludes, "The keener and the clearer is reason, the better fantasy it will make"[4]. For Tolkien fantasy worlds must have an "inner consistency of reality"[5], without which Art cannot be produced. For fantasy is a form of "sub-creative art"[6], which means the creation of mythical images which accord to internal laws and thus seem credible. Tolkien has used in *The Lord of the Rings* various techniques which make his own fantasy world, Middle-earth, exceptionally convincing and realistic. It is precisely this aspect of the book that many readers find so appealing. First of all, *The Lord of the Rings* was a revolutionary fantasy text in that it included no excuse of dreaming or travelling in order to account for the occurrence of the events related in the story. The narrator treats the reader as an inhabitant of Middle-earth, not of the real, primary world. As explained in the Prologue of the book, the narrative is based on archives that survived in the libraries of The Shire and other realms of Middle-earth, and the main source is the Red Book which was written by Bilbo and Frodo himself [7]. Thus, the fantasy world is treated as having an entirely autonomous existence, unlike previous travel, dream or timeslip tales. As David Bratman puts it, "*The Lord of the Rings* marked the end of apology"[8]. Even though in the past there had been writers like Lord Dunsany that created partially autonomous fantasy worlds, it was Tolkien who first developed a coherent theory on that matter and also applied it in his own stories. Middle-earth is, in many respects, unique in fantasy literature. Its sense of reality is not the result of simply refusing to use dreaming or similar devices. Its most important element is that it is an almost "fully imagined secondary world"[9] described in amazingly great detail. The geography of Middle-earth, for example, contributes significantly to the realism of the fantasy world. The maps which accompany *The Lord of the Rings* are very elaborate. Without them it is very difficult to follow the events. Apart from the general map of Middle-earth[10], there is a detailed map of The Shire[11], and also one of Rohan, Gondor and Mordor, the region where most of the action takes place[12]. These maps do not simply show the divisions between political or physical unities, but also give information on such details as paths, mountain passes, river crossings, bridges and hills. The maps resemble landscapes. Forests, for instance, are represented by miniature trees. The purpose of this kind of representation is to make the landscape of the imaginary world as alive and real as possible. Furthermore, as Lee D. Rossi[13] observes, there is on the maps "an abundance of strange place names", which breathe life into the geographical regions by giving them historical, political and natural significance. As the members of the fellowship of the Ring travel throughout Middle-earth, the reader is better acquainted with these places as he is provided with further, elaborate information.

Place descriptions occupy a large part of *The Lord of the Rings*. Their role in the story is to convey to the reader the sense that these places are real. Tolkien's descriptions are detailed and given with an emotion that creates the impression he has actually been there. One of the best examples is the description of the approaches to the Morannon, the desolation that lay before Mordor:[14]

> Here nothing lived, not even the leprous growths that feed on rottenness. The gasping pools were choked with ash and crawling muds, sickly white and grey, as if the mountains had vomited the filth of their entrails upon the lands about. High mounds of crushed and powdered rock, great cones of earth fire-blasted and poison-stained, stood like an obscene graveyard in endless rows, slowly revealed in the reluctant light.

It is important that the landscapes of Middle-earth, even though they belong to an imaginary world, do not appear alien to the reader. The desolation before Mordor resembles places on Earth which have been devastated by industrialism or warfare. Tolkien himself wrote that the description of the approaches to the Morannon may "owe something to Northern France after the battle of the Somme"[15] where he had fought in 1916. Beautiful

landscapes do not appear alien either. In the earthly paradise of Lothlorien "the shapes seemed at once clear cut, as they had been first conceived" but still Frodo realises that he "saw no colour but those he knew, gold and white and blue and green"[16]. The plants and animals of Middle-earth are the same that exist in the real world, only they are enriched and sometimes elevated. Tolkien had supported in his essay *On Fairy-Stories* the idea that fantasy holds more realism than the modern world, and wrote characteristically: "The notion that motor-cars ... are more real than, say, horses, is pathetically absurd"[17]. Tolkien's fantasy stories are concerned with horses, trees and high mountains to a far greater extent than the modem world is. Thus, it is not suprising that Bratman[18] finds Middle-earth "more real than our own reality, and brighter". The realism of Tolkien's world is strengthened by the historical information contained both in the narrative itself and in the appendices. There are several parts of the story where the reader is provided with details concerning the history of Middle-earth. Faramir, in his talk with Frodo and Sam, gives an account of the origins of the states of Rohan and Gondor[19]. There is also a great amount of historical information given in the council of Elrond, concerning the first war with Sauron and other more recent events[20]. In the appendices, there is further information on such matters as the Kings of Gondor and Rohan or the wars between Orcs and Dwarves, and there is also a chart which puts the various events of the Second and the Third Ages of Middle-earth into chronological order[21].An examination of the history of the secondary world shows that its sense of reality is not only a matter of its being detailed. The historical events are described in an almost scientific manner. The races of Middle-earth have endured wars, famine and disease, and have often been forced to migrate in order to escape these and other calamities. Barbarian tribes have invaded their lands, alliances have been forged and traitors have appeared. In general, the history of the secondary world is based on reason, taking into account all the factors that influence it, such as the need for survival or the desire for power. Above all, the history of Middle-earth has been marked by the struggle between two conflicting forces, Good and Evil. One of the most important qualities of *The Lord of the Rings* is that it has the sense of being a part of this ancient struggle. The present story is simply a continuation of a larger story that is often referred to in the text but is never fully related. As T.A Shippey puts it, the book has a "Beowulfian impression of depth, created as in the old epic by songs and digressions like Aragorn's Lay of Tinuviel[22], Sam Gamgee's allusions to the Silmaril and the Iron Crown[23]... and dozens more".[24] The story of the Ring is presented as another part of the everlasting struggle of the 'good' races of Middle-earth against Evil, a struggle which is as ancient as the beginning of time, when in the First Age, Morgoth, the first Dark Lord, "of whom Sauron of Mordor was but a servant, dwelt in Angband in the North"[25]. By making allusions to a remote, almost mythological past, Tolkien creates the impression that his "story is not in the air"[26]. Thus, the secondary world becomes even more convincing, creating a vast scale of time.

A fully imagined fantasy world must have its own imaginary languages. In *The Lord of the Rings*, the peoples of Middle-earth use various languages, from the Black Speech of Mordor to the Elvish *Quenya.* These languages are not simply random strings of sounds, but are based on specific phonological patterns. Tolkien used his own linguistic knowledge in order to design his invented languages. Two of them, the *Sindarin* and the *Quenya*, had "reached a fairly high degree of organisation"[27]. What makes Tolkien's invented languages even more convincing is that each has its own distinctive sounds. Rossi points out that the Black Speech of Mordor, "with its concatenation of low and back vowels and plosive and sibilant consonants" seems to be "the very language of hell"[28] Truly, the inscription of the Ring, which is in Mordorian, sounds very unpleasant: "*Ash nazg durbatuluk, ash nazg gimbatul, ash nazg thrakatuluk agh burzum-ishi krimpatul*"*[29]. The Elvish speech, on the other hand, is highly musical: "Elen sila lûmenn' omentielvo"** [30]. The languages of Middle-earth seem to fit perfectly its races, good and evil. Thus, they become as convincing as possible. Tolkien invented also two alphabets, the *Tengwar* and the *Cirth,* which appear in the story[31], and are explained in the appendices[32]. The different races of Middle-earth communicate with the *Westron*, the Common Speech. Tolkien explains that the text is actually an English translation of the Common Speech, and gives an account of how he translated names and which linguistic patterns he used for this purpose[33]. In general, the languages of Middle-earth are described in detail and make the secondary world even more credible. The races of Tolkien's world, apart from having their respective languages, have also their respective social structures. The Shire society is pastoral and conservative. Its inhabitants are simple, rural folk, with strong family ties. There is no government, but the Hobbits are peaceful and lawful by nature[34]. The Elven societies are also simple, but they do have some kind of authority, though not absolute. In Lothlórien, for example, there is Lord Celeborn and Lady Galadriel. Elves worship Nature and their role in the world is the preservation of natural life. Human societies resemble medieval Europe. They have many feudal domains which are ruled by a monarch who is supposed to be the representative of the people, responsible for their welfare. Most of the societies of Middle-earth are patriarchal, especially the dwarven, where males constitute the two thirds of the population. The Orcs are described as brutal. evil creatures, "hating even their own kind"[35], the natural servants of Sauron. Tolkien gives many details concerning the habits of his races, such as the Hobbit custom of giving presents on their birthday, the dwarve's love for stone and their subtle craftsmanship, and the Elven practice of baking the waybread *lembas*. Thus, the peoples of Middle-earth are not mere bodies but social beings, with their own culture. Their description is detailed, based on reason, and therefore realistic and credible.

* "One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them, One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them".

** "A star shines on the hour of our meeting".

Failure to understand that Tolkien's world has its own social structures may be the reason that led certain critics to make some rather unfair judgements. J. W Lambert commented that *The Lord of the Rings* has "to all intentions and purposes no women"[36], and Catharine Stimpson found Tolkien "blandly, traditionally masculine", and his women "the most hackneyed of stereotypes". Even though both comments are not entirely fair, it is true that there are few female characters in the story, and only one, Eowyn, is active. The story was written by a man and, naturally, it is seen from a male point of view. Still, what for Stimpson is 'traditionally masculine', for Tolkien is mere necessity. His world is patriarchal, as the real world has been in the past. In such a world it would not be credible if in the journey to Mordor Frodo was accompanied by women, or if women participated in the battles he describes. Eowyn, the niece of King Thèoden, is the only active female character, as she rides in disguise with the army of Rohan and slays the Nazgûl Lord in the battle of Pelennor. In order to achieve this she had to conceal her female identity, because women were simply not expected to participate in fighting. Her own words to Aragom reveal the social status of women in Rohan: "All your words are but to say: you are a woman, and your part is in the house"[37]. Even Lady Galadriel of Lothi6rien, though infinitely wiser than Lord Celebom, says that "the Lord of the Galadhrim is accounted the wisest of the Elves of Middle-earth"[38], acknowledging in this way his authority. Thus, Tolkien stresses that his world is patriarchal, but Galadriel's superiority is also shown when she corrects her husband's description of Gandalf's choices as "folly": "He would be rash indeed who would say that thing"[38]. The case of Galadriel, by far the most elevated character in the story, shows clearly that the existence of few female characters in *The Lord of the Rings* is simply due to the social structures of Middle-earth and the theme of the novel, and the reason is definitely not sexism. Above all, Tolkien's invented races are 'real', social beings, not politically correct ones.

The races of Middle-earth are not only social, but also 'natural' beings. They seem to be united with the places of Middle-earth they inhabit, and Middle-earth appears to "breathe with the lives of its inhabitants"[39]. Tolkien's secondary world is, in many ways, 'liveable'. Elves, for example, live in complete harmony with Nature, and so do Hobbits. Most races do not appear alien, as they are humanoid. Yet, the liveability of Middle-earth and its

Barad-dûr *Octo Kwan*

inhabitants is apparent even in the case of the tree-like race of the Ents. The Ents are the shepherds of the trees, the guardians of the forests. They have the shapes of trees themselves, and at times they are "growing sleepy, going tree-ish"[40]. After some time they may awake, becoming Ents once again. Ents do not simply live in the forest, they are part of its life. They represent the power of Nature. In the war against Saruman and his Orcs, they attack Isengard and destroy it, taking their revenge for the cutting of the trees of Fangorn forest. At the Hornburg, Fangorn forest marches to battle, surrounding Saruman's Orcish troops. From the shadow of the trees "none ever came again". If one considers the results of the destruction of woodlands in the real world, it is easier to understand the symbolism of the Ents and of Fangorn, and thus the forest's revenge seems an entirely natural event. Life in *The Lord of the Rings* is connected with Nature, and in this way the story becomes credible and the secondary world liveable. With the use of the Ents and other inventions, such as the connection of Evil to the destruction of landscapes, Tolkien manages to give an ecological tone to his novel, strengthening its realism in the process.

By the use of all these means, Tolkien makes his fantasy world convincing and gives the reader no excuse to discredit it. Still, it is also important to convince the reader about the truthfulness of the story's characters, situations and themes. As far as characters are concerned, *The Lord of the Rings* appears in many respects credible. In Tolkien's work "the ordinary and the marvellous ... inhabit the same overarching reality"[41]. This is very important for the credibility of the story's characters. Among them one can find a comic Pippin Took, a tragic Gollum, a divine Galadriel, a naive Sam Gamgee, a mad Lord Denethor, brutal Orcs, a treacherous Saruman, and many others. It is a story that has every kind of colour and movement, covering a large variety of characters and situations. Language reflects the different personalities of the heroes and the seriousness of the situations. Hobbits, especially Merry and Pippin, talk "lightly in hobbit-fashion"[42]. Lord Denethor of Gondor, on the other hand, uses an archaic language. "Didst thou think that the eyes of the White Tower were blind? Nay, I have seen more than thou knowest, Grey Fool"[43]. Language style also depends on the situational context. Bilbo's birthday party is narrated in a comic manner, whereas in the siege of Gondor the language is elevated and the style epic. Tolkien seems to cover in the text a great variety of different aspects of life experience. In this respect, his characters and situations do appear credible. The credibility of the characters of *The Lord of the Rings* has, however, been questioned. Edwin Muir commented in *The Observer* that the story's "good people are consistently good" and its "evil figures immutably evil". Of course, this comment is not entirely true. Gollum is a villain who nearly repented, and Saruman, who was originally good, betrayed the White Council and sided with Evil. Yet, it is true that most characters are consistently either good or evil throughout the novel. This may not appear credible compared to modem reality, but Tolkien's story does not take place in the modem world. If it was, as Tolkien wrote in the foreward to *The Lord of the Rings*, "then certainly the Ring would have been seized and used against Sauron"[44], not entrusted to Frodo. The story's good characters, in particular, conform not with modern reality but with a kind of Christian or humanitarian morality which does exist in the real world as a belief. Yet, Frodo's failure to throw the Ring into the Fire shows that even the simple Hobbits cannot remain totally unaffected by the power of Evil. It is really a matter of one's own moral expectations whether he will believe Tolkien's characters or not. One could also argue that situations in *The Lord of the Rings* are not always realistic. Given the circumstances, the defeat of Sauron seems impossible, yet it happens. Though this may not seem realistic, the reader finds it credible for two reasons. First, the possibility of a victory over Sauron, however small, did exist. Second, its being so small made it even more desirable so that the reader is ready to accept it.

The existence of the Ultimate Evil creates further complexities. W.H Auden had once "asked Tolkien if the notion of the Orcs, an entire race that was irredeemably wicked, was not heretical"[45]. The answer is that the Orcs were not originally evil, but were corrupted by the Dark Lord in the remote past. "The Shadow that bred them can only mock ... it only ruined them and twisted them"[46]. The existence of the Ultimate Evil personified in Sauron and the inability to use the Ring other than for evil purposes is another matter. The problem can be solved if one considers Sauron and his Ring not unrealistic but 'unnatural'. Tolkien connected the Ring and its Magic to the Machine. "The Machine is our more obvious modern form ... related to Magic"[47]. Sauron and his Ring convey to the reader a "sense of wrongness"[48]. They are the unnatural, brutal force which threatens to destroy the natural world, in the same way that in the modern world the Machine, in all its degenerate forms, threatens the life of the planet. This may be one of the reasons why Sauron and the Ring seem so frightening. In the light of this view, Tolkien's notion of Evil appears if not natural, at least credible within the fantasy world.

The realism of *The Lord of the Rings* is connected in many ways to its thematic concerns. The problems of the secondary world are caused by the same human weaknesses that create 'real world' problems. Rossi[49] saw the Ring as "the ultimate extension of the human will", the symbol of "the dangers and ambiguities which Tolkien sees in the wielding of temporal power". The destruction of Middle-earth, the wars and the betrayals, as well as the subsequent resistance of the 'good' races to Evil, are the result of the desire for power which transfomis the weak into Gollums and the great into Saurons and Sarumans. Yet, power is not the only theme of the story. Malcolm Page[50] describes the book as "many-faceted: fairy story and history, magical and realistic, pessimistic about society yet hopeful about individuals, escapist fantasy-romance and aware of human truths". *The Lord of the Rings*, with its ecological aspect and the fear of violent change it implies has managed to become "one of the best expressions of a whole generation's dismay at the modem world" (Rossi[51]). Readers find the story convincing

because it manages to express their own fears and desires for their world.

The story is also connected to reality in another way, which was first mentioned by W.H. Auden. Auden, who reviewed *The Lord of the Rings*, responded[52] to the Quest theme: "Life ... is primarily a continuous succession of choices between alternatives ... Mr Tolkien has succeeded more than any previous writer in this genre in using the traditional properties of the Quest". Auden's praise may have been influenced by his personal enthusiasm for the book, but it is true that in the Quest of the Ring the characters must take difficult decisions, political or personal. Gandalf and the Elf-Lords decide not to use the Ring. Frodo, the Ring-bearer, takes the decision not to go to Minas Tirith but to travel to Mordor alone, in order for the Ring to work no more evil. Then he trusts Gollum as a guide to the Land of the Enemy. Samwise Gamgee decides to save Frodo's body from the Orcs even though he thought he was dead, instead of finishing the Quest alone. In general, the characters of the story choose the most difficult roads and are finally rewarded with the fall of Sauron and the destruction of the Ring. Once again, Tolkien's characters appear to conform with human morality rather than human reality. Still, it is unfair to reject their realism. They have fears and weaknesses, they struggle with themselves, and within a fantasy environment their taking the morally right decisions is easier to believe.

What adds considerably to the realism of *The Lord of the Rings* is that even though it concerns itself with themes which link the story to reality, the distinction between the fantasy world and the primary world is also made clear. The story is by no means a direct allegory. To interpret "Sauron as Hitler, or the Ring as nuclear weapons"[53], is a trivial and false reading of the text. The seat of the Evil in the East is a mere geographical convention and is not meant to refer to Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia. With regard to nuclear weapons, when Tolkien began the novel in 1936, they had not yet been discovered. Likewise, Saruman's attempts to create a new breed of Orcs may resemble Nazi genetical experiments in concentration camps, but Tolkien wrote this part of the story before any news of Nazi atrocities had reached Britain. The best comment on the question of allegory in *The Lord of the Rings* is probably that made by C.S Lewis:[54] "These things were not devised to reflect any particular situation in the real world. It was the other way round; real events began, horribly, to conform to the pattern he had freely invented". Tolkien wrote in the foreward to *The Lord of the Rings* that he disliked allegory and preferred "history, true or feigned, with its varied applicability to the thought and experience of readers". Thus, his imaginary world is completely autonomous and the events he relates are treated as history. The story is simply aware of human truths, not dependent on real world situations. The resemblance with historical events, if any, shows only how realistic Tolkien's story is. *The Lord of the Rings* is not of course real history, but an invented myth. Yet, with the use of narrative techniques, the myth becomes credible and difficult to distinguish from history or reality. Tolkien filters the narration through the eyes of the Hobbits, who act as mediators between the contemporary reader and the wonders of Middle-earth. As Rossi[55] observes, Hobbits "might have been [Tolkien's] own acquaintances". There is something very familiar in their characters, especially those of Sam, Merry and Pippin. In the beginning of the story, they are as ignorant of the wonders of the fantasy world as the reader. Ted Sandyman, when talking to Sam Gamgee in the Green Dragon Inn, questions the existence of Dragons, Elves and giants: "fireside-tales and children's stories". As the narrative unfolds, the reader travels with the simple Shire-folk, meeting new places and people. Tolkien, with the use of Hobbits, manages to retain the mythical aspect of his story without spoiling the sense of reality which he spent so much effort to build. The ordinary and the marvellous co-exist in *The Lord of the Rings*, which is both a mythological and a realistic story.

The Lord of the Rings is a unique fantasy text. Its sense of reality is very strong. Its success in convincing the reader is not simply a matter of applying specific techniques. The book conveys the feeling not of invention, but of discovery. The best explanation that can be found for its credibility is given by Tolkien,[56] who wrote in one of his letters: "[The stories] arose in my mind as 'given' things, and as they came, separately, so too the links grew ... I had the sense of recording what was already there, somewhere: not of inventing".

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Mary Dickerson

Aragorn

Watch out for the horses tonight.
Only on the other side of this abyss
are breakfast and handkerchiefs
and fat silent contentment.
They who ride in black
will be here ere we wait for them,
all waiting rendered useless in a night interminable,
the stars taken away from your sight,
although not from the heavens.

Listen for hoofbeats.

They are near, waiting for the chance
to awaken from misery unimaginable.

Stay close.

I have wandered to the five ends of the Earth
and come to tell you what I have seen,
rubbing my lips together to keep them warm.
Is all strife far beneath your feet,
as you thought? Or
running mindlessly about in the daytime,
the nighttime,
even when you don't know which is which?
Or running not mindlessly, running
to a deadly order?
The wind may tell you the weather,
but not the outcome. Perfect stillness is the only
partner in your crime, shattering like
ice.
What do you forfeit by shrugging your shoulders
and leaving it up to someone else?
That
is what you'll find out.
It is you, after all,
who can end this mess.
Only the wisdom inherent in folly is of much hope now.

Set out while you can

and watch for the black shadows
stealing through silent lanes where
you thought all was safe, guarded.
It is up to you. Take it as you may,
but these streets are filled with waking
that beckons bitterly
to the lost, to the vulnerable Starved
who mourn openly at the empty air.
Certainly they have been here a long, long time -
even those boots are a lot older
than you are. The dirt caked on them
will one day be all we have left, either
of a dead world or a changed one.
Take them and do not wonder why such things
as these are made,
whether their need was anticipated or simply improvised.

Dress yourself warmly.

The wind will bite more than your skin,
the rain will soak more than your face. And watch
for horses tonight.
What took you for fairy tales
and the learned for archaic
is approaching, the beautiful
as well as the corrupt, and both are perilous:
Things of light and of darkness that you
will never touch; and your eyes would burn
in their presence.

Watch

how you walk,
how you narrow your eyes in distrust.
It is up to you,
the small and bewildered.
You will live this moment forever
if you give in.
Save your tenderness
to kiss the sweet earth, and live
like one who will never see the sky
for the hidden stars.
You sweat alone,
not akin to the species who share your lot.
The ones who speak your language
will sift through your hands
whatever you choose, and choose you must
between pity and honour -
in neither can you survive.

Go then, like so few before you,

who wait for you
across the sea.

Gandalf

So in many shadows we dwell, fearful
and yet not so. Whence comes such?
And whither goes. Those to whom we owe our lives
ride to places unknown and vaguely hoped for, watching
in the dark. Closing one's eyes one hears
them as the evening passes. Yet
sometimes it is all beneath the ground,
and only an ear to the earth will bear tidings
of what we only dare to dream of.

And dream we do, of sweetness
and of spring. We sleep half aware, half guessing;
such is what fate would seem. The winter ends,
the abyss has a bottom, but only those who walk
abroad are the wiser. Their faith is well rewarded
and dearly bought by the foolish and the weak.
The trembling hands are all we see,
but the shrouded prophet of grim tidings
descries hope beyond strength or wisdom.

Letters

The Mallorn tree, and beyond ...

Sir - My first thought on seeing the new cover for *Mallorn,* with the black frames and heavy black title, was that it looked like an obituary notice for the Mallorn Tree. I feel even sadder remembering how I fought, when on the Tolkien Society Committee, to improve the reproduction of the cover illustration. Successive editors had copied the previous cover so that the delicate lines had gradually filled in or thickened. I made enquiries and learnt that the original drawing, which Pauline Baynes drew for and gave to the Society, had been lost when a previous Chairman or Editor had split up with his wife and the then Committee did not take steps to recover the drawing. But by copying the best cover available and having a master from it made for future use the quality was considerably improved. Compare the covers on *Mallorn* nos 26 and 27.

I assume that you did not realise that the artist whose work you insult in your editorial is (I believe) an honorary member of the Tolkien Society, who will be receiving a copy of *Mallorn* and reading your statement; and moreover someone who has responded readily to requests from the Society for designs for T-shirts and mouse-mats. It is perhaps not entirely your fault, since Pauline's name has been omitted from the credits in issues 30 and later, though listed prominently earlier.

In my opinion the old design should be restored or else an entirely new one chosen. In its present form the picture has been mutilated by the removal of the lettering which is an integral part of the design, by its compression into a small space when it was drawn to occupy the whole page, and by fencing it in with frames which serve no pupose. It brought to mind Tolkien's comments on the poplar tree he loved and which was 'savagely mutilated', and eventually cut down, inspiring him to write *Leaf by Niggle.*

Christina Scull

Sir- You invited a debate on the Mallorn cover: let it begin here. The new design is a disaster. Indeed, I find it upsetting to look at even as I write this message. Pauline Baynes' picture, in its original form, is one of the finest pieces of art the Tolkien Society has ever published, with several layers of graphic interest; yet you eliminated all of them. In your reduction the curving branches, which had an almost *Art Noveau* quality, have become rigid; the letters hanging in the tree, which gave it a playfulness as well as added decoration and depth (especially through the blackness of the sides, against the fineness of the branches, when correctly printed), have been rudely removed; and the impact of the whole, whose fine lines depend upon the larger size for which it was designed, has been flattened by shrinking and low-resolution scanning. In short, it's dreadful. I don't know what Pauline will say when she sees it. I know what I would say: although the art was a gift to the Society, no one has the moral right to make such drastic alterations without permission of the artist.

The titling type is hideous, and no match to the illustration in either weight or form. The frames, as Christina says, serve no purpose, or rather serve no good purpose: they separate the cover into disunited blocks, and they distract the eye. Nor is the choice of lettering at the bottom very pleasing: a type of poor character. I think I know what you were trying to do - to solve the problem that has long plagued the *Mallorn* cover, how to include the issue number, date, and subtitle together with Pauline's picture, which was designed for a cover which (in the early days of *Mallorn*) contained nothing else. The solution is not very difficult, even using ordinary Times Roman, merely a matter of relative sizes and placement. Your solution is no improvement, except in so far as you left off the ISSN, which is unnecessary on the cover.

I agree with Christina: restore Pauline's picture as it was, using a clean master (by no.36 it had apparently been re-photocopied again to the point of fuzziness), or use something else. This comes with our strongest urging. But if you abandon such a splendid illustration we will be very disappointed.

If I may say something also about the interior of *Mallorn* 37. It is usually wiser, from a design standpoint, to stay within a single typeface family unless other types can be used in a harmonious way. The 'engraved' initial letters marry well with the Times Roman (missed, however, on pp. 28 and 29). The pseudo-Gothic type and the titling on p. 3 do not, and there seems to be no reason to set the editorial in a 'schoolbook' face which most readers won't distinguish from the main text type, and which in fact is less easily read at that size and leading on such a long line. (And why switch to a most illegible sans-serif italic on p. 28?) Double columns of 10 or 11 point Times (if Times must be used) on this size page, separated by about a quarter-inch, are optimal for legibility: see p.40. Three columns, at this size, generate far too many wide spaces when justified, and with only an eighth of an inch of separation the eye wants to read straight across the gap rather than down the page. But you have handled the footnotes generally well.

Apart from these considerations, may I suggest that it would be a Good Thing to include the editors' names within *Mallorn,* not just addresses for contributions? Christina and I know who you are; other readers may not. And of course the cover artist should be credited too.

Wayne Hammond

I imagine Pauline Baynes will have accepted my light hearted remarks in the same spirit that I have accepted your ... constructive criticism. Still, chacun a son gout. *I note that you do not yourself shrink from criticism, so by what token do you deny it to me? I am grateful however for the lesson in Basic Publishing. When the day comes when publishing has reduced itself to a set of rigid rules, yours will be most useful. Ed.*

Sir - Considering the new look of *Mallorn,* I am not sure whether the present boxing in and reduction in size of the Mallorn is any better than what came before, but it is at least as pleasing. What I would like to see is TITLES for some of the artwork - perhaps it reflects on the work that a title is seen as needed, but I for one would like to know what the artist in question proposed that we were looking at... To more serious matters, however - the article entitled interpretative analysis: Ron Pirson's Tom Bombadil's biblical connections. I think the author ought to have read more carefully Tolkien's own response he quotes: 'I really do think you are being too serious, besides missing the point.' The stuff that follows is ingenious enough, but goes too far - and gets uncomfortably close to stating that Bombadil meeting

Ungoliant *Octo Kwan*

others, last as he was first... As such, it gives potent reason for the inclusion of the episode concerning Bombadil in any film of *LotR*.

Now to much happier thoughts: many other very interesting articles (even Pirson's was thought-provoking!) - I especially liked Ruth Lacon's *Invisible Shire* and John Ellison's *Virtual History*. In that latter piece, I might suggest that not only was evil responsible for presenting itself with blatant propaganda as a monolithic and solidly stable political block and the effects of Sauron obtaining the One Ring far more disastrous than might have been the case if it had happened - it was also in the interest of certain members of the Council of Elrond (those both on and off stage) to paint as black a picture as possible, so that the impossible mission "if you choose to accept it" would be taken on by those chosen to undertake it. No other alternative could be entertained, and the final calamity would need to be blown up into such vast proportions that people would risk their all to achieve the ends that the "great and the good" desired. Propaganda works for all sides, and remember that the winners write history.

Frodo in LotR is an allegory on Paul's vision on the road to Damascus. On that footing alone, I contend that Tolkien would have found the contents of the article disturbing if not annoying - and I must admit to feeling much the same way myself. As for the ruthless use to which the unpublished materials are put in the cause of tying up loose ends and proving otherwise dubious points and so-called connections, that only makes me envision the very dangers that Tolkien himself would have pointed out in the publication of the *History of Middle Earth* series. If this is the use to which they are to be put, better that they were never published.

I fear that we need to make one thing clear: the only works that can be said to be the defining thoughts of the author are those published during his lifetime. Even the *Silmarillion* is only a collection of parts that show work in progress, not the finished work. Sketches and most especially early drafts by their very nature cannot be taken as reliable. The names Timothy Titus and Barnabas were after all excised from LotR - else they would not have been changed. Names are a notoriously unreliable yardstick to measure Tolkien's unvoiced thoughts with, as he himself uses them with relative disregard at first until the character is established, and then settles upon a name quite a long way along the creative trail. As an example, the character Gandalf was called Bladorthin for quite a long time in *The Hobbit* and final names were decided not long before the final version was created. As for *LotR*, Tolkien himself explains that he laboriously worked at internalising all religious references so that his work might have "applicability" but was not an allegory either in part or in whole. If he had meant to create an allegory of Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus, he would have left in those references and allusions needed for the informed reader to get his point, but as he himself made clear, applicability lies in the freedom of the reader and allegory in the domination of the author and Tolkien did not wish his works to be viewed as allegory and we ought to be sensitive to those wishes.

As for Tom Bombadil, why can't folk just accept Tolkien at his word? He represents the spirit of the vanishing countryside (especially around Oxfordshire) and within the framework of *LotR*, offers us the pacifist option in the face of evil which Tolkien effectively rejects, but puts up for consideration as part of the narrative. Yes, Bombadil is not affected by the Ring, it has no power over him, but more correctly he has no power over it as Gandalf (Tolkien) states. Bombadil may be master of his own little land, but he is a most unsafe guardian and would go down in ruin at the end if Sauron defeated all

We know for instance that Sauron once had his much vaunted Ring, for all the good it did him then - and he did not create a darkness over all Middle-earth. He stole all but the Three and perhaps all but one of the Dwarf-rings from Ost in Edhel, and bore the One - and yet Middle earth did not fall to him. He had vast powers at his command then, so why did he not succeed? The most probable answer is that the One was not quite the doom-weapon that Gandalf and Elrond would have wished to make it out to be. After all, his exercise of domination over the Nazgûl was not all that absolute - when Ar Pharazon arrived with his fleet, where were his nine servants when their master needed them? Sauron was forced to leave behind his One Ring and come cap in hand to the King of Numenor and plead forgiveness and be taken as prisoner to the Isle of the Star - albeit that this final decision chimed in with his ultimate desires; had the One been that super a weapon, he ought to have blasted the Numenorean fleet out of the bay of Umbar and scattered his enemies to the four winds. He took a great gamble, for what was to prevent Ar Pharazon from relieving Sauron's body of its head right there and then? And remember that Sauron bore the One when the Last Alliance besieged Mordor - and they were able to do so and he with the One was still not invulnerable, but went down to an attack by Elendil and Gilgalad and the One was taken from his battered body.

The more one looks at the nature of events, the more it seems likeliest that Sauron was a great deceiver, able to frighten his enemies and allies alike, but that there was not as much substance there in reality to back up his threats. But I am glad that John Ellison had brought these matters to the fore in his story.

Alex Lewis

Thanks, Alex. Can't imagine why you pick out Ruth's piece in particular. Are you by any chance related? Just one little niggle - if one is prepared to guess at what Tolkien would have done to make a point about Bombadil, one can hardly criticise an author for doing the same thing. Ed.

More Bombadil

Sir - I must confess I did not find Ron Pirson's exploration of affinities between Jesus and Tom Bombadil (*Mallorn* 37, pp. 15-18) terribly persuasive, though his attempt to give Peter Hastings' point its due was salutary. What provokes me to register comment is not Pirson's argument *per se*, but the fact that, having meticulously analysed every possible biblical allusion in Tolkien's narrative, he then shies away from offering any substantive conclusions as to the significance of these proposed "intertextual relations." Even if one were to subscribe wholeheartedly to Pirson's view that Tom's rescue of the hobbits from the barrow is thematically influenced by the empty tomb scene in the gospels, one might still reasonably ask: "So what?" How would our recognition of such a transference of motifs from one literary context to another help us better understand *The Lord of the Rings* - or Tom Bombadil in particular - apart from recapitulation of the obvious point that Tolkien's Christianity had a profound impact on the shape of his mythology? Pirson's appeal to"subconscious" borrowings by Tolkien is a convenient means of avoiding the issue. It is also wholly unconvincing to me in this specific instance. If the biblical allusions are indeed as thick and precise as Pirson contends, Tolkien himself could hardly have been unaware of what he was doing. It seems pointless to speak of intertextuality unless the alleged connections can actually be shown to have made a difference in the kind of story Tolkien decided to write. But if, in the end, Pirson's catalogue of allusions amounts to little more than window dressing, this throws into question the underlying value of the enterprise.

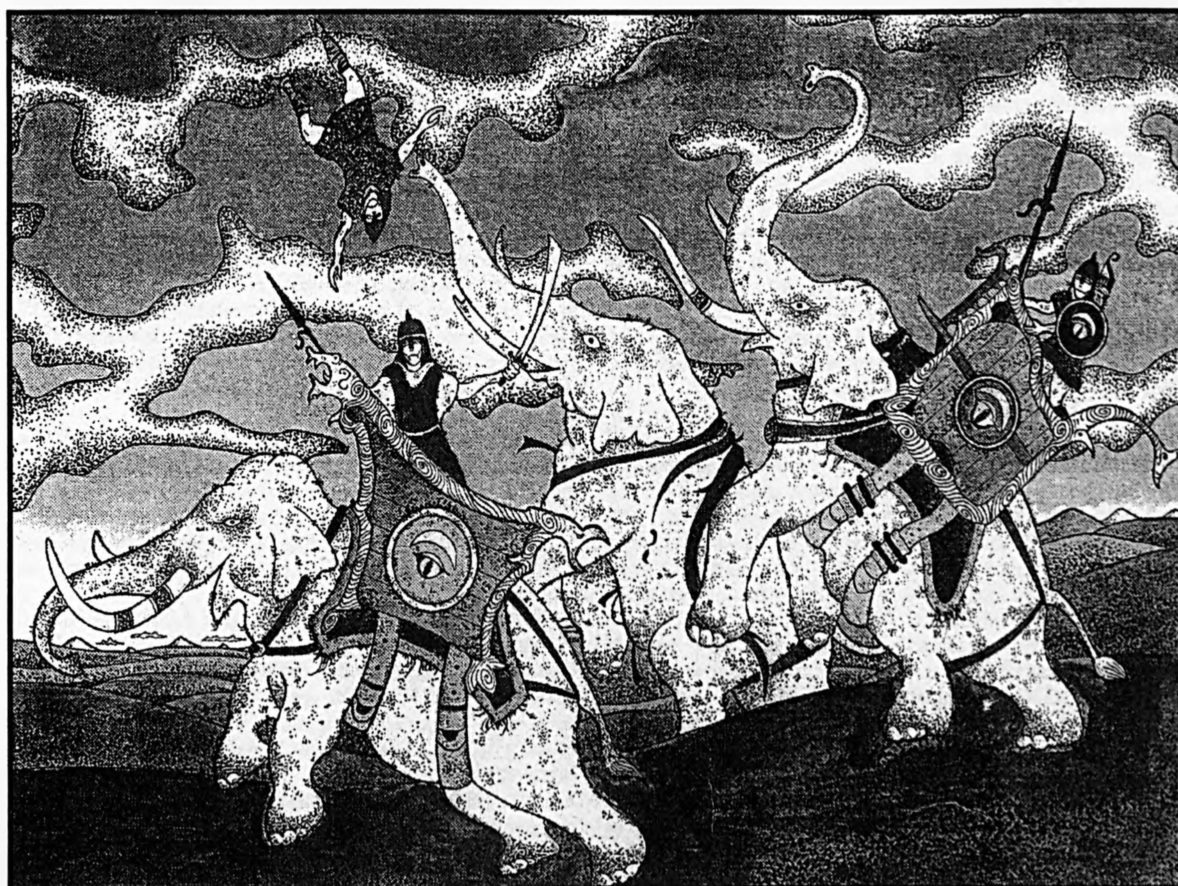
By this criticism I do not for a moment presume to deny that one can find and reflect upon biblical motifs in Tolkien's writing. My point is rather that these resemblances should not be taken in and of themselves as interpretive keys, either to the "meaning" of Tolkien's story or to the process of its composition. A nice illustration of this is Legolas' remark about Aragorn's ability to control the Oathbreakers: "Even the shades of Men are obedient to his will" (RotK.151), which is strikingly similar to the amazement that follows Jesus' inaugural act of exorcism: "He commands even the unclean spirits, and they are obedient to him" (Mark 1.27). So far so good, but there the "intertextuality" ends, and the individuality of each narrative, with its own internal dynamic and imagined back-story, takes hold (as Tolkien himself insisted in *On Fairy-stories*, in reaction to comparativist approaches to myth). In the case of Tom Bombadil, moreover, we actually have quite an explicit statement by Tolkien about the milieu and themes he is intended to embody, not a lofty Christ-figure but "the spirit of the (vanishing) Oxford and Berkshire countryside" (Letters, 26).

Chris Seeman

Other alternative Middle-earths

Sir - "The Virtual History of Middle-earth" by John Ellison (*Mallorn* 37, pp 28-34) about "what would have happened if Sauron won?", is interesting, but raises queries. I do not know how much Tolkien fan fiction has been written down the years set in this alternate time-line; I would be thankful for any WWW addressesor other references to such matter. Ellison's time line seems to part from LOTR after the Seige of Gondor. He does not say

Lorenzo Daniele



how near Frodo and Sam got to Orodruin, but somewhere their errand failed and Sauron recovered the Ring, and thus got back all its old power and much more strength and ability to strengthen his armies and coerce his slaves.

Sauron would likely have industrialised his new realm, and fairly quickly designed powered machinery of one sort and another. LOTR makes it clear that he and Saruman had explosives, and in my opinion that puts one or both of them on the doorstep of inventing guns, and likely other powered devices also. 'The Hobbit' and LOTR mention coalmining, and fuel oil can be got out of coal if Middle-earth had no oilfields. Ellison's description of Sauron's inability to stop rebellions in Rhun and elsewhere is realistic as long as Sauron's weaponry was as in LOTR, but would soon change if out of a security barrier round an industrialized area came armoured powered vehicles, able to keep to fast horse speed far longer than a horse can, and the smell of hot oil, and the blasting of burnt gases from heavy motors, and defenders' walls and moats quickly bridged or bulldozed down, and old-style weapons useless against steel hulls, known before that only as distorted unclear tales of dread of the long-ago Fall of Gondolin; and to that add heavy guns mounted on them. If posted round Isengard, they would have quickly disposed of any Ents who made trouble. Powered vehicles would have been restricted to reliable units of the armed forces, not for the general public.

In the air, in LOTR Sauron only had the Nazgûl's mounts, which proved vulnerable to arrow, and on the ground to sword. He seems to have had no access to a breeding stock of dragons, or the expense of keeping them in largely arid unproductive Mordor put a stop to that idea. Losing a Nazgûl-mount at Sarn Gebir and another on the Pelennor would have pushed him to design a flying steed less vulnerable. Rebels in remote areaswould be even less able to hold out well when helicopters and fighter- bombers came, and such devices do not need expensive feeding when not in use. Trouble in remote areas would have continued, but would be tolerable and containable, leaving him free to take power over more and more of the world and subject it to tight totalitarian control.

Gondor and area at say 150 FA would present largely a picture ofunmechanized farming as before, and security enforced by many sorts of powered weapons that the natives had no access to. Rebels would find it hard to get supplies because the people would know that trouble in the area causes severe collective punishment. Heavy industry, and workers who knew how to make the Enemy's devices, would for a long time likely
be shut in out of contact behind security perimeters, and among outsiders would be the subject of public fears and speculation like the real world's Area 51 is.

In John Ellison's account Sauron told the Corsairs of Umbar to "get lost" and thus pushed them over to the rebels. I feel that, more likely, he would have given them a base at Pelargir and financed them as his navy, made much more powerful and further reaching with powered surface and underwater craft and weapons as fast as he could design them and have them made; while they would not have been allowed to raid in Gondor, he would likely have given them freer rein to raid lands further away.

It is likely that the Black Speech would have been a compulsory school subject within his realm, and even after any successful rebellion would have left its mark on the local language; at first I thought that the Russian-style name 'Natasha Beregondova' (p29, col.3) was meant to reflect that.

In such a scenario, if an experiment accident did kill Sauron and make Mordor uninhabitable as might have happened in Ellison's time line, that would leave intact any war industry facilities that he had set up away from Mordor; what happens next depends on whether or not the Men in his security forces, who likely still had reason to dislike Orcs, go over to any rebels that are still around. Otherwise, with Sauron's empire not in serious danger, he would not have been driven to suicide but would came carried on with his longest-term plan. It is not apparent whether the Ring gave Sauron ability to find the Straight Road, but it is unlikely that he would try to attack the Undying Lands along such a long narrow easily-blocked route. If his realm was secure, his longest-range plan might be to try to find a way to fly away from Arda and pierce the Walls of Night and free his exiled master Morgoth - if he was willing to go back to being a second-in-command, or to risk directly involving the Valar again.

Anthony Appleyard

An editor writes ...

Sir - I am writing to you with some comments on *Mallorn* 37. I should first say that the issue as a whole maintains the high standards set by its predecessors, both in terms of content and in terms of presentation. However, there are some points of detail which I do not like.

First, the new cover design. I find this too fussy, with both a plain outer border and a patterned inner border. In addition, the tree is too small, and does not dominate the cover as I believe it should; in fact, it only takes up about 20% of the total space.

It is pleasant to see that colour illustrations have finally found their way into *Mallorn*, and that both these and (most of) the black and white pictures are of a high quality. However, I am disappointed at the need to use a different paper for pages bearing colour pictures than for other pages. I also think that the outline map on page 6 is poor; the lines are too broad, and the overall appearance is somewhat amateurish.

Moving onto the text. I am afraid that I do not think that *Mallorn* is the place for much humour; it is, after all, meant to be a serious academic journal. In particular, I think that the letter from 'Kensington Prallop' is unsuitable for this magazine. I would be interested to learn the views of others views on this topic.

David Bratman's article, "Tolkien and the Counties of England," is well-written and informative, both to natives of Britain and to overseas readers. I also enjoyed John Ellison's "The Virtual History of Middle-earth" (my earlier comments about the place of humour notwithstanding!), and his CD review (which has tempted me to buy the recording). Ruth Lacon's article, "The Invisible Shire," was very interesting. I hope to produce a more detailed critique of this in the not too distant future.

I regret to say that I did not enjoy reading Michael Tolkien's review of "Tolkien: Man and Myth". I do appreciate that the reviewer is almost uniquely qualified to review a book about the life and works of Professor Tolkien. However, I found his review to be, in places, less than clear. The many long – I might say excessively long – words and sentences used contribute to this.

Of the remaining pieces, I disagree with many of Ron Pirson's arguments in, "Tom Bombadil's Biblical Connections," although this did not prevent me from reading the article with interest. I regret to say that I have not yet been able to read Christopher Garbowski's article, "The History of Middle-earth: from a Mythology for England to a Recovery of the Real Earth"; its very length has, I think, put me off; although this is probably a criticism of the reader more than of the author!

Andrew Wells