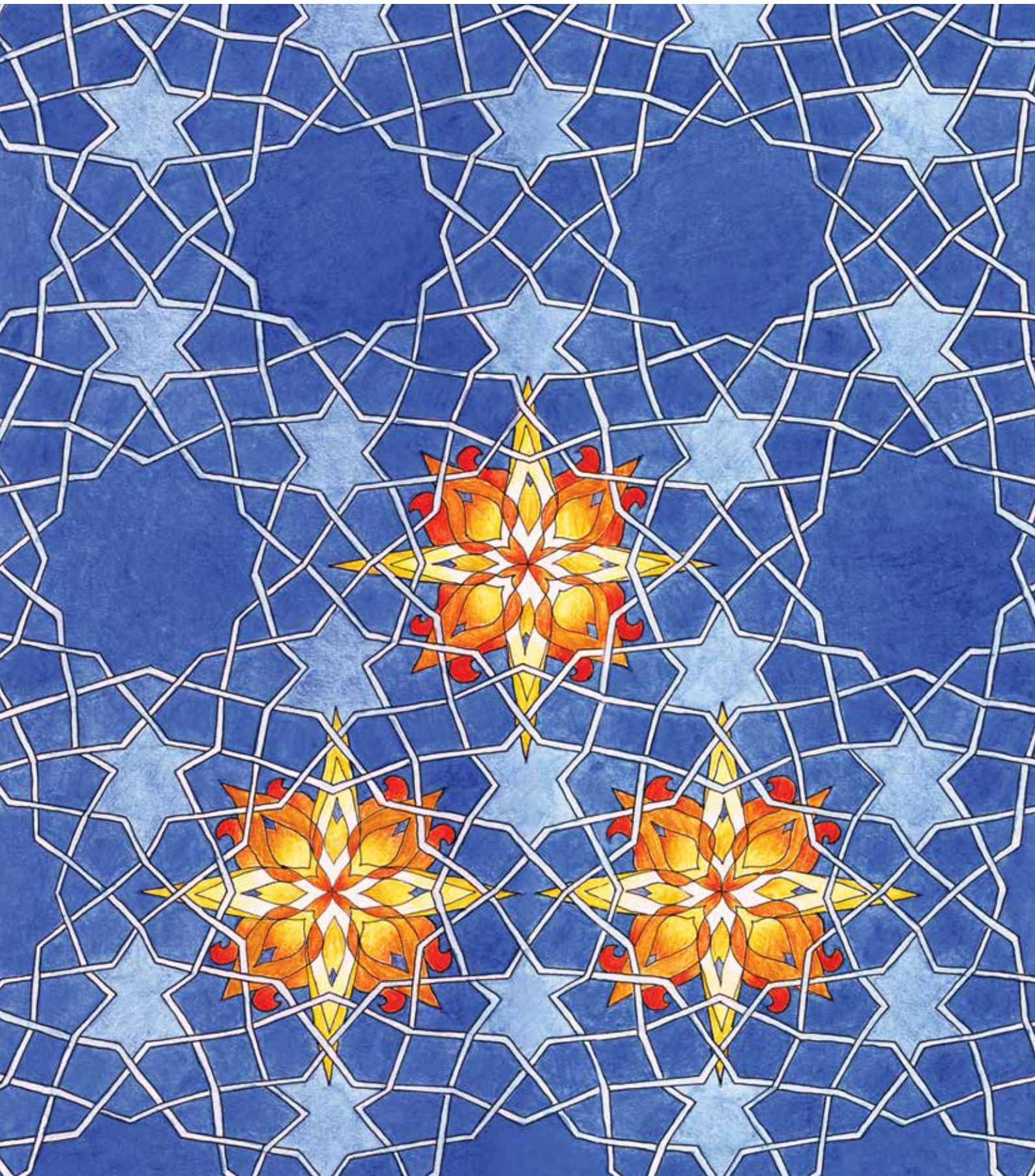
Issue 47 • Spring 2009

Mallorn

The Journal of the Tolkien Society



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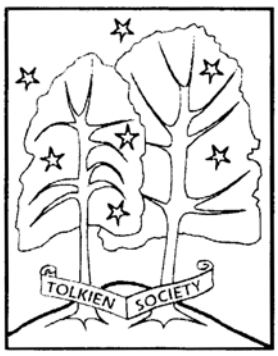
Sue Wookey



Mallorn

The Journal of the Tolkien Society

Issue 47 • Spring 2009

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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 Professor J. R. R. Tolkien, CBE (1892–1973) who remains its President in perpetuo. His daughter, Miss Priscilla Tolkien, became its honorary Vice-President in 1986. As well as *Mallorn*, the society publishes a bimonthly 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 Road, Cheltenham, Glos GL52 3ER or visit http://www.tolkiensociety.org.

The ode goes ever on

John Gilbey

Hwaet! Now I've been at the binnacle of *Mallorn* for more than a year, and with three issues under my belt, it's probably time I took a moment to explain who I am and what I'm about, and how I have responded to constructive criticism I've received.

I started at *Mallorn* with a radical redesign of the magazine, which has gone over reasonably well. Some aspects, though, were irksome to many, including to me: the font was too small to read comfortably, a problem compounded by the single-column layout. These things worked against my desire to make the journal more readable and accessible without lowering its scholarly credentials.

The font size was introduced by me in a blind panic, when, having taken over the magazine with as yet little idea of how much copy I would receive, what I should do with it if I got any, and how much I'd need to fill an issue, I felt I should take steps to cram in as much material as I could. The column arrangement was in part a consequence of my inability to handle more than one column using the software I had available, and, as anyone who knows Microsoft Word will tell you, using it for desk-top publishing is as handy as trying to peel a banana while wearing boxing gloves.

Happily, both problems are resolved at a stroke with the issue in your hands, thanks to the arrival of my friend and colleague, Colin Sullivan, who's taking over all aspects of editorial production and design. He's managed the impossible — legible font sizes and two-column layout — with no compromise on the amount of material we can publish.

An explanation of Colin's provenance necessitates some discussion of my own, something else that readers have requested. I am on the editorial team of the weekly science magazine *Nature*, where, among many other things, I devised and continue to edit Futures, its long-running series of science-fiction stories. Colin, as a chief subeditor at *Nature*, is the chap who actually puts the stuff onto the page, commissions the artwork, and makes sure it all comes out on time. Colin confesses to being a somewhat lapsed devotee of Tolkien, and he loves fiddling around with DTP: I can't remember if I asked him, or if he volunteered, but anyway, here he is, and *Mallorn* is, I think, all the better for it, and no one is more grateful for his arrival than I.

Now Colin's here I can concentrate more on purely editorial issues. Since my arrival I've campaigned hard to persuade people that brevity and accessibility don't mean any lessening of scholarship; and that the number of references does not correlate with insight (Einstein's 1905 paper on special relativity contained no references). I'm pleased to say that people have begun to send me shorter items than they once did — typically, a Review of a book or film shouldn't be more than 1,000 words or so, and an item of Commentary (a scholarly article) shouldn't really be more than 4,000 or so. One can make exceptions, obviously, but one should bear in mind that 40,000 words fill an issue, and that's without any artwork in it apart from the cover.

Given that I'd like to publish a variety of material; that *Mallorn* only comes out twice a year; and that each issue costs a large amount of your money, as members of the Tolkien Society, I can't afford to devote disproportionate space to a single article. I'm also not fond of serialization of long articles. The six-month gap between issues is one reason. Another is that I don't want to tie up issues in the future: even without serialization I regularly receive more than twice as much copy as I can print, and even though I don't know half of you half as well as I should like, I like less than half of you half as well as you deserve.

One decision I made very early on was

that I wouldn't consider original poetry, because, in part, I felt I didn't have sufficient education in prosody to know whether any poems I might receive were actually any good. Since then I relented to the extent that I will at least consider poetry, judging it simply on whether I liked it or not. Still I craved more objective criteria, but without knowing precisely what it was I wanted. The problem was stated in Ruth Lacon's lucid explanation (*Mallorn* **46,** 6–8) for why serious critical studies of Tolkien's own poetry are few. "Most of us no longer have the tools for understanding European poetry in its classic forms," she writes, "we are not taught the rules, and can appreciate neither their well-turned deployment nor their daring breakage."

This is not the place to go into why our education system has denied us the kind of insight into prosody routinely enjoyed by schoolchildren a century ago, not least Tolkien himself. We are aware that Tolkien was a considerable poet, a master of classical and medieval verse forms, but, as Lacon says, we no longer have the tools we need for the kind of technical appreciation of that mastery that a fuller appraisal demands. The only thing we are allowed to do with poetry, if we are exposed to it at all, is emote at it: to judge whether we like it or not, without really being invited to wonder why.

For me, this chasm has been filled by *The Ode Less Travelled: Unlocking The Poet Within* by Stephen Fry. It's a scandal, to Fry — an amateur poet, among his many other accomplishments — that if people are eager to learn the technical apparatus they need to engage with their leisure pursuits effectively, the same attitude does not apply to poetry. If photographers know their f-stops and musicians their f-holes, why is there no encouragement to learn about the technicalities of rhyme and metre — of iambs, dactyls, Spenserian stanzas, quatrains, sonnets, the tools of the trade, the rudiments of traditional and modern verse forms? Free verse is all very well, but will be so much tosh (Fry's terminology is a good deal less polite) if the poet (and his audience) have no understanding of how much it differs from conventional structures. Again, as Lacon puts it, "we are not taught the rules, and can appreciate neither their well-turned deployment nor their daring breakage."

Thanks to Fry, I know, which I did not know before, that (for example) Bilbo's protean walking song, *The Road Goes Ever On*, was written in iambic tetrameters. So what? Well, Tolkien, as the poet, was certainly aware of the metric schemes he used. We know that in his modern English translations of the medieval *Pearl* and *Sir Orfeo*, Tolkien went to some trouble to study and replicate the complex and subtle rhyming and metrical schemes of the

The only thing we are allowed to do with poetry is emote at it

originals. Why, then, should I, or anyone else, as potential critics of Tolkien's verse, hopeful of achieving some original insight into his works and so judging their merits, be denied the same capacity, through my own ignorance? Having such knowledge will help me explore precisely how Tolkien used rhyme and metre to emphasize a poem's content, and, perhaps, varied the forms to achieve particular effects: that "daring breakage" that Lacon so aptly mentions.

Again, thanks to Fry, I now know that Frodo's Man-in-the-Moon poem from the Prancing Pony was composed in traditional ballad form, with alternating four- and three-stress lines (iambs again, as it happens), but with this "daring breakage": the insertion of an extra, fifth line, after the third, and mirroring it in rhyme and metre, an alteration that adds interest and drives the story along. Was this breakage an invention of Tolkien? Or was he adapting some earlier, perhaps obscure, Middle-English verse form? I do not know the answers to such questions. However, had I not had any appreciation of the technicalities involved, I might not have been capable of even being aware that such questions were there for the asking.

No such thing as a natural death?

SIR — As a third-generation Oxford woman, I very much enjoyed David Doughan's article 'Women, Oxford and Tolkien' (*Mallorn* **45,** 16–20). I would like to follow up one point. Doughan mentions Tolkien "quoting with approval from Simone de Beauvoir … in a 1960s television interview" but without giving the quotation.

Actually, when you look at it, the quote does not show anything about Tolkien's attitude to women or feminism, but it is illuminating for other reasons. In the interview he said, as he had elsewhere, that the true subject of *The Lord of the Rings* is death — and he repeated de Beauvoir's words:

"There is no such thing as a natural death: nothing that happens to a man is ever natural, since his presence calls the world into question. All men must die: but for every man his death is an accident and, even if he knows it and consents to it, an unjustifiable violation."

He associated this with the untimely death of Carl Maria von Weber, the German Romantic composer, whose work he said he admired greatly. The quotation can be found at the head of a chapter in the biography of Weber by John Warrack, published in 1968 — the year of the interview. Not that de Beauvoir was writing about Weber; Warrack is quoting from her book about the death of her mother (translated, incidentally, by Patrick O'Brian, which may interest some people). So Tolkien received her words at one remove.

So we cannot tell from this quotation whether he had ever read de Beauvoir's own work. However it is, I think, enlightening in two ways. First, it sheds some light on the importance of music for Tolkien; his interest in Weber was strong enough for him to get hold of this biography as soon as it came out (unless he was quoting from a review).

Second, it is striking that two people coming from such different directions should both have agreed that "for every man his death is an accident" implying that the 'natural' animal-vegetable process of living and dying is not an adequate account of human experience.

Virginia Luling

Where there's a will

SIR — As a retired court officer who spent much of his career in the Richmond County (Staten Island) Surrogate's Court and who also has a background in Latin and the history and literature of ancient Rome, I must compliment Murray Smith for a most erudite and enjoyable article on the application of Roman law to the wills of the Shire (*Mallorn* **46,** 23–27).

In New York State, as in the other 49 states, wills require two or more witnesses and signing of both testator and witnesses at the same time in a ceremony that should be conducted by an attorney/draftsperson. New York law, however, does not require an attorney to draft or supervise execution of a will, although I strongly urge using an attorney in such a technical area of legal practice.

Mr Smith might be interested in the fact that Louisiana, whose civil law follows in many instances the Napoleonic Code, allows admission to probate of wills in the 'Mystic' form, in addition to conventional wills. Mystic wills in Louisiana require a testator using 'Mystic Form' to sign his will, place it in an envelope, seal the envelope, and, after declaring it to be his will, have seven witnesses sign the sealed envelope.

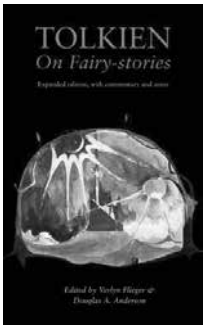
In ancient Rome, wills were filed in the Temple of Vesta, Goddess of hearth and home. One of the duties of the vestal virgins was to serve as custodian of wills during a testator's lifetime.

Richard Gonsowski

Denethor
Sue Wookey

The shores of Faery, revisited

DAVID DOUGHAN



Tolkien On Fairy-stories: Expanded Edition, with Commentary and Notes
J. R. R. Tolkien
Edited by Verlyn Flieger & Douglas A. Anderson
320 pp, HarperCollins (2008)
ISBN 9780007244669, £16.99

On Fairy-stories is crucial reading for anybody interested in Tolkien's work — and indeed it has had an influence in the wider fields of folk-tale studies and accounts of writing for children. It has added at least two important new terms to the vocabulary of these studies: *Eucatastrophe* and *Sub-creation*. Also it is noted, among other things, for the important distinction between the flight of the deserter and the escape of the prisoner, and for the concept of 'recovery'.

It first took shape as the Andrew Lang Lecture, given at the University of St Andrews in 1939, then, after much revision, was published in *Essays presented to Charles Williams* in 1947, then with less drastic revision in 1964, in *Tree and Leaf*, together with 'Leaf by Niggle'. This is a slightly odd coupling, as 'Niggle' does not particularly illustrate the principles adumbrated in *On Fairy-stories*; Flieger and Anderson suggest that a more appropriate companion piece would have been *Smith of Wootton Major* (though they do admit that this would have been difficult, as *Smith* had not been written in 1964).

The part of this edition that Tolkienists will find most fascinating is almost certainly the manuscript drafts

The 1964 text has since been regarded as 'canonical', and has been through various reprints since, in various collections of essays and stories, including most importantly a reprint of *Tree and Leaf* with a foreword by Christopher Tolkien which includes the complete text of the poem *Mythopoeia*, quoted partially in the essay. Incidentally, all the independent reprints of *Tree and Leaf* have had a cover illustrating the Tree of Amalion. Now we have this new edition, with *On Fairy-stories* separate from any other material, and with a completely different dust-jacket illustration, though still one by Tolkien: *The Shores of Faery*, from 1915, suggesting perhaps a fresh view. Still, the essay is a relatively short piece that appears to speak for itself.

Why do we need a new edition? The reason is that Verlyn Flieger and Douglas Anderson, two leading names in Tolkien studies, provide a background and a context for the essay, as well as invaluable manuscript material hitherto unpublished.

It begins, appropriately, with an introduction in which the editors explain their methodology, with particular reference to the context of the essay, and its main themes. Next comes the final (1964) text of the essay itself, with Tolkien's own notes, plus notes by the editors — mostly explanatory, such as the meaning of 'bowdlerized', or *The Wind in the Willows*, and even at one stage correcting Tolkien, when he refers to the 'D'Orsigny' papyrus (should be 'D'Orbiney') — but also throwing out a few ideas of the editors' own. After this they give a publication history of the essay, followed by two contemporary reviews of the lecture from the Scottish press (more a précis than a review). Finally, there come the texts of the manuscript drafts, together with the editors' commentaries on these.

The editors' comments, whether here or in the introduction or the notes, are very thought-provoking. For example, there are a few brief notes that provoke reflection, for example, taking the mention of the 'green sun' to draw a parallel with David Lindsey's strange book *A Voyage to Arcturus* (see Frank Wilson's discussion of this book in *Mallorn* **46,** 29–33); and even more interestingly, starting from Tolkien's mention of 'rocky matrices' to suggest that geology and mythology are 'coeval disciplines arising in roughly the same period and out of the same period and out of the same human impulse to dig into origins.' Both in the introduction and the commentaries on the manuscripts they have a lot of ideas that can stimulate discussion (or even argument).

For a start, they note that the main expressed purpose of *On Fairy-stories* is "that fairy-story is a legitimate literary genre, not confined to scholarly study but meant for readerly enjoyment by adults and children alike". Also, they make the following point about the essay's relationship to Tolkien's work:

> … in respect of his own fiction, then, Tolkien's Andrew Lang Lecture stands as a watershed in his development as a writer and marks an exponential improvement in Tolkien's own authorial development … What was effective and beguiling in *The*

Hobbit — hobbit earthiness combined with fairy tale, the tentative beginnings of a Faerie Otherworld — has been retained and wrought to a high finish in *The Lord of the Rings*. What was problematic or ill-fitted — the mixture of talking purses and third-act saviours — has been eliminated.

Elsewhere they discuss the way Tolkien engages with ideas of comparative philology and its implications for the development of human perception. Human beings, they say are hard-wired for human language, and also to make stories out of that language — or, as Tolkien puts it: "The incarnate mind, the tongue and the tale are in our world coeval." These are just a couple of instances of commentaries that can lead to new ways of thinking about old ideas.

However, despite the editors' very worthwhile and perceptive exegesis, the part of this edition that Tolkienists will find most fascinating is almost certainly the manuscript drafts. For instance, in what was probably the beginning of the lecture as actually delivered Tolkien compares himself to a mortal conjuror who finds himself, by some mistake, called upon to give a display of magic to the court of an Elf-king. After producing his rabbit, he may consider himself lucky if he is allowed to go home in his proper shape, or to go home at all.

Elsewhere he speaks of the pitfalls of writing for children, and while noting that fairy tales are classed as "juvenilia", suitable for uncles and aunts to buy for nieces and nephews, and laments the lack of a comparable category of "senilia" for children to choose for aunts and uncles "with uncorrupted tastes".

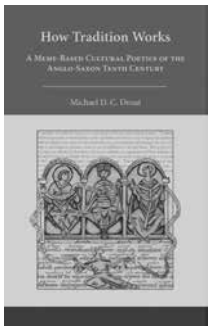
There is one criticism some people have made (and that I think is valid), which is that this edition for completeness should have included the text of *Mythopoeia*, as in the 1988 edition. Even so, this stands as a valuable contribution to Tolkien scholarship, which should be on the shelves of any serious student.

David Doughan is a gentleman of leisure.

See Alex Lewis on the genesis of *On Fairy-stories*, page 15.

The memetics of culture

JOHANNA KERSHAW



How Tradition Works: a Meme-Based Cultural Poetics of the Anglo-Saxon Tenth Century

Michael C. Drout

333 pp, Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (2006)
ISBN 978-0866-98350-1, $47.00

You've heard of memes, of course, even if only in the somewhat debased form in which the term is used on the internet for a quiz or survey that users fill out, repost and recreate. If you're like me, though — apologies to those of you out there who have a much firmer grounding in the sciences — you are probably rather vague on the details of the actual principles of memetics, which is an attempt to think about cultural processes in terms analogous to evolutionary theory. One of the minor — or perhaps not so minor — virtues of *How Tradition Works* is that it provides an admirably clear summary of the theory, without obscuring the debates around it, which is accessible to people who are not scientists. Michael Drout describes his project here as an attempt to "reorient" our thinking about culture, literature and tradition, using the insights of memetics, and generating a theory that — as he strongly implies — differs from other kinds of literary theory by being more or less testable.

Drout will be familiar to those interested in Tolkien. He edited *JRR Tolkien's Beowulf and the Critics* and *The JRR Tolkien Encyclopedia*. He is an associate professor at Wheaton College, a Christian liberal-arts college in Norton, Massachusetts, where he teaches Old and Middle English, fantasy and science fiction. That particular combination tells you something about Drout's general scholarly approach. He instinctively aspires to the synthesis, the big over-arching idea, and dislikes being confined to period boundaries, but he also has a philologist's respect for exact, detailed work. This is a very prominent feature of *How Tradition Works*: memetics is certainly a big idea, and one that emerged in the sciences and not the humanities, but both Drout's depiction of the big idea, which is very engaged with scientific work and is not simply a pasting of fancy labels on to tired old insights, and the ways in which he applies it to his object of study, do not shy away from detail or data.

To put it simply, 'memetics' is about how ideas spread and habits form, and change in the process. It's about memory, and how and why people end up repeating the actions of others, particularly older generations. It has some similarities to evolutionary theory, and some similarities to how viruses and bacteria spread. You could probably do a good study of the formation and change (or not) of tradition on Tolkien fandom. In memetic terms, Oxonmoot — the Tolkien Society's annual meeting in Oxford — would be a 'memeplex', made up of smaller units or memes, which may have a greater or lesser degree of similarity from repetition to repetition, and new ones may come along or old ones die. The most stable Oxonmoot meme is *Enyalië*,

the visit to Tolkien's grave in Wolvercote cemetery, which has been part of the memeplex from the beginning and has remained constant even as the Moot moved from the Turf to the Town Hall to become a residential event. This is a classic example of how a memeplex quickly gathers significance, in the form of other 'traditions' or expected behavioural norms (room parties, talks, dance workshops and so on).

The weakness of this is that whereas it's easy to see how memes and memeplexes evolve in a relatively closed group, applying the idea more widely is less convincing. Drout is most persuasive when he is talking about how traditions are formed within small groups and communities, for instance how a soaking in the Rule and the Office formed Benedictine monks. Later sections, most notably the chapter on Old English wisdom literature, which is probably the most appealing to the non-specialist, are interesting in themselves, but I wasn't convinced there that the memetic framework was really necessary to his interpretation.

The other major weakness, which is particularly apparent in the context of religious writings, is that Drout doesn't consider the role of experience, or of input from outside the closed system, be that God or underlying features of human consciousness. Sometimes Drout seems overly keen to reduce everything to the influence of the Benedictine reform, as when he talks about formulae in wills that refer to making gifts for the sake of their ancestors' souls. What this seems to me to be about is the emergence of a belief in Purgatory, which may be connected to the activities of the Benedictines, but, if so, Drout has missed out a few stages. This probably sounds like nit-picking, but it isn't really — it illustrates a key problem for the falsifiability of Drout's theories. That is, they can be checked only within relatively closed systems, which you don't get in the real world.

To put it in fandom terms, we might contrast the memeplex that is an experienced participant in fandom's impression of *The Lord of the Rings* with, say, a bright adolescent reader who hasn't had contact with fandom but has read a lot of Tolkien, and yet a third person, a non-fan whose exposure to Tolkien comes from popular culture. The teenager's memeplex will be easy to analyse, and the 'fandom' element can at least be sketched out, but the amorphous ideas of the non-fan will be much harder to grasp in such terms. I suppose you could just put that down to the decay of the meme, but it does show a shortcoming in the explanatory power of the theory.

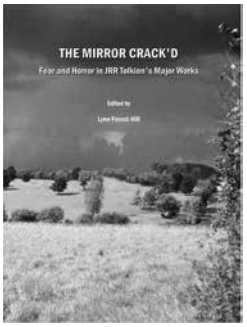
Drout's book is a brave attempt to apply scientific insight to the humanities

Drout's book is a brave attempt to apply scientific insight to the humanities, without sacrificing the sensitivities of the literary and cultural scholar. It's not quite a Grand Unified Theory, but it does assume that different kinds of scholarship have things to say to each other. It has its weaknesses, but it's still an exciting, chewy read. It will appeal, obviously, to those interested in Old English culture, but anyone who is interested in traditions or the transmission of any kind of ideas will get something out of it. Tolkien fans, though, will be interested to know that Drout is planning to apply his ideas to mediaevalism in general, and Tolkien in particular, in a forthcoming work. On this evidence, it will certainly be worth waiting for.

Johanna Kershaw is at Oriel College, the University of Oxford.

Fear and loathing in Middle-earth

JOEL FRANZ



The Mirror Crack'd: Fear and Horror in JRR Tolkien's Major Works

Edited by Lynn Forest-Hill

240 pp, Cambridge Scholars Publishing (2008)
ISBN 978-1847186348, £34.99

This book, a compilation of essays by a number of authors who have in their own ways digested and discovered Professor Tolkien's writings, is a marvellous read. The amalgamation of essays analyses with intense scrutiny the impact and essence of fear, horror and terror in Tolkien's writings. There are many correlating themes, and some highly dissonant ones, between — for example — the writings of Tolkien, and those of Henry Rider-Haggard and Edgar Allan Poe.

Tolkien, Poe and Rider-Haggard seem to all have one great theme in common, and that is fear. The expression of fear in the respective authors' writings all have a similar tone of voice. Tolkien inspires fear by giving us the Nazgûl, those wraith-like creatures shrouded in black, creatures without eyes, in tune to the very essence of evil, which has given them the form they now possess. He gave us Sauron whose eye causes those who fall under its gaze to know terror in their heart of hearts: the eye that seems to pierce the very fabric of being. And Tolkien gave us Melkor, the epitome of the cause of fear in mortal hearts. Melkor, with his black mace that rent the earth and smote the High King Fingolfin his doom, a towering black shroud, inspires fear,

if not terror in the eyes of all who behold his visage.

Rider-Haggard employs a similar concept of fear in his writings. In *King Solomon's Mines*, we see the figure of Death, or his ivory skeleton, and we know fear: a pure fear that pierces our hearts, and makes us cognizant of the natural fear of death. Poe reiterates that theme throughout his own writings as one of the base fears of mankind. Humans fear death. It is quite simple. But what is so scary about death? In Tolkien's own writings we see a sort of resignation where death is concerned. At the last battle at the Gates of Mordor, the Host of the Free Peoples of Middle Earth realizes that their doom is nigh, and that they may only buy time for the destruction of the Ring. But they know that they shall die, and they have accepted it. In *King Solomon's Mines*, Quartermain realizes that his escape from the mines in which he is trapped is unlikely, and he accepts the noose that is drawing tight about his neck. Death is not feared. Death is something to be wary of, to be sure — but not feared.

Yet, that is only one fear. Stephen King writes in an essay, cited in this book by Lynn Forest-Hill, "I recognize terror as the finest emotion … and so I will try to terrorise the reader. But if I find I cannot terrify him/her, I will try to horrify; and if I find I cannot horrify, I'll go for the gross-out. I'm not proud." (p. 22).

What does this mean for *The Mirror Crack'd*? Let us see what it means through example. Fear … well we have seen examples of fear, and partially those of terror. But what in Middle-earth is horrifying? The giant spiders Shelob and Ungoliant, and the destruction of the Two Trees, are horrifying. Ungoliant herself is repugnant. When she darkens the light of the Trees and bloats enormously, it is revolting. Shelob in her lair, attacking Frodo and Samwise is also horrifying. The detail is immense; the disgust, blatant. Yet, Middle-earth is not the sole proprietor for horror in Tolkien's writing. A number of the essays in this book look at the imagery in *Beowulf* as well. The Balrog, dragons and many other beast of evil repute are discussed in these assorted essays.

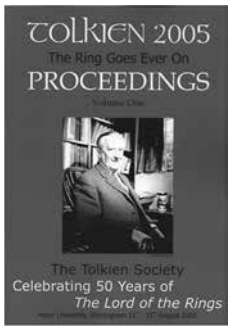
The comparison of writing between these three authors, Tolkien, Poe and Rider-Haggard, is immense. They all have that one theme in common, and the form in which one might see the implementation thereof, being fear, is similar, and yet vastly different. Tolkien's fear takes place, in Middle-earth, as a more concrete fear inspired by creatures of malicious intent. Rider-Haggard's fear is that of death, and the uncommon. From the great statue of Death holding his spear, to skeletons frozen into stalactites; to ghastly figures forming shady apparitions in marshes, Rider-Haggard's fear is that of a more tangible nature. Poe combines the materialism of Rider-Haggard's view of fear, and integrates it with Tolkien's own, perhaps more spiritual view of fear. With Poe, we see a combined feature of creatures that inspire fear, and objects that prove to be debilitating mentally, causing this fear. From the black tomb decorated with macabre design, to the canals of Venice whence a child is drowning, and a woman is deathly pale.

Lynn Forest-Hill has outdone herself in the arrangement of the essays in such a way as to make their impact that much more significant. The authors who contributed their essays to this book should all receive some form of commendation, and the best is for one to pick up this book and read it for yourself.

Joel Franz is an undergraduate student, currently researching various Tolkienian themes.

Ringing ever onwards

COLIN DURIEZ



The Ring Goes Ever On. Proceedings of the Tolkien 2005 Conference: 50 Years of the Lord of the Rings
Edited by Sarah Wells
835 pp, Tolkien Society (2008)
2 Vols: ISBN 978-0-905520-24-7, £35

I was present at *Tolkien 2005*, at Aston University, Birmingham, but had no real idea of how much I had missed while I was there until these two volumes of *Proceedings* arrived, resembling telephone directories in bulk. If one reads just one contribution per day from these pages, these tomes contain more than three months of thought and stimulus, opening up many new aspects of Tolkien's work, particularly *The Lord of the Rings*, the focus of the conference. The stated aim of the *Proceedings* is to provide a record of that momentous conference, celebrating half a century of *The Lord of the Rings*, as well as to present a coherent collection.

With almost 100 contributions from an international range of speakers, and more than 800 pages in total, the volumes could easily have overwhelmed the reader. Sarah Wells, the editor, has done an admirable job of dividing the contents up into sections that amount to a convincing taxonomy, relating to the various contexts of Tolkien's writings — literary, historical and intellectual — and to his central concerns and themes. Each individual contribution is introduced with an abstract, giving an instant overview, and usually a brief biographical note on the author.

There are eleven sections in all: Tolkien's life; his literary achievement; Tolkien in other lands; other voices; the telling

of tales (myth and storytelling); Tolkien's people; Tolkien's legacy; theology and the nature of good and evil; Tolkien's sources; Middle-earth at the movies; and Tolkien's world. One section title, 'Other Voices', is not as immediately obvious as most of the categories. A glance at its contents, however, reveals its meaning: it is about wider considerations of the impact of Tolkien's writings, including his affinities with other modern writers, some similarities more apparent than others. Comparisons are made between Tolkien and another literary cult figure in Russia (Alexander Grin), and between Tolkien and a popular British writer (Michael Moorcock). One contribution concerns itself with the very classification of fantasy, and Tolkien in particular, as progenitor of a great deal of modern adult fantasy. Another examines the relationship between the writings of three former Oxford students in the 1950s and Tolkien (Alan Garner, Diana Wynn Jones and Susan Cooper). One (my own) looks at Tolkien's recognizable presence as a character in other fictions.

A picture emerges of Tolkien's remarkable impact on diverse cultures around the world

As useful as the subject sections are, they do not exhaust threads that may be followed, sometimes with the help of the index provided. At the moment, for example, I am interested in the impact of the two world wars on Tolkien as part of research for a book I am writing. To my delight, a number of contributors address this issue, providing leads and fresh perspectives, such as John Garth's *As under a green sea: visions of war in the Dead Marshes*, and Franco Manni and Simone Bonechi's *The Complexity of Tolkien's Attitude Towards the Second World War*, and touched on in other papers on different themes, such as Anna Smol's *Male Friendship in The Lord of the Rings: Medievalism, the First World War, and Contemporary Rewritings*. Another thread which has interested me (and others, no doubt) for a number of years runs through many contributions, such as Patrick Curry's *Iron Crown, Iron Cage: Tolkien and Weber on Modernity and Enchantment*; Ralph C. Wood's *J.R.R. Tolkien: Our Post-modern Contemporary*, and Natalya Prilutskaya's *The Problem of Machine Technology in The Lord of the Rings* —this is the contemporary application of Tolkien's work. Is he pre- or post-modernist? Why as a seemingly arch-traditionalist is he so relevant in critiquing the seductive power of the machine in the modern world?

Several sections pick up on important areas of debate about Tolkien's work, such as the one labelled, 'Theology and the Nature of Good and Evil'. Instead of seeing Tolkien as simplistic and un-grownup in his portrayal of evil, the contributors point to him as one of the most important contemporary voices speaking on the nature of modern evil. They reflect a diversity of interpretation of Tolkien's portrayal of evil, pointing to a lively debate of utmost importance touching upon the heart of his work. Another is 'Tolkien's Literary Achievement', a very comprehensive section, which includes such ruminations as *From Beowulf to Post-modernism: Interdisciplinary Team-Teaching of J.R.R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings* (Robin Anne Reid and Judy Ann Ford); *Approaching Reality in The Lord of the Rings* (Andrea Ulrich); *Tolkien, the author and the critic: Beowulf, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth and The Lord of the Rings*, (Vincent Ferré); *J.R.R. Tolkien: Our Post-modern Contemporary* (Ralph C. Wood); and *Iron Crown, Iron Cage: Tolkien and Weber on Modernity and Enchantment*, (Patrick Curry). Others include a look at Tolkien as a benchmark of comparative literature, narrative freedom in *The Lord of the Rings*, the literary purpose of dreams, visions and prophecies in the same work, and a placing of Tolkien in the cultural and literary context of his time.

The brief biographies reveal that the contributors come from a variety of countries in the Old and New Worlds, including Norway, Spain, Italy, Russia, Germany, Austria, Greece, the United Kingdom, Poland, the USA, Canada, Brazil and Argentina, bringing a diversity of insights and perspectives. A picture emerges of Tolkien's remarkable impact on diverse cultures around the world, including post-Soviet democracies. Contributors include scholars, such as Tom Shippey, Marjorie Burns and Christopher Garbowski; authors of popular books, such as Michael Scott Rohan; and perceptive ordinary readers and fans of Tolkien. There is generally a remarkable coherence in the contributions, which range from *The Ace Copyright Affair* to the intriguingly titled *Influence of Climate on Myth: Tolkien's Theory and Practice*. The footnotes and bibliographies, quite apart from the pieces themselves, provide a seemingly endless reading adventure.

Colin Duriez is author of a number of books on Tolkien, C. S. Lewis and the Inklings, including *Tolkien and the Lord of the Rings: A Guide to Middle-earth*, *J.R.R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis: The Story of Their Friendship*, *A Field Guide to Narnia* and *The Inklings Handbook* (with David Porter). He has also appeared as a commentator on DVD sets of Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings*, *Ringers* and BBC TV's *The Worlds of Fantasy*.

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Echoes of strange music

LYNN FOREST-HILL

The Darkling and the Lady: The Trial of Cyrhision, Book 1
Christine Davidson
352 pp, Writers Exchange E-Publishing (2008) ISBN 9781921314094, $14.99 Available from Amazon http://tiny.cc/darkling and at Tolkien Society and other Fantasy events, price £7, or from the author (e-mail: christine@9realms.co.uk)

Besides being the first part of an epic tale, Christine Davidson's *The Darkling and the Lady* marks an interesting transition from a successful venture into e-publishing to the more familiar, traditional hard-copy book. It is therefore available at last to the widest possible readership, rather than being accessible only to the niche market for e-books. Further parts of the story will follow the same publishing pathways.

The Darkling and the Lady easily engages the reader, but it quickly becomes clear that there is a back-story of considerable complexity underpinning the immediate and engrossing tale of the modest but not self-effacing young Holtworth Goodfellow who leaves his rustic home in search of adventure. However, this book is by no means a *bildungsroman* and it is a refreshing change to find a 'hero' figure in an adventure story who is confident in his own abilities and does not need to undergo the usual and rather tired convention of mentoring from an older male character. Although Holt learns a number of things during his adventure, he does not follow the juvenile Arthurian or Luke Skywalker model. Nor is he so naïve as Pippin Took, or as bookish as Frodo. Instead, his existing skills are tested in new and far more demanding ways.

An absorbing story told in a deceptively straightforward style

Because it does not fall into the trap of slavishly following earlier models, *The Darkling and the Lady* shows that the art of English fantasy writing continues to flourish. The story clearly belongs to, and fully deserves its place in, the romance tradition that Tolkien revived and initiated for a modern readership, not only because of its constant hints and references to a slowly unravelling back-story, but because it synthesises references to ancient British myths and legends with fresh new sub-created themes. The debt to myth and legend is sometimes overt, but often subtly treated, and continues to echo Tolkien's interest in creating a particularly English mythology that is constructed from existing traditions. In *The Darkling and the Lady* this at times produces the sensation that the reader is familiar with names of characters, places and character types.

Although there is no obvious debt to Anglo-Saxon, other language forms such as Welsh and Irish, as well as references to phenomena such as bogles (hobgoblins) and Firbolg (a legendary people of pre-Celtic Ireland) introduce the wider perspective of British mythology. Whereas Tolkien often moves into a more abstract use of myth, legend and tradition, Christine Davidson uses her sources more openly so that the reader can see how she is placing her story in relation to familiar concepts. Indeed, at times elements of the back story can be seen as a recasting of known mythical references, as, for example, Fennir's Teeth recalls Fenrir the great wolf of northern myth, while the 'strange music' experienced by Holt's father echoes faintly the harmless music in *The Tempest*. Some of the Celtic language elements are handled in a way that reflects Tolkien's development of languages to characterise different races. Taken as a whole, the creative use of sources in *The Darkling and the Lady* generates a sense of consistency as well as a feeling of familiarity that is almost immediately displaced, entertainingly challenging the reader's preconceptions.

Although this first part of *The Trial of Cyrhision* reflects Tolkien's own imaginative geographical scope in its wide panoramas and epic distances, in its descriptive details the story reveals an individual and convincing familiarity with horsemanship, weaponry and weapon-handling, as for example in the small detail of Holt's ninety-pound bow, and the special qualities of the *krist*, which are impressively portrayed and developed. If a love of detailed description at times rather overwhelms the progress of the action, it also contributes a distinctive pacing. It encourages the reader to relax briefly before the next dramatic turn of events, enhancing the sense of a hostile environment within which the main characters must make sense of their changing fortunes. The dominant characters are well-defined and varied, with Amrielle conforming successfully to the demands of the more active female, without, at this point in the story at least, becoming yet another warrior maiden. She is more active than Arwen, less tragic than Éowyn, and always intelligent, self-determining and individual. Although the two-legged characters are, nevertheless, generally consistent with the conventions of fantasy adventure, the story includes the added dimension of the 'helper animals' motif, provided by the intriguing and independent Minx, saved from the Firbolg's cooking pot, and the faithful Brandysnap.

The representatives of evil and their wicked ways could perhaps be more graphically depicted to suit today's taste for horrific details, but the most disturbing aspects of the story are handled with sufficient delicacy yet clear allusion to encourage each individual reader's imagination to fill in

the details of the horrors. At the same time, the narrative avoids the curiously euphemistic vocabulary that characterises Tolkien's descriptive style particularly when dealing with the vileness of the orcs.

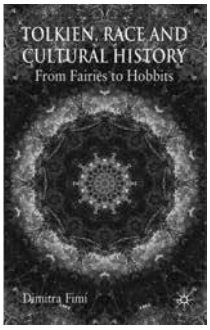
The occasional quaintness of expression in *The Darkling and the Lady* does not detract from or disturb for long the uncontrived narrative style, which ably reflects Tolkien's own accessible style, particularly that of *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Although the first part of *The Trial of Cyrhision* does not show the same significant changes of vocabulary and register that characterise the later parts of *The Lord of the Rings,* its fluency allows the familiar and the unfamiliar elements to merge into a new and convincing sub-created world. Avoiding the kind of kitsch archaisms that so often blight derivative fantasy, it tells an absorbing story in a deceptively straightforward style without giving the impression of a pastiche.

Although its debt to Tolkien will delight fans of Middle-earth, *The Darkling and the Lady* asserts its own creative identity and atmosphere. Initially a less demanding read than *The Lord of the Rings*, the story reveals hidden depth and leaves the reader eager to know more about the engaging characters, Holt, Amrielle, Minx and especially the slender and enigmatic Rillodan of the midnight hair and jewel eyes.

Lynn Forest-Hill is a medievalist and author. Her story *An Afternoon At The Seaside* appears on page 45. A review of her edited volume *The Mirror Crack'd* can be found on page 9.

Away with the fairies

HENRY GEE



Tolkien, Race and Cultural History: From Fairies to Hobbits
Dimitra Fimi
240pp, Palgrave Macmillan (2009)
ISBN 978-0-23021951-9, £50.00

How was it that the young Tollers, a beer-drinking, hell-raising hearty known for his ferocity on the rugger pitch and his fondness for the more heroically bloodthirsty of European myth, found himself writing verse on twee fairy sprites cavorting in wood-sunshine — and keeping a straight face while he was about it? No 19-year-old male would even admit to such things nowadays, believing (rightly) that the market for such things lies firmly with 8-year-old girls. And yet our John Ronald actually *published* the stuff — what's more, to the approbation of his similarly hearty friends. What was going on?

To answer this (and many other) questions is Dimitra Fimi's task in this readable and absorbing book. The short answer is that Tolkien was, inescapably, a man of his time — and his time was intensely unlike our own. "The Victorian imagination was dominated by the presence of fairies" (p. 28) to a degree we can now scarcely imagine, and Tolkien was simply following a well-established tradition, modified later — in Tolkien as in everyone else — by the Great War.

As the stately Eldar grew out of fairy folklore, so did their languages from another pursuit of the time — a general fascination with the history of languages, and, in particular, the invention of new ones. I knew that Tolkien was a competent Esperantist, but nothing of the context in which this fact is embedded. Fimi reveals that the turn of the twentieth century was a frantic period of linguistic invention: "the period 1880–1914 witnessed 145 such projects" (p. 95) of which Esperanto is simply the best known today. Not just languages, either, but universal alphabets in which idealized universal languages might be written: Fimi shows how Tolkien's Tengwar can be traced directly to one among several.

No one doubts Tolkien's originality, but Fimi's book allows us to glimpse a kind of creative logic through which his legendarium almost *had* to happen: a climate welcoming of fairies and folklore; romantic quests for national mythologies; a general interest in language and linguistic invention. Tolkien was indeed a man of his time and, more than that, a man living at just the right time for his peculiar talents to flower.

Fimi's book reads so well that it's hard to believe that it's an academic tome, still less one of the dispiriting canon of 'cultural studies', clogged with texts seemingly written by people with no sense of humour and whose language has been put through a kind of lexical congester. So much so that phrases such as "it is the dialectic co-articulation of ideology and aesthetic form that finally produces the literary text" (p. 157) are rare.

The cover art of academic books usually battles with hospital décor for the crown of most boring, uninspired and depressing colour schemes. But one of the loveliest features of Fimi's book is the cover art, a kind of mandala in shades of green and brown, reminiscent both of Tolkien's floral emblems of Elvish heraldry, and the mad-eyed obsessional detail of those Late Victorian fairy paintings that typified the era in which Tolkien began to write (I was reminded of Richard Dadd's painting, *The Fairy Feller's Master Stroke*). The cover turns out to be Fimi's own picture of Moseley Bog, rendered as through a kaleidoscope. A more fitting cover for this insightful work could hardly be imagined.

Henry Gee is the editor of *Mallorn* but manages to do a few other things in his spare time.

The ogre in the dungeon

ALEX LEWIS

J. R. R. Tolkien wrote the paper *On Fairy-stories* for an Andrew Lang lecture given on 8 March 1939 at St Andrews University[1], although Carpenter suggests that the basis for the talk was meant to be a lecture given to undergraduates at Worcester College a year before (ref. 1, p. 190). Various writers[2,3] have described this talk as extremely significant because of the date of its composition — coming right at the start of the process of the writing of *The Lord of the Rings*. Some even go so far as to suggest that it set the pattern for how *The Lord of the Rings* would be written.

It has also been suggested that this paper contained Tolkien's settled and final thoughts on various broader artistic matters, and have used it as a stick with which to beat potential illustrators of his works, as well as determining Tolkien's low opinion of drama as an art form. Both suggestions require caution. Indeed, Flieger and Anderson[3] warn against making exactly that assumption, and that Tolkien revisited these questions when writing *Smith of Wootton Major* later in his life, and came to somewhat different conclusions. So, a kind of unsubstantiated rumour has built up around *On Fairy-stories*, and yet as far as I am aware, there has been no detailed analysis of the talk in terms of its changing content and context. Shippey[4] suggests that it was Tolkien's 'least successful if most discussed piece of argumentative prose'. One point of this paper is to address that view.

First: why was Tolkien asked to give the Andrew Lang lecture at all? He was, as an academic, little known. The timing of the lecture makes it very tempting to suggest that it was because Tolkien had recently had *The Hobbit* published (on 21 September 1937) — and that someone mistook that book for a 'traditional fairy story'. But that would seem to be a rather simplistic explanation, which in fact turns out to be mistaken.

Rachel Hart (ref. 2, Ch. 1, pp. 1–2) explains that Tolkien was third choice as presenter of this paid lecture — £30, a considerable sum in 1939, when a week's wages for a working man would have been anything from 10 shillings to £3, depending on his level of skills[5]. Indeed, working it out in those terms, it is astonishing to think that £30 would have been around half the average man's annual pay, or £12,000 in today's terms.

The first two people approached were Gilbert Murray, a very well-known Oxford academic; and Hugh Macmillan, who had been Lord Provost of Scotland and briefly Minister for Information in the opening months of the Second World War. Neither man could fulfil the engagement and so Tolkien was approached. He had meant to give a talk on fairy stories at Worcester College the year before, but had instead read out a version of *Farmer Giles of Ham* (ref. 1, p. 191), and so the lecture was something he could write and give. As it turned out, Murray gave the Andrew Lang lecture the following year, and Macmillan the year after that.

It is possible that Tolkien was suggested by his friend and former colleague from Pembroke College, R. G. Collingwood, who had since moved on to the Waynflete Chair at Magdalen College. One of Collingwood's former pupils at Pembroke, T. M. Knox, was on the board charged with appointing Andrew Lang lecturers. Given Collingwood's own interests[6], Collingwood himself might have been in the frame for the lectureship. But Collingwood was ill: he retired in 1941 and died a few years later.

Tolkien and Collingwood had most certainly collaborated to some degree on academic work[7]. Flieger and Anderson believe that Knox might have approached Tolkien directly (ref. 3, p. 123), but given the closeness of Knox and Collingwood, and the latter's high profile in academia, it seems far more likely that it would have been Collingwood that Knox wanted initially to deliver the lecture and effectively had to settle for Tolkien in the end.

Multiple versions

The essay we now know as *On Fairy-stories* is best thought of as a development of four initially quite different papers[3]. The first two come from before the Second World War. The first, of which no certain record now exists, was partially written for Worcester College in 1938; the second (version 2), developed and given at St Andrews in 1939. The third version was published in *Essays Presented To Charles Williams* (Oxford, 1947), and which I shall call version 3 for the purposes of this paper. Finally, there is the greatly expanded version published in *Tree and Leaf* in 1966 (ref. 8), alongside the story *Leaf By Niggle*. I shall call this final iteration version 4.

It is important to emphasize that these are four quite different papers putting forward different views in many key areas. Also they cover varying if overlapping areas in and of themselves. In short, they reveal Tolkien's own changing views over three decades.

One of the interesting things that changes dramatically is Tolkien's attitude to Andrew Lang himself. It moves from a broadly supportive position in the first two versions to an

increasingly negative one in the third, but mellowing by the fourth in 1966.

To turn up and give an Andrew Lang lecture at his Alma Mater and castigate the man would seem the height of folly, and yet that is what Tolkien appeared to be doing in print. However, versions 3 and 4 as published each run to around 60 pages, far too long to have been delivered in a one-hour lecture. So, what was missed out?

Manuscript A — one of the manuscripts discussed, for the first time, by Flieger and Anderson[3] — runs to some 19 pages, including deletions and alterations. It is, in length, the likeliest to have been the basis for the Lang lecture itself. It is not the entire paper — the start and end are missing — but most of it is there. It is concerned with defining fairy stories, and is highly positive about the work and studies of Andrew Lang. It also matches most closely contemporary newspaper reports of the lecture (ref. 3, pp. 161–169). Here are some examples:

> For me the standard, the unrivalled [books of fairy stories] are the twelve books of twelve colours by Andrew Lang and his wife. (ref. 3, p. 176)

Origins and study of fairy stories:

> In this question of which Lang was deeply interested and wrote brilliantly and originally. And others have of course followed. (ref. 3, p. 179)

And again:

> More interesting if origins are discussed is the question of relation of what Andrew Lang called the higher and lower mythologies (and of both to religion strictly so-called). The biographer of Andrew Lang held that he had 'proved that folk lore was not the debris of a higher or literary mythology but the foundation on which that mythology rests. (ref. 3, pp. 181–182)

To be sure, Tolkien does say that this is an inversion of the truth, but is criticising Max Muller the famous nineteenth-century German philologist at that point and not Lang as he is in later versions.

> Andrew Lang's famous collections were of course a by-product of adult research into mythology and folk-lore, specially drawn off and adapted for 'children. (ref. 3, p. 187)

> 'The adaptation of the Story of Sigurd (done by Andrew Lang himself from Morris's translation of the Volsunga Saga) was my favourite without rival.' (ref. 3, p. 188)

This is likely to be the paper from which Tolkien extracted the material for the Lang lecture.

Manuscript B is expanded, to some 34 pages if one discounts crossed out sections and reworkings (ref. 3, pp. 206–251). Here the praise for Andrew Lang is more qualified, but still present, and a new element on the nature of magic is introduced. For instance, the above example where Max Muller is being criticised becomes:

> Among the many interesting questions which an enquiry into origins raises is one we have already just glimpsed; the relation of what Andrew Lang called the higher and lower mythologies: which would now probably be called myth and folktale. The once dominant view (which he especially opposed) was that which derived all from nature-myths… That would seem to be the truth nearly upside down … (ref. 3, p. 223)

> So I will not say children have changed since Andrew Lang's time. I will say that I wonder if they were ever like that. (ref. 3, p. 234).

I believe that Manuscript B may be the workings that Tolkien began as something to send to St Andrews for inclusion in their publications — they were planning to publish all the Andrew Lang lectures given in one volume, and asked Tolkien for his lecture to include in there. When it appeared it did so without Tolkien's contribution for he never sent any version for their inclusion in that volume of papers. He did, however, send a copy of *Tree and Leaf* to St Andrews in due course, with his apologies.

Then we have the 1947 *Essays* version[10]. There are some differences between the 1947 and the 1966 versions of the paper — primarily version 3 starts with the introduction of an Englishman in Scotland and adds or removes various lines here and there throughout the text — page 33 has an extra line: "Of this seriousness the medieval *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is an admirable example." And this is removed in Version 4. Also removed on page 59 was: "All children's books are on a strict judgement poor books. Books written entirely for children are poor even as children's books." This is a rather bald statement that would be difficult to defend. On page 73 a sentence is removed from Essays: "Andrew Lang is, I fear, an example of this." In the 1966 version. It adds merely "As Lang said."

The discussion of art is somewhat complex. Version 4 has: "We do not, or need not, despair of painting because all lines must either be straight or curved. The combinations may not be infinite (for we are not) but they are innumerable." (p. 82) whereas version 3 is more extended from page 73 paragraph 2 through to page 74.

Version 3 has an extended note on page 78 which is cut short on version 4 (p. 72).

And finally the second half of Note G, which appears in version 3 (p. 88), is entirely missing from version 4 — and is nine and a half lines long. It does deal with matters of eugenics, and perhaps Tolkien felt that to be an unwise subject to bring up in 1966, whereas in 1947 it might still have been acceptable.

Finally we have *Tree and Leaf*[8], with its stinging attack on Andrew Lang as well as on Max Muller. Tolkien damns Lang with faint praise, and I shall give some examples. My own comments on Tolkien's comments are given in square brackets after each quote.

Drayton's Nymphidia is one ancestor of that long line of flower-fairies and fluttering sprites with antennae that I so disliked as a child. Andrew Lang had similar feelings. In the preface to the Lilac Fairy Book he refers to the tales of tiresome contemporary authors... (p. 30) [see below with reference to *Voyage to Lilliput*]

The number of collections of fairy stories is now very great. In English none probably rival either the popularity, or the inclusiveness, or the general merits of the 12 books of 12 colours which we owe to Andrew Lang and his wife …. Most of its contents pass the test, more or less clearly. … but I note in passing that of the stories in this *Blue Fairy Book* none are primarily about fairies, few refer to them. (p. 33) [So in effect the *Blue Fairy Book* is bogus — it does not contain what it says in its title]

But what is to be said of the appearance in the *Blue Fairy Book* of *A Voyage to Lilliput*? I will say this: it is not a fairy story … I fear that it was included merely because Lilliputians are small … (p. 34) [Note that before this on page 30 he says that Lang disliked the smallness and triteness — so how come this story is included? It would seem Tolkien is accusing Lang of a lapse of taste or even academic decision]

Now *The Monkey's Heart* is also plainly only a beast-fable. I suspect that its inclusion in a 'Fairy book' is due not primarily to its entertaining quality, but precisely to the monkey's heart supposed to have been left behind in a bag. That was significant to Lang …. (p. 37) [but I would imagine Lang and his wife included it for the former reason]

Andrew Lang's Fairy Books are not perhaps lumber rooms. They are more like stalls at a rummage sale … His collections are largely a by product of his adult study of mythology and folk-lore; but they were made into and presented as books for children. Some of the reasons that Lang gave are worth considering …. They represent the young age of man true to his early loves and have his unblunted edge of belief, a fresh appetite for marvels … It seems clear that Lang uses belief in its ordinary sense … if so then I fear that Lang's words, stripped of sentiment, can only imply that the teller of marvellous tales to children … does trade on their credulity … Children are capable of course of 'willing suspension of disbelief' … but if they really liked [the tale] for itself they would not have to suspend disbelief: they would believe — in this sense.

Now if Lang had meant anything like this there might have been some truth in his words … [meaning there is none?] … And as for children of the present day, Lang's description does not fit my own memories, or my experience of children. Lang may have been mistaken about the children he knew, but if he was not, then at any rate children differ considerably … and such generalizations which treat them as a class … are delusory (from pp. 51–54).

It is true that the age of childhood sentiment has produced some delightful books … but it has also produced a dreadful undergrowth of stories written or adapted to what was or is conceived to be the measure of children's minds and needs … the imitations are often merely silly … or patronising or (deadliest of all) covertly sniggering, with an eye on the other grown-ups present. I will not accuse Andrew Lang of sniggering, but certainly he smiled to himself, and certainly too often he had an eye on the faces of other clever people over the heads of his child-audience … (p. 56)

I do not deny there is a truth in Andrew Lang's words (sentimental though they may sound) … 'he who would enter into the kingdom of faerie should have the heart of a little child'... 'For children are innocent and love justice; while most of us are wicked and naturally prefer mercy.' Andrew Lang was confused on this point. Let us not divide the human race into Eloi and Morlocks: pretty children — 'elves' as the 18th century often idiotically called them … (p. 57)

[Talking of eucatastrophic events in fairy stories] Even modern fairy stories can produce this effect sometimes … It happens even in Andrew Lang's own fairy story *Prince Prigio*, unsatisfactory in many ways as that is. Note 1 — this is characteristic of Lang's wavering balance. [again, Tolkien accuses Lang of a lack of academic decisiveness as he had before]

In context

Thankfully because of the hard work and scholarship of Flieger and Anderson, we are now able to put the whole lecture of *On Fairy-stories* into context because we can work out when certain ideas came into the essay and others were removed or changed. Few researchers have pointed out that Tolkien was indeed hostile to Lang's works in *On Fairy-stories*. Ruth Berman (ref. 11, p. 127) comes close, though she merely says: "Tolkien disliked much in Lang's work, and was by no means a follower of Lang, especially in 1939, when he was trying to write *The Lord of the Rings* as a story for adults, and so particularly resented the assumption that fairy-tales were necessarily children's literature." She then goes on merely to compare motifs in Lang's *Green Fairy Book* with similar ones in Tolkien's writing, which do not seem to prove anything much at all. Berman is wrong in several points — notably that Tolkien was antagonistic to Lang's work in 1939 — see Manuscript A and B as discussed above — and that in 1939 he was writing *The Lord of the Rings* for adults — he was at that point merely writing a sequel to *The Hobbit*, which was meant as a children's story, and was being drawn towards the darker material in his *Silmarillion* and other 'serious' writings[12].

But that is not the end of the matter — as Flieger points out, Tolkien's views were changing still as he grew older, and the introduction to *Smith of Wootton Major*[13] introduced concepts markedly different to those in *Tree and Leaf*. Whereas Tolkien says that Elves are not involved in human affairs and not interested in them in versions 3 and 4 of *On Fairy-stories*, in *Smith* he says that Elves and Men share the world and may even have their destinies intertwined in some way.

So, why was the whole situation changing? Very likely it

was due to the interactions between Tolkien and his fellow Inklings. Glyer[14] shows how much the members of this loose writers' group influenced one another and in what ways they did so. She points out that influence is not a simple thing and has many components including both positive and negative influence (resonators and antagonists). She comes out in a mid position between the early writers who claimed that the Inklings were some kind of 'artistic movement' and consciously integrated their works to some Christian end, and the opposite position which Humphrey Carpenter espoused that Tolkien was not influenced by anyone.

Glyer quotes correspondence from various sources (ref. 14, pp. 5, 34, 58 — the wager of a space and a time travel story between CSL and JRRT; ref. 14, pp. 73, 84, 88, 94, 116–119 — influence on *The Lord of the Rings* as it was being written). It seems pretty clear that this discussion group, debating society and writers circle that was the Inklings as a loose group of people did affect one another both in what they wrote and in their held views. Debates were ferocious and ideas had to be defended against others in the group. Under these circumstances, it is not a surprise that Tolkien's views on Lang as one example would change markedly with time. M

Alex Lewis is a gentleman and a scholar.

See page 7 for David Doughan's review of the new edition of *On Fairy-stories*.

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The curious case of Denethor and the *Palantír*

JESSICA YATES

This essay is inspired by a theory of Tom Shippey, put forward in four different places, three of them with reference to the Peter Jackson film, *The Return of the King*. Shippey wrote[1]:

> What did he see on the 13th, the day when Faramir was brought in, the day the 'pale light' was seen flickering? The 13th is the day when Frodo is captured and taken to Minas Morgul [*sic*: it was the tower of Cirith Ungol]. The likelihood is that *that* is what Denethor has seen, in a vision controlled by Sauron.

Elsewhere[2] Shippey comments on the scene when Denethor returns from his "secret room under the summit of the Tower" with his face "grey, more deathlike than his son's" and his words to Pippin on the next page "the Enemy has found it, and now his power waxes", Shippey wrote that "Denethor is allowed to see Frodo captured in the *palantír* and thinks Sauron has the Ring".

In his Hope College lecture[3], Shippey said that the *palantíri* were used four times in the book: by Pippin on 5 March; by Aragorn on 6 March; by Saruman throughout the narrative, and by Denethor on 13 March: "Denethor sees Frodo captured at Cirith Ungol and mistakenly concludes that Sauron has the Ring." I should add Denethor's final view of his Stone, just before he goes to his death, in the early morning of 15 March, and Shippey also notes this in his book.

Finally, we have Shippey's penetrating analysis[4], which approves of Jackson's treatment, on the whole. Discussing the *palantíri* he argues that Jackson has nearly eliminated the element of false information that was part of Tolkien's plan: Sauron seeing Pippin, and then Aragorn, and concluding that each had the Ring. Here is his discussion of Denethor:

> On the 13th Faramir is brought back badly wounded, and Denethor retires to his secret chamber, from which people see "a pale light that gleamed and flickered … and then flashed and went out." When he comes down, "the face of the Lord was grey, more deathlike than his son's" (*Lord Of The Rings*, p. 803). Clearly Denethor has been using his *palantír*, but what has he seen in it? Much later on, close to suicide, he tells Gandalf that he has seen the Black Fleet approaching (as it is), though he does not know (though at that moment the reader does) that the fleet now bears Aragorn and rescue, not a new army of enemies (*LOTR*, p. 835). However, this does not seem quite enough to trigger Denethor's total despair. Surely we are meant to realise that what he has seen in the *palantír* is Frodo, whom he knows to be the Ring-bearer, *in the hands of Sauron*. Both Frodo's capture and Faramir's wounding take place on March 13th; and one may recall that Sauron plays a similar trick by showing Gandalf and the leaders of the West Frodo's *mithril*-coat and Sam's sword in the parley outside the Black Gate. The matter is put beyond doubt, however, by what Denethor says to Pippin as he prepares for suicide. "Comfort me

not with wizards! … The fool's hope has failed. The Enemy has found it and now his power waxes" (*LOTR*, p. 805). "The fool's hope" is Gandalf's plan to destroy the Ring (see *LOTR*, p. 795), and the "it" that "the Enemy" has found must be the Ring. Once again, then, Denethor has seen something true in a *palantír*, and has drawn from it *a wrong conclusion*.

What does the first-time reader of the text learn about the *palantíri* from Saruman's, Pippin's and Aragorn's experiences with the Orthanc-stone? He learns (from Gandalf's inferences afterwards while riding with Pippin) that Saruman had no will to argue with Sauron. He was obsessed with the Stone and Sauron could compel him to come to the Stone at will: "How long, I wonder, has he been constrained to come often to his glass for inspection and instruction …?" asks Gandalf. Maybe Saruman's dependence was aided by the fact that they were both Maiar, and on the same wavelength, so to speak, for their communication would have been wordless.

Pippin was obsessed with the Stone from first holding it, and "driven by some impulse that he did not understand" he stole it from Gandalf, found a place apart and gazed into it "like a greedy child". He was then forced to answer the question Sauron put to him, by mindspeech only, which luckily only ran to "who are you?", to which Pippin replied "a hobbit"' He did not give his name: Pippin felt physical pain as Sauron gloated over him. It would seem that conversational use has a longer range than distance-viewing, as Sauron did not see far enough to witness the destruction of Isengard by the Ents.

Finally Aragorn was able to wrench the Orthanc-stone to his bidding by force of personality and hereditary right. He showed himself to Sauron in a different guise, and displayed his sword. Then he used it to survey a large area of the country round, noticed the corsairs massing to sail up the river, and decided it would be his task to stop them.

By the time Pippin reaches Minas Tirith we know the *palantíri* are dangerous. In the book Denethor refers to the Stones early on, and as Gandalf has already told Pippin of the Seven Stones and their locations, this is a clue for the first-time reader. "Yea … for though the Stones be lost, they say, still the lords of Gondor have keener sight than lesser men …" At this Pippin fancies that Denethor knows that he has looked into a Stone.

How much does Denethor know of Frodo's quest? Denethor discovers the truth from Faramir, and responds with the classic phrase "a witless halfling". Gandalf, despite Pippin's experience, still did not anticipate Faramir's news to recognise a serious danger to Frodo's quest.

Denethor uses his *palantír* twice in the book: once when Faramir is brought back near to death; and second just before he leads the procession to the House of the Stewards, when he sees the corsairs sailing up the river, presumably when he went up to the high chamber to bring the Stone down. Thus he did not see the battle when Aragorn and the Dead defeated the corsairs and filled the ships with allies. Sauron, however, sent him the vision, knowing that Aragorn had taken over the ships yet hoping to make capital out of Denethor's delusion.

Although the *palantíri* do not show probabilities and alternatives, unlike the Mirror of Galadriel (and how uncanny it was for that mirror to predict the near-failure of the quest at Cirith Ungol), they may show more than simply events happening elsewhere, in 'real time'. Gandalf expresses the desire to use the Orthanc-stone to look back thousands of years to Tirion, "while both the White Tree and the Golden were in flower", a time which he had lived through as Olórin. Aragorn shows himself to Sauron in a different guise. After Denethor's suicide, his Stone will only show, to all except the strongest of will, the image of "two aged hands withering in flame".

Windows on the past

The key to these usages is found in Tolkien's essay in *Unfinished Tales*, based on notes he wrote when revising *The Lord of the Rings* and assembled by Christopher Tolkien into an essay with notes. Tolkien wrote that the Stones could see "scenes or figures in distant places, or in the past", and then "visions of the things in the mind of the surveyor of one Stone could be seen by the other surveyor" (note 5). In note 18 we read that "They retained the images received, so that each contained within itself a multiplicity of images and scenes, some from a remote past". This explains why Gandalf believed that he could look back to Valinor; why Aragorn could make Sauron see him as dignified, not travel-worn; and why Denethor's suicide was imprinted on his Stone for future viewers.

Until Shippey announced his interpretation, very few of Tolkien's readers interpreted Denethor's despairing return from his chamber as proof that he had seen Frodo captured. I disagree partly with Shippey and also with Tolkien, speaking through Gandalf, when he says "He was too great to be subdued to the will of the Dark Power; he saw nonetheless only those things which that Power permitted him to see." In the essay from *Unfinished Tales*, Tolkien modified that assertion. When Tolkien revised this part of the story, under pressure, he may not have realised the need to change the text to something like "nearly all that he saw was under Sauron's control".

If Denethor went to his Stone when he chose, and it was not near at hand as Saruman's was, there would be times when Sauron was otherwise engaged, though he may have come to his Stone quite quickly if he sensed that Denethor was 'on line' or had just 'logged in', extremely risky behaviour that Gandalf, surprisingly, did not anticipate. When Pippin suggests that Denethor consult Gandalf over Faramir's illness, Denethor refused. Had he done so, and told him he had seen Frodo captive, Gandalf, although horrified, would have reassured him that the Enemy did not have the Ring — for Gandalf would have sensed it with his own Ring.

However, I believe that Sauron did not know Frodo was captured. Sauron would have had to discover Frodo on a routine sweep of Mordor, as no word was sent to the Dark Tower of the capture, and a Nazgûl only appeared to

investigate just as Frodo and Sam were escaping.

First, had Sauron noted Frodo in his Stone, he would have sent a Nazgûl at once to fetch him to Barad-dûr, as he planned to do with Pippin. Second, if he decided to leave him there for a day to see if there was a rescue attempt, he would have monitored Frodo's chamber and the access to the Tower to watch for a rescuer, so that when Sam arrived Sauron would have watched him give Frodo back the Ring. Disaster! However, there would have been no need to have left Frodo there. His potential rescuer(s) would not know Frodo had been spirited away under cover of darkness. Sam would have turned up at the Tower and found two troops of orcs in ambush. Disaster!

Even had Sauron left Frodo captive, missed Sam's rescue, and then discovered Frodo had escaped, he would have mobilised Nazgûl and orcs to catch the fugitives. We are to assume that he left Frodo in the chamber; left the orcs to get on with killing one another; sent a Nazgûl when all the orcs were dead and not before; and only sent a small team hunting for the fugitives, assuming that if they couldn't be found, that they were heading back through Shelob's lair, and he needn't bother about them.

If, however, he did *not* know about Frodo, it is surprising that he didn't check up on Cirith Ungol until all the orcs were dead, and that, if he did check just before the Nazgûl arrived, he didn't then catch Sam rushing up the stairs or giving Frodo the Ring!

There is textual evidence against Sauron knowing about Frodo. Both parties of orcs had been sent on patrol by Nazgûl, not by Lugbúrz (*i.e.* the Dark Tower), and only Shagrat's mob, based at Cirith Ungol, owed loyalty to the Eye. Gorbag and Shagrat agreed that the Eye was "busy elsewhere" and they couldn't get It to pay attention to the fear of Spies on the Stairs (which might have happened because the Witch-king sensed the Ring as his army marched out). Gorbag advised Shagrat to catch Frodo's companion before he sent in his report, which suggests that Lugbúrz wouldn't move in their direction first, and that the Eye was not focused on Cirith Ungol at all. As Sam climbed the tower he heard Shagrat tell Snaga that "News must get through to Lugbúrz, or we'll both be for the Black Pits", suggesting again that they had been left to their own devices, and that the Nazgûl, arriving just as Frodo and Sam were leaving, had not been sent by Sauron, but is making its own inspection, triggered off by the Watchers, and possibly the light from Galadriel's phial. Finally, we know that the Eye was preoccupied on 16 March with a vision of Aragorn he saw on 6 March, well before Frodo and Sam climbed the Stairs, reinforced by watching Aragorn capture the corsairs' fleet on 13 March and win the Battle of the Pelennor Fields on 15 March.

We also have Gandalf's assertion (and Tolkien's, speaking through him) about what Denethor saw. Just after Denethor's death Gandalf summed him up: "the vision of the great might of Mordor that was shown to him fed the despair of his heart". And he repeated this at the Last Debate: "Denethor saw great forces arrayed against him in Mordor, and more still being gathered". Were Gandalf wrong, and Denethor also saw Frodo captive, then Gandalf could also have been wrong to have said that Denethor saw only what Sauron permitted him to see.

Finally we have the evidence from the drafts, in *The War of the Ring*. In the draft outline (page 360 of the hardback edition), Denethor did not commit suicide. He greeted Aragorn coldly and suggested that as Faramir was likely to die, the line of Stewards would die out anyway, and thus Aragorn would become king. By the next outline (p. 374) Tolkien had decided that Denethor would die in the pyre, and then he wrote drafts close to the published work, a major difference being that Denethor knew that Aragorn had taken the corsairs' ships, and still intended suicide, because he would not yield to a descendant of Isildur. Moreover, Tolkien first intended that Denethor would look in the Stone for the first time after Faramir returned, near to death (pp. 381–382), but later changed the story to read that Denethor had frequently consulted the Stone as an aid to war strategy. Had Tolkien intended us to understand that Denethor saw Frodo captive through Sauron's control of the Stone, then it is likely there would have been a hint of this in the early drafts.

However, the contentious passage does not occur in *The War of the Ring*. After Denethor's suicide Pippin described Denethor's departure and return to Faramir's sickbed, and then Tolkien wrote that passage retrospectively.

Part of the scheme

I would also plead the opinions of Hammond and Scull (ref. 5: pp. 547–548). They also helpfully add (p. 608) details from a document kept at Marquette University, the *Scheme*, which says that after Shagrat arrived at Barad-dûr (on 17 March), he was slain by Sauron, presumably for failing to keep him informed, for losing two troops of orcs, and for letting the prisoner escape. Sauron's haste to punish Shagrat therefore protected Frodo and Sam; Sauron did not send out the hunting party, it was ordered by the Nazgûl, who have a misleading description of Frodo and Sam, possibly gained from a wounded orc. The conversation between the tracker and the soldier, about to give up their hunt, is very useful.

The *Scheme* also has news of the escape of the prisoners reaching Barad-dûr "almost at same time as news of their capture" on 15 March, while in the draft quotes in *Sauron Defeated* (p. 10), a foot-soldier passes news of the capture to a rider, who brings the news to Sauron on the 14th or 15th. Sauron sends a Nazgûl to Cirith Ungol, who arrives too late. However, by the published *Tale of Years* Tolkien had decided to postpone news of Frodo's capture reaching Sauron until 17 March, Shagrat going by foot.

Frodo's *mithril*-coat is thus doubly useful: it delays the report to Barad-dûr; and causes two troops of orcs to massacre one another: Sam doesn't even have to kill one orc — Snaga falls down the trap-door ladder and is killed (in the film Sam runs him through from the back).

Conclusive evidence of Tolkien's intentions is found, I believe, in *The War of the Ring* (Part 3 Minas Tirith, Ch. II, 'Book Five begun and abandoned', pp. 231, 257). Tolkien's

original synopsis had Gandalf take the *palantír* to Minas Tirith! Tolkien wrote: "Ships of Harad. New force from North. Episode of the Palantír and Gandalf."

This is part of a note from another synopsis:

> As the siege grows and the armies of Gondor are pressed back he looks in the Palantír. He catches sight of Frodo in tower and then Sauron cuts in. Gandalf gives a great shout and hurls the Stone from the battlements. It slays ? a captain …

Christopher Tolkien comments that: "This is the original germ of the story of Denethor and the Palantír …" I interpret this rejected idea as Tolkien realising the danger of Sauron discovering Frodo captive. Once he decided that Gandalf should give the Stone to Aragorn he made much useful capital out of it. Sauron became preoccupied with Aragorn and neglected the threat of spies.

Compare also this line from *The Treason of Isengard* (p. 437): "Sauron is busy with war and it takes time for message to reach him", and all the calculations of the dates of Frodo's capture and rescue and the delay in sending the message about Frodo to the Dark Tower in *Sauron Defeated* (pp. 7–11).

I am satisfied that Sauron did not know Frodo was captured until long after he had escaped, but could Denethor have seen Frodo in his Stone, unbeknownst to Sauron? The Denethor of the published book knew from Faramir's report that Frodo, Sam and Gollum were heading to Mordor via the Morgul Vale and Cirith Ungol. It is likely, in the interests of good management of the war, that he would have surveyed the Tower of Cirith Ungol to see if he could have seen the questers. This would have been extremely risky: had Sauron 'logged in', he would have caught Frodo's image. Was Denethor aware that Sauron was often present when he used the Stone?

Is it not strange that Denethor does not consult the Stone just before he sends Faramir out the second time?

Is it not strange that Denethor does not consult the Stone just before he sends Faramir out the second time, possibly to his death, to check the disposition of the Enemy's armies? He could have seen the Morgul-host and given Faramir informed advice. Or was the Darkness just too dark for him to see? This flaw in the plot is essential for the story, to illustrate Denethor's poor decision-making, and to ensure that Faramir returns to the city near to death. Denethor is less harsh to Faramir in the earlier versions, and Tolkien deliberately made him harsher (*War of the Ring* pp. 332–333).

Another example of Denethor's independence from Mordor would have been his knowledge of other events, such as Rohan's success at Helm's Deep, when he might have seen Aragorn in action (see the *Unfinished Tales* essay, p. 411).

I note here that in accordance with the original usage of the Stones, for their security and to ensure good sightlines, all users of the Stones sought high places in which to view them, including Aragorn in the Hornburg, and even Pippin on a 'green hillock'. Let us assume that Denethor knew about Frodo, and Sauron did not. Gandalf's extreme negligence in allowing Denethor to know about the quest is apparent to me. Gandalf did not know how strong Denethor was against Sauron; he knew how Sauron dominated Saruman and Pippin. Had Sauron asked the right questions, Frodo's quest would have be ruined. He could have inquired, for example, after the location of the Ring, or the identity of the Ringbearer. Tolkien knew that Denethor could have resisted such questions, but Gandalf need not have done.

While revising *The Lord of the Rings* in the mid-1960s, Tolkien had second thoughts about Denethor's *palantír*, shown in the changes to the text of *The Two Towers* and *The Return Of The King*, and in the notes in *Unfinished Tales*. He changed Gandalf's words "long have I known that here in the White Tower, as at Orthanc, one of the Seven Stones was preserved" to "long ago I guessed that here in the White Tower, one at least of the Seven Seeing Stones was preserved". Tolkien makes it clearer in his essay notes that Gandalf's experience with Saruman prompted concern over Denethor, with the clues of Denethor's wide knowledge of faraway events and his "appearance of premature old age" — the *palantír* being used constantly in conflict with Sauron having an effect similar to that of the One Ring. Simply changing 'known' to 'guessed'[6] does not exonerate Gandalf from putting Frodo's quest in terrible danger. I suggest three options for Gandalf that Tolkien might have pondered when he realised how Denethor could have betrayed the quest under pressure.

First, he could have forbidden Faramir to have mentioned Frodo, and the story would have proceeded as the theatrical release of the film, without the crucial report scene that highlights the different characters of Denethor and Faramir and shows how Denethor reacts to the Ring's temptation: a scene far too important to lose.

Second, he could have taken command of Minas Tirith and demanded that Denethor be deposed and imprisoned — rather as Gandalf does in the film, beating Denethor with his staff, to boot.

Third — and this is the solution I prefer — after the report scene is played out in full, Gandalf could have realised the danger to the quest, guessed where Denethor kept his Stone (and asked Beregond), and then gone up to the chamber and laid a spell on the door so that Denethor could not have used his Stone.

Whatever Tolkien did beyond minimal rewriting would have been noticed and remarked on. After the business of rewriting that chapter of *The Hobbit*, it would have been embarrassing to have done it again. So he simply touched up the text lightly (after all, he needs Denethor to have searched the Stone while Faramir lay near death, in order to become suicidal), and wrote himself detailed notes to explain that Denethor, as the rightful owner of the Stone, could not be dominated by Sauron. He "retained the strength to control the Stone to his own purposes" while Sauron "would not

(and could not) have the Ithil-stone under perpetual observation" — nor did Sauron delegate the use of his Stone. Neither Saruman nor Sauron were rightful owners or users of their Stones, and Tolkien even suggests that Denethor held conference with Saruman, when Sauron could not eavesdrop.

I have decided not to accept Shippey's version of events, but prefer the solution that Denethor saw Frodo in his Stone out of his own curiosity and not impelled by Sauron, whose attention was entirely elsewhere, thus endangering the quest, should Sauron have used his Stone while Denethor was engaged in observing Frodo (only metaphorically, "in the hands of Sauron").

Denethor risked the whole future of Middle-earth, and moved towards suicide: by gazing to the east, he missed an event that should have brought him comfort for Gondor's sake, though mixed feelings for his stewardship: Aragorn capturing the black fleet. Sauron was watching this same battle, angry that Aragorn had flouted his plans, yet devising the plan to deceive Denethor. Had Denethor not been so dangerously curious, in my reading, he would have known the fleet was full of Gondor's allies and would not have been deceived by Sauron.

Furthermore, neither Sauron nor Denethor observed the Ride of the Rohirrim, whose arrival was a surprise to both, approaching Minas Tirith under the cover of the forest and the darkness, and thus camouflaged from the view of the Stones.

Another detail in *Unfinished Tales* (p. 410) is relevant: Tolkien notes that the *palantíri* were blocked by darkness and "could see through walls but see nothing within rooms, caves … unless some light fell on it". A high red lamp lit the Cirith Ungol chamber, and Frodo lay huddled in the dark. Unless Sauron used his Stone during Frodo's interrogation, he would not have been able to tell whether the figure was an orc or a hobbit, or even see him at all. Denethor might have done better, looking for a figure the size and shape of Pippin.

But as nobody before Shippey had perceived that Denethor could have seen Frodo captive in his Stone, and as Tolkien would be expected to be more explicit about this, given the need to rewrite, and to write private notes about the function of the Stones: why not, as the Creator, simply decide that Denethor did not see Frodo, and leave it at that?

Real life

I conclude that Tolkien, allowing his characters the autonomy of behaving as they might have behaved in 'real life', could not dismiss the possibility of Denethor searching his Stone, as he had allowed Denethor the information that Frodo went up the pass of Cirith Ungol. As Denethor could have seen Frodo and thus wrecked the quest had Sauron eavesdropped, Tolkien analysed the functions of the Stones in his 1966 writings, so as to minimise the chance of Sauron exploiting his curiosity. He left unwritten what Denethor did see during the Siege of Gondor, and made but a few textual changes. He was so successful in covering up his plot-hole that for nearly 50 years nobody saw the possibility.

When these ideas first occurred to me I had just seen the theatrical version, and marked the omission of that very important scene in which Faramir reported to Denethor and Gandalf, with Pippin present, about his adventure with Frodo, Sam and Gollum. Denethor then bitterly regretted that Boromir hadn't been in charge, and Gandalf responds: "He would have kept it for his own, and when he returned you would not have known your son." In the theatrical version Gandalf rescues Faramir with Pippin also riding Shadowfax, and as soon as Faramir enters the courtyard of Minas Tirith he tells them that he has seen Frodo and Sam, and that they have gone to the Morgul Vale, by which Gandalf understands that they have taken the path of Cirith Ungol.

As Gandalf, earlier, in book and film, warned Pippin that he was not to say anything to Denethor about Frodo's quest, it follows that the film-Denethor knows nothing about Frodo and the Ring.

If the film-Denethor had no *palantír*, which John Noble reported was the case[7], it further follows that his degeneration is due to his grief over Boromir, not corruption by Sauron as well. As a war commander he should have been prepared for Boromir's death as his chief captain.

It is most likely that Jackson dispensed with the *palantír* for artistic reasons; having moved the scene of Pippin's temptation into the third film. He felt that to have two elderly lords corrupted by two Seeing-stones would be repetitious, especially after he decided to have Saruman parade his Stone in front of Gandalf, Théoden and their retinue. Tolkien also considered this by revealing Denethor's Stone at the very last moment.

From the extended version of the DVD we find that the crucial report scene was filmed, and reinstated as 'The Wizard's Pupil', a two-hander between Faramir and Denethor. This is extremely fine: Faramir speaks Gandalf's words and most of the dialogue is straight from the book. Jackson added Denethor's vision of Boromir behind Faramir, reinforcing our opinion that Denethor is going insane. John Noble himself attributed some of his motivation to Denethor's loss of his wife.

However, Denethor still has no Stone, and I wonder whether Jackson, in the process of reordering the events of *The Return of the King*, hit on the same drawback that I have found, and that I believe Tolkien also realised as he was revising the trilogy.

Had Sauron known of Frodo he would have summoned him to the Dark Tower. Jackson may also have stumbled upon this plot-hole, and dealt with it by excising Denethor's *palantír* from the story. Whether accidentally or on purpose he solves Tolkien's plot-hole by omitting the Stone altogether, for which I am sorry. John Noble played Denethor as Jackson wished, and he has some fine moments, but he verges towards a stereotypical mad king instead of the subtler character that Tolkien drew.

Appendix 1 At some point in the Oxonmoot 2006 lecture series somebody pointed out that in the film's Voice of

Saruman scene, Saruman mocks Gandalf for sending the Halfling to his doom, which suggests that Saruman knows the nature of Frodo's quest. As he is Sauron's slave, it would follow that Sauron would also know about Frodo's quest — which is nonsense, so here is an inconsistency caused by the desire to endow Saruman with more menace and pride before his fall.

Appendix 2 Tolkien's time-scheme suits both Shippey's interpretation and mine. Denethor consults his *palantír* late in the evening of 13 March. Sam sets out to rescue Frodo at noon on 14 March, a moment that Tolkien anchors by stating where Aragorn, Merry and Pippin were at the time. Sam rescues Frodo that evening, and the next morning the Darkness begins to clear for Frodo and Sam as well as Minas Tirith. The Battle of the Pelennor is fought and Frodo and Sam hear a Nazgûl-shriek, which tells us of the Witch-king's death.

Had Denethor looked again at Frodo's prison chamber before he went to the pyre, he might have seen Frodo and Sam together, or an empty chamber, the latter of which would not have given him comfort. However, it was good (in my reading) that Sauron did not pick up Frodo's image from Denethor, but kept him firmly focused on the west-facing view of the Stone, and on the black fleet.

Finally, I would like to refute any suggestion that the Stones had a 'flashback' or 'time-travel' function. They could see distant objects, and scenes from the past provided that that Stone had already viewed those scenes. Furthermore, a surveyor could see an object retained in the mind of the surveyor with whom he was communicating. It was not, however, possible to require a Stone to show past events that it had not witnessed: otherwise the Quest would have failed as soon as Sauron learned of the escaped spies. He would simply have travelled back in time to find Frodo and Sam, and then move forward quickly to find them in 'real time'. Such a power would also have been useful to Saruman in his part of Middle-earth, sending news to Sauron beyond the reach of his (Sauron's) Stone. But obviously the Stones did not have that power. However, had Sauron encouraged Saruman to survey well north of Isengard, he might have been able to spy on the Fellowship before and after they came to Rivendell.

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The realm of Faërie, and the shadow of Homer in Narnia and Middle-earth

LOUIS MARKOS

> "Me, sir!" cried Sam, springing up like a dog invited for a walk. "Me go and see Elves and all! Hooray!" he shouted, and then burst into tears. (*The Lord of the Rings*, Bk I, Ch. 2)

> "This is the land of Narnia," said the Faun, "where we are now; all that lies between the lamp-post and the great castle of Cair Paravel on the eastern sea." (*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Ch. 2)

Near the beginning of *On Fairy-stories*, J. R. R. Tolkien offers a provocative and helpful distinction as to the true nature of fairy stories:

> …fairy-stories are not in normal English usage stories *about* fairies or elves, but stories about Fairy, that is *Faërie*, the realm or state in which fairies have their being. *Faërie* contains many things besides elves and fays, and besides dwarfs, witches, trolls, giants, or dragons: it holds the seas, the sun, the moon, the sky; and the earth, and all things that are in it: tree and bird, water and stone, wine and bread, and ourselves, mortal men, when we are enchanted.

Fairy stories, that is to say, are not stories that necessarily revolve around small, winged creatures, but stories that transport us to Faërie, to what Tolkien later calls a "Perilous Realm". The exact nature of this realm "cannot be caught in a net of words", Tolkien tells us, "for it is one of its qualities to be indescribable, though not imperceptible". It can be imagined, if not always described, and it can, sometimes, be reached. The heroes of fairy stories have found their way to the Perilous Realm through a variety of different means: Jason and Odysseus aboard their ships, Alice down a rabbit hole, Dorothy on a tornado, and the Pevensie children through the back of an old wardrobe. Tolkien himself takes us there by turning back the clock to explore the mythic

(*not* a synonym for false) past of our own earth (for Middle-earth, as readers too often forget, is the earth in the years before God revealed himself to Abraham).

The boundaries and parameters of Faërie are, of course, as elusive and shifting as the winged fairies themselves, but there is one central element that must be present if Faërie is to be anything more than a name. Tolkien explains:

> Faërie itself may perhaps most nearly be translated by Magic — but it is a magic of a peculiar mood and power, at the furthest pole from the vulgar devices of the laborious, scientific, magician. There is one proviso: if there is any satire present in the tale, one thing must not be made fun of, the magic itself. That must in that story be taken seriously, neither laughed at nor explained away.

If we drain Faërie of its magic, it ceases to be Faërie. If we include magic but then either ridicule it or offer a natural, 'rational' explanation for it, then we break the spell, and Faërie is reduced from a beautiful butterfly to a dead bug pinned on a laboratory wall. Worse yet, if we debase it to a sort of mystical technology, it risks becoming a danger: a weapon of mass destruction. Magic is serious business! It is neither to be misused nor trifled with.

In Chapter 3 of *The Abolition of Man*, C. S. Lewis echoes Tolkien's warning that true Faërie magic must not be confused with "the vulgar devices of the laborious, scientific, magician". Indeed, Lewis shows that there is a kind of magic that, in its nature and intent, comes far closer to science than religion:

> For magic and applied science alike the problem is how to subdue reality to the wishes of men: the solution is a technique; and both, in the practice of this technique, are ready to do things hitherto regarded as disgusting and impious—such as digging up and mutilating the dead. If we compare the chief trumpeter of the new era [of science] (Bacon) with Marlowe's Faustus, the similarity is striking. … The true object [of *both* Bacon and Faust] is to extend Man's power to the performance of all things possible. [Bacon] rejects magic because it does not work, but his goal is that of the magician.

The voodoo of the witch doctor and the Latin spells of the Satanist both embody a type of 'black' magic that seeks power and control as its ends. In this, the magician stands hand in hand with the mad scientist: both lust after forbidden knowledge (whether of the natural or supernatural kind) and hope, through it, to attain control over the divine or human sphere.

In *The Lord of the Rings* and the Chronicles of Narnia we read a different incantation: a 'white' magic that yearns for a deeper harmony and beauty and that sweeps us away to places where that harmony and beauty do actually exist. Although the sources of this white magic are varied and wide, I would like in this essay to seek a groundwork for Tolkien and Lewis's special blend of Faërie in the two great epics of Homer.

If Tolkien could have read the previous sentence, he would no doubt have replied that it was *Beowulf* and the Norse Sagas, rather than the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, that were foremost in his mind when he fashioned his epic. And, of course, he would be right. Still, for all his love of the Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon cultures and for all the influence that they exerted on him, Tolkien and his work are nevertheless products of that Western world that was fashioned out of a fusion of the Greco-Roman and the Judeo-Christian. Homer's epics, that is to say, are finally as formative on the Western mind as the Bible; the tales of the Trojan War and of the returns of the Greek heroes are as interwoven into the soul of the West as the sacred narrative of the scriptures. The light from the beacons of Troy illuminates the pages of *The Lord of the Rings*, and although it is not as strong as that divine light that shineth in the darkness and can be neither overcome nor comprehended, it does cast its own shadow over the Faërie world of Middle-earth.

Echoes of Ancient Greece

Although he borrows neither names nor characters from *The Iliad*, Tolkien nevertheless presents us, in *The Lord of the Rings*, with a world that is as immense and richly layered as that of Homer. Cut into these two epics at any point, and you will be greeted with a world that opens out on a multitude of dimensions. Thus, while the narratives focus on a relatively short period in the midst of a massive and desperate war, they also find countless and creative ways to suggest a wider history. Homer achieves this primarily through the insertion of epic similes that transport us, suddenly and without transition, from the action of the battlefield to the surrounding countryside. Indeed, Homer rarely describes the death of a minor soldier without freezing his narrative and giving us a quick biography of this otherwise anonymous bit of cannon fodder: a biography that generally takes us away from the battlefield where men win glory to the Shire-like villages that exist on the margins of the war. The farmers and shepherds and craftsmen that crowd around the edges of Homer's central conflict are like the Hobbits and Bree-folk who catch only fleeting glances of the gathering storm as they attend to their provincial lives. The very ordinariness of these onlookers intensifies the Faërie quality of the landscapes through which the warriors move and fight. Once again, we are dealing with an entire world, not just an isolated story, one that has length and width and depth. Something is happening in every corner of that world, even if we are not told about it directly.

And, as Homer and Tolkien hold in tension this simultaneous action, they also give us glimpses of the past. Like the War of the Ring, the Trojan War comes at the *end* of a long, heroic Golden Age: it is the last great expedition that will pave the way for the safer, if less glorious ages that will follow. To maintain this sense of an even greater past shrouded in the mist of time, Homer and Tolkien load every rift of their narrative with a wealth of genealogical ore. Their heroes are situated in a stream of heroic resistance against overwhelming odds, the struggle of the human against the bestial, hope against despair. Homer and Tolkien allow us to catch sight of this stream as we traverse the epic landscapes of their narra-

tives. Thus, in Book VI of *The Iliad*, two warriors, one Greek and one Trojan, pause before their fight to share their family histories and thus ensure that they are worthy to engage one another in battle. As it turns out, one of them is descended from Bellerophon, the legendary hero who rode Pegasus and defeated the Chimera; Homer pauses, like his soldiers, to tell the tale of this old, old hero. Again, in Book IX, as the Greeks try to convince Achilles to return to the battlefield and help them drive back the Trojans, one of them tells a story that parallels Achilles' own: that of Meleager, the hero of the Calydonian Boar Hunt who allowed anger to cloud his mind.

Tolkien seizes a hold of this Homeric technique and builds his epic around it. We cannot take a single step through Middle-earth without being faced by the ruins of a greater, lost civilization. The names and places that are tied up with that vanished glory — Beren and Luthien, Gondolin and Doriath, Fëanor and Túrin, the Noldor and the Númenoreans — weave their way through the narrative like snatches of old tunes we can barely remember but that speak to us of forsaken Edens and Paradises lost. They exert a weight on the central tale that is almost a felt presence. Here, we sense, is a real world that does not exist before or after our own, but alongside it: ever vital and contemporaneous. Homer's Troy exists in an absolute mythic past that is as far from (and close to) us as it was to the German Romantics or the British Elizabethans or the French Medievals or the Greeks of Periclean Athens. The same is true for Tolkien's Middle-earth; it lies, simultaneously, next door and a million miles away. Our reality does not diminish it; rather, its reality deepens and clarifies our own.

We cannot take a single step through Middle-earth without being faced by the ruins of a greater, lost civilization

Sub-creation

Tolkien, in *On Fairy-stories*, refers to himself as a 'sub-creator', as one who builds a second world after the mode of, but not in contradiction to, our own God-fashioned world. He creates, not as an end in itself, but because he was created by a Creator. As such, he feels both liberated and compelled to create, to make, to fashion. "Fantasy remains a human right," he insists, "we make in our measure and in our derivative mode, because we are made: and not only made, but made in the image and likeness of a Maker." It is not enough for Tolkien (or Homer) simply to tell a tale; the tale must be set in a full world that has its own history and runs in accordance with its own laws. It was this same impulse that impelled the makers of all the great legends and fairy tales (from Ovid to the Brothers Grimm, from Malory to Spenser, from the anonymous mythologists of Ancient Greece to the anonymous author of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*) to enlarge their creative vision to take in grander schemes and wider vistas. That is why the stories that really matter do not merely divert; they lift us bodily out of our mundane existence and draw us into the World of Faërie.

C. S. Lewis too felt the lure of Faërie and the compulsion to make in the image of his Maker, but his vision was slightly less grand than that of Tolkien. True, the Chronicles of Narnia hint quite often at multiple layers of history and of past heroic ages, but here the layering is not so compelling or all-engrossing as it is in *The Iliad* or *The Lord of the Rings*. For his trek into the World of Faërie, Lewis would use as his guide Homer's second epic, rather than his first. It is the fantastical voyages of Odysseus, not the grim battlefield of Achilles, that give the Chronicles (particularly *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*) their setting and their scope.

The Odyssey, though it is as much a masterpiece as *The Iliad*, is a simpler, and perhaps more human work. The canvas is reduced somewhat, and the focus rests on fewer characters and themes. The vision is more domestic than martial, more about getting home and setting things to right than about testing one's courage on the battlefield. The raw power of the first epic gives way to the wonder and mystery of the second. The former offers us naked divinity (the gods in armour); the latter a land peopled with the supernatural (sirens and sea monsters and beautiful enchantresses). Tolkien, of course, was inspired by the shape of Odysseus' epic journey home, and he not only puts his trinity of heroes (Frodo, Gandalf and Aragorn) through an Odyssean descent into the Underworld, but he gives us (in Books III/IV and V/VI) a type of parallel action whose ultimate source is, I would argue, *The Odyssey* (which presents parallel action in Books I–IV/V–VIII). Still, *The Lord of the Rings* remains more in the mode of *The Iliad*.

Not so the Chronicles, where Lewis allows his work to be infused (nay, infected) by the lighter but more pervasive magic of *The Odyssey*. For Lewis, sub-creation is not only about creating a layered world with multiples histories, languages and cultures, but about making that world come to shimmering life. Tolkien gives us talking Eagles and Trees, but Lewis populates wood, hill, and stream with a plenitude of living, breathing forms. In his greatest sermon, 'The Weight of Glory,' the author of the Chronicles shares with us (perhaps unwittingly) the yearning that impelled him (and others like him) to sub-create a Faërie world like Narnia:

> We want so much more — something the books on aesthetics take little notice of. But the poets and the mythologies know all about it. We do not want merely to see beauty, though, God knows, even that is bounty enough. We want something else which can hardly be put into words — to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it. That is why we have peopled air and earth and water with gods and goddesses and nymphs and elves — that, though we cannot, yet these projections can enjoy in themselves that beauty, grace, and power of which Nature is the image. That is why the poets tell such lovely falsehoods.

And that is why readers return to the Chronicles again and again. For that giddy awe and childlike wonder that we experience at Rivendell and Lórien (but rarely elsewhere in

The Lord of the Rings) is broadcast all over Narnia. It meets us in the rivers and on the plains and laughs in the hollows and on the hills. 'I am alive,' it seems to say, 'and I am calling you home.'

The Lord of the Rings is an autumnal, elegiac work; the Chronicles (excepting *The Last Battle*) are works of spring and summer. They both resonate with magic, but the former's is older, greyer, more restrained, whereas the latter's is younger, fresher, more exuberant. Lucy and Susan's wild romp with Aslan and their even wilder ride on his back in Chapter XV of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*; the dancing fawns and Bacchic revellers in Chapters VI and XIV of *Prince Caspian*; Reepicheep's unwavering desire to reach Aslan's country in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*; the fiery land of Bism in Chapter XIV of *The Silver Chair*, where diamonds can be drunk as though they were wine; Shasta's night meeting with the numinous Aslan in Chapter XI of *The Horse and His Boy*; the hauntingly beautiful Song of Creation that Aslan sings in Chapter IX of *The Magician's Nephew*: all speak alike of a vigorous, energetic world of endless possibilities for adventure, growth and discovery. Here is a world where beauty, grace and power can be felt, touched, known.

Soon, Gandalf and the Elves will leave Middle-earth and soon the staffs will be broken, the rings will disappear, and the seeing stones will go dark, but the magic presence of Aslan will ever remain, just on the other side of a river or just behind a tree. In the last chapter of *The Magician's Nephew*, Aslan returns Polly and Digory to the Wood between the Worlds, where he gives them a stern warning before sending them back to London. "Both the children," Lewis writes,

> were looking up into the Lion's face as he spoke these words. And all at once (they never knew exactly how it happened) the face seemed to be a sea of tossing gold in which they were floating, and such a sweetness and power rolled about them and over them and entered into them that they felt they had never really been happy or wise or good, or even alive and awake, before. And the memory of that moment stayed with them always, so that as long as they both lived, if ever they were sad or afraid or angry, the thought of all that golden goodness, and the feeling that it was still there, quite close, just round some corner or just behind some door, would come back and make them sure, deep down inside, that all was well.

I can think of no passage in the Chronicles that more perfectly captures the unique nature of Lewis's Faërie magic. For the memory that remains with Digory and Polly is like the memory that remains in our own minds when we put down the Chronicles. Just as Odysseus, returned to Ithaca, must have felt, still, around him the glory of those wonders he had encountered in his travels, so we (like Polly and Digory) feel all about us the ever-present nearness of Aslan. Our brain may tell us that this is 'only' fantasy, but our heart and soul ache to turn that corner, to open that door, to awaken, finally, from our cold and lonely slumber.

The mythic vein tapped by Tolkien lends his Faërie World an almost concrete reality, but the one tapped by Lewis lends his Faërie world something different: an incarnated Beauty that is at once the source and goal of all our deepest yearnings and desires.

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Real and imaginary history in *The Lord of the Rings*

FRANCO MANNI

Reading and re-reading *The Lord of the Rings*, I feel immersed in a world that differs from that of my normal daily experience. This would in some measure be true, of course, for any interesting novel: the events are experienced by other people (the characters) and theirs are the decisions, the joys and the perils. Furthermore, in *The Lord of the Rings* I feel immersed in the Middle Ages. When I read books about medieval history, though, my mind resists this sensation; if I were to be transported in my imagination to any century of the Middle Ages, it would never be the same as the world of *The Lord of the Rings*, which is much wider than the medieval period, more complex, more idealized and closer to me and my experience (although not, of course, the greater part of it).

Tolkien wanted to talk about *our* world, and to do so he used that which he loved and which constituted his work: archaeological and philological evidence concerning the Middle Ages, especially the early medieval period. Tolkien said that the events recounted in *The Lord of the Rings* took place in Middle-earth — at latitudes corresponding to the Atlantic coast of Europe, down to the northern Mediterranean lands — in an epoch that resembles that which saw the struggles between late-Roman/barbarian kingdoms that led to the establishment of the Holy Roman Empire with

Rome as its capital. Hobbiton and Rivendell are at the same latitude as Oxford, and Minas Tirith is at that of Florence. The mouth of the Anduin and the city of Pelargir are at the latitude of ancient Troy (*Letters* No. 294). That in the passage Tolkien refers to Troy and Florence, the first an important city in classical antiquity and the second during the Renaissance, is an indication that Tolkien, although fascinated by the early medieval period in particular, was in fact fascinated by history *in general*.

An interest in history might be motivated by nostalgia (which Tolkien certainly felt) or the desire to understand the genesis of the present and thus to understand the present in greater depth than would be afforded by a mere examination of the results, with no consideration of the causes. Tolkien also possessed this, I think more important, motivation. His world — as we shall see below in greater detail — is like a *millefeuille* cake that has been cut, so that one can see how it is made. The reader can see the layers from twin perspectives because of two literary techniques used by Tolkien: vertically, giving the effect of depth, or horizontally, in greater complexity.

Why is there immobility in Tolkien's imaginary history?

The first viewpoint is more evident and was spoken of explicitly by Tolkien himself (*Letters* No. 247). has been rigorously demonstrated by the critic Tom Shippey (*The Road to Middle-earth* pp. 272–281): *The Lord of the Rings* recounts events that occurred, over the space of about a year, at the end of the Third Age. But here and there — in fact, fairly frequently — reference is made to historical episodes from all three ages. This involves reference to tales, poems, songs, monuments, inscriptions, natural landscapes and ancient artefacts. These past events are never expounded fully, but only glimpsed partially. This technique creates an 'effect of depth' that gradually augments the appearance of reality in the imaginary world that is described. In fact, every real world has its own structured past, which is never presented in its completeness to anyone, but limited portions of which are investigated when an external event or internal motivation acts as a stimulus. An important reason that *The Lord of the Rings* is considerably more absorbing than *Silmarillion* is the fact that it contains temporal backdrops that give rise to a realistic effect of depth, whereas *The Silmarillion* does not, for it constitutes them itself. And this is also the principal reason why Tolkien preferred not to publish *The Silmarillion*, as he himself admitted (*Letters*, Nos 182, 247) and as Shippey underlines (*The Road to Middle-earth* pp. 203–204, 273–274).

The second perspective, more elusive, although abundantly present in *The Lord of the Rings*, has not (to my knowledge) received explicit critical attention, although several points are made in an article by Christina Scull[1]. This is the 'horizontal' or synchronic viewpoint, in which the various historical layers are present at the same time and 'spatialized', that is, transformed into territories of Middle-earth. The Barrow-downs represent the late Stone Age to early Bronze Age (*c.* 3000 BC); Numenor, with its gigantic funerary constructions and embalming of the dead, is ancient Egypt — and also ancient Israel which, at the time of the monarchy (*c.* 900 BC), forsook the iconless cult of Yahweh (Eru on Meneltarma) for idolatry, and Israel of the Exodus, with the flight of Elendil/Moses and the remaining faithful. Then again, the human sacrifices demanded by Sauron in the temple at Melkor bring to mind the customs of the ancient Carthaginians and the Aztecs; and the conquest for plunder and slave-taking, the markedly different foreign policy of imperial with respect to republican Rome. Arnor represents the Western Roman Empire in the fourth and fifth century, with internal struggles between the *imperatores*, as well as the complicated wars between barbarian tribes and barbarian/Roman kingdoms, in particular the Anglo-Saxons and the Merovingians' realm. The Wainriders and Easterlings represent nomadic and semi-nomadic Slavs, Magyars, Bulgars, and other tribes in their various incursions into Europe from the East during late-classical and early medieval times. The Dwarf races, with their age-old feuding, are the fifth- to eighth-century Germanic kings, as recounted, for example, in Paul the Deacon's *Historia Langobardorum*.

Historical perspectives

Gondor is — in Tolkien's own words — a sort of proud and venerable (but ever more impotent) Byzantium, which reaches the peak of its power (tenth century) only to unravel in a decadent medieval period (*Letters* No. 131). Tolkien also relates that the Numenoreans in Gondor were proud, strange and archaic, just like the ultra-traditionalist ancient Egyptians, who resemble them in their love of gigantic edifices and interest in tombs and ancestors, although in their theology they are more like the Hebrews (*Letters* No. 211). In general, the Fall of Numenor signifies for Tolkien the end of the classical epoch and the beginning of the Middle Ages (*Letters* No. 131).

The Rohirrim represent the Anglo-Saxons from the fifth to eleventh centuries (Shippey *The Road to Middle-earth* pp. 111–119) and their relations with Gondor those between the Romans/barbarians and Byzantium[2]. But the Rohirrim also stand for the North American natives, with their horses, prairies and their ingenuous and strict sense of honour (Shippey *The Road to Middle-earth* pp. 115).

Mordor in general represents the despotism of the ancient eastern empires (Eygptian, Chaldean, Mesopotamian, Persian), who deported entire peoples and made widespread use of slavery (but also suggests the despotism of our own time: the 'racial' experiments and the attempt to introduce a new paganism on the part of the Nazis; whereas Saruman, who aspires to install himself in Isengard, resembles the Vichy, Bratislava and Budapest governments). The Isengard of Saruman is also the lair of powerful medieval to 18th-century pirates, like Saracen Algeria or the Caribbean island of Tortuga. Esgaroth on the Long Lake (in *The Hobbit*) is like a European Bronze-Age lake settlement combined

with a lagoon or riverside city, such as mercantile Venice or Amsterdam in late medieval times (fourteenth to fifteenth centuries).

Lorien and Rivendell are a mixture of the medieval (twelfth to thirteenth century) baronial courts of Provence, with their troubadours, and early medieval Benedictine — in particular Cluniac — abbeys[3].

At the end of this exhaustive list are the Druedain, a blend of Neolithic and nineteenth-century third-world peoples at the time of their first contacts with European colonizers.

Not only, then is Middle-earth in its entirety a mixture of different historical periods, each one referred to a geographical region, a sort of 'synchronized diachrony' (in which events separated in time are made contemporary), but also in some individual areas a certain degree of combination occurs.

The most evident example is the Shire. So as to make it compatible with the other parts of Middle-earth that will be visited by the Hobbits, it manifests certain generalized medieval (such as plumed headgear, bows and arrows, travel on foot or on horseback, and the existence of the Thain) or *Ancien Règime* qualities (extended rather than nuclear families; no electricity; little travel occurs: most people are born, live and die in one place; the economy is almost exclusively agricultural). Thus it exhibits numerous aspects of the past that lasted for millennia and are compatible with the various geographically (not temporally) expressed 'pasts' to be found elsewhere in Middle-earth.

But it also contains (blended with the ingredients outlined above) modern and contemporary elements: there are American plants, potatoes and tobacco ('pipe-weed' was called tobacco in the first drafts of *The Lord of the Rings*); a well-organized postal service exists for *everyone* (not just for the aristocracy); there is a civic museum; neither vassalage nor a rural nobility exist; there are smials or comfortable Hobbit houses; Lobelia uses an umbrella; middle-class houses have clocks hanging on the wall; Sharkey introduces the accumulation of state wealth, industrial pollution of rivers, prohibition of alcohol and tobacco, and smokestacks.

As Emilia Lodigiani has observed, the Shire represents "everyday life",[4] which cannot exist or sustain itself in isolation from a much wider cultural, political and military background: the Hobbits as a race were relatives of Men, who themselves had received language, writing and science from the Elves; in particular, there was peace in the Shire only because the Elves and Men (the last of which were the Rangers) had curbed the forces of evil. Similarly, the Shire symbolizes the actual present, with which the reader identifies (*The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are written — in 'The Red Book of Westmarch' — from the point of view of the Hobbits). And the present cannot exist without the past, or survive without a sense of history (or *historia magistra vitae*, which is developed for the Hobbit population by a few selected individuals, especially Bilbo and Frodo).

If we enter into the intimate life of the Shire, we find a well-fed Hobbit (Bilbo, or Frodo before his voyage) in his comfortable home, Bag End, seated in a comfortable armchair, smoking a pipe, while the clock on the wall and the crackling of the fire mark the passing of time spent waiting for the scones and sponge cake which is being baked for afternoon tea; outside, the gardener is attending to the lawn and flowerbeds. This authentic personal life of the Shire is very childish and celibate[5] (psychologically), very petit-bourgeois (socially), very countrified (from a geographical point of view) and very 20th-century (temporally). It portrays, in other words, a style of life disconnected from an awareness of great historical events. We know that Bilbo and Frodo have 'Tookish blood', take part in important adventures and meet Elves and Wizards, but these facts are what make them different, and distinguish them from — rather than making them fit into — the Shire.

It seems then, that when Tolkien speaks of Hobbits, he makes reference to his readers (as well as to a part of himself — *Letters* No. 213) towards whom he feels both sympathy and critical doubt. When he speaks of the Elves, Aragorn, Treebeard and, especially, of Gandalf, he is talking about that minority of people (as well as about another part of himself) who fulfil the vital role of 'eye-openers' and, in particular, curators of that sense of history that is essential for the defence and promotion of everyday life. (Although this knowledge of history may be necessary for the defence and encouragement of 'normal' existence, it is certainly not sufficient to guarantee it: Saruman is a scholar-expert in the tradition of the Rings and many other historical matters, but this knowledge does not enable him to avoid becoming a great deceiver and victim of self-deception.)

Sense in the Shire

If the Hobbits represent twentieth-century readers, the regions of Middle-earth are a historical atlas and characters such as Gandalf, Elrond and Aragorn are history professors, why did Tolkien state more than once that the events recounted in his saga are episodes that took place in our world, in particular in Europe, but in the distant past (*Letters* Nos 211, 294, 183)? Tolkien was, in fact, quite detailed: his present, and that of *The Lord of the Rings*' readers (the second half of the twentieth century) corresponds to the end of the Sixth Age or the beginning of the seventh. As an Age lasts for about 2,000 years, between the end of the Third Age — and the happenings chronicled in *The Lord of the Rings* — and the publication of the book, 6,000 years would have passed[6].

But what sense is there in constructing a Shire that somewhat resembles the home of Wodehouse's Jeeves, and then saying that this land — with its clocks, umbrella-carrying widows, well-tended lawns and five-o'clock tea — existed 6,000 years ago, between the Neolithic and the Bronze Age?

The most plausible explanation is, I think, the following: it is because neither the twentieth-century Shire, nor Byzantine Gondor, nor indeed any other component of the Middle-earth *tableau historique* are real; all are idealized. In the Shire, for example there are few weapons, almost no crime of any kind, and such incidence of epidemics, starva-

tion and warfare as are described happened conveniently beyond living memory. Gondorian Byzantium, unlike the real Byzantium[7], seems to have a sort of feudal system (manifested in Prince Imrahil and the other Lords who gathered to defend Minas Tirith in its hour of need), but there are not the chronic feudal wars that were all too common in, say, medieval western Europe.

It is true that few readers of *The Lord of the Rings* would be able, or interested, to recognize the marked incongruities that exist between Tolkien's imaginary medieval worlds and the actual Middle Ages; but nearly all of these readers, whether they like it or not, cannot avoid accepting the rural England of the Shire as real. Indeed, that 'Shire' is too idealized! Thus, by pushing the apparent modernity of the Shire (together with the surrounding medieval regions) back to 6,000 years ago, Tolkien is able to make the two things compatible: readers identify with the Shire's twentieth-century features, but this identification is not ruined by unsustainable comparisons.

It seems then, that when Tolkien speaks of Hobbits, he makes reference to his readers

On the other hand, shifting the time of the War of the Ring to 6,000 years ago has the result that the First Age commenced 12,000 years ago, and this happens — as every reader of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion* knows — without transforming the 'medieval' status of Elvish, Dwarfish and human civilizations (without considering the Hobbits of the Shire, whose recorded history begins no earlier than the Third Age). In all three ages we find a single and unchanging level of civilization, the 'medieval'.

A question of time

This brings us to consider two further problems of Tolkien's use of history in his works of fiction. The first is that, in one sense, time passes (kingdoms are born and destroyed; continents change; characters are born, perform actions and then die), but in a second sense it seems not to pass (scientific, technological, artistic, literary, jurisprudential and religious notions do not change). It is as though civilization was immobile, as though only brief events (such a battles, adventures and deaths) occurred, in the absence of long-term processes (such as the spread of feudalism, industrialization, changes in modes of government and family structure).

The second problem is that this very immobility sustains the 'medieval': the same type of armour, castles, hereditary monarchy and the same absence of industrialization are found both at the onset of the First Age and at the end of the Third, as is the lack of widespread slavery. Whence this inertia? I will consider the second question first.

It should be made clear at the outset that this 'medieval' character is expressed between inverted commas for several reasons: it includes elements of antiquity, such as the deification of Sauron and slavery in Mordor and, generally, the *extreme* slowness of change (in the 4,000 years of the ancient civilized world, cultural and social changes were much slower than in the 1,000 years of the Middle Ages, from late classical to Renaissance). Then there are ingredients from the modern age, such as the presence of national rather than feudal monarchies; the presence of armies composed largely of foot-soldiers; and the ideology noted by Shippey, who refers to Lord Acton's aphorism that power always corrupts and therefore that someone who seeks power cannot remain untainted[8].

Furthermore, the scenario of an alliance of many peoples (the 'Free Peoples of Middle-earth') who, *in the name of freedom* and other values that go beyond the mere politics of state power, fight against a common enemy that aims to conquer and enslave the whole world, is an idea not to be found in the Middle Ages or the *Ancien Régime*, but appears in European alliances only at the time of the French Revolution and Napoleon Bonaparte. In addition, as mentioned above, there is neither clear-cut vassalage (the word is used only with regard to Gwaihir and his eagles), nor serfdom. In particular, there is no organized church with related customs rooted in the life of the populace.

Perhaps Tolkien chose the medieval period because the classical civilizations had aspects too different from ours (human sacrifice, polytheism, gladiatorial contests, deification of rulers, sexual licence, slavery), which would have created obstacles to reader identification. On the other hand, the modern age did not easily lend itself to the landscapes and characters Tolkien had in mind: elements such as bureaucracy, industrialization and mass culture would have resembled hard, unfantasized reality a bit too much.

The Middle Ages also lend themselves well to the expression of the Germanic ideals of *Beowulf*, according to which "heart shall be bolder, harder be purpose, more proud the spirit as our power lessens". Tolkien, however wanted this ideal in the following form (as he says explicitly in *The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth, Beorhthelm's Son*): desperate courage is a moral value only if uncorrupted by a desire for glory, for personal recognition, but is motivated only by the loyalty of a subordinate to his superiors. (At first glance, it could seem that Tolkien did not realize that this identical position was adopted in the defence of Nazis at the Nuremberg trials.) And this adjustment could only have widespread social approval in a Christian society such as in the medieval epoch, in contrast to ancient pagan societies.

Other motives: medieval times are fascinating because of the stratification of previous cultures (Theodoric's keeping of the Roman senate; Frederick II, who mixed elements of ancient Roman with Byzantine, Norman, Arab and Frankish feudal in his Palermo palace)[9], a stratification that also existed in the ancient world but about which we, from our greater distance in time, know much less. In medieval, but not ancient, times an original English civilization and language were born (from a synthesis of British Celts, Romans and Anglo-Saxons). Pre-Reformation medieval England was still Catholic, not yet become insular, but with deep linguistic, cultural and dynastic ties with the continent — and so different from in the modern age. Lastly, in the

Middle Ages Tolkien could make appropriate use of a series of languages of his own invention, based on the Germanic and Celtic tongues that he loved[10].

If one reads a serious book on medieval history[11], one immediately makes the (predictable) discovery that all medieval kings were — in varying proportions, of course — both good and bad, and there is never a moment during these 1,000 years when an alliance that clearly aims at conquest, enslavement and massacre is opposed by an alliance that proposes to defend liberty and promote justice. Such groupings — either in practice or, at least, in theory — may be found from the time of the French Revolution onwards and, especially, from the time of the Second World War.

Following Tom Shippey's analysis, it seems to me that Tolkien *also* wants (it is not his principal aim) to talk about the mid-twentieth century and its particular political problems. But, like other British fantasy writers of the same period (T. H. White, Orwell, C. S. Lewis and Golding), he could not do so using a form of literary realism. None of these authors addressed politics and social problems *directly*, because they felt that beneath them lay other more important issues (for example, the investigation of the nature of evil) that many 'realist' writers were tempted to avoid or completely ignore[12]. Tolkien elected to use medieval fantasy, like White, whereas Orwell chose the near future, Golding a mid-oceanic desert island, and Lewis, an interplanetary voyage.

In order to reply to the second question posed above (why does Tolkien 'immobilize' history?), let us begin by noting that the Middle Ages — as commonly perceived — seem to embody the idea of immobility; we do not find it easy to distinguish the various subdivisions of western medieval history (such as the phases of feudalism)[13]. We clearly perceive the differences between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries, but not those between the seventh and ninth or eleventh and thirteenth centuries; it seems to us as though each generation of medieval peasants, monks, nuns, housewives and warriors absorbed entirely and without additions the heritage of ideas and habits bequeathed by the preceding generation. Whether this might really be due to the existence of an objective medieval inertia (which was still more pronounced in antiquity), or alternatively to our subjective obtuseness in discriminating, is a complex problem that I will not discuss here. The fact, though, remains.

Certainly, medieval historians were not aware of important historical changes; they recorded bundles of events, but did not notice fundamental changes: and Tolkien in *The Silmarillion* and the retrospective passages of *The Lord of the Rings* does not describe past centuries and millennia after the fashion of a modern historian, but rather he recounts them as might have Paul the Deacon in his *Historia Langobardorum*[14].

To a certain extent Tolkien accepts, as a philosophical basis for this immobility, the Platonic theory: for Plato all knowledge is pre-existent to history, it exists from the birth of the heavens, and during life it is remembered, but neither augmented nor modified; progress does not exist. Thus for Tolkien some knowledge is innate or 'natural' such as that concerning family organization[15] whereas all other knowledge (such as astronomical, artistic, military or linguistic) was taught by the Valar to the Elves at the beginning of their history: more to the Eldar and less to the Moriquendi, but at the beginning a body of knowledge was transmitted and afterwards basically conserved without change (there were some specific developments, such as the art of precious metalwork in Feanor and Celembribor, but these had no general significance for the Elves' social practices). The circumstances of Men during the first three Ages are little different, except that for them the Valar's role is played by the Elves.

The point of view of the Valar follows the Platonic model of 'emanation' and 'return'

It is true that in the Fourth Age the Men break away from the tutelage of the Elves and the Istari (and, in the final analysis, the Valar) and develop a 'Time of Men' which leads to our actual history, and up to our present, which is no longer 'medieval', and therefore presupposes that historical change had been 'set in motion'. But the Fourth Age is *not* described by Tolkien: he eliminated the proposed Epilogue of *The Lord of the Rings* and aborted the sequel set after the death of Aragorn[16].

As Shippey has rightly observed (*The Road to Middle-earth* p. 199) the dialogue between Legolas and Gimli in Minas Tirith has a particular importance in *The Lord of the Rings*: the representatives of the two main non-human races of Middle-earth discuss history and the role of Men in it: the latter are described as the new protagonists who will replace the old, with the principal defect of inconstancy and the principal merit of being enterprising. This is a prophecy whose meaning is ambiguous: Legolas, arguing against Gimli who plays the part of detractor, emphasizes the human qualities that will guarantee (according to the Elf's prophecy) their survival after the disappearance of Elves and Dwarves. But what is the value of this vitality if what Gimli says — that Men are unable to complete the projects they undertake or to conserve what is good from the past — is true (and the allegation is not contradicted by Legolas)?

Aragorn Elfstone, although the first king of the Fourth Age — the Age of Men — does not seem to fit the descriptions of Legolas and Gimli: certainly not that of Gimli, because he is constancy personified, able to live anonymously at length, carrying out an unrecognised service for which he postpones political action and marriage until he is able to complete, at the right moment, his mission. But neither does he correspond to Legolas's description: he *re*-forges the broken sword, *re*unites the divided kingdom, *re*plants the withered tree, but sows no 'new seeds', takes no new initiatives. He conserves tradition; he sets off the Fourth Age not because he interprets its special destiny, but simply because he presides over the passage from the Third Age. He saves the freedom of the peoples of Middle-earth, but does not use that freedom to create anything new.

What does he conserve? In accordance with the name he is known by (Elessar = Elf-stone), he (who grew up in the house of Elrond and his son-in-law, was a descendant of the Numenoreans of Elendil, that is those faithful both to the Elves of Tol Eressëa and the Middle-earth Elves) is the human who conserves the tradition of the *Elves*.

Now Tolkien did not intend to narrate the events of the Time of Men (the Fourth Age and onwards), whereas he recounted in great detail the three eras of the Time of the Elves. The eras of Men are those of our actual history and therefore are full of historical changes, as Tolkien well understood. The three Elvish ages, in contrast, do not have anything analogous to our Renaissance or Protestant Reforms, the conversion of entire populations to Christianity, feudalization of societies, birth of city-states or bourgeois power, constitution of nation-states, the English liberal revolution, democratic revolution in the United States, liberal-democratic and partly socialist revolution in France; or to the Copernican, Galilean, Newtonian, Darwinian, Einsteinian or Freudian scientific revolutions; the Enlightenment, Romanticism, Positivism; the discovery of the New World, colonization, decolonization; the agricultural, industrial,

Old man willow

Sue Wookey

transport, telecommunications or information technology revolutions; the demographic boom or the advent of mass culture, bureaucratization, constitution of the welfare state or the growth of the division of labour in a complex society: No, the Time of the Elves is a 'frozen' history, filled with happenings, but without changes. Except one.

Although from the First to Third Ages the Elves do not develop new knowledge or modify their social organization, they still experience a real, though isolated, historical change during this period. This transformation is essentially internal, notwithstanding its important external results, and cannot correctly be called intellectual, political or social; it is really a *moral* change.

The Elves whose history Tolkien narrates are not the Vanyar or Teleri of Valinor, but rather those of Middle-earth: the Moriquendi who refused to leave and the Noldor who wished to return. Elf lineages who loved Middle-earth, because of its beauty, because they could found there a dominion inde-

Goldberry
Sue Wookey

pendently of the Valar, enough to stay there for thousands of years, even though they knew it was inhabited by Melkor and his servants. These Middle-earth Elves, though, change greatly between the First Age and the end of the Third: at first they are founders of kingdoms, builders of cities, makers of rings, teachers of peoples and generals in great wars. At the end of the Third Age they are elusive woodland dwellers, reduced to giving shelter, curing and giving advice in the 'monasteries' of Rivendell and Lorien, progressively disillusioned with Middle-earth and on the point of leaving for somewhere beyond the sea, or 'fading away'.

The Elf who most typifies the First Age is Fëanor, with his great bravery, but also his overweening pride (and thus, though to a less marked extent, are also Finrod, Thingol and Turgon). The most typical Third-Age Elf is Elrond (A Half-elven who has chose the destiny of the Firstborn): with no earthly ambition, 'abbot' of Rivendell and with his heart already beyond the Sea. The only Elves living in Middle-earth in both the First and Third Ages are Glorfindel and, in particular, Galadriel. Glorfindel in the First Age is the heroic warrior who falls defending what is left of his homeland, Gondolin. Glorfindel reborn at the end of the Third Age is a messenger and scout for individuals from other peoples, Aragorn and Frodo, in whose campaigns he takes no part.

Galadriel in the First Age is a proud Noldor princess who goes to Middle-earth against the wishes of the Valar, neither to recover the Silmarils like Fëanor, nor to influence their leadership, like Fingolfin. She seeks in Middle-earth a "dominion of her own"[17]. Galadriel at the end of the Third Age is the woman who stays close to her husband Celeborn[18]; who secretly keeps the Ring, Nenya; who keeps an eye on the movements of the enemy; who gives shelter to and encourages the Fellowship of the Ring; who refuses — in a memorable scene with Frodo — any prospect of independence; who goes with Elrond and Gandalf to the Grey Havens and leaves Middle-earth for ever.

Historical inertia makes sense because it applies to the Time of Elves. A history of mankind without cultural and social change would make no sense and would result in theological scepticism and desperation: why should innumerable generations of individuals be born and die if this served no purpose for future generations, if no journey was undertaken, no mission fulfilled? Real antiquity certainly had its historical changes, but ancient historiography was not aware of them; human nature was held immutable, and time, cyclical; this fed a profound scepticism towards the traditional gods and a pitiful sense of desperation that — like a karstic stream — re-emerge, despite their best intentions, in Thucydides and Tacitus. But Tolkien's Elves live for thousands of years and can therefore experience *personally* the passage of time: individual experiences that, during the course of their lives, slowly and painfully, lead to a moral maturation.

This, then, seems to me the answer to the question that I posed above (why is there immobility in Tolkien's imaginary history?). Tolkien, by means of the Elves, wants to talk about an aspect of human experience[19]. Not humanity's collective experience, that which we call 'history', but the personal experience of individuals, which we simply call 'life'. In fact, that which happens to the Elves collectively during the three Ages — there are no important cultural and social changes — occurs during the life of each single human being: the 'character' does not change, because the cultural and social factors in the world that led to its formation are unchangeable: a thirteenth-century man, be he Dante Alighieri or the humblest serf, could never think, feel and act like an eighteenth or twentieth-century man, as is well understood by the historians of human mentality[20].

Even if character cannot change, the life of a person makes sense because he changes his own 'response' to that character. Free will does not consist of trying to be a different person or living an external or internal life different from that which destiny has bestowed; it consists of trying to understand and thus make a *critical analysis* — which are the good points, and which the bad — and to behave accordingly. This is moral maturity, which is the only change recorded in Tolkien's history of the Elves, inasmuch, I believe, as this history was not really about history, but about life. Using a literary technique not the least bit 'medieval' or 'traditional', but instead similar to Samuel Beckett's in *Waiting for Godot* (as Delle Rupi has observed), Tolkien makes Frodo and Sam realize, when they are near Cirith Ungol, that they are fictitious characters: "characters become legends, narrators become characters and listeners become narrators"[21]. The three authors of the *Red Book of Westmark* — Bilbo, Frodo and Sam — are protagonists of the events that are recounted and are aware that these serve as material for a narration. They serve, that is, the hearer or reader who will receive a message, a teaching, that will help them to understand that they now are the actor who must continue the story. *De te fabula docet*: the story speaks of your own life.

Conservative attitudes

Apart from Melkor, the Ainur were content with the first Music of Iluvatar: their attitude was *conservative*. When Melkor introduced dissonance, the Ainur would have preferred to eliminate it. Iluvatar maintained it, though, and incorporated it into a new music, more glorious than the old. When shaping Arda, the Ainur (who then became the Valar) wanted to perform the first music, and then wished to conserve the result. After the coming of the Firstborn, the Valar aimed to take them away from Middle-earth — where, clearly not by chance, Iluvatar had placed them — and have them live in Valinor so that they could share together the contemplation of unchanging beauty. When the Noldor decide to return to Middle-earth, they are influenced by the false accusations against the Valar spread by Melkor ("the Valar want you to stay in Valinor in order to rule over you") and shaken by the violent arguments between Fëanor and his half-brothers, motivated, at least partially, by the prospect of vindictive greed (the reconquest of the Silmarils), and the killing of the related Teleri race. There are all the ingredients here of the biblical account of the Fall in *Genesis 3*: the falsehoods recounted by the Serpent-Satan against

Yahweh, the advent of the incomprehension and reciprocal accusations between Adam and Eve, the desire for the forbidden fruit and the slaying of Abel by Cain. The Valar condemn the Noldors' emigration, gathered in council and influenced by the first prophecy of Mandos.

However, even if it is true that the emigration of the Noldor took place *in practice* against a background of wrong-doing, might not it have been possible *in theory* for it to have occurred righteously? And would not the Valar, beside the fact that they condemned it on grounds of sinfulness, have opposed it anyway, at least in their hearts — even if it had been conducted in exemplary fashion?

Although one cannot be certain of the answer to the first of these questions, there is no doubt of that to the second, as may seen from the Valar's behaviour prior to the Noldor's misdeeds. According to the conservative historical perspective of the Valar, it would have been preferable for the Elves to live out their time in Valinor, rather than going to Middle-earth (which was probably unforeseen on the part of the Valar).

The presence of history in Tolkien's works symbolizes diverse aspects of the meaning of human life

I have argued above that the imaginary history Tolkien recounts is not really history, but principally a metaphor for the life of the individual. I would now like to suggest that the meaning of life embodied in *The Lord of the Rings* does not follow exclusively the conservative viewpoint of the Valar, but also partially the creative perspective of Iluvatar.

The point of view of the Valar follows the Platonic model of 'emanation' and 'return' (*mimesis* and *metexis*): the temporal world is an emanation of the eternal world, and returns to it. This emanation is an imperfect copy of the perfect archetype and represents an infelicitous descent, in the cycle of rebirth, from the state of beatitude. The primordial condition is restored by the process of return, compared to which the intervening time adds nothing new or significant. Thus the Elves, after their errors in Middle-earth, return to Valinor, except for those who go to the Halls of Mandos (the dead), or to Eldamar (those who chose to sail the Great Sea).

When Bilbo, in *The Hobbit* (which is subtitled 'There and Back Again'), returns to the Shire after his adventure, he is essentially unchanged: Tolkien ends the work with "and he lived happy and content", underlining the resumption of that interrupted 'bourgeois' and 'infantile' state of beatitude in his comfortable home. It is true that now Bilbo is not merely well-to-do, but has become decidedly prosperous. And it is also true that he has managed to avoid forgetting his 'Tookish' part, but instead has put it to the test and found in himself great reserves of courage, sagacity and generosity. But all this, in 1937, was a theme still undeveloped (the book was, after all, expressly aimed at children), and *The Hobbit* concludes with the Platonic model: the return to a life of good square meals, friendly jokes, pipe-smoking and dozing.

In *The Lord of the Rings* — which opens with abundant meals and friendly joking — something of this perspective remains: Frodo and Sam do not die on Mount Doom, but are saved by the (*Deus ex machina*) eagles and return to the Shire, which in the meantime has become corrupt and polluted, but which is rapidly restored and cleaned up. Flowers and lawns once more surround the house at Bag End and — at least for Sam — the cycle of peaceful days restarts. He says, in fact, in the book's last line, "Well, I'm back".

Together with this perspective, though, there is another, which predominates in *The Lord of the Rings*: Frodo cannot remain in the Shire, some wounds cannot be healed, he must leave for the sea and death. Sam, too, knows that he cannot expect to see again Galadriel in Lorien, Elrond in Rivendell, Gildor Inglorion in the woods of the Shire or Gandalf in Bag End. They have gone for ever. Sam himself will go to the Grey Havens (as is recounted in the Appendix).

As Middle-earth is our Earth, once magical, but now longer magical, so life, as it progresses, leaves behind childhood, which can be remembered but cannot — and must not — be returned to[22]. Fiorenzo Delle Rupi rightly observes, in his essay on the modernity of *The Lord of the Rings*, that in this work — in contrast to *The Hobbit* — return is denied from the very beginning[23]. Life has a meaning because Iluvatar suffers no restrictions, and continually creates a realistic context in which our existential adventures — which necessarily include knowledge, pain and death — are not just wanderings or errors, but become an integral part of a future music of unimagined beauty.

This is obviously a Christian point of view. Whereas in certain Greek thought 'it is best for a man not to be born, or to die at an early age', for a Christian, despite the knowledge that a child as it grows will suffer and commit many sins, it is not to be desired that children should die so as to return immediately to heaven and the angels. For Christianity, temporal events are opportunities to be saved; there is no return for the soul to a heaven or an earthly paradise; human nature is not unchangeable, but is called to transform itself into a divine super-nature[24]; suffering gives privileged access to this transformation; death is not cancellation, but fulfilment. It is, however, the death of *all* the person, body *and* soul, and not just of the body — as for Plato or the Elves (while the body is mortal, the soul is immortal and ready for reincarnation) — and sin is in fact a '*felix culpa*'[25].

Real history?

The abundant use of elements taken from real history in *The Lord of the Rings* does not mean, I would suggest, that Tolkien's primary aim was to talk of real history, long past or recent. Tolkien disapproved of the use of allegory, in which there is a one-to-one relationship between a signifying element *X* and a signified element *Y*, a relation that leaves freedom to neither the sender of the message nor its receiver. He explained that his work contained 'large symbolism', in which the relations between signifier and signified are manifold, rather than unambiguous and predetermined[26].

In this free and unconstrained manner, the presence of history in Tolkien's works symbolizes diverse aspects of the meaning of human life:

- openness to the complexity and dramatic nature of the world, of which an important precondition is historical awareness;
- the immobility of individual characters, over and above the multiplicity of events;
- the possibility of moral maturation as an unconstrained response to immobility of character;
- acceptance of unforeseen innovations, of the confluence of individual paths into a vast Way with no return, which presupposes, at least implicitly, the acceptance of the creative role of Iluvatar with respect to evil (among other things).

The idealization of isolated historical elements, the spatialization of time that makes later and earlier historical components contemporary, and the assimilation of all historical ingredients into a generalized medieval period are all literary techniques that serve to achieve the philosophical aims of Tolkien's historical symbolism.

The effect of depth created by the detailed construction of a long-past imaginary history predating the epoch in which *The Lord of the Rings*' events are set constitutes a literary stratagem that serves a different purpose, the aesthetic need to give the work 'the intimate consistence of reality', to make of it a 'subcreation' in which readers could imagine living. Direct references to recent history or contemporary events (for example, Sauron's totalitarian experiments and Saruman's bureaucratic and anti-ecological administration of the Shire) are also certainly present (Shippey *The Road to Middle-earth* pp. 152–156) and are important, but occupy a secondary role with regard to the author's intentions.

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4. *Invito alla lettura di Tolkien* 95 (Mursia, 1982).
5. The married-couple version, after criticism from others and personal doubts, was excised from the definitive version of *LOTR*. See 'The Epilogue' in Tolkien, J. R. R. *Sauron Defeated. History of Middle Earth, Vol. IX*, 114–135 (HarperCollins, 1992).
6. Tolkien, J. R. R. *Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien* (eds H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien) No. 211, 283 (George Allen & Unwin, 1981). The idea of living at the end of the Sixth Age of the world ,or at the beginning of the Seventh, is not original to Tolkien, but may be found in the writings of an eighth-century English monk, the Venerable Bede *De temporum Ratione* (see ref. 3 pp. 71–73).
7. A difference between the Byzantine and Holy Roman Empires was that the former did not experience feudalism, judged by some historians (such as ref. 2) as a positive feature, but by others (such as Kazhdan, A. P. *Bisanzio e la sua civiltà (Vizantijskaja kul'tura),* (Laterza, 1995)) as a negative one.
8. Lord Acton (a late nineteenth-century English historian) famously said: "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Shippey discusses this notion, central to *LOTR*, and correctly notes that the idea is not present in antiquity or the Middle Ages, but is specifically modern; neither Plato nor Thomas Aquinas would have had it, because they thought that those who managed to gain power could use it for both good and evil purposes: Shippey, T. *The Road to Middle-earth* 125 (HarperCollins, 1992).
9. Horst, E. *Federico II (Friederich der staufer. Eine biographie)* 169–215 (Rizzoli, 1995).
10. Shippey, T. 'Tolkien as a Postwar Writer' in *Scholarship and Fantasy: Proceedings of the Tolkien Phenomenon, May 1992, Turku, Finland* (ed. K. J. Battarbee) 217–236 (Univ. Turku, 1993).
11. Bloch, M. *La società feudale (La société féodale (1939)),* (Einaudi, 1987); Pirenne, H. *Storia d'Europa dalle invasioni al XVI secolo (Histoire de l'Europe des invasions au XVI siècle (1937))*, (Garzanti, 1967); Huizinga, J. *L'autunno del Medioevo (Herfsttij der middeleeuwen (1919))*, (Sansoni, 1966).
12. Shippey observes that all five of these British writers had had direct experience of the tragedies of war, and that Britain was the only Western country (apart from its enemies, Austria and Germany) at war for 10 out of 31 years: 1914–18 and 1939–45 (ref. 10).
13. Bloch, M. *La società feudale* 171–270, 363–375, 442–455, 471–489 (Einaudi, 1987).
14. Paul the Deacon *History of the Langobards*
15. Tolkien, J. R. R. 'Laws and Customs among the Eldars' in *Morgoth's Ring. History of Middle Earth, Vol. X* (ed. C. Tolkien) 207–217 (HarperCollins, 1994).
16. Tolkien, J. R. R. 'The New Shadow' in *The Peoples of Middle-earth. History of Middle Earth, Vol XII* (ed. C. Tolkien) 409–421 (HarperCollins, 1996).
17. Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Silmarillion*: "But Galadriel, the only woman of the Noldor to stand that day tall and valiant among the contending princes, was eager to be gone. No oaths she swore, but the words of Feanor concerning Middle-earth had kindled in her heart, for she yearned to wide unguarded lands and to rule there a realm at her own will" (p. 90).
18. In contrast to earlier times: Tolkien, J. R. R. 'The History of Galadriel and Celeborn' in *Unfinished Tales of Numenor and Middle- earth* (ed. C. Tolkien), (George Allen & Unwin, 1980).
19. Tolkien, J. R. R. *Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien* (eds H. Carpenter & C. Tolkien) No. 153, 189 (George Allen & Unwin, 1981): "Elves are certain aspects of Men and their talents and desires."
20. 'Mentality' is defined as that group of notions that accumulate in all people of a certain historical and geographical, independently of their level of education, personal ability, gender, profession, wealth or age. See, for example, Vovelle, M. *Ideologies and Mentalities* (Polity Press, 1990).
21. Delle Rupi, F. 'The Lord of the Rings come romanzo moderno'. *Terra di Mezzo* No. 1 (nuova serie), 37–39 (April 1995); reprinted in *Introduzione a Tolkien* (ed. F. Manni) 168–175 (Simonelli, 2002). See also Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Lord of the Rings* 739–740 (Unwin paperback, 1983).
22. Delle Rupi, F. 'The Lord of the Rings come romanzo moderno'. *Terra di Mezzo* No. 1 (nuova serie), 38 (April 1995).
23. Delle Rupi, F. 'The Lord of the Rings come romanzo moderno'. *Terra di Mezzo* No. 1 (nuova serie), 30–31 (April 1995).
24. As happened, by means of a diametrically opposed pathway (humiliation rather than pride) with respect to Satan's prophetic lie to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3: "*eritis sicut Dii*". See Ladaria, L. F. *Antropologia teologica* 214 (Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1983).
25. As sung in Roman liturgy, in the Easter vigil Exultet.
26. Tolkien, J. R. R. Foreword to the second edition of *The Lord of the Rings*; see also Shippey, T. *The Road to Middle-earth* 150–152 (HarperCollins, 1992).

Tolkien's further indebtedness to Haggard

DALE NELSON

Tom Shippey's guest Editorial in *Mallorn* 45 calls for more investigation of nineteenth- and twentieth-century authors who influenced Tolkien. My entry on this topic for Routledge's *J. R. R. Tolkien Encyclopedia: Scholarship and Critical Assessment* documents Tolkien's acknowledgement of Sir Henry Rider Haggard's *She* as an influence and Tolkien's appreciation for the Viking romance *Eric Brighteyes*, and records parallels in Tolkien's fantasy with elements from five additional Haggard stories, namely *King Solomon's Mines*, *Ayesha: The Return of She*, *Heu-Heu or The Monster*, *The Treasure of the Lake* and the short tale 'Long Odds'. I've found evidence in at least two further books for Haggard's influence on Tolkien's fiction. Any particular example could be coincidental, but enough parallels exist between Haggard's romances and Tolkien's fantasy that many readers will be ready to affirm that reference to 'major influence' is justified.

The climax of Haggard's 1892 historical adventure *Montezuma's Daughter* contains a surprise for admirers of *The Lord of the Rings* — a scene in which protagonist and enemy come together at last at the edge of a volcano, and the tale's cunning and evil antagonist struggles with an invisible attacker before falling into the crater. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Gollum overtakes Frodo at the Cracks of Doom and tackles the invisible hobbit, desperate to take the Ring of Power from him, and clutches the Ring for one appalling moment before he falls into the flames. But two generations earlier, as Haggard's villain de Garcia is about to fight a final duel with the hero, Wingfield, the former loses his reason:

> He seemed to perceive me no more, [Wingfield writes,] but nevertheless he fought, and desperately, thrusting at the empty air. It was terrible to see him thus doing battle with his invisible foes, and to hear his screams and curses, as inch by inch they drove him back to the edge of the crater. Here he stood a while, like one who makes a last stand against overpowering strength, thrusting and striking furiously. Twice he nearly fell, as though beneath a mortal wound, but recovering himself, fought on with Nothingness. Then, with a sharp cry, suddenly he threw his arms wide, as a man does who is pierced to the heart; his sword dropped from his hand, and he fell backwards into the pit.
>
> I turned away my eyes, for I wished to see no more; but often I have wondered Who or What it was that dealt de Garcia his death wound.

Wingfield suspects that a Higher Power reserved this fate for de Garcia, whereas readers of *The Lord of the Rings* will recall remarks by Gandalf and Frodo about Gollum having some fateful part to play before all is done.

The great event in the War of the Ring that occurs before the hour at Mount Doom is the siege of Minas Tirith. The defenders retreat towards the Citadel. Fires "rage unchecked in the first circle of the City" (*The Lord of the Rings* p. 806; Houghton Mifflin single-volume paperback, 2001). Sauron's forces attack the gate with the colossal battering ram, Grond. Chapter 34 of *Montezuma's Daughter*, 'The Siege of the City of Pines,' describes how Wingfield and a desperate remnant of Aztecs are besieged by the Spaniards. They bar themselves inside the city and prepare a 'great trench' and barricades that will retard the advance of the Spanish soldiers when they have breached the city walls. The Aztecs and Wingfield make their final defence at the high *teocalli* or temple. Two great moments in Haggard's novel — the large-scale siege; the harrowing fight of individuals at the volcano — are paralleled by the two great moments in Tolkien's account of the War of the Ring.

Montezuma's Daughter may have influenced Tolkien's writing of *The Hobbit* as well. Early in the story (Ch. 12), Wingfield leaps from a ship in order to get away from de Garcia and his cronies. He avoids drowning and drifts ashore by inserting himself in a floating barrel half-filled with discarded rotten meal cakes. The episode naturally reminds us of how Bilbo engineered his own and the dwarves' escape from the woodland Elves by means of empty provision barrels that are floated on the river. This was one of the *Hobbit* episodes that Tolkien painted. One of the other paintings is the memorable picture of the dragon Smaug wrapped around the stolen Dwarf treasures, with the Arkenstone glittering in the darkness. *Montezuma's Daughter* contains a chapter titled 'The Burying of Montezuma's Treasure.' Wingfield and his Aztec friends resolve to hide precious gems, and a gleaming 'golden head of Montezuma' with emerald eyes, in a secret chamber before this wealth can be found and carried off by the conquistadores. At one point, a traitor is executed and, when his body is flung on the heap, his arms seem to encircle two jars of valuables. If Tolkien read this book, his depiction of Smaug, the hoard and the Arkenstone, could be indebted to Haggard.

Another New World adventure by Haggard, *Heart of the World* (1895), may have influenced critical elements of Tolkien's plotting of the story of *The Lord of the Rings*. Let's pause to recollect that the evidence of his comments and manuscripts is that Tolkien did not set out to write the 'new Hobbit' story with a plot outline at hand or even a strong desire to write another hobbit adventure. His publisher did not want to follow *The Hobbit* with some version of the Silmarillion materials; Unwin wanted a sequel. I would argue that this situation put Tolkien under pressure that was bound to nudge him towards the conscious or, more likely, unconscious use of elements of adventure fiction that he liked.

Readers of Christopher Tolkien's presentation of his father's

drafts (in *The History of Middle-earth*) have marked what a protracted effort was necessary before Tolkien resolved who 'Trotter' was. For a long time, this mysterious stranger, encountered by Frodo and his companions at Bree, was a hobbit who wore wooden shoes. Tolkien tried stubbornly to make this conception work, but could not remain content with it. It took him more than a year (summer 1938 to autumn 1939) to arrive at the conception, instead, of Strider. Christina Scull's essay 'What Did He Know and When Did He Know It? Planning, Inspiration, and *The Lord of the Rings*' traces the phases of Tolkien's struggle (in *The Lord of the Rings*, *1954–2004: Scholarship in Honor of Richard E. Blackwelder* pp. 101–112 (especially 105–107), eds Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull, Marquette University Press, 2006).

The Strider-Aragorn plot is truly fundamental to the narrative of *The Lord of the Rings* as we have it. Who would have guessed, reading *The Lord of the Rings* in 1954–55 when the book was first published, that this plot was not a part of the story from the time Tolkien began to write? The weather-beaten Ranger is actually Aragorn , the heir of the sword that was broken and the hidden true king of the now-declining realm of Gondor; he is the king whose triumph gives the third volume, *The Return of the King*, its title. Having at some time read Rider Haggard's *Heart of the World* may have helped Tolkien to drop the wooden-shoed Trotter and develop this much more promising cluster of ideas.

Haggard would appeal to Tolkien because of the importance, in some of his fiction, of love and suffering

Heart of the World supposes that thousands of years ago, according to legend, the white hero Quetzal, who bore on his brow a carved emerald, brought civilization to the Indians of Mexico and Guatemala. Then he sailed away, having promised to return, but leaving the green stone behind. After his departure, civil war broke out and the stone was divided. One half eventually came, centuries later, to the last Aztec emperor, Guatemoc, and then was passed on through the generations until it came to Guatemoc's descendant, Ignatio, the narrator of Haggard's novel, when his father was near death (Ch. 1, Ch. 4).

Ignatio, a Roman Catholic, learned that he is the rightful ruler of the Indians, and that, as bearer of the talisman, he will be recognized as such by a secret brotherhood and may command much treasure. It is believed that "when the two halves of this stone come together, the men of white blood will be driven from Central America and an Indian emperor shall rule". However, his attempt to raise a rebellion against the land's modern rulers come to nothing because of betrayal. Ignatio lost the treasure and "became a wanderer" for many years, despised for his apparent poverty and because of his race (Ch. 1). Yet it remains Ignatio's dream to see the two halves of the Heart-gem reunited and to bring about the rise of an "Indian empire — Christian, regenerated, and stretching from sea to sea" (Ch. 4). (Ignatio does not envisage Quetzal's return.)

Ignatio learns that the capital of the ancient pagan empire still exists on an island in the interior (Ch. 4). It turns out that this city, called 'Heart of the World', is ruled by chiefs, the chief in Ignatio's time being an old man, the pagan high priest Zibilbay; when Zibilbay set out on a quest, in his absence his nephew Tikal was in charge. (There is, then, a multiple stewardship theme here: the great Quetzal has gone away, to return someday when a white man shall appear; for centuries the city has been ruled by chiefs who are descendants of the last Aztec king, Guatemoc — or by their stewards, such as Zibilbay, or even by a steward's steward, such as Tikal.) Zibilbay had heard a voice in a dream that told him to "wander forth from the country of the Heart [to] find that which was lost" (Ch. 11). Zibilbay bears the other half of Ignatio's stone.

Eventually, Ignatio and his friend, the white miner James Strickland, join Zibilbay and his daughter Maya and journey to the ancient city. It is built of "snow-white stone, whereon the light gleamed and flashed" (Ch. 14). However, only "a few — a very few — children" may be seen (Ch. 15). The once mighty population has "dwindled to a few thousands"; they are "perishing as, in a season of drought, flowers perish for lack of rain, bringing forth no seed" (Ch. 11). The city is falling into dilapidation, with tree roots pushing aside the centuries-old masonry. When Ignatio and the others arrive there, they find that Tikal has usurped the throne. Eventually, however, Maya and Strickland marry and she bears a son. (In writing the novel, Haggard may have intended to bring forward Strickland as Quetzal returned, but he didn't follow through with this plot element.)

Tolkien's Aragorn, of course, passed many years in which his rightful kingship was unknown and he was the wanderer, Strider. Before he is revealed to Boromir as Isildur's heir at Rivendell, Aragorn takes time to advise Bilbo about the importance of a green stone, an emerald, upon the brow of Eärendil, and he himself bears a green stone, presumably the same one, as king (*LOTR* 227, 231, 960). However, the broken object associated with Aragorn is not a stone but the sword Narsil. The broken sword is essential to the verse that a voice cries in the quest-inciting dreams of Faramir and Boromir, who are not stewards like Zibilbay, but are sons of a steward (*LOTR* 239–240).

Aragorn is heir to the throne of Gondor at the white city of Minas Tirith, whose steward, Denethor, is unwilling to give place to the rightful ruler. The ancient capital has become a forlorn place, "falling year by year into decay". Only half of the men who "could have dwelt at ease there" remain (*LOTR* 736). Beregond tells Pippin that "there were always too few children in this city; but now there are [nearly] none" (*LOTR* 747). Although Gondor, unlike the city called Heart of the World, does not suffer from drought and the resulting death of flowers, the White Tree of Minas Tirith is dead (*LOTR* 736). As king, Aragorn plants a new seed, and his marriage to Arwen promises the birth of children. These deeds are signs of the coming renewal of Minas Tirith and Gondor.

However, because of his ancestral link to Númenor, Aragorn must also be associated with the destruction of a

great city, indeed of a great realm, which perished beneath the Great Wave at the end of the Second Age because of the sacrilege of its impious king in defying the Ban of the Valar, as Tolkien tells in the *Akallabêth*. At the end of *Heart of the World*, the city is overwhelmed by a great flood, set in motion by its vengeful, despairing queen, the impious Maya (she acted thus because Tikal murdered her infant son) (Ch. 25). In both books, the watery destruction of a beautiful island city is the doom following upon a horrendous, even sacrilegious, act. I don't ignore Tolkien's references, in his letters, to his dream, recurrent since childhood, of the Great Wave, nor do I contend that this dream had its origin in a youthful reading of *Heart of the World*; but one might conjecture that the drowning of the city in the Haggard book would be especially likely to impress someone already dreaming of a catastrophic wave. Perhaps Haggard's book — as well as Plato's Atlantis myth — contributed the detail of the drowned *city*, to fill out and help to provide a literary use for the 'Great Wave.'

Incidentally, before the main story with Zibilbay, Maya, and the lost city is well under way, Ignatio and Strickland have an adventure that might have contributed its own element to Tolkien's Bree episode. Fearing for their lives, Ignatio and Strickland, uneasy guests of the ill-reputed Don Pedro, hide behind a false panel shown them by a servant girl at the hacienda. Sure enough, at night six men enter the room where Ignatio and Strickland are presumed to be sleeping, and murderously slash at the bedclothes with swords and knives (Ch. 9). Readers of *The Lord of the Rings* might wonder if this sequence contributed to the incident of the Black Riders attacking the beds where they think the hobbits are resting. One wonders: supposing that the Ringwraith ambush here owes something to the Haggard episode, does that help to explain why the Ringwraiths are still, at this point in Tolkien's writing, less appallingly horrifying than they later become? Does their country-inn cutthroat behaviour reflect a bit too plainly the derivation of the incident from Haggard's tale? The Black Riders have already appeared before the hobbits reach Bree, but maybe Tolkien would have developed their dreadfulness sooner, as he toiled at the book, if not for the 'convenience' of using them as assassins in a 'revision' of the Haggard scene. At any rate one must acknowledge that the Riders at Bree "are not the menace they later become", as Tom Shippey notes in *The Road to Middle-earth*.

"The invention of languages [was] the foundation" for his serious literary fantasy, Tolkien wrote in 1955. 'The 'stories' were made rather to provide a world for the languages than the reverse' (*Letters* 219). In this oft-quoted passage, Tolkien implied that he was *not* like many an author who has orally told or written stories ever since childhood. His imagination did not teem with characters and incidents. He did not, one surmises, carry a notebook in which to jot down the ideas that were always presenting themselves as germs of possible stories.

If, then, Tolkien often drew, probably without realizing it, on Haggard for plot materials, may we venture to say more than that he did so because both authors wrote adventure stories? I believe that we can. Haggard would appeal to Tolkien not only as an adventure-romance writer, but because of the importance, in some of his fiction, of love and suffering, subjects that mattered greatly to the professor.

For example, in Haggard's medieval adventure story *Red Eve* (1911), we have a love story complicated by the haughtiness and hostility of a father who opposes his daughter's desire to marry the hero, as well as by war, arduous journeys, treachery and the supernatural. There are feats of skill with weapons, the fellowship of comrades-in-arms, disguises, separation of the lovers, and narrow escapes before, at last, the lovers are united. The author of the Beren and Lúthien ,and Aragorn and Arwen stories would be likely, I suppose, to find that *Red Eve* engaged his interest. As regards suffering, *Red Eve* and *Montezuma's Daughter* brood upon matters such as lack of sleep, water or food; repeated disappointment; grief at parting from the beloved; injury and sheer physical weariness, and so on. Suffering is basic to what the hero experiences in some of Haggard's tales. That the same is true of much of Tolkien's fantasy throughout the half-century of its creation probably does not require demonstration here — but be it noted that the treatment of the heroes' sufferings is one of the things that set Tolkienian fantasy apart from most modern fantastic fiction. What importance does *suffering* have in the plots of William Morris, Lord Dunsany, E. R. Eddison, and other modern fantasists before Tolkien? For that matter, where is the realistic depiction of weariness, hardship and suffering in Malory and the Icelandic sagas? When we think of these narratives, do we remember their protagonists as being men who suffered much? Hugh, the hero of *Red Eve*, says in the last chapter, "I wonder has ever man borne a heavier burden for all this weary while?" Frodo might have said something like that — but the typical hero of modern adventure fiction or fantasy would not say it. Such expressions do not diminish the heroism of Haggard's and Tolkien's heroes.

I'm not suggesting that Haggard's plots provided Tolkien with a template for his own, but it seems as though Tolkien's invention of plots (as well as his deployment of many descriptive and narrative details) probably was enabled to a significant degree by his absorption of work by the earlier writer. It's a commonplace of Tolkien criticism to allude to bits from Haggard's *She* as influencing Tolkien and to suppose that Gagool (in *King Solomon's Mines*) had something to do with Gollum. Such passing comments are inadequate as acknowledgement of the probable importance of Haggard for Tolkien.

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THE PASSING OF THE PEOPLE OF PEACE

Julie Sinclair

In the mountain's lap lay a lochan of light
Distilled from the golden air
Of the quiet noon of midsummer June
When the sun shone bright and fair.
And stillness lay in the stony strath,
And on the purple brae,
For all were at mass save a lad and a lass
Who watched where the flocks did stray.

Janet and Tam they sat alone
On the hill-side honey-sweet
As upon the land, like a healing hand,
There pressed the summer heat.
The drowsing bees on the amethyst brae
Droned a chant both douce and deep,
And under its spell the two they fell
Into a nodding sleep.

The sacring-bell rang clean and clear;
The folk they bowed and prayed,
As up from his doze young Tam arose —
And he was sair dismayed,
For the hill was a-cold; a sudden cloud
Had hid the eye of day,
And grey and pale, like a shrouding veil
A mist lay on the brae.

Tam thought that Time was out of joint,
Or else had ceased to be,
Or, like the tide that soughed and sighed
As ebbing ran the sea,
Had from the hillside drawn away
To leave it standing lone —
An island steep; the ocean deep
Of years about it — gone!

"Janet, arise from out your sleep,
For I fear a nameless ill!"
Young Tam he cried on the mountain-side
Where the mist lay dank and chill.
"Arise from your sleep!" he called again,
"Or I fear ye'll wake nae mair!"
But to his dread, as one stone-dead
Still slept his sister fair.

Clad in a velvet mantel green
As she rode up the brae
Came the Lady as bright as a star of night
To where young Janet lay.
The Lady she said, "Tam, whisht ye now!
Lest ye wake your sister sweet!
For her dreams, they are rare, I trow and swear,
Though none for Christian meet!"

And Tam he would pray the queenly dame —
But he couldnae find his tongue —
And her laugh was the knell of a silver bell
As the grey mist round her clung!
And she stooped — and Janet she did clasp
In her arms so round and white,
And to her breast the child she pressed,
And bore her out of sight.

A grey host following close behind
Passed swiftly up the hill,
And light did course, each one a-horse,
Through the day so dreich and chill.
And Tam he gazed and marked their ride
As they passed so quiet and queer,
But dumb he stood, as made of wood,
On the hill-side silent there.

Oh, there passed by full fifty score,
And fifty score times ten!
Yet stood Tam still upon the hill
As they rode up frae the glen.
But when the last of that soundless host
Came riding silent by
Tam's tongue was loosed; now speak he must,
Or else he'd surely die!

"O stand and stay!" young Tam he cried,
"I pray ye, stand and stay!
What folk are ye? And whither gae
Ye on your mirksome way?"
"We may not say, O Child of Man.
This we maun hide from thee."
"Yet shall I know, though to my woe!
Now stand! And answer me!"

Then stood the hindmost of the host,
And turning, he did look
The saddest glance, through sorry chance,
That ever Tam did brook.
And up did speak the mist-pale wight:
"We're none of Adam's kind.
And Alba's shore for ever more
We shun and cast behind.

"The White Dove* came from out the West,
White Martyrdom to seek.
Highly he prized the White Christ,
The mighty and the meek!
And great were the deeds of Collumcille
When he did have his day.
The gate barred-to, it open flew!
The kelpie fled away!

"And all o' the folk, they gave him ear
That were of Adam's kin,
For Christ the Pure, he was their cure
Who shared in Adam's sin.
Now the White Isle lies beneath his sway,
For the White Christ governs all,
And the People o' Peace must yield their lease
To the People o' the Fall."

Tam bowed his head; when next he looked
The host had passed away.
The Sun shone bright, and in her light
The world lay glad and gay.
"Janet!" he cried; but nought could see
On the hillside far or near —
And "Janet o' mine!" but ne'r a sign
Found he of his sister dear.

But Janet she's gone to an elder world
Where they need nor Moon nor Sun,
And Janet she's hurled to a fairer world
Where the crystal rivers run.
And Janet she's gone to a lovesome world
Lit by light of the first white star,
And Janet lives ay 'neath the purest sky
Where the Peaceful People are.

*Columcille *i.e.* St Columba. This verse refers to two of his most outstanding miracles. The story of *The Passing of the People of Peace* is loosely based upon a Scottish folk tale. The kelpie is the water-monster of the River Ness, presumably Nessie or one of her relatives.

The People of Peace is of course a mistaken piece of 'folk etymology'. *Sidhe* is often taken as being derived from a Gaelic word for peace but apparently it actually derives from the Latin *Sidus i.e.* they are the People of the Stars (as in Tolkien).

NELDORETH REVISITED

Carol Brownlow

just twenty years upon the earth
of puissance full and radiant face
he wandered high in heart and mirth
amid the glades of Rivendell
rejoicing in his life's good grace
of royal lineage and high birth
at the noble purpose of his race
he whom they had named Estel

ancient with three thousand seasons
yet as a sapling lithe and green
escaping Nature's shoddy treasons
amid the glades of Rivendell
joy sprang to life where had been
leaping high from winter-deep geasons
now treading lightly and serene
the one they called Undomiel

across the airs her voice so fair
blossomed in a luminous scent
enthralling all that heard her there
amid the glades of Rivendell
such was her binding enchantment
and the effect on him so rare
that tripped his heart and fell silent
he thought she was Tinuviel

taking to herself Luthien's Choice
cleaving long to her Dunadan
that brief blink in which to rejoice
far from the glades of Rivendell
but short then seemed her mortal span
when last she heard Estel's fair voice
understanding the Doom of Men
diminishing into Firiel

THE FOREST

Carol Brownlow

secrets dwell in the deeps of the Forest
enter at your peril mortal soul
to meet the confusions of willows
that spiral to Withywindle graves
and Iarwain's songs of resurrection

secrets dwell in the deeps of the Forest
should you dare to enter the songs
beneath the canopy of fallow gold
enchanted by the sylvan harp
the Lady-Who-Dies-Not awaits you

secrets dwell in the deeps of the Forest
lichen-covered shadowed into dusk
who walks its tangled branches writhing
catching at unawares the benighted
who stray beyond its twilit eaves

dare you now to go inside these words
uncharted mesmerisms of long-gone days
furtively lurking on mem'ry's borders
to lure wayward imaginations
with glamours that exit not unchanged

The importance of beans and turnips

rpg

In Hell, every morning is a Monday.

Nrch!tchu was not finding afterlife easy in the Department of Infernal Affairs (Summonings & Entrapments Division). He worked, when not on a call, in a tiny office shared with up to 20 other hot-desking junior under-fiends. He would have liked to have considered air-conditioning a far-off dream; unfortunately it was an up-close nightmare. Despite the worst efforts of Maintenance the temperature in the office was uncomfortably low while remaining just high enough not to require the attention of the Sickness and Danger staff.

He toyed with the plastic name-tag on his desk. There was another thing. It was one thing to have a spawn-name that sounded like his mother had influenza, but quite another to be at this rank. No respect, no respect at all. He'd turn up at yet another amateur séance and announce himself and they'd all laugh. Sometimes he wouldn't even get as far as 'Slightly Hard of Hearing' before someone would say '*Gesundheit*' and he'd be back on his way across the dimensions, ears and tail burning with the blessing, laughter ringing in his ears with a reedy voice complaining "Roger, you could have at least disguised your voice."

And what about Brtwtgahu over there? Been in this department only nine millennia and was already 'Criminally Insane'. Bastard. Nrch!tchu would have sold his own grandmother to be even 'Mildly Vexed', Beelzebub knew. Actually, he reflected, he wouldn't: he'd already sold her for three pounds of over-ripe Camembert to complete that job in Canberra. Brtwtgahu also wasn't summoned every time a snotty schoolkid thought it would be a lark to play with a ouija board and a bit of chalk. It was the candles, he was sure. Everyone seemed to be allergic to something these days, and it was just his luck to be lumbered with wannabe necromancers who sneezed at the first whiff of molten wax. Summoned at the drop of a hat, or sniff of a candle as it might be. Whatever it was, it was a right pain in the fork.

Just because he was a demon, he thought, there was no reason to treat him like dirt.

Kids these days. All world wide web and internet. How in Hades was he supposed to compete? What could he offer? And they were a miserable bunch of artists: Nrch!tchu hadn't seen a decent pentagram in centuries.

Still, all the calls meant his Fearmiles account was looking good. Another few hundred summonings and he'd be able to ask that tasty-looking succubus in Accounts out for a drink. He might even be able to take one of the company cars and go somewhere really special. He'd heard Birmingham was nice at this time of year. Maybe he could get a few apostates, which would be worth a promotion, surely?

That bastard Brtwtgahu. Not only did he score all the vowels but also managed to get assigned to some creep called Dawkins. What a crock that was. Just had to go in, throw a few synaptic switches and bugger off to the pub for the rest of the day. He always got a laugh. Always. Nrch!tchu had been given some druid called Williams. A druid! That was so two-millennia ago. What was the point? Instantly forgettable: Nrch!tchu couldn't even remember his first name.

A flash, the stink of cheap matches. Now what?

Another accidental summoning, another spotty kid with asthma and red-rimmed eyes and no hope of a girlfriend. Nrch!tchu thought ruefully of the succubus in Accounts and speculated sadly that any potential necromancer who had a girlfriend probably wouldn't be doing this. Sounded like a tree. Rowan, that was it. Nrch!tchu had turned the assignment down.

"I conjure and abjure thee—"

"I'm sorry, you'll have to speak up. See, says here on the name tag. Was that 'adjure' or 'abjure'?"

"What? You do as—"

"No, look, see I've got to be sure, I've got this timesheet and my line manager gets real pissy if—"

"Demon! I abjure thee to—"

"Right, 'abjure' it is, I'll be off then, cheerio, hope the cold gets worse."

Then there was the annual review. As the most senior junior demon he'd got into trouble for the moustaches that had appeared on the inspirational posters all round the department. He was supposed to set an example, they said, and even though the one about Sickness and Danger and the four-sided pentagrams was, from a certain angle, quite funny, it was his responsibility to make sure that sort of thing did not happen. Of course, we know you didn't do it, they said (you don't have the imagination, haha) but we have to set an example.

That wouldn't have been so bad, except that he *had* done it and no one believed him.

At least he was *trying*, not like the wastes of sulphur downstairs. But as his least unfavourite uncle kept telling him, you don't get points for trying: we're only interested in measurable outcomes.

And now this memo from Inhuman Resources. A 're-assignment' to the Department of Tempting Devices (Silicon). That would have been great fun when the human state

of the art was bloody great Welsh rocks, but now it was all iPods and computers. Windows. What a low-grade, shabby evil that was. The potential that had been *wasted*. And everyone knew what 're-assignment' meant. The pitying glances from the rest of his so-called 'team' were nearly enough to make him consider switching sides.

What he wouldn't have done for a short extra-curricular assignment, 30 years perhaps, to Conflicts. He'd seen the roadmaps for the Persian Gulf, and 2011 was gearing up to be particularly tasty. They'd be short-handed for sure.

The phone rang. With a weary sigh he picked up the receiver: "Nrch!tchu the Slightly Hard of Hearing and Socially Maladjusted, Summonings."

"Nrch!tchu. It's Senyr?cds in Accounts. Look, I know we've never met, but I've been admiring your trident for a while, and I really liked the way you got that University Department to change the line about being 'crippled by indecision' to 'differently abled due to resolutely challenged lifestyle choice', and, well, I've got tickets for the Bullring. Would you like to go with me?"

Ah, maybe Hell wasn't so bad after all.

rpg is a molecular biologist and hopeless romantic who has recently returned to Britain after a serving a short period of transportation to Botany Bay.

An afternoon at the seaside

LYNN FOREST-HILL

The afternoon sun was warm and the sand between his toes was soft. Down where the gentle waves lapped in, his sons were playing, calling to one another in high piping voices, laughing, splashing. Beside him his wife was at last contentedly reading a ladies' magazine. It was a perfect, relaxing start to the holiday. The devoted father and husband watched the sunlight glittering on the ruffling surface of the North Sea and listened to his children's voices, and forgot that he was trying to remember the name for a sand fairy. He felt very drowsy.

To his surprise, he woke up to twilight. Down on the indigo horizon Hesperus the evening star was glowing. It was beautiful. It was also very quiet. He turned to apologise to his wife for sleeping so long, but she wasn't in the deckchair next to him. In fact the deckchair wasn't there. The children! He sat upright but the beach was quite empty in both directions as far as he could see. Except away to the right, a group of men striding along briskly through the powdery sand. Might they have seen the family? No, better to head up to the car. They would surely be there, unless, surely she wouldn't be so cross as to drag them back to the cottage on the bus? Anxious, he picked up his shoes and socks, slung his pullover across his shoulders, making sure he had his car keys in the pocket of his shorts, picked up his pipe and tobacco from the warm sand. He started for the steps leading up to the road, when he was suddenly hailed: "Wait! We want a word with you!"

He turned, more anxious than ever, and irritated at having to interrupt his search for his family. One of the group of men he had seen was waving at him.

"What do you want?" he called, crossly.

"A word with you, if you please!" another of the men shouted back. They were approaching fast now through the heavy going of the fine sand. A group of men around his own age, he thought. They drew close enough for him to make out their number, and the odd way they were dressed, not at all what he would have expected on the beach, even after the families had gone home and the twilight was deepening. This made him uneasy, but as they came up to him he realised that two of them were older men. One elderly but still very tall, striding up the beach on long shanks, with his white hair flowing over his shoulders, the other seemed not so old. His dark hair was grizzled, and his face as he drew nearer was lined and tanned. It had in it an indefinable look of nobility that did not quite match the weather-stained cloak he wore, fastened with the shell pin of a pilgrim at the shoulder.

"What exactly do you mean by accosting me in this manner, and in these outlandish costumes?" the anxious father repeated sternly, trying to sound as though he spoke with the confidence of a man accustomed to having his words listened to. "You really should think twice about wearing masquerade costumes like these so far from any place where they would be appropriate. You could get yourselves into all sorts of trouble walking around like that." He pointed to the long sword that hung unsheathed by the thigh of the youngest, and nearest, of the group of men.

The whole group had now gathered around him. Men of various ages, all strangely dressed for a trip to the beach, and all, he realized, carrying weapons. Trying to forestall trouble he addressed them as calmly as he could manage. "Look, I'm sorry, but I don't have any money with me. Just my shoes and pipe and tobacco." He held out the items to them. Several of the men laughed.

The lean, grizzled man spoke, still with a hint of a laugh in his voice.

"We don't want your money, just your help." His voice was strangely accented, but the anxious father could not quite place it in spite of his expertise. He wondered, irritable with himself, why he would bother, after all, the children …

"I'm sorry, I must catch up with my wife," he objected. He had been examining the strangers more carefully. They seemed to be some kind of club. All, except the youngest, sported sheathed swords hung on differently ornamented belts. Most wore small items of chain mail over leather jerkins, but one wore little more than leggings under a sailcloth cloak. Two wore cross-gartered leggings beneath long tunics.

One of these was a most beautiful young man, the youth closest to him. Perfectly made, with flaxen hair braided over his shoulders, he was perhaps 20 years old and at his hip he wore a long, heavy-looking sword with a hilt shaped like intertwined dragons.

"I really must go!" The anxious husband and father turned away, but instantly he felt a vice-like grip on his shoulder and, turning his head, found himself confronted with the eyes of the beautiful young warrior with the dragon-hilted sword. The eyes were sea-grey, and very stormy.

Before he could protest — "Let go!" commanded the tall elderly man. "That is no way to treat the loremaster!" The young man released his grip. It really had been unnaturally painful, as if the joint was about to burst, but the sudden conferring of such as prestigious title diverted the husband and father's attention from both his painful shoulder and his domestic situation. Before he could recover himself completely the elderly man spoke again.

"Might I explain? My companions and I are all fighting men, as you can see." He indicated with a sweep of his strong bony hand his companions, and their weaponry. "We have literally spent our lives making this land what it is, but does anyone remember that? Only a few good men and loremasters like yourself, it seems."

"I do try to … spread the word," murmured the newly appointed loremaster as light began to dawn in remote corners of his mind. The man to whom he spoke was old enough to be his father but still a head taller than he was. On his neck, quite clear even in the evening light, there was an encircling red mark. But it was not a rope burn. This was all very strange, especially the old man's accent.

"Yes, well, it's *not enough*!" growled the grizzled man.

"By you leave, Sire," The elderly man interrupted with stern courtesy, and continued to address the newly appointed loremaster. "In every age so far we have found one or two scribes and minstrels who are willing and able to pass on our stories and so ensure that the land and the people stay together, understanding how things came about and who they are because of who we are. Our deeds live on to strengthen each new generation, and our renown in each generation repays what we spent of ourselves. But now we can't find anyone willing and able enough to pass on our stories — except you."

"But I know so little. I'm not a minstrel," objected the loremaster. "Not much of a scribe either." He added wistfully.

"Well, you're the best there is at present, and we can help," the grizzled man said with energetic honesty, slapping the hilt of his long sword in a gesture the loremaster took to indicate impatience.

The loremaster looked anxious again, doubtful and confused.

"Maybe if I made some introductions," suggested the tall old man in a conciliatory tone, "you would look more favourably on our proposition?" The loremaster shrugged, feeling helpless and out of his depth. The old man continued. "First," he said, indicating with a courteous gesture of his right hand the craggy-faced, gruff and grizzled man in the pilgrim's cloak, "My lord Horn, King of Westernesse."

The loremaster dropped his pipe and tobacco pouch in astonishment.

"King Horn?" he exclaimed, then recollecting himself, he managed a very awkward bow of his head. "Sire. I beg your pardon."

"Never mind that." said the king curtly, waving a hand dismissively.

The elderly man hastily indicated the bright-eyed, youthful, leather-clad swordsman who was leaning easily on the shoulder of the younger grey-eyed owner of the dragon sword. "This", he said, "is my lord Bevis of Hamptoun."

"Bevis?" muttered the loremaster, putting out his hand politely, as if he were meeting a new faculty colleague, then removing it as an embarrassingly inadequate response to the stalwart warrior. "Sire," he said, with another little bow of his head. It was returned with a good-natured smile.

"And this is Havelok," the old man went on, indicating the man in the sail-cloth cloak. He towered, sinewy and startlingly white-haired, over the darker-haired sturdy man he was introducing. "He's from Grimsby, although he has strong Danish connections, as you may know." He added with a grim look and something of a growl.

"And a strong smell of fish, like all Danes," said a voice as the loremaster nodded and bowed to Havelok.

Several things happened at this point. Havelok, who had stepped forward, hand on sword hilt, in a gesture of courtesy, swung round to face his slanderer and his thick braids almost whacked the loremaster in the face. King Horn and the elderly warrior both turned and shouted at the slanderer, "Shut up, Guy!" At the same moment the beautiful young flaxen-haired warrior lunged sideways and grabbed the wrist of the slanderer, who gave a cry of pain. In a trice, King Horn's sword flashed ringing from its jewelled scabbard and stood at the throat of the beautiful warrior, who loosened his grip.

"Get off, Bee-brain!" the slanderer exclaimed, pushing his assailant, and his luck, only to find himself suddenly rising into the air as the massive forearm of Havelok smashed into his chest, thudding dully on the emblazoned surcoat. He landed in the soft sand with a thud and a grunt of surprise.

The loremaster, greatly disconcerted by the sudden eruption of violence, put up his hands in a gesture of peace and stepped in to offer his hand to help the fallen Guy to his feet again. King Horn sheathed his sword, still scowling with displeasure. The beautiful grey-eyed warrior laughed and spoke, and the loremaster smiled.

"Speak English in front of the loremaster," said Horn and Bevis almost in unison, and Guy added provocatively: "He won't understand you. *We've* got trouble understanding you."

The tall white-haired warrior was about to speak, but the loremaster interposed.

"Actually, I understand him quite well," he said quietly. They all looked at him in surprise.

"So!" said the young man triumphantly to those around him. "You may not understand me, but this learned man does!"

"That's right," the loremaster told everyone. "I know his Mercian dialect."

"But he's a … *Dane*," exclaimed the elderly man, almost spitting out the name.

"Actually," said the loremaster quietly, "he's a Swede — a Geat to be exact — but he's speaking Mercian, with a bit of an accent. How marvellous." He added, mostly to himself. He would have liked to continue his strange exchange with the young man.

"I don't understand all this," Bevis objected. "Do you know him?"

"I think so," said the loremaster with a look of pleasure.

King Horn's craggy face relaxed into a knowing smile. It beamed unexpectedly on the loremaster in the gathering dusk, and for a moment he almost felt he liked the rather irascible monarch.

"I *knew* he was the right man," the king remarked to the elderly man who stood beside him like a seneschal, and nodded in agreement.

At that moment, and hitherto unperceived in his approach by all the warriors and the loremaster, a splendid figure in full plate armour riding a fine courser came cantering up from the water's edge where the horse had been splashing along magnificently in the little breaking waves. The horse's harness jingled cheerfully as it drew nearer and its richly embroidered caparison shone with gold thread in the growing twilight. Down from his high saddle slid the splendid figure.

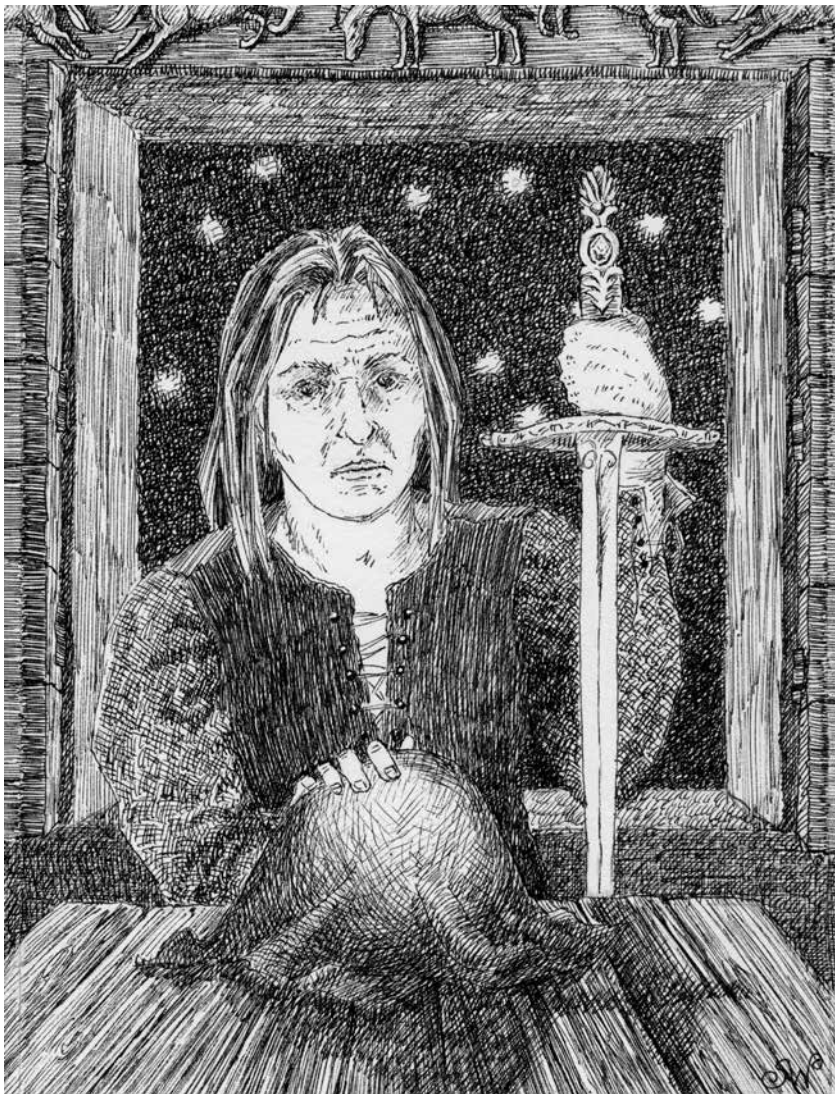
"Sorry I'm late," he said, pulling off his shining plumed helm and bowing to Horn and Bevis, then to Havelok. "Dreadful storm the other side of the Pennines: all the rivers were in flood, and we're going to have to do something about the woses on the moors. They're breeding like goblins".

"What are woses doing on the moors?" asked Guy. "They're supposed to stay in the forest."

"Don't ask me," said the splendid knight. "Ogres, I suppose, as usual."

"Well, you're here now," said the elderly man. "Let me introduce our new loremaster. Eminently qualified."

Before he could complete the introduction the splendid knight drew off his plated gauntlet and offered his hand to



Aragorn and the Palantír

Sue Wookey

the loremaster. "Gawain of Camelot," he said enthusiastically, "at your service. I'm so glad to meet you at last. I've heard so much about you from Pearl's father. You are going to take the job aren't you?" he gave the loremaster a sideways look. "We can call on our friend with the beard like a bush if you need a bit of additional … ah … *persuasion*," he added with a merry laugh.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the loremaster. "Is he really green?" he asked before he could stop himself.

"Only at Christmas," Gawain replied enigmatically, and laughed again. "Would you like to see the nick on my neck?" he asked.

"Um…" was all the loremaster could manage, rather nonplussed by the offer. He had been enjoying talking to Gawain. It seemed so much easier. He had about him a pleasing cheerfulness. His little neatly trimmed honey-coloured goatee beard and shoulder-length curled hair were set off by his shining plate armour, which clanked a little as he moved.

"I bet you'd like to see the lace,'" Gawain offered, trying to wriggle a finger inside the gorget around his throat. He stopped and shook his arm. A faint sprinkle of something fell from his wrist and elbow, dull against the shining armour. "Sand," he explained. 'That squire of mine never cleans it out properly."

"Are you going to spend all evening showing off?" Guy's acerbic question drew Gawain's attention.

"Hello, Guy," he said. "Still trying to create an impression? If you ask the loremaster nicely he might help you out." Guy's hand went to his sword hilt.

"Not again!" exclaimed the loremaster in exasperation.

"This is the trouble," said the elderly man. "Reputations are under attack."

"Some more than others," Gawain added brightly.

"Remind me — when's the wedding?" Guy responded savagely. Gawain's fair countenance blackened instantly. This time it was his hand that moved towards the hand-and-a-half sword that hung from a green-jewelled belt. Guy pressed his advantage: "You will give my regards to Dame Ragnall, won't you? And my apologies that I shan't be able to attend. My stomach's not strong enough for…OUCH!"

The movement of Gawain's hand had been a feint. In fact it was his armoured left fist that connected with Guy's cheek and sent him flying.

"Oh, nice move!" exclaimed the beautiful young warrior. He threw back the cloak lined with black bear-fur that had been slung loosely from his shoulders and revealed a fearsome scar on his right shoulder. It looked as though a set of huge claws had torn deep into the flesh, but a long time ago. "Troll wife," he announced to no one in particular, although his voice called the loremaster's attention from where Bevis was helping Guy to his feet again. "Ugliest thing I have ever seen," the young man continued. "Is yours a troll too? It is terrible to have to marry one." Gawain cut him off.

"Take no notice," he said. "I am not, and have never been, troth-plighted to any Dame Ragnall. It's just a story, put about to …"

"My wife is the most beautiful lady in this land." A husky voice panted close by. A painfully thin, almost wraithlike figure appeared on the edge of the group. Everyone looked around in surprise. "Gentle lords," he began again breathlessly, dropping the harp he carried into the sand and bending forward holding his knees as one who has run long and hard. "Gentle lords," he panted again, "have any of you seen her? My wife, I mean?"

"Not now, Orfeo," said King Horn. "Can't you see we're busy?"

"But …' began the emaciated harper, mournfully, "I've lost her."

"Look, you're not the only king who's ever lost his queen," Bevis broke in, irritably. "We've all lost our ladies at one time or another. At least you've still got your kingdom. Most of us have had to fight to get our lands back as well. And I had Ascupart to deal with. And were the three kings of Cologne any help — no, they were not!"

"I had to take on a troll. *And* a dragon," The beautiful youth put in.

"Come off it, Bee-brain," said Guy. "You didn't fight *for* a woman, you just fought *a* woman," he added, unwisely.

The youth lunged at him, this time with his great sword in his hand, stung by the slight. The elderly man stepped between them and as the youth swung the sword hilt towards Guy's cheek it actually crashed into the front of the old man's shoulder. He staggered and fell back to be caught by Bevis and King Horn, who was furious.

"Guy, you *will* stop picking fights," the king commanded. "And you," — he turned his blistering gaze on the beautiful youth — "put that sword away. We are all here for the same reason. May I remind you all that you are knights and lords? And, Orfeo, I am sorry, but none of us has seen your wife — we have other concerns."

Dejectedly, the harper picked up his harp and turned away while Guy went back to soothing his sore wrist and his aching back and the beautiful youth went to apologise to the elderly man. The loremaster, briefly unnoticed, walked over to the harper and put a hand tentatively on his emaciated shoulder.

"Have you asked it?" he enquired quietly.

"*It*?" repeated the harper, puzzled.

"The sand fairy."

"Oh. yes. It snapped at me and said it only talked to children and animals. Then it threw sand at me and vanished."

"Oh dear," said the loremaster sympathetically. Then with a flash of inspiration he asked, "have you tried asking the Maiden in the Moor?"

"No — no I haven't!" cried Orfeo excitedly. "What a good idea! Thank you, most kind of you. If you're ever in Winchester come to the castle and ask for me!" He started to lope off, turning towards the steps that led up from the beach and inland.

"Who's minding the castle while you're off on this wild-goose chase?" Gawain called after him, brightly.

"My steward, of course. Great chap, utterly trustworthy!" Orfeo called back, turning and running backwards for a

moment and almost falling over in the soft sand; a ghost of the king he had once been, thin, pale, haggard with the long chase, but still driven by his longing to find his abducted queen. "And it's not a wild-goose chase. I will find her." His voice trailed away as he turned and went on running, heading for the steps.

The loremaster felt sorry for him on his lonely quest.

"That was good idea of yours," Gawain remarked pensively, "but I hope he finds the Maiden before the abbot clothes her in blue."

Seagulls were wailing above them now as they headed out to the darkened sea. It all seemed suddenly very desolate as Orfeo's quest reminded the loremaster with a jolt that he had a wife of his own to find.

Meanwhile, Bevis, Horn and the beautiful youth had eased the elderly man out of his byrnie and leather hauberk and were examining the red welts on his shoulder where the rings had been driven through the leather by the blow from the sword hilt.

"I don't think it's broken," Horn said, pressing around the joint and upper arm.

"I did not mean to do this to you," the beautiful young man told the old warrior remorsefully. The old man scowled at him.

"Make yourself useful, Bear," said the king. "Fetch some sea water to ease these injuries."

"I'm not hurt, Sire. Just winded," the old man insisted. "I've had worse." Everyone within earshot laughed, except the young warrior.

Guy was still standing apart, sulking, or contrite, while everyone else was busy with their own conversations, and the loremaster now took the chance to speak to him.

"Please," he said, "as one Warwickshire man to another, tell me, who is that tall elderly chap that caught the blow on the shoulder. I'm sure I should know him but I can't place him."

"Oh, that's old Earl Byrhtnoth," said Sir Guy.

"Good grief!" exclaimed the loremaster. "I can't believe I didn't recognise him, those long shanks of his … I mean, I should have known. My friend Eric would be most amused to know how dense I've been. He would have recognised the earl at once."

"Why?" asked Guy with a frown.

"The poem. You know, his speciality."

"Ah," said Guy portentously. "Well, *as one Warwickshire man to another*, that is what this is all about really. It's all very well having a few scribes and scholars in cold stone rooms scratching away elegantly, but it's not really getting the *renown* thing right, is it? I mean, renown only really happens among the throng in the hall as the storytellers repeat the tales of heroic deeds in the firelight while the horns are overflowing and the trenchers are full. Deeds are nothing until they are acclaimed by many voices and many hearts are stirred. You've just seen how poor Orfeo is diminishing. Of course he's famished, but it's not just that, his whole being is withering from neglect."

"I never realised that happened!" cried the loremaster in astonishment.

"Ah, well, look around. Bevis is fine — you can tell that by the brightness of his mail. Look at how the rings shine and glitter in the starlight. Worth a fortune, and quite impervious to edged weapons, but it would melt like an icicle in sunlight if his name wasn't remembered as much as it is. And look at Bear there, our Bee-wolf, he's in the full vigour of his youth again after a very lean time because he's getting a lot of attention. The King used to be a fine sight too, but he's growing more grizzled and weather-beaten, if you know what I mean, as his making of Westernesse goes unnoticed so long. The right kind of attention and he'd be a fit as me."

"I see," said the loremaster thoughtfully, although this was not really true. He didn't 'see'. And this was not just a figure of speech. While Guy had been holding his attention the night had finally closed in. It was hard to make out the warriors around him. The warmth of the day had gone. There was no wind. Silence had fallen, only softly, softly, came the night-sound of the sea from behind the dimly seen figures who seemed to be waiting in the darkness for him. Then, out over the North Sea the moon rose majestically and her silver train flowed across the gently rippling water. Coming to land, it slowly touched the forms of the lordly warriors and haloed them so that they shone as if with a soft silver radiance.

"I'll do it," he said quietly. "Thought I don't yet know the way."

There was a lot of sudden movement. King Horn stepped up to him. The others made space, gathered round, murmuring and sounding pleased. Horn smiled and grasped his hand.

"We will help you," the King assured him, still smiling. From inside his unremarkable leather jerkin he produced something that shone faintly in his hand.

"This is a token of our aid," he said, holding it out. "Blow it and we'll come to you." The loremaster took what the king offered — a shining white shell, like a coiled pearl, glistening cold in his hand.

"Come on, Ron," Guy's voice beside him sounded suddenly lighter, less masculine. "Darling …" the word brought a chill air.

"Darling, you're snoring. Come on, *do* wake up." The loremaster, the anxious husband and father — opened his eyes. A chill air from the sea touched his cheek but his wife's warm soft hand was gently shaking his arm to rouse him. She was still there beside him! He smiled.

"Sorry," he said drowsily, happily.

"Daddy! Daddy! Look what we've found!" Small bright faces were suddenly beside him and a little pink hand dusted with sand was holding out to him a white shell that glistened bright with sea-water in the late afternoon sunlight like a coiled pearl. It was only an ordinary common winkle polished by the sea and sand, but the children had never seen one like it before and they were very excited by it.

"Is it treasure?" asked the smallest.

"Is it magic?" asked the eldest.

"Oh, yes," said their father with absolute honesty.

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Dragon meat for dinner

ZAK CRAMER

I have been thinking about the custom of Dragon's Tail served for the King's Christmas Feast in *Farmer Giles of Ham*, and replaced in Farmer Giles's time by a Mock Dragon's Tail made of cake and almond paste and cunning scales of hard icing-sugar. Is Mock Dragon a well-known menu item in British Christmas dinners? Being neither Christian nor British, I am not familiar with it. The Editor tells me that Victorians dined on mock-turtle soup, a cheaper, beef-based substitute for the real thing, and that there are British dishes in which the fish is minced up and put into a kind of fish-shaped mould and decorated to look like a whole fish. There are also, of course, oriental food traditions that liken lobster and chicken or duck dishes to dragon and phoenix.

But are there mediaeval sources that include the serving of dragon's meat on special occasions? What comes immediately to mind, of course, is the Volsunga Saga and related literature, where Sigurd drinks the blood of the dragon, Fafnir, and roasts and eats the dragon's heart. This could be the source, if one is needed, of Tolkien's consideration of dragon meat for dinner. But it seems to me that Sigurd's eating of Fafnir's heart is meant to be shocking, and is certainly a unique event that confers wisdom, and is not at all like normal eating and feasting. Tolkien says as much in *Turambar* and *The Foalókë*: "Few have there been that ever achieved a deed of such prowess as the slaying of a drake, nor might any even of such doughty ones taste of their blood and live, for it is as a poison of fires that slays all save the most godlike in strength" (*Book of Lost Tales* Vol. 2).

It is possible that Jewish lore might lie behind Tolkien's consideration of dragon's meat

This, of course, doesn't mean that the deed of such a godlike hero might not be remembered and commemorated through the annual eating of a Mock Dragon, or that Tolkien might not have been inspired to imagine as much from such sources. But it is at least worth considering another famous and traditional text where it is in *fact* the meat of a dragon that is served up for dinner, albeit under what are again somewhat unique circumstances and for a select group of diners.

The text I am thinking of is the Talmud, and before you immediately say that Tolkien had no knowledge of or interest in the Talmud, let me remind you that he certainly had a very great interest in *dragons*, and that the lore and legends associated with Leviathan in Talmud and Midrash are famous enough that a scholar of dragon-lore could not have failed to have seen them referenced somewhere in his travels.

In Genesis 1:21 we are told that on the fifth day of creation God created dragons. The word used for dragon is *thaninim*. For its elucidation, the great eleventh-century Biblical commentator, Rashi, directs our attention to the Talmud (*Bava Batra* 74b) where the *aggadah* (legend) is brought down that this 'dragon' is the Leviathan, a great sea monster, two of which were created, a male and a female. Afraid, however, that if they reproduced they would destroy the world, God killed the female and preserved her meat in salt for the benefit of the righteous in the World to Come. This legend is repeated in many places and is a regular feature of the Jewish paradise: the righteous gathered at a festival table at the end of time, eating and enjoying the meat of Leviathan.

It seems very possible to me that Tolkien, with his great interest in dragons, would be aware of this Jewish lore, and that it, along with other sources, might lie somewhere behind his consideration of dragon's meat as a food on special occasions such as Christmas and/or the end of the world. His humour is nowhere better shown than in *Farmer Giles*, in which he plays with a variety of sources, creating a confection of the Biblical Leviathan, dragons of the Fafnir type, and Victorian mock-turtle. The whole of *Farmer Giles*, I think, illustrates the serious fact that our real-world cultures are composed of just such confabulations. Tolkien's literary work is a great and extended meditation on this kind of varied history of our traditional texts, and of the languages we speak, the myths and stories and jokes we tell, the religions we believe in, and the food we eat.

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