Mallorn

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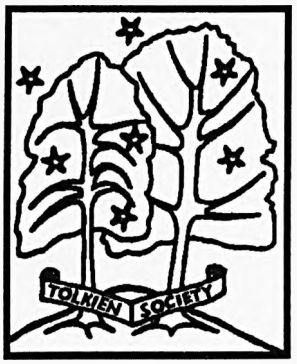
The Journal of the Tolkien Society



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 AGM 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.

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Mallorn XLI

CONTENTS

Editorial 2

The Lost Heart of the Little Kingdom 3
By Alex Lewis

Tolkien's Middle-earth and the Catholic Imagination 9
By Chrisopher Garbowski

From Fëanor to Doctor Faustus: a creator'as path to self destruction 13
By John Ellison

Cut-out-and-keep
Hobbit family trees 22
The History of Aragorn and Arwen 24
By David Vale

'Reading Lord of the Rings: The final attempt:' An analysis of a web community 26
By Janet Brennan Croft and Jay Shorten

Reviews
Reviews of Peter Jackson's 'The Two Towers': 34
Charles Noad, Susanne Stopfel, Anna Rozwadowska

The Common Speech and its speakers in The Lord of the Rings 38
By Nikolas Koravos

Poetry 41
The Stairs at Cirith Ungol
The Light of Eärendil
By Keith McFarlane

Coinage in Middle-earth 42
By Kenneth Fraser

Re-writing the past - the pillars of Middle-earth 44
By Andreas Gloge

About the authors inside back cover

Artists

Pauline Baynes	front cover
Lorenzo Daniele	29, 47
John Ellison	15
Jef Murray	19, 31
Kay Woollard	1, inside front cover

Mallorn XLI July 2003

Editorial

We are publishing a little earlier this year, in an attempt to get back to a more reasonable yearly schedule, but I do not believe the quality of the journal has suffered. Although a few years ago a marked ebb in the flow of contributions threatened the future of *Mallorn* itself, the situation has now turned around completely. Clearly the film has helped, but the effect was being felt before that. I can only put it down to an appreciation by writers and commentators of the quality of material now being offered for *Mallorn*, which of course in turn attracts more talent and a greater wish to be published in our pages. For that we have to thank a whole brigade of contributors, past and present. The journal would literally be nothing without them.

For this issue we are lucky enough to have the services of a number of wonderful artists and I would like in particular to single out Jef Murray, new to *Mallorn*, two of whose works can be found on pages 19 and 31. He is a professional artist and his work is for sale; what's more it can be visited at www.jefmurray.com. I strongly recommend a viewing.

LOR - a trilogy in six parts

Two Towers was a peculiar revelation, leaving one with very mixed feelings. It was undoubtedly exciting, the production values were very high and for the most part the new characters were sufficiently beautiful and/or resolute. Certainly one of the film's triumphs is the script's choice of language. Lesser writers would have too closely copied the book, but that was written in language meant to be read, not spoken out loud. For the most part the script has been sensitively adapted so that it keeps the right flavour without getting too 'high style' for current tastes.

But I now more strongly believe what I only suspected from the first film, namely that Peter Jackson is under the impression that LOR is an action movie that just happens to be masquerading as a book. We know this because he was prepared to dump a whole bookful of perfectly good story elements in order to rewrite the story in a form more acceptable to his idea of a movie script. One accepts that this process is inevitable in film-making, but is not in any other instance that I know of done when the new story is markedly inferior to the old.

The reasons for some of the changes are mystifying, notably the wholesale re-writing of Faramir's character. Is this colourless, indecisive and self-doubting wimp the man with whom the proud shieldmaiden Eowyn is to fall in love, and for whom she is to give up her dreams of world domination?

Similarly, having Merry and Pippin sucker Treebeard into attacking Isengard is a change with no point to it. Treebeard has already stated that he knows about the destruction caused by orcs. Having Merry and Pippin use a transparent ruse to spur him to action somehow demotes the whole episode.

But in my opinion the most damaging change was a relatively minor incident, as Legolas, Aragorn and Gimli barge and fight their way through the golden hall to the foot of Theoden's throne like arrogant superheroes. For a minute the plot abandoned Middle-earth, abandoned verissimilitude and became Marvel Comics; intelligent romantic fantasy was clearly not enough, they had to change it to a childish Rambo-like militarist adventure. The mind reels with horror at the potential for this kind of transformation of the RoK plot.

The exorcism was another mistake, presumably intended to emphasise the curing of Theoden. But if Gandalf has already defeated the Saruman inside Theoden, what is to happen when they meet at Orthanc? The struggle between them when Gandalf breaks Saruman's staff will have lost all its surprise and force. I suspect therefore that the scene is to be left out, or perhaps transformed into something more consistent with Jackson's interpretation. An egg-and-spoon race perhaps.

But I think there must be another Gandalf-Saruman confrontation. If not, there will be no palantir. And if no palantir, no excuse to split up Merry and Pippin, and no reason for Merry to go with Dernhelm/Eowyn and help her defeat the Nazgul lord. Maybe she doesn't need his help. There's no knowing what Eowyn is destined for, given the example of the amplification of Arwen's part. Before the end she'll have defeated the entire orc army on her own, slain Sauron, invented penicillin and discovered America. The new Faramir of course will be far too feeble for her.

Next came the wholly invented battle with the warg-riders (invented in the sense of 'not in the book') which was more than an irritation, it was a fatal error; it pointed up for all to see that Theoden's kingdom was too small and underpopulated to support any kind of army, its capital city barely large enough to be called a village and the scrap itself a feeble precursor to the magnificence of the battle at Helm's Deep.

Peter Jackson has the power to make not just our wishes come true, but those of fictional characters too. There are some instances of things merely wished for in the book coming true for the characters by virtue of Peter Jackson's divine powers, such as the appearance of 300 archers from Lorien, three times the number wished for in the book by Legolas. I suppose the arrival of the clockwork Elves wasn't too ugly a deviation, but ignoring the Huorns' part in defeating Sarumans orcs was merely silly. It meant that the odds at Helm's Deep were impossible, but that nonetheless Erkenbrand defeats a far bigger orc army than the one his earlier, larger force had lost to at the fords. No one trusts a director who insults the intelligence of his audience.

The Ents of course have been criticised. They look like walking, rather dopey, trees. For myself, I'm not so sure how valid the criticism is. Although Jackson's Ents are, I believe, a misinterpretation, its an understandable one. The original text is hopelessly contradictory, and that's where the big problem lies for illustrators. In the original we are to believe that Merry and Pippin walked right up to Treebeard and thought he was a tree. On the other hand, he is long limbed, capable of speed, and basically man shaped. There is simply no convincing way to reconcile these two different ideas, no reasonable way to make a two legged creature with a head look like a tree. It is the absolute essence of a tree that it is monodexter. It has a single stem trunk and nothing that even slightly resembles a head. Artists' attempts based on walking trees haven't worked, nor those that show trees with heads on top, or painted on the trunk. In any case it is perfectly plain from the text that Ents are NOT trees, though Huorns may be. (This reminds me of the huge problem faced by the film makers attempting to adapt *Day of the Triffids*. The triffids were supposed to trundle about on their roots, which is too slow for a film. So when they were needed to speed up, the director showed only the tops of the plants and had them in a fast glide. They looked as if they were rolling on wheels. Which was, of course, exactly what they were doing.)

My belief is that by far the best method is to assume that the Ents are man like, but with tree-ish characteristics. Their skin can be leather or bark-like, their hair mossy, their limbs somewhat like branches, their fingers and toes perhaps twiggish, their legs may even be shown twined together into a stem. But their general shape should be man like. To reconcile the Hobbits mistake we must look to psychology and the ability of the mind to see what it expects to see Merry and Pippin weren't expecting to see a gigantic bark-skinned man in the forest, so they didn't. They were expecting to see trees, so they did.

Despite all this, I have to admit that the second time I saw TT, it had mysteriously improved, although I could still not eradicate the impression that TT had wholly lost the haunting and mystical quality of the first film, partly at least due to Shore's atmospheric score for FoR. And something else. I can only express it as charm. FoR had great charm, as has the book, and TT has little enough of it. These are fatal losses. I sincerely hope they are regained in the third part. There is certainly some scope for it in the text.

The Lost Heart of the Little Kingdom

Alex Lewis

First published in* 'Leaves from the tree, J R R Tolkien's Shorter Fiction' 1991, *the Proceedings of the 4th Tolkien Society Workshop, Beverley 1989. A Peter Roe booklet.

Concerning *Farmer Giles of Ham*[1], Tolkien's biographer Humphrey Carpenter stated that Tolkien wrote it some time during the 1930s in part to amuse his children but chiefly to please himself.[2] The Little Kingdom is Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Worminghall (meaning 'dragon-hall') is a place a few miles East of Oxford. Early in 1938 he read a revised version at Worcester College and it went down well, but Carpenter states that by 1945 Tolkien could not write the sequel since Oxfordshire had changed so much.

It is perhaps strange for those not acquainted with the area concerned to think that as early as 1945 Tolkien bemoaned the passing of the Oxfordshire and Midlands countryside, and that he might have given this as his main reason for not writing anything more concerning the Little Kingdom that contained *Farmer Giles of Ham* [3]: 'The heart has gone out of the Little Kingdom, and the woods and plains are aerodromes and bomb-practice targets.' A casual reader might think such a conclusion reactionary. Tolkien had a great love for all things natural, and trees in particular[4], but I shall show that his concerns for the environment were well-founded even as early as 1945. Taken today, his fears for it verge on the prophetic.

One is always confronted when reading Tolkien's so-called minor works with this innate passion for the English Midlands countryside, a passion that his detractors might say has almost a hint of the ridiculous about it. But that would be to look at the parody of the man, and not the man himself and his surroundings and scholarship. I say 'so-called' minor works, for Shippey has suggested that, on another level, *Farmer Giles of Ham* could easily be seen as an allegory of Tolkien's switch from academicism to creativity.[5] Shippey points out that the allegory of the short tale is very precise, with the Parson being perhaps the idealised philologist, the blade Tailbiter and the rope which the Farmer used standing for philological science, Giles the creative instinct, the dragon representing the ancient world of Northern imagination, and the king standing for literary criticism that takes no account of historical language study. Shippey reveals to us that Tolkien illustrated with *Farmer Giles of Ham* that 'Thame' should be 'Tame', 'for Thame with an "h" is a folly without warrant'; this was a linguist's dig at the irrational spellings within the English language.

One can discover by examining several sources how life in Oxfordshire changed drastically from the 1910s when Tolkien first came to Oxford and grew to love Oxfordshire and its countryside, to the 1940s and 1950s and indeed beyond that time to when it fell from his esteem.

This paper examines the population growth, the increase in the Oxford city housing stock, the changes in rural Oxfordshire due to the defence of the realm during World War Two, and the increase in road traffic.

First of all, the growth in population. Why should a sleepy University town grow at all? The answer is the rise in prominence of the motor car. William Morris (later Lord Nuffield) and his production-line car manufacture brought British-built cars within the reach of millions. The Cowley works in Eastern Oxford were established in 1910 but it was well after 1918 that car production really expanded. In 1919 Morris Motors employed only two hundred workers. By 1924, this figure had risen to 5,500. With the incorporation of the Pressed Steel car-body making factory in Cowley, and Osberton Radiators in the North of Oxford, in 1926, 6,500 people worked for the Oxford motor car industry. It is estimated that by the Second World War thirty per cent of the population of Oxford worked for the motor industry, and Morris had built his millionth car.[6] This manpower was satisfied by immigrant labour drawn to the city by the prospect of work in this ever-expanding industry. The rise of the motor industry continued right up to the 1960s and brought with it its own by-product, the proliferation of large fast road networks at the expense of the English countryside. Tolkien would say late in his life when he saw a new road being built: 'There goes the last of England's arable!'[7] He was for instance concerned by plans in the mid-1950s to build a relief road across Christchurch Meadows, a local government scheme that thankfully never went beyond the planning stage.[8] So great was the public outcry at the time that a plan was seriously considered to build a two-mile-long tunnel from The Plain running under Christchurch Meadows and emerging at the other side of Oxford in order to relieve traffic with minimal environmental impact, though this was eventually proven to be too expensive.[9]

Another road that Tolkien would

Alex originally dedicated this paper to the memory of Mr Percy Broadiss, Great Clarendon Street, Oxford; 1906-1989, his 'Gaffer Gamgee'.

likely have been opposed to would have been the Marston Ferry Link Road, completed in 1971, but discussed for many years before that.[10] In the years that the Tolkien family lived in Northmoor Road[11] they often hired a punt for the summer and went up the Cherwell to Water Eaton and Islip and picnicked, or to Wood Eaton looking for butterflies, or took drives to Worminghall, Brill, Charlton-on-Otmoor or West into Berkshire up White Horse Hill to see the ancient long-barrow known as Wayland's Smithy. Looking to the present day he was correct to fear the incursion of the road system on the countryside. For instance, Phase 2 of the M40 motorway that first linked Oxford and London in the 1970s was a reality by 1990, and it cuts right across Otmoor and the areas of natural beauty that lie there (including Worminghall, Brill, Charlton-on-Otmoor, Islip and Water Eaton) to bring more volumes of traffic faster to Banbury and Birmingham. From 1986 onwards, £133,000 per year was allocated to the land acquisition budget for building new roads in Oxfordshire.[12] How Tolkien would have hated the 'motor cars' progress' at the cost of yet more precious Midlands countryside.

Along with the rise of the motor car, one might well add the spread of the London commuter belt beyond the Berkshire town of Reading to engulf Oxford, as contributing to the loss of self and the fading of the uniqueness of Oxford as a university city. Oxford was fortunate and yet unfortunate to be only fifty-five miles from central London. Commuters first began to use the rail system to travel from Oxford to London via Reading in numbers during the 1950s and the two-and-a-half-hour journey by car from Oxford to London was cut to a mere one-hour drive by the building of the M40 motorway in 1969-1972, completing the 'suburbanisation' of a city that once possessed a being and a heart of its own. Yet this 'London effect' is only a more recent phase of the capital's threat to the Oxfordshire countryside, and to the city of Oxford itself, which had begun in earnest during World War Two with the evacuation of many Londoners to Oxford, which was a 'safe city', in order to escape the Blitz. Only one enemy aircraft ever flew over Oxford, and' that was late in the war to photograph the Cowley works then used for aircraft repairs[13]. Thomas Sharp called it a whim of luck that Oxford was never bombed, unlike its close neighbour Coventry and the city of Exeter to the south-west. It was this fundamental change in the population of the city of Oxford which brought about a loss of Oxfordshire character in its people; a dilution, if you like, of the Midlander, supplanted by the Cockney refugee and also the labourers who came to look for work from the poorer regions of the country. The Sam Gamgees of Oxfordshire were becoming a rarity.

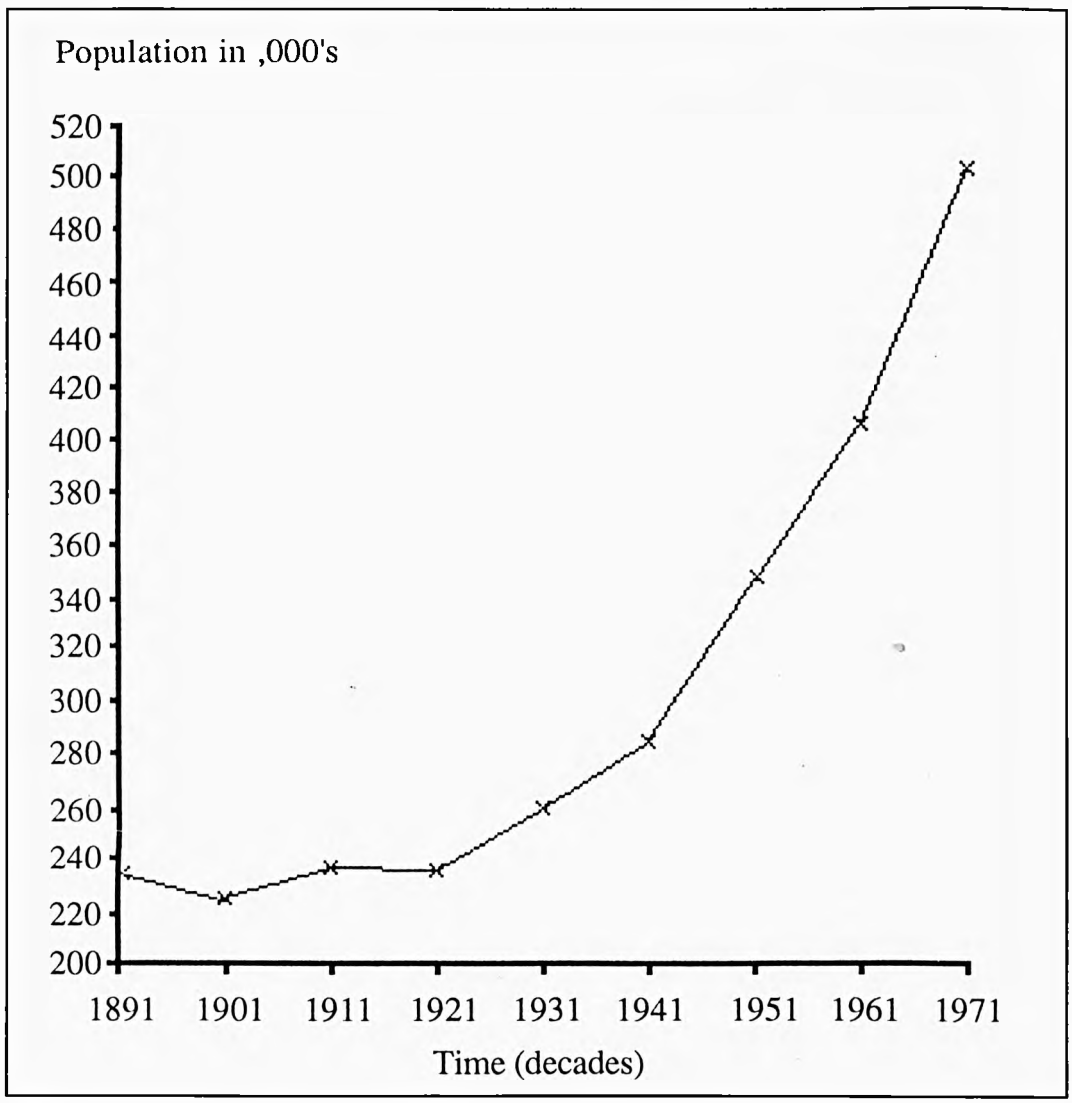

Figure 1. Population of Oxfordshire (as defined 1.4.74) plotted against time.

This as much as anything would have reinforced the strangeness of the city Tolkien once came to love as an undergraduate, when he looked at it during the late 1930s and early 1940s, and it is little wonder that he was disheartened. In that light the threat of Southern refugees moving into Bree in *The Fellowship of the Ring* can be seen as an echo of the loss of Oxford the familiar to Tolkien the man[14]: 'If room isn't found for them, they'll find it for themselves', declares the squint-eyed ill-favoured traveller at The Prancing Pony.[15] The same might have been said, by someone of the time, to be happening to Oxford.[16]

That such roots were important to Tolkien is evident. In a diary entry of 1933, Tolkien makes a significant statement about the subject of the loss of early memories.[17] He had returned in 1933 to the area around Sarehole Mill, where he had spent the pleasanter times of his childhood, and found that it had changed almost beyond his recognition: 'How I envy those whose precious early scenery has not been exposed to such violent and particularly hideous change.' This was a grievous loss for him of childhood memories, and in Oxford too the changes were coming fast and furious. From 1921 to 1931 the rate of increase of the city population was greater than in all but two towns throughout the whole country at 26 per cent. From 1931 to 1951 the rate of increase was scarcely less at 23 percent. [18] Look at a graphical representation of this population growth from 1891 to 1971 *(figure 1)*. It is important to note that up to 1921 the figures are nearly constant, but grow sharply thereafter.

Oxford housing stock had of course to increase in order to accommodate the growth in population. The two are interdependent. In the 1931 Census[18], under the heading 'structurally separate dwellings', there were listed 50,638 as opposed to 44,527 in 1921. Examining the statistics of housing stock, there was a lower proportion of the larger houses (9 rooms and more) and of the very small houses (4 rooms and less) built in this period, and most houses built were of 5-6 rooms. This meant that suburban housing estates of redbrick, mostly terraces and semi-detached homes, sprang up in that period. These 'production-line dwellings' to match their 'production-line worker-dwellers' would not have harmonised with the Gothic-style Oxford of Cotswold stone buildings that Tolkien knew. If one examines the map of housing stock[19] (*figure 2*) it is immediately clear how large an area of countryside the city ate up during this period of its growth – the areas in question are the darker ones in the figure. It might be thought[20] that the building of the houses to the North of Oxford city centre for the dons, and their fami-

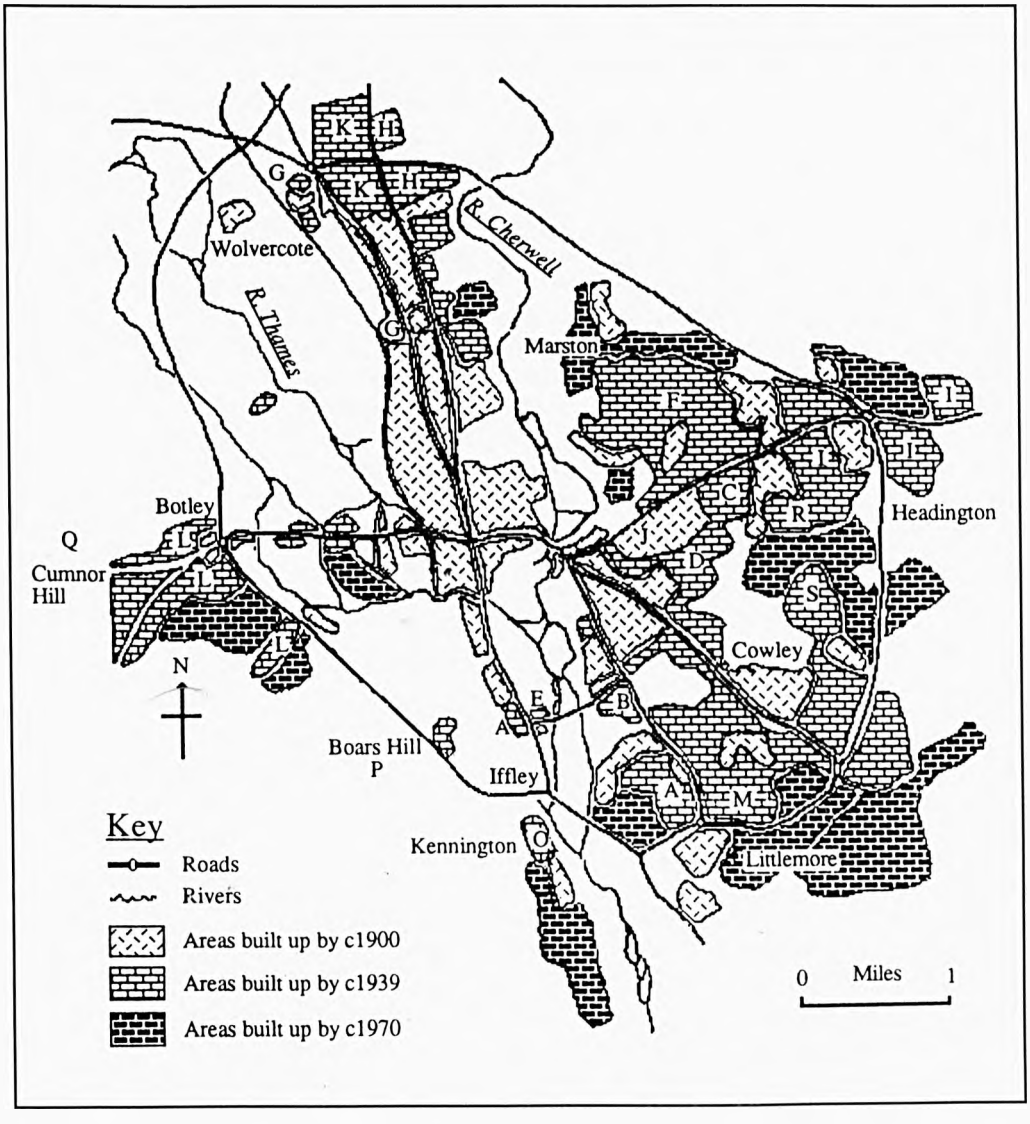

Figure 2. Oxford city housing stock development to 1970.

-lies once they were allowed to marry, could have been a contributory factor to Oxford's loss of uniqueness, but this cannot have been the case for Tolkien. By 1877 North Oxford was already developed, and indeed Summertown dates from 1832, so that Tolkien would have accepted these houses when he first arrived in the city as part of its character. To visit North Oxford and examine the old houses now, it might be difficult to see how the character of these large Victorian dwellings could ever be seen as a part of Oxford, but I myself lived on the Banbury Road from 1963 to 1971 between North and South Parades, and in the early 1960s, when the volume of road traffic was considerably less and the houses had not been turned into schools of languages or offices or guest houses or flats, they possessed a stately air of opulence not at odds with the grandeur of the older city in the centre. They were each individualised buildings, no two exactly the same, each standing in almost half an acre of gardens. Their grandeur was the mock-Gothic splendour of Keble College. It is to be remembered that Tolkien himself chose to live in North Oxford from 1925 to 1949 at numbers 20 and 22 Northmoor Road.[21]

The districts where the housing stock increased dramatically were the areas where the greatest population increases were recorded. Conclusively, between 1921 and 1931 the population of Cowley and Iffley districts increased by 122 percent and Headington district by 79 percent.[22]

By 1939 Oxford Corporation had built more than 2000 new council houses, most of them at Rose Hill, Iffley [A], Freelands [B], Gypsy Lane [C], South Park [D], Weirs Lane [E], New Marston [F], Wolvercote [G], Cutteslowe [H] and Headington [I][22]. Some of the houses, such as those on Morrell Avenue,[J] were of a high standard, though of the others little is mentioned (see figure 2 for the areas designated by capital letters). Private developers by 1937 had built more than 4,700 new houses, mostly in areas added to the city in 1929, North of Summertown [K] and extending beyond the ring road.' Beyond the city boundaries suburbs grew up in Botley [L] and Littlemore [M] and several nearby villages such as Kidlington [N] and Kennington [0] became more suburban in character. The hills around the city were favoured by the prosperous middle classes for the building of larger houses: Boars Hill [P], Cumnor Hill [Q], Headington Hill [R] and Shotover [S]. This was no longer the city Tolkien had known during his undergraduate days. His fears of unbridled growth were well-founded. Kidlington [N] is now the largest village in England and was almost turned into a town in 1987, but the villagers decided against it, though the matter is far from concluded.

The Second World War was the 'War of the Machines', as Tolkien himself declared.[23] It meant that aerodromes were required and, since these aircraft included bombers, bombing practice areas were needed, mainly to improve accuracy. Unfortunately we have no information on bomber-practice target areas, but there are plenty of facts on the aerodromes available. Looking at the map, (*figure 3*) at the time of the First World War the Cotswolds and Central Midlands had five aerodromes: Witley (training), Halton, Weston-on-the-Green (training), Bicester and Upper Heyford. By the time of the end of the Second World War there were 96 of them[24]. A quick glance at the map shows how the Oxfordshire countryside had been gutted. Few names are marked, for the sake of clarity, and the ones closer to Oxford Tolkien would have known of and objected to. It is important to understand the scale of the devastation I am talking about; it is perhaps fortunate that I was able to work at Oakley aerodrome during April, 1974. I was a student working temporarily during the Easter vacation moving cars parked on one of the runways at Oakley aerodrome for Autocar Transporters. These cars, belonging to the Austin Rover Group (i.e. the old Morris Motors Ltd), were parked by mistake on the wrong runway. Oakley aerodrome has three such runways. During the time I worked there, we moved over four thousand cars of various sizes from one runway to another, and the runway we were moving them from was by no means entirely covered by cars when we began the task. It took a large team of people working over seventy hours a week four weeks to make a visible impression upon the runway. We did not finish the task that Easter. Imagine then the acreage subordinated to aerodromes of Oxfordshire's arable land. It is hardly any wonder that Tolkien was so angered by all that he saw happening around him.

The proliferation of traffic on the roads of Oxford city had been a great social problem for many years. It was not only cars that caused the damage, but all forms of transportation. In 1913 William Morris (later Lord Nuffield) started an illegal motor bus service between the station and Cowley Road[25], in order to compete against the inefficient Electric Tramway Company. As he was not allowed to collect fares on the new buses, vouchers were sold to people in shops. In the first four days of this illegal service, seventeen thousand people travelled on it. Licences were eventually issued to Morris, but he later sold his rights to the Electric Tramway Company, who then changed their name in 1931 to City of Oxford Motor Services. Bus passenger numbers rose right up until the early 1940s when the subsequent boom in private car ownership forced fewer, more economical services. Thomas Sharp[26] in a very highly regarded work said in 1948: 'The heavy concentration of traffic is threatening to break down the entire organisation of Oxford as a centre of civilised life', and that: 'People wait in queues for buses that wait in queues.' The fumes from these buses at that time were apparently most unpleasant for pedestrians in Oxford city centre. Then one had the humble bicycle to consider. Sharp[27] shows that in 1938 there were over 24,000 bicycles in Oxford and that by 1946 there were 44,500 of them, according to police records. As Sharp points out, the single bicycle, like the single locust, is no problem, but in swarms they rapidly become a plague.

So perhaps one might be tempted to say that Tolkien's sensibilities were irretrievably wounded by the metamorphosis that had befallen his beloved Oxford, and so he wrote no more about it.[28] He had bought a car in 1932, but when he realised the damage that cars were causing

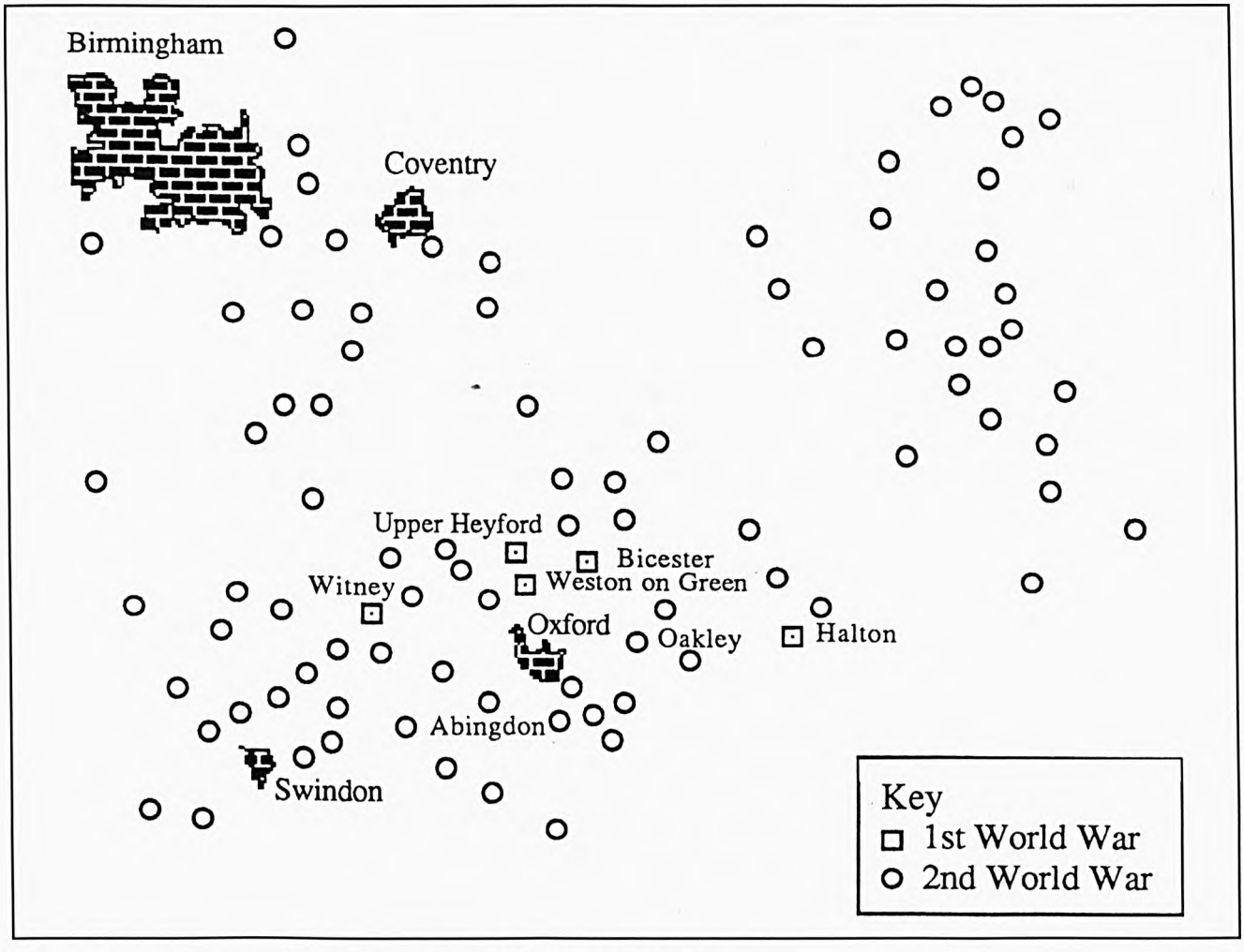

Figure 3. Aerodromes of the Cotswolds and Central Midlands

to the environment, and the large tracts of land being relegated to road usage, he abandoned driving at the outset of World War Two.[29] In his early years of driving, he took his family around the Oxfordshire countryside, and it is said that his style of driving caused him to write *Mr Bliss*.[30]

Tolkien also wrote the unpublished allegorical *Bovadium Fragments* [31] – a parable about the destruction of Oxford by the *motores* (i.e. cars) that block the streets, asphyxiate the inhabitants and finally explode. This has a truly modern flavour to it, if one considers the current figures of increases in private car usage[32] and the present anxieties about lead in petrol, car exhaust emission control[33] and pollution clouds covering many large cities in Europe, such as Athens, where car usage is regulated.

But that is not the whole story. The threads of the sequel to Farmer Giles of Ham take a few more twists in their development before they become the weave that we recognise. Tolkien's letters after 1945 show a definite softening of his attitude towards his sequel based in the Little Kingdom. Asked if he could provide other stories to make up a sufficiently large volume[34] Tolkien responded: 'I should, of course, be delighted ... to publish "*Farmer Giles of Ham*" ... With leisure I could give him company.' This is not the same 'The heart has gone out of the Little Kingdom' we had before. Later still in 1949 Tolkien responded to Alien & Unwin[35]: 'As for further "legends of the Little Kingdom": I put a reference to one in the Foreword in case they should ever come to anything, or a manuscript.of the fragmentary legend should come to light. But Georgius and Suet remains only a sketch, and it is difficult now to recapture the spirit of the former days, when we used to beat the bounds of the L[ittle] K[ingdom] in an ancient car.' There seems now to be something else at work in terms of recapturing the spirit, and the 'something' can readily be ascertained from the letters that followed in 1950[36]: 'the *Silmarillion* and all that has refused to be suppressed. It has bubbled up, infiltrated, and probably spoiled everything ... which I have tried to write since. It was kept out of Farmer Giles with an effort, but stopped the continuation ... I can turn now to other things, such as perhaps the Little Kingdom of the Wormings[37], or to quite other matters and stories.' Also at much the same time: 'I always thought, that in so far as he has virtue, it would have been improved by other stories of the same kingdom and style; but the domination of the remoter world was so great that I could not make them. It may now prove different.'

It may now prove different.

How tantalising to think that he might have done so! But of course he could no longer let go of 'the *Silmarillion* and all that'. It was in his blood and that is what he continued

with up to his death. If there had been a sequel written, The Little Kingdom of the Wormings, or whatever it would have been called, what might it have contained? Tolkien did give us some clues. In a letter to Alien & Unwin in 1939 he wrote[38] of: '... the adventures of Prince George (the farmer's son) and the fat boy Suovetaurilius (vulgarly Suet), and the Battle of Otmoor.' Carpenter had access to some of Tolkien's papers when writing the *Biography* and informs us[39] that Chrysophylax the dragon was to be re-introduced into the sequel. There are perhaps more philosophical reasons why the sequel did not get written. Shippey[40] suggests that Tolkien had despaired, perhaps, by the time of the 1960s of eventually finding the Lost Straight Road to rejoin his own creations after death – like Smith, or even Frodo, who doubt that salvation will be theirs, for, like the Silmarils, they are lost forever. But this would be to ignore a short tale that sprang into being in the evening of his life in 1967: *Smith of Wootton Major.*

I would suggest that this short tale heralded a new creative strand for the Little Kingdom, albeit very late in the coming. Wootton Major and Minor are two villages that appear in the story, and there are several Woottons in and around Oxfordshire, notably one close to Abingdon and another not far from Kidlington. Far Easton and Westwood are names that could have come from the Midlands, but most interestingly the name Nokes is probably derived from Noke, a village nestling on the edge of Otmoor.[41]

So had Tolkien recaptured the lost heart of the Little Kingdom after all? Had it taken him 22 years to do so? I would like to believe so. Time, after all, is a great healer.

Notes and References

1. *Farmer Giles of Ham*, J.R.R. Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin, Reset New Format, 1976. [Hereafter cited as *FGH*]. I shall refer to this only once, for a knowledge of the text of the story is implicitly assumed for this article.
2. *J.R.R. Tolkien: A biography*, Humphrey Carpenter. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1977 [Hereafter cited as *Biography*] p.165.
3. *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, Hurnphrey Carpenter (ed.). London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981 [Hereafter cited as *Letters*] p.113.
4. *Letters* pp.321, 419-20.
5. *The Road to Middle-Earth*, T.A. Shippey. London, George Alien & Unwin, 1982 [I-Iereafter cited as *Road*] pp.75-6.
6. *The Victoria History of the County of Oxford*, Vol. IV. Oxford University Press,'1979 [Hereafter cited as *Victoria*]
7. *Biography* p.125.
8. *Letters* p.235 and note 2.
9. *Report of Oxford Roads Enquiry*. Ministry of Housing and Local Government, 1961 p.12.
10. *The Transport Debate*. Oxfordshire County Planning Department, March 1978 [Hereafter cited as *Transport*] p.53
11. *Biography* p.160.
12. *Transport Policy Programme 1985-6*. Oxfordshire County Council (various maps and tables throughout this report).
13. *Oxford Replanned*, Thomas Sharp. Architectural Press, 1948 [Hereafter cited as *Ox. Rep.*] p.19.
14. *The Fellowship of the Ring*, J.R.R. Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin, 2nd Ed., 1968 reprint p.168.
15. Tolkien had reached the Inn at Bree in *The Fellowship of the Ring* before the shadow of the Second World War, but sometime after 1937 (see *Letters* p.303).
16. By this I am certainly not accusing Tolkien of parochialism. It is to be remembered that he grew to love the 'dull stodges' who were his students at Leeds (see *Biography* p.104), and his love for language precludes any such narrow-mindedness. It is the dilution of the essential character of a place that he would mourn as a linguist and scholar of matters historical.
17. *Biography* pp.124-5.
18. Census Reports 1921, 1931, 1951. HMSO.
19. Map based upon one taken from *Victoria*, p.207.
20. *Biography* p.113.
21. *Biography* p.155.
22. *Victoria* p.206.
23. *Letters* p.111.
24. *Action Stations 6: Military Airfields of the Cotswolds and Central Midlands*, M.J.F. Bowyer. Cambridge: Patrick Stephens, 1979.
25. *Encyclopedia of Oxford*, C. Hibbert (ed.). London: Macmillan, 1988 p.459.
26. *Ox. Rep.* pp.19, 31.
27. *Ox. Rep.* p.92.
28. *Letters* pp.344-5.
29. *Biography* p.124 30. Biography pp.159, 163.
31. *Biography* p.163.
32. *Cherwell Area Rural Transport Study: Report of Survey Findings, Working Paper* 105, P.A. Stanley; and *Transport* pp.16-17.
33. Leading article, 'Alan Osborn in Strasbourg: Euro-MP's vote for US-style exhaust controls', *The Daily Telegraph*, No. 41,617, 13.4.89.
34. *Letters* p.118.
35. *Letters* p.133.
36. *Letters* pp.136-7, 139.
37. The planned sequel to Farmer Giles.
38. *Letters* p.43.
39. *Biography* p.166.
40. *Road* p.211.
41. The similarities are more subtle than just the names; there are sub-plot echoes of the one in the other. *Farmer Giles* has a Royal Cook who bakes a Mock Dragon Tail - a superb confection – for eating each Christmas Eve (see *FGH* pp.20-21, 25). *Smith of Wootton Major* has the Master Cook, who makes at a winter festivity, the Feast of Good Children on each twenty-fourth year, a Great Cake for the Twenty-four feast (see *Smith of Wootton Major*, J.R.R. Tolkien. London: George Allen & Unwin, 2nd. Ed., 1975 p.8). It is perhaps not merely fortuitous that the one night children are told to be on their best behaviour by their parents is Christmas Eve, lest Father Christmas leave them no presents; and so a thematic link is forged between the Feast of Good Children and Christmas Eve.

Tolkien's Middle-earth and the Catholic Imagination

Christopher Garbowski

A number of recent studies have focused on the Catholic themes of Tolkien's work (*e.g. Pearce*). This is hardly surprising, since Tolkien himself wrote to a correspondent that *The Lord of the Rings* is 'a fundamentally religious and Catholic work' (*Letters 172*). Moreover, Catholic themes are bound to resonate more for a reader from the faith community who takes his or her Catholicism seriously. I feel the author's work is indeed Catholic, but in two ways. As is well known his religion was an essential factor in his life, and Tolkien was simply true to himself in his fiction: at the same time it is 'catholic' in that he wrote for everyone. In no way was he attempting to impose his faith on anyone through his fantasy [1].

At any rate, what interests me more than the degree of Tolkien's adherence to Catholic doctrine, is a particular sensitivity that the tradition might have imparted on his work. I am aware, of course, that 'sensitivity' is not quite the same thing as Catholic 'substance,' yet it is probably what has had the larger impact on the majority of his readers, which is why the question deserves analysis in its own right.

The artist and religious humanism

When Tolkien talks about fantasy in 'On Fairy-Stories' he adds the well-known epilogue to his discussion of 'eucatastrophe' in which he notes a sort of parallelism to the happy ending of a fairy story and the Christian story of Christ's resurrection. However, the 'far off gleam or echo of evangelium' *('On Fairy-Stories' 155)* he refers to in this context is just that: something distant, and is important knowledge rather for the converted (literally, the Inkling Charles William, to whom the published version of the lecture was dedicated). Thus it can hardly be considered an artistic manifesto; it was Tolkien's explication of what he felt to be the deepest nature of 'story'. In his correspondence he makes the point that certain elements will resonate for those so predisposed, but will barely have an effect otherwise. He responded to an agnostic reader who claimed to sense faith inhabiting the trilogy: 'If sanctity inhabits [an artist's] work or as a pervading light illumines it then it does not come from him but through him. And neither [would you] perceive it in these terms unless it was also with you.' *(Letters 413)* The freedom of the reader is maintained.

> *The drink in their drinking-bowls seemed to be clear cold water, yet it went into their hearts like wine and set free their voices. The guests became suddenly aware that they were singing merrily, as if it was easier and more natural than talking.*
> 'In the House of Tom Bombadil', *The Fellowship of the Ring*

The above means that it might be more useful to call *The Lord of the Rings* a work of religious humanism than specifically Catholic, i.e., a work that is open to a transcendent dimension. This 'openness', in turn, is thought to be a factor that strengthens our humanity.

Consider the culminating moment of *The Fellowship of the Ring* volume from this perspective: On the top of Amon Hen Frodo feels two opposing tendencies in a simultaneously internalised and external manner:

> 'For a moment, perfectly balanced between their piercing points, he writhed, tormented. Suddenly he was aware of himself again. Frodo, neither the Voice nor the Eye: free to choose, and with one remaining instant in which to do so.' *(472)*

Gandalf's interference (it was his 'voice') can be likened to the transcendent element in Frodo's conscience, i.e. the element that is external, but which ultimately has a liberating effect on him. This is entirely proper in religious humanism, which in Christian tradition is succinctly encapsulated in Saint Irenaeus' declaration: 'The glory of God is man fully alive.' Such a sentiment corresponds with the non-denominational claim of the psychiatrist Viktor E. Frankl that we fulfill our human potential most by imitating God, roughly meaning the higher we set our sights in life the more we improve *(Homo Patiens 104)*. And it is evident enough that for Tolkien the creative activity of the artist as sub-creator, with its imitation of the Primary Creator, was a vehicle for his or her being 'fully alive.'

Tom Shippey implies there is something of an evangelical mission in Tolkien's religious fantasy: since the author knew 'his own country was falling back to heathenism (if only on the model of Saruman, not Sauron), and while mere professorial teaching would make no difference, a story might.' *(189)* But this ignores the inconvenient fact that no one, least of all Tolkien, had predicted the astonishing success of the trilogy before it was published, so it could hardly have been considered an effective strategy for such a purpose. More to the point, as Colin Manlove has detected, the Christian fantasists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were involved in a form of praise of the 'richness of divine creation' *(214)*. With Tolkien, however, what is noticeable is how close he keeps to that creation, compared, say, to C. S. Lewis in his Cosmic

Trilogy. The author amplifies creation rather that departs from it. The latter might be considered in congruence with Tolkien's more sacramental vision of the world.

The Catholic imagination in Middle-earth

There can be little doubt that belonging to a particular faith community influenced the religious humanism of Tolkien's work, at least encouraging a particular sensibility. In the author's case, this sensibility can best be called the Catholic imagination, which finds enchantment and wonder in the world: 'Catholics live in an enchanted world, a world of statues and holy water, stained glass and votive candles, saints and religious medals, rosary beads and holy pictures,' enthuses Andrew Greeley, author of *The Catholic Imagination*. 'But these Catholic paraphernalia are mere hints of a deeper and more pervasive religious sensibility which inclines Catholics to see the Holy lurking in creation. As Catholics, we find our houses and our world haunted by a sense that the objects, events, and persons of daily life are revelations of grace.' *(Greeley, 1)*[2] This sensibility can readily be recognised at numerous points in *The Lord of the Rings*, as in the extract introducing this essay, where enchanted water seems a vehicle of grace.

What prompts such a perception of the world? For the theist, the religious imagination has two contrasting, but ultimately complimentary aspects. The theist's picture of God focuses in turn on His transcendence and on His immanence. That is, one focus relates to God's distance to His creation, the other to His nearness. The theologian David Tracy *(cf. Greeley 5)* claims both these perceptions of God influence the religious imagination, although for different faith communities one or the other might have more significance. He calls imagination that stresses God's distance dialectical, while the one that stresses closeness is analogical, since it tends to multiply metaphors and stories about God[3]. Furthermore, Tracy studied the language in the works of a number of prominent Catholic and Protestant thinkers. Athough there are no hard and fast rules, the tendency is that theologians in whom the dialectical sensibility dominates tend to be Protestant, while those with an analogical leaning are more often Catholic. Neither the analogical nor the dialectical imagination is superior, and at times act as a corrective to each other, at least for theists. The Greeley study examined the matter in ordinary Catholic believers and discovered evidence of the analogical imagination permeating their lives in many different ways, necessarily varying in individuals.

It should be borne in mind that Catholics have also tended toward the dialectical imagination at times. Think of Blaise Pascal as he pondered the immensity of the universe and despaired of finding a place for God in the void. Contrast this to Tolkien's description of the Earth as depicted in Ilúvatar's vision to the Ainur: 'And this habitation might seem a little thing to those who consider only (...) the immeasurable vastness of the World [i.e. universe], which still the Ainur are shaping, and not the minute precision to which they shape all things therein' *(Silmarillion 18)*. We see here a dynamic picture of creation: the Biblical Genesis, which ends creation on the sixth day, is in a sense updated[4]. More to our point, compared with Pascal's *horror vaccui*, Tolkien concentrates on the beauty of what is and sees within it the glory of God's creation. In other words, two quite different 'Catholic' sensibilities: one dialectical, the other analogical.

For Catholics, since God Himself became incarnate in Creation, the world has a sacred dimension. This in part is represented by the sacraments and translates into a sacramental vision of the world. Greeley feels it is hardly surprising the Church had a comparatively tolerant attitude toward the nature religions it came into contact with in the first centuries of its existence. There is the famous letter of Pope Gregory the Great concerning the mission to the Anglo-Saxons, whose culture Tolkien so loved:

> 'When Almighty God has brought you to our most reverend brother Bishop Augustine, tell him what I have decided after long deliberation about the English people, namely that the idol temples of that race should by no means be destroyed, but only the idols in them. Take holy water and sprinkle it in these shrines, build altars and place relics in them.' (Quoted in *Greeley 11*)

This wise policy of acculturation, sensitive in its own way toward natural theology and the nature religions has not always been dominant in Church policy, but one can see how important it was for Tolkien. In a sense, he blamed the Normans for unnecessarily 'destroying the temples' of the Anglo-Saxons, so to speak, and set about recreating their mythology, not to mention visiting Celtic, Nordic and Finnish temples, to name a few.

In *Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination* Peter Ackroyd reminds readers that there was no clean break with centuries of vibrant pre-Reformation Catholic culture in England and further claims that its 'inheritance is buried just below the surface of our own time' *(178)*[5]. Regarding the analogical imagination that particularly concerns us here there is the difficulty in that the Anglican tradition, especially in its high form, is fairly close to Catholicism. In a similar fashion to the latter, high Anglicanism is not iconoclastic and possesses a developed liturgy, both of which influence the sensibility of the faith community's adherents. This means that British readers of *Mallorn* might easily find elements of the analogical imagination in various non-Catholic works of their national literature. To add to the confusion, Greeley feels that differences occur between high church teaching and the logic of its sacramental sensibility: in the question of sex, for instance. 'In theory, Catholicism says that sex is good, but in practice the Church has yet to shake the Platonist notion that sex is dirty.' *(57)* And of course this 'Platonist notion,' closely related to the dialectical imagination, had a much stronger sway in Tolkien's youth, arguably also affecting his depiction of Middle-earth's sexuality[6].

Elsewhere Ackroyd also makes the point, half in jest, that humor and transcendence are almost the same thing (Onega 215). This intuition is quite apt for the analogical

imagination. Greeley discusses the effect of the liturgical imagination on Christian culture, and certainly the liturgy involves elements of elevated play. Tolkien himself approved of an early review that recognized in his 'Catholic work' 'an elaborate game of inventing a country' *(Letters 196)*. In the light of the above, it is hardly surprising that the Catholic sensibility finds beauty to be close to the truth. This view almost approaches a doctrinal stance, since it is even expressed in the most recent edition of the Catechism of the Catholic Church in its discussion of the Seventh Commandment[7]. It is worth mentioning that Tolkien himself complained that in our times "goodness is itself bereft of its proper beauty" *("On Fairy-Stories" 151)*, and we may surmise that in his Middle-earth he made an effort to restore the balance.

Academic scholars are generally reluctant to discuss beauty in a literary work. Pertinently, in her review of Peter Jackson's *Two Towers* (2002) in the weekly *Human Events*, writer Marian Kester Coombs declares the film presents Middle-earth as possessing remarkable beauty *(URL[8] below)*. This may be a judgment one can argue with, but it can be said of any film adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* that, no matter how faithful otherwise, if it lacked beauty something essential would be missing.

Contrasting with the perception of the orthodox Christian (in which icons, for instance, generally conform to strict canons) beauty for a Catholic has no clearly defined form, since 'artists are sacrament makers, revealers of God-in-the-world, and there is no artistic medium that is excluded from this invitation or opportunity.' *(Shafer, URL below)* As Ingrid Shafer also points out, the Catholic imagination is highly visual. This quality certainly applies to Tolkien's prose: one of the reasons it has inspired so many illustrators is easily traced to its visually evocative nature. Thus fantasy, with its quest to bestow visible shape upon invisible desires, is a valid form in which to search for beauty, and has been a part of that search since Dante and earlier. To some extent in common with Dante, fantasy is essentially comedy for Tolkien: one might say, with its culmination in eucatastrophe, in some ways also a Divine Comedy.

Even thematically experiencing beauty is a liberating force in *The Lord of the Rings*. This does not have to be the extraordinary beauty of Lothlorien. Relative beauty can elevate a traveller. After having traversed the wastelands before the Black Gate of Mordor, Frodo and Sam reach Ithilien, a comparative paradise with many new plants and fragrances. Although their unwilling companion Gollum coughs and retches at this richness, "the hobbits breathed deep, and suddenly Sam laughed, for heart's ease, not for jest." *(Two Towers 305)*

Yet if beauty is akin to truth, what happens when art seems to go against truth? Tolkien was not afraid to explore the boundaries of his convictions. This is evident enough in 'A Part of the Tale of Aragorn and Arwen' from Appendix A of *The Lord of the Rings*, where, to a large degree, death as the 'Gift of Ilúvatar' it is supposed to be is questioned. As Helen Armstrong persuasively argues *(10-12)*, in that passage Tolkien seems close in spirit to Simone de Beauvoir's insistence that death is an 'unjustifiable violation' for everyone, which the author even once claimed to be the dominant theme of the trilogy[9]. If this poignant exploration of doubt and despair is relegated to the appendixes in the novel, the theme is promoted to a central position in the First Age story 'Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth' in the posthumously published *History of Middle-earth* volume *Morgoth's Ring*.

For Catholics, a sense of community is of major importance[10]. The hobbits possess a strong feeling of community, along with an un-Puritanical sense of the good life. On the journey to destroy the One Ring, the hobbits encounter various other communities, which demonstrates the fact that community does not imply uniformity. Tolkien also explores different building blocks of community, such as the importance of friendship[11]. Compared to a typical adventure story where fellowship or camaraderie might also play a role, in Tolkien we find a profound treatment of genuine friendship. One that goes beyond questions of class solidarity, for instance. Sam refers to Frodo as 'Mr. Frodo' to the very end, and there can be no doubt of the profound quality of their relationship.

Another point of the Catholic sensibility also worth pointing out is the value it places on authority. With the ubiquitous emphasis on individualism throughout much of society this intuition seems difficult for many to accept. Nonetheless, authority properly understood and carried out actually fosters genuine individualism. A number of social theorists indicate that rampant individualism reduces us to social atoms, thus increasing our vulnerability to power. Gregory Wolfe reminds us that '[p]ower is based on external constraint whereas authority is based on consent.' *(URL below)*

Tolkien is not naïve, and demonstrates that authority can be abused. But in Gandalf, among others, he depicts genuine authority. The humanity of Gandalf gains him much respect, while his obvious spiritual authority is based on persuasion. At the profoundest level it nurtures the individuals that avail themselves of it, and the wizard helps all around him draw upon their inner resources more deeply than often they themselves imagined possible. Gandalf illustrates an Aristotelian sense of wisdom that does not allow him to despise common (i.e 'hobbit') sense, although he realizes the latter requires guidance.

Conclusion

Obviously Catholicism does not hold a monopoly on a number of the sensibilities discussed above; it is largely their constellation that places them under the same umbrella. It has been suggested that the Catholic imagination as presented by Greeley, on whose conception I largely base my analysis, 'enables Catholics to be more human, or at least to give freer and fuller expression to their humanity.' *(Neuhaus 81)* The nineteenth century literary historian Hypolite Taine simply called it the 'old imagination.' In *The Lord of the Rings* Tolkien has embodied the Catholic imagination in a new form and rendered a profound expression of the humane that resonates beyond the confines of any single faith community.

Notes

1. This point was made in all sincerity by Tolkien's son, John, a Catholic priest, in *JRRT - A Film Portrait of JRR Tolkien.*

2. In stressing the continuing importance of enchantment for Catholic imagination Greeley challenges the secularisation theories that have dominated the last hundred years and more, especially in the social sciences. 'I find no persuasive evidence that either modern or post-modern humankind exists outside of faculty office buildings. Everyone tends to be pre-modern.' *(p 2)* Some sociologists of religion have begun to agree with Greeley and consider a process of de-secularisation is presently underway, which does not mean traditional religions are necessarily regaining their former importance, in some cases it is just the reverse.

3. Greeley sees the analogical imagination as drawing upon the faculty cognitive psychologists assert in their claim that metaphors are 'fundamental tools for human knowledge.' *(p 6)*

4. Tolkien claimed we get our opinion about God both from Revelation and 'contemplating the world about us.' *(Letters 400)* The latter would no doubt include contemporary knowledge of the world, thus the dynamic creation story of the Music of the Ainur with its modern ring.

5. In his study Ackroyd places Tolkien in the English visionary tradition (45), as well as citing him as an exemplar of the 'old [Catholic] imagination' *(177).*

6. The Church was generally friendlier toward eroticism before the Reformation. Marital liturgies like the Sarum ritual in England included blessings of the marriage bed 'and a prayer that the bride be compliant and vigorous in bed.' *(Greeley 61)* If in his article 'Hobbit Sex and Sensuality in The Lord of the Rings' Daniel Timmons is correct in his assessment of the sexual practices of the hobbits, perhaps they had their own version of this pre-Reformation rite.

7. In Catholic tradition this is the commandment concerned with bearing false witness.

8. URL refers to the electronic address of internet or electronic database texts that supplied in the reference list.

9. I myself find the ending of the tale open-ended rather than one of complete despair. After the initial breakdown, a stay in the former Lorien may have had a soothing effect on Arwen. At any rate, the stone city of men would hardly be the place for Arwen to recover from her grief. Moreover, even if this were not so, I think Tolkien instils part of his religious vision in the symbolic ending 'and there is her green grave, until the world is changed...' (Return of the King 390). It closely echoes the end of Hurin's mother Morwen, after whom the isle Tol Morwen 'stands alone in the water beyond the new coasts that were made in the days of wrath of the Valar' (Silmarillion 230). Both cases indicate a divine sign of sorts. Indeed, their similarity rather indicates the continuation of Arwen's earthly despair to the very end, after which 'Iluvatar' somehow granted her special mercy. In a conventionally Christian understanding, neither Arwen nor Morwen (especially the latter) are particularly salutary characters, so the special favour Iluvatar indicates on their behalf seems more in line with what might be called a theology of hope inherent in Tolkien's work. (I discuss this sensibility in my 'Tolkien's Eschatology of Hope: From Ragnarok to Joyous Subcreation'.)

10. In fact, one of the primary complaints of the Reformers was that the Church placed a community of people between God and the individual soul (Greeley 123). What historically followed was the stress 'secularisation' placed on the individual and his or her autonomy. An interesting question is whether the recent cautious swing toward the intellectual respectability of communitarian interests is in part responsible for a similar critical rapprochement with Tolkien's work. Certainly Patrick Curry, one of the author's vigorous non-Catholic apologists, has a marked communitarian bias.

11. Although she doesn't actually mention friendship, feminist critic Kara Gardner claims Tolkien creates characters that offer 'a model for masculinity that is strongly pro-feminist. [He] reminds us that the most honourable tasks for a man are creating, healing, protecting.' (URL below) While I cannot vouch for the critic's feminist instincts in regards to Tolkien, friendship has become a topic feminist philosophers are prone to contemplate (cf. Friedman 11 note1).

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The first and second Ages

From Fëanor to Doctor Faustus: a creator's path to self destruction

This paper was first presented at the 5th Tolkien Society Workshop ("The First and Second Ages", 1990) and published in its Proceedings, the third Peter Roe booklet, 1992.

John Ellison

This paper follows up two previous events; the 'Workshop' held at Cambridge in 1988 under the title 'Tolkien and Romanticism' and the corresponding one held at Beverley the following year, notable for Tom Shippey's talk on the interpretation of, the significance of 'The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth, Beorhthelm's Son' (*Tolkien 1975*) in relation to Tolkien's work and thought. As to the former, this paper owes its origin to the author's feeling that the Faust myth, which was not touched on then, needed some exploration in relation to Tolkien's own 'legendarium'. As to the latter, Professor Shippey's talk considerably sharpened one's own sense of something peculiarly final and valedictory about Tolkien's own kind of romanticism, and its realisation in his imaginary world. Its outstanding feature, as those who heard it may recall, was its emphasis on the ambivalence of Tolkien's attitude towards, 'the Northern world', and towards, 'the Northern heroic spirit', the mainsprings of his creative imagination. He argued that Tolkien in 'The Homecoming', is going against his own predilections in siding with Tidwald, the party to the dialogue who takes a cynical and critical view of Beorhtnoth's, 'heroic', behaviour in voluntarily staking the issue of battle. The implications of this, he suggested, seemed to be that Tolkien had come to regard the 'Northern heroic spirit', as something, 'heathen', in essence; something retaining a destructive element in its make-up which required taming, or, in other words, 'Christianising', to exorcise it. This feeling on Tolkien's part, he added, might reflect contemporary events in the, 'real', world, at the time 'The Homecoming', was written. The degradation of the Northern spirit, represented by what had just passed in Nazi Germany, was sufficiently plain, but Tolkien might have been even more affected, he thought, by what he saw of the state of the immediate post-war world.

I do not think that the importance of the outbreak, course, and aftermath of the First World War, as the historical context within which Tolkien's mythology was originally conceived and evolved, can be over estimated. Within these years the old pre-1914 certainties of life, as Tolkien and everyone around him would have known them, had collapsed and vanished. He was, as is well known, profoundly and personally affected in the most shattering way, as all the combatants were. The original 'Lost Tales', may have been, in the beginning, set down in an escapist kind of spirit that seems more than understandable in the light of the circumstances in which the earliest of them were written. It did not however take very long before Tolkien's 'other world', began to 'act up at him', in a non-escapist, ambiguous fashion. A romantic he may have been, but he had to face the consequences of romanticism in its decline and passing; and it does not have to be said how disastrous for mankind some of them have turned out to be. The combination of romantic nostalgia for the fading and passing beauties of this world shot through with the apprehension of potential horror underlying them is a recurring element in the arts of the period preceding 1914; very much evident in, say, the symphonies of Elgar or of Mahler, to take a couple of instances.

The legend of Faust

The particular myth that embraces the entire course of Romanticism from its beginning to its final convulsions is known to everyone as the legend of Faust. Embodied at the outset in the two parts of Goethe's poetic drama, it finishes up by denying itself in Thomas Mann's novel *Doctor Faustus*, set against the backdrop of Nazi Germany in its final stages of collapse, a novel that consciously presents itself as an antithesis of, or, 'deconstruction', of, Goethe's masterpiece. It was a re-reading on my part of Doctor Faustus that provided the final impulse for this paper. In between the two extremes, the Faust myth, mainly of course Goethe's realisation of it, provided a rich source of artistic inspiration and a quarry for source material, notably in music, the quintessentially, 'romantic', art*. The infinite potential of the creative human mind both for good and evil

* *Composers who drew on it, from Goethe's own time and subsequently, have included Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Liszt, Wagner, Berlioz, Gounod, Boito, Mahler, Busoni, and Havergal Brian; this list is probably nothing like comprehensive.*

in the consequences of man's endless search for knowledge, continually stimulated and inspired the finest artistic minds.

It occurred to me that it might be worthwhile to look at Tolkien's imagined world against this kind of background. I have to make it clear that it is not my intention to attempt to stage a revival of the once popular, and now rather passé, pastime of 'detecting influences on Tolkien', supposedly derived from various likely and unlikely sources. He would presumably have been conversant, at least to some extent, with the early origins of the legend of Faust, as exemplified in Marlowe's 1604 play, even though he probably had little direct interest as far as that was concerned. How well he knew either part of Goethe's *Faust*, or both parts, I have not the slightest idea. As far as this paper is concerned, it does not matter at all. On the other hand, the 'Faust myth', in one form or another, had become so much a part of every educated person's consciousness by the time Tolkien started out to build his imaginary world, that he could not wholly have escaped its consequences, even had he so wished. Its presence is felt in his work as one of the many background flavourings in, 'the Soup'. This metaphor of Tolkien's may seem as if it has been a little overworked, but its usefulness is undeniable. The individual manifestation of the 'Faust myth, that is of the greatest interest from our present point of view is, as it happens, the very one which post-dates everything in Middle-earth up to the completion of *The Lord of the Rings*, that is, Mann's novel, about which he can have known nothing whatever. I intend to come back to it at the end of this paper, as a means of indicating the peculiar kind of 'relevance', Tolkien's imagined world bore and still bears to the concerns of the, 'real', world in which he lived and worked, concerns which still trouble us today as profoundly as they did him and his contemporaries. I have, though, to start at the point where the peculiar 'split', in Tolkien's creative personality, the kind of self-doubt upon which Tom Shippey focused in relation to 'Beorhtnoth', first seems to appear. As the mythology is developed and extended over the years, this 'split', comes to be defined above all by the way in which the elves and orcs are seen more and more as linked opposites, projections of the creative and destructive sides of the human personality. But this concept took shape gradually, as I think, over a long period. It is fully present by the time Frodo's words to Sam, in the Tower of Cirth Ungol, come to be spoken. "The Shadow that bred them can only mock, it cannot make: not real new things of its own. I don't think it gave life to the orcs, it only ruined them and twisted them" (*Tolkien, 1966c, 190*), whereas it has not fully emerged if looked at in the light of Treebeard's well-known statement that, "Trolls are only counterfeits made by the Enemy in the Great Darkness, as Ores were of Elves." (*Tolkien, 1966b, 189*)*. I suggest that the first important evidence of the 'split', is represented by the appearance in, 'The Tales', of Fëanor. When one looks at the mythology, at the 'legendarium', as a whole (if it is indeed a whole), it at once becomes plain that Fëanor occupies a central place in it. He is the key-figure, the hinge on which the whole great Tale, the compendium of the individual Tales, turns.

It of course hardly needs saying that 'Tolkien's 'legendarium', does not contain a Faust-figure as such. No one person enters into a 'contract', with Melkor, or with Sauron, or barters his soul in exchange for knowledge, power, riches, or anything else. (Presumably the Mouth of Sauron has a contract of service, of some kind, but he can hardly be described as a central figure; the Nine Mortal Men enslaved by the nine Rings may, if you like, represent an unconscious use of a Faust-motive). Nevertheless there does seem to be something rather Faust-like about the way Fëanor's career resolves itself into a struggle to transcend the limitations of his own existence: "For man must strive, and striving he must err" (*Goethe 1959a, 41*) says Goethe's Almighty in the dialogue with Mephistopheles at the beginning of Part 1 of 'Faust'; Fëanor is however an Elf, one of the Elder Children of Ilúvatar who have been confined, "within the circles of the world", and perhaps his tragedy is that he was not born a Man instead. The Eldar are summoned by the Valar to dwell in Aman; they are expected to create (or, if the word can be preferred, 'sub-create'), in imitation of Eru. In the end most of them prove unable to remain within the bounds that have been set for them. And this had been foreseen. At the time of the summons, Ulmo, in the council of the Valar, had spoken against it, "thinking it were better for the Quendi to remain in Middle-earth" (*Tolkien, 1977, 59*).

Creative spirit

The 'restlessness', of the Eldar, of the Noldor especially, is the outward symbol and expression of their creative spirit. Fëanor represents that creativity raised to the highest possible degree. He sits, as it were, on the top of the pile; of the three races of the Eldar who go to Aman, it is the Noldor who are, "beloved of Aule" (*Tolkien, 1977, 60*). In the search for knowledge, "they soon surpassed their teachers" (*Tolkien, 1977, 60*), an extremely significant remark. In due time, Fëanor surpasses everyone else. His mother Míriel has previously surpassed all her own kindred in her own craft of weaving and needlework, and her strength then passes into Fëanor himself. Rúmil of Tirion is the first of the Noldor to devise letters, and musical notation, but Fëanor thereafter surpasses him in the devising of the Fëanorian script. This must indeed represent the truest part played by the Noldor, and by Fëanor himself, in the history of Arda. It has much more significance, really, than the fashioning of jewels, of even of the Silmarils themselves, for writing and letters are the foundation of civilisation, as Tolkien and all the rest of us know and have known it, just as they were the foundation of his creative and professional life. Fëanor's name means, 'Spirit of Fire', and the imagery of fire pervades the record of his deeds and ending; it is in him, as ever, the classic symbol of creativity; "Oh for a

** The surface inconsistency between these two passages has led to some difficulties in interpretation. Tolkien himself* (Tolkien, 1981, 190) *insists that in the latter passage, 'made', is to be distinguished from 'created', but in the former one 'make' is clearly synonymous with 'create'.*

Muse of fire that will ascend The brightest heaven of invention." He is also *Curufinwë*, and the *'curu'*, element in this name, signifying, 'skill', passes on to one of his sons who inherits the largest measure of it, but not for the better. 'Curufin the crafty'; at quite an early stage in the formation of the legendarium, Tolkien is using his own linguistic mode to point the link between the creative and the destructive in human nature; the English words, 'craft', and 'crafty' of course embody the same inherent ambiguity. I would say that this is the point at which the 'split', in Tolkien's attitude to his own handiwork first comes out in the open. Later on the same linguistic ambiguity is to be used to indicate the personality of Saruman, 'Man of Skill', coupled with the double meaning of, 'Orthanc', which in the language of the Mark signifies, 'The Cunning Mind'.

There seems to be a sort of tragic inevitability inherent in the course of Fëanor's existence until his final 'dissolution', (if there is no better word for it). He could not have been and could not have done, perhaps, any other than what he was, and did. His career presents the spectacle of a swift ascent to a peak, the fashioning of the Silmarils, which is at the same time a fatally decisive action which sets him on a downward path towards extinction. It is instructive to trace this mythological, 'rake's progress', in all its successive stages. Significantly, the devising of the Fëanorian script, which betters the work of Fëanor's predecessor Rúmil, and which represents Fëanor's 'true', place in the history of Arda, is an achievement of his youth. Subsequently he is first among the Noldor to discover how gems, "greater and brighter than those of the Earth", may be made with skill. There is an important distinction to be made between these two feats. The first one is an improvement on art. The second one, more perilous, is an improvement on nature herself.

Fëanor then marries, and Nerdanel his wife, gifted with a higher measure of patience, tries to restrain his over-enthusiastic spirit, in the end unsuccessfully. Her more moderate nature passes, to some extent, to some, but not all, of her sons. Fëanor himself extends the range of his creative enterprise, and his father-in-law Mahtan instructs him in the making of things in metal and stone. When his father Finwë remarries he develops antipathy towards his stepmother, and then to his new half-brothers, and withdraws into his own concerns.

The naming of Morgoth

At this stage Melkor is pardoned by the Valar after three Ages of Arda, and is allowed to dwell in Aman. Fëanor develops a special hatred of him, and first names him *Morgoth*, ('Dark Enemy'). Amateur psychology might at this point indicate that what he is actually doing is to embark on the dangerous course of denying the 'dark', side of his own nature, pushing back his 'destructive' self into his unconscious. Be that as it may, his own nature seems destined to lead him into some kind of, 'special relationship', with Melkor, even if the contractual element, binding Faust to Mephistopheles, is absent, or at least, seems on the surface to be

The Black Gate - John Ellison

absent. The making of the Silmarils follows directly upon the unchaining of Melkor. Tolkien at this point drops a hint of the tragedy inevitably lying ahead; "it may be", he says, "that some shadow of foreknowledge came to him of the doom that drew near." (*Tolkien, 1977, 67*). The lust and envy of Melkor are roused, and he embarks on the seduction of the Noldor, who begin to, "murmur against the Valar". Fëanor himself begins to look outside Aman; it now seems that his interests and inclinations have undergone a major change of direction. "Fiercest burned the new flame of desire for freedom and wider realms in the eager heart of Fëanor" (*Tolkien, 1977, 68*). The 'flame', may be a new one, but it does not appear to be a flame of creativity. He guards the Silmarils in his own hoard and treats them as his own property; "he seldom remembered now that the light within them was not his own" (*Tolkien, 1977, 69*).

The next following sequence of events makes the deterioration in his moral stance quite plain. It starts with his turning his craft and skills to the making of a secret forge, and to using it to produce weapons of war; he makes swords and helmets for himself and his sons. Mahtan his father-in-law now regrets having taught him the skill in metalworking that he himself originally learned from Aulë. In this rebellious mood he begins to speak openly against the Valar, and an open breach follows with his half-brother Fingolfin; the result of this is that he is summoned to appear before the Valar, and receives a sentence of banishment. This does not appear to have any effect on him. He retires to Formenos, and makes a fortress, and a hoard of weapons and treasure there, locking the Silmarils in a chamber of iron. At this point Melkor appears there and confronts him; with the apparent intention of playing Mephistopheles to Fëanor's Faust, he tries to enlist him on his own side. However, as it happens he overplays his hand. In the midst of his efforts to inflame Fëanor's rage and his suspicions of the Valar, he allows his own lust for the Silmarils to show itself. He leaves Formenos with the Northern heroic equivalent of a flea in his ear.

We now arrive at the central sequence of events which represents the Darkening of Valinor. Fëanor is summoned to Valmar from Formenos, and while he is there the assault of Melkor and Ungoliant upon the Two Trees takes place. Yavanna appeals for the aid of the Silmarils in restoring the light of the Trees. Fëanor withholds it. To break them, he says in effect, would mean breaking him as well; "never again shall I make their like". Melkor has meanwhile reached Formenos, slain Finwë, Fëanor's father, and taken the Silmarils. This would have happen in any case, says the Tale, whether Fëanor had refused Yavanna or not. "Yet had he said yea to Yavanna at first, before the tidings came from Formenos, it may be that his after deeds would have been other than they were" (*Tolkien, 1977, 79*). There has been, therefore, a moment of decisive choice; after it, Fëanor's path is set irreversibly downward towards destruction. I will return to the actual words he speaks later on, and quote them then, as they relate closely to the main theme of this paper.

The death of Fëanor

The pace of events now begins to accelerate. Fëanor appears in Túna and inflames the Noldor to revolt. "Fierce and fell were his words, and filled with anger and pride, and hearing them the Noldor were stirred to madness." (*Tolkien, 1977, 82*). I am not sure exactly when Tolkien wrote these words, but their applicability to the 1930s is rather striking. This exercise of the power of mob-oratory is followed by the theatrical, not to say operatic scene of the oath-taking of Fëanor and his sons; they swear to pursue the Silmarils to the ends of the earth. Dissension breaks out, and Fëanor is opposed by Fingolfin and Turgon, and also with more moderation by Finarfin, but his side prevails in the end, and the Noldor prepare to depart and set out for Middle-earth. The herald of Manwë appears, bent on restraining their departure, but his words of warning are ignored, and Fëanor's response to him contains significant words which will turn out to have given to the familiar imagery a new and sinister emphasis. "It may be", says Fëanor,"that Eru has set in me a fire greater than thou knowest." (*Tolkien, 1977, 85*). What this new fire may be will soon become clear.

The following sequence of events alienates Fëanor permanently from all the rest of the Eldar except those of his own house. These events are: the parley with the Teleri at Alqualondë, the subsequent battle with them and the Kinslaying; the escape of the Noldor in the ships of the Teleri; the judgement passed on them, and signalled to them on their subsequent road, recorded as "The Prophecy of the North"; and finally the crossing of the Helcaraxë and subsequently, the burning of the ships at Fëanor's orders. Their return across the straits is rendered impossible, and the subsequent passage across the straits of the section of the host led by Fingolfin has to be undertaken and achieved without them. By this time Fëanor appears to accept the inevitability of his own 'doom', and even to welcome it; the 'Northern heroic spirit', in him has now reached its highest level of intensity. With the burning of the ships the symbolism of, 'The Spirit of Fire', has reached a wholly destructive stage; at this point the words "he laughed as one fey", are applied to him; the epithet will recur at the time of his death. This word *fey*, like others characteristic of Tolkien's 'archaic', or 'high', styles, is used to convey a kind of coded meaning, for which, 'mad', is a wholly inadequate equivalent*.

Fëanor's end is not long in coming once the Noldor have arrived in Middle-earth. It takes place, not in the actual battle, the Dagor-nuin-Giliath, that quickly follows, but in its aftermath. The battle itself is a victory, and the remaining Orcs flee from the field in retreat. Fëanor alone presses on in their wake, senselessly and unnecessarily. It is his last and most typical piece of, 'Beorhtnothery', if one may be allowed to coin the word. "He was fey", says Tolkien, "consumed by the flame of his own wrath." He is

**For those who know Wagner's Die Meistersinger, the untranslatable word 'Wahn', (illusion), which implies a combination of insanity, frenzy, and delusion, both private and public, perhaps comes quite close to it.*

finally smitten to the ground and fatally wounded. Borne back by his sons towards Mithrim he dies looking out from afar at the peaks of Thangorodrim, and "so fiery was his spirit that as it sped his body fell to ash, and was borne away like smoke." (*Tolkien, 1977, 107*). The new fire of which he boasted to the herald of Manwë as the host prepared to depart from Túna has turned on him and consumed him at last.

Is it not evident from Fëanor's life-history that the making of the Silmarils constitutes both the peak of it, and its single catastrophic error? He ensnared the light of the Two Trees, a universal light, in which no 'property' existed. The deterioration in his character started to show itself as soon as he had made the Silmarils, in the possessiveness that overtook him from that time on. The underlying cause of it was his realising that he had made something which he himself could not surpass. he could not strive after perfection any longer; he had achieved it, and all that 'creation', could represent for him after that was mere pattem-making. The essence of creativity is not perfection, but the tireless search for it; Faust was required to strive ceaselessly and never to pause to contemplate, 'the passing moment'. Fëanor's words at the time of his refusal of Yavanna's plea for the aid of the Silmarils show that he has betrayed himself into falling in love with the work of his own hands: "For the less even as for the greater there is some deed that he may accomplish but once only, and in that deed his heart shall rest." (*Tolkien, 1977, 78*). This is the equivalent of the fatal words that in Faust's contract with Mephistopheles were to doom him.

"Then to the moment I can say .
Linger you now, you are so fair."
(*Goethe 1959b, 270*)

('Verweile doch, du bist so schön'). (I have deliberately misquoted the words which Faust actually does speak just before his death in Part II of *Faust*. Goethe, at the last minute, replaced, 'can say', with 'could say', so that Faust escapes damnation by a hairsbreadth; and is shown as redeemed in the final scene of *Faust*).

Impermissible act

I believe that from Tolkien's own point of view Fëanor's making of the Silmarils represented a dangerous and impermissible act, one that exceeded the bounds intended for the Elder Children of Ilúvatar. I do not of course, suggest that there is any autobiographical element about his concept of Fëanor's character; that would be absurd. I think, on the other hand, that he sensed that there could be a certain applicability to his own situation about it, and that this affected his subsequent attitude towards his own creative work. The word 'fey', as it appears in relation to Fëanor does as it happens have an exact counterpart in the German original equivalent of Tolkien's own name, *tollkühn*. I do not mean that he thought that either epithet in either language was in any way applicable to himself, but he can hardly have been unaware of the linguistic implications. These will, incidentally, present us towards the end of this paper with an exceedingly picturesque coincidence. The outward sign of all this is the curious appearance of inhibition which seems to characterise Tolkien's attitude to his imaginative writing. At a superficial level he was probably worried about what his professional colleagues might say if they knew about it. They would accuse him of, 'wasting his time on this sort of stuff', while he ought to have been getting on with his scholastic work. At a deeper level there may have been something about the whole idea of, 'creativity', that conflicted with his deeply ingrained religious sense. He needed to rationalise and justify his own position, to legitimise his invention, to enable him to carry on writing. He did so by evolving the idea of, 'sub-creation', set down in the Andrew Lang lecture, later an essay, 'On Fairy Stories' (*Tolkien 1964*). The artist is seen as a sort of feudal tenant-in-chief of a medieval king, making his own little world in imitation of the one into which he himself is made. The subordinate, or 'sub-creative', role allotted to the individual as artist, contrasts very strongly with the assumption of overriding status as belonging to the art-form itself, the writing of fantasy. Tolkien might have felt inhibited about acknowledging his own status as an artist; but that does not imply that he thought that what he was doing was not supremely important.

This sense of 'perfection', or completeness, as something to be shunned as much as possible, seems manifest in Tolkien's notorious disinclination (I do not believe it was inability) to finish anything. From *The Book of Lost Tales* on, not a single major project is carried all the way to completion; some of course come within a reasonable distance of it. He finished *The Hobbit*, but he had to be prodded into doing that, and of course he never regarded that work in the same light as his long-term preoccupation with his older mythology - it wasn't at the heart of his imaginative thinking as *The Silmarillion* was. The single major exception to the rule turns out to be no exception at all. Tolkien did not think of *The Lord of the Rings* as something independently complete in itself, but rather as the last leaf of a triptych of which large sections of the other two leaves remained unfilled. He expended some twenty-odd closely packed pages in outlining the whole panorama to Milton Waldman (*Tolkien, 1981, 143-161*), and also, for a time, drove George Allen and Unwin Ltd nearly frantic by insisting that *The Silmarillion* was as large as *The Lord of the Rings*, of equal importance, and that consequently it should be published in tandem with it. Niggle's Tree, in other words, can never be completed in this 'fallen', world; it would encourage presumptuousness to believe otherwise.

Another piece of Tolkien's writing that I suspect also bears some relation to this aspect of his thought is, 'The Lay of Aotrou and Itroun', (*Tolkien 1945*). I am not trying to offer anything like a cut-and-dried interpretation of this piece, but it has always struck me as a rather strange choice of subject from Tolkien's point of view unless one postulates a kind of applicability about the tale to an artist's creativity. The physical act of procreation is, after all a common enough metaphor for it; many painters (Turner for instance), writers and composers have thought of or referred to their pictures or their books or their scores as their, 'children'. The Lord Aotrou, in his desire

for posterity, breaks the bounds of what is 'allowable', or legitimate, laid down by his religion, as Fëanor tried to exceed the bounds prescribed for the Eldar in Aman. The remarkable feature of the tale from the present point of view, however, is that the motive of a contract with the Devil, or the Devil's representative, is genuinely present. His punishment, when the bargain proves impossible of fulfilment, occurs, as far as we can tell, in this world, not in the next; but perhaps he is the closest approach to a Faust figure in Tolkien's writing, even if only in miniature. We will also be encountering the Corrigan, the witch as the Devil's representative, shortly again, playing the same role in a twentieth century context.

Other resonances

Further reason for giving 'The Tale of Fëanor' (I call it that for convenience's sake) a central place in the structure of Tolkien's thought lies in the way its essence seems to recur in the two principal Tales of the Second and Third Ages; the rise and fall of Númenor, and the History of the One Ring. I will briefly indicate some ways in which they seem to correspond. The Dunedain, once they are settled in Númenor, develop a rich and complex civilisation. While they are passing through the early stages of the formation of their culture, they derive much from the Eldar in Eressëa, and in the west of Middle-earth. They learn their language and take from them their nomenclature. Then they begin to surpass their teachers, as the Eldar had previously done, emerging from the tutelage of the Valar. The particular occupation which symbolises their creative spirit and creative powers is shipbuilding and seacraft. As mariners and 'men of peace', they first bring their civilisation to the shores of Middle-earth. The port and harbour of Vinyalondë and other outposts are set up through which trading and other relations with the indigenous and other peoples of the mainlands develop and are fostered. This in retrospect seems like a kind of Renaissance period in Middle-earth in the Second Age; an outburst of creative energy comparable to the expansion of Europe at the close of the Middle Ages. The final years of Númenor's history might likewise be thought of in terms of that of the first half of the twentieth century, the rise of the tyrannies, fascism, Stalinism, and the destruction of the old, 'bourgeois, liberal and humanist', Europe in two world wars. There is an obvious 'applicability', which presumably Tolkien had no conscious thought of expressing. Men in Middle-earth who at first had been civilised by the Númenoreans, when the latter ultimately come as warriors and overlords, are instead terrorised.

The Tale of Aldarion and Erendis, within the compass of one particular story and one set of events, is a kind of parable of Númenorean history, a commentary on its progress from its beginnings to the final downfall. The destructive element is Aldarion's insistence on pressing on with his shipbuilding schemes and his voyages in defiance both of his public and personal obligations. It is a classic instance of the kind of presumptuousness* that has been the undoing of Fëanor, and represents, once more, 'creativity', out of control, turning on its possessor, with consequences not merely personal but also fatal for society as a whole. Erendis' abandonment by Aldarion and the resulting strangeness of her relationship with her daughter have consequences as regards the Numenorean succession which ultimately issue in the last catastrophe. In the end the last Numenorean king challenges the might of Sauron and another 'special relationship', ensues. The largest armada ever seen is built and launched; the Ban of the Valar is broken, and the world is changed. This is not the climax of an 'action replay' of the Tale of Fëanor; but there is a notable similarity of outline and underlying meaning.

The History of the One Ring might on the other hand be seen as standing in an inverted relationship with the Tale of Fëanor; turning it upside-down, as it were, with, at its centre, the One Ring as a 'debased' counterpart of the Silmarils. The latter represented an ideal of beauty and perfection, and as such only presented a threat to those who held them with intent to possess them; then their effects were instantaneously felt, those who held them being tormented with physical pain. (The One Ring operates in a precisely contrary way, producing an apparent beneficial physical effect to start with, and fostering possessiveness, not repelling it).

Maedhros and Maglor, the two of Fëanor's sons who have inherited the largest measure of his 'positive', creative qualities, become in the end the most tragic of them. They make their way into the camp of Eönwë, after the Last Battle with Morgoth in which the two remaining Silmarils have been recovered, and make off with them. The hollowness of the claim of Fëanor and his house to ownership is at once apparent to them, and in their torment they are forced to cast them away. The death of Maedhros, casting a Silmaril and himself into a crack of fire in the earth, which clearly anticipates Gollum's end in Orodruin, provides a highly significant link between the two Tales. Maglor's torment is that of the artist who realises the unattainability of an ideal; he casts a Silmaril into the sea and, 'wanders ever singing in pain and regret beside the waves', (*Tolkien, 1977, 254*), - one of the most haunting images in Tolkien's works.

If the Silmarils enshrine ideal beauty, the One Ring enshrines its opposite – power. As a complementary counterpart of the Silmarils it too is beautiful to look on, at least outwardly; 'of all the works of Sauron the only fair'. It represents the debasement of creativity; the values of true art turned upside down; the cacophony introduced by Melkor into the Music of the Ainur. Its making links it firmly with the history of Fëanor and the Fëanorians, through Celebrimbor, the chief of the Elvensmiths of Eregion, and the son of Curufin, 'the crafty', who, 'desired in his heart to rival the skill and fame of Fëanor', (*Tolkien, 1980b, 236*). The Elvensmiths traffic with Sauron in the Second Age, and obtain his instruction in the making of rings, at first the lesser ones, and in the end the Three Rings forged by Celebrimbor himself, whose

*Or ofermod, *in the Old English equivalent, translated by Tolkien as, 'overmastering pride'. It is no less applicable to Feanor himself.*

existence leads to the forging of the One Ring by Sauron, 'to rule them all'. There is perhaps, even a sense in which the War of the Ring may be thought of as a, 'War of the Silmarils', in reverse, viewed from the other side, the Enemy's side. Sauron has to wage it, in order to regain, in his turn, the work of his own hand which has been taken from him, and his war, like that of the Elves in Beleriand, becomes a 'long defeat'.

The significance of Faustus

Tolkien's world, as principally represented by Fëanor's part in it, and as seen against a late romantic background, may seem to display some congruences with the legend of Faust, or echoes of it, but not to provide an exact of comprehensive equivalent. Fëanor, up to now, may be thought to qualify as a 'Faust figure', of a sort; however the relationship is not quite a direct one, but lies at a tangent. I now come, though, to review the particular version of the legend of Faust that started me off on this enquiry. This is Thomas Mann's novel *Doctor Faustus*, and to those who know it the comparison may initially seem a very strange one indeed. Tolkien's world existed and exists, entirely in his imagination, and in ours; its relation to, or connections with, his and our contemporary world, and with history as it was being made at the time of its own making, arise, (assuming that they arise at all), purely by implication. Thomas Mann in *Doctor Faustus*, (written at nearly the same time as *The Lord of the Rings*), is concerned, on the other hand, with the crisis in the culture and identity of his own country at a catastrophic period in its history; he employs a multiplicity of allusive devices to make it appear even more 'historical' than it is. Nevertheless, it represents the point at which Tolkien's 'mythology', and the 'Faust myth', actually intersect.

The Mariner's Wife - Jef Murray

I cannot think of a better way of putting it than by saying that the hero, or rather, 'anti-hero', of Doctor Faustus, the imaginary composer Adrian Leverkühn, is a Fëanor of our times, a Fëanor playing out his role as a symbol and key-figure of the crisis of the first half of the twentieth century, the aftermath and end-product of Romanticism.

At this point I have to provide an outline of the content of Doctor Faustus, in order to make the above comparison, and the reasons underlying it, seem at all understandable. It will have to be an exceedingly rough outline; *Doctor Faustus* is a long and complex work, and full of allusions and references at every turn to Mann's own world; the Germany which he left in 1933, just after Hitler's assumption of power. However the complex detail does not really affect the issue for the present purpose.

The story is that of the life of a composer, Adrian Leverkühn, told by his closest friend. It is now that the picturesque coincidence arises, which I mentioned previously. Mann chose the name of his hero consciously, to indicate his personality. 'Leverkühn', ('living audaciously') is a partial congruence with, 'tollkühn', – it would be appropriate as characterising Fëanor, at least in the early part of his career. (Mann's actual allusion is to Nietzsche and Zarathustra, although that does not concern us here). Serenus Zeitblom, the narrator, is depicted as telling his friend's life-story at the time when his own world is collapsing in ruins around him; he 'writes', as from within Nazi Germany during the closing stages of the Second World War. (This is an interesting parallel to Tolkien's setting out to build his mythology while surrounded by the evidences of the collapse of the old pre-1914 world, including his own part of it). Zeitblom is a teacher by profession, and represents the archetypal, 'Good German', brought up within the old bourgeois world of German culture; 'the land of poets and thinkers', of Goethe and Schiller, of Bach and Beethoven. (In Númenorean terms, he is one of, 'the Faithful'). The early part of the book recounts Leverkühn's upbringing and musical training; the stages through which he develops to attain technical mastery of the essentials of his art. His teacher, the organist Wendell Kretzschmar, is a kind of benevolent father-figure to him; one whose tutelage he is destined to outgrow, just as the Noldor 'surpassed their teachers'. He initially cannot see a future for himself in music, and turns to studying theology for some intervening years. Eventually he resumes his studies in music and composition, but he still sees no future for himself as a creative artist, constrained as he is within the discipline under which he has been brought up. (His budding genius has been apparent from the beginning). That discipline of course is the mainstream of German music through Bach and Beethoven and the, 'early romantics', up to Wagner and the end of the nineteenth century, and for Leverkühn the challenge is to 'break out of it', in order that his composing shall be more than mere pattern-making.

The episode which represents his, breaking out also symbolises his contract with the Devil. It is, on the surface, only the fact of his having consorted with a prostitute (the 'Corrigan', of Aotrou and Itroun in another shape), or his being assumed to have done so; the incident is not directly narrated. There is another factual allusion here – to Nietzsche, who died insane, supposedly as a result of syphilis contracted when still a student. Leverkühn is to become insane in the last years of his life, and the fate is a traditional one for composers of the romantic era. There is a parallel symbolic allusion; to the intellectuals in Germany who, 'gave themselves', to authoritarianism and Nazism in the 1920s and 1930s. The effect of Leverkühn's encounter with 'the Corrigan', is to release his individual voice as a musician. His music develops along unprecedented lines, and a succession of works show him evolving a new method of composition – a new musical system which will replace the old. A feature of his new music is that the letters of the prostitute's name HETAERA[1] ESMERALDA, translated into notes, make up a musical code which recurs repeatedly in his works. The 'new musical system', which Leverkühn invents so as to replace the old, is actually a deliberate imitation[2] of musical history as it happened in reality. The 'real-life', model is the exhaustion of the old tonal system (the major and minor keys and their relations with each other) and the 'serial' or 'twelve-tone', system pioneered by Arnold Schönberg with the intention of replacing it.

There is, however, a horrific price to be paid for Leverkühn's new-found freedom. His, 'new musical system', is the outcome of 'devilish', inspiration, and in a section in the middle of the book, the Devil himself, appears to Leverkühn to explain the nature of the bond that now exists between them. This passage has, of course, to be understood as symbolic, not real; it is not part of Zeitblom's narrative, but is told as though it has been reconstructed afterwards, from what Leverkühn himself, displaying early signs of insanity, has written down about it. Its message is the inversion of all pre-existing musical values. Sublimity, solemnity, and order are henceforth to be represented by discord and dissonance; harmony and consonance will stand only for chaos, confusion, disorder; in a word, Hell. The formal rules of composition in the 'New Order' in music (one could call it a 'Music of the Ainur', newly devised by Melkor) are nevertheless to be absolute, 'totalitarian', in their strictness and rigidity. All of this represents, at one level, a political allegory for the New Order, in music is to be equated with the barbarism of the 'New Order', in Europe; the rule of the Thousand-Year Reich.

Leverkühn's career as a composer reaches its climax with his final masterpiece, the 'symphonic cantata', 'The Lamentation of Doctor Faustus'. Mann's account of this imaginary work, perhaps the

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1. A title– it refers to the 'professional', prostitute class in Athens of the fifth century BC.

2. Many of Schönberg's followers were infuriated; the descriptions of Leverkühn's music in the novel do not really suggest anything very much like orthodox 'twelve-tone', music as it became known. Mann also introduced the names of 'real', musicians (the conductors Otto Klemperer and Bruno Walter and the tenor Karl Erb) as performers of Leverkühn's imaginary works.

most remarkable piece of descriptive writing about music ever produced by a non-musician, draws the sharpest possible contrast between the, 'totalitarian', strictness of the new system within which it is composed – 'there was no longer any free note' he says – and the intense subjectivity of its emotional expression. But the only emotions it expresses are those of utter agony and despair; like Maglor, Leverkühn's Faust is doomed, 'ever to wander singing in pain and regret beside the waves'. As Mann himself in Doctor Faustus, has 'unwritten', the Faust of Goethe, so does Leverkühn, in his final masterpiece, symbolically 'unwrite', Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, with its concluding Ode to Joy, the supreme affirmative symbol of the dawn of the romantic age in music. So appalled is Zeitblom by the unrelieved despair of Leverkühn's masterpiece that he tries to seek consolation in the void beyond it. "Expressiveness – expression as lament – is the issue of the whole construction; then may we not parallel it with another, a religious one, and say too (though only in the lowest whisper) that out of the wholly irremediable hope might germinate? It would be but a hope beyond hopelessness, the transcendence of despair – not betrayal to her, but the miracle that passes belief." (*Mann, 1949*). What a thoroughly Tolkienian attitude that is! - the very spirit that sustains Frodo and Samwise on their journey into Mordor! It is also the only thing that sustains Zeitblom himself, at the very end of *Doctor Faustus*, as he contemplates the shattered ruin that is all that is left of Germany. "When, out of uttermost hopelessness - a miracle beyond the power of belief - will the light of hope dawn? A lonely man folds his hands and speaks, 'God be merciful to thy poor soul, my friend, my Fatherland!'" (*Mann, 1949*).

The completion of the work signals Leverkühn's physical collapse and the loss of his reason. At a musical gathering at which he is due to play extracts from the work and comment on it, he talks confusedly and nonsensically, confesses the 'devilish', origin of his inspiration, and breaks down. He becomes insane, and dies in 1940, a few years afterwards.

The corruption of genius

I hope that some correspondences between Fëanor's 'mythological rake's progress', and Adrian Leverkühn's fictional-historical one emerge reasonably clearly from the foregoing. The history of both is that of genius corrupted finally into insanity; the creative drive turns on its possessor and destroys him, and with him a good part of the fabric of society. Thomas Mann, well before 1933, could witness the spectacle, at close quarters, of civilisation about to slide into barbarism. Tolkien likewise had plenty of opportunities for observing and commenting on the same spectacle, or a similar one, and he did so, in many and varied ways. For him the sight of green country ruined and despoiled by industrial or commercial development was simply one single manifestation of it; "just another of the works of Mordor". It is noteworthy that Tolkien's letters display no particular satisfaction or any feeling of exultation about the end of the Second World War; rather than that they convey the sense that the underlying situation of mankind has not changed*. Above all there is his appalled response to the news of the making of the atomic bomb, and its use on Japan, "Well, we're in God's hands. But He does not look kindly on Babel-builders." (*Tolkien, 1981, 116*).

Here, if you like, is the new "fire set in me, greater than thou knowest" of which Fëanor boasts in his response to the herald of Manwë as the Noldor prepare to leave Aman. It seems quite remarkable in the face of this that there are still people who are prepared to believe that Tolkien's world holds nothing beyond a straightforward conflict between the uncorrupt good and the irredeemably evil. Quite otherwise, he constantly returns to one particular theme; that the creative and destructive forces in man's nature are indivisibly linked; this is the essence of the 'fallen world', in which we live. It is not a particularly comforting message, but it is an eminently contemporary one.

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*See page 13 for T A Shippey's view of the significance of 'The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth Beorhthelm's Son', in this connection.

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The Hobbits' Family Tree

- Abbreviated Version -

Compiled by David B. Vale

* Thains of the Shire

Hobbits first come to Eriador from the Vales of Anduin - 1050
The Shire founded - 1601, led by Marcho and Blanco, granted by King Argeleb II
The Dark Plague - 1636
End of the North Kingdom - 1974

Bucca of the Marish * [1]
Appointed first Thain of the Shire 1979

Oldbuck Thains [2] – [11]

Gorhendad Oldbuck * [12]
Moved family to Buckland as Brandybucks in 2340
Built Brandy Hall as Master of Buckland

Tobold Hornblower, 'Old Toby' first plants 'pipe weed' - c. 2670

'Bullroarer' defeats an Orc-band in the Northfathing - 2747
The Long Winter, 'Days of Dearth' - 2758

Gormadoc Brandybuck - 2836 = Malva Headstrong

Isumbras Took I * [13]
Became first Took Thain 2340

Took Thains [14] – [21]

Isengrim Took II - 2722 * [22]

Isumbras Took III - 2759 * [23]

Ferumbras Took II - 2801 * [24]

Bandobras Took [Bullroarer] - 2806

Fortinbras Took I - 2848 * [25]

The Fell Winter, white wolves attack - 2911

Balbo Baggins 2767 - ? = Berylla Boffin

Madoc Brandybuck - 2877 = Hanna Goldworthy

Hamfast of Gamwich 2760 - ? = ?

Mungo Baggins 2807 - 2900 = Laura Grubb

Largo Baggins - 2912 = Tanta Hornblower

Marmadoc Brandybuck - 2910 = Adaldrida Bolger

Adamanta Chubb = Gerontius 'The Old Took' 2790 - 2920 * [26]

Mimosa Bunce = Ponto Baggins - 2911

Wiseman Gamwich 2800 - ? [Roper] = ?

Camellia Sackville = Longo Baggins - 2950

Bungo Baggins 2846 - 2926 = Belladonna Took

Fosco Baggins 2864 - 2960 = Ruby Bolger

Mirabella Took = Gorbadoc Brandybuck - 2963

Isengrim Took III - 2930 * [27] [no children]

Isumbras Took IV - 2939 * [28]

Hildigrim Took - 2941 = Rosa Baggins

Hob Gammidge 2846 - ? 'Old Gammidgy' [Roper] = Rowan Greenhand

Fortinbras Took II - 2980 * [29]

Otho Sackville-Baggins 2910 - 3012 = Lobelia Bracegirdle 2919 - 3020

Bilbo Baggins of Bag End 2890 - Adopted Frodo When he was orphaned in 2980 [Ring-bearer 2941 – 3001] Went over sea 3021

Drogo Baggins 2908 - 2980 = Primula Brandybuck 2920 -2980 Both drowned when Frodo was aged 12

Rorimac Brandybuck 'Old Rory' 2902 - 3008 = Menegilda Goold

Ferumbras Took III - 3015 * [30] [unmarried]

? = Adalgrim Took - 2982

Hobson Gamgee [Roper] - 2984 = ?

Lotho Sackville-Baggins 'Pimple' later 'The Chief' 2964 -3019 Slain & possibly eaten by Grima Wormtongue

Frodo Baggins 'The Ring-bearer' 2968 - [Ring-bearer 3001 - 3019] Mayor of the Shire 3019/20 Went over sea 3021

Saradoc Brandybuck 2940 - FO12 = Esmeralda Took

Paladin Took II 2933 - FO14 * [31] = Eglantine Banks

Hamfast Gamgee 'The Gaffer' [Gardener] 2926 –FO8 = Bell Goodchild

Meriadoc 'the Magnificent' Brandybuck 2982 – FO c. 65 'Merry' With Éowyn slew the Lord of the Nazgûl Knight of Rohan & Master of Buckland Buried with King Elessar = Estella Bolger

Peregrin Took I 2990 – FO c. 65 * [32] 'Pippin' Slew a great Troll Knight of Gondor & Thain of the Shire Buried with King Elessar = Diamond of Long Cleeve

Rose Cotton 2984 - FO61 = Samwise Gamgee 'Sam' [Gardener] 2980 - Mayor of the Shire 7 times Went over sea FO61 [13 children including -]

Faramir Took I FO9 - ? * [33] = Goldilocks Gamgee FO10 - ?

Elanor Gamgee 3021 - ?

Frodo Gardner FO3 - ?

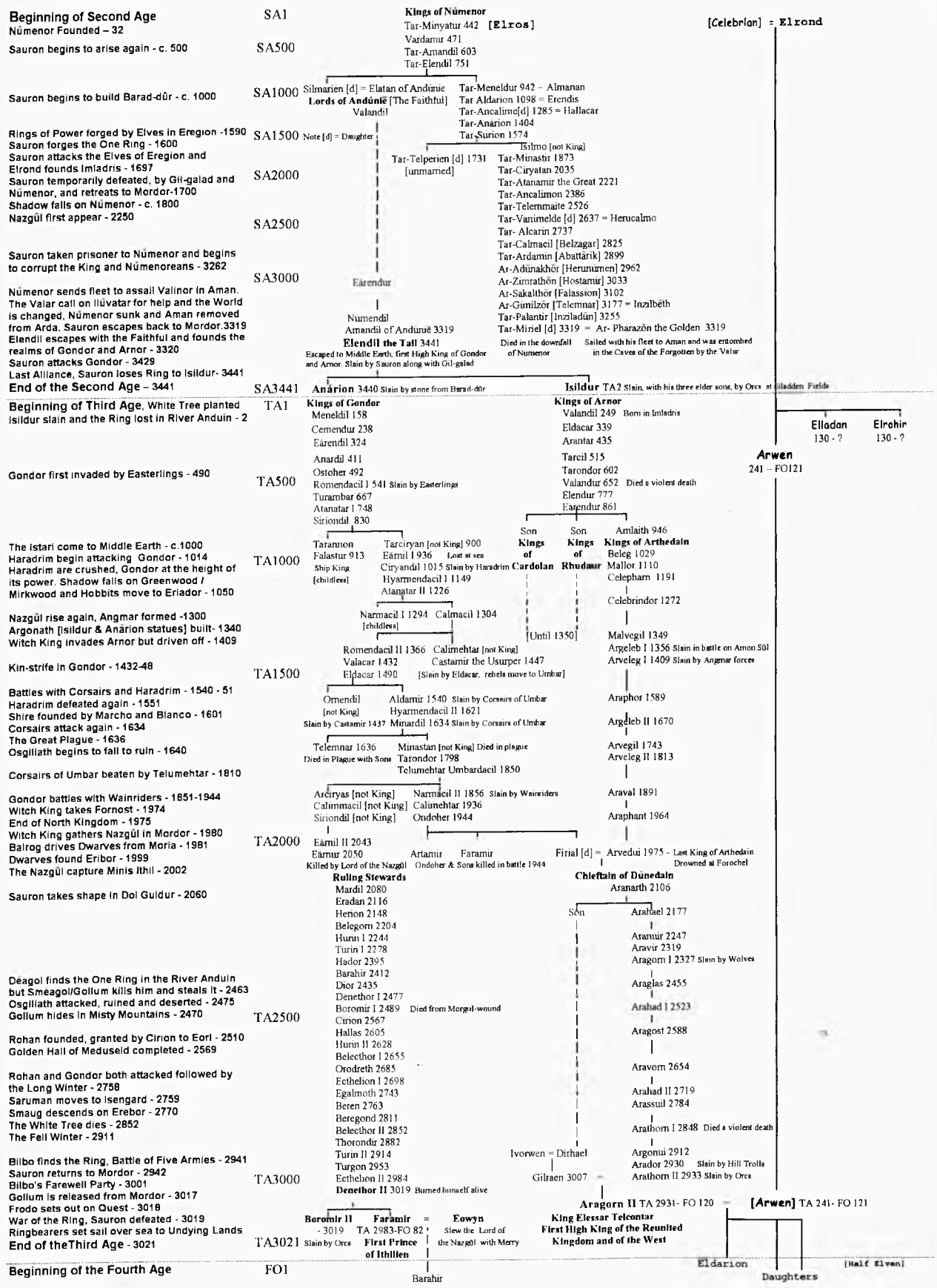
Comparative ages at significant dates:-

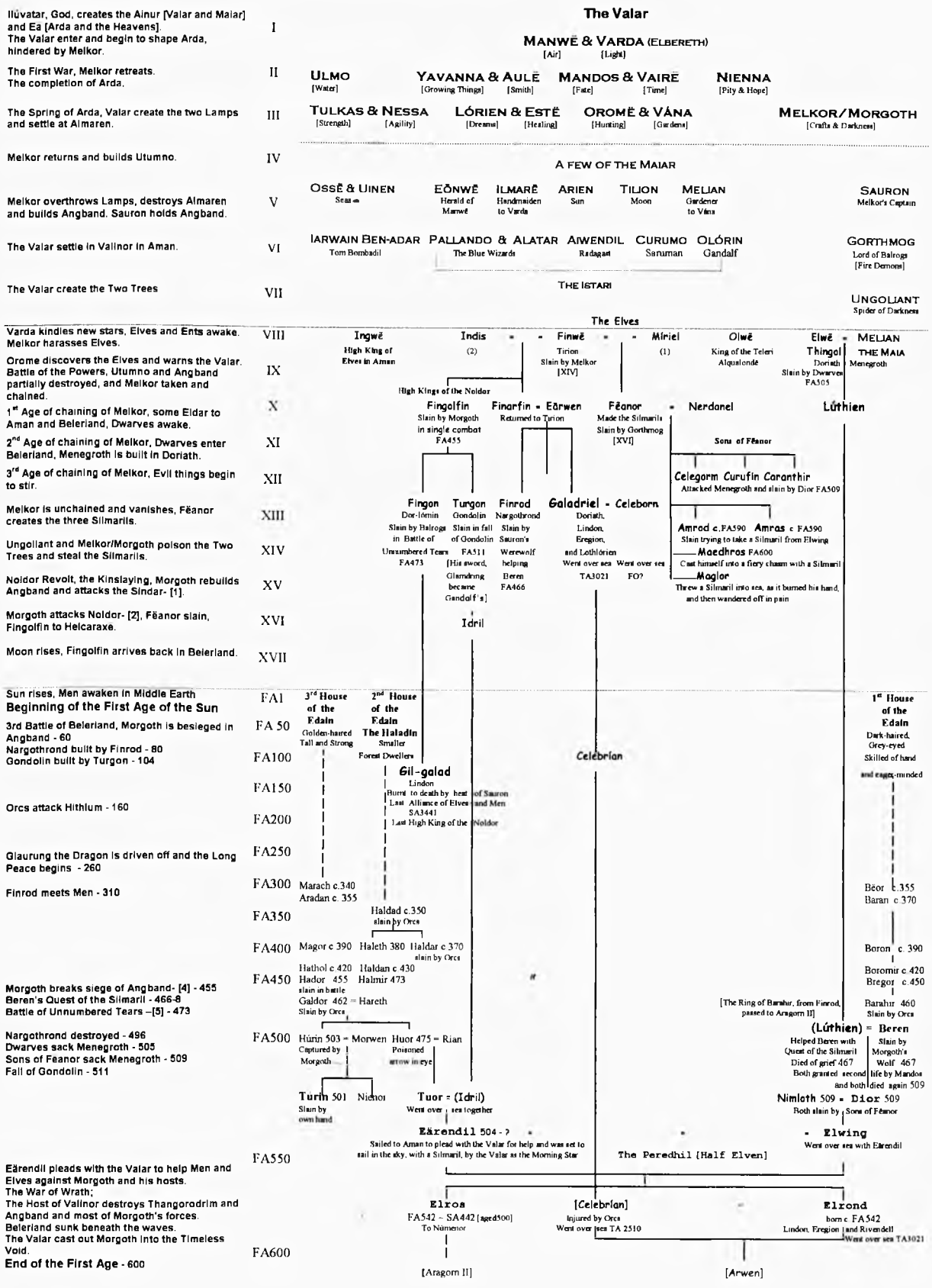
Note! Years are given in Gondor Reckoning. Subtract 1600, from Third Age dates, or add 1421, to Fourth Age dates, to adjust to Shire Reckoning.

1. The finding of the Ring by Bilbo	– 2941	[1341]	Sméagol – 511,	Bilbo – 51,					Aragorn – 10,	Arwen – 2700
2. Bilbo's Party	– 3001	[1401]	" – 571,	" – 111,	Frodo – 33,	Sam – 21,	Merry – 19,	Pippin – 11,	" – 70,	" – 2760
3. The War of the Ring	– 3018/19	[1418/19]	" – 588,	" – 128,	" – 50,	" – 38,	" – 36,	" – 28,	" – 87,	" – 2777
4. Bilbo & Frodo to Grey Havens and over the sea	– 3021	[1421]		" – 131,	" – 53,	" – 41,	" – 39,	" – 31,	" – 90,	" – 2780
5. Sam to Grey Havens and over the sea	– FO61	[1482]		Bilbo & Frodo over sea,		" – 102,	" – 100,	" – 92,	" – 151,	" – 2841
6. The passing of Aragorn and Arwen	– FO120/1	[1541/2]		Bilbo, Frodo & Sam over sea,			Merry & Pippin buried in Gondor		" – 210,	" – 2900

An Abbreviated History and Ancestry of Aragon and Arwen

Compiled by David B. Vale




Ilúvatar, God, creates the Ainur [Valar and Maiar] and Eä [Arda and the Heavens].
The Valar enter and begin to shape Arda, hindered by Melkor.
The First War, Melkor retreats.
The completion of Arda.
The Spring of Arda, Valar create the two Lamps and settle at Almaren.
Melkor returns and builds Utumno.
Melkor overthrows Lamps, destroys Almaren and builds Angband. Sauron holds Angband.
The Valar settle in Valinor in Aman.
The Valar create the Two Trees
Varda kindles new stars, Elves and Ents awake. Melkor harasses Elves.
Orome discovers the Elves and warns the Valar. Battle of the Powers, Utumno and Angband partially destroyed, and Melkor taken and chained.
1st Age of chaining of Melkor, some Eldar to Aman and Beleriand, Dwarves awake.
2nd Age of chaining of Melkor, Dwarves enter Beleriland, Menegroth is built in Doriath.
3rd Age of chaining of Melkor, Evil things begin to stir.
Melkor is unchained and vanishes, Fëanor creates the three Silmarils.
Ungoliant and Melkor/Morgoth poison the Two Trees and steal the Silmarils.
Noldor Revolt, the Kinslaying, Morgoth rebuilds Angband and attacks the Sindar- [1].
Morgoth attacks Noldor- [2], Fëanor slain, Fingolfin to Helcaraxe.
Moon rises, Fingolfin arrives back in Beleriand.
Sun rises, Men awaken in Middle Earth
Beginning of the First Age of the Sun
3rd Battle of Beleriand, Morgoth is besieged in Angband - 60
Nargothrond built by Finrod - 80
Gondolin built by Turgon - 104
Orcs attack Hithlum - 160
Glaurung the Dragon is driven off and the Long Peace begins - 260
Finrod meets Men - 310
Morgoth breaks siege of Angband- [4] - 455
Beren's Quest of the Silmaril - 466-8
Battle of Unnumbered Tears –[5] - 473
Nargothrond destroyed - 496
Dwarves sack Menegroth - 505
Sons of Feanor sack Menegroth - 509
Fall of Gondolin - 511
Eärendil pleads with the Valar to help Men and Elves against Morgoth and his hosts.
The War of Wrath;
The Host of Valinor destroys Thangorodrim and Angband and most of Morgoth's forces.
Beleriand sunk beneath the waves.
The Valar cast out Morgoth into the Timeless Void.
End of the First Age - 600
I
II
III
IV
V
VI
VII
VIII
IX
X
XI
XII
XIII
XIV
XV
XVI
XVII
FA1
FA 50
FA100
FA150
FA200
FA250
FA300
FA350
FA400
FA450
FA500
FA550
FA600
The Valar
Manwë & Varda (Elbereth)
[Air] [Light]
Ulmo
[Water]
Yavanna & Aulë
[Growing Things] [Smith]
Mandos & Vairë
[Fate] [Time]
Nienna
[Pity & Hope]
Tulkas & Nessa
[Strength] [Agility]
Lórien & Estë
[Dreams] [Healing]
Oromë & Vána
[Hunting] [Gardens]
Melkor/Morgoth
[Crafts & Darkness]
A few of the Maiar
Ossë & Uinen
Seas
Eönwë
Herald of Manwë
Ilmarë
Handmaiden to Varda
Arien
Sun
Tilion
Moon
Melian
Gardener to Vána
Sauron
Melkor's Captain
Iarwain Ben-adar
Tom Bombadil
Pallando & Alatar
The Blue Wizards
Aiwendil
Radagast
Curumo
Saruman
Olórin
Gandalf
Gorthmog
Lord of Balrogs [Fire Demons]
The Istari
Ungoliant
Spider of Darkness
The Elves
Ingwë
High King of Elves in Aman
Indis
(2)
Finwë
Tirion
Slain by Melkor [XIV]
Miriel
(1)
Olwë
King of the Teleri Alqualondë
Elwë
Thingol
Doriath
Slain by Dwarves FA505
Melian
the Maia
Menegroth
High Kings of the Noldor
Fingolfin
Slain by Morgoth in single combat FA455
Finarfin
Returned to Tirion
Eärwen
Fëanor
Made the Silmarils
Slain by Gorthmog [XVI]
Nerdanel
Lúthien
Sons of Fëanor
Celegorm Curufin Caranthir
Attacked Menegroth and slain by Dior FA509
Fingon
Dor-lómin
Slain by Balrogs in Battle of Unnumbered Tears FA473
Turgon
Gondolin
Slain in fall of Gondolin FA511
[His sword, Glamdring became Gandolf's]
Finrod
Nargothrond
Slain by Sauron's Werewolf helping Beren FA466
Galadriel - Celeborn
Doriath, Lindon, Eregion, and Lothlórien
Went over sea TA3021
Went over sea FO?
Amrod c.FA590
Amras c FA590
Slain trying to take a Silmaril from Elwing
Maedhros FA600
Cast himself into a fiery chasm with a Silmaril
Maglor
Threw a Silmaril into sea, as it burned his hand, and then wandered off in pain
Idril
3rd House of the Edain
Golden-haired Tall and Strong
2nd House of the Edain
The Haladin
Smaller
Forest Dwellers
1st House of the Edain
Dark-haired, Grey-eyed
Skilled of hand
and eager-minded
Celebrían
Gil-galad
Lindon
Burnt to death by heat of Sauron
Last Alliance of Elves and Men SA3441
Last High King of the Noldor
Marach c.340
Aradan c. 355
Haldad c.350
slain by Orcs
Magor c 390
Haleth 380
Haldar c 370
slain by Orcs
Hathol c 420
Haldan c 430
Hador 455
Halmir 473
slain in battle
Galdor 462 = Hareth
Slain by Orcs
Bëor c.355
Baran c.370
Boron c. 390
Boromir c.420
Bregor c.450
Barahir 460
Slain by Orcs
[The Ring of Barahir, from Finrod, passed to Aragorn II]
Húrin 503 = Morwen
Captured by Morgoth
Huor 475 = Rian
Poisoned arrow in eye
(Lúthien) = Beren
Helped Beren with Quest of the Silmaril
Died of grief 467
Both granted second life by Mandos and both died again 509
Slain by Morgoth's Wolf 467
Turin 501
Slain by own hand
Nienor
Tuor = (Idril)
Went over sea together
Nimloth 509 = Dior 509
Both slain by Sons of Fëanor
Eärendil 504 - ?
Sailed to Aman to plead with the Valar for help and was set to sail in the sky, with a Silmaril, by the Valar as the Morning Star
= Elwing
Went over sea with Eärendil
The Peredhil [Half Elven]
Elros
FA542 – SA442 [aged 500]
To Númenor
[Celebrían]
Injured by Orcs
Went over sea TA 2510
Elrond
born c FA542
Lindon, Eregion and Rivendell
Went over sea TA3021
[Aragorn II]
[Arwen]

The view from cyberspace

'Reading Lord of the Rings: The Final Attempt:' an analysis of a web community

Janet Brennan Croft and Jay Shorten

The Internet has had an enormous influence on fan communities of all kinds. Soap opera fans discuss plot twists, Xena fans trade fan fiction, Star Wars fans analyse movie trailers frame-by-frame, and so on. The Internet has made it extraordinarily easy for devotees of any subject to find like-minded people with whom to exchange news and discuss their passions. *Lord of the Rings* fans are no exception; there were hundreds of sites devoted to J.R.R. Tolkien's creation worldwide before the Peter Jackson movie project began, and the number mushroomed as soon as it was announced. As a contributor to one discussion group noted:[2]

> 'The amount of Tolkien fan interaction which occurs over the Internet every [day] is simply staggering. I tried to develop an approximate picture of it over two years ago for a project I finally had to abandon. I counted over 200 forums before I gave up.'

What we hope to do in this paper is to contribute to the study of characteristics of Tolkien readers, and make some observations on the topic of community on the Internet, especially as it relates to fan communities.

First, what goes into an online community? Jenny Preece offers this list of components:

- •People who interact socially as they strive to satisfy their own needs or perform special roles, such as leading or moderating.
- •A shared purpose, such as an interest, need, information exchange, or service that provides a reason for the community.
- •Policies, in the form of tacit assumptions, rituals, protocols, rules, and laws that guide people's interactions.
- •Computer systems, to support and mediate social interaction and facilitate a sense of togetherness. [3]

People and Purpose

In April 2001, Toronto writer, musician, and cartoonist Debbie Ridpath Ohi decided she needed to read *The Lord of the Rings* before the first instalment of the movie trilogy came out at the end of that year. As a filksinger,[4] she was already familiar with many elements of the story, but had never managed to read the trilogy the whole way through [5]. She was an experienced web forum host, with an online diary called "Blatherings" and a number of associated discussion forums on filk singing and other topics. For six years she also managed an online writers' community with a 50,000 member mailing list[6]. Posting reports on her web site as she read each chapter was a logical extension of her online diary project, and she felt that inviting her friends to comment on her observations would encourage her to finish the book. Later on she also mentioned some other motivations:[7]

> 'It would make me very happy if my online journal helped encourage other Tolkien skeptics to try reading Lord of the Rings, and also help show them that the Tolkien fan community welcomes all potential "converts", even ones who may not necessarily enjoy all the battle scenes.'

The first participants were mainly Debbie's friends and people who read her online diary regularly. But when her site was reviewed on the unofficial movie site TheOneRing.net (TORN), a diverse group of people from around the world was made aware of her project and joined the discussion.

> *'This is certainly an interesting community that has assembled here. I have an almost uncontrollable urge to run scientific experiments on it. "People who read the Lord of the Rings once a year have a 43% lower incidence of heart disease, report above average levels of job satisfaction, and love citrus fruits."*[1]

Policies and computer systems

Debbie initially set her site up as an unmoderated bulletin board. As she read each chapter, she would post a brief essay about what she found interesting or boring, how she felt about the characters and plot, and so on. Sometimes she added questions to stimulate discussion. Readers did not have to register to use this site; anyone could post a reply to the list[8]. Replies would include the poster's name, linked to their email address if they wanted to include it, and the date and time they posted. There was no way for the writer to go back an edit a post in this format. Earlier chapters remained open for posting even after Debbie had moved on, and in fact they are still open, but we cut off our analysis as of the day we posted our consent form.

Statistics and comparisons

Demographics

Who participated in this discussion? This was an amazingly heterogeneous group. Members reported ages from 12 through to 51. Some were reading *The Lord of the Rings* along with Debbie for the first time; most had read it several times, and many had read it over ten times and owned multiple copies. Occupations varied widely, too; there were schoolteachers, soldiers, graduate students, homemakers, software writers, and so on, all united by an interest in one book. As Wellman points out[9]

> 'The relative lack of social presence online fosters relationships with people who have more diverse social characteristics than might normally be encountered in person ... This allows relationships to develop on the basis of shared interests rather than be stunted at the onset by differences in social status.'

Participants were primarily from Canada and the United States, and other English-speaking countries such as England and New Zealand

were well represented. But other posters wrote in from places as diverse as Sweden, Greece, and South Korea. Everyone posted in English, but although there were several discussions on translation issues[10], in general nationality was not a major topic of conversation. In a discussion of popular television shows, Paul A. Cantor speaks of the "tribalisation of the audience ... the flip side of ... globalisation"[11]. His conclusions are just as applicable to a book-based fan community:

In general, the Internet allows people to break with traditional community configurations and group themselves with anyone they choose on the basis of perceived cultural affinities. The main point of all this talk of globalisation and tribalisation is that television in the cable and the Internet era is redrawing the cultural map in ways that increasingly ignore national boundaries.[12]

Gender was an important factor in the demographics of this group. More than one participant felt that there were probably more female than male posters in this forum because of the tone and style of the exchanges. A psychology student from Sweden, for example, wrote[13]

'I remember sometimes thinking that "it's so nice here, that's probably because there's so many women around". Was I right? Or was that just prejudice?'

Allison Durno is a close friend of Debbie's and one of the major contributors to the "Final Attempt" project. She also noticed this "feel":[14]

'...it intrigued me how many women in general were posting over in that board, though I'm not sure why. Part of it is that I think of Tolkien fandom as heavily male-based, though I'm not quite sure if that's true. Part of it is because other Tolkien message boards I've lurked at do seem to be heavily male. So, I wonder if women posted more because the board was run by a woman, if there was a tone to the discussion that was less-intimidating, if issues came to the foreground that women found they had more to talk about, if female-oriented reports (from Debbie) just generated more female response.'

Interestingly, however, the statistics show that 50% of the users used a masculine or probably masculine name or identified themselves as male, and only 22% were female or probably female. 27% of the posters used gender-neutral names and did not identify themselves as male or female[15].

But the number of posts by gender is also surprising, given this distribution. Most studies of online communities conclude that men post more and longer posts than women[16], but that isn't the case here. The male participants posted 46% of the posts; the female participants, only 22% of the total posters, wrote 40% of the posts; and the gender-neutral participants wrote 14%.

However, the type of post by gender seemed to follow the theoretical norm for Internet posting behavior. This norm predicts that women will provide more "social glue" through off-topic posts than men will. In her study of three Usenet newsgroups on science fiction television, Cromer found that the groups with a higher percentage of female members felt more off-topic messages were posted on their boards, and were also somewhat more tolerant of them[17]. Herring's research also shows more tolerance for off-topic posts by women than by men[18].

We divided the posts into three groups: primarily discussing the chapter under consideration; discussing anything else related to Tolkien's writings; and posts that went completely off-topic, including discussions of the upcoming movie. Of the total posts by women, 32% were on-topic, 16% were Tolkien-related, and 52% were off-topic. For men, 43% were on-topic, 17% were Tolkien-related, and only 40% were off-topic. The distribution for gender-neutral posters was close to that for female posters, so we can hazard a guess that these are likely to be women because of the theory that women are more likely to pick a gender-neutral nickname than men[19]. If this is so, there could be a more evenly balanced gender and posting-by-gender distribution than there appears to be at first sight, but the on topic/off topic distribution would remain the same. (On the other hand, the gender-neutral posters posted far less as a group than either the male or female posters.)

The fact that the women in this group spoke up more than might be expected, given the gender distribution, might explain the "feminine" feel. Five of the top ten posters by number of words written were female. It is also likely that the gender and the behaviours modelled by the person who originated the board, and by Allison, who was the top poster and took on a "hostess" role, set the tone.

Characteristics of interactions: rules and roles

From the earliest messages on this forum there was a balance between "scholarly" postings providing background to help Debbie understand and appreciate Tolkien's works, and "encouragements" that urged her to continue reading and posting. As time went on and the group got larger, there were more discussions that went off-topic. As noted above, the percentage of women's postings that were off-topic was larger than that for men. Off-topic postings often help form a kind of "social cement"[20] between group members.

Communities start defining themselves when they begin to develop rules. In this case, concerns about "spoilers" ruining the book for Debbie by revealing too much led to some posters appointing themselves "spoiler police" as early as the chapter "Farewell to Lorien". Even earlier there were hints about the fate of Bill the pony and the upcoming death of a favourite character that influenced Debbie's reading. The situation came to a crisis in the chapter "The King of the Golden Hall," when Debbie made a comment about how meek and subservient Éowyn seemed. This of course was a red flag to those familiar with the whole story, and one poster did reveal Éowyn's later pivotal role. As Allison recalls[21]

'That was the spoiler that caused me to call Deb at 7:00 in the morning to warn her off the discussion boards and that freaked her out so much she gave me editing power for spoilers that night... [T]hat's how my role stepped up on the page, once Deb gave me "the keys" to be able to erase spoilers from the board. It rather startled me to see how my role changed on the board from that point on.'

Polite online behaviour is distinct enough from face-to-face behaviour

that it has its own neologism: "netiquette". And this was an exceptionally polite board. The closest thing to a flame during the whole history of the forum was a single incident of one poster calling another's post "absolute rubbish". Even complaints about spoilers were leavened with humor and 'emoticons' to soften the blow (as in one example where a participant suggested posting decoy spoilers). One participant pointed out about the subsequent Silmarillion discussion, in which many of the same posters participated:[22]

> 'As heated up and controversial as they were, the discussions always remained fair, there was always an undertone of mutual respect and affection, even when we disagreed ... and we never called the other person stupid or bashed him or her down in another way when he or she held a different opinion.'

Is it possible that the subject matter – the works of J.R.R. Tolkien – automatically led to more mature and polite online behaviour? Apparently not – several people commented that the overall tone of this board was far more mature than that of other Tolkien discussion boards they had visited. One went so far as to call the behavior on some other Tolkien boards "orc-like"[23]. One poster wrote:[24]

> '...in my opinion, the discussion climate at the Final Attempt board, and the subsequent Silmarillion board, was a lot more open-minded, tolerant and well-educated than many others. That is, most people seemed to be genuinely ... and lovingly interested in the works and world of Tolkien, and truly interested in hearing other people's points of view. On many other boards where I've lurked a bit, I find that ... people who don't have the same opinion as the majority tend to get bashed or ridiculed.'

Another participant speculated on the reason:[25]

> 'Having lurked a bit at some other boards, the level of deep feeling and thought at this board has seemed to be a good deal greater than the norm. I have seen some boards that go into a similar level of detail, but without getting down to the real level of meaning. Also we haven't had too many people posting the kinds of comments that seem to be mainly repetitive drawn-out vowel sounds or interjections and which seem almost the norm at some other boards. Perhaps this is due to the median age of the participants.'

Unfortunately, we do not have enough information on the ages of the participants to come to any real conclusions, since only twelve of the nearly 200 posters gave their ages. As we mentioned above, it is unlikely to be due to the subject matter; while Tolkien wrote seriously and many readers take him seriously, this does not guarantee mature behavior. Some posters mentioned Tolkien "fanboy" sites as being particularly flame-ridden; these are forums where the median age and gender distribution are probably quite different from the "Final Attempt" group. A cursory look at the "getting to know you" thread on the later Silmarillion discussion board does seem to indicate a higher median age for this group than for Internet users in general.

In an intriguing article titled "Politeness in computer culture: why women thank and men flame," Susan Herring surveyed male and female posters on a variety of boards and came to some interesting conclusions. Both male and female respondents said that they valued polite behavior online, but actual behavior was skewed by gender. She speculated that "[f]or women, a cluster of values emerges that can be characterised as democratic, based on an ideal of participation by all and validation of others' experiences ... For men, in contrast, there is a valorisation of speed ... and rational debate...". Because of this value system, men may be more likely to be annoyed by incompetent acts on the part of other posters, such as sending time-wasting messages and spam, and may respond like "net vigilante[s]" and justify flaming as "a form of self-appointed regulation of the social order"[26].

But this board was different. While levels of computer competence and knowledge of Tolkien's legendarium varied, at all times a plea of ignorance invoked a deluge of help instead of ridicule. Participants in this forum exhibited "reciprocal supportiveness," a value that builds community and at the same time is "a means of expressing one's identity" and increasing "self-esteem, respect from others, and status attainment". In contrast to "real life";[27]

> 'The accumulation of small, individual acts of assistance can sustain a large community because *each act is seen by the entire group* [italics added] and helps to perpetuate an image of generalised reciprocity and mutual aid.'

Participants in this group also seem to value and reward (by responding and praising) a similar group of communication or performance skills to those observed in a soap opera discussion group by Nancy K. Baym: "humour, insight, distinctive personality, and politeness"[28]. For the "Last Attempt" group, it also seems that knowledge and the ability to share it in an informative but not condescending way are appreciated.

Performance is one way individuals establish an identity online. Participants also use distinctive names or nicknames, and employ strategies to associate their screen names with a distinct personality; "Katarina" and "Katerina", for example, sensitised the group to the subtle difference between their names through joking exchanges and personal revelations about where they lived and their occupations. On many boards, including the other forums on Debbie's site, participants use signature lines that include meaningful quotes, but the original "Last Attempt" forum did not allow this.

One interviewee, though, may have hit on the real reason why the tone of this board was so comfortable. A strong leading personality can influence an entire community:[29]

> '[I]t felt kind of like entering Deb's living room, where a nice, long party was going on. My guess is that the real life community around Deb has a truly friendly atmosphere, or flavour, and that flavour was contagious. All us who entered digitally became infested with it, and adapted to it quickly. ... I soon got the image of Deb as the host and head of the table, the object of celebration had it been a birthday party, and Allison acting as the perfect hostess, going around and checking on everyone, introducing people

Flotsam and jetsam *Lorenzo Daniele*

to each other and handing out the hors d'oeuvres, if you know what I mean.'

Growth of the community

A viable community grows and changes over time. One way a computer-mediated community can grow is through members' interacting outside of the forum where they met, and thus reinforcing their bonds. Etzioni and Etzioni conclude that a "hybrid system" that combines the best features of face-to-face and computer-mediated communication would "allow the special strengths of each system to make up for the weaknesses of the other;" a group that communicates both ways would have the superior level of interpersonal knowledge generated by face-to-face contact in addition to the memory-storage capabilities of a computer community[30]. But meeting face-to-face to reinforce bonds can be problematical for such a widely scattered group, and may be more probable in a situation where the community members have more in common and are more likely to have reasons to meet, such as an academic community whose members are likely to attend the same conferences.

In this case, aside from Debbie, Allison, and one other filk musician whom they already knew, only two of the interview respondents seem to have met in person at the time of the writing of this paper. (The authors met Debbie and Allison in person for the first time when presenting this paper at a conference in their home town.) However, many of the interviewees reported that they have exchanged private emails with other participants from time to time or visited their personal websites. Wellman calls online ties "intimate secondary relationships" – they are moderately strong, but operate only "in one specialised domain." Yet they can become more intimate over time, and he speculates that the "limited social presence and asynchronicity of computer-mediated communication" only slows the development of stronger ties and does not mean they will never occur[31].

While the on-topic discussions were the main purpose of the board, it was the off-topic exchanges that provided the social glue. As Haythornthwaite *et al.* point out, "such wanderings [off topic] may ... be taken as a sign that the group is becoming a community"[32]. We noted above that we counted posts that discussed other Tolkien works as on topic. But discussions also ranged farther afield to other fantasy writers, Tolkien-inspired music and art, the Peter Jackson movies, and so on.

At times participants also talked about their personal lives, sometimes tying it in with the chapter under discussion. One member compared the departure of Frodo to his father's serious illness, which led to both expressions of sympathy and empathy, and to even deeper conversation about the scenes in question. This caring behaviour is another example of a community forming. As one European interviewee pointed out, at some point one's personal comfort with the group shifts from protecting one's privacy to caring about belonging:[33]

'After the 11th September however I had some different concerns: Not about privacy, but about getting lost: I suddenly realized that if someone disappeared completely from these boards and even did not answer to emails we would not be able to find out what became of him or her. I think [two other members] know my real name, and I am happy about this.'

Another way a community grows is by developing its own in-jokes. Debbie started this early on – on May 3rd, in her initial comments on the chapter "The Shadow of the Past", Debbie said, "If anything nasty happens to the Hobbits in the Shire, I'm going to be upset (unless it happens to only the Sackville-Bagginses, of course)"[34].

Participants found it very amusing, and she began using variations of it in her chapter reports, sometimes for a humorous effect and sometimes more poignantly, as in her comments on "The Land of Shadow", where she says "NOTHING BAD HAD BETTER HAPPEN TO SAM!"[35].

But the main way this community has grown has been by branching off into new projects. Reading The *Lord of the Rings* with Debbie was from the beginning a finite project, and on June 4th, about two-thirds of the way through the trilogy, Big Mike observed:[36]

'There are lots of web sites where we Tolkien fans can get info, but this has really become a gathering (or Moot) of regular Tolkien loving people. Just like the feeling at the end of the book (wishing there was another 1000 pages to read) I hope some how we can continue this small community after Deb finishes.'

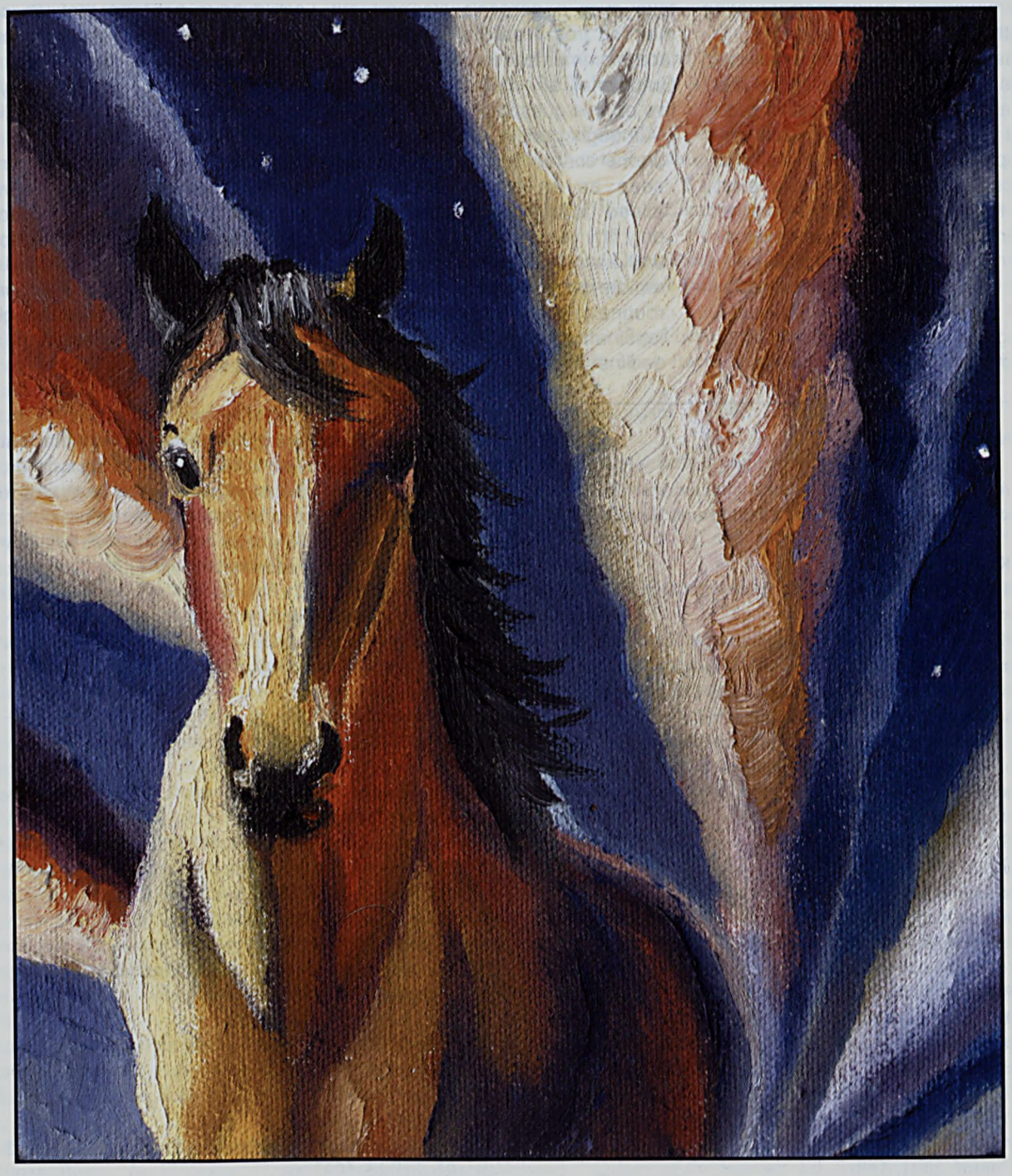
Almost immediately another poster suggested a group reading of *The Silmarillion,* and many other readers chimed in agreeing to the suggestion. Soon Allison stepped in to organize a forum for a chapter-by chapter discussion, and it got under way in July 2002. Other forums were soon added to the "Talking Tolkien" section of Debbie's site. There are now eight very active forums for participants discussing different aspects of Tolkien's writing and related works, including the Peter Jackson movies, books discussions on *The Hobbit* and Tolkien's essay "On Fairy-Stories" (soon to move on to other works and authors), and comments on Debbie's comic strip "Waiting for Frodo". There is even a forum devoted to discussing this research project. The "Talking Tolkien" forum has begun to take on the characteristics of a literary salon (as many online discussion groups do when they have multiple forums and threads), where guests can drift around the room listening to and taking part in a variety of conversations; sometimes one discussion will dominate, and almost everyone will be paying attention to it, and at other times small groups will be conversing all around the room.

Conclusions

The question remains: Is this a community? And more generally, can any group that rarely or never meets face-to-face really call itself a community? For one thing, most of the participants in Debbie's "Last Attempt" and associated forums seem to think of it as a community themselves, albeit a limited one. As one interviewee put it, he enjoys conversing and considers the other participants his friends, but "there is also a sense of distance"[37]. One interviewee did express doubts about the entire concept of computer-mediated community, calling herself "cautiously enthusiastic", and feeling that her experience with the "well-educated, widely read" people

"Mearas" - Jef Murray.

Jef Murray is a professional artist - see page 2 for details about how to view other examples of his work.



on Debbie's board, while exciting and fun, still made her "realize the limitations" of CMC and feel that it could never truly replace face-to-face interactions[38].

This community grows and adapts to new members and new topics of discussion; bonds between members are strengthened by occasional outside interactions; it has a shared history demonstrated by in-jokes and references to earlier threads; and it has developed its own rules and roles which adapt to new situations as needed. Quoting Haythornthwaite *et al.* again:[39]

> 'The question of whether or not one can find "community" on-line is asked largely by those who do not experience it. Committed participants...have no problem in accepting that communities exist on-line, and that they belong to them ... Even before the development of virtual communities, people usually cycled between multiple communities ... [M]odern neighborhood ties do not fill all of a person's community needs ... Virtual communities are only a part of a person's multiple communities of interest, kinship, friendship, work, and locality.'

Howard Rheingold, in his The Virtual Community, concluded "whenever CMC technology becomes available to people anywhere, they inevitably build virtual communities with it, just as micro-organisms inevitably build colonies"[40].

Critics of online communities sometimes worry that virtual ties can take over a person's life and cut them off from "real life" and face-to-face communication. Wellman and Gulia offer an interesting perspective on this question:[41]

> 'Although people now take telephone contact for granted, it was seen as an exotic, depersonalised form of communication only fifty years ago ... We suspect that as online communication is rapidly becoming widely used and routinely accepted, the current fascination with it will soon decline sharply. It will be seen much as telephone contact is now and letter-writing was in Jane Austen's time: a reasonable way to maintain strong and weak ties between people who are unable to have a face-to-face encounter just then.'

What would Tolkien himself have thought of a web community? Would he have considered it one more incarnation of his "deplorable cultus"[42]? Would it have confirmed his deep distrust of technology? Or would he, like Pippin, say "I wish we could have a Stone that we could see all our friends in ... and that we could speak to them from far away!"[43]. Community is always a good to be striven for in Tolkien's world, and the "Final Attempt" web group is an example of a supportive, but limited, community that serves a need of its members that may not be addressed by other relationships in their lives – a need to examine and discuss the meaning of *The Lord of the Rings* in a mature and thoughtful environment, and encourage new readers to do the same.

Notes and references

The research for this project was conducted with the approval of the University of Oklahoma Institutional Review Board.

1. ("Kevin")
2. (Martinez)
3. (Preece, 2000, 10)
4. "Filk" is the folk song of the science fiction and fantasy community. Filk songs can be totally original compositions, or new words to established tunes. They can be about writers, characters, or worlds. They can be parody, or loving homage, or a form of science fiction or fantasy writing in itself. Debbie performs in a Toronto-based trio called Urban Tapestry.
5. (Ohi, *Reading*)
6. (Ohi, *Permission*)
7. (Ohi, *V: 10*)
8. We found that since participants were unregistered, they sometimes varied the names they posted under, which may have skewed some of our statistics. The same person may have used several variations of their name.
9. (Wellman, 1997, 191)
10. One lengthy discussion on translation issues resulted in a number of posters copying out the first stanza of "The Song of Beren and Lúthien" in various translations they had access to. This thread is available at http://www.electricpenguin.com/blatherings/lotr/archives/00000047.html
11. (Cantor, 2001, 168)
12. (Cantor, 2001, 169)
13. ("Katarina", *Tolkien*)
14. (Durno)
15. This may be higher than in other online communities; many Tolkien fans create Elvish names for themselves, and people who are not scholars of his invented languages would have trouble figuring out the gender of the name.
16. A number of these studies are listed in *Psychology and the Internet* (Morahan-Martin, 1998, 183)
17. (Cromer, 2002, 6-7)
18. (Herring, 1994, 286)
19. (Jaffe et al., 1999, 230)
20. (Fox and Roberts, 1999, 646)
21. (Durno)
22. ("susanna")
23. ("Bodo Hardbottle")
24. ("Katarina", *I First Heard...*)
25. ("Turumarth")
26. (Herring, 1994, 289-290)
27. (Wellman and Gulia, 1999, 343-4)
28. (Baym, 1997, 112)
29. ("Katarina", I First Heard...)
30. (Etzioni and Etzioni, 1999, 247)
31. (Wellman, 1997, 198)
32. (Haythornthwaite, Wellman and Garton, 1998, 218)
33. ("susanna")
34. (Ohi, *I:2*)
35. (Ohi, *VI:2*)
36. ("Big Mike")
37. ("Brian")
38. ("Nail Paring")
39. (Haythornthwaite, Wellman and Garton, 1998, 212-213)
40. (Rheingold, 1993, 6)
41. (Wellman and Gulia, 1999, 348)
42. (Carpenter, 1977, 231)
43. (Tolkien, 1965, 260)

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The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers

Directed by Peter Jackson.
New Line Productions Inc.

Lost in the process

The narrative threads of *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* cover most, though not all, of the text of Tolkien's original – the confrontation of Gandalf and Saruman at Orthanc and the matter of Shelob are still to come (the latter needed, apparently, to flesh out Samand Frodo's trek across Gorgoroth). What has been transferred from book to film has, however, undergone a great deal of restructuring: sometimes this has, very reasonably, been done to put back into their chronological place sequences which characters in the book describe afterwards, the main example here being the Ents' attack on Isengard (as, doubtless, in the final film we should see Aragorn take the Paths of the Dead in 'real time', rather than as a reminiscence of Gimli and Legolas); but other changes seem more questionable, as we shall see. Of course, the film is tremendously spectacular. Once past the opening credits, without any recap or synopsis of what has gone before, we are back with Gandalf's encounter with the Balrog - but this time we fall with them into the abyss. Gandalf miraculously retrieves his sword in mid-air and proceeds to set about the fiery demon with it as they both plunge into the earth, before we cut from a long-shot of them to Frodo, who starts up from sleep as if from a dream of the conflict. This is a visually superb sequence even if it's quite some way from the images evoked (for this reader, at any rate) by Gandalf's own account in the book. (To state the obvious, whereas Tolkien produced two separate narratives for the book, the film, again entirely properly, intercuts between them.)

As they continue their trek through Ithilien, Frodo and Sam are joined by Gollum, who initially makes his presence felt by attempting to seize the Ring from the sleeping Frodo. Gollum is an extraordinary example of state-of-the-art computer animation. The detail in terms of hair and skin texture is astonishing. Some of Gollum's movements were 'driven' by Andy Serkis (who also did his voice), who for some scenes wore a lycra 'sensor suit', whose detected motions provided guidance for the animation. (This is a gross simplification: see *Cinefex* 92 for details.) Gollum is a stunning technical achievement but this viewer wasn't always quite convinced by him: he didn't always seem quite 'there', and his face (which reminded one both of Peter Lorre and even Harold Steptoe) seemed slightly too masklike; and his appearances near the end of the film with Sam and Frodo in Osgiliath didn't seem altogether consistent in terms of scale. However, it is certainly a good try.

At this point, it might be observed that neither Jackson (nor any other current portrayer of Tolkien's characters) can be said to start from scratch in depicting the characters in the saga: there already exist more-or-less consensus versions, admittedly of very variable individual quality, of how most of the characters appear - which is hardly surprising for a book published nearly fifty years ago - and Jackson's versions tend to fall well within the boundaries of the expectations created by that consensus. Gollum certainly does so, and so, indeed, do most of the characterisations in the film: they all approximate to these established prefigurations. The only difficulty is with such as Ents where any one person's visual image may seem quite wrong to many others. The orcs who have captured Merry and Pippin provide some humorous relief, so to speak, when a fatal quarrel among their number allows some unplanned cannibalism, ('Meat's on tonight!'), before the attack of the Rohirrim allows the hobbits to escape into Fangom Forest - where they meet Treebeard. If any of the book's characters were going to be difficult to visualise, it must be the ents. The film-ents are rather more twiggy than I should have thought, but they are another extraordinary digital effect (apart from the partial animatronic dummy of Treebeard's head and shoulders used for close-ups of Merry and Pippin as they are carried by him). However, there is a point which strikes me as wrong: Treebeard's standard expression appears to be one of open-mouthed surprise, a bit like Dougal in The Magic Roundabout (for those of you old enough to remember). This seems to be a trivialisation: the ents here don't seem quite serious enough.

After Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas encounter the Rohirrim - big, blond chaps on horses - they inspect the pile of burned orcs for signs of Merry and Pippin, then wander into Fangom Forest where they meet the resurrected Gandalf. This is a trimmer, neater Gandalf, with a much tidier beard. It's a pity that his speech to the travellers omits the reference to the 'nameless things' that gnaw the world far beneath the deepest dwellings of the dwarves, but about which he will bring no report lest he darken the light of day: this is the kind of thing which helps give the book its mythic resonance, but which characteristically gets lost in the f'ilrn's dialogue. Notably, in the flashback accompanying his account of the conflict with the Balrog, we only have the sequence where they emerge on the peak of Zirakzigil (perhaps some account of their ascent to this height from the 'uttermost foundations of stone' will be given in the extended version DVD); but Gandalf defeats the Balrog merely with his sword, rather than by means of the pyrotechnics hinted at in his own account. Gandalf whistles up Shadowfax and the four companions ride to Edoras and Theoden. Here, an alarmingly decrepit Lord of the Rohirrim is not just healed by Gandalf, but must be 'de-possessed' of Saruman's spirit – which Gandalf the White now has the power to do: an example, perhaps, of making Tolkien's gradual description of the king's healing rather more decisive and obvious.

The refugees from Rohan now make their way to Helm's Deep (rather than Dunharrow), in the course of which they are attacked by warg-riders (the wargs are, again, splendid digital creations), and Aragom has a hard time of it with one Sharku, a veteran orc fighter. The encounter of Frodo and Sam with Faramir considerably extends the original story. In the book,

Faramir, after an interview with the hobbits, allows them to continue, with Gollum, on their way in Ithilien, but here, they are taken with Faramir and his men all the way down to Osgiliath (where Frodo has a strange encounter with a flying Ringwraith, whose significance eludes me), Faramir all the time pondering whether to take the Ring for himself, before letting the hobbits go free. Was it felt that the 'real' Faramir was just too good, and had to be made more complex?

The climax and set-piece of the film is the Battle of Helm's Deep. For some reason, the number of more-or-less able fighters from Rohan is here some 300, who are up against some 10,000 of Saruman's orcs. In the book, there are around 2,000 fighters, which makes the outcome of the battle just a bit more credible. The delegation of archers from Lothlorien led by Haldir is new, and so is the arrival at dawn of Eomer, rather than Erkenbrand; and Aragorn's address to the enemy is absent. Many such changes will, of course, have been made from considerations of pace and compression, as inevitably happens when a book is changed into a screenplay. Still, the battle was an extraordinary visual display. The Uruk-hai bombardiers (if that's the applicable term) looked as though they were taken from a mediaeval engraving. Whether or not a reminiscence of the Second World War was intended, Gandalf's words at the end of the film – 'The Battle for Helm's Deep is over. The battle for Mddle-earth is about to begin' – are plainly an echo of Churchill's 'What General Weygand called the "Battle of France" is over. I expect that the battle of Britain is about to begin.' (A couple of other WWII echoes: when Saruman addresses his assembled army of orcs in Isengard, it calls to mind *der Fuhrer* addressing the troops at a rally; and the ents' breaching of the dam at Isengard recalls a similar scene in *The Dambusters* (again, for those old enough).)

As with the first film, there is much that is memorable and much for some of the audience to grate its teeth over. In what I think is a flash-back Elrond persuades Arwen to leave Middle-earth for the safety of the West in words taken from 'The Tale of Aragorn and Arwen': there we have a vision of the dead Aragorn, which morphs into his statue on his tomb, and the widowed Arwen standing to one side, as young and beautiful as ever. (An instance, by the way, of the film working well because it stuck to some of Tolkien's actual words.) Although not in the book, the image of the two quite gigantic trolls (to judge their size by comparison with a nearby orc-guard) opening and closing the Black Gate of Mordor has its own fascination. Conversely, Gimli is made too much of a comic turn: dwarves are far too grim for that. We have earlier seen Sauron represented as a flaming eye when encountered in visions; but now we see that the Eye of Sauton is a physical manifestation hovering above the topmost pinnacle of Barad-dur. Wrong, wrong ... Generally, as with the first film, *The Two Towers* works splendidly on its own terms: the effects are superb (although they still look like effects in some places); the acting is generally of a high standard – I might mention here Bernard Hill in particular, who makes a very good (if a trifle too young, once healed) Theoden; the pacing of the story, with its cutting between two or three narrative threads, is effective and holds the attention; and one is left impatiently awaiting *The Return of the King*. And yet, for this reviewer at least, a good deal of what makes the book so meaningful and memorable has got lost in the process of its transformation into a screenplay.

Charles E. Noad

Flawed triumph

Well, my expectations were a little different this time round. I knew I was in for another instalment of style and sheer vision, grand images and fine acting. I knew that at the very least, this was going to be a good movie. I was hoping, secretly and guiltily, that it might, just *might*, be better than *Fellowship*. Does that mean I was prepared for what I got? Not exactly.

For one, nothing could have prepared me for that steamroller of a movie, and I still refuse to believe that that was three hours of film. In my experience, three hours is a lot longer. For another – no, *Towers* isn't better than *Fellowship*. It is different, darker, more fragmented, more violent, perhaps more epic, but all of that doesn't make it into a better movie – or a worse movie either.

Neither does the fact that the alterations are much more noticeable and fundamental. *Towers* takes more liberties with its source material than *Fellowship*, for a variety of reasons, and many viewers may find that hard to accept. Suffice it to say that as long as I can see why the change was made I have no problem with it. And in most cases I can. I have barely a quibble about what the movie shows us. As for the things it *doesn't* show us – well, I'll be coming to that.

In many respects the second instalment picks up right where the first left off. The vistas widen, and the pace becomes relentless, but the visual glory, the breathtaking detail and the all-pervading sense of reality keep up. I cannot in clear conscience say that I imagined the Black Gates or Fangorn or Jackson's sublimely beautiful Edoras just like that – but I might well have imagined them like that if my imagination had been up to it, which it wasn't. Or, to pick a different example: I had been listening to the advance hype about the battle of Helm's Deep with immense detachment and even with a little trepidation. After all, *Towers* isn't about the battle of Helm's Deep, and action for the sake of it tends to bore me. And then I was sitting there dumbfounded through forty minutes of warfare, and there was that "I don't believe this" feeling again. Yes, it bowled me over. And just when I thought I knew what to expect.

I foresaw issues with the added storylines, for taking time away from the main plot. They do that, but I actually came to like Arwen in this one. I *finally* believe that Aragorn loves Arwen and vice versa, and the horrible dilemma that love poses, and Elrond's anguish over his daughter's choices. In fact one of the few quibbles I had about the first part has now been resolved: if

Arwen is to play a part in this movie, they should make us believe that there is a story to be told there. They did.

As for the storytelling itself: I suppose I should resent the way this movie pulls my strings – only that it does it so masterfully I don't want it to stop. I wouldn't have thought that you could still move me with that well-worn staple, the parting of families whose old men and young sons go off to fight a hopeless fight. Or that I would be watching with held breath when the future king of Gondor dons his armour for the first real battle. Or even that I would be fighting tears when Merry tells Pippin that for them there is no going back, and there I really should have known better.

Because like *Fellowship*, *Towers* is a movie about people – and oh, those people. To see that Aragorn can yell and kick Orc helmets around and slump to his knees in grief and frustration. That Sam can be cruel in his jealousy, and not just towards Gollum. That Frodo watches himself changing, against his will. That Gollum almost loves Frodo and that Gríma really does love Éowyn. Did I believe it? Every time. So *this* is what fantasy can be like.

Interpretation? Yes. A departure from the book? Maybe, although I tend to think of it as celebrating the book – but whenever it puts its trust in the characters the movie soars. I like Théoden's retreat into the conventional and traditional – poetry, heroic cliché – when faced with things too big for him, the signs that after a lifetime of ruling Rohan he is suddenly out of his league. I like the humanity and complexity of these characters, the shades of grey that bring their larger-than-life qualities into focus. And that includes this movie's much-criticized Faramir. Having seen Frodo breaking down under the Ring, and recalling that scene right at the end of *Fellowship* when Aragorn almost succumbed to it (and it was a fine, touching moment, a bit of an eye-opener for Aragorn and the audience both), I doubt that I would have bought Faramir's near-saintly indifference. Yes, it works in the book. I don't think it would have worked on film.

So, once again: is there *nothing* in there I don't like? Yes, there is. More than in *Fellowship*, and bigger things too. With this one it is not a case of a special effect too many.

First and foremost, I wish the focus hadn't been quite so much on Aragorn and company. That warg attack and Aragorn's apparent death – what was *that* all about? If they had jettisoned the whole pointless sequence we might have had time to see how Merry got that gash on his forehead, or how Faramir learned of his brother's death, or why Gollum calls Sméagol a murderer, or even that Frodo really does think of nothing but the Ring. The Ring quest gets short shrift this time – fine, wonderful scenes, but always too short, always less than its due.

Apart from that there are too many monologues – Galadriel's, Sam's, Gandalf's – telling us things the movie should have shown us; in particular, I'm not too happy with Sam's somewhat preachy voiceover towards the end. There are even a few continuity breaches – little things, but they are there, like Frodo and Sam finding themselves back on the wrong side of the Anduin.

But underlying all that is something more fundamental, something that may well be responsible for it all. What it comes to is that in places *Towers* feels a little rushed, a little uneven – a little truncated. Two hours and fifty-nine minutes, and there are moments in this film when I can almost *see* where they sacrificed a shot, or a line, or half a scene to cut this thing down to the required length. And the required length may just have been too little to tell the story.

So, am I happy – really, completely happy? Well, no. Not because it's not a great, breathtaking movie – it is that, and a worthy successor too – but because it could be better still. Because I cannot quite shake the feeling that it *is* better, and that I just haven't seen the real film yet. *Fellowship* is, for me, as close to flawless as they come. With this one I'm waiting for the extended DVD version to make it complete.

Eight and a half out of ten, with *Fellowship* (the extended version) ten out of ten; but ask me again in December.

Susanne Stopfel

More than just eye candy

Being a huge *Lord of the Rings* and Tolkien fan, I would be the first to assert that both *Lord of the Rings* movies so far released are visual masterpieces, with amazing dialogue, casting, production, effects, and direction, and that both films should be esteemed highly in the world of Oscar nominations, critical literary circles, and the arts communities at large. But amidst all of the effects we should not fail to see that this movie has larger parallels to real world events and current world issues, and that the author had created a world of more history than fantasy, and more reality than meets the eye.

Tolkien wrote these books in a time where his efforts were halted by the war and by his devotion to teaching. He created a world that was no doubt shaped in some way by the experiences of his time, which included the outbreak of both World Wars, his growing loathing for war, his concern about the environment, and his religious nature. And while he himself discouraged anyone from seeing his works as allegorical, they turned out to be symbolic and paralleled at the very least. Considering this as a critical student of society, I reason that these are in no way the parallels that Tolkien made of the books himself, but only parallels I make today.

Both *The Fellowship of the Ring* and *The Two Towers* (and later we will also see in *The Return of the King*), represent our world closer than we may think. One of the central tenets of the tale is the evident struggle between good and evil, although this is presented more in shades of grey than in black and white. There are the self-evident bad guys, and all the evil beasts and birds that serve as spies of Sauron and Saruman. There are the good guys – the Fellowship, the elves, the Shire folk, the ents. But as we start to see particularly in the second movie, there are constant character conflicts presented. Gollum is torn by conflict with his former self Smeagol and his desire to help Frodo and to save the ring from Sauron, while his Gollum side

is consumed by greed for the ring. Frodo is torn by the pressing urge to put the ring on and give up the quest as he feels its incredible weight, and the desire to complete the task of destroying the ring and its power. Aragorn is torn by his love for Arwen and his destiny as Isildiur's heir to the throne of Gondor, and overall members of the Fellowship experience constant conflicts between what is right and wrong, what is the proper path to take, and what their part is in the complex tale. This tale sees evil and good, evil mixed with good, and good turned to evil. In other words, it represents all the sides to humanity. We see that even though we have come so far today in our world of technology and mechanics, as humans we have remained the same, and the struggle within ourselves is age old. The struggle between corruption and morals, the struggle between what is good for us and what may be bad but easier to accomplish, the struggle between the many different conflicting interests and responsibilities in our lives. The movie, above all, represents the struggles of humanity.

Another parallel that can be made is the destruction of machinery. Tolkien was writing at a time of great industrialisation, after he was shipped off to fight in the First World War, and when great weapons of war were being manufactured. This was the time of the machine and Tolkien's war experiences left him loathing war and war machinery. This is represented in Saruman and his army of Orcs. In the movie it is emphasised – we see Orthanc, Saruman's stronghold, where the Orcs are filthy evil creatures, seen ripping down trees with hatred, and turning the great wheels of machinery to make the weapons and armour for the Uruk-Hai they are breeding and the war against the people of Middle-Earth. Smoke rises, the circles of Isengard fill with boiling fumes and stench, and the machines keep working, enslaving the Orcs who are their servants and Saruman's. We see creatures being bred expressly for war. We see war leaders making decisions in haste, for reasons of power and domination, and we see the toll this takes of everyone.

The parallels with the situation of the world today, as warfare and threats of terrorism fill the news; our leaders promise victory and justification of the purpose, but only posing more questions than answers. The reasons for war are never simple, and many times unjustified. The ugliness and horror which comes with the machinery of war is brilliantly shown in this movie. As Joseph Campbell said in his speech to the students at the Sarah Lawrence College in 1940,

> "Perhaps our students must prepare themselves to remember (without any support from our institutions of higher learning) that there are two sides to every argument, that every government, since governments began, has claimed to represent the special blessings of the heavenly realm, that every man (even an enemy) is human, and that no empire (not even a merchant empire) is founded in "kindly helpfulness."

In these times of political deterioration and war, we must remember two things. First, there are always two sides to every argument, no matter how much purveyors of war claim to be working for a holy Cause. Second, no war has ever been fought for the sole interest, or even best interests, of its "people." War is a hierarchy, it is territorialism. A child will want a toy more if someone else has it. War is analogous to building your toy collection.

Finally, I swould like to mention one more parallel that we can make, among many things may be derived from the movie. This concerns the ents, the ancient tree shepherds of Fangorn Forest. In the books and the movie, we discern an ancient, wise race of trees, trees that have been around for millennia and are older than most of the elves, trees that have human voices, and human locomotion. This struck me when I was watching the movie, paying attention to its clearly apparent environmental voice. And it struck me that maybe if trees had a human voice then we would pay more attention to what they were saying, and that applies to all things that do not have their own voice, particularly nature. But as we see in the movie, the voice of nature is strong, and its power is even stronger. This is shown in the greatness and strength of the ents, when they destroy Isengard, and trap Saruman in his tower, after Pippin tricks Treebeard into going South so that he can see the destruction of many of his tree friends, who 'had their own voices'. Nature showed its true voice and power when the ents went to war, and released the waters of Isengard. The message here, I believe, is that nature is much more powerful than any other living thing, and if we treat it with respect, it will nourish us as it has done for centuries, but if we ignore it and abuse it, thinking that we dominate all things without an apparent voice, we must face the consequences. What happens in nature happens to us, as Merry pointed out to the reluctant ents when he said: "but you are a part of this world...," when they chose not to be in the battle to save Middle-earth.

Beautiful things in our world are dying out, as represented by the story of the ents and the passing of the elves. Beautiful, honest, simple things. But they do not have to die out, and it is up to us to make sure that they don't, and most of all, recognise their great value. Peter Jackson deserves great credit for capturing so well in the movie the great beauty of the world as represented by places such as Rivendell, the Shire and Lothlorien, and the significance they should hold for us. The movie could have shown more, but doesn't – the importance of natural forces as represented by Tom Bombadil, and the relationship Gandalf has with the eagles.

It does reiterate well an important messaage – that we must never feel that we are too small to make a change in the world, for when we see a small hobbit contending with the enormous power of Mordor, and when all hope seems to become despair, remember what Galadriel said* to Frodo: "Even the smallest person can change the course of the future."

Anna Rozwadowska

**But not in the book. And she should have said 'may' not 'can', as Elrond does in the speech of which this is a paraphrase. Ed.*

The Common Speech and its speakers in The Lord of the Rings

Nikolas Koravos

All the writers of fantasy stories who want to create credible secondary worlds are faced with the same problem: the languages spoken by the inhabitants of their world. It is clear to everyone that in any 'possible' world nations, tribes or states should have their respective language or languages. This need is in conflict with basic narrative necessities: how will the characters of each story interact with people from other regions? And if the main characters come from different linguistic backgrounds, how will the author minimise the difficulties this fact creates? Each writer provides his or her own solution to this problem. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien resolved the issue by postulating a *'lingua franca'* for the area in which his story takes place: the Common Speech or Westron. Most readers accept this as a clever technique on his part, but from a linguistic point of view it should be investigated whether it is indeed justifiable for so many different groups of people to use the same language in order to communicate with each other. The final question is the following: is the idea really credible?

The first impression is that the use of the Common Speech in so many lands by so many people is not quite convincing with respect to particular cases. For instance, it seems strange that the Hobbits speak the same language as the people of Gondor since the two nations had virtually no contact for hundreds of years. Arnor, the North kingdom where Westron was spoken, was dissolved in the year 1974, Third Age *(LOTR 1123)*. From that time and for over a thousand years the Hobbits had little contact with people from other areas. During this time, it seems unlikely that Hobbit and Gondorian varieties of the Westron should remain mutually intelligible. There is also the question of how and why Hobbits and other Middle-earth nations adopted the Common speech – in many cases as their native language, in others as a second language. In particular, it is strange that the Orcs adopted Westron, which was after all the language of their enemies, and spoke it in such a manner that Pippin found much of their talk intelligible *(LOTR 466)*. It is these problematic areas that will be discussed in this paper.

Despite the existence of these problems it should not be forgotten that Tolkien had studied linguistics and paid exceptional attention to the credibility of his fantasy or 'secondary' world. If the origins and history of the Common Speech, as Tolkien presents them, are analysed, then most of the problems will disappear.

Númenorean ascendancy

The first thing to point out is that Westron was originally the speech of the people of Númenor, who had ruled the Northwest of Middle-earth for many years. It is therefore quite natural that their language was spoken in all the lands that were part of their empire, and also in many nearby areas. In the appendices of *The Lord of the Rings* we learn that the Númenoreans started their imperial expansion in the year 1800, Second Age *(LOTR 1172)*. The end of the kingdom of Arnor and the beginning of the decline of Gondor – the two Númenorean centres of power in Middle-earth – came more then three thousand years later *(LOTR 1123)*. Even at the time that the story of *The Lord of the Rings* takes place it is clear that the kingdom of Gondor is the most powerful and prestigious state in the area.

During the years of Númenorean supremacy the Westron tongue was the language of the most prestigious ethnic group in the north-west of Middle-earth. In addition, the Númenorean empire and later the kingdoms of Arnor and Gondor apparently used the Westron as the language of administration, education and perhaps religion. Tolkien explains that the Númenoreans, who at first used the Elvish language Quenya as the official, later abandoned it and replaced it with their native language, the Westron tongue *(LOTR 1163)*. The Common Speech was the variety of Westron that spread throughout Middle-earth during the Númenorean era. The official status of the Westron played and important part in its expansion among the native population. The linguist Janet Holmes mentions that "where one group abrogates political power and imposes its language along with its institutions – government, administration, law courts, education, religion – it is likely that minority groups will find themselves under increasing pressure to adopt the language of the dominant group" *(Holmes 60)*. Historically, there are many examples of language shift towards the language of the dominant group. The most relevant ones here are the spread of Greek throughout the empire of Alexander the Great and the spread of Latin throughout the Roman empire. It therefore seems entirely logical that in many areas of Middle-earth the local languages were gradually displaced by the Westron. In some other areas, however, especially in places where strong nationalist feelings existed or in cases of isolated groups, the local languages survived and the Common Speech was learned only as a second language. This seems to be the case with the Rohirim, and also with the Elves and Dwarves. These groups never abandoned their native languages, although many individuals, especially the most educated ones, had good command of the Common. Among the Drùedain and the Dunlendings, on the other hand, it seems possible that only very few people could speak the Common Speech with fluency.

Hobbit isolation

Although it is logical that the people of Middle-earth adopted the Common, it is not as easy to explain the fact that varieties spoken in different regions remained mutually intelligible after the Númenorean power waned. The Hobbits in partic-

ular, being isolated from the outer world after the fall of the kingdom of Arnor, should have developed (in the one thousand years of their seclusion), a variety which should not be easy for a Gondorian speaker to understand easily, even if the two varieties had common origins. This seems to be the case with such languages as French and Italian in the real world – both had Latin as their ancestor, but still they are not mutually intelligible and are considered to be different languages. How is it possible that the Hobbits in the story could communicate so easily with Aragorn, Legolas, Gimli, king Thèoden, Beregond, Treebeard and so many characters coming from different regions?

The best explanation for this phenomenon is that the language used by Hobbits and people in other areas had been standardised and codified long before the story took place, so that many aspects of speech, and most notably syntax, basic vocabulary and morphology, remained unaffected. Indeed, Tolkien mentions in his prologue that at the time Hobbits started making settlements within Númenorean territory, they "learned their letters and began to write after the manner of the Dunedain" *(LOTR 16)*. The writing system was probably similar in Arnor and in Gondor at that time. Its existence made the language spoken throughout former Númenorean territories immune to dramatic changes and makes credible the fact that Hobbit and other varieties of the Common remained mutually intelligible after so many years. The most profound differences should exist in pronunciation, which is less influenced by the writing system, and indeed Beregond tells Pippin that "strange accents do not mar fair speech" *(LOTR 792)*. Phonological differences, however, do not necessarily make two varieties unintelligible to each other. Interlocutors have the ability to 'converge' towards the speech of another person, especially when communication is important *(Holmes)*. This may be the case with the speakers of the Common Speech in *The Lord of the Rings*.

An additional factor should be taken into account in explaining the mutual intelligibility of Hobbit and Gondorian speech: there was travel and trade between the North and the South and some travellers, especially Dwarves, passed through The Shire *(LOTR 56)*. The Common Speech was therefore still a useful *lingua franca* and there was motivation for Hobbits to preserve a style which would be intelligible to foreigners. It seems that Hobbits, especially the most educated, cultivated and reproduced a relatively formal style of speaking, one that remained close to 'book language', a style which might also serve as means of communication with foreigners. This style was probably prestigious, as Gaffer Gamgee's comments on Bilbo's 'educated' speech implies: "a very nice well-spoken gentlehobbit is Mr. Bilbo" *(LOTR 34)*. It therefore seems that a form of 'standard' Westron remained influential among Hobbits, something which explains why Hobbits had few communication problems in the story: they were familiar with this kind of language. It should not be forgotten that with the exception of Sam, the other Hobbits who appear in the story – Frodo, Merry and Pippin – belong to 'noble', aristocratic families and were therefore members of the educated middle or upper classes. This means that they were knowledgeable of 'book language', of low frequency, archaic and formal vocabulary and therefore they had a larger linguistic repertoire than ordinary Hobbits, a repertoire which they could exploit effectively when interacting with foreigners.

Speaking with the enemy

All these factors provide an explanation for the relative homogeneity of the Common Speech varieties spoken by the "good" races of Middle-earth. These races, Elves, Dwarves, Hobbits and Humans, are in some way allied and share the desire to defeat Sauron and expel the Orcs from the territories they occupy in Middle-earth. It is natural that they share a language as well. But what about Orcs? In the text, Orcs also speak a variety of the Common Speech, as Tolkien mentions in the Appendices of *The Lord of the Rings* (1165). Orcs have almost no contact with humans and there is a strong hatred and aversion between the two races. How is it possible that the Orcs adopted the Westron? Two problems exist here. The first is related to the fact that the contact between the two races was minimal; the second is that, according to Tolkien, Sauron had developed his own 'Black Speech' and tried to teach it to his Orcish subjects but failed. Why did the Orcs adopt the Common instead of the Black Speech?

Let us begin the discussion with the first problem. In order for the Orcs to have developed a version of the Common they must have had in the past some kind of contact with it. The book provides us with little information. It is nowhere mentioned that Orcs had diplomatic or trade relations with Human kingdoms. The only way to address this problem is therefore by making certain hypotheses, for some of which evidence can be drawn from the texts of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

First of all, it is possible that Orcs occasionally came in contact with the Common Speech through Human captives who worked as slaves in Orcish dungeons. There is some evidence that Orcs did use prisoners in such a way. In *The Hobbit*, Tolkien mentions that (non-Orcish) prisoners and slaves were forced to work "till they die for want of air and light" in goblin dungeons *(69)*. It is therefore a possibility that Orcs learned how to use the Common from these slaves. This hypothesis is, however, weak. It is far more likely that the slaves, being the subordinate group both in status and numbers, would be forced to learn whatever language the Orcs might be using rather than the opposite. There would be no motivation for the Orcs to adopt 'slave-language'. Furthermore, the interaction between the two groups would probably amount to no more than a few commands, threats and curses. This could not result in the adoption of the Common Speech by the Orcs.

A place in Middle-earth where the Orcs definitely came under the influence of the Common Speech is Saruman's Isengard. It is known that Saruman's Uruk-hai were an Orcish race that he bred in Isengard *(LOTR 560)*. Since Saruman himself spoke the Common and since it would be desirable for him to have servants that could use it, it is highly likely that he taught the language to the Uruk-hai, who learned it as their 'Mother Tongue'. This may

explain why Ugluk's speech was comprehensible to Pippin *(LOTR 466)*. Yet, there is no explanation about the adoption of the Common by other groups of Orcs, those coming from Mordor and the Misty Mountains, for example.

It may be assumed that only the Orcs that were high in the hierarchy could use the Common. It would be natural for Orcish officials, favoured by Sauron, to have a language with which they could communicate with both Orcs from other regions and other races. This hypothesis is, however, undermined by several 'facts'. For one thing, it seems that even simple Orcish soldiers had knowledge of the Common. This is evident in the case of Merry and Pippin's guards when they were captives. One of them says to Pippin in the Common: "Rest while you can, little fool", and the other adds: "If I had my way, you'd wish you were dead now" *(LOTR 466)*. In addition, Tolkien explicitly mentions in the Appendices that many Orcish tribes in the Third Age "had long used the Westron as their native language" *(1165)*. Finally, even if the hypothesis was correct, there would still be no explanation for the fact that low-standing Orcs chose the Common instead of the Black Speech as their native language.

To solve these riddles, it must be accepted as an axiom that in order for the Orcs to adopt any language it should be a language of some status within their community. The Westron must have been the language of a major Orcish tribe – which it was not – or it must have been used by high officials in Sauron's regime. It should be a language connected with social advancement and power. There is a strong possibility that the answer to the riddles is found in these last observations. We know, for example, that the lieutenant of Sauron's fortress, 'the Mouth of Sauron', was a renegade who came from the race of those that are known as 'the Black Númenoreans' *(LOTR 922)*. These were Númenoreans – therefore speakers of the Westron – who entered Sauron's service during the Second Age of Middle-earth. Apparently, they occupied important and strategic posts in Sauron's regime. In addition, as Robert Foster mentions in *The Complete Guide to Middle-earth,* three of the Nazgûl (probably the Black Captain himself), were also initially Black Númenoreans *(282-3)*. It therefore seems likely that these Westron speakers introduced the Common Speech to Orcish dialect speakers through a direct chain from leader to subordinate. It is not unlikely that Orcs adopted the Common initially by imitating their Númenorean superiors, thinking that in this way the other Orcs would fear and respect them.

The above hypothesis is very strong, as it agrees with the principle that dominant group language is much more likely to spread to members of subordinate groups rather than the opposite. Once the Orcs learned the language, they found that it was a useful tool for communicating with other tribes, and in some cases the new language gradually displaced older ones. In other cases, a situation of bilingualism was established. Soldiers and officials should have a knowledge of the Common Speech as well as the tribal language.

The Black Speech

The only question that still remains unanswered is the failure of Sauron to impose his own 'Black Speech' on his Orcish subjects. It seems that this speech never acquired native speakers, and although it remained a prestigious language variety among the Orcs it was not spoken. Of course, it left its trace on Orcish language. Tolkien mentions that "from the Black Speech were derived many of the words that were in the Third Age wide-spread among the Orcs, such as *gâsh,* fire" *(LOTR 1165)*. This means that for some time the Orcs were exposed to this language, but its influence was limited for some historical or other reason. It may be that the retreat of the Black Speech was connected to the historical events of the Second Age. Tolkien points out that "after the first overthrow of Sauron this language in its ancient form was forgotten by all but the Nazgûl" *(LOTR 1165)*.

It is possible that the Westron started to spread among the Orcs long before the development of the Black Speech. If this is true, then at the time the Black Speech was introduced the Orcs were already using the Common as a *lingua franca*. Sauron's attempt to introduce the Black Speech was probably disrupted when in the year 3262 (Second Age), he was defeated by the Númenorean army and taken prisoner to Númenor *(LOTR 1120)*. During the years of his captivity it is highly likely that his subjects were ruled by the Nazgûl, who were only nine, and a larger number of Black Númenoreans, who might still be using the Westron. In this way, the Westron became once again the "official" language for Orcs. There followed the War of the Last Alliance and the defeat of Sauron. These events resulted in the gradual decline of the Black Speech in Orcish communities.

In conclusion, during the Third Age the Orcs retained the Common as a useful instrument of communication. The need to preserve this language was strong, not only as an Orcish *lingua franca* but also as the means through which the Orcs would occasionally come in contact with Humans or other races. Wars were quite frequent, and captives were taken as prisoners to Orcish dungeons. Thus, although the Orcish varieties of the Common were indeed different from the 'Standard Common', they never became totally incomprehensible to 'outsiders'. This means that even Orcs were capable of preserving a language and not only of "corrupting" it. It is therefore doubtful whether their race is as evil and 'irredeemably wicked' as presented by members of the 'Good' races, most notably by the Elves. And, as a final comment, it should be noted that language change is totally natural and there is no reason at all to label language change as 'corruption'.

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Poems by Keith McFarlane

The Light of Eärendil

You touch a place, close, by my heart
Where this, I promise you, no dark
Shall fall, though earth's blind teeming dim
And fail: the smallest flame holds back
The night, and shadows counterpoint
The fire we forge in blood and brain,
As lamps at sunset presage dawn
Though, one by one, the stars go out.

No rock might bear in obstinacy
Or faith greater resilience
Than this that love can steel from flesh
And gentleness; like water quenching
Flame, or ocean's patience shaping
Stone: each pulse beat wakened dares
Become sublime, though synapse part,
And voice be broken, stilled by time.

Keith McFarlane

The Stairs at Cirith Ungol

A Halfling dreams of endless mounting stairs:
Awakened there he finds no light, no sound
but silence holding breath; whose ears conjure,
far off, the slow, determined, beat of water;
his hand, outstretched, reveals damp rock, frost air.
Barefoot he walks on frozen ground, that rising step
by step first cracks, then thaws, becomes foul slime.
Stench rises suffocating in the watching black.
Time passes right where silence grows warmer,
where patterns form from velvet dark, dull chords
that fasten shade to shade, delineate,
divide the air, extend into blackness,
while underfoot the slime grows deep and rank
by whose decay is born a nacreous light.

Ahead the tunnel widens, where blue fired
constellations become as many eyes;
revealed her body, vast in the damp cave;
her palps tear silk, rend skin, paralysis
of pain and dissolution, softened flesh
her meat and drink. Unconcerned she watches
the man-child, bound by fear, lost in her eyes,
whilst unbeknown she readies abdomen
and limbs to strike. A sudden rush and arms
search out to grasp, her body raised above
the child - who holds aloft an Elven blade
and crystal vial that brandished fill her world
with pain, a light that burns both eye and brain,
a sword that pierces where her poison drains.

And then her screams call back the light, her form
dispelled as mist in rising air, he turns
from dreamt corruption to his mother's arms
where rests a child whose words in later years
become such bold imagined worlds where at
the last is named that nightmare vision:
The Stairs at Cirith Ungol, Shelob's Lair.

Keith McFarlane

Coinage in Middle-earth

Kenneth Fraser

In a well-known letter, Tolkien lists the many demands made on him by readers asking for more details of the world he had created. "...many want Elvish grammars, phonologies and specimens... Musicians want tunes, and musical notation; archaeologists want ceramics and metallurgy. Botanists want a more accurate description of the mallorn, ... and historians want details about the social and political structure of Gondor..." *(Tolkien 1981, 248).* While numismatists do not figure in the list, I should like to consider what we know, or can deduce, about coinage in Middle-earth. The works published in Tolkien's lifetime supply few details, and refer only to the Third Age. It is therefore fruitless to speculate on the possible use of coins by the Elves or the Númenoreans, though it may be pertinent to note that several ancient civilisations (notably Egypt) managed without coins.

The crucial passages occur in "The fellowship of the Ring", in which Frodo has to buy a new pony at Bree for twelve silver pence, which was three times its value *(Tolkien 1974a, 177),* and Gandalf at the Council of Elrond remarks that the news that Strider had accompanied the hobbits was "worth a gold piece" *(Tolkien 1974a, 253).* There are two other passing references to pennies in use in the Shire, and one or two others to money in general there. In particular, Bilbo gave "a few pennies" to children before the Party. *(Tolkien 1974a, 33).*

This is enough to tell us that even in such backwaters as the Shire and Bree, people habitually used both gold and silver coins, and that among the latter were 'pennies'. One of the unpublished drafts in 'The return of the Shadow' is more specific, because it tells us that "Silver pennies were very valuable in those days" *(Tolkien 1988, 164),* a phrase which suggests that Tolkien really was thinking not just of silver coins in general, but of the comparison with the mediaeval English penny, with which his academic work would have made him familiar. "Very valuable" is an understatement. I am told that an unpretentious male pony might nowadays be bought for about £200, which would equate Frodo's penny with £50 now. The early mediaeval penny had about the same diameter as our present "copper" penny, but, being thinner, less than half its weight. *(Sutherland 1973, 68).*

Other references in the same volume are even more illuminating. For a while, a transcript of Bilbo's will was envisaged as appearing in the story. It included "all monies in gold, silver, copper, brass or tin" *(Tolkien 1988, 247)* and we may therefore suppose that all these metals must have been in use for coinage somewhere (incidentally, a coinage of pure tin would be very unusual in the real world). Moreover, in an early draft it is said that Bilbo spent "his last fifty ducats" *(Tolkien 1988, 16)* on the Party. This denomination may well have been rejected in the end because its name had a specifically Christian reference. The originals were struck in the twelfth century for the Duchy of Apulia, with the legend:

"Sit tibi, Christe, datus
Quem tu regis, iste Ducatus",
which means:

"O Christ, may this Duchy, which Thou rulest, be given to Thee". But the ducat was later the standard gold coin of Venice for many years, and was accepted throughout Europe. It had about the same diameter and weight as our penny *(Chamberlain 1960,50).* I think an analogous standard gold coin – very likely struck outside the Shire – was implied here. In a later rejected draft, the Party cost Bilbo "Five hundred double-dragons (gold coins of the highest value in the Shire)". *(Tolkien 1988, 252).* No doubt this was rejected because the dragon, a symbol of evil, was unlikely to be depicted on the coins of any reputable country. However, the passage makes it likely that Tolkien envisaged gold coins of more than one value. In numismatics, the word "double" would usually imply double the weight of another coin, rather than that the design showed two dragons.

But the most valuable reference we have occurs in 'The peoples of Middle-earth', where a footnote to the etymology of 'Farthing' as a division of the Shire declares: "In Gondor *tharni* was used for a silver coin, the fourth part of the *castar* (in Noldorin the *canath* or fourth part of the *mirian*)". It is explained that *tharni* was an old word for 'quarter', like the English 'farthing'. *(Tolkien 1996, 48).* In the light of this, it is tempting to suppose that the denomination translated 'penny' was indeed the castar. The names of the two coins are clearly related to Noldorin (Sindarin) entries in the "Etymologies". Under the heading *Kanat* (four) we find the Noldorin equivalent *canad (Tolkien 1987, 362)* and under *Mir-* we find Noldorin *Mir* meaning "jewel, precious thing, treasure". *(Tolkien 1987, 373).* We cannot make any direct connection with the English etymology of 'Penny': the Oxford English Dictionary declares the word to be Germanic, but of uncertain meaning *(OED 1989, 482).*

At any rate, England did, from the reign of Edward I, have silver farthings and halfpennies. Before that, these denominations had been supplied by breaking the penny along the lines of the cross which was its reverse design. However, we should note that Edward also introduced the groat of four pence: previously, the penny had been the largest denomination in silver *(Mitchell & Reeds 1997, 97).*

We have no knowledge of how the 'gold piece' related to the silver. If Tolkien was thinking of English analogies, he might have had in mind Henry III's unsuccessful gold penny, worth twenty silver ones. It weighed twice as much as the silver penny (or about the same as our present 5p) and had a diameter about the same as our pound coin. *(Sutherland 1973, 64).* Another possibility would be Edward III's more long-lasting noble (worth eighty pence). In most cases, mediaeval coins were fairly simple multiples or fractions of others. We cannot know what most of the multiples would have been in Middle-earth. On the one hand, Tolkien tells us that "The Eldar preferred to reckon in sixes

and twelves as far as possible" *(Tolkien 1974b, 353)*, and on the other hand, the Númenorean reckoning, of length at least, was decimal *(Tolkien 1980, 285)*. In the real world, decimal coinage in the modern sense was unknown until Peter the Great introduced it in Russia, so I doubt if it would have prevailed in Middle-earth.

We do not know who struck the coinage of Middle-earth. Given the minimal level of government in the Shire, I feel it is unlikely it could have produced its own coinage. It was common enough in the mediaeval period for the more remote countries to employ foreign currency for lack of their own. For many years the Byzantine *solidus* was thus the standard gold coin over much of Europe. In Middle-earth the predominant coinage must surely have been that of Gondor, which we know did have one (see above). Another likely candidate is Rohan, the civilisation of which is in many ways based on that of the Anglo-Saxons, who had an extensive coinage, mainly of silver pennies.

One would like to know what designs the coins of Middle-earth might have had. Even here, there are one or two clues. Most importantly, in *Unfinished Tales* it is stated that "Gondor after the Kings declined into a 'Middle Age' of fading knowledge, and simpler skills" *(Tolkien, 1980, 403)*. This surely means that we ought to be considering parallels from the mediaeval period, rather than the classical coinage with which Tolkien's education would have made him familiar. In that era, the majority of coins bore a very stylised image of a king or other ruler on the obverse, and the reverse was often a cross of some kind, or sometimes the figure of a saint. Heraldic devices appear in the late Middle Ages. Going back into the Anglo-Saxon period, we find also monograms, inscriptions, swords, crude representations of buildings and, interestingly, in a few cases in the pagan era, a beast that might have been a dragon! *(Mitchell and Reeds 1997, 43-44)*. This range of designs poses a problem. Clearly the cross is out of the question fo Middle-earth, and in view of the reticence of *The Lord of the Rings* concerning religion, I think any representation of the Valar must also be excluded. Again, since the Stewards of Gondor were so modest as to have no device on their banner, surely they would not have put their own heads on the coinage. What are we left with?

There might have been coins with mere inscriptions – albeit artistically engraved – as was usually the case with Islarnic coins. But one finds also in *The Lord of the Rings* and elsewhere occasional references to quasi-heraldic devices (badges rather than coats of arms in the correct sense), as for instance on the Gates of Moria *(Tolkien 1974a, 291)* and I think these are quite likely to have been used on coins. The reference to dragons mentioned above does at least make it clear that Tolkien thought figurative art, and not just inscriptions, might have been employed.

There is one tantalising reference which allows us to go further. In *Unfinished Tales* it is stated that the seal of the Stewards of Gondor bore the letters "R.N.D.R." surmounted by three stars, signifying 'King's Servant' *(Tolkien 1980, 297)* and a similar device used by King Elendil is actually depicted *(Tolkien 1980, 316)*. As the devices on mediaeval coins were quite frequently not dissimilar to those on seals, I think this is our strongest candidate for a Gondorian coin design. Apart from overcoming the difficulty about not depicting the Steward directly, it also suggests that the inscription (no doubt giving the ruler's titles) would be in Sindarin, which would have been used rather than the Common Speech, just as mediaeval coins were inscribed in Latin. Dates and denominations, by the way, were hardly ever inscribed on mediaeval coins, being no doubt of little use in an age of illiteracy.

To conclude, I have ventured to illustrate the design of the Steward's Seal. We do not know how the stars were represented: I have used as a model the three stars which occur, in an analogous position, on top of the coat of arms of the Republic of Latvia. This was a common design on the coins and stamps of that country, and Tolkien could well have seen it.

I believe this is all that can be said to date about the coinage of Middle-earth, unless more can be found in works as yet unpublished. I hope that readers may agree that these scattered references, when brought together, supply us with more information than might have been supposed.

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Other information from Mrs Ann Cairns.

Re-writing the past - The pillars of Middle-earth

Andreas Gloge

Translation from the original German by Marie-Noelle Biemer

The best place to start, when attempting to comprehend Tolkien's mythic dimensions, merely hinted at in stories, songs, and lore in *The Lord of the Rings*, is with *The Silmarillion*. Tolkien tried hard to have both books published at the same time because he was convinced they were too closely linked to each other to be separated *(cf. Carpenter 1991, 182ff)*. But the publishers shrank from his demands. They judged *The Silmarillion* unsuitable for the contemporary market and in any case it largely consisted still of a complex, disordered pile of innumerable manuscripts and revisions. In the event, *The Silmarillion* was published posthumously by Tolkien's son Christopher, who made what he thought the best choices amongst his father's manifold notes. A few years later, the twelve volumes of *The History of Middle-earth* followed, also edited by Christopher Tolkien. It filled many gaps as regards content and offered alternative versions to *The Silmarillion* based on hitherto neglected scripts by J.R.R. Tolkien.[1]

There will never be an authorised version of *The Silmarillion*, so many interpretative approaches should only be considered with care. However its literary value for *The Lord of the Rings* is beyond question. "In any case it served as a primary source for The Lord [of the Rings]" *(Mathews 1978, 56)* and "[b]y incorporating various epic traditions and types into one form – and one, moreover, which closely adheres to the requirements Aristotle prescribed for the epic in his *Poetics*, including unity of action – Tolkien devises a unique form of *fantasy* writing" *(Mathews 1978, 57f)*. According

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to Mathews, *The Silmarillion* serves as a primary source for the actions and motivations of different cultures and traditions in Middle-earth and thus explains the geographical and socio-political structures in *The Lord of the Rings*. For this reason, The Silmarillion is included in the following examination of the influence of old myths and legends.

The importance of language

J.R.R. Tolkien found international fame as an author but first and foremost he was a philologist who taught for 39 years at the universities of Oxford and Leeds. Besides his penchant for Old

"And now the songs have come down among us out of strange places and walk visible under the Sun." (TT, 191)

English, he also possessed a variously extensive knowledge of Latin, Greek, Finnish, Gothic, Welsh, and Icelandic. According to his biographer Carpenter he was "well versed in all dialects of Anglo-Saxon and Middle English" while additionally "during 1919 and 1920, when he was working on the Oxford Dictionary he made himself acquainted with a number of other early Germanic languages" *(Carpenter 2002, 178f)*.

It is thus no great surprise that in his great life's work, *The Lord of the Rings*, no less than fifteen languages emerge *(cf. Noel 1977, 28ff)*. They vary from the only hinted at to the extensive, in conversations, names, songs, poems, or lore. In a letter to W.H. Auden, shortly after the publication of the last volume of The Lord of the Rings in 1955, Tolkien said about his love for languages:

> 'Most important, perhaps, after Gothic was the discovery in Exeter College library, when I was supposed to be reading for Honour Mods, of a Finnish Grammar. It was like discovering a complete wine-cellar filled with bottles of an amazing wine of a kind of flavour never tasted before. [...] All this only as background to the stories [of Middle-earth], though languages and names are for me inextricable from the stories. They are and were so to speak an attempt to give background or a world in which my expressions of linguistic taste could have a function. The stories were comparatively late in coming'. *(Carpenter 1995, 214)*

Inspired by his own poems, the invention of his own grammar, and by old mythologies (as for example the relatively new Finnish epic Kalevala [2]), Tolkien began to work on private stories, which would give his "taste for language" a function and a sense, in 1917. Those episodes, which were only published after his death as *The Silmarillion* and which depict the creation and world history of Middle-earth over a period of more than 6000 years, formed an inspirational well for his two most successful books, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

Tolkien invented not only two elvish languages, Quenya and

1. A rough abstract of *The Silmarillion* can be found in Carpenter (1991a, 190-241) where a more than ten thousand word long letter from Tolkien to Milton Waldmann (Collins publishers) in 1951 has been summarised. In it, Tolkien explains the relevance of *The Silmarillion*. In Garbowski (2000, 59-63) more information and explanation concerning the posthumous publication of *The History of Middle-earth* and *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth* (1980, George Allen & Unwin), published as *Nachrichten aus Mittelerde* in German, can be found. These works illuminate the mythical background of Middle-earth and have contributed considerably to the character of the world of *The Lord of the Rings*.
2. The Finnish national epic was finished in its complete revision in 1849. See http://virtual.finland.fi/english/kalevala.html (13.4.2002)for more details.

Sindarin *(cf. RK, 493-530)*, with vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation but he also supplied his fictitious peoples with appropriate language patterns that clearly distinguished them from one another in the story:

'Tolkien used English to represent the Common Speech, Westron, spoken by the hobbits and most of the Free Peoples of Middle-earth. The relationship of English to the languages of other peoples indicates those peoples' relationships to the hobbits. Throughout most of *LOR*, Anglo-Saxon based English is used to give the effect of simple dignity and proximity to nature. In the Shire, the English Tolkien used was informal and often unsophisticated and provincial. In Rohan, actual Old English words, names and phrases were used to show that their relationship to Modern English reflects the similarities between the tongues of the Shire and the Mark. These two languages had a common source in the speech of Wilderland, where both the hobbits and the Rohirrim originated. In Gondor, French and other Latin-based words were used to suggest a language still more removed and noble than the Common Speech used elsewhere. This was because the inhabitants of Gondor spoke not only Westron but Elvish as well.' *(Noel 1977, 29)*

While the language diversity in Middle-earth is often only hinted at, it shows distinct depth elsewhere, with the elves, for example. The entire conception, at any rate, proves Tolkien's love of languages and the sound of old words which renders *LOR* stylistically more interesting – though some readers unfamiliar with elvish vocabulary might wonder about the exact sense of the words. Here Tolkien's propensity for symbolism shows. It is less the clearly definable sense and more the function for the plot or the magic of the atmosphere that determines his creative direction. It can be found in the poems in elvish as well as in some isolated, seemingly wistful, remarks:

"Galadriel' he [Sam] said faintly, and then he heard voices far off but clear: the crying of the Elves as they walked under the stars in the beloved shadows of the Shire, and the music of the Elves as it came through his sleep in the Hall of Fire in the house of Elrond.'

Gilthoniel A Elbereth!

And then his tongue was loosed and his voice cried in a language which he did not know:

A Elbereth Gilthoniel
o menel palan-diriel,
le nallon sí di'nguruthos!
A tiro nin, Fanuilos!

(TT, 425)

Even though neither Sam nor the reader can grasp immediately the exact meaning of these words, the passage has a certain effect and meaning because of the strange language. Helmut W. Pesch ascribes this function to a reflection of the magical character of language as well as to its function as a medium of creation which in turn determines the magical character *(cf. Pesch 1982, 183)*. Tolkien himself felt that the creative use of language was almost equal to an act of creation, which would bring us closer to God *(cf. Tolkien 1987, 157)*. The imagination of the reader at this is as much engaged as by the creative power of words.

During the long years of writing and revising Tolkien reconsidered and rewrote almost every single word in *LOR* and he grew very fond of his own creations, such as the newly devised plural of dwarf (dwarves instead of dwarfs). Even though the publisher's typesetters corrected 'dwarves' to 'dwarfs'," elvish' to 'elfish' and 'further' to 'farther' at first, Tolkien showed an impressive determination concerning his own Middle-earth orthography and grammar, finally managing to establish his unconventional forms in spite of the critical efforts of his publisher's typesetters *(cf. Carpenter 1991, 45, 224, 225, 409, 410)*.

In addition to these word variations, which lend his texts a personal touch independent of the grammatical style, Tolkien put every single word, though it was only concerned with trivial things, in *LOR* under consideration to see whether or not its derivation and operation was to the immediate purpose of the world of Middle-earth. For example the tobacco that Gandalf and the hobbits enjoy throughout the story and which even gets its own chapter "Concerning Pipe-weed' *(FR, 26)* in the prologue of *LOR*, is described as pipe-weed not as tobacco. Though Tolkien clearly classifies this pipe-weed as tobacco through its mode of production and usage, he calls it pipe-weed in his own unique language. The reason for that might be, as Shippey suspects, that tobacco does not accord with the phonetic structure of English and sounds too outlandish for the Shire.

It ['tobacco'] is an import from some unknown Caribbean language via Spanish, reaching English only after the discovery of America, sometime in the sixteenth century. [...] 'Pipe-weed' shows Tolkien's wish to accept a common feature of English modernity, which he knew could not exist in the world of elves or trolls, and whose anachronism would instantly be betrayed by a word with the foreign feel of 'tobacco'. *(Shippey 1982, 53)*

In contrast to all the special and magical moments of the newly-formed language elements, Tolkien also proves his ability to deal critically with the use of language. Thus he portrays Saruman, the head of the White Council, who in the end falls prey to his own lust for power, as a master of manipulation using only the sound of his voice:

'Suddenly another voice spoke, low and melodious, its very sound an enchantment. Those who listened unwarily to that voice could seldom report the words that they heard; and if they did, they wondered, for little power remained in them. Mostly they remembered only that it was a delight to hear the voice speaking, all that it said seemed wise and reasonable, and desire awoke in them by swift agreement to seem wise themselves. When others spoke they seemed harsh and uncouth by contrast; and if they gainsaid the voice, anger was kindled in the hearts of those under the spell. For some the spell lasted only while the voice was spoke to them, and when it spoke to another they smiled, as men do who see through a juggler's trick while others gape at it. For many the sound of the voice alone was enough to hold them enthralled; but for those whom it conquered the spell endured when they were far away, and ever they heard that soft voice whispering and urging them. But none were unmoved; none rejected its pleas and its commands without an effort of mind and will, so long as its master had control of it.' *(TT, 228)*

Here Tolkien illustrates how the power of language can be misused for propagandist and manipulative ends as it was practised by the great pow-

ers everywhere in the world in Tolkien's time.

Saruman and to some extent his servant Wormtongue, as well as Smaug in *The Hobbit*, have the knowledge and talent to use this powerful medium to gain ascendancy over others. In spite of his love of language, Tolkien does not avoid the ambivalence of language as a means of communication but contrasts the wonderful songs of the elves with a dark warning that language can be used for evil purposes by cunning individuals such as Saruman.

Language has also the function of transferring into the present knowledge of and about the past, in order to extract new wisdom from it. It is important to note that the effectiveness of language elements consciously used by the author lends Middle-earth plausibility and authentic depth and thus furthers his purpose in creating a myth.

> 'For a not inconsiderable number of readers and critics the languages with their oddly genuine resonance contribute to the 'inner consistency of reality' of Middle-earth that the author desired. Certainly the languages (together with the more fragmentary ones) as they have been incorporated into the mythology bolster the sense of historicity of Middle-earth.' *(Garbowski 2000, 71)*

This 'inner consistency of reality' is the basis for the reader's fascination with *LOR*. Because the secondary world of Middle-earth is so plausibly drawn it stands as a literary construct so complex that even after repeated reading as yet undiscovered details can be found.

How important those language elements were for Tolkien can be seen in the following etymological and mythological analyses of a few names and passages in his books. It would be beyond the scope of this paper to retrace the original, mostly Old English, meanings of every single name in *LOR* that have been drawn from secondary literature. It has to be mentioned, though, that almost every invented name in *LOR*, be it that of a creature, an item or a geographical feature, either has Old English as a source or is rooted in the Nordic world of gods and heroes. These roots have been so carefully chosen by Tolkien that the bases of these names always bears a striking if at first hidden meaning (at least for linguistic amateurs) that contributes to the texture of Middle-earth. The studies of Ruth Noel (1977), T.A. Shippey (1982), and Armin Dahlke (1998) can be referred to here. In their books they point out the integral characteristics of Tolkien's methodology[3].

A mere list of the different origins of words in this paper certainly cannot mirror their importance in the readers' perception, but the intensity of Tolkien's investigations and efforts can be demonstrated. They ultimately revert to the cultural roots of nearly all Western European peoples. The subliminal familiarity with Middle-earth thus formed is as relevant for the impact of *LOR* as the influence of mythology and religion which is elaborated upon in the following. I have to point out, though, that in letters and conversations Tolkien freely admitted to these parallels and inspirations, but many similarities to old myths are based on speculations which in turn rest on a knowledge of the author's expertise. This conflicts with Tolkien's view that a literary work should be the only source for interpretation, ignoring all the author's personal history.

The heritage of Norse mythology

The most important Norse myths and legends can be found in the *Edda*, the epic of the Scandinavian gods. It serves Tolkien as an inspiration for names and actions in Middle-earth's cosmos. The process starts with the dwarves in *The Hobbit*. They obtain their names almost exclusively from the Old or Poetic Edda and assume the essential characteristics of their names in their original meaning. Additionally, Tolkien adapts the dwarves' appearance and way of life from the Siegfried saga by describing them as small in stature, stubborn, gold-loving craftspeople and assigning them the mountains as a home. These adaptations have been clearly retraced by Armin Dahlke *(1998, 22-26)*. It is interesting to note that Tolkien takes the main features of the elves, who are considered to be the counterpart of dwarves amongst the free peoples in the history of Middle-earth, from an Anglo-Saxon background. By the use of this contrast he immediately breaks the symbolic fetters which would have restricted him had he designed too accurate an adaptation of Norse mythology.

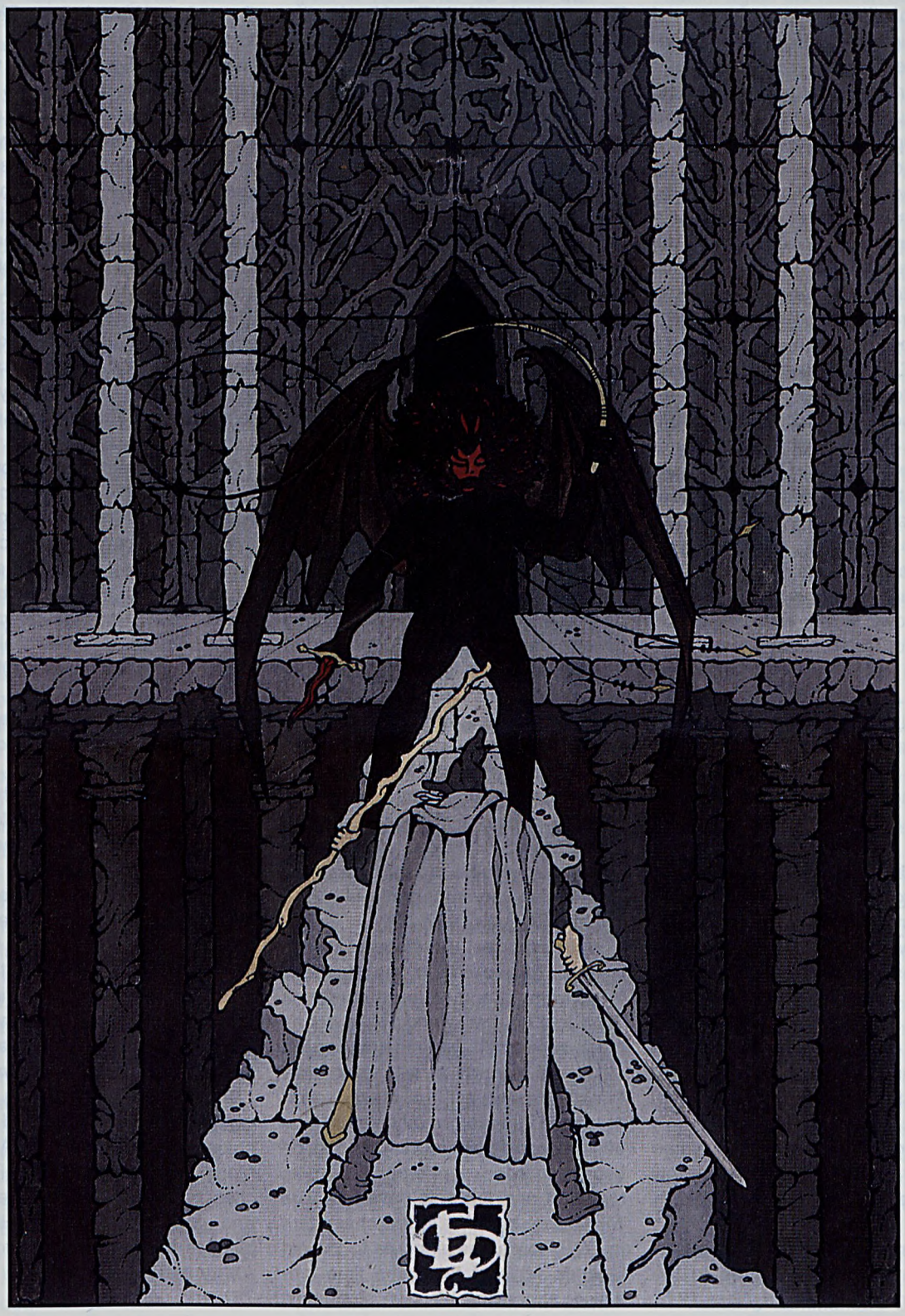
In addition to the dwarves, other peoples and characters in *LOR* are modelled on the gods and heroes of the Edda and its legends. Thus the Norse god Odin has his successors in the wizard Gandalf as well as in the dark lord Sauron. Odin's personality has been split by Tolkien so that all his good characteristics are mirrored in Gandalf and his bad in Sauron.

Gandalf is, besides his similarity in appearance to Odin (*cf. Noel 1977, 111*), wise, learned, benevolent, a master of fire, a man of many and similar names; he has a connection with eagles and ravens and has a similar function to the god of storm reflected in the sobriquet "Gandalf Stormcrow" *(LOTR II, 143)*. His 'etymological nature' can be found in the Old Norse word Gandalfr which means "elf versed in magic" *(cf. Dahlke 1998, 50-53)*. Besides, Odin possessed a magic horse which can be compared to Shadowfax, Gandalf's exceptional steed, which also understands human speech *(cf Noel 1977, 111)*.

Sauron is never described in his physical form but is exclusively characterised by dark symbolism: a lidless eye, a master of magic rings, an authority similar to the gods of war and death, a thief of old wisdom in order to implement his own plans. All this can be traced back to Odin's darker side *(cf Dahlke 1998, 56-58)*.

The fallen wizard Saruman emerges as a link between these two Odin figures. He, like Loki of the Norse pantheon, can be identified by his variegated appearance which is emblematic of his different faces and manipulative falsehoods. Just as Loki leaves the gods, Saruman turns his back on the White Council to pursue evil *(cf. Dahlke 1998, 53)*, misuses and contemptuously mocks his old friends and is finally killed by Grima Wormtongue, like the serpent's poison that drips down on Loki when he is fettered as a punishment for his evil deeds. But Saruman is not as vital to the course of events in *LOR* as Gandalf or Sauron are. Thus his character is not supplemented with Anglo-Saxon or Biblical mythological symbolism ass are the latter two. The creation of Gandalf and Sauron as binary opposites, or antipoles, stemming from one common source mixed with additional

3. Tolkien's essay "Ein heimliches Laster" about his attitude towards the love of words and language can be found in *Tolkien (1987, 209-235)*.



The Bridge of Khazad-dum *Lorenzo Daniele*

and differentiating elements can be traced back to Tolkien's notion of secondary creation. This differs from mere adaptation to this extent; although he transfers parts of Norse mythology to Gandalf and Sauron, he completes them with different components of varying origin and thus creates something entirely new.

Further parallels to Odin and Loki can be found in Frodo and Gollum's relationship. Frodo's name stems from Frô, a different name for the Scandinavian goddess of fertility Freya. It means 'wise' or 'fertile'. He also emerges as Froda in Beowulf but shows special parallels to the Danish king Frôdi, a descendant of Odin. Those parallels manifest in a similar attitude towards their homeland *(cf. Noel 1977, 59ff)*. Gollum first appears in a grotto below ground when he meets Bilbo in *The Hobbit*. This recalls the dwarf Andvari who withholds a valuable ring from Loki and eventually curses its thief.

The dramatic meeting between the Fellowship and the Balrog in the Mines of Moria also reflects the end of the world as announced in the Edda. The Balrog shows strong parallels to the god Surt for "[b]oth were giant figures combining darkness and consuming fire. Each was armed with a flaming sword and each fought high on a frail bridge, breaking it down" *(Noel 1977, 146)*. Surt was one of the vital powers that presaged Ragnarok, the end of the world, and the fight with Gandalf is described just as it happens in the Norse legend "with the powerful wizard destroyed in overthrowing his enemy, but returned to life in a higher form" *(Noel 1977, 147)*. Though the world does not end in *LOR*, Tolkien describes a world of decline full of vanishing ancient peoples and the beginning of a new, less magical, age which is foreshadowed, amongst other things, by the Balrog's Ragnarok symbolism.

Further elements typical of Norse mythology are mirrored in the barrow downs, the graves of warriors of old, in Boromir's funeral on a boat floating down the river, and in the female warrior Éowyn who is compared to the Valkyries of the Edda *(cf. Noel 1977, 83f)*. As with Gandalf and Sauron this is only partly true for Éowyn's character. Though she hides behind a Valkyrie mask, her true nature and the character's function are completely different.

Numerous small similarities and analogies to Norse mythology could be mentioned here, as for example the trees bestowing life in *The Silmarillion*. They equal the World Tree Yggdrasil, a giant ash, in their status and link to the gods. But the few examples already mentioned should be sufficient to draw an adequate picture of Tolkien's methodology and his intention to take selected fragments of Scandinavian mythology and insert them into his own. Tolkien digresses from the available material, though, and gives it a whole new and modified meaning; not necessarily a more topical one, but a meaning transformed.

> 'Tolkien was irritated all his life by modern attempts to rewrite or interpret old material, almost all of which he thought led to failure of tone and spirit. Wagner is the most obvious example. People were always connecting *LOR* with *Der Ring der Nibelungen*, and Tolkien did not like it. [...] [W]hat upset Tolkien was the fact that Wagner was working, at second-hand, from material which he knew first-hand, primarily the heroic poems of the Elder Edda and the later Middle High German Nibelungenlied. Once again he saw difference where other people saw similarity. Wagner was one of several authors with whom Tolkien had a relationship of intimate dislike: Shakespeare, Spenser, George MacDonald, Hans Christian Andersen. All, he thought, had got something very important not quite right.' *(Shippey 1982, 220)*

It is important therefore to assess how far Tolkien adapts the elements taken from his numerous sources to fit them into his own world. He is not as much concerned with reanimating the old Norse legends as with integrating the still existing spirit of these worlds of legend into his own secondary creation in a different form. This can be especially seen in reference to style, structure and the epic battles in *The Silmarillion* but also in the characters in *LOR*. Tolkien pays tribute to the old legends while at the same time creatively enhancing his own stories or, as Garbowski *(2000, 71)* puts it: he produces an "inner consistency of reality" not only through the diversity of languages but also by systematically choosing mythic elements for his secondary world and the action taking place in it.

The influence of Anglo-Saxon mythology

One of the best known Old English texts is the almost 3000 line long heroic poem *Beowulf* which was probably written in the seventh century[4]. Tolkien's known interest in and fascination with Beowulf shows in the adoption of significant strands from Beowulf in *The Hobbit*. The scenes with the dragon clearly follow Beowulf's adventure, though they have of course been adapted to the story *(cf. Noel 1977, 60f)*. Shippey *(1982, 220)* calls Beowulf "[t]he single work which influenced Tolkien most" and Dahlke *(cf. 1998, 7ff)* also sees the basis for Tolkien's mythological foundation of Middle-earth in it. Both authors, as well as Ruth Noel *(cf. 1977, 81ff)*, mention numerous etymological examples as evidence for their assumptions. These examples show that many names and places of the human peoples of Middle-earth, like Rohan and its inhabitants, have been taken from Beowulf or other Old English tales. Whether Tolkien was searching for appropriate Old English words which fitted his ideas or whether his stories were inspired by the names in the old heroic epics, is difficult to reconstruct.

The legend of King Arthur is certainly formative for the development of some of the characters and actions, contrary to Ulrike Killer's statement that Tolkien never reverted to the *"matière de Bretagne"* even though the legendary King Arthur is considered to be Great Britain's national hero *(cf. Killer 1991, 424)*. The final scene at the Grey Havens for example shows some remarkable parallels to Mallory's *Le Morte D'Arthur (cf. Noel 1977, 54)*. The most striking analogies can be found in Aragorn and Gandalf's characters, which reflect Arthur and Merlin to a certain extent. Ruth Noel cites no less than seventeen crucial, and as many more small, resemblances between the development of Arthur and Aragorn *(cf. Noel 1977, 68-76)* and almost a dozen instances suggesting that Gandalf is modelled on Merlin *(cf. Noel 1977, 109f)*. The relationship between the two is interesting as well: the wizard acts as a

4. cf Graddol (1997, 59). The exact date of origin is in dispute. In other sources the eighth century is mentioned.

counsellor and guide behind the scenes at the beginning while the proud warrior waits for his chance to accede to the throne of his kingdom, his rightful heritage.

Another aspect that owes something to Celtic mythology is certainly the portrayal of the elves. Tolkien's elves are similar to the Celtic elvenfolk, the *Sidhe*, in both appearance and behaviour *(cf. Noel 1977, 113ff and Dahlke 1998, 21)*. In contrast to other races of Middle-earth, the elves' names are not derived from Old or Middle English but go back to the languages Tolkien invented himself. That is why this people receive the greatest depth and independence in Middle-earth. This can especially be seen in the *Silmarillion* episodes which are primarily concerned with the history of the elves.

The influence of Shakespeare on Tolkien's mythological foundation for *LOR* cannot be ignored, in particular, *Macbeth*. The most obvious example is the march of the Ents towards Isengard. Tolkien explains without reserve that the march as well as the role of the Ents themselves was inspired by Shakespeare's play:

> 'But looking back analytically I should say that Ents are composed of philology, literature, and life. They owe their name to the *eald enta geweorc* of Anglo Saxon, and their connexion with stone. Their part in the story is due, I think, to my bitter disappointment and disgust from schooldays with the shabby use made in Shakespeare of the coming of 'Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill': I longed to devise a setting in which the trees might really march to war.' *(Carpenter 1995, 212)*

The fateful prophecies uttered by the Weird Sisters in Macbeth also find their counterpart in *LOR*. Boromir's preoccupation with the power of the ring does not leave him even after his meeting with Galadriel. The change in him following this prophetic encounter is obvious to the reader. From that point on, Boromir is convinced he has found the right way even if it means resorting to violence and shedding his friends' blood:

> "To me it [the test of Galadriel] seemed exceedingly strange', said Boromir. 'Maybe it was only a test, and she thought to read our thoughts for her own purpose; but almost I should have said that she was tempting us, and offering what she pretended to have the power to give. It need not be said that I refused to listen. The Men of Minas Tirith are true to their word.' But what he thought that the Lady had offered him Boromir did not tell.' *(LOTR I, 464-465)*

Like Macbeth, Boromir cannot shake off the vision of power and success, and impatience and ambition gnaw at him from the inside. In the end he oversteps the bounds of what is permitted and becomes treacherous. In contrast to Macbeth though, he does not commit murder, but instead repents and sacrifices himself for his friends.

The prophecy of the Weird Sisters concerning the death of Macbeth can also be applied to the Witch-King, Lord of the Nazgûl, who was foretold that "No living man may hinder me!" *(RK, 136)*, "implying his invincibility but actually outlining a strange doom [...] [and] he was destroyed within the framework of the prophecy – at the hands of Éowyn, a woman, and Meriadoc, a hobbit" *(Noel 1977, 139)*.

As a last important feature of the Anglo-Saxon influence, hobbits have to be mentioned even though they certainly are one of Tolkien's most self-contained new creations. Tolkien does not revert to literary sources of the English culture here but to socio-historical ones. Just like the ancestors of the English people, the hobbits settled at their new home in three different tribes after having fought for their country in decisive battles *(cf. FR, 20f)*.

> 'Thus historically the Shire is like/unlike England, the hobbits are like/unlike English people. [...] Both emigrated in three tribes, Angles, Saxon and Jutes or Stoors, Harfoots and Fallohides, all since then largely mingled. The English were led by two brothers, Hengest and Horsa, i.e. 'stallion' and 'horse', the hobbits by Marcho and Blanco, cp. Old English *marh*, 'horse', *blanca* (only in Beowulf) 'white horse'. All four founded realms which evolved into uncharacteristic peace [...] Organisationally too the Shire, with its mayors, musters, moots and Shirriffs, is an old-fashioned and idealised England, while the hobbits, in their plainness, greediness, frequent embarrassments, distrust of 'outsiders' and most of all in their deceptive ability to endure rough handling form an easily recognisable if again old-fashion self-image of the English. The calquing is most evident, however, on the map.' *(Shippey 1982, 77-78)*

As a matter of fact, many place names in the Shire are taken from the Oxford area, which supports Shippey's analysis. The reason that the hobbit passages, especially the early chapters, in *LOR* are, proportionally, more humorously written might derive from the possibility that they derive from actual experience in Tolkien's own neighbourhood. Tolkien always disapproved of attempts to interpret his texts as an adaptation of his time and contemporaries but it is striking that the seriousness in form and expression is far less developed in the Shire than in all the other episodes of *The Lord of the Rings*. The exact reason remains speculative but the possibility of ironically dealing with his fellow beings through the eyes, ears and mouths of hobbits at least stays comprehensible from Shippey's viewpoint[5].

The Bible and Christendom in Middle-earth

J.R.R. Tolkien's strong adherence to his Catholic faith is well known. In a letter to his son Michael, who had been wounded a few weeks before in 1941, he wrote:

> 'Out of the darkness of my life, so much frustrated, I put before you the one great thing to love on earth: the Blessed Sacrament ... There you will find romance, glory, honour, fidelity, and the true way of all your loves upon earth, and more than that: Death: by the divine paradox, that which ends life, and demands the surrender of all, and yet by the taste (or foretaste) of which alone can what you seek in your earthly relationships (love, faithfulness, joy) be maintained, or take on that complexion of reality, of eternal endurance, which every man's heart desires.' *(Carpenter 1995, 53f)*

Tolkien's commentary on Middle-earth's religiousness is found mainly in *The Silmarillion* which shows clear parallels to the Bible in content and

5. Though similarities to Jonathon Swift's Gulliver's Travels (1726) as regards hobbits can be identified, there is no concrete evidence of a conscious adaptation on Tolkien's part.

style even though it is full of pagan mythology. It starts with the genesis of the world by Eru, the one god, and continues with the fall of Melkor (also called Morgoth) and that of the elves, as well as with their exodus from Valinor, home of the gods. An almost endless story of wars, loss, tragic deaths and hopeless friendships is created in *The Silmarillion,* which derives its name from the Silmarilli, the three primordial jewels in which the light of Valinor, an analogy of Christian paradise, has been caught. The jewels symbolise a last vestige of perfection in a fallen world and become the principal objects of lust of all creatures during Middle-earth's First Age. The Second Age describes another fall, this time that of the Men of Númenor who dare attack Valinor, the land of the gods, in the pride and conceit that they are equal to them. This is similar to the building of the Tower of Babel. But the Valar destroy the mighty fleet and conceal the way to their paradisiacal shores. Only the remaining elves have the ability to sail into the West, thus leaving Middle-earth forever. In the mythology this heralds the Third Age, in which the echoes of these powerful and dramatic events of *The Silmarillion* form the foundation for the action and motivation in *The Lord of the Rings.* As we see later with Boromir, Denethor, Saruman and Gollum sin and forgiveness play a pivotal role in the stories of Middle-earth. It is not difficult to identify Tolkien's staunch Catholicism:

> 'In the letter to Waldman Tolkien claims his mythology is concerned with, among other things, the Fall 'and that in several modes', since he felt the Fall is something always present in human history. If the First Age was primarily about the Fall of the elves, the Second Age is dominated by the Fall of men, especially those privileged to live in Numenor. Nevertheless, far more than with the remaining Silmarillion mythology, the Numenor cycle's significance was only to be attained in its relationship to the Third Age.' *(Garbowski 2000, 67)*

Also associated with the biblical fall of mankind, which has its counterpart in *The Silmarillion* as indicated above, is the presence of a personified demonic power which seduces and perverts everything natural, thus assuming devilish traits. These counterparts of the biblical Satan can be found in the shape of the Valar outcast Melkor and his follower and later successor Sauron who wake the dormant egoistic longings of humans, dwarves and elves to wage their eternal wars against their immortal arch-enemies, the Valar. While Melkor weaves his treacherous webs during the First Age Sauron takes over that role in the Second Age and up to the time of *LOR.* Randel Helms accurately notes that Sauron's career is modelled on the biblical and Miltonic Satan (*cf. Helms 1991, 49).* But I believe he errs in his assertion that in the Satan myth Tolkien finds an altogether satisfying starting point for his own exploration of absolute evil *(cf. Helms 1991, 49).* Elrond explains in Rivendell that nothing, not even Sauron, is evil from the beginning (cf. FR, 350) "which suggests that he is, like Satan, a fallen being of great power" *(Purtill 1974, 103).* This is also true of Melkor who fell into disgrace during the creation of the world because his troublesome individuality did not please his fellow gods who were striving for harmony. Accordingly, many parallels can be drawn between *The Silmarillion* and the Bible.

> 'But the main point about *The Silmarillion* is that it is a kind of bible, an encyclopaedic epic of return which shows us ways of living with loss and the pain of recovery. Nearly contradictory to the theme of loss in the tales is the medium itself, the great wealth of mythic and archetypical invention, creation, recovery which The Silmarillion contains. [...] The Silmarillion is a crown of light, a properly inspiring testament to be returned to and reread with growing pleasure. It is both the beginning and the culmination of Tolkien's subcreation'. *(Mathews 1978, 59)*

The biblical influences on content, structure and style which are so predominant and evident in *The Silmarillion* are less obvious in *The Lord of the Rings*, though they never vanish. As a starting point it can be reasonably assumed that the mythical framework of Middle-earth avails itself of the Bible as a model, mixed with the aforementioned texts of Norse legends and parts of Anglo-Saxon culture, all combined in *The Silmarillion* whose episodes are embedded in the songs and tales of *The Lord of the Rings.*

Conclusion

Tolkien always wanted to publish *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings* together. He did not succeed even though he was convinced of its importance:

> 'Its shadow [that of *The Silmarillion*] was deep on the later parts of *The Hobbit.* It has captured *The Lord of the Rings*, so that that has become simply its continuation and completion, requiring *The Silmarillion* to be fully intelligible – without a lot of references and explanations that clutter it in one or two places.' *(Carpenter 1995, 136f)*

Tolkien's original intention before he wrote even one sentence of *The Lord of the Rings* was

> 'to make a body of more or less connected legend, ranging from the large and cosmogonic, to the level of romantic fairy-story [...] – which I could dedicate simply to England; to my country. [...] The cycles should be linked to a majestic whole, and yet leave scope for other minds and hands, wielding paint and music and drama. Absurd.' *(Carpenter 1995, 144f)*

Even though the origin of many passages and much creation in *LOR* and *The Silmarillion* can be traced back to old myths and legends[6], the form of legend which influenced Tolkien the most, and which of these has the biggest part in his works, are not questions that play a decisive role in assessing Middle-earth's mythology. It is only important to recognise and evaluate the symbolism formed by myth and religion which is extant in the world of Middle-earth and thus also in *The Lord of the Rings.*

> 'Tolkien plunges into the sacrality of the natural; he delves into basic human emotions and a symbolic structure that is so widely distributed over cultural boundaries that it can be called fundamentally human symbolism. The stories evoke participation in a secular religion – that is, a religion in which all is sacred because all things, even the most natural, are related to one another and to a founding transcendence.' *(William Dowie: Salu 1979, 267)*

During the Middle Ages, a period that has served as a model for almost every fantasy novel regarding society,

6. A comprehensive list of literary influences in the areas mentioned in this paper can be found in Shippey (1982, 220-226).

politics and evolution, the world of legends, ghosts and mythical creatures, of heroes and epic poems possessed a real aspect which influenced people's superstitions and everyday life. From the earliest days of human society these kinds of convictions formed the first legends, stories which are denied their validity and relevance in today's materialistic and no longer spiritually oriented society. Considering that in the old myths, legends and fables, which were taken seriously in the past, is hidden a deep-seated human longing for explanation and comprehension of their own environment, it is easy to understand that it is a topical necessity of human life to revert to old things in order to create something new out of them – just as Tolkien did. Tolkien does not take on board all Christian or all legendary interpretation of the world, but avails himself of those sources of the past which were appealing to him. That is also why they cater for such a variety of different readers. Other fantasy authors such as Alan Garner have given their opinion on the value of mythologisation:

> 'I need some kind of crutch, some kind of framework, I suspect. My most reputable reason for doing it is that myth is not an attempt to entertain, it is an attempt to explain something. Originally people did not sit around and cook up fairy stories to get through the long winter evenings. They were trying to come to terms with their environment, so you find that over the millenia [sic] myth contains crystallised human experience and very powerful imaginary. This imaginary is useful for a writer if he uses it responsibly. It can work against him if he does not use it properly, but if he uses it correctly then he has very powerful cutting tools in his hands which work beneath the surface.' *(Alan Garner in: Swinfen 1984, 101)*

But there is a crucial difference between Tolkien and other authors of fiction, such as Alan Garner, who also borrow from old legends in order to add substance to their stories. As with most other authors Tolkien of course read much literature before ever producing lierature of his own. But because of his academic career and his love for languages he was probably more erudite than many of his contemporaries. Tolkien stands out for dealing with the work of authors from the past on a different level. He is not as much concerned with the conversion of literary texts into a more topical and suitable form in structure or content, as with an entirely new creation which refers to what he considers relevant and traditional archetypes. Thus the new creation pays tribute to its older template and is primarily adapted to the texts, not concerned with the readers' expectations.

> 'Even where old texts are recollected, the effort of adapting old models to the modern situation is often striking: whenever Tolkien's contemporaries James Joyce, T.S. Eliot or Eugene O'Neill let themselves be inspired by old myths and legends it was only to try and experiment with their relevance for Man in the 20th century. Even T.H. White with all his love for the magic world of the Arthurian epics changed the figures of his revised *Morte d'Arthur, The Once and Future King* (1938-58) into modern, psychologically interesting people. He thus achieves an ironic distance from the original. And it is this ironic distance which Tolkien dispenses with in his dealings with the old material. It does not occur to him to alter the traditional material when he starts to implement his plans in 1917 which would eventually lead to *The Silmarillion*. He wants to create something new based on old models.' *(cf. Petzold 1980, 35)*

The purely mimetic activity in the Aristotelian sense of imitating the old according to human nature is not what this is all about. What counts is to show ordinary and well-known things in a construct such as a secondary fantasy world to give them a new and more important context in order to gain insights about oneself and one's environment; an ability which might have been lost in the course of time. According to C.S. Lewis, the virtue of a myth is "that it takes all the things we know and restores to them the rich significance which has been hidden by the veil of familiarity" *(Purtill 1974, 154)*. The same is true of Tolkien's treatment and transformation of mythology. It is still unclear about many parallels to old legends in Tolkien's Middle-earth whether he put them in on purpose or whether they crept into the stories unperceived due to Tolkien's academic knowledge.

> 'And it is mysterious to witness how in the phenomenon of succession intended things mix with guided ones so that it becomes impossible to decide who imitates and sets out to repeat what has already come to pass: the person or fate. [...] Because we follow in the footsteps of others and all life is completion of mythical presence.' *(cf. Thomas Mann: in Tschirner, Susanne 1989, 157)*

But however one classifies Tolkien's form of 'imitation', in view of the mythical historicity of the secondary world Middle-earth the existence of mythic substance plays an enormous role when looking at the powerful symbolism of that world.

Tolkien's vocabulary and proficiency in languages are also very important. By clever and deliberately unconventional usage of old and reshaped words, Tolkien triggers his readers' unconscious familiarity with the roots of their own language in order to find their way around in Middle-earth and at the same time makes them feel emotionally safe and intellectually challenged.

> 'Tolkien used word-play in promoting the idea that *LOR* describes an age dimly remembered in historical vocabularies. This helps to arouse the reader's interest when words from historical contexts are used. For example, he used the Old English word *ent* and *orc* for highly specific types of creature, which he suggests were only vaguely or inaccurately remembered in Old English mythology. Tolkien often gave historical words a misleading meaning for the sake of a pun. For example, he made the "Cracks of Doom" (traditionally meaning the signal for the Day of Judgement) into a physical landmark – fissures in the interior of Mount Doom, where, as it happens, a type of day of judgement took place.' *(Noel 1977, 32)*

Further examples of the use of old, almost forgotten words pervade *Lord of the Rings*. The characteristics of what is described in Middle-earth are always linked to the meaning in Old English or Norse mythology *(cf. Noel 1977, 32ff)*. This applies especially to geographical occurrences but also to names and characters. This complex methodology enhances the remarkable mythical value of the literary context to a certain extent and at the same time arouses linguistic interest in the reader. In all probability, it serves also to further the author's enjoyment in the creative use of language.

Appendix

I would like to mention some points about the new German translation of *The Lord of the Rings* , published nationwide in 2000. In accordance with my foregoing thesis I believe the new translation's effects steer in a doubtful direction. In the "Tolkien Times", published by Klett-Cotta publishers who own the German rights to Tolkien's books, a scene in Bree is quoted which shows both the old and new translation next to each other (with a commentary by the translator Wolfgang Krege). A clear tendency to update Tolkien's language can be seen. The text is adapted to modern German thus altogether disregarding Tolkien's intentional old-world quality of the language and its special effect. The following examples should suffice to demonstrate my meaning. Striking differences are italicised.

Original version (FR, 208-209):	*Old translation (Tolkien Times, 4):*	*New translation (Tolkien Times, 4):*
(1) "Where are you, you woolly-footed *slow-coach*?"	(1) „Wo steckst du denn, du wollfüßiges *Faultier* [1]?"	(1) „Wo steckst du, Nob, du *flaumfüßiger Penner*[3]?"
(2) "A *cheery*-looking hobbit bobbed out of a door..."	(2) „Ein *vergnügt* aussehender Hobbit schoß aus der Tür heraus..."	(2) „Ein *aufgeweckt*[4] aussehender Hobbit kam aus einer Tür hervorgeschossen..."
(3) "But we've got a room or two in the north wing that were made special for hobbits, *when this place was built.*"	(3) „Aber wir haben ein paar Zimmer im Nordflügel, die eigens für Hobbits vorgesehen wurden, *als dieses Haus gebaut wurde*[2]."	(3) „Aber im Nordflügel haben wir ein paar Zimmer, die wurden speziell für Hobbits angelegt, *als dieser Laden hier gebaut wurde.*[5] "
(4) "Here is a nice little *parlour*"	(4) „Hier ist eine nette kleine *Gaststube*"	(4) „Hier haben wir ein nettes kleines *Klubzimmer*[6]."
(5) "If we don't come, *ring and shout*"	(5) „Wenn er nicht kommt, *läutet und ruft*"	(5) „Wenn er nicht kommt, *nochmal lauter bimmeln und brüllen*[7]"

1.Sloth 2.when this house was built 3.fluffy-footed dosser 4.bright 5.when this here pile was built 6.club room 7.jangle [the bell] and yell again

Of course, these are only small changes but even in these few passages a more or less subliminal imitation of modern German usage is revealed. Even though the hobbits can be said to communicate in the most modern form compared to all other peoples in Middle-earth, too modern a translation of Tolkien's carefully selected prose runs the risk of destroying the magic of this remote world by making the language sound too vulgar.

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