

Mallorn

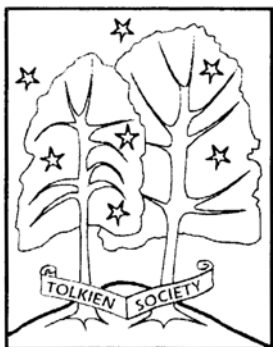
Issue 52 • Autumn 2011

The Journal of the Tolkien Society





*'Almost felt like you liked the forest!':
That's good! That's uncommonly kind of you!'*



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Issue 52 • Autumn 2011

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Mallorn is the Journal of the Tolkien Society, and appears twice a year, in the Spring (copy deadline 25 December) and Autumn (21 June). It considers reviews, comment, scholarly articles, original poetry, artwork and fiction (excluding fan fiction). Unsolicited material is welcome, but contributors should decide prior to submission to which category their manuscript belongs, and electronic submission is strongly encouraged. Full details on the preparation and submission to *Mallorn* are available on request from the Editor by email (mallorn@tolkiensociety.org) or by mail to 89 Connaught Road, Cromer, Norfolk NR27 0DB, UK, on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope (if in UK) or two International Reply Coupons (if outside the UK). *Mallorn* © 2011 The Tolkien Society. Copyright for individual articles and artwork resides with the authors and is used here under on a nonexclusive licence.

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, Summermoort and the Seminar in the summer, and Oxonmoort, 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.tolkienesociety.org>.

Consider the context



Nancy Martsch

J. R. R. Tolkien is our favourite author. So naturally we want to learn as much about him as possible. We read his writings and his letters, study his biographies, listen to recorded interviews. We endeavour to discern his ideas. Then we write about him, and we cite his words to craft finely honed arguments with which to demonstrate our theses. Many academic papers are written this way. After all, these are the Words of the Master, are they not? Surely he meant what he said? Or did he? To put it in statistical terms, should all Tolkien's words be given equal weight? Perhaps we need to consider the context.

Tolkien's words aren't the Gospel. Tolkien wasn't a prophet, thundering the Word to the ignorant. He wasn't a Biblical scholar, striving to extract every last nuance of meaning from the text. He wasn't a Torah scribe, checking and rechecking every word for absolute accuracy. Tolkien was a man. He was conscientious and had a good memory, but still he made mistakes and misremembered things. He changed his opinions over the course of a lifetime. He explored new concepts in the form of stories. Once in a while he may even have lost patience with an importunate query. When we draw from his letters, biographies, or the legendarium itself, when we cite Tolkien's words, we need to consider their context.

Probably the best source of Tolkien's thought, apart from his legendarium, comes from his letters published in *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien*. These letters have been 'selected and edited' (it says so on the cover), probably to concentrate on matters of interest to the readers of Tolkien's fiction and to protect the privacy of the Tolkien family. Doubtless Tolkien wrote many other letters about academic and other matters.

But letters by their very nature are a biased source. People usually write letters when they are unable to communicate in person or when a formal statement is required. Because of this lack of correspondence

one of the most important people in Tolkien's life is virtually absent from Tolkien scholarship: Edith Bratt, his wife.

Second, the letters have to be saved. The bulk of the collected letters postdate the publication of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

Third, and perhaps most important, Tolkien's letters were written with a particular reason in mind, usually in response to a previous letter or enquiry. Although the reason is summarized in *Letters*, we still have what is in essence one side of the conversation. (Taped interviews give both sides of the conversation, but these, too, can be edited.)

Even so, much can be learned by following the 'thread' of the conversation. Take, for example, Tolkien's famous statement "I do think of the 'Dwarves' like Jews: at once native and alien in their habitations, speaking the languages of the country, but with an accent due to their own private tongue..." (*Letters* 176, ellipsis original). This was written on 8 December 1955, the second of three letters discussing the BBC Third Programme broadcast of *The Fellowship of the Ring*. The preceding line reads, "I thought that the Dwarf (Glóin not Gimli, but I suppose Gimli will look like his father — apparently someone's idea of a German) was not too bad, if a bit exaggerated." The reference to "a German" suggests that Tolkien might have been thinking of a Yiddish accent, much more common in the 1950s than today. (Yiddish is descended from Medieval German.) Yet there's no suggestion of a Dwarvish 'accent' in either *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings*. Which leaves open the possibility that this statement might have been an afterthought triggered by hearing the 'German' actor. Whatever the reason, the date and circumstances of this letter suggest that caution ought to be exercised before applying this statement to Tolkien's thought in earlier compositions. Context.

The situation in which a letter is written also matters: for instance, people seem more apt to write when they're dissatisfied about something — how often do we fire off a Letter to the Editor when we're happy with the publication? Dates matter, too. Tolkien's Second World War letters are noticeably more pessimistic than those written before or after. Although it should not be surprising that a person would feel that the world is going to Hell in a handbasket at a time when the world really is going to Hell in a handbasket. But Tolkien might not have held such gloomy views at other times. Context.

We also need to remember that *Letters* contains letters that weren't sent. Tolkien wrote an angry letter to a publisher in Nazi Germany, refusing to make a declaration of *arisch* ('aryan', that is, non-Jewish) origin for the publication of *The Hobbit*. This 'letter' (*Letters* 30) comes from the files of Allen & Unwin, Tolkien's English publisher. It is one of two drafts that Tolkien submitted to Allen & Unwin for their selection: it seems likely that Allen & Unwin sent a milder version, not the one published in *Letters*.

Indeed, some of the letters are not letters at all, but drafts for letters. When I am writing a letter by hand (and I still do: I find it easier than typing), I sometimes find myself going off on a tangent or into too much detail. So I start over. The letter sent is usually shorter than the draft saved for my records. (It would be instructive to compare Tolkien's drafts with the letters he sent.) Before the invention of Xerox, a record of a letter was likely to be a typed carbon copy or draft; or else a hand-written copy or draft. Tolkien saved drafts. His story about the hobbit matriarch Lalia the Great (*Letters* 214) is in a draft. In many cases, Tolkien's drafts and unsent letters may reveal more of his thought than the letters he actually sent. Even so, we should recognize that these are drafts, not the 'official' versions.

We can also learn about Tolkien's ideas from his biographies. The best are probably *J. R. R. Tolkien: A Biography*, the official biography by Humphrey Carpenter; and the day-to-day record in *The J. R. R. Tolkien Companion and Guide: Chronology* by Christina Scull & Wayne G. Hammond. Once again, when citing Tolkien's words it

is important to consider the context.

To give a well-known example, this time from a passage in Carpenter's biography, oft-cited in support of Tolkien's dislike of Shakespeare: "in a debate on the authorship of Shakespeare's plays he 'poured a sudden flood of unqualified abuse upon Shakespeare, upon his filthy birthplace, his squalid surroundings, and his sordid character.'" The occasion was a debate at King Edward's School in Birmingham on 4 April 1911 (recorded in the *King Edward's School Chronicle*) — and Tolkien was 19 at the time. Debating is like role-playing: the debater has to be able to argue either side of the issue. Indeed, Tolkien had already demonstrated a flair for the dramatic in other debates, such as dressing in costume to play a barbarian envoy and speaking in Gothic. So he could have been dramatizing here. However, Maggie Burns discovered (*Mallorn* 49) that Tolkien's grandfather John Suffield did hold anti-Shakespeare views. So it's possible that Tolkien made use of the debate to express his grandfather's opinions. Whatever his views at this time — and we do know that Tolkien disliked Shakespeare — is it really fair to cite this passage as an exemplar of Tolkien's opinion throughout the remainder of his life? Context.

Tolkien's writing has much to teach us, too, if we observe the internal context. Tolkien wrote both academic studies and fiction. He didn't lead a compartmentalized life: he worked on more than one project at once. So cross-fertilization of ideas occurred. And his legendarium grew and changed over the years.

At one time, Tolkien's published work (aside from his academic studies) consisted primarily of *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Silmarillion* plus a few others. And we had Carpenter's *Tolkien: A Biography* and related works. Today the drafts for Tolkien's fiction have been published in the 12-volume *The History of Middle-earth*, the two-volume *The History of The Hobbit* and elsewhere. And a tremendous amount of information is contained within Rateliff's *The History of The Hobbit*, Scull and Hammond's *The J. R. R. Tolkien Companion and Guide*, their *The Lord of the Rings: A Reader's Guide* and many more. And we

even have the Internet! A treasure-trove of information is available to us.

Much insight can be gained by simply cross-referencing Tolkien's works by their dates of composition. For instance, John Rateliff in *The History of The Hobbit* has shown that Tolkien was writing *The Hobbit* at the same time that he was working on his tales of the First Age. This explains why the goblins of the Misty Mountains recognized Beater and Biter, the swords of Gondolin — which doesn't make sense from the timeline in 'The Tale of Years' (in *The Lord of the Rings*), where Gondolin fell some six and a half thousand years earlier.

The development of Tolkien's legendarium can be followed through *The History of Middle-earth*. Although the basic outlines of the mythology remained constant over time, the details varied enormously. Sometimes the details do matter: linguists and philosophers in particular need to be careful of context. That wonderful summary of the mythology, *The Silmarillion*, is a composite work assembled from many different pieces. Douglas Kane, in *Arda Reconstructed*, has located many (but by no means all) of the published sources for *The Silmarillion*. The deeper we dig into Tolkien's writing, the more we can appreciate his thought.

To give an example: before the publication of *The History of Middle-earth*, a scholar could propose, based upon a statement in *The Silmarillion*, that fate preordained the actions of Lúthien the elf while Beren the man acted from free will. The relevant statement reads:

Therefore he [Ilúvatar] willed that the hearts of Men should seek beyond the world and should find no rest therein; but they should have a virtue to shape their life, amid the powers and chances of the world, beyond the Music of the Ainur, which is as fate to all things else.

But thanks to *The History of Middle-earth* this statement (with minor changes in wording) can be traced to 'The Music of the Ainur' (written 1918–20), in the initial version of the legendarium. And the story of Lúthien and Beren (first titled 'The Tale of Tinúviel') was composed earlier, in

1917. At this stage the entire cosmology was different, Tolkien wavered between making Beren a man or an elf, and the Sauron-figure was a giant cat. Clearly the concept of 'fate' vis à vis Lúthien and Beren would have been different, too. Today the advanced scholar would be wise to consider the origin of his or her citations. Context.

Last but not least we must consider the cultural context. Tolkien was English. He drew upon the land and language familiar to him. But today his work is read and enjoyed by English-speaking and non-English speaking people all over the world. Foreign English-speakers need to remember the English accent when parsing Tolkien's poetry. Artists would be well-advised to learn what the English countryside looks like. (The names 'corn' and 'hemlock' do not refer to the same plants in England and North America.)

For their part, English people need to remember that English customs are not universal: when foreign readers make mistakes it could be an indication that their culture is different. A gentle explanation may be called for. In particular an explanation is needed for the English educational system of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (so important in Tolkien's life), because it is so very different from that of today. Please, oh please have the decency to say what time of the year 'Michaelmas' and 'Hilary' terms are. Nobody else uses these names!

In summary, we need to recognize that J. R. R. Tolkien's words aren't stand-alone Gospel. Tolkien was a man who lived in a particular time and place; and his words reflect those particular situations in which they were uttered. If we keep this in mind when studying Tolkien's letters, his biographies, his legendarium, or whatever, we will gain a deeper understanding of Tolkien's ideas.

When citing Tolkien's words, consider the context.

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An idea takes root

SIR — I have been thinking about your interesting Editorial, ‘Ents and sources’ (*Mallorn* 51), in which you suggest that a New Testament verse from St Mark (8:24 — ‘I see men as trees, walking’) might be the source, or a source, out of which Tolkien’s idea of ents germinated.

I have no great familiarity with the New Testament, but there is a verse in the Old Testament that may perhaps be in the background of that text. It is Deuteronomy 20:19. The verse contains both *halachah* (law) and *aggadah* (lore). Its *halachah* is that during a war, when besieging a city, you are not allowed to cut down fruit-bearing trees around that city. In justification of this law, the verse is read as a question in which the Torah asks: is a tree of the field a man (that you should destroy it too in war)? But the sages also found *aggadah* in this verse,

reading it as a statement: for a man is a tree of the field (see, for instance, the Babylonian Talmud: Ta’anit 7a). The *aggadah* compares men to trees and emphasizes, following the sense of the verse, whether their Torah produces fruits (works, deeds) or not. In Kabbalistic texts this is developed into very profound meditations on man’s connection to nature via the identification of Adam Kadmon (the primordial man) and the Tree of Life — both of which are conceived as cosmic figures at the root of all creation. And in our own time, this verse continues to inspire Jewish thinkers — for instance, take a look at the very interesting book *A Person is Like a Tree: A Sourcebook for Tu BeShvat* by Yitzhak Buxbaum (ISBN: 0-7657-6128-9). All of this may be far outside Tolkien interests, but my basic point is that the likening of men to trees is both old and young, and Jewish as well as Christian. This might have a more direct bearing on Tolkien when we realize that the text can legitimately be read in an inverse way: for a tree of the field is a man. Tolkien knew Hebrew well enough to know this.

You might also want to consider Second Samuel 5:24 and First Chronicles 14:15. There, David is told to listen for the sound of marching in the tree-tops as a sign to go to war. I guess most people would understand this as poetic language referring to the sound of the wind in the trees, but — my mind being properly prepared by Tolkien — I cannot help but understand this verse as referring to David’s waiting for the trees to begin marching. I will not venture here to decide if this is a Biblical influence on Tolkien, or a Tolkien influence on my reading of the Bible. I will be the first to admit that my experience of many things, including Torah, have been impacted by my reading of Tolkien.

In discussing the possibility of Biblical ents, we must also consider the Nephilim, the Biblical giants — but that is much more than I am prepared to go into now, and not directly related to this business of seeing trees as men.

Meanwhile, also thanks for that interesting quote from Borges. The manner in which seemingly unrelated things are brought together in the leaf mould of an author’s mind is matched only by the equally mouldy minds of readers.

Zak Cramer

Correction

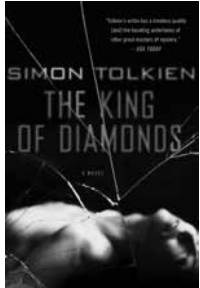
In the article ‘J. R. R. Tolkien and the Spanish Civil War’ (*Mallorn* 51), José Manuel Ferrández Bru referred to the British author Evelyn Waugh as ‘Anglo-Catholic’. Evelyn Waugh was of course a Roman Catholic, which is quite different — the change was entirely a result of editorial error. I apologize to the author and thank David Doughan for pointing it out. **H.G.**





A doom of diamonds

MIKE FOSTER



The King of Diamonds

Simon Tolkien

Minotaur Press, 324 pp. \$24.99

ISBN: 978-0312539085

The doom of diamonds and the laments of lost love make Simon Tolkien's third murder mystery, the second to feature Oxford police detective inspector William Trave, a compelling and convoluted successor to 2010's *The Inheritance* (reviewed in *Mallorn* 50, 9–11).

As in that book, Tolkien's experience as an Old Bailey barrister begets a book with the virtue of deep roots in a trial lawyer's understanding of English law. Like the first Trave, its present mystery — two murders, two years apart — blossoms into a flower of evil with roots deep in the great horror of the last century: the Second World War and the Holocaust. Once again, the tale volleys between the squalor of prison cells and the luxury of country mansions. As before, the answers to the puzzle of murders in England are secrets from Europe a dozen years before the first slaying.

David Swain is the murderer, convicted at the Old Bailey for the fatal stabbing of Ethan Mendel, who had replaced him as the lover of Katya Osman, the niece of wealthy Belgian diamond merchant Titus Osman, in the boat house at Blackwater Hall, Osman's Oxfordshire estate. Evidence is ample: a series of threatening letters from Swain to Katya vowing to kill both her and Mendel. Trave's well-documented investigation dooms Swain to life in prison.

But the detective inspector has misgivings, and as the prologue, set in 1958, ends, he is uncertain that justice has been done, troubled by a "lingering doubt that no one else seemed to share".

Unsurprisingly, his misgivings are not misbegotten. But his motives are.

Like Swain, Trave himself is the victim of his own passions: impulsive acts of animosity fuelled by the original green great dragon: jealousy.

For Titus Osman's lover is Trave's estranged wife, Vanessa.

In *The Inheritance*, Vanessa was no more than a name, the spouse who had left Trave after the death of their only son, Joe, in a motorcycle accident. Like many a grieving man, the detective inspector had thrown himself into his work. His obsession with his police profession, with

clearing the falsely accused and tracking down the truly guilty, had claimed the innocent bystander: Vanessa, who forsakes him and moves out of their barren home to digs near Keble College. She takes up painting, cooking and a new romance.

Osman embodies everything Trave is not. Rich, suave, blue-eyed, dapper and attentive, he has rescued his niece Katya from a downward spiral of drugs and bad companions — including David Swain — and taken her under his avuncular wing at Blackwater Hall with a surrogate family that includes his scarred, sinister brother-in-law, Franz Claes and Claes' stern, religious older sister Jana.

Katya's haven, however, imprisons her just as surely as Swain's cell does him. Locked in her gilded cage behind steel bars with reinforced glass, she is straitjacketed by strong sedatives administered by Jana.

She had always been pretty but suffering had changed her. Her bright blue eyes, swollen with too much crying, had become larger and more luminous in her gaunt face ... she had almost stopped eating so that her clothes had now begun to hang off her. She wore them carelessly — the buttons on her grey dress were unevenly fastened, and there were stains around her collar.

In her secret diary, she writes of her will to be rid of her suffering.

In the book's first chapter, Katya overpowers Jana, who has come with her nightly needle, and escapes briefly from her room. As the others scour the house for her, she meets Vanessa for only the second time. "They're trying to kill me," she tells her before passing out. Titus soothes Vanessa and carries Katya back to her bedroom cell. But doubts have been engendered that Osman's loving charm cannot abort.

Meanwhile, the convict Swain stewes in his own venom in his Oxford prison cell. More than anything, his threatening letters to Katya had sealed his verdict. "He hated her himself now; with every fibre of his being he hated her, just as much as he had loved her before." When his unctuous cellmate 'Easy' Eddie Earle spurs him to pick at the wound of his feeling of betrayal and then proffers a plan to escape and exact his murderous revenge on the girl, David enlists, provided that he is provided with a loaded pistol and ride to Blackwater Hall once they are free.

Tolkien's touch-and-go telling of that prison break heats the suspense level up to a slow burn that will become a roiling boil. Eddie's cocky plot succeeds, and David gets what he wants: a snub-nosed revolver and a midnight ride to revenge. Remembering where Katya's room was from their single tryst there, he breaks in and makes his way in the darkness and opens the door.

Thus for the second time, Trave gets the dispatch to go to the scene of a fresh homicide at Blackwater Hall, with ghosts from the first murder haunting him:

Ethan Mendel lying dead, with the lake water lapping around his dark hair and his outstretched arms; David Swain's collapsing in on itself as the jury foreman announced the guilty verdict; Titus Osman's smug eyes twinkling behind his manicured beard as he entertained his guests at that dinner party after the trial with Vanessa sitting on his left, listening to the bastard's tall tales with such rapt attention. Why had he taken Vanessa that night? ... He hadn't wanted to go ... But Creswell his boss had insisted ... Trave didn't want to go on his own, and because he felt guilty that she never went out; that he'd not been able to help her at all in those long, hard months and years after their son Joe had died. Trave had his job, but she'd had nothing ... They grieved soundlessly

and separately, trying to avoid each other until their marriage withered away and died. Not with a shout; not even a whimper. In a cold and weary silence.

So they go together, and he loses her to Titus, the king of diamonds.

Returning to Blackwater Hall after the second murder there, Trave finds Katya — pretty, ravaged, malnourished, dead of a single gunshot through the forehead. With his assistant Adam Clayton, he interrogates smooth-as-a-snake Franz Claes, who reveals he fired two shots at the fleeing Swain. Trave also questions the uneasy, upset Jana, and finally Titus: his obvious hostility disturbs Clayton, who does not know that Osman has taken Trave's wife as his mistress. He does know about Trave's awareness of Franz Claes' nasty little unpunished sex secret. Trave also informs

In the author's words

Simon Tolkien discusses his new book, The King of Diamonds.

Every writer hopes his newest work is better than the one before it. Simon Tolkien believes that *The King of Diamonds*, his second Inspector Trave murder mystery, exceeds *The Inheritance*, its predecessor.

"You want your writing to improve. You learn from each book you write. They're very different. It's less of a whodunnit. It's an extension and development of *The Inheritance* because the central character Trave has both his career and his love life at stake. It continues what I enjoy, the historical aspect.

"It is more considered than *The Inheritance*. I wanted to do [another] story on the death penalty. The first was an experience of courtroom drama. *The King of Diamonds* is a more straightforward police procedural based on the actions of characters outside the courtroom. It's more of a hark back to my first book, *Final Witness*" [published in 2002; its British title was *The Stepmother*].

Vanessa Trave, the detective inspector's estranged wife, "enabled me to develop a female character for the first time since the first novel. She is a woman torn in two directions. Trave has been unable to deal with the death of their son. She wishes to live independently and she is

taken in by the false promises offered by Osman. Yet she is left having to deal with responsibility [for Katya Osman's murder]. She's forced into integrity. The girl appealed to her and she didn't do anything at all."

Trave's partner in policing, Adam Clayton, "like Vanessa, is torn. They are two fulcrums. She stands between Osman and Trave. He stands between MacRae and Trave. The reader is asked to view Trave's experience through the eyes of Adam Clayton and see his doubts. He fears that Trave may have gone off the rails. Clayton screws up in *The Inheritance*, but not in this one."

Simon's mood is exuberant. He and his wife, the former Tracy Steinberg of Clayton, Missouri, and their daughter and son, moved into a new home in Santa Barbara, California, in July. He credited Zadie Smith's 2005 novel *On Beauty* with helping him get through the hubbub of house-changing. A fan of Bob Dylan, he was looking forward to seeing Dylan play on 14 July.

"I loved *Modern Times*. There are a lot of wonderful things on it, like 'Spirit on the Water'. There's nothing I like more than 'Mr. Tambourine Man'. It's my favourite poem. Its imagery is astonishing," he adds, quoting from the



last verse of that 1964 song.

And although Simon knows the music of the Irish band U2, the coincidence between the name of their bass player and Trave's assistant was one he had not realized. "The connection: none whatsoever."

Eager to return to work on his third Trave novel, *Killing Churchill*, he offered a brief preview. "It's set in 1940, two decades earlier than the others. Trave is younger. It's set in London, but Vanessa has been evacuated out, probably to Oxford, with their infant son. So she's

him of his suspicions that Osman's rescue of young Belgian Jew Ethan Mendel and his younger brother Jacob Mendel and their grandmother from Nazi-occupied Antwerp was less of a 'fairy godfather' move than a cynical ploy to gain the diamonds they could bring to him.

Trave's animosity to Osman compromises his policing, Clayton fears. Although she respects her estranged husband's integrity, Vanessa suspects the same, even when Osman makes a hasty visit to her flat and begs her not to tell anyone that Katya had told Vanessa that she feared for her life. Trave pounds the final nails into his own professional and personal coffin 43 pages later when he visits Blackwater Hall in search of the prison escape driver, loses his temper, and throws a punch at Osman that Titus easily dodges, leaving the detective flat on his back and stripped of his dignity — and, eventually, his job. The result: Trave

is taken off the case, replaced by Macrae, another inspector newly arrived in Oxford. His thuggish assistant, 'Jonah' Wale usurps Clayton's place.

Tolkien weaves the story of the murder investigation with the chronicle of Swain's betrayal by Easy Eddie; his gunshot wound from Franz; and his frantic fugitive flight into the tale of the police search for him. These chapters fabricate a fine frenzy including a tense return to his boyhood home. His mother, who had shunned his earlier trial, binds his wound and bids him begone. A touching first meeting with his young half-brother Max is a glimmer of goodness and generosity amid the grimness and gore.

Of course, Trave does not give up the hunt, still doubting Swain's guilt. Imperilling his police career, He arranges a secret meeting with Swain at St Luke's, the fugitive's erstwhile private secondary school. But this ends badly, for

an absent presence [as she was in *The Inheritance*].

"I've done an awful lot of research on the London blitz. It goes back into the shadow, into World War I; there's more of a historical dimension. It's also about Reinhardt Heydrich, the head of the Nazi SS intelligence, the SD."

The presence of Heydrich, the founder of Dachau and other notorious death camps, ensures that *Killing Churchill* will reprise the Nazi anti-Semitism element that is the adamant bedrock of *The King of Diamonds*.

Diamond tycoon Titus Osman, his devious brother-in-law Franz Claes, and Franz' ascetic sister Jana are all bound up in the Holocaust in Belgium.

"Osman is the king of diamonds. He conveys the magic of them. I read quite a bit about Antwerp and the Regency Diamond for this. The only liberty is that the ring Osman gives Vanessa is obviously a fiction. He's a very attractive character, a charming, charismatic man, everything that Trave is not. Trave makes a terrible fool of himself over Osman in front of Vanessa. And yet he's evil."

Franz' meticulous manner conceals "a repressed gay aspect. There's a connection between Franz and [another character], who were co-defendants in the boy brothel case. The publisher wanted the rent-boy house story out. But it's important, rather like the relationship of James Mason and his number two in [Alfred Hitchcock's] *North by Northwest*."

The tense, anxious Jana faithfully attends Mass at St Aloysius, where Simon, son of Christopher and his first wife, Faith, was baptized and where his grandfather frequently worshipped and served Mass. "Jana's room is like a nun's room." It embodies "the enormous pressure she is under, the incredible narrow religious way in which she has passed her life. Trave realizes that."

Another woman who stands out is escapee David Swain's mother, to whom he flees after his escape and Katya's murder. "Their home very, very strongly modelled on the place where the lady who used to look after me lived."

David's mother, who remarried after his father's death, had not visited him during his incarceration for Ethan Mendel's death, but "seeing him again made him real. She believed in him. When he was in trouble, he came to her. She saw the connection between her two sons [David and his young half-brother Max]. And Trave believed in him." When David is recaptured, she visits him in prison and brings him clothes to wear for his trial; she is dressed in the suit he had last seen her wearing at his father's funeral. "I made you," she says as she leaves. "They've got no right to take you away."

Another mother, Aliza Mendel, grandmother of Ethan and Jacob, "is very good for enhancing our understanding" when Trave visits her in Antwerp's Jewish quarter "remembering the Holocaust

and the families involved. It focuses on how very organized it was, the whole extraordinary aspects of how the jailers were able to keep the prisoners."

Simon is also fond of jailbreak mastermind Easy Eddie Earle, whose lucky card is the king of diamonds. "I was pleased. I like the way he talks. He's from the other side of the tracks. He's being used but he doesn't know what will happen."

Osman's familiar is a green-eyed black cat, Cara. "I'm keen on Cara. The cat is an extension of Osman. Osman slides around Trave, like the sinuous way a cat slides around a person. Cats don't bark. In terms of David's arrival to see Katya, she adds suspense. I like it when we meet the cat. I spent a lot of time working out how she would figure in the ending."

In terms of sales, "this world is very difficult place to get people to read books. My attitude is that I do what I can do." One new development is the signing of a contract. *Final Witness*, his first novel will be republished in a HarperCollins edition this year. *The King of Diamonds* and *The Inheritance*, published by Minotaur Press in the USA in 2010 and 2011, will be issued in HarperCollins editions in the UK in spring and autumn of 2012, respectively.

So more readers will have a chance to read Simon Tolkien's books. Readers should take that chance. These books are good as gold — or, better, dazzling as diamonds. **M.F.**

Trave is followed to the rendezvous by Wale and MacRae. Swain is recaptured and charged with murder by firearm. This offence is punishable not by life, but by death: hanging.

Trave, a pariah, is suspended from his police job the next morning, shunned by all but the still-loyal Clayton. Swain has confessed to the crime, “as full and frank a confession as any investigating policeman could wish for. Except that Clayton was left obscurely dissatisfied ... Swain had confessed too easily. He’d sung like a canary but without any variation in the notes. There’d been no intonation, no emotion.” Both suspect that Swain’s admission was the result of torture.

So Trave sets off for the Jewish Quarter of Antwerp, searching for Jacob, Ethan Mendel’s brother, whose testimony had suggested that Ethan might have gone to Osman seeking confirmation of a suspicion about Franz Claes. He does not find Jacob, but he does find Aliza, the Mendel’s grandmother. She tells him that Ethan had discovered something in West Germany that related to the fate of his parents Avi and Golda, who were captured as they attempted to escape and shipped to Auschwitz, where they died, two of the victims of the Holocaust, doomed by diamonds. She gives him a photograph of Jacob, and Trave vows to find the young man. With Clayton’s help, he will. They break into his grubby Oxford apartment. What they discover then begins the process of chipping away the rough stone to reveal the gem of truth: the Nazi connection to Blackwater Hall.

Meanwhile, unbeknownst to Trave, Titus has asked Vanessa to divorce her husband and marry him. She agrees to this proposal, which is accompanied by a brilliant heirloom diamond, but she has misgivings: “She felt for a moment like a swimmer who had dived into a beautiful river and found it far colder and quick running than she had ever anticipated.”

Two weeks later, Vanessa forces herself to call Trave to ask for the divorce.

She did not fully understand her own reluctance. She had no wish to go back to her husband, and yet she found it extraordinarily hard to make the formal break with her past that was now required. It felt like she was closing the book not only on her husband but also on her dead son: divorce was not just an acknowledgement of failure but also somehow an act of cruelty, a betrayal of the past. She hadn’t been able to explain any of this to Titus when he’d gently but insistently pressed her about this during dinner in Oxford two days earlier, but she realized that the delay was only making it harder to do what she had to do, and so she went straight to the telephone.

Trave answers on the second ring, and they meet at a coffeehouse on St Michael’s Street. There, for the first time, she reveals what Katya had said to her ten days before she was shot. “They’re trying to murder me,” a statement she’d already revealed to not only Osman but also Trave’s

successor, Inspector MacRae; both had advised her to be silent about Katya’s terrified outburst.

‘You’re going to have to tell that court up in London,’ Trave said quietly. He spoke as if what he said was obvious, not a subject for argument or discussion.

‘I can’t. I won’t,’ said Vanessa, refusing to see it that way. Her eyes blazed with defiance, but Trave stood his ground ... ‘A man’s on trial for his life ... I hope you’ll do what’s right. That’s all.’

Vanessa looked at her husband and suddenly the fire went out of her ... realizing he was right: she had no choice.

To reveal any more of what happens in this superb story’s final 94 pages would be unfair to both the readers and to Simon Tolkien, who has crafted a cunning, complex tale easily the equal of *The Inheritance*. In some ways it is better, primarily because of Vanessa, torn between her present passion for Titus and her burden of Katya’s revelation. By making his detective’s alienated wife a crucial figure in the mystery, Tolkien has complicated feelings with facts. Swain and Katya’s tale is not the only fatal, sad story of lost love in *The King Of Diamonds*.

As in the first Trave, Tolkien roots the terrors of the present in the horrors of the past as surely as his grandfather J. R. R. Tolkien rooted *The Lord of the Rings* in events that transpired long before Bilbo Baggins ever left Bag End. Simon shares his grandfather’s acuity of description. Not only the major characters but also minor characters — faithful Adam Clayton, vainglorious Easy Eddie Earle, old Aliza Mendel, treacherous Inspector Macrae — come to life. Even Osman’s green-eyed ubiquitous black cat Sana (if a cat can be a character) is unforgettable. Chapters 25 through 28, as the narrative volleys between Oxford and Blackwater, sizzle with suspense as much on the third reading as they did on the first. Tolkien admits that these climactic chapters involved “a lot of working out, the two scenes. It took a lot of rewriting. I was very, very pleased with it.”

Secrets are hidden within secrets. Truth may triumph; the hangman may be cheated. Perhaps what was lost may be found.

Simon Tolkien is aware that some of the interest in his fiction “is about my grandfather, the great man. I write novels, a prose of a certain kind, and my grandfather’s were entirely different. He had no interest in anything modern at all. He was inhabiting the Anglo-Saxon world. It was more vivid for him than the modern world”

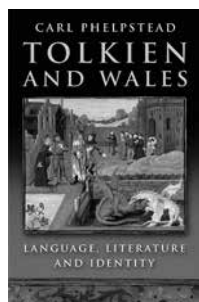
But these Inspector William Trave books would be noteworthy thrillers whether the author’s name was Simon Tolkien or Simon Jones. *The King of Diamonds* follows up *The Inheritance* with such superb success that readers will be ready to queue up for the third, *Killing Churchill*, on the day that it is published.

Mike Foster is the North America representative of the Tolkien Society.

Simon Tolkien has crafted a cunning, complex tale easily the equal of *The Inheritance*.

The Welsh connection

TROELS FORCHHAMMER



Tolkien and Wales: Language, Literature and Identity

Carl Phelpstead

University of Cardiff Press, £19.99

ISBN: 978-0708323915

I started by reading the back-cover blurb and nearly got second thoughts — could a Danish physicist with very little knowledge of Wales and Welsh be the right person to review this book? Reading the preface, however, I was relieved to find that the book also deliberately targets people like myself who know something about Tolkien, but next to nothing about Wales or Welsh. Reading it from that perspective I found an excellent book that I recommend warmly.

The book itself is split in five parts: the prefatory material, a part on language (three chapters), one on literature (another three chapters), one chapter on identity and the addenda. Besides the preface, the list of contents, and so on, the prefatory material includes a chronology of the primary events discussed in the book together with a few extra events from Tolkien's life. Although it contains little that cannot be found also in the Hammond and Scull's *The J. R. R. Tolkien Companion and Guide: Volume 1: Chronology*, I found this overview quite helpful while reading.

The seven chapters that make up the book proper start with a part on 'Language' consisting of three chapters. The first chapter, 'Encountering Welsh', deals with Tolkien's meetings with the Welsh language, drawing heavily upon Carpenter's biography, Tolkien's published letters and his paper 'English and Welsh'. A section on the books dealing with Welsh subjects that Tolkien owned, including his annotations and, where applicable, uncut pages, adds new biographical knowledge, and a subsection on 'professional philology' gives an excellent overview of the parts of Tolkien's professional work that had relations to Welsh. The second chapter deals with 'Linguistic taste' and contains also a very interesting discussion on the evolution of the concept of 'Celtic'. The discussion of Tolkien's theory of linguistic taste is excellent as far as it goes, but I would have liked more depth and perspective, and it lacks an attempt to explain Tolkien's personal linguistic tastes — what was it, specifically, that attracted Tolkien so much about Welsh (and Finnish)? The last chapter in the language section deals with Tolkien's invented languages, and, of course, the relations between Welsh and Sindarin take up the most space here. The discussion of grammatical similarities is excellent

as is the discussion of various sound mutations in the two languages. The only thing I miss in this is a discussion of phonemes in the two languages.


The second part of the book proper deals with literature and consists of three chapters titled 'Mythological sources', 'Arthurian literature' and 'Breton connections'. In this part of the book, Phelpstead discusses the surviving Brittonic literature and Tolkien's connections with it. In the first chapter he summarizes the history and argument of Tolkien's 'The Name Nodens' and moves on to discuss some mythological motifs that are found both in Brittonic sources and in Tolkien's fiction: the ring that confers invisibility, elves and dragons. When discussing elves, the Irish *Tuatha de Danaan* are brought into the discussion in order to build a more solid argument for a Celtic influence on Tolkien's elves. When discussing Tolkien's dragons, we are likely to think first of Smaug and Glaurung and other dragons of Middle-earth, but Phelpstead focuses instead on Chrysophylax of *Farmer Giles of Ham* and on the Great White Dragon of *Roverandom* — both of these are shown to have some strong connections to Wales and Brittonic tradition. The chapter on the Arthurian literature gives a fine overview of the topic, and relates mostly to Tolkien's scholarly writings — in particular his work together with E. V. Gordon on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Unfortunately, Tolkien's *The Fall of Arthur* remains unpublished, and therefore cannot be discussed in detail. Attempts to connect Tolkien's Middle-earth fiction to Arthurian sources generally remain less convincing — few of the parallels noted between *The Lay of Leithian* and *Culhwch and Olwen* are more than a possibility — often one among several, and none of them seems to throw new light on either story itself or on Tolkien's relationship with either story. The final chapter of the literature section deals mainly with the Breton lays, their connection to other Brittonic literature and of course Tolkien's retelling of one of them, his *Lay of Aotrou and Itroun*, but also his work on the English *Sir Orfeo*.

The final part of the book is the one-chapter section on identity. In this chapter Phelpstead considers Tolkien's self-identification as English, Mercian and even Hwiccan, explaining what he meant by these designations (I for one did not know about the kingdom of Hwicce) and discussing what this means for Tolkien's statements about dedicating his mythology to England. The chapter is a very fine discussion of Tolkien's own identity as a West-Midlander, but unfortunately there is little about Tolkien's general ideas about regional identity. These might not be politically correct in our day, but they were nonetheless his, and would, I think, deserve a closer investigation in a book that dedicates an entire chapter to Tolkien's own regional identity.

Of the addenda there is little to say — they start with an appendix listing the books Tolkien owned on Welsh matters that are now in either the Bodleian Library or the English

Faculty Library. Then there are 40 pages of notes (personally, I would prefer to have separate systems for citations and explanatory notes), 14 pages of bibliography and 7 pages of index. The index seems to be quite good — only a couple of my test keyword searches failed (*Beleriand* and *Lay of Leithian*).

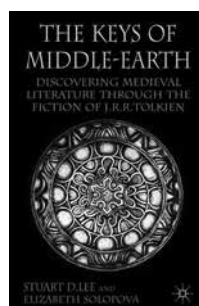
Where this book works the best for me is in introducing Welsh, Brittonic and Celtic matters, including the history of the scholarship on these questions, the status of

scholarship at Tolkien's time, his contributions and later developments. There may at times be a tendency to avoid questioning Tolkien's rhetoric, or some small confirmation bias in seeing possible connections to Tolkien's fiction from the Celtic sources, but this is never enough to annoy me, and all in all this is an excellent book that I happily give my warm recommendation. 

Troels Forchhammer is a physicist who works for a major manufacturer of mobile phones. He is based in Denmark.

From Middle Ages to Middle-earth

KASTYTIS ZUBOVAS



The Keys of Middle-earth: Discovering Medieval Literature through the Fiction of J. R. R. Tolkien

Stuart D. Lee and Elizabeth Solopova
Palgrave Macmillan, £16.99
ISBN: 978-1403946713

It is no secret to anyone with even a remote interest in Tolkien and his works that Old English and Old Norse literature played a large part in the professor's life. It is no wonder, then, that parallels between themes or even particular works of this medieval literature and the stories of Arda can be found. This is the main stated purpose of *Keys* — to bring the parallels to light and show both how Tolkien might have been influenced by medieval texts he undoubtedly knew, and also how our understanding of these texts might be enriched by knowledge of Tolkien's work.

Is this, then, a book about 'source analysis', dreaded bane of all Tolkien researchers? The oft-quoted passage from *On Fairy Stories* about the danger of inventing connections where there are none, while trying to pick out the individual bones from the soup that is a story, is, unsurprisingly, discussed at length in the book's introductory chapters. Here, the authors insist that they are not trying to shoehorn Tolkien's literary achievement into a collection of passages removed from medieval texts. Rather, by outlining the parallels between the medieval literary traditions of the Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians and Tolkien's work, they would bring to light the ingenuity of these medieval texts and show how Tolkien continued and reinvented the tradition. The authors also connect this point to the book's title — it is, as they say, *The Keys of Middle-Earth* rather than 'to Middle-Earth', for a reason, because the proverbial keys are given to us by the fiction of Middle-earth and let us unlock the wonderful world of medieval literature, not the other way around.

All this argument about purpose, however, seems a little forced. It almost looks like the authors are trying to present

their work as a time-reversed source analysis, that is, analysing Tolkien's fiction as the source of medieval literature. Although this point of view might be intriguing from an 'in-Universe' point of view, where the stories of Arda indeed come from a mythological past age and their traces are still seen in the literary tradition of Northern Europe during the Middle ages, I very much doubt that this is what the authors intended. As for the title, I first interpreted it in a different way, regarding 'keys' as musical keys, which provide the mood and style of a composition, but not its substance. In that sense, the stories of Arda are written in the same key as those of medieval Anglo-Saxon literature, and thus the connection becomes obvious.

Following the background introduction (which includes a brief biography of J. R. R. Tolkien), there is a short outline of medieval literature, the major surviving texts, the themes and topics, the languages and the style of poetry. Although all of these are interesting, they only serve to whet the reader's appetite, but are hardly detailed enough to let one fully appreciate the contents of the medieval texts. There are no language primers to speak of, beyond a few isolated pronunciation and grammar rules. The description of the alliterative metre is detailed, but confusing in places. All this deprived me (and most likely many other readers) of appreciating the original texts contained in the book, at least until such time that I learn Old Norse and Old and Middle English.

The main part of the book, the medieval texts themselves, together with detailed commentary, focuses on 13 scenes from both *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Each scene — from the naming of dwarves to the departure of Frodo from the Grey Havens — is paired with one or more extracts from medieval texts. The context of the medieval work is described in great detail, and the parallels between it and Tolkien's work drawn just as meticulously. The extracts are presented in the original language, with a translation to modern English running side by side. Unfortunately, the translations are rather literal, with most of the rhythm and the metre lost. Although I can only imagine how difficult it must be to translate alliterative verse properly, it can be done, and such translations would have

immensely improved the taste of this medieval soup.

The comments and analyses are generally very interesting; even though I already knew about some of the topics addressed, it wasn't boring reading about them again. Sadly, mistakes creep in here and there: Ancalagon turns into Ancalong and Weathertop is renamed Amun Sûl; I'm sure there was at least one place where I noticed an error in the Old English text. Although these errors can be attributed to editors and are overall minor issues, there is also a more worrying one. Several times in the book, the Rohirrim are referred to as "being very much Old English, even down to the names and language". Have the authors forgotten that Rohirric is translated into Old English, rather than being

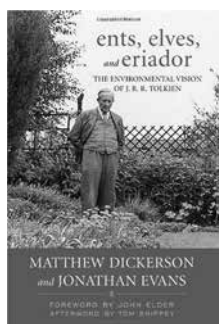
Old English? Such a factual mistakes casts doubt on the rest of the discussion about the texts, reducing the enjoyment of the book to some extent.

That said, however, *The Keys of Middle-Earth* was still a very enjoyable read. Although lacking in some areas, it is a great introductory book that provides one with a feel for medieval literature and gives tips for where to look in case one is interested. The mistakes are annoying, but then nobody is perfect, so as long as you read it with caution, I heartily recommend this book. m

Kastytis Zubovas is a PhD student in theoretical astrophysics and the president of TL Draugija, the Tolkien community of Lithuania.

The green evolution

KUSUMITA P. PEDERSEN



Ents, Elves and Eriador: The Environmental Vision of J. R. R. Tolkien

Matthew Dickerson and Jonathan Evans; Foreword by John Elder, Afterword by Tom Shippey
University Press of Kentucky Press,
316 pp. \$ 35.00
ISBN: 978-0-8131-2418-6

Ents, *Elves and Eriador* is an in-depth formal study of the environmental dimensions of Tolkien's works. Insightful, thorough and admirably clear, it will be essential reading for those interested in an overview of this subject. The book is part of *Culture of the Land: A Series in the New Agrarianism* from the University of Kentucky Press. Matthew Dickerson, who teaches at Middlebury College in Vermont, has followed the present work on Tolkien with another in the same series, *Narnia and the Fields of Arbol: The Environmental Vision of C. S. Lewis*, written with David L. O'Hara (2008). He is also the author of *Following Gandalf: Epic Battles and Moral Victory in The Lord of the Rings* (Brazos Press, 2003). Jonathan Evans, a medievalist at the University of Georgia, is the author of several essays on Tolkien and an authority on dragon-lore. Both teach in the environmental studies programmes of their institutions. *Ents, Elves and Eriador* is a substantial work of 'eco-criticism', informed throughout by familiarity with environmental movements and modern environmental thought.

Dickerson and Evans begin with an exposition of "Gandalfian stewardship", which they identify as the core of Tolkien's environmental vision, found throughout his works. One of its most explicit statements is found when Gandalf says to Denethor:

The rule of no realm is mine, neither of Gondor nor any other, great or small. But all worthy things that are in peril as the world now stands, these are my care. And for my part, I shall not wholly fail of my task, though Gondor should perish, if anything passes through this night that can still grow fair or bear fruit or flower again in days to come. For I also am a steward. Did you not know?

(*The Lord of the Rings* V, 1)

The concept of stewardship is an old one. To be a steward is to have responsibility to take good care of something one does not own — a responsibility given by the owner, who puts the steward in charge in the owner's absence. Good and bad stewards are found in the Parables of the Gospels, where the 'owner' may be understood as God. As Dickerson and Evans note, politically the steward is accountable to the king and must surrender authority to him on his return (Denethor, a dramatic counter-example, is Steward of Gondor but prefers to call himself 'Lord'). The theme of stewardship is developed in medieval literature including the romance *Sir Orfeo*, which Tolkien translated. It has now become part of contemporary environmental discourse, in which its meaning is debated.

Dickerson and Evans place their account of Gandalfian stewardship within the entirety of Tolkien's myth and characterize it as Christian or at least consistent with Christianity. It should be said that in spite of their Christian emphasis, the authors do not skirt elements in Tolkien's narrative that do not fit easily into a specifically Christian frame of reference. Their account of Tom Bombadil is perceptive and compelling, and they freely acknowledge (to take one other example) that Yavanna can be compared with certain goddesses in various traditions. Their careful reading of *The Silmarillion* provides overall theological context and shows that Tolkien's environmentalism is based on five principles: (1) the Universe is the creation of the supreme divine being; (2) the creation (or 'nature')


has inherent value; (3) the purpose of creation is delight and beauty; (4) the creation and those who dwell in it are threatened by evil, which in some ways is embodied as a cosmic enemy; and (5) the peoples dwelling in the world should acknowledge creation's goodness, fulfil its purpose of beauty and joy, defend it from evil and restore it when it is harmed (stewardship is part of this fifth principle). All these ideas have now become basic to most Christian writing on the environment (except that not all would agree that evil is cosmically embodied).

In an essay published in 1967, 'The Historical Roots of Our Environmental Crisis', historian Lynn White laid the blame for environmental destruction at the door of Christianity and set in motion four decades of self-critical reinterpretation of Christian views of nature, environmental ethics and biblical sources. White's accusations still sting and Dickerson and Evans refute him, reiterating the now-accepted understanding of human 'dominion' over the Earth and other creatures (Genesis 1:28) as good stewardship and not exploitation. One of the important contributions of Dickerson and Evans is to demonstrate that although Tolkien's works are earlier than almost all Christian 'ecotheology' and much other environmental ethics, the environmental vision he expresses in myth is rich, deep, complex, encompassing and coherent — and as well that it is in agreement with the findings of leading environmental thinkers who have come after him.

This opening section of *Ents, Elves and Eriador* sets the stage for an extensive treatment of three ecologies of Middle-earth, the 'feraculture' of the ents, who are 'preservationists' of the uncultivated wild (the word 'feraculture' is a coinage of the authors); the 'horticulture' of the elves, who tend gardens and forests for the sake of their beauty¹, and the agrarianism of the Shire (located in the region of Eriador), which has been for centuries a society based on sustainable agriculture. The book's detailed ecological analysis of these three cultures is most instructive. Highlights of this section include increased appreciation of Farmer Maggot and Farmer Cotton, a reflection on the ways the enchantment of Lothlórien is both earthly and heavenly, and a consideration of the rift between the ents and the entwives. We are reminded that vast areas of Middle-earth were deforested in the Second Age, as most of the old forests were destroyed by the Númenóreans as they built up their naval power². Dickerson and Evans make the significant point that because the trees' "long-standing desire to defend the forests and punish those who do wrong" comes from these ancient hostilities, "ultimately there is no discrepancy between the Old Forest and Fangorn". The description of the three ecologies is followed by a fascinating discussion of overlapping ecologies or "margins", ecological readings of Farmer Giles of Ham, Niggle's Parish and Wootton Major, and a chapter on environmental destruction, 'Three Faces of Mordor': Mordor itself and Isengard and the Shire under Saruman.

The book winds up with two chapters on application, as the authors hold that the environmentalism inherent in

Tolkien's works can and should be put into practice. They point out that in *The Lord of the Rings* environmental healing takes place when evil is overcome, as with the ents' remaking of Isengard and the labour of Sam and others to restore the Shire. But first, we need to be roused and to rouse others. We may be reluctant: Treebeard says that "Ents do not like to be roused" (*The Lord of the Rings III*, 4) and Merry comments that "Shire-folk have been comfortable so long they don't know what to do" (*The Lord of the Rings VI*, 7). Then it will be necessary to council together rather than acting alone, hard and skilful work will be needed, and stewardship will demand of some that they go into deadly danger or give up much that they love. Finally, Dickerson and Evans make some particular and concrete recommendations for our own lives. Readers may be happy to know that one of these is to "eat like a Hobbit", not just by enjoying our food but also by knowing a lot about it and being part of the community that produces it.

Dickerson and Evans conclude by stating their conviction that "even the narrowest definitions of environmentalism and environmental literature would have to include Tolkien and his works", reaffirming what they say in their introduction: "We came to environmentalism through Tolkien, rather than the other way around." The same is true of countless readers of Tolkien. *The Lord of the Rings* was published even before such an early environmental classic as Rachel Carson's 1962 *Silent Spring*, and became an influence on the counter-culture of the 1960s. It has moulded the environmental consciousness of millions since then, along with Tolkien's other works. *Ents, Elves and Eriador* does much to show why Tolkien should be recognized as one of those who laid the foundations for and formed the environmental movement as we now know it. It also illuminates what Tolkien's message is for us today, in a time when the environmental crisis is still deepening. 

Kusumita P. Pedersen is professor of religious studies at St Francis College, New York. She is co-chair of the Interfaith Center of New York and a trustee of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions.

1. One minor error can be found that in no way affects the substance of the book and its general excellence. It is said of Gildor and his companions, whom Frodo, Sam and Pippin meet in the Shire, "These elves are passing through Eriador, leaving Middle-earth on their way to Valinor across the sea in the farthest west" (p. 95). No doubt Gildor and any of those with him may go over sea in the near future, as he does mention this. On this occasion, however, they seem to be returning from the Tower Hills going towards Rivendell. In his later notes to the song to Elbereth they have been singing, Tolkien says: "No doubt Gildor and his companions (Vol. I, Chap. 3), as they seem to have been going eastwards, were Elves living in or near Rivendell returning from the palantir of the Tower Hills. On such visits they were sometimes rewarded by a vision, clear but remote, of Elbereth, as a majestic figure, standing upon the mountain Oiolosse (S. Uilos)" — A Elbereth Gilthoniel in Tolkien J. R. R. & Swann, D. *The Road Goes Ever On: A Song Cycle* Second Edn 73–74 (HarperCollins, 1978). The westward-looking palantir in the Tower Hills was placed there by Elendil; see *The Silmarillion* 'Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age' and *The Lord of the Rings III/xi* and note to Appendix A.iii.
2. Tolkien says that "The devastation wrought by the Númenóreans was incalculable" — Tolkien, C. (ed.) *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth* 262–263 (Houghton Mifflin, 1980).



The lion, the witch, and the baffled producers

CHAD CHISHOLM



The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader

Directed by Michael Apted

Walden Media, 112 mins (2010).

Starring Ben Barnes, Georgie Henley, Liam Neeson, Simon Pegg, Skandar Keynes, Tilda Swinton, Will Poulter

In *Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*, Tolkien begins his lecture with an ‘allegory of the tower’: a story about a man who “inherited a field in which was an accumulation of old stone, part of an older hall” that no longer exists, but which was the ancient home of his ancestors. Some of these old stones were used in constructing the house where the man lives, but he uses the rest of these ancient rocks to build a tower. After the man presumably dies, his friends gather around the tower and cannot decide what to make of this oddity. Some of them notice that the tower is made of ancient stones; others wonder if coal deposits lie beneath its foundation; finally, “they pushed the tower over, with no little labour, in order to look for hidden carvings and inscriptions” in the stones, or forgetting the stones completely to look beneath them for mineral wealth. In all this mess, here is the irony:

They all said: ‘This tower is most interesting.’ But they also said (after pushing it over): ‘What a muddle it is in!’ And even the man’s own descendants, who might have been expected to consider what [the tower builder] had been about, were heard to murmur: ‘He is such an odd fellow! Imagine his using these old stones just to build a nonsensical tower! Why did not he restore the old house ...’ But from the top of that tower the man had been able to look upon the sea.

As medieval scholar Michael D. C. Drout points out, the man in Tolkien’s allegory is the *Beowulf* poet, the stones are what remain of the vanished Saxon culture, and his friends who destroy the tower are generations of *Beowulf* critics who have neglected to study the poem as a poem, but have instead scoured the ancient narrative looking for historical tidbits and mythological clues to help them better understand the Anglo-Saxon period. Tolkien argues that as the friends missed their chance at better understanding the tower-builder, so have the *Beowulf* critics by treating the poem as a mere ancient bibliography.

If Tolkien would permit me to stretch his allegory, the

‘tower’ story could also be applied to C. S. Lewis’s *The Chronicles of Narnia* stories and the recent attempts to adapt them into popular films. Just from viewing some discussion boards on Facebook or attending any recent meeting of a local C. S. Lewis Society, there is an obvious and undeniable tension between Lewis’s readers and the product that the Walden Media filmmakers have produced. And although there are similarities between some of the issues (that I described in a review for Festival of the Shire) between the Tolkien readers and the Tolkien film fans, I believe the gulf is much wider in the case of Narnia. Many of Lewis’s fans and scholars have criticized the recent Narnia films for a variety of reasons, but I believe the underlying grounds for these problems in adaptation is that Narnia is Lewis’s own ‘tower’ that is built from many ancient stones that come from Platonic philosophy, Christian theology, Lewis’s medieval studies and his near-antiquated love for strong narrative voice and structure. All of these stones also lead to a unique vision that perhaps the film producers either did not completely understand or outright avoided.

The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (2010) is an adaptation of Lewis’ fifth Narnia novel. *Dawn Treader* is the third Narnia adaptation that Walden Media has produced in the past five years. In the story, Lucy (Georgie Henley) and Edmund (Skandar Keynes), who are the youngest of the Pevensie children, along with their pesky cousin Eustace (Will Poulter), return to Narnia by entering a painting of a ship on the ocean that has come to life. Once they have fallen into the water, they are pulled aboard the ship (called the *Dawn Treader*) by their old friend King Caspian X (Ben Barnes) and Reepicheep, a talking mouse and knight of Narnia. The mission of the voyage, as Caspian and Reepicheep explain, is twofold: to find and rescue the seven exiled Lords of Narnia who were banished by Caspian’s usurping uncle Miraz (and get their swords, which the filmmakers inserted, although what this element adds is uncertain); the second and more sublime goal is to reach Aslan’s Country which lies at the End of the World. In addition to the elements Lewis provides in the novel, the screenplay has several additions. Here are a few: (1) the sacrificing of the Lone Islanders to a green mist; (2) a ‘reviving Ophelia’ moment in which Lucy, in the scene with the *Magician’s Book*, instead of being envious of Susan as Lewis shows her to be, wishes instead she could destroy herself and become Susan; (3) an all-out battle at the Island of Dreams which (whether the producers intended this or not) becomes the new climax of the story rather than the journey to the World’s End as Lewis intended it to be. Furthermore, the order of islands where the *Dawn Treader* stops becomes

jumbled, which might make it confusing for those who have read the novel.

Compared with the earlier Narnia films *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* (2005) and *Prince Caspian* (2008), *Dawn Treader* was a disappointment as far as sales, grossing \$104,838,624 in the United States, which, compared with the film's estimated budget of \$155 million, demonstrates it to be a financial failure, even if international sales helped the studio to at least 'break even' on expenses. Walden Media and director Michael Apted are not the first group to dramatize Lewis's novels as the BBC made several Narnia adaptations in 1988, 1989 and 1990, and a popular television cartoon was created by the American group Children's Television Workshop in 1979. Often these movies are rather antediluvian animations set in two-dimensional frames, or live action with crude special effects that are either drawn in or created by using antiquated camera tricks. However, viewing these older adaptations (multiple times during 'movie hour' at our home), I've come to see that although these earlier films might be wanting in some ways when contrasted to our modern animated or graphically designed versions, the earlier films were truer to the original narratives. Although there are other reasons that the earlier adapters had to do this other than paying respect to the original stories, the contrasts between older and current adaptations of fantasy novels and children's fiction raise more questions.

In most respects, although the visual artistry from these earlier adaptations might be laughable when compared with the CGI technology in today's adaptations of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, the limits of these older films give the adaptations one indelible advantage if we believe that a film should (to at least some degree) truthfully represent the original work: the older filmmakers seemed to understand that for their film to be successful with their movie audience (and thus in the marketplace), it would have to adhere to the narrative elements that were constructed within the book. Of course, these earlier film adapters had to make choices as they created dramatized versions for the screen or television, but they depended on elements of the story to delight and move the audience in a manner that was similar to that of the book. Part of their rationale might have been their attraction to the original stories, but I believe the underlying reason for following the original narratives was because the filmmakers were aware of their visual limitations in creating works with fantasy elements. Therefore, their more pragmatic approach was to attempt to dramatize the narrative and rhetorical appeals that the novels had on the readers in order to recreate a similar experience that would allow the audience to overlook the inevitable visual shortcomings of their films.

In these modern Narnia adaptations, the films seem to convey a deeper concern with visual appeal as well as trying to 'modernize' the story (such as more quarrelling among the children such as you would see in a so called 'reality' show, and more double-climaxes, which seem to be more fashionable in large-scale films today). However, some of the film revisions at times are revealing, tacitly illustrating

that despite their awareness of Narnia's enduring popularity, that the producers feared that elements of the story might be 'unexciting' or 'out of fashion' for a modern film audience, and that changes had to be made for the film to sell tickets. However, in their haste to rearrange the stones Lewis provided and add new ones, the producers might have impaired the tower so much so that it no longer holds together: by changing so much of the narrative logos of the *Dawn Treader*, the directors enmeshed the elements of the story and didn't get the emotional and intellectual reactions from the audience that they were hoping for. Anyone who has ever been attached to a particular book or story understands that all of elements of a narrative do not exist separately, but all are interrelated and make up the whole work. I believe the filmmakers somehow don't comprehend how, by making alterations here and there, they truly changed their story into a series of non sequiturs.

Although *Dawn Treader* has left more Lewis readers unsettled than the earlier Walden Media adaptations, there is clear evidence of their experimentation (that arises from misunderstanding the story) in the earlier films. One example that illustrates this can be seen in *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, when Edmund meets Mr Tumnus in the frozen dungeon (another added scene), and the White Witch tells the imprisoned faun that 'he' pointing to Edmund "turned you in for sweeties". The producers suggest that Edmund is a traitor, as Lewis also does in the novel, but Lewis makes it clear that Edmund is a traitor because he deserts his family at the Beavers' Dam and informs the Witch where they are, although at this point in the story Edmund has reasons to doubt the Witch's motives for wanting to see him and his family. Therefore, Edmund is clearly a traitor to his family, and this adheres to the ethos of the 'secondary world' that Lewis creates for his readers. But does Edmund betray Tumnus? If so, how does this fit into the scheme that Lewis develops for his fictional world? The short of it is, this amending of the script cannot work because it does not fit: the filmmakers needlessly muddled the ethos of their movie (the one Lewis had already provided for them) for this reason — although blurting out everything he knows to the Witch while filling his mouth with Turkish Delight could be characterized as careless on Edmund's part, he has also just arrived in Narnia where he knows no one and knows nothing (yet) of the consequences his actions might have. Edmund never intends to place Tumnus in danger here, and therefore, although Edmund's carelessness does cause Tumnus to be caught, Edmund's treachery is not against the faun but against Lucy, Susan, Peter and the Beavers.

This problem of disrupted logic concerning Edmund's treachery does not change the plot or cause a major disruption for the earlier movie. However, in *Dawn Treader*, some of the innovations to the narrative cause more significant problems for this film. For example, the sort of ending that Lewis wants to create with the travellers sailing to the World's End and the children's approach to Aslan's Country is designed to arouse transcendent feelings of longing and

fulfilment, such as these lines from Euripides' *Hippolytus* express:

O God, bring me to the sea's end
To the Hesperides, sisters of evening,
Who sing alone in their islands
Where the golden apples grow,
And the Lord of Oceans guards the way
From all who would sail
Into their night-blue harbours —
Let me escape to the rim of the world
Where the tremendous firmament meets
The earth, and Atlas holds the universe
In his palms
For there, in the palace of Zeus,
Wells of ambrosia pour through the chambers,
While the sacred earth lavishes life
And Time adds his years
Only to heaven's happiness.

Lewis admired these lines¹, and he mentions *Hippolytus* in his own autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*. The sensation here of a mere mortal coming to a place where the differences between the material and metaphysical realms become one, and where absolute truth is not merely an idea but a quantifiable fact, is intended to be sublime and invigorating for the reader, and this is the effect that Lewis intended to create. For Lewis, this is more exciting than the greatest battle or fighting a million sea monsters. To some degree, I believe that the Walden Media producers intended to create a similar response, but they created such a mess of the story that they probably failed.

In the ending of *Dawn Treader*, for instance, while the actors on the screen were in tears at the parting of Reepicheep (which is a powerful moment of catharsis for the reader of the book), no one in the audience (to me) looked emotionally moved at this seeming-moment of climax, and after the film I didn't see many red eyes or smiles of joy coming out of the toilets or loitering in the theatre lobby. In my view, the producers did not understand the book because the director clearly expected an emotional response from the audience at the end (as in the book), which never materialized. When I say 'moved emotionally' here, I should be careful and clarify that I mean this in a sense more like Aristotle's term 'catharsis' for a sort of a 'purging of emotions' that the reader or viewer undergoes as the novel or film reaches its resolution. Although a Matthew McConaughey romance film might be thought of in one sense 'moving', I want to make it clear that I am using this word in a different sense, or as Tolkien says, a feeling of 'joy' that comes "beyond the walls of the world", and the effect that this has on us. Therefore, there is an anticlimax at the end of the *Dawn Treader* adaptation, which was intended to be a powerful moment, but the entire film was too meddled with new subplots and changes to the narrative to really create that moment of sublimity that Lewis tries to create in the novel.

The change in the narrative also created a philosophical


shift from the book to the new film. Lewis was not Huey Long who believed (as the song at the credits proclaimed) that everyone could be a 'king'. In other words, Lewis was not a humanist and so he did not write a humanist book that could fit the notion of what Alister McGrath calls "the cult of independence" that is so popular today. Remember, the characters in the story plot experience far more failures than personal successes, and these failures serve to humble themselves so that they put their trust in Aslan and the preternaturalness of his world, which the children realize is stronger than themselves. None of them was foolish enough to search for the Island of Dreams on their own, and when they find it, and when they learn what it truly is, they run in fear because they know they cannot face the darkness within themselves. Lewis's philosophy is a Platonic one in which people must search for truth not within themselves, but in the 'forms' where all truths exist in their purest, most real, essence. As the movie rewrites the philosophical logos of the book, making man 'the measure of all things', able to beat the sea-serpent through their own pluck and courage, then there is almost no need for Aslan at all, or for Reepicheep's yearning desire to enter Aslan's country because defeating the sea-serpent and conquering the Island of Dreams is the highest elevation the characters — in this new hyper-individualized version of the story — could ever reach. Indeed, rather than being denied entrance into Aslan's Country, it makes sense in the film when Caspian, Edmund and Lucy choose not to enter it because the truth of Aslan's world has become sublunary to the humanist ethos that the movie producers have imposed upon it. However, if the producers were expecting to move the audience emotionally at the end of the film (and they must have, otherwise why was Eustace sobbing so much), then I'm amazed that they did not see their folly because you can't move an audience about a journey into Aslan's Country after you have devalued, by a shift in philosophy, that same country.

For those who would say, 'A movie is going to be different than a book', as if mere dramatization were the only point I am critiquing, I would add that I'm not arguing that anyone should feel bad for enjoying the film. Rather, all I am arguing is that the filmmakers made a different story from Lewis, which they had a right to do, but we must remember that an adaptation of a Lewis novel is not the same as a reworking of the logos of Lewis' novel, so that is a very different criticism from expecting the movie to be completely like the book. Second, I am claiming that the producers did not understand elements within Lewis's story and how they were related to each other, and this impaired the coherency of Lewis's narrative, making what was once sensible nonsensical. Once the producers began steamrolling along without understanding Lewis's fiction, the mess this created was inevitable because, as Umberto Eco points out: "When you don't know how to deal with a story, you put stereotyped situations in it because you know that they ... have already worked elsewhere." This has been the trademark of the film industry for some time. However, although some of the added elements might have worked in other films, they don't

seem to work for Narnia because they don't fit the narrative or philosophy of Lewis's world.

Without being able to interview the people at Walden Media or director Michael Apted, it is hard to ascertain any motive for these changes or this reluctance to deal with the 'tower' Lewis built as he constructed it, but I believe part of it stems from a lack of willingness to deal with ideas and notions for which they have no charity. Whether this is a result of bias, nervous marketing or just a default attitude, I would end with some words of G. K. Chesterton, who was criticizing the selectiveness of Matthew Arnold's work on the life of Saint Francis of Assisi. Chesterton was critical of Arnold and other modern biographers who chose to concentrate on the parts of Francis's life that suited their modern sensibilities, while they carefully avoided issues such as the stigmata that did not abode well with their fashions of thinking. To them, Chesterton jovially repined:

You may dislike the idea of asceticism; you may dislike equally the idea of martyrdom; for that matter you may have an honest and natural dislike of the whole conception of sacrifice symbolized by the cross. But if it is an intelligent dislike, you will still retain the capacity for seeing the point of the story; of the story of a martyr or even the story of a monk. (ref. 3)

If another Narnia film is to be produced (as is slated, though not certain), then I hope the filmmakers will climb the tower rather than pull it down, and try to immerse themselves in the vision that it allows them (as it did Lewis and generations of readers) to see. If this next Lewis story has elements that they 'dislike', I hope the producers and directors at Walden Media, rather than seeing the Narnia novels as a heap of old stones from which they can make money, will at least take the time to try to understand what it is they dislike about the novels themselves, and ask themselves why it is that generations of readers have flocked to these fantasy classics despite these perceived 'imperfections'. I hope they will have the charity to at least consider why Lewis built these old rocks into his story (rather than some other story), and I further hope that this will guide their efforts to produce a worthy film that Lewis could have respected. 

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3. Chesterton, G. K. *Saint Francis of Assisi* 5 (Hendrickson, 2008).



A dash of movie magic

HENRY GEE



Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2

Directed by David Yates

Warner Bros, 130 mins (2011)

Starring Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint and Emma Watson.

And so we come to it at last: Harry Potter and the Deathly Goodbyes. As *Mallorn's* regular movie correspondent Chad Chisholm writes so ably elsewhere in this issue about the latest crop of Narnia film adaptations (see page 18), the business of translating a well-loved book into a movie is a delicate one. One must make the product appeal to a modern audience while at the same time not offending the fans of the book, who in turn must own that books and films are different things, but, most importantly, one must remain true to the spirit the original author intended.

For my part, for example, I enjoyed Peter Jackson's *Fellowship of the Ring* a great deal, as it seemed — to me — to capture the spirit of *The Lord of the Rings* very well, so the several changes and omissions to plot and characterization seemed justified. *The Two Towers* made an exciting war movie by focusing on the long, slow build to the climactic battle of Helm's Deep (only a few pages in the book) — a success that seems to draw on Jackson's past as a director of schlock: the Helm's Deep sequence is also an *hommage* (almost shot-for-shot) to a similar siege sequence in Sam Raimi's *Evil Dead III — Army of Darkness*.

The Return of The King, though, despite the hardware gained on Oscar night, fell flat, because of the squalid dispatch of Saruman early in the film and the consequent omission of the Scouring of the Shire sequence, which brings the whole point of the whole book home like a slap in the face. Instead we had, in the film, a seemingly unending sequence of saccharine non-endings.

The makers of the Harry Potter sequence (seven books made into eight movies — count 'em) have had fewer such problems to contend with.

For a start, the readership of the books is contemporary with, and in most cases, the same as, the audiences of the films. This offers three potential advantages, if that's the word. First, the author, J. K. Rowling, is a contemporary voice, so there's no need to translate the mores of another age into a modern setting.

Second, whereas Tolkien and Lewis will be turning in their graves, Rowling is very much alive, front and centre, and has a voice in the way her works are adapted. Whether

this is always a good thing or not can be debated, but at least we, the audience, can have some confidence that her intentions as an author are not traduced beyond recognition as the books became films.

Third, Rowling's books simply don't have the consciously wrought, carefully poised stylistic, linguistic, philosophical or mythic depth that enrich and in many ways distinguish the works of Tolkien or Lewis. Again, whether or not this is a good thing is a matter of argument. However, it should make the transition from page to screen all the less painful.

Some tension, though, is good. The first two movies, *Philosopher's Stone* and *Chamber of Secrets*, clove just that bit too close to the books to succeed on their own terms. That was, in part, down to the meat-and-potatoes direction from Chris Columbus (*Home Alone*, *Mrs Doubtfire*, you get the idea), perhaps a too-safe pair of hands. The third, *Prisoner of Azkaban*, was refreshing in part for its choice of director, Alfonso Cuarón (*Y Tu Mamá También*, see what I mean?)

After that, the books became progressively more complex and voluminous, so conversion by the consistently good screenwriter Steve Kloves was a matter of slash-and-hack, starting with *Goblet of Fire* (a book written as if intended to be a computer game, with which one can say that director Mike Newell did his best).

The final four films (*Order of the Phoenix*, *Half-Blood-Prince*, *Deathly Hallows Part 1*, *Deathly Hallows Part 2*), though, have achieved some consistency of tone, with Kloves as writer and David Yates (lots, but mainly for TV) as director. As a result, the films have got better and better, creating a universe which, whereas very close to Rowling's, has its own integrity. Having just returned from *Deathly Hallows Part 2* at my local Enormoplex (though thankfully not in 3-D, these varifocals being tricky enough as it is) I can heartily agree with one reviewer who commented that one of the good points in what is an excellent film is that it makes up for the inadequacies in Rowling's writing.

In one sense, this seems a low blow. Unlike Tolkien, who wrote fiction largely as a pastime to indulge his own philosophical fantasies, which he'd share with a small group of like-minded friends, and whose subsequent commercial success was perhaps incidental, and certainly surprising — not least to Tolkien himself — Rowling wrote *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* under what must have been a crushing weight of expectation. Writing a book as a complete unknown is one thing — but what about the responsibilities of an author who is already successful, and has so many people to please?

Once upon a time (okay, it was 1941) the late SF author Isaac Asimov sat down to write a story eventually published as *Nightfall*. At the time it was just one story among many written by the youthful author on the Smith-Corona in the back room of his parents' candy store in New York. *Nightfall*, though, was special. It went on to become one of Asimov's

most successful stories, anthologized 48 times. The Science Fiction Writers of America voted it the best SF story to have been written before the establishment of the Nebula awards in 1965. In his own notes on the reprinted story in *The Early Asimov*, Asimov wondered whether, had he sat down to write the story and an angel appeared at his shoulder telling of its future success, he'd have been able to continue.

From the foregoing one can appreciate Rowling's predicament. In one book, she had to tie up the loose ends in an increasingly complex plot, while introducing an entirely new plot, and tying that up, too. While she was doing that, she had to introduce some new twists that would surprise a legion of readers who had been examining every detail of her world from every angle, speculating minutely how it would all pan out. And while she was doing that, she had to bring the book — and the whole series — to a suitably satisfying conclusion. That she succeeded, for the most part, is a testament to a formidable single-mindedness of purpose. Whatever Rowling's failings as a prose stylist, one must admit that the lady has *cojones*.

The upshot, for the film-makers, was that *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* — the book — simply couldn't be treated to the same process of radical condensation that Kloves used to bring *Goblet*, *Phoenix* and *Prince* to the screen. It had to be spread over two films. (Aside — I see that *Breaking Dawn*, the final part of Stephenie Meyer's overwrought *Twilight* sequence, is to be presented as two films, so the Pottermverse seems to be setting a trend.) *Deathly Hallows Part 1*, therefore, although a pretty good film, on the whole, was only ever going to be a preamble. The bulk of the

book appears in the first film, clearing the decks for what is, effectively, the final third of the book in the final film.

Which is just as well, as the film gives space for the plot to breathe, and brings life to a book which, one senses as one approaches the end, is running out of puff. Scenes in the book that really ought to have great emotional power — the battle at Hogwarts, for example — tend to come over as a rather rushed football commentary, when Rowling really ought to have taken a breath and approached the ending in suitably elegiac mood. No such problems for the film, however, where the scale of the devastation wrought by the final battle — the loss — comes over with suitable impact.

As Pottermans know, the final book has an envoi in which we meet the main protagonists 19 years later, seeing their own children aboard the Hogwarts' Express, the train that departs from the now-legendary platform nine-and-three-quarters at King's Cross Station. To this reader, at least, the scene as written seems twee, and one harks back to Tolkien's intentions for the end of *The Lord of the Rings*, an epilogue in which Samwise retells some of the story to his own children — an epilogue that was, wisely, dropped. Would Kloves and Yates quietly ignore Rowling's own epilogue? No, they don't, and, as it turns out, the decision is a wise one. They tackle Rowling's epilogue with aplomb (helped by Daniel Radcliffe's sensitive, well-judged acting as a mature adult), rather showing up — I feel — the decision to drop the 'Scouring of the Shire' episode from the film of *The Return of the King*, and rounding off an epic series on a suitably wistful note.

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A trip to Iceland

PAT REYNOLDS



Where the Shadows Lie

Michael Ridpath

Corvus, £12.99

ISBN: 978-1848873971

Mallorn-readers might be tempted to read *Where the Shadows Lie* because J. R. R. Tolkien appears in it, or avoid it for the same reason. Neither approach is necessary. Tolkien does not, in fact, appear — he is dead in Ridpath's novel as he is in real life. Fictionally, Tolkien had a friendship with an Icelander while at Leeds, and this led to some significant changes in the direction he took with *The Lord of the Rings* after the first chapter. Tolkien's presence is thus at third

hand, and his voice is only heard in two letters he 'wrote' to the friend. The letters, to my ear, do not quite ring true. Someone a little more versed in the subject might, for example, have mentioned aspirations for a speedy conclusion, or illness. Nothing is said about Tolkien that could cause offence to anyone.

Tolkien fans also appear in *Where the Shadows Lie*. The opportunities for offence are slightly greater — concluding as they do in rather trite sermonizing that "There is nothing wrong in being a Lord of the Rings fan ... What is wrong is when you let it blind you to what is going on in the real world" (in the words of one character, which seem to reflect Ridpath's view). The reality of fandom — that it is 'going on in the real world' — with creativity, with friendship, with all the potential offered by any other grouping around a common interest — is not considered. This is indicative of rather shallow research (as presented by the character of detective Magnús Ragnarsson, who bases his judgement on what he found on a couple of Internet sites), but this




seems to be an isolated incident — both for Magnús and his creator.

At the heart of the novel is Gaukur's Saga — which has not survived. According to *Where the Shadows Lie*, a translation is more than a 100 pages long, and the weakest part of the book is chapter 12 which might be a summary of the translation. It is a mere 10 pages long. It includes a 'translator's footnote'. It is weak because it breaks the pace of the book, and, given the form it is in, will satisfy neither saga aficionados nor those who have never read them. If this is meant to be a (compressed) translation, then it is weak because the translator's voice is not strong enough. Gwyn Jones, George Johnson and Herman Palsson all have very distinctive voices, for example — and given that the translator — Agnar Haraldsson — is a major character, this is an opportunity missed. In perhaps another example of insufficient research, the different kinds of sagas are not explained, which is a shame because Gaukur's saga as presented is not an 'Icelandic (*Íslendinga*) saga' but a 'legendary (*fornaldar*) saga' or 'saga of antiquity' — encompassing more than the lives of historic Icelanders, and including oral transmissions and literary myths and legends. This might have been a mini-lecture, cut as disruptive to the pace, but I feel it would have added depth to the otherwise excellent consideration of 'fantastic' elements in Icelandic culture, as Ridpath is able to present other aspects of Icelandic culture without disrupting the flow.

But to concentrate on the Tolkien is to concentrate on

the weakest parts of the book. Ridpath has a track record as an author of financial thrillers, and *Where the Shadows Lie* is a move to the police procedural, the first of a series; 'Fire and Ice'. It may be cynical to suggest that Ridpath has simply jumped on the bandwagon of Scandinavian detective fiction, as he asserts on the end cover that he has aspired to write of an Icelandic setting for well over a decade. He clearly has a deep love for the landscape and culture. I was reminded of Ian Rankin's *The Naming of the Dead* (which also has a northern European setting which combines global activities with local superstition, and has a family tragedy for the lead character as a key element). Ridpath is not far behind Rankin as a writer.

Ridpath has created a number of engaging characters. The twenty-first-century dialogue is almost without exception excellent (the failures being the occasional use of less formal diction in characters who I felt would choose more erudite words — 'we had fun' rather than 'we enjoyed' for example — but one is always conscious that speakers are more-or-less at home with English, and might well be constrained by their second-language abilities). There is an engaging backstory in Magnús' family background, which will continue at least to the next book of the series. I hope that something of the fantastic Iceland — the hidden folk, the beliefs, the legendary history — continue too, if only at the level that (for example) food or art have in this first volume. I am looking forwards to the next book: *66° North*. 

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Casting away treasures: Tolkien's use of *Pearl* in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*

LEIGH SMITH

The importance of lost beauty to Tolkien's worldview is hardly a controversial point. In his letters, he frankly discusses his personal losses before and during the First World War, and his much-quoted statement that "By 1918 all but one of my close friends were dead" follows an acknowledgment that "of course" his personal experience has affected his fiction¹. Accordingly, many critics have examined the elegiac element in *The Lord of the Rings*², especially in the departure from Lothlórien, when Gimli laments seeing "the last of that which was fairest".

However, Tolkien's repeated tendency to imagine transient beauty as a lost jewel has not been properly connected with his study of the Middle English *Pearl*³. To be sure, his highly regarded translation of *Pearl*⁴ ensured that the poem would be considered essential background for his fiction: every thoughtful consideration of Tolkien's Middle English sources takes account of it, and Stefan Ekman's statement that "*Pearl* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* exercised enormous influence on Tolkien"⁵ is hardly to be disputed. The nature of this influence has, to some degree, been explained by Tolkien scholars, including Ekman, whose comparison between the *Pearl* landscape and Tolkien's Arda builds on Tom Shippey's observation that the topography of Lothlórien recalls that of *Pearl*⁶. Further, Amy Amendt-Raduege has found echoes of medieval dream visions, including *Pearl*, in Tolkien's own dream visions⁷.

Given this level of recognition, surprisingly little has been said of the most important image Tolkien takes from the *Pearl*: the basic metaphor of the jewel and the jeweller⁸. Tolkien's legendarium is full of "joyles juleres" who, like the dreamer in *Pearl*, become authors of their own misery over a lost jewel. The influence of *Pearl* on the possessive jewellers of *The Silmarillion* is so pervasive as to require separate treatment. However, I hope to take a first step in establishing the importance of *Pearl* in Tolkien's fiction by showing that, in *The Hobbit*⁹ and *The Lord of the Rings*, he uses the lost jewel in the same way as the *Pearl* poet to make the same point about love and loss: the more precious a treasure is, the more we must resist laying claim to it.

As in many of Tolkien's plots, the conflict in *Pearl* is set

in motion by the loss of a jewel. In the opening stanza, the speaker laments that

I leste hyr in on erbere;
Thurgh gresse to grounde hit fro me yot.

Despite the fact that he is recounting these events after he has supposedly had the consoling dream-vision, he cannot help exclaiming "Allas!" for the loss of "my precious perle". His most obvious analogue in Tolkien's fiction is the hapless Gollum, forever crawling after "my precious". The dreamer's lament, "Allas! I leste hyr ... that privy perle wythouten spot" is echoed, less artfully, by Gollum's cry, "Curse us and crush us, my precious is lost!" The key to both characters' misery is the word 'my': they feel entitled to possess the beloved object forever, although their claim to ownership is vague at best. If, as internal evidence suggests, the pearl symbolizes the dreamer's little daughter, who died early—"Thou lyfed not two yer in oure thede"—then she is a person, and we are not granted permanent possession of people. The Pearl Maiden (presumably the fair lady into whom the little daughter would have grown) reminds her mourning father that what

thou lestes was bot a rose
That flowred and fayled as kynde hyt gef (269–270).

Nature, which makes the rose flower, also makes it die. Yet, the dreamer convinces himself that he can keep this gift of nature, that he can dwell forever "with hyt in schyr wod-schawes". For this reason, the Pearl Maiden says he is "no kynde jueler", implying both ungentleness and unnaturalness: he denies the laws of nature by trying to keep forever what he thinks of as "my precious perle" and "my lyttel queene". As for Gollum's precious, we learn in *The Lord of the Rings* that he killed his friend Déagol for it and yet convinces himself that it really is his "birthday present". His desire for it (and the chance by which Déagol found it) makes him feel entitled to it, prefiguring Boromir's "It might have been mine. It should be mine". Having no consoling vision, Gollum never learns to see the Ring in any other way.

The less pathetic but equally joyless Thorin Oakenshield is irrational in the same way as the *Pearl* dreamer. The dreamer, even when made to understand why his earthly loss was necessary and given hope of a heavenly reunion, is still willing to die to cross that river and “assert . . . ownership of the pearl maiden”¹⁰. When he plunges into the flood, she has given him the entire lecture on which his serenity at the end is supposed to be based, including the information that, to get to where she is, “Thy corse in clot mot calder keve”. But at the time, with her in front of him and the water between them, “My manes mynde to madding malte”, and he (like Gollum) wants only to see and touch his precious. Thorin also is ready to die — and doom his comrades, too — to assert ownership of his treasure. This obsession is not ordinary greed: it is a long-nursed grievance over his patrimony. As the treasure is the product of his own people’s mining and craftsmanship, stolen by the dragon, his claim to it seems more rational than Gollum’s claim to his “birthday present”. But his desire for possession, like that of the dreamer in *Pearl*, makes him less rational as it makes him more joyless. It is ironic that Thorin should contemptuously describe dragons as “guard[ing] their plunder as long as they live” but “never enjoy[ing] a brass ring of it”.

When he makes his Gollum-like claim to his own lost jewel, the Arkenstone — “I will be avenged on anyone who finds it and withholds it” — he stands little chance of enjoying it, not only because Bilbo has stolen his precious, but because he and his dozen comrades are surrounded by an army. Bard has asked only one-twelfth of the treasure for his people’s loss and trouble, and Roac’s logic is incontrovertible: even if the reinforcements come in time and the dwarves win the treasure, winter is coming and they can’t eat gold. But Thorin has become so “grim”, so joyless, that no one dares argue with him. Only at his death does he realize that “If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world”.

Tolkien’s most unkind — and most joyless — jeweller¹¹ is probably Sauron, who is literally a jeweller in that he forged the Ring, which he then lost (when Isildur cut it from his finger), and the plot of the entire trilogy is driven by his attempt to get it back. Like the dreamer in *Pearl*, Sauron is “no kynde jueler”, not only in the sense of ungentleness, but also (and more importantly) in the sense of unnaturalness. In fact, unnaturalness, hostility to nature, may be his defining characteristic. Originally, let us remember, he was a *maia* serving Morgoth, who (being unable to create life), devoted his efforts to marring and wrecking it. Sauron is now carrying on his work. Everyone who reads *The Lord of the Rings* notices that, as one gets closer to the mechanical hell that is Mordor, the landscape becomes less natural: trees, grass and, above all, that life-giving water, are replaced with barren rocks and ashes and slag-heaps (657).

What Sauron will do if he gets back his lost jewel is equally obvious: he will destroy all nature and substitute a mechanical order with him in command. Such an order would have one advantage over nature, at least for the one at the top: it would be durable. “The desolation that lay before Mordor,” we are told, will be a “lasting monument to the dark labour of its slaves” and will “endure when all their purposes [are] made void”. However, if one prefers the gifts of nature, as most of us do, one has to accept that they are cyclical and impermanent.

For Tolkien, as for the dreamer in *Pearl*, the need to “yern no more then was me gyven” is as important as it is difficult. Faramir, who “would not take this thing if it lay by the highway”, recognizes that the temptation to seize it must have been “too sore a trial” for Boromir. Galadriel is sorely tempted by Frodo’s offer of the ring, as she could tell herself she was “given” it. Besides, as she tells Frodo, if the ring is destroyed, then “Lothlórien will fade, and the tides of Time will sweep it away”. But if he does not, then Sauron wins, and his kind of permanence would destroy everything that made Lothlórien worth preserving. To clutch what she has would be to lose it.

The importance of “passing the test”, of refusing to claim ownership of a treasure is consistent in Tolkien’s fiction and is not confined to the Ring. Celeborn accepts the necessity of losing his “treasure” — Galadriel — and he applies the metaphor in a way that connects him explicitly with the dreamer in *Pearl*. Knowing he will lose her, he hopes that Aragorn’s “doom [will] be other than mine, and your treasure remain with you to the end!” Of course, she will not: when a man marries an elf, they both become mortal. So, living “happily ever after” ironically means accepting death. When Eowyn is betrothed to Faramir, Aragorn uses a similar metaphor: “No niggard are you, Eomer . . . to give thus to Gondor the fairest thing in your realm!” The importance of not clutching earthly treasures too tightly is probably stated best by Aragorn, who approves of Pippin’s dropping the elven brooch: “One who cannot cast away a treasure at need is in fetters.”

Given, then, that some treasures have real value and deserve to be cherished, how does one go about loving them without claiming ownership? This question goes to the heart of the *Pearl Maiden*’s lesson, and Tolkien’s answer is supplied, surprisingly enough, by Gimli, whose shock at the idea that dwarves would mine the caverns at Helm’s Deep is instructive. He says:

No, you do not understand . . . No dwarf could be unmoved by such loveliness. None of Durin’s race would mine those caves for stones or ore, not if diamonds and gold could be got there. Do you cut down groves of blossoming trees in the springtime for firewood? We would tend these glades of flowering stone, not quarry them. With cautious skill, tap by tap — a small chip

Given that some treasures have real value and deserve to be cherished, how does one go about loving them without claiming ownership?

of rock and no more, perhaps, in a whole anxious day — so we could work, and as the years went by, we should open up new ways, and display far chambers that are still dark, glimpsed only as a void beyond fissures in the rock.

Gems and precious metals, after all, are as much a part of the natural world as trees, and Gimli's appreciation of their beauty separates him from Sauron and Saruman, who also have some interest in mining and craftsmanship. What distinguishes a gentle jeweller like Gimli is his ability to appreciate treasures and see them as beautiful in themselves, not as a means to other ends, such as power, pleasure, wealth or fame.

Of course, one may also value people or use them, and for this reason, the image of treasure applies similarly to human relationships in *Pearl* and *The Lord of the Rings*. In *Pearl*, the dreamer finds cause for joy only when he brings himself to rejoice that his darling girl is a queen in heaven. As she tells him early in the poem:

Now thurgh kynde of the kyste that hyt con close
To a perle of prys hit is put in pref.

His simple gem has been chosen by the prince, cleaned, smoothed, and put in a worthy setting, so that its quality shines clearly. Similarly, when Gimli asks for a strand of Galadriel's hair, "which surpasses the gold of the earth as the stars surpass the gems of the mine", he tells her he will "treasure it" and set it "in imperishable crystal to be an heirloom of my house, and a pledge of good will between the Mountain and the Wood until the end of days". Such a gift is gloriously useless, compared with a bow or a knife or a belt or a rope. Gimli's ability to love a treasure without using it is probably Galadriel's reason for predicting that "your hands shall flow with gold, and yet over you gold shall have no dominion". He seems to suffer most at leaving Lothlórien — he is the only one of the company who "wept openly", lamenting that, "I have looked the last upon that which was fairest" — yet he makes no attempt to cling to it, to remain there¹². He loves Galadriel but has no thought of laying claim to her and can therefore still rejoice in her gift to him. This is exactly what the dreamer in *Pearl* must learn to do, and by the end, he does. His statement that "wel is me in thys doel-doungeoun / That thou art to that Prynces paye" is not just virtue or generosity. Rejoicing in the happiness of his beloved is the only way he can receive the consolation he seeks.

Of course, it is easy to say that death is a natural part of life, and one must simply accept it. Tolkien, who had endured the bitterest of personal losses, understood very well the difficulty of accepting such consolation. One problem is that the drive for ownership is not always as straightforward as it is for Gollum and Sauron. For most of us, who are neither heroes nor villains, it has a way of looking like something else. For the dreamer in *Pearl*, it looks like love: his precious pearl has been lost, hurt, sullied, and he mourns to think that the dirty earth has "marred" it. In fact,

Tolkien links the "creative (or as I should say, sub-creative) desire" with a "passionate love of the real primary world" and consequent wish to preserve it (*Letters* 145). This creative desire, he continues, "may become possessive, clinging to the things made as 'its own', the sub-creator wishes to be the Lord and God of his private Creation. He will rebel against the laws of the Creator — especially against mortality" (*Letters* 145). This is precisely the situation of the jeweller in *Pearl*: he wants so badly to grasp 'his' little pearl that he disregards the will of God, not only refusing to "love ay God, in wele and wo", but attempting to cross the river, having once been told that he may not. As Jennifer Garrison observes, he wants to "rescue her from death" (ref. 10, 310), which, in human terms, is a loving wish. For Thorin, the drive to possess looks like honour, and not just his own honour, but the honour of his people, who have been reduced to blacksmithing and coalmining since they were robbed of their treasure. For that matter, when Boromir cries, "It should be mine!" he wants to protect Gondor. And none of these considerations is, in itself, bad. Another problem is that the desire to cling to what we love is often stronger than our reason.

The cure for this 'madness', for both Tolkien and the *Pearl*-poet, is the same as the cure for any other addiction¹³: one must do without the object long enough to get through the withdrawal agonies and recognize that what joy may have come from love or honour or whatever the treasure represents did not come from possession: dragons do not enjoy a brass ring of their treasure. This need for separation and withdrawal may also be Tolkien's solution to an old problem in *Pearl* criticism¹⁴: why is the dreamer suddenly consoled at the end, when all the Pearl Maiden's speeches were insufficient to prevent him from plunging into the river?

At the end of *Pearl*, with the jewel no longer before his eyes, the dreamer can pronounce himself well and happy that his dear one has found favour with God: "So wel is me in thys doel-doungeoun / That thou art to that Prynces paye". Here, he parts company with Gollum, who is too strongly addicted to his precious for its absence to ease his cravings. Bilbo, however, after seeing the ring again and being almost driven to madness by his own cravings, tells Frodo, "I understand now" and urges him to "Put it away", where the sight of it can no longer tempt him. Boromir's experience is the same: when the ring is no longer before him, the "madness" that he says drove him to try to seize it passes. Even Frodo, when he sees Sam with the ring in the Tower of Cirith Ungol, has a "hideous vision" in which Sam turns into an orc, and he snatches the ring, crying "No you won't, you thief". But as soon as the ring disappears in his clenched fist and is no longer before his eyes, the madness departs. The same thing happens when the ring is destroyed: Sam looks into Frodo's eyes and "there was peace now, neither strain of will, nor madness, nor any fear". This last is especially telling, as he thinks he and Sam are about to die, but his serenity equals that of the awakened dreamer in *Pearl*. With his new understanding

but without his jewel, he is no longer a “joyles julere”: the drive to claim the ring for his own is gone, and he is “glad” that Sam is with him. This, too, is the state in which the awakened dreamer finds himself: he “yern[s] no more then was me gyven” and finds in God a “frende ful fyin”, whom he is content to serve.

Thus, the loss is the cure, as the Pearl Maiden repeatedly tries to tell the dreamer. To accept the possibility of loss is to be cured of the drive for ownership and thus to be made capable of real joy. The dragon hoarding his treasure, Thorin Oakenshield committing himself to a war he cannot win, Gollum crawling after his “precious”, and Sauron in his dark tower seeking his ring, are “joyless jueleres” whose need for ownership destroys them. Much more joyful are Faramir, Galadriel, Celeborn, Pippin and Gimli, who appreciate their treasures but do not imagine that they have a right to them. Tolkien’s seeming ambivalence towards human craft becomes clearer when viewed in the light of *Pearl*. The dwarves’ treasure and the rings of power are beautiful in themselves, but they lead to misery when clutched too tightly. Even the fairest things, like Lothlórien, must be allowed to pass away.

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1. Foreword. *The Lord of the Rings* 2nd edn (HarperCollins, 1965).
2. For example, see Smith, L. ‘I have looked the last on that which is fairest’: Elegy in Beowulf and Tolkien’s Lothlorien. *Mallorn* No. 44, 43–46 (2006); Deyo, S. M. Wyrd and Will: Fate, Fatalism and Free Will in the Northern Elegy and J. R. R. Tolkien. *Mythlore* 14(3), 59–62 (1988); Walker, S. The

War of the Rings Treelogy: An Elegy for Lost Innocence and Wonder. *Mythlore* 5(1), 3–5 (1978).

3. Dunn C. W. & Byrnes, E. T. (eds) *Pearl*, in *Middle English Literature* (Routledge, 1990).
4. Tolkien, J. R. R. (trans.) *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl, and Sir Orfeo* (Ballantine Books, 1992).
5. Eckman, S. Echoes of Pearl in Arda’s Landscape. *Tolkien Studies* 6, 59 (2009).
6. Shippey, T. J. R. R. *Tolkien: Author of the Century* 196–200 (Houghton-Mifflin, 2000).
7. Amendt-Raduege, A. Dream Visions in J. R. R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*. *Tolkien Studies* 3, 49–50 (2006).
8. Shippey briefly but directly connects the narrator in *Pearl* with Tolkien’s jewellers in *The Road to Middle Earth* (Houghton-Mifflin, 2003). There, he notes the kinship between craftsmen such as Fëanor and Tolkien himself, who “must have thought” that the *Pearl*-poet was right “to call himself a jeweller” (242). This reference to a jeweller’s ‘sub-creation’ is justified by Tolkien’s letter to Milton Waldman, in which he asserts that gem-making symbolizes “the sub-creative function of the elves” — Carpenter, H. (ed.) *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien* 148, (Houghton Mifflin, 2000). However, Shippey makes this observation in passing and does not explore the full implications of the metaphor.
9. Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Hobbit* (Houghton Mifflin, 1996).
10. Garrison, J. Liturgy and Loss: *Pearl* and the Ritual Reform of the Aristocratic Subject. *The Chaucer Review* 44(3), 294–322 (2010).
11. That is, as Fëanor, whose case, as mentioned earlier, should be examined in a future paper.
12. This fact is especially noteworthy in light of Shippey’s observation that the rivers in Lothlorien seem influenced by the river in *Pearl* (see ref. 4).
13. For a discussion of the Ring’s addictive powers and drug-like operation, see Shippey, T. *The Road to Middle Earth* 139 (Houghton-Mifflin, 2003).
14. Many critics have expressed dissatisfaction with an ending they consider too neat and too easy. For example, see Aers, D. The Self Mourning: Reflections on *Pearl*. *Speculum* 68, 54–73 (1993). One solution is suggested by Garrison (see ref. 13). I would argue that Tolkien suggests another.

A woman of valour: Éowyn in *War and Peace*

CATHERINE MADSEN

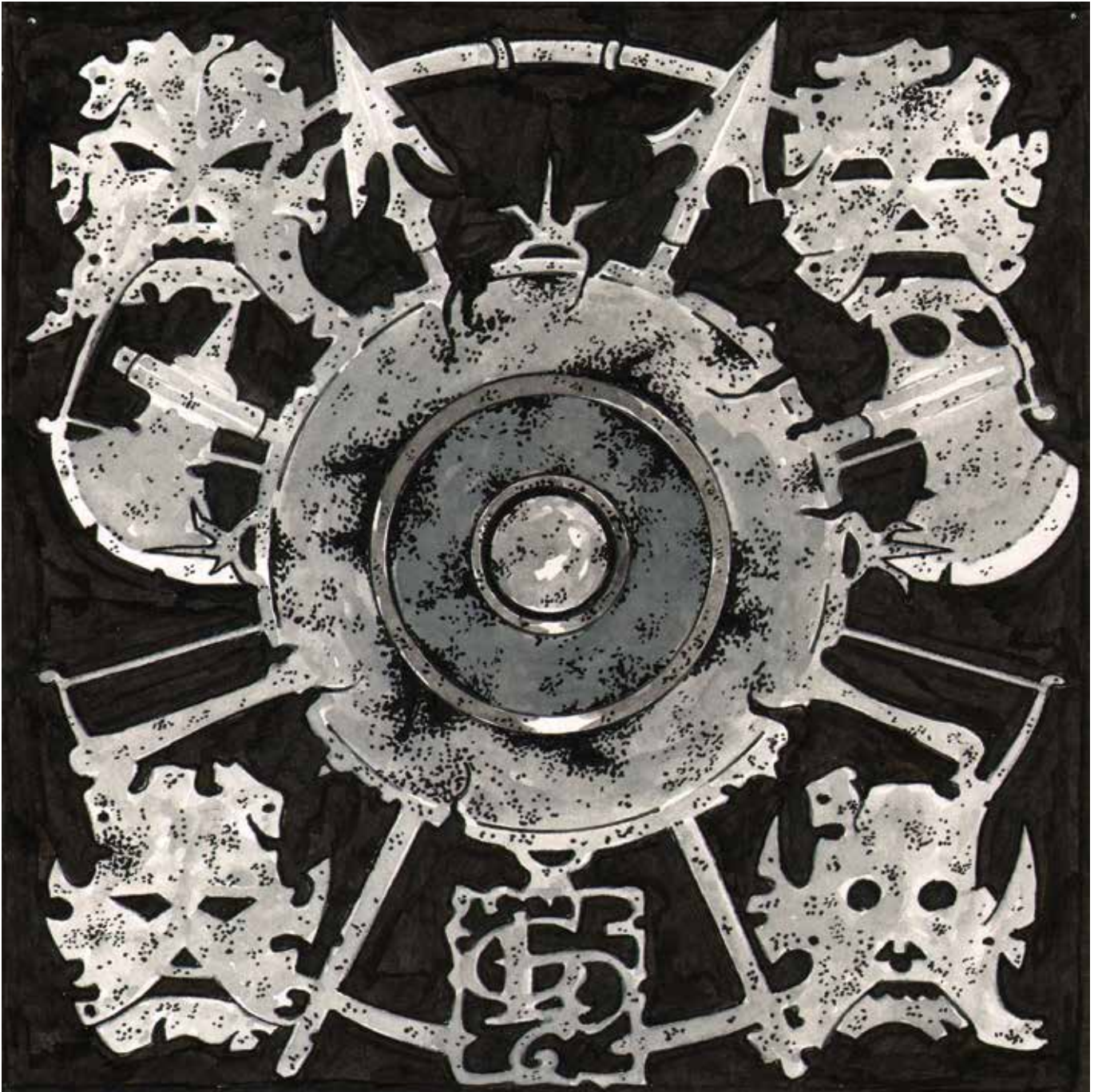
And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. — Ezekiel 36:26

It is easy to read Éowyn’s change of heart from shield-maiden to healer with mild incredulity, even with some irritation. There is something formulaic and even facile in the presentation — not as forced as Jane Studdock’s conversion in Lewis’s *That Hideous Strength*, where one is not sure she will like having children any better than she liked having dreams, but still too sudden and thoroughgoing. A conventional feminist reading would call it Tolkien’s convenient way to dispose of a woman who, by taking up arms, has trespassed (however fortunately for the free peoples of Middle-earth) on a male preserve.

This would be a superficial reading, considering Tolkien’s sympathetic treatment of Éowyn’s frustration and also Aragorn’s and Faramir’s respect for her valour. Yet the question remains whether Éowyn is treated quite

adequately at the climactic moment of ‘The Steward and the King’ (*The Lord of the Rings* VI 5). Possibly Tolkien did not entirely know how the subtleties of such an emotional reorientation operate in a living woman’s life; possibly he was reproducing a schema long established in literature by other male writers who had themselves observed the shift only from the outside. Telescoping the complex process of sexual awakening and vocational redirection into a few lines of rather formal dialogue, the form cannot hold the experience.

Tolkien has a reputation of doing badly with female characters, although some of the unhappy women of *The Silmarillion* material reveal a greater psychological acuity in this realm than he is generally given credit for. Éowyn herself is thoroughly convincing as long as she is unhappy. Joy is notoriously more difficult to convey in writing than sorrow and discontent, and as Éowyn’s joy is only a minor detail in the great eucatastrophe of Sauron’s overthrow it



is no wonder if Tolkien cut corners a bit in presenting it. Yet as he clearly did not mean Éowyn's transformation to be read as a defeat, its nature and its evolution are worth considering more closely.

Éowyn and Faramir are subtly linked by the plot, beginning with the Battle of the Pelennor. As Éowyn, disguised as Dernhelm, rides in with the host of Rohan, Faramir lies wounded and delirious on a pyre in the tombs of Minas Tirith. Gandalf, compelled to protect Faramir from the madness of his father Denethor, must turn from his confrontation with the Nazgûl King at the broken gates of the city and cannot join the battle; thus it falls upon Éowyn, with Merry's help, to slay the Nazgûl. Éowyn and Faramir are brought to the Houses of Healing on the same morning, and are healed by Aragorn on the same night. By this point

the reader is, in a sense, prepared to think of the two in the same breath. If the presence of Merry as Aragorn's third patient did not serve as a decoy, the reader might make the match before the plot does.

Considering the two characters together, one can see parallels and antitheses in their respective unhappinesses. Both Éowyn and Faramir have suffered not only in the war, but in the course of their youth: Éowyn is orphaned, and has waited on her uncle Théoden during the darkest period of his reign, whereas Faramir's mother died young and his brother Boromir was their father's favourite. The shieldmaiden of Edoras has been forbidden to ride to war and the gentler son of Denethor has been compelled to; Théoden is passive and Denethor abrasive. But the young Steward and the Lady of Rohan are more or less



equal in position, and certainly equal in physical training and courage.

Faramir is presented as better schooled than Éowyn in courtesy and patience, just as Gondor is presented as more highly civilized than Rohan. Rohan is still young and brash — at its highest social level a nation of riders and warriors — whereas Gondor is the remnant of Númenor, chastened and bound to the memory of a noble history. The experience of national and geological cataclysm is spiritually indelible: Faramir himself has a recurring dream (like Tolkien's own) of the wave crashing down upon Númenor. Rohan has no such nightmares. Although its alliterative verse is rooted in lament and profound sobriety, its elite warriors think the Elves are an old wives' tale and have no comprehension of the origins of the war with Sauron.

Partly for these reasons, Éowyn is not old enough psychologically and morally to perceive Faramir as a wounded man in need of her help. Neither her cultural nor her personal experience has prepared her to read the signs. She is proud and decisive in pursuit of her own purposes, but she is not strongly perceptive about other people's. Her experience of men who respond to her beauty has been limited to the lewd glances of Wormtongue and the polite rejection of Aragorn; she responds to Faramir's first compliment civilly but coolly. Nevertheless she perceives in him, even at their first meeting, something more than she perceived in Aragorn. The seasoned warrior to whom she brought the cup at Edoras represented an escape from her embittered life, but he would not assist her escape; at Dunharrow he hinted that he was not available, and told her to do her duty. Faramir in the Houses of Healing represents friendship and in a sense conscience, at a level more intimate and voluntary than the

duties of her position. She is concerned lest he 'think her merely wayward', without the self-discipline to endure — as he endures — forced inactivity as the war hangs in the balance. His sympathy and fellow-feeling call forth a human response in her, if only self-pity at her unwilling idleness. She is indifferent to his praise of her beauty, although it is given with the painful clarity of a mind facing the likelihood of death; but she has already looked him steadily in the eyes at his invitation to walk in the garden, and faintly blushed, as though aware of discovering a boundary at the instant of crossing it.

During her convalescence Éowyn is exposed to the inexhaustible peacetime vocation of healing. No loss of dignity, and no necessary connection with women's work, is involved in taking up this vocation, of which Aragorn himself is the exemplar. It is not clear, even after the end of the war, that she will live to need another vocation, but the very fulfilment of her role as shieldmaiden has accomplished its obsolescence. The slaying of the Nazgûl King is an achievement surpassed only by the overthrow of Sauron; it is as spectacularly decisive as Aragorn's arrival in the ships of the Corsairs (and Aragorn, for all his superior strategic skills, could not have slain this foe). For the first time in her life, Éowyn encounters an open future.

There are various female conversions in literature that suggest themselves as parallels to Éowyn's. Superficially — if only because of the phrase "There goes a man who tamed a wild shieldmaiden of the North" — Shakespeare's Kate comes to mind, with her furious resistance and her ultimate abject capitulation to wifely obedience. But Kate's violence is uncontrolled, whereas Éowyn is a disciplined fighter; Kate is genuinely brutal to her suitors and her sister, and Petruchio is genuinely brutal in his remedy. Peter Saccio¹ argues convincingly that Kate's transformation is not a defeat: it amounts to her putting her considerable energies in play with Petruchio's rather than in opposition, plunging into a wildly inventive cooperation that becomes an elaborate marital game. By comparison, the simplicity and directness of Faramir and Éowyn's courtship is distinctly 'vanilla': calculated role-playing has no part in it.

A more illuminating, though surprising, parallel is Princess Marya Bolonskaya in *War and Peace*². Two more dissimilar women would be hard to imagine — Princess Marya is pious, unattractive and all too painfully willing to do her duty — but she and Éowyn have certain critical experiences in common, both domestic and emotional.

War and Peace has a level of psychological detail far surpassing *The Lord of the Rings*. Its method and its raison d'être is to show the fullness of the ordinary life that war disrupts, alters, destroys and reconstitutes. Tolkien had lived through this process of breakdown and recovery in the First World War, and was as well aware of it as Tolstoy, but his sensibility and style went in another direction: a heroic romance must suggest in highly compressed form what a novel illustrates at length. It even seems faintly unfair to read too much detail into the incidents of a heroic romance — to do midrash or psychohistory, as it were, on

the inner workings of a shieldmaiden's mind. At the same time, Éowyn is the only thoroughly developed female character in *The Lord of the Rings*. Every glimpse of her is an assessment of her motives. She trembles as she gives the cup to Aragorn in Edoras; at Dunharrow she gives him a concise and desperate account of her frustrations; Aragorn, Éomer and Gandalf pool their observations of her despair as she lies unconscious in the Houses of Healing; Faramir analyses her refusal to go to the Field of Cormallen after the war's end. Whereas Goldberry and Rosie Cotton are mere sketches, and Galadriel a striking but distant figure whose past Tolkien had to rough out in retrospect, Éowyn is vividly and closely drawn: in the end we know her nearly as well as we do Frodo, Sam and Gollum.

Princess Marya and Éowyn each have a strenuous and inescapable duty to a difficult old man. Prince Bolkonsky is both more isolated and more energetic than the bewitched and depressive Théoden, full of theories and schemes, and perpetually in search of intellectual companionship on his distant country estate. He supervises his daughter's education, terrifies her with his geometry lessons, discourages her suitors, makes her life a misery and cannot bear the thought of her leaving home. Princess Marya's luminous and sympathetic eyes are her most extraordinary feature, but her face breaks out in red blotches on the frequent occasions when she is nervous or ashamed. Early in the book she is repeatedly described as having a heavy step. Her piety offends her father, amuses her brother Andrei, and charms the wandering mendicants who stop for charity at their house. Marya is self-sacrificing without question or resentment, precisely as Éowyn is not.

Yet Marya's self-sacrifice puts her as effectively beyond ordinary female society as Éowyn's warrior disguise puts her. Marya's service to her father is essentially a slavery imposed by his personality on hers; her determination to serve him piously and lovingly rather than truculently is the only form of rebellion available to her, amounting to rebellion only because her piety does offend him. Marya is unattractive, and knows it, and knows that everyone knows it; her piety is also a defence against the pain of being unable to participate competently in the rituals of courtship, as practised (in French) by her equals in the frivolous Russian aristocracy. But above all her piety is a form of intellectual seriousness that puts her beyond frivolity. She does not really want to enter the world of her friend Julie, her sister-in-law Lise and her paid companion Mlle Bourienne. She grieves at the thought of never being loved, of never marrying or having her own home, but there are things she cannot do to achieve those ends.

Although Éowyn is described as beautiful, there is no equivalent in her features to Princess Marya's luminous eyes. Éowyn has been taught the womanly arts of her folk — she is an attentive hostess, a good organizer, a compassionate leader of her people in their retreat to Dunharrow and a tactful patient of the Warden — but she is cold and embittered where Marya is submissive and uncomplaining. The piety of Rohan is in deeds of arms, and in that sense Éowyn

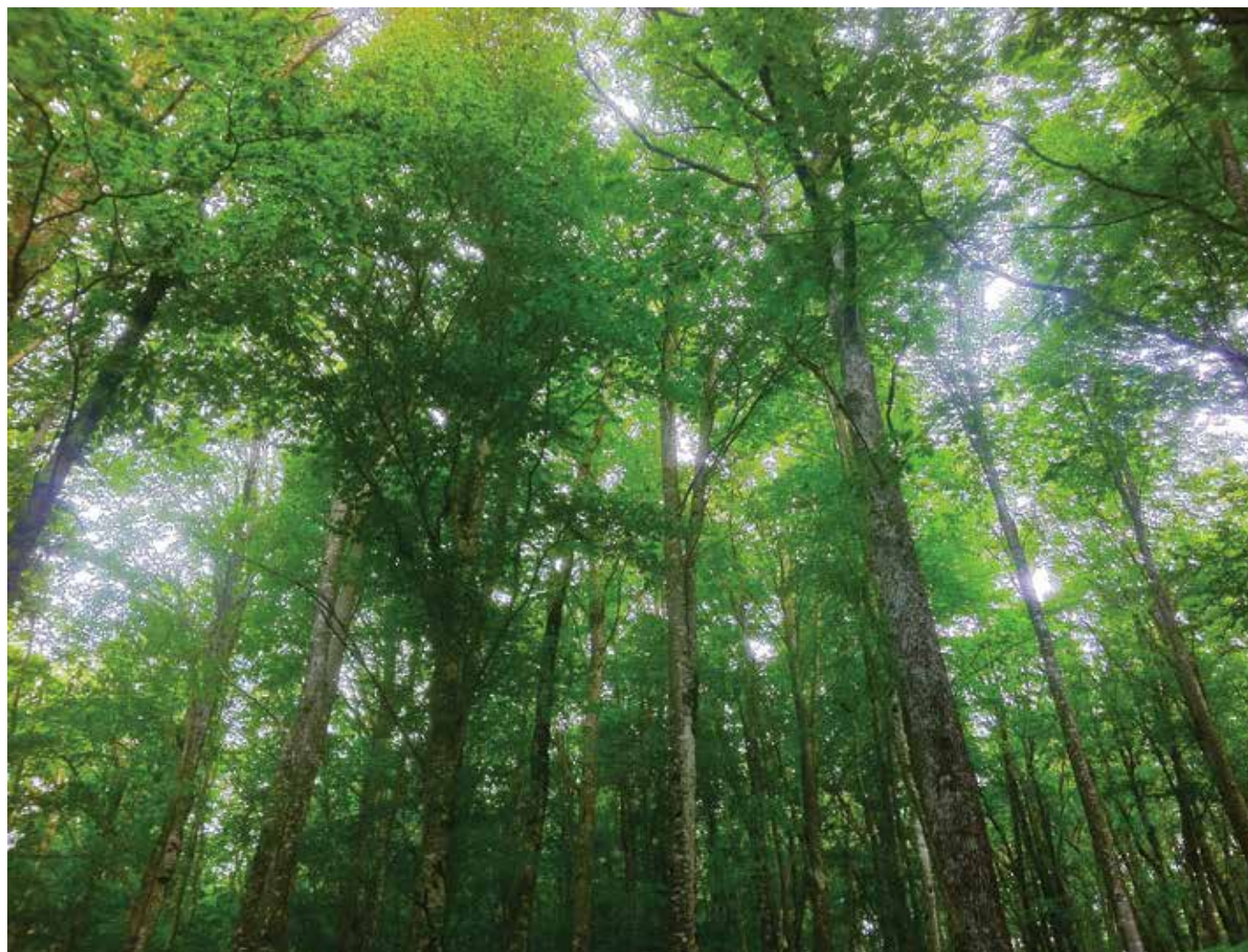
is pious, yet in Rohan this piety is overwhelmingly masculine and its free exercise is impossible to her. Like Marya, she has little hope for the future, but we are not told what she has dreamed of except escape.

Marya, after her father's death and burial, is trapped on the estate by a mutiny of the peasants, who will neither come with her nor allow her to flee as Napoleon's troops advance into the region. She is rescued by the chance arrival of the young officer Count Nikolai Rostov, brother of the lovely and flighty Natasha to whom her brother Andrei was once engaged. Rostov's pity and help move the bereft Marya deeply, and he is equally struck by her vulnerability and gratitude; an immediate emotional bond springs up between them. When Rostov later visits the princess at her aunt's house outside Moscow, Marya's attachment to him becomes visible and audible:

When Rostov entered the room, the princess lowered her head for a moment, as if giving her guest time to greet her aunt, and then, just as Nikolai turned to her, she raised her head and her shining eyes met his gaze. In a movement full of dignity and grace, she rose with a joyful smile, gave him her slender, delicate hand, and began to speak in a voice in which, for the first time, new, throaty, feminine notes sounded. Mlle. Bourienne, who was in the drawing room, looked at Princess Marya with bewildered astonishment. A skillful coquette herself, she could not have maneuvered better on meeting a man she wanted to please. (ref. 2, p. 951)

Mlle Bourienne — who previously had no compunction about attempting to seduce Marya's first suitor almost before her eyes — finds the change in the princess incomprehensible: the sudden grace of her movements, the deepening of her voice, the self-possession have come out of nowhere. The inadvertent, uncalculated response of personality to personality, and of female body to male body; the mutual illumination of two difficult lives; the shared memory of the crisis in which they met: all these elements combine to transform her. Whereas most of the women of the novel — notably Pierre Bezukhov's first wife Hélène and Marya's friend Julie, as well as Mlle Bourienne — treat courtship as a complex game of social advantage, Marya's experience is the real, biological thing. Mlle Bourienne knows the rules of the game; Princess Marya is discovering the law of her nature.

The rules of the game prescribe and nag. The old pop song 'Wishin' and Hopin' exhorts the young woman in search of love to take herself in hand, to undergo a radical makeover of appearance and personality: "You got to show him that you care just for him / Do the things he likes to do / Wear your hair just for him." This is the remedial version of sexual communication, the marionette version for those who want the experience but have not located the instinct. People in love change their looks and sample each other's enjoyments in a trance of mutual attentiveness. People hoping for love do the same things in a frenzy of anxious obligation. In time anxiety turns to resentment: women turn



self-contemptuous for seeking male attention, or contemptuous of men who apparently require but may not respond to these unremitting efforts. Marya, who could not convincingly adopt the social compulsions, responds with her whole soul to the biological drive. Her physical transformation is a consequence, not a stratagem.

Faramir, on the cold final day of the war — a mere five days after their first meeting — wraps Éowyn in his mother's cloak, like Boaz spreading his robe over Ruth or Isaac bringing Rebecca into his mother's tent. Their first physical contacts occur as they stand together on the ramparts, while the fate of the Ring is decided far away. Éowyn draws closer to Faramir as he speaks of the drowning of Númenor; their hands meet as fate hangs in the balance; Faramir kisses Éowyn's brow in sudden joy. After this they are separated for some time as Faramir takes up his stewardship, and Éowyn relapses. The Warden — a good psychologist — sends for Faramir, who speaks frankly to her of her love for Aragorn, his own love for her, and his surmise that she hesitates between them. Éowyn, who at their first meeting had said, "Look not to me for healing!" finds herself healed by his declaration.

Her shift of feeling, like Marya's, takes place internally, and the reader sees only its outward evidence. Or perhaps something slips here, and for an instant the reader sees the author

in a hurry to tie up the plot. The suggestion that Éowyn 'at last' understands her heart is explanatory, and perhaps faintly patronizing; her rather formal opening words, which situate her in place and time, have an artificial ring. Her declaration that she will no longer 'vie' with the Riders, whom she has by now surpassed, may be meant to show a becoming feminine humility — or simply an incomprehension of the scale of her achievement — but it suggests just as strongly a certain authorial inattention. A sensitive actress might make something of Éowyn's words: Saccio speaks of having heard Kate's last speech performed slowly, wonderingly, the sharp and ready shrew discovering aloud a new pattern of relationship. Certainly once the words are said, Éowyn joins Faramir in a warm flirtation.

In *War and Peace* it is Marya who crosses the boundary to Nikolai: when the Rostovs lose their money he is too proud to court her, lest he appear to be marrying for fortune as his mother has always encouraged. He is deliberately stiff and distant, controlling himself rigidly till she appeals to him in pain at the loss of their friendship; then, as at their first meeting, her suffering is unbearable to him and he must relieve it. In the epilogue we see Marya and Nikolai's marriage alongside Natasha and Pierre's: Marya's piety, which Nikolai admires but which is foreign to his temperament, has reasserted itself, and in a sense she replicates her

father's pedagogy through her moral bookkeeping with their children.

Éowyn as healer is never shown in action; we do not see her studying with the Warden, or observe her at work amid the materia medica of Ithilien. In terms of the wider story there is no need. Tolkien, like Niggle in his short story, was burdened with professional and domestic duties, and "there were some corners where he [did] not have time ... to do more than hint at what he wanted". But it is useful to have for comparison Tolstoy's acute perception of Marya, which provides more than a hint. By what inner alchemy — hormonal, ethical, vernal — does 'a lady high and valiant' become the biblical *eishet chayil*, the 'woman of valour' of the last

chapter of Proverbs, who employs her inexhaustible energies for life and for peace? 

Catherine Madsen's previous essays on Tolkien are 'Light from an Invisible Lamp' (*Mythlore* 53, 43–47) and 'Eru Erased' (in *The Ring and the Cross* ed. Paul Kerry, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; 2011).

1. Saccio, P. 'Shrewd and Kindly Farce' in *Shakespeare Survey: An Annual Survey of Shakespearean Study and Production* vol. 37. (ed. Wells, S.) (Cambridge University Press, 1984). Saccio makes the same point more strikingly in the lecture 'The Taming of the Shrew: Farce and Romance' in the audio series *William Shakespeare: Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies* (The Teaching Company, 1999).
2. Tolstoy, L. *War and Peace* (trans. Pevear, R. & Volokhonsky, L.) (Knopf, 2007).

We hatesses those tricky numbers: Tolkien, Lewis and maths anxiety

KRISTINE LARSEN

In an often cited (especially by this author) passage in the famous essay *On Fairy Stories*, Tolkien explained that in his early years not only did he like fairy stories, but "many other things as well, or better: such as history, astronomy, botany, grammar, and etymology". Flieger and Anderson have allowed us to peek into Tolkien's thought process as he crafted this essay, by publishing excerpts from his drafts. Manuscript A contains similar language for this specific passage, as Tolkien wrote¹: "In that distant day I preferred such astronomy, geology, history or philology as I could get, especially the last two." However, Manuscript B contains two versions of this passage (the first crossed off, the second not so) that contain a puzzling counterpoint to the list of "preferred" subjects. The first states:

In that happy time I liked a good many other things as well (or better): such [as] astronomy, or natural history (especially botany) as I could get. If I preferred fairy-stories to arithmetic, it was merely because (alas!) I did not like arithmetic at all. (ref. 1)

The second reads:

I liked many other things as well, or better: such as history, astronomy, natural history (especially botany), and more than all philology. ... I was quite insensitive to poetry (I skipped it if it came in tales); and stupid at arithmetic. (ref. 1)

His admitted insensitivity to poetry is interesting, given his later proclivity for inserting it into his own tales, but what fascinates (and confounds) this author is his apparent childhood aversion to mathematics.

Although it is true that maths anxiety (or mathphobia) is and has been a problem in education circles for far too long,

we should not be so quick to use that easy explanation to brush off Tolkien's comments. Like poetry, mathematics plays a fundamental role in the crafting of Middle-earth and, in my mind, Tolkien displays an equal ease with both disciplines. In fact, poetry depends on mathematics, in terms of its meter, and we know that Tolkien was undaunted by difficult meters. As he explained in a 1962 letter to his aunt Jane Neave:

The Pearl is much more difficult to translate, largely for metrical reasons; but being attracted by apparently insoluble metrical problems, I started to render it years ago. ... I never agreed to the view of scholars that the metrical form was almost impossibly difficult to write in, and quite impossible to render in modern English. (Letters 238).

Likewise Tolkien correctly and deftly used arithmetic to coordinate the timelines of events in his legendarium; determine distances and travel times for the journeys of Bilbo, Frodo and others; establish the various calendar systems of Middle-earth (one of which was actually suggested for possible real-world adoption by a 1978 editorial in *Chemical and Engineering News*²); and work out inconsistencies in the lunar-phase chronology in the drafts of *The Lord of the Rings*³. In addition, Tolkien seems to have demonstrated a working understanding of the 19-year Metonic cycle of lunar phases in his descriptions of how Durin's Day was related to the moon-letters in *The Hobbit*. Tolkien also wrote in a 1972 letter that he had devised numeric signs analogous to the Fëanorian alphabet "accommodated to both a decimal nomenclature and a duodecimal, but I have never used them and no longer hold an accurate memory of them" (Letters 344).

Tolkien also played with mathematics in crafting a calendar for Valinor, leading both Tolkien and (in his commentary)

his son Christopher to take the reader through a detailed mathematical analysis of the Valian Year versus the Years of the Sun⁴. Surely the time and effort Tolkien took in developing multiple calendars is evidence that he was not ‘stupid at arithmetic’. Indeed, he actually used mathematics to try to quantify the stupidity of war in a 1944 letter to Christopher:

How stupid everything is!, and war multiplies the stupidity by 3 and its power by itself: so one’s precious days are ruled by $(3x)^2$ when x = normal human crassitude (and that’s bad enough)”
(*Letters* 61).

On the jacket-flap to *The Hobbit* appeared a statement that its author was ‘a professor of an abstruse subject’ and compared the birth of *The Hobbit* to that of *Alice in Wonderland*. In a 1937 letter to Allen and Unwin Tolkien noted that “‘Philology’ — my real professional bag of tricks — may be abstruse, and perhaps more comparable to Dodgson’s maths” than to Anglo-Saxon, his professional ‘subject’. He added of his legendarium that “I am afraid this stuff of mine is really more comparable to Dodgson’s amateur photography, and his Song of Hiawatha’s failure, than to Alice” (*Letters* 15). The reference here is to Charles Dodgson, the real name of Lewis Carroll, and both his ‘day job’ (as lecturer and tutor of mathematics) and his hobbies. Dodgson wrote his own mathematical pamphlets and books to better prepare his students for the requisite standardized tests of his day (and in response to what he considered the serious problems with the standard geometry texts). Biographer Morton Cohen describes⁵ his mathematics publications as “professional and, if not altogether elegant, genuine attempts to change mathematical practices and help students”. Tolkien’s willingness to be compared to Dodgson in this way also seems to contradict his claims to being bad at maths.

The comparison to Dodgson also leads us naturally to a brief discussion of the state of maths education during

Tolkien’s childhood. In the late twentieth century maths education scholars affirmed that arithmetic has historically been the cause of more student anxiety and failure than any other subject, and that childhood attitudes towards mathematics persist into adulthood. Tolkien’s era was interestingly similar to our own time, as Tolkien’s childhood coincided with a massive debate within mathematics education circles in England as to the proper order and method of teaching various topics within mathematics. The following report of the 1901 meeting of the British Association of Education section on the Teaching of Mathematics would give any current maths teacher a serious case of déjà vu:

During the first half of the discussion the question as to where the responsibility rests for the present unsatisfactory state of affairs was scarcely touched, but the President of the Association set that all rolling by remarking that the present examination system was one imposed on the teachers from the outside, as a test of their efficiency, and that the teachers were not really to blame for it.
(ref. 6)

Whereas Tolkien might have claimed that maths was not his strong suit, in the case of fellow Inkling C. S. Lewis the claim was apparently very real. In a 1959 letter⁷, Lewis called mathematics “a science of which I have to this day not succeeded in mastering the elements”. In a 1962 letter he offered⁸: “I shudder at the subjects you have to take in High School, and some of them I could not even begin to attempt — Algebra and Calculus for example.” Apparently Lewis did not inherit his mother’s affinity for the subject; Flora Lewis received first class honours in geometry, algebra and logic while in college. In 1917, Mr Kirkpatrick, the headmaster of Lurgan College, and Lewis’s tutor, noted⁸ that when it came to mathematics, Lewis “has not only no taste, but on the contrary a distinct aversion”.

Lewis’s disdain for maths may have hindered him in at



least two specific instances. With the First World War raging, Lewis's father suggested to his son that he try to join the ranks of the artillery specialists (assumed to be a safer position within the military than in the infantry). Despite his father's apparent persistence, Lewis explained in three separate letters that "only those cadets who can be shown to have some special knowledge of mathematics" would be recommended for such a position⁸. Lewis's aborted story *The Dark Tower* relied on engineer J. W. Dunne's theory of 'serial time', and included a mind-numbing paraphrasing of Dunne's ideas in the last completed section of the tale. Walter Hooper suggests that because Lewis was "weak in mathematics, he may have been unable to imagine a convincing method" of tying up the strands in the story and bringing it to a reasonable conclusion⁹. Interestingly, as Verlyn Flieger explains in *A Question of Time* (1997), Tolkien himself used Dunne's model of time in writing *The Lost Road* and *The Notion Club Papers*, and although neither tale was completed, a lack of understanding of mathematics does not seem to be the reason. In fact, in part 2 of *The Notion Club Papers*¹⁶ the character Lowdham calls the two distinct Númenórean languages A and B, to which fellow character Stainer complains "I find this rather hard to follow, or even to swallow. Couldn't you give us something a bit clearer, something better to bite on than this algebra of A and B?" Although Tolkien himself thought that the character of Franks was more closely aligned with Lewis¹⁰, perhaps Stainer's complaint owes its genesis in Tolkien's knowledge of Lewis's attitudes towards mathematics.

Although it is tempting to simply blame a late Victorian version of the infamous American educational policy called 'No Child Left Behind' for Tolkien's and Lewis's self-described childhood difficulties with maths, it seems that at least Tolkien vastly underestimated his eventual mathematical abilities. For as he noted somewhat smugly in a 1955 letter to Naomi Mitchison, "I am sorry about my childish amusement with arithmetic; but there it is: the Númenórean calendar was just a bit better than the Gregorian: the latter being on average 26 seconds fast [per annum], and the N[úmenórean] 17.2 sec[onds] slow" (*Letters* 176). Not bad for a 'fairy story' written by a mathphobic English professor!

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2. Reese, K. M. Hobbit Calendar Proposed for Serious Consideration. *Chemical and Engineering News* 52 (27 March 1978).
3. Tolkien's meticulous crafting of a lunar phase-based timeline for *The Lord of the Rings* can be seen in letters found in *Letters* 69, 84 and the draft calendars discussed in *The Treason of Isengard* (367–369).
4. Tolkien, J. R. R. *Morgoth's Ring* 50–51, 58–60 (Houghton Mifflin, 1993).
5. Cohen, M. N. *Lewis Carroll: A Biography* 75 (Alfred A. Knopf, 1996).
6. Muirhead, R. F. The Teaching of Mathematics. *The Mathematical Gazette* 2(29), 82 (1901).
7. Hooper, W. (ed.) *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis, Volume 3* 1029, 1399 (Harper, 2007).
8. Hooper, W. (ed.) *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis, Volume 1* 1008, 264; 305, 316, 322 (Harper, 2004).
9. Hooper, W. (ed.) *C. S. Lewis: The Dark Tower and Other Stories* 96–97 (Harvest Books, 1977).
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Inscriptions and insertions in a first edition of *The Lord of the Rings*

JAMES BLAKE

To the bibliographer, provenance means the ownership history of individual copies of books. The study of provenance is generally extended to include examination of physical evidence, such as inscriptions or annotations, which show how readers interacted with books. Such studies play a part in illuminating the role particular books played in the social, cultural or intellectual lives of their owners. Here I look at a first edition of *The Lord of the Rings*, which, being rich in inscriptions and insertions and of known provenance, provides a case study showing how the work was received by two early readers.

The three volumes, the first of which is a second impression, were originally owned by the English painter George Dannatt (1915–2009) and his wife Anne. The books remained with the Dannatts until sold to the booksellers Paul and Barbara Heatley in 2002. The inscriptions and insertions, which according to the Heatleys all date from

the time of the Dannatts' ownership, can be summarized as follows: pencilled ownership inscriptions in the front of all three volumes, with dates of acquisition appended to two of these; dates of reading pencilled in the back of all three volumes; various cuttings, principally from *The Times* and *The Listener*, inserted in all three volumes, with some annotation. As described below, one cutting is pasted in.

Comparison with correspondence sent to the Heatleys allows most of the handwritten annotations to be ascribed to George, and many of the rest to Anne; there is uncertainty over a few examples as, to a non-expert eye, the Dannatts' handwriting is rather similar.

The inscriptions and insertions allow us to reconstruct much of the history of the Dannatts' interaction with *The Lord of the Rings* over a period of more than 40 years. The pencilled inscription in *The Fellowship of the Ring* shows that they bought it in December 1954, some five months



after its first publication. Although generally meticulous about recording everything to do with these volumes, they did not date the ownership inscription in *The Two Towers*, which had been published in November. Conceivably they bought both these volumes at the same time: Anne was certainly reading *The Two Towers* before the end of December. Their reasons for buying the two volumes at this point are unknown, though possibly they were influenced by W. H. Auden's positive review, published in November; as we shall see below, George certainly took note of it.

The dates pencilled into the back of the three volumes each have "AD" or "GD" appended to them, and are clearly dates of reading. However it is unclear if they are dates when a volume was started or finished. According to the dates given, Anne was reading *The Fellowship of the Ring* on 28 December 1954, and *The Two Towers* the day after. Possibly this means that she finished one volume on 28 December and started the next the following day. George was reading *The Fellowship of the Ring* on 10 January 1955, but apparently did not get round to *The Two Towers* until 21 May.

Although rather slow in acquiring the first two volumes, the Dannatts bought *The Return of the King* the day after publication, as shown by a very precise inscription: "George and Anne Dannatt Oct 21 1955". Anne was reading it on 21 November: even if this represents the date she finished the volume, she was not then particularly quick to do so, considering how promptly it had been bought. Just possibly she wrote "21.11.55" in error for "21.10.55." George was reading it on 21 January 1956.

An anonymous review from *The Listener* from 1955 is

pasted inside the back cover of *The Return of the King*. Next to it a pencilled note in George's handwriting reads:

This would seem to be the best brief summing up of the 3 books — Listener Dec 8. 1955 — that I have seen. See also Auden's enthusiastic article in "Encounter", November 1954. (Vol 3 No 15).

The Listener review finds both "merits and limitations" in the work, and opines: "It is impossible to decide what will be the judgement of posterity on *The Lord of the Rings*." Tolkien criticism refers to Auden's review frequently; here is evidence that the piece also caught the attention of at least one reader who was not professionally involved with literature.

Anne was again reading *The Fellowship of the Ring* on 2 June 1964, but may have decided not to continue with the whole work, as no more dates of reading appear in any of the volumes, for either her or George. Whether or not they did read any part of *The Lord of the Rings* again, their interest in it remained active: between 1973 and 1997 they inserted a small, eclectic collection of press cuttings into the three volumes. In order of publication, these are as follows:

8 November 1973: the article "Tolkien lives?" by J. W. Burrows, published in *The Listener*, inserted inside the front cover of *The Two Towers*.

22 November 1973: a letter by Tom Davis of the University of Birmingham, published in *The Listener*, folded with the Burrows piece. Although Burrows is generally positive about Tolkien, Davis is critical of both Tolkien's work and Burrows's analysis.

12 May 1977: John Carey's review of J. R. R. Tolkien: a

Biography by Humphrey Carter, published in *The Listener*, inserted inside the front cover of *The Return of the King*. The review is entitled 'Hobbit-forming' and is mildly critical of Tolkien's work.

3 January 1992: the anonymous piece 'Early Reading Hobbits' from *The Times*, inserted inside the front cover of *The Fellowship of the Ring*. The piece briefly recounts how as a boy Rayner Unwin "reviewed" *The Hobbit*. The exact date has been marked on the cutting in pen.

20 January 1997: the article 'Waterstone Book Survey: Tolkien Wins Title Lord of the Books by Popular Acclaim' by Dayla Alberge and Erica Wagner, from *The Times*, inserted inside the front cover of *The Fellowship of the Ring*. The date has been pencilled on the cutting.

It is not obvious how these pieces were chosen. Why, for instance, did the Dannatts not include Tolkien's obituary from *The Times*, published on 3 September 1973, in their collection of cuttings? It is equally unclear whether any method lay behind the distribution of the cuttings across the three volumes. Possibly during these years they were collecting and storing cuttings rather at random. This contrasts with the very deliberate choice of the 1955 review pasted into *The Return of the King*: here George selected a review he felt to be of particular value, underlined his choice by physically attaching it to the book, and placed it at the very end of the three volumes, as if to provide a concluding summary of the whole work.


By 1982, the Dannatts were also aware of the monetary value of these volumes. A cutting from a catalogue issued by the second-hand bookseller Michael Cole of York from this year is inserted inside the front cover of *The Fellowship of the Ring*. The cutting, which has the date and the bookseller's name and address marked on it in pen, lists a first edition of *The Lord of the Rings* for sale for £320.

There are no annotations to the text itself in any of the three volumes, which is not unusual: in general, only

teachers and students add marginalia to works of fiction.

The Dannatts sold the three volumes in 2002.

To conclude, examination of these volumes shows how two early readers interacted with *The Lord of the Rings* over a period of decades. Two aspects of this interaction are worth highlighting. First, the novel seems to have engaged them even when not being read. For many years they were apparently more interested in following the debate about its merits, and in tracking its popularity and influence, than in returning to the text itself. Second, it was not uncritical admiration of Tolkien's work that drove this long, if intermittent, engagement with the novel. In 1955–6 George found himself agreeing with a review which found both "merits and limitations" in *The Lord of the Rings*; in 1964 Anne seems to have abandoned her rereading; and in later years they collected cuttings characterized by a wide range of opinions. In George's case, his work as a music critic in 1944–56 may explain some of his interest in a text that from the beginning divided both critical and popular opinion.

As is the case here, examination of individual copies of books generally yields insights that although valuable are relatively modest, not least because aspects of the evidence are inevitably hard to interpret. The uncertainty surrounding why the Dannatts chose the particular cuttings listed here is an example. However, provenance evidence gains in value if multiple copies of the same work can be studied. To this end, I would encourage anyone with access to early editions of Tolkien's works to examine them for inscriptions, annotations, insertions or other marks of ownership, and to publicize anything of interest they find. In this way studies of provenance may help us to document how Tolkien's works were received by his earliest readers. 

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Orcs and Tolkien's treatment of evil

DAVID TNEH

Tolkien's world is inhabited by a multiplicity of creatures. Although the labyrinthine topography, fascinating languages and ancient history of Middle-earth dazzle many a reader, it is Tolkien's creation of elves, orcs, balrogs, ents, hobbits and dwarves that makes the lure of Middle-earth hard to resist.

Treebeard speaks to Merry and Pippin of the 'free peoples' of Middle-earth. In his citation of the 'free peoples', the elves were the first to settle on the realm followed by a catalogue of the free-living creatures from the elves to a selection of animals. The race of the orcs does not exist in Treebeard's list of 'free peoples' and, compared with the

other more illustrious characters in the novel, the orcs have long been considered secondary images of evil in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Just who are the orcs and what role do they play in the legendarium? To most readers, they are the embodiment of evil; malignant creatures of terror and destruction. Their origin predates a time even before any battle took place in Middle-earth, when Melkor, the greatest of the Valar, became corrupt and evil and desired to have his own way. He disrupted the Music of Creation, sowing hatred and distrust among all his creations. His vilest 'creation' was the orcs.

For who of the living has descended into the pits of Utumno? Yet this is held true by the wise of Eressëa, that all those of the Quendi who came into the hands of Melkor, ere Utumno was broken, were put there in prison, and by slow arts of cruelty were corrupted and enslaved; and thus did Melkor breed the hideous race of the Orcs in envy and mockery of the Elves, of whom they were afterwards the bitterest foes. For the Orcs had life and multiplied after the manner of the Children of Ilúvatar; and naught that had life of its own, nor the semblance of life, could ever Melkor make since his rebellion in the Ainulindalë before the Beginning: so say the wise. *And deep in their dark hearts the Orcs loathed the Master whom they served in fear, the maker only of their misery.* This it may be was the vilest deed of Melkor and the most hateful to Ilúvatar.

(*The Silmarillion* 58, my emphasis)

One gets the feeling of the orcs' resentment of Melkor for imposing great suffering on them. The orcs are definitely stated to be corruptions of the 'human' form seen in the elves and men. They are (or were) squat, broad, flat-nosed, sallow-skinned, with wide mouths and slant eyes: in fact degraded and repulsive versions of the (to Europeans) least lovely Mongol-types (*Letters* 210.)

As we make comparisons with the elves, the superior and generically noble race, we notice differences between the two opposing factions. The elves or 'Quendi' as they are known shall "be the fairest of all earthly creatures, and they shall have and shall conceive and bring forth more beauty than all my children; and they shall have the greater bliss in this world" (*The Silmarillion* 47). The elves are immortal, ageless and will never know sickness. They can be killed in any normal circumstances like men but as they age, they will not grow weak, only wiser and fairer. David Day¹ elaborates:

There is always a light on the Elven face, and the sound of their voices is various and beautiful as water. Of all their arts they excel best in speech, song and poetry. Elves were the first of all people on earth to speak with voices and no earthly creature before them sang. And justly they call themselves the Quendi, the 'speakers', for they taught the spoken arts to all races on Middle-earth.

(ref. 1, 75)

The orcs do not have such magnificent attributes. In contrast to immortality, wisdom and — to some — the ability to create, the orcs are capable only of wanton destruction. Even the language they speak is called 'the Black Speech', an unpleasant language developed by Sauron for use by all of his servants. The purest form is used by Sauron, Smaug (the dragon) and the Witch-king of Angmar, whereas at a lower level, several versions of the language exist in a debased form.

The orcs were first bred by the Dark Power of the North in the Elder Days. It is said that they had no language of their own, but took what they could of other tongues and perverted it to their own liking; yet they made only brutal jargons, scarcely sufficient even for their own needs, unless it were for curses and abuse. And these creatures, being filled with malice, hating even their own

kind, quickly developed as many barbarous dialects as there were groups of settlements of their race, so that their Orkish speech was little use to them in intercourse between different tribes.

(*The Lord of the Rings* Appendix F)

Orcs are perceived to be consistently evil from their moment of creation. Their capability of speech, however, is weighted with moral imperative. According to W. H. Auden², "In the Secondary World of Middle-earth, there exist, in addition to men, at least seven species capable of speech and therefore of moral choice — Elves, Dwarves, Hobbits, Wizards, Ents, Trolls, Orcs" (ref. 2, 138). Therefore, the ability of the orcs to communicate would suggest that they are capable of making moral choices, but Tolkien's portrayal might suggest otherwise. Some critics have treated none too kindly this obvious division of good and evil. Edmund Wilson, one of Tolkien's chief critics, states that "for most part such characters as Dr. Tolkien is able to contrive are perfectly stereotyped" (quoted in ref. 3, p. 80). Catharine Stimpson criticizes Tolkien's treatment of good and evil in the following manner:

Of course, evil is corroding, then corrupting, and finally canceling. However, Tolkien seems rigid. He admits that men, elves, and dwarfs are a collection of good, bad, and indifferent things, but he more consistently divides the ambiguous world into two unambiguous halves: good and evil, nice and nasty. Any writer has the right to dramatize, not to argue, his morality. However, Tolkien's dialogue, plot, and symbols are terribly simplistic.

(ref. 4, 18)

Adding to this list is Walter Scheps who comments on a similar note:

At this point, it would perhaps be useful to summarize briefly the characteristics of good and evil as they are revealed in *The Lord of the Rings*. First, and most important, good and evil are almost always generically defined; we can often tell whether a character is one or the other if we know where he comes from, who his ancestors are, how he speaks, and which color, black or white, is associated with him.

(ref. 5, 51–52)

Thus, many critics of Tolkien disagree with Tolkien's way of dividing everything into two spheres, black and white, good and evil. The portrayal of the orcs, as an example, seems to prove what the critics think of Tolkien's overall work — that it is rigid, structured and clear-cut, totally void of ambiguity. If that is the case, the orcs will then be perceived as consistently evil. However, I should like to demonstrate that not only are the orcs an important race essential to the saga but that they are capable of showing some finesse of behaviour.

What the critics have failed to take into account was that the orcs are in fact created from elves, the "Firstborn, the immortal Elder Race of Middle-earth, the noblest of the Children of Eru" (ref. 6, 148). They share an exact ancestral past at the beginning but Melkor had transformed some of them into orcs. Although the elves and orcs share

an indistinguishable beginning, complexities arise as to whether the orcs are capable of knowing the virtues of goodness. Tolkien tells us that “For nothing is evil in the beginning. Even Sauron was not so” (*The Lord of the Rings II 2*). This is a positive affirmation that the orcs are not originally evil as even Sauron was good at the beginning. Tolkien further elaborates in his letters that the orcs are “fundamentally a race of ‘rational incarnate’ creatures, though horribly corrupted, if no more so than many Men to be met today” (*Letters* 153). Tolkien’s statement is interesting because he compares the race of the orcs to common men and the orcs are said to be capable of thought. This would indeed do justice to the position of orcs, as they are not the mere mindless slaves of Sauron. Tolkien himself reacted strongly on allegations that his novel was only about the play on good and evil. He says: “Not that I have made even this quite so simple: there are Saruman, and Denethor, and Boromir; and there are treacheries and strife even among the orcs” (*Letters* 154).

The fact that the orcs are capable of transcending their complex state of being is mentioned by Tolkien when he describes how Melkor abused his ‘sub-creative powers’ and:

started making things ‘for himself, to be their Lord’, these would then ‘be’, even if Morgoth broke the supreme ban against making other ‘rational’ creatures like Elves and Men. They would at least ‘be’ real physical realities in the physical world, however evil they might prove, even ‘mocking’ the Children of God. They would be Morgoth’s greatest Sins, abuses of his highest privilege, and would be creatures begotten of Sin, and naturally bad. (I nearly wrote ‘irredeemably bad’; but that would be going too far. Because by accepting or tolerating their making—necessary to their actual existence — even orcs would become part of the World, which is God’s and ultimately good.) (*Letters* 153)

Although it is hinted that there is a possibility of redemption for the orcs, Tolkien stresses that the ability of the orcs to have souls or spirits had never crossed his mind. Furthermore, it was due to Morgoth’s dark powers that the orcs were forged, not as an original act of creation but a great abuse of his powers.

But whether they could have ‘souls’ or ‘spirits’ seems a different question; and since in my myth at any rate I do not conceive of the making of souls or spirits, things of an equal order if not an equal power to the Valar, as a possible ‘delegation’, I have represented at least the orcs as pre-existing real beings on whom the Dark Lord has exerted the fullness of his power in remodelling and corrupting them, not making them. (*Letters* 153)

Thus, the portrayal of the orcs in the novel is extremely complicated. The obvious comparison and contrast with the elves would compel many readers and critics to think that there lies no other view in the nature and alignment of the orcs. The mould is cast and set and hence the perception that *The Lord of the Rings* is nothing more than a story of good and evil. But with the orcs, Tolkien portrays the complexity of evil that goes beyond mere comparison

or contrast with the elves. Our understanding of evil is in fact challenged when Tolkien shows that evil can exist in many ‘shades’, and the race of the orcs is a perfect example. To understand such complexities, it is helpful to draw on the idea of Manichaeism and Boethianism for a deeper insight into the nature of the orcs.

Manichaeism or dualism refers to the theory of two opposing principles that exist independently of each other, such as good and evil in all things. “It taught that not God but Satan, the Demiurge, made the world and its wicked matter. Only spirit was good and came from God” (ref. 7, 172). In opposition to Manichaeism, the Boethian view is that:

there is no such thing as evil: evil is nothing, is the absence of good, possibly even unappreciated good... Corollaries of this belief are, that evil cannot itself create, that it was not itself created (but sprang from a voluntary exercise of free will by Satan, Adam and Eve, to separate themselves from God). (ref. 8, 109).

In relation to this, I would like to bring in Shippey’s analysis of the two concepts of evil in *The Lord of the Rings*. In his view, Tolkien’s presentation of evil is convincing and captivating because Tolkien portrays the nature of evil alternately between Manichaean and Boethian perspectives. Tolkien incorporates the two views as a sort of an answer to the nature of evil, which is ambivalent and in a way, multi-dimensional and complex. The Manichaean view also states that “the world is a battlefield, between the powers of Good and Evil, equal and opposite — so that, one might say, there is no real difference between them and it is a matter of chance which side one happens to choose” (ref. 9, 134).

Evil is then made out to be an independent entity, a force of its own, although the Boethian perspective is that “there is no such thing as evil. What people identify as evil is only the absence of good” (ref. 9, 130). We are made to see evil as an internal (Boethian) and external (Manichaean) in which the ambivalent orcs are perfectly Boethian.

That orcs are capable of moral choice is shown by as many as six conversations that they have among themselves. It is also worthy to note that only the orcs, as an evil race, have this many conversations, which reveals much of their character and mindset. In one instance, there is a conversation between two orc-leaders, Shagrat from Cirith Ungol and Gorbag from Minas Morgul. The latter warns Shagrat that although they have Frodo (at this point Sam has taken away the Ring), they have to be careful of another enemy who has wounded Shelob with a magical weapon. Although they are ignorant of the identity of Frodo, the orcs conclude they have bigger problems at hand and the ‘little fellow’ “may have had nothing to do with the real mischief. The big fellow with the sharp sword doesn’t seem to have thought him much anyhow — just let him lying: regular elvish trick” (*The Lord of the Rings IV*, 10).

Gorbag clearly disapproves of such action, he is “convinced that it is wrong, and contemptible, to abandon your companions. Furthermore it is characteristic of the other side, a ‘regular elvish trick’, they do it all the time” (ref. 9, 132). Although this might reveal a side of the orcs that is

affirmative, Shagrat topples this view by making a joke on 'old Ufthak' and their refusal to rescue him from Shelob:

"D'you remember old Ufthak? We lost him for days. Then we found him in a corner; hanging up he was, but he was wide awake and glaring. How we laughed! She'd forgotten him, maybe, but we didn't touch him — no good interfering with Her."

(*The Lord of the Rings IV 10*)

On the other hand, from another angle, Shippey⁹ comments that the orcs are associated above all by their "orcish humour"; their jokes are more often than not associated with torture and pain and the joy of seeing their victims or comrade suffer. Common orcish words include 'fun', 'sport' and 'lads' that seem to be contrary to the overall nature of the orcs but in some ways similar to our own scale of humour, as repugnant as that may be.

The orcs may be well down, or even off, the scale of humorous acceptability, but it is the same scale as our own; and humour is a good quality in itself, although like all good qualities it can be perverted. In other examples we see how the "orcs in fact put a high theoretical value on mutual trust and loyalty" and "the orcs recognise the idea of goodness, appreciate humour, value loyalty, trust, group cohesion, and the ideal of a higher cause than themselves, and condemn failings from these ideals in others"⁹. This can be shown by the words of Snaga to Shagrat: "I've fought for the Tower against those stinking Morgul-rats" (*The Lord of the Rings VI 1*), which shows some form of minimal allegiance to one another. Other examples include the use of the word 'lads' that indicates "male bonding and good fellowship"⁹. The orcs, led by Mauhár, even attempted to rescue some of their comrades from the riders of Rohan and in the chapter entitled 'Helm's Deep' (*The Lord of the*



Rings III 7), they understood “the concept of parley”⁹ and gave Aragorn a chance to surrender: “Come down! Come down!” They cried. ‘If you wish to speak to us, come down! Bring out your king! We are the fighting Uruk-hai!’” Even the last sentence reveals to us their sense of pride, unity and in some sense bravery because the orcs are known to be fierce warriors. Foster¹⁰ comments that the orcs are quite organized at times:

However, there was some organisation among tribes, and the orcs of the Misty Mountains had a capital, Gundabad. Cooperation was, not surprisingly, greater in wartime, when large numbers of orcs, often under the control of Sauron, were able to work together to fight the Free Peoples. (ref. 10, 305)

In a rare scene, we get a glimpse of the orcs as comfort-seeking creatures that wish that the war would be over so that things would be better for their own kind.

‘You should try being here with Shelob for company,’ said Shagrat.

‘I’d like to try somewhere where there’s none of ‘em. But the war’s on now, and when that’s over things might be easier.’

‘It’s going well, they say.’

‘They would,’ grunted Gorbag. ‘We’ll see. But anyway, if it does go well, there should be a lot more room. What d’you say? — if we get a chance, you and me’ll slip off and set up somewhere on our own with a few trusty lads.’ (*The Lord of the Rings IV* 10)

In the Boethian mould, evil is seen to be “essentially internal, psychological, negative” (ref. 8, 109). In fact, the Boethian conception of evil also explains how¹¹:

Absolute good is possible, in fact actual (God is absolute goodness). Absolute evil is impossible, since to be absolutely evil a thing would have to be absolutely non-existent, which is of course impossible. Evil is always parasitic on goodness for its energy and efficacy. An evil thing or person can only exist only by being partly good.

Thus the orcs do not exemplify evil, which is external (Manichaeism) like the One Ring, but are examples of the evil corruption of Morgoth. As they were manipulated by the Dark Lord for his own purposes, the nature of their corruption speaks of evil that comes from within. Evil is seen to be internal and the orcs embody this but at the same time, they have the awareness of the conscience of good. Through their actions, the orcs have shown they are intelligent, daring, coordinated and capable of emotions. Shippey also explains that both perspectives are equally significant and vital toward generating ‘uncertainties’ in the epic that would strengthen the narrative structure of the novel.

The complex interlacement of the narrative structure positively generates ironies (and anti-ironies) for the reader, uncertainties and ‘bewilderment’ for the characters. Those uncertainties, about themselves and others, are mirrored by the ambiguous nature of

the Ring, part psychic amplifier, part malign power, perhaps internal, perhaps external. I have argued that the work’s “controlling vision of things” is in fact a double vision, between the opinions I label ‘Boethian’ and ‘Manichaeism’; and that both opinions are presented at one time or another with equal force. (ref. 9)

In the case of the orcs, evil is a part of good but not vice-versa. It is important for us to know that good is a distinct and separate entity by itself just as Ilúvatar existed before everything else was created. It is the foundation of good that evil is dependent upon. Evil cannot exist on its own, just as the existence of the orcs is related to the coming of the elves, but this does not mean that good shares a reciprocal relationship with evil.

Nothing is originally evil or, in other words “Evil is not a thing in itself but a lessening of the Being inherent in the created order” (ref. 3, 78). The orcs were crafted from the fair elves: this does not mean they are eternally evil without the ability of demonstrating and achieving some form of transcendence beyond their evil portrayal. As discussed by C. S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity*, the concept of Manichaeism is not possible in our worldview today because:

No one “likes badness for its own sake . . . just because it is bad.” They like it because it gives them something, whether that is sensual gratification (in the case of sadists), or something else, “money, or power, or safety”. But these latter are all good things in themselves. Wickedness is always, according to Lewis, “the pursuit of some good in the wrong way”. But since “goodness is, so to speak itself” while “badness is only spoiled goodness”, then it follows that the two equal and opposite powers of the Dualist worldview cannot exist. The evil power, the Dark Power in which Lewis firmly believed, must be a mistake, a corruption, not an independent and autonomous force . . . This opinion is of course very firmly built into Tolkien’s whole mythology.’ (ref. 9, 131)

Colin Gunton also shares the view that not only is evil seen to be ‘spoiled goodness’ but both good and evil share an interrelated and inseparable existence¹².

And there is something more to be said about the parallels between this aspect of the story and Christian theology. We noted before that evil is parasitic upon the good: it has an awful power, it corrupts and destroys, and yet has no true reality of its own. So it is with Tolkien’s depiction of evil. The ring-wraiths represent some of the most horrifyingly evil agencies in literature. They are wraiths, only half-real . . . Their touch brings a dreadful coldness, like the coldness of Dante’s hell. And yet they are finally insubstantial . . . Similarly, just as the devils of Christian mythology are fallen angels, so all the creatures of the Dark Lord are hideous parodies of creatures from the true creation: goblins of elves, trolls of those splendid creatures the ents, and so on . . . Evil is the corruption of good, monstrous in power yet essentially parasitic. (ref. 12, 132–133)

Tom Shippey observes that the orcs do not have an inverted morality but a sense of knowing good that is only limited. The

orcs are able to recognize goodness when it benefits them or their race and can exhibit positive actions at times but are unable to sustain them because evil, in the Boethian angle, is “internal, caused by human sin and weaknesses and alienation from God”⁹. The orcs recognize the idea of goodness but:

Orcish behaviour, whether in orcs or in humans, has its root not in an inverted morality, which sees bad as good and vice versa, but in a kind of self-centredness that sees indeed what is good — like standing by one’s comrades or being loyal to one’s mates — but is unable to set one’s own behaviour in the right place of this accepted scale. (ref. 9)

In debating this, one must realize the world of the orcs is different from the world of the elves, their mortal enemy. The orcs consider anyone who is against the will of Sauron as their adversary, yet they obey Sauron primarily out of fear for him. And because Sauron’s hold on them is so strong, the orcs are unable to break free. The orcs adhere to self-serving goodness and from the complexities of their creation, splinters of their former self, the elves, remain a part of the orcs that cannot be erased. This corruption is evident when Frodo tells Sam as they embark from the Tower of Cirith Ungol.

“The Shadow that bred them can only mock, it cannot make: not real things on its own. I don’t think it gave life to the orcs, it only *ruined* them and *twisted* them; and if they are to live at all, they have to live like other living creatures. Foul waters and foul meats they’ll take, if they can get no better, but not poison.”

(*The Lord of the Rings* VI 1, my emphasis)

Overall, the orcs do show some form of human behaviour that we recognize and relate to. Their plight is a universal condition of in-betweenness that Tolkien did not fully resolve. The orcs have demonstrated that they are capable of achieving transcendence and that they do know some basic affirmative values but with the interplay of the Manichaeic and Boethian elements, we are made to see that the ‘evil’ nature of the orcs is inconsistent. The Boethian struggle within them also mirrors Tolkien’s treatment of the two aspects of evil as ‘unresolvable’, but necessary to the development of the narrative.

Tolkien’s universe encompasses an unresolvable tension between two views of evil: one, the Boethian (and Catholic) view that evil is only the absence of good, and the other the pagan (and Manichaeic) view of evil as an active and malign force in the world. The narrative constantly pulls us in both directions: we overhear orcs who wish for creature comforts, who demonstrate a sense of justice (even if self-serving and depraved) and who long for the war to end; and we also sympathize with the Rohirrim who overtake a party of orcs and slaughter them without mercy¹³.

And as the orcs are cast in this mould, they remain the ‘brutalized infantry’ of Sauron who are mockeries of the elves. Their ‘bond’ only intensifies their mutual hatred for one another. The orcs cannot be blamed for their predicament because they were ‘created’ to be considered always a

lesser and degenerate race, living a fearful existence according to the will of the Shadow that has ‘ruined’ and ‘twisted’ them. To be living like ‘other living creatures’ will be indeed hard for the orcs as they are caught between battling the better version of themselves (the elves) and handling a tyrannical and monstrous embodiment of evil in the shape of Sauron whom they fear and hate. The orcs are then creatures of circumstances that are manipulated by Sauron for his own gain at the expense of the orcs themselves.

It is interesting to note that to an extent, Tolkien did not regard orcs as evil in their own right, but only as tools of Melkor and Sauron. He wrote once that “we were all orcs in the Great War” indicating perhaps that an orc for him was not an inherent build-up of personality, but rather a state of mind bound upon destruction. In addition, Joseph Pearce¹⁴ notes that “the orcs, therefore are seen by Tolkien as victims of the Fall, as is Man, with the difference that their corruption of the orcs by Tolkien’s Satan was much worse than that of Man” (ref. 14, 95). Thus, the corruption of the orcs, relegating them to the status of killing machines of Sauron, only widens the antithesis between orcs and elves. Hence, the use of contrasts by Tolkien has the effect of putting the race of the orcs forever in the shadow of darkness, to be always a foil to the greater elves. The elves then seem to be made the most perfect and noble race of Middle-earth. Perhaps this is Tolkien’s intention, to contrast the orcs with the elves and in doing so, to highlight the chosen race of Middle-earth. The orcs must be made to be persistently evil for the sake of the elves, and this is why the orcs can only exhibit limited affirmative values that are not sustainable to the end. Tolkien has given the orcs some ‘space’: he has not permanently portrayed the orcs as an absolutely evil race, but neither can he afford to show the orcs ultimately redeeming themselves. Hence, the Boethian perspective is used to demonstrate a slight blurring in the characteristic of the orcs. To show a total transcendence in the orcs would be impossible. This serves to pinpoint the importance of the orcs as a foil to the Elves. One cannot help but have compassion for the plight of orc, as Paul Kocher observes:

The poor brutes are so plainly the toys of a mightier will than theirs. They have been conditioned to will whatever Sauron wills. ‘And for me,’ exclaims Gandalf, ‘I pity even his slaves.’ Aragorn at Helm’s Deep includes them in his warning against the Fangorn huorns, which are marching to crush them, but the orcs do not listen. Never in Tolkien’s tale are any orcs redeemed, but it would go against the grain of the whole to dismiss them as ultimately irredeemable. (ref. 3, 71)

What I am advocating is not that the orcs are good (a word that by now should be considered subjective in its meaning) but that we should view them in the context of evil that is broad and more ambiguous, not something that is finite, pure and unadulterated in its form. Both the orcs and the elves could then be possibly described as ‘two sides of the same coin’ in terms of their origin, troubled history and animosity. Just as the elves’ existence represents good in its



most ethereal sense, the orcs represent evil at its most basic. It acts as a counter-balance to maintain the equilibrium of the plot and as a possible technique whereby the protagonist of the story is not an elf warrior or a powerful wizard or king but a three-foot high halfling. The orcs then provide the necessary *rites de passage* for the character of Frodo Baggins to emerge as the eventual quest-hero of the tale. Besides this, Tolkien must maintain the consistent existence of both images of good and evil, (the elves and the orcs) forever pitting them in never-ending battles with tragedies for the elves and, finally, with no race getting the upper hand until the stalemate is broken by Sauron's foolishness in not guarding the borders of Mordor. Herein lies the challenge for Tolkien to portray the triumph of good over evil as "historically possible, not a daydream" (ref. 15, 31).

Tolkien has also said that his tale is not merely a fantasy about good and evil because "if the conflict really is about things properly called right and wrong, or good and evil, then the rightness or goodness of one side is not proved or established by the claims of either side; it must depend on values and beliefs above and independent of the particular conflict" (ref. 16, 56). Hence, evil is shown to be intrinsically self-defeating with a loss of insight to understand itself and victory is accomplished by the free peoples because of evil's own natural flaw. Although this is the fate of evil, the salvation of Frodo Baggins is sealed when he completes his quest amid a personal setback and returns a hero to Middle-earth.

Tolkien's orcs seem to be the most common image of evil in all his major works: they seem to rank low in terms of importance and intelligence but their function, organization, versatility and commitment are highly commendable for a race that is ignored by many. Their involvement in every single battle from the beginning heralds their ever-increasing importance and also as Tolkien's method of

maintaining a vast, consistent, well-wrought Middle-earth mythology. The use of such an image of evil guarantees the consistency of conflict, evil, plot and character build-up, and not merely a means to provide "a continual supply of enemies" (ref. 8, 174) to the saga. Simple and downtrodden they may be; but the orcs are symbolic of a race that is part of the fabric of Middle-earth. The existence of the orcs is essential to the entire saga; they are not a separate entity but very much dependent on the forces of good, in this case the elves.

In the orcs we see a race torn apart with splinters of past consciousness, the present Boethian struggle, and multiple polarities that shape them as a race worthy of attention. **David Tneh** is from Malaysia. This essay is an edited extract of his unpublished MA dissertation.

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STRIDER

Teresa Newham

"That's Strider in the corner — he's an odd one, no mistake!
He vanishes for months on end; who knows what road he'll take.
He don't say much, and folk round here are wary of his gaze —
There's plenty strange things happening, and weird tales around, these days!"

*"O Barliman! They cannot see the white light on his brow,
The flickering flame which crowns him — or they would not doubt him now!
As Aragorn, King Elessar, he comes to claim his throne,
The day is drawing near when he will make his purpose known."*

"He's come and gone as long as most of us here can recall —
The years go by yet he don't seem to age that much at all!
He's one of them there Rangers from up North by Deadman's Dike,
A mystery man; and yet I can't find nothing to dislike!"

*"A legend sprung to life, he will fulfil his destiny —
In Minas Tirith's courtyard, white will bloom brave Gondor's tree,
And all will shout as they behold their King so just and fair
'The Broken Sword is forged again! All hail, Isildur's heir!'"*



Werewolf Hollow

MARK L RIDGE

Werewolf Hollow has lain quietly beneath its canopy of trees for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Six hundred acres of dense forest and abandoned quarries contain its secrets. There's a 30-acre lake, called Blood Moon Lake, surrounded by white pine and spruce trees. Bordering the southern edge of the lake and Grey Wolf Hill to the north, there's an endless series of unexplored limestone caves running through the hollow. A single lane dirt road winds its way through the hollow beneath the canopy of trees that keeps it in perpetual twilight. People living in the surrounding hamlets, towns and small cities never venture into what they call the most haunted woods in Indiana. Whenever the Moon rises full above the tree tops, and as it wanes to crescent, doors and windows of the homes near the hollow are shut and barred, and dogs are tied with heavy chains to metal stakes driven deep into the ground inside barns. Blood curdling screams that pierce the otherwise peaceful night and scratching on doors and walls are attributed to the wind blowing through the trees and echoing in the canyons of the forgotten and abandoned quarries.

No one living, so stories say, has ever seen what really lives in the hollow, and no one wants to know.

Except for teenagers with too much time on their hands and a leader who insists on investigating every mystery southern Indiana seems to contain.

"Don't get lost. Very funny. Michael!" I lost Michael as soon as we entered the caves. The darkness bore down around me in such an oppressive manner that I actually became, for lack of a better comparison, sea sick. "Michael!"

As I wound my way through the narrow tunnels that had been cut through the limestone by uncounted ages of flowing water, events of the previous few hours replayed over and over in my weary mind.

"Michael!" I paused. Listened. It seemed as though my friend had pulled aside the veil separating the world of the living from the world of the dead, and stepped through.

Michael J. Bear was obsessed, driven to find answers to mysteries wherever they could be found. His research and obsession with the occult had intensified since hooking up with Annetta back in the fall of 1968. As such he insisted,

often at the most inopportune times, that we — our entire group — accompany him on what he called his ‘Midnight Excursions’. Even though I’ve known Michael since kindergarten, I never realized how little he actually slept until that fateful night in August 1969.

“What the ...” I stammered, trying to squeeze my eyes open. “Michael? Dang it man, it’s one in the morning.”

“Get dressed. We have to go. Now!” He urged over the phone. “This cannot wait. Annetta and Jenna are already waiting for us. I’ll be there in two minutes.”

Two minutes? I thought. It’ll take me that long to find the bathroom. But that was Michael for you. Time meant nothing to him, and he often forgot that the rest of us needed to sleep. I barked my toes on the coffee-table leg and hopped across the living room in the dark trying not to scream in pain.

We’d been out earlier, drinking beer with Annetta, Jenna, Jase and Tippy down at the Sugar Creek Cemetery and had just got in around eleven. I immediately passed out on the sofa. My parents were gone for the weekend to see the Grand Ole Opry in Tennessee, so I was alone in the house.

Normally, Jenna would have joined me, but she was having some aunt visiting for a few days and said we’d have to wait until the next weekend to fool around. By the time Michael called around one o’clock, I was already deep inside the void of nothingness of my intoxicated stupor. In short, I was out. Usually, I could sleep through anything, and often did when I was drunk. But whenever Michael called my mind just knew it was him and I’d come awake.

Well, mostly awake anyway.

He came bolting in the door and tossed my clothes to me as I stumbled out of the bathroom still caught halfway between being awake and being stone cold passed out.

“Come on,” he said pushing me out the door half naked, “you can dress on the way.”

“What the heck is it this time, man?” I was struggling to get my pants on as he revved up the 440 of the GTX and spun tyres.

“You’ll see,” he said, as the car veered around the corner of my street and south onto Grant Street. We spun rapidly through the stop sign where Grant crosses Circle, turned left, and flew around the bend, spun left again over the tracks and took a hard right onto Johnson Avenue.

“Jump in the back. Hurry.”

I rolled over the seat into the back as he slowed to ten miles an hour. As we neared Annetta’s house, he bent over and threw open the passenger door, and Annetta and Jenna hoped in just in time as he accelerated. Jenna crawled over the seat to join me.

“What the heck is going on this time?” she asked, helping me on with my shirt and shoes.

“How should I know? Didn’t Annetta say anything?”

“Nope. She said he called, told her to get me and wait out front.”

The car was sliding to a halt at the train depot where Jase and Tippy joined us. Then Michael floored the accelerator and headed down the backstreets towards Sherman Road.

“Mikey, what’s this all about?” Jase said trying to wake up

as he slid over the seat into the back.

Tippy, sitting up front with Annetta, had passed out, her head resting on Annetta’s lap, almost as soon as Jase helped her inside. Tippy lived in one of those three storey original Noble homes next to the abandoned train depot, and Jase spent many a weekend night at her house, partly as a way to avoid his father who often came home drunk after spending a night down at Poole’s Bar with the other Noble losers. Unlike us, Jase’s dad was a mean drunk who often took pleasure in beating on members of his family. When things got too bad, Jase would go stay with Tippy’s family for a few days.

“Can’t say. Just hang loose. We’ll be there in 45 minutes.”

“Fine,” I said, and placed my arm around Jenna, who was leaned back in the seat. “wake me then.” And I passed out.

You ever have one of those dreams where you think you hear something, then wake up and you still hear it? Well, I have and believe me, it isn’t fun. I was dreaming that I was walking in the woods late at night. The air was cool and the full Moon hung low in the sky, looking for all the world like a giant ball you could almost reach out and touch. I was feeling pretty good, and just when I thought, man this is great, I feel so peaceful, the air split open with the barking howl of a wolf.

The shock startled me so badly that I jumped and hit my head on the roof of the car. As I was shaking my head to push off the drowsiness, I heard it again. If you have never heard that sound before, don’t go trying to find it. Trust me. You don’t want to. Every hair on my body stood on end and my eyes flew open so wide I thought my eyeballs were going to pop out. The third howl made my blood freeze.

“What the heck was that?” No one could hear me. They were all standing out in front of the car in the beams of the headlights listening. A fourth howl rang out as I strode up to my group of friends.

“Wolves?” I stammered.

“Not quite, bud.”

“Sounds like wolves to me,” Jase said, holding Tippy a little too tightly I noticed.

“Nope. Wolves don’t howl ... like this.” Michael was standing with his hands on his hips, Annetta, in her black dress and boots, stood beside him. Their long hair, his black and hers brown, whipped about gently in the early false dawn morning breeze. Michael was also wearing his usual adventuring clothes: black sneakers, black jeans and black t-shirt. They looked like a witch and a warlock ready to do battle with forces unseen. And knowing their spirits, they’d give a pretty damn good accounting of themselves if they did.

Jenna backed up and I wrapped my arms around her. She was shaking like a willow in a typhoon.

“Werewolves,” Annetta said, in a matter-of-fact tone that sent chills up my spine.

You know, as much as I liked Annetta, sometimes she was a little eerie. Michael wasn’t spooky, just weird. Okay, Michael could be spooky too, but neither was as spooky as Annetta’s mother, who earned money — usually on the weekends in her spare time — working as a fortune teller. Cassandra, Annetta’s mother, is a real gypsy. Not the kind you read about in books or see misportrayed in movies, like

that one with Lon Chaney, but an actual Romanian Gypsy. How she and Annetta ended up in small town America is a story unto itself.

Anyway, Cassandra had this way of looking at you that sort of gave you the willies, but not in a bad way. Her penetrating azure eyes, staring out of her round face surrounded by mounds of raven locks, tended to see into your soul, while her beauty set you at ease. She always wore these flowing skirts, usually black, loose silk or cotton blouses — mostly black — and necklaces crafted from silver and gold. On her fingers she wore five rings. Exactly five; always the same five. One had an opal, one a ruby, one an emerald, one a sapphire and one, I kid you not, was a solid band of platinum that had weird carvings engraved all over it. And her jewels weren't no small quarter-carat rip-offs you can buy at the mall jewelry store in Bloomington; they were big and real. Precious cuts, she called them.

The first time I met her, she smiled, nodded, invited us in for tea — an oddly sweet mixture that had the ability to make you feel relaxed — called Jase and me by name (nobody had told her our names as yet) and made reference to something called a triumvirate, or some such.

"You are three who make one," she said, in her soft eastern European French-like tone.

Jase and I thought she was a bit weird; doubly so when she reached into a box that seemed to appear out of nowhere. The thing contained all kinds of items — rings, pins, rough-cut precious stones, I saw a lot of something she called onyx, and necklaces. She handed me a little silver band ring saying, "Sabon says hello." The ring was engraved with the words Find Me, with Sabon's name on the inside. Sabon had been my first love, but had disappeared the winter of seventh grade.

I've never taken the ring off since that day Cassandra gave it to me. Somehow, I thought it might lead me back to Sabon.

"Werewolves?" We all said in unison.

Three more piercing howls sounded in succession sending more chills racing through my body.

Michael turned around and said quite seriously: "Werewolves."

I would have told Michael to stop pulling my leg, if it wasn't for all the howling that kept ringing through the trees. Michael enjoyed making us the butt of his jokes, usually after a very prolonged and, sometimes, rather involved series of riddles, mysteries and disinformation. Once he was sure that Jase and I were completely under his spell, he'd pop the punch line. However, from the look on his face, and Annetta's, something told me that this time he was deadly serious.

They each wore these identical silver medallions — a five-pointed star wrapped in a circle; his had a ruby in the centre and hers had an opal — on short silver necklaces. Cassandra had given them to Michael and Annetta the day she gave me Sabon's ring, saying to them: "Bound in spirit, bound in love, eternally."

I looked at their medallions and got one of those feelings. Sometimes I worried about those two.

Jase, however, felt a slight tugging on the cuff of his pants.

"Aw, hell, Mikey, dang it. I ain't got time for these games of yours after drinking all night and not getting any rest."

More howls assaulted our ears. Jenna wrapped her arms around my neck so tight I thought my head was going to pop off. I swear, if she could have at that moment, she would have crawled right up into my shirt pocket and hid.

"Let's get out of here!" she said.

Tippy was already in the car hiding in the backseat on the floorboard with her arms clutched tightly over her head.

"Relax. They're moving away from us. Michael," Annetta was all business now. "We better get moving." I reckon she felt at home among the dark forest and the wolves — at least I'd heard Romania and France had lots of wolves.

"Okay. Everyone to your usual positions. Let's roll!"

Our usual positions meant that Annetta would be up front next to Michael, Jase in the back behind the driver's seat, next to him Tippy, with Jenna behind the front passenger seat, where I sat riding shotgun. The only difference this time being, Michael actually handed Jase and me short-barrel shotguns, which he called greeners, that he'd quickly removed from the trunk.

"Take these." He handed each of us a box containing — I am telling you the truth here — 12 gauge deer shells, but with silver slugs. He then strapped on an official western-style gun belt and rolled the cylinder of his Colt revolver checking its loads. "And don't shoot unless you have to."

We were all well acquainted with firearms. My Dad taught us to shoot when we were six. We'd walk down to the pond on Uncle John's farm up near Franklin, and shoot frogs with a .22 calibre rifle. Mom bought the rifle for Dad back in 1943, so he could track down and kill a black panther that had been seen bothering livestock on their farm where Monroe Reservoir is now. Sometimes I shudder thinking about what secrets are buried beneath all that water; just like I was shuddering as Michael drove us down the little hill that took us deep into the hollow.

"What exac' are we looking for, Mikey?" Jase asked, scanning the tree line. "You're not really serious about this werewolf thing are you?"

"I am." And that was all Michael said as the GTX crept along at an easy 20 miles an hour.

Now I was feeling my pant's leg being tugged and told Michael to stop the car.

"What?!" he asked a little perturbed.

Did I also mention, at any time, that Michael's parents are rich? How wealthy they are, I can't say, but Michael had access to money. Lots of it. I began to think about just how wealthy Michael was, and decided that if he wanted to pull an elaborate joke like this, he definitely had the resources to do it. However, before I could confront him about what poor taste such a joke was in, something happened that made us all believers.

"Okay Micha—" The foliage to my right began to shake violently and this — thing — jumped out and into the road directly in front of the car. The creature was over six feet tall, covered in greyish brown hair, with these great big jaws that contained what looked like the nastiest, sharpest

teeth I've ever seen on any animal.

My hair must have been standing on end because I could feel the fabric covering the inside of the car's roof. The thing opened its mouth wide, about a half gallon of saliva dripping onto the ground, and howled.

Michael and Annetta seemed to be smiling.

"Okay, okay, I believe you! I believe you! Now what?"

"Now," Michael said causally, "we see if it's real or not."

He stepped out of the car and walked around to the front with Annetta at his side. I was on the passenger side of the car with a shotgun ready to blast the thing away, only I was too afraid to actually do it. The monster's eyes wavered back and forth between us. It stepped forward three steps and stopped. The thing had its teeth bared and was growling menacingly, and I could smell a putrid mustiness emanating off the beast that told me it was definitely not human. Michael eased his revolver out of its holster, the beast just standing there in the headlights, growling, snarling, but not moving, except those red eyes. I swear I thought I saw it raise an eyebrow as it glowered at me.

I heard the hammer on the revolver clicking back to fully cocked. The floorboard of the backseat now contained three very scared teenagers, and I heard Annetta whisper something in French. I guessed she'd never seen a wolf like the one standing in front of the car before. Just when I expected to hear the bang of Michael's gun, another howl rang out, this time from what appeared to be quite a ways off. The beast suddenly dropped to all fours and disappeared down the road.

"Damn it," Michael said, motioning Annetta inside before jumping back behind the wheel and flooring the accelerator. I was barely in my seat as the car sped off.

"Michael," I asked shakily, "what did you mean by seeing if it was real?"

"After I dropped you all off earlier, I went home and did some reading. In a book about mysteries of Indiana, I came across a story about a place the locals call Werewolf Hollow."

The car was bouncing down the road at an even 50 miles an hour. The road turned and twisted like a maddening version of a pretzel.

"I thought it was a bunch of bunk, but wanted to check it out anyway. I figured we had enough time to reach the place, after checking its location on one of my maps, just before full Moon set, and just might be able to ... well, you heard the howls."

In fact, I was still hearing them over the roar of the duel exhaust of the GTX's powerful engine.

"And prove what, exactly?" I asked running my eyes along the tree line and front of the car.

"I want to find out whether or not a legend about a tribe of wild people still living in the hollow is either true or false. People who think they are wolves."

Okay, now he was getting really spooky.

"Werewolves are real, my love." Annetta was getting spookier as well. "Mother told me so."

Jase was peeking over the back of the seat.

"Real or not, must we go about chasing them?" He was obviously more scared than I'd ever seen him. And Jase

didn't scare easily. He told us about this one time when he was visiting some relatives down near Nancy, Kentucky, where he'd had a run in with some ghosts. Naturally, we didn't believe him. Michael figured everything had a rational explanation; I just wasn't sure either way.

After everything we'd been through up to that point, I was still a sceptic wanting to believe.

Whether that thing we'd seen was werewolf, man-wolf, or just a really big wolf, gave me enough reason to want to get out of that place of oppressive darkness.

"Relax, man. Just have that shotgun ready." Michael said a bit too casually. "We're almost there."

What? I thought. Almost where?

As if reading my thoughts, Michael smiled and said, "The lair."

Tippy and Jenna were still on the floorboard.

"Are you crazy?" Jase and I said together.

Michael's smart, real smart, in fact he was the smartest kid in our class. Some people said he was the smartest kid in Indiana. But sometimes, when a person is that intelligent, they are very short step from being outright insane.

At the moment, I was sure he'd gone over the edge.

As we rounded a bend in the road, the headlights fell upon the pale limestone backing of an abandoned and drained quarry. The stone walls, cut into a half-circle, looked to be over 200 feet high, and I hoped Michael didn't plan on expecting any of us to climb up those steep, dangerous cliffs.

Indiana is replete with limestone quarries, many of which have been abandoned. I've seen some. They all have large pools of immensely deep water and contain catfish that grow to six feet ... so some of the old folks claim. The quarry Michael stopped the car at was bone dry. I figured it had been abandoned for about a hundred years, if not more.

As we got out of the car, Michael said: "There should be a cave down at the bottom somewhere."

Then he turned to Jase: "Stay here with the girls while we check it out."

"Not a problem, man, just leave me the keys."

Michael pulled two flashlights out of the trunk and tossed one to me as he headed across the rocks and down the slope. Jenna gave me a kiss, saying be careful, then I trotted away to catch up with Michael.

The slope descended for at least 600 feet. We slipped and slid and half jumped from stone to stone and across gravel until we reached the bottom. We found ourselves in a hole about 800 feet wide. Michael found a trail, of all things, and trotted off.

Eventually we came to an opening in the rock face.

"Okay," Michael said, flipping on his light, "try not to get lost. That story I read mentioned that these caves are tricky and have lots of branches."

"Fine," I said, following him inside. Once inside, I lost him almost instantly, as if we'd entered separate realities.

Try not to get lost, I thought, as I flashed the beam of my light around looking for Michael, and trying to catch some sound that would tip me off to his position. The path we were on inside the cave was loose-packed dirt, and I could

see tracks covering the surface. The deeper into the caverns I walked, the more they smelled like a crypt. I surmised that Michael must have headed down the trail at a trot because I lost him so quickly, but I still could not shake the feeling that he and I no longer shared the same dimension.

"Just pull aside the veil and step into another world," Michael would sometimes say as we sat out at the Sugar Creek cemetery drinking and talking about philosophy and alternate dimensions.

I just wanted to get out of those labyrinthine caverns, wondering why I'd let him lead me into them in the first place. Sometimes, on our excursions, I wondered if Michael didn't have some secret agenda. I banged my head on a low part of the ceiling and winced.

"Michael!" My voice reverberated through the caves. I moved along turning down various passages, barely able to see two feet in front of me. Dang it!

I had been trying for quite sometime to find my way back to the opening without success. If there hadn't been so many tracks in the dirt, I might have been able to do so, but every turn looked the same.

"MICHAEL!"

Yeah, I was scared, but I wasn't about to let him try to confront whatever it had been that we'd seen alone. I turned down a new tunnel and stopped.

Sitting near a small fire before me was an old man. A really old man. The fire cast enough light for me to see him clearly. His face was brown and leathery, and wrinkled like an old handkerchief that had been wadded up and stuffed into a pocket for several years. But his body, which was covered with nothing besides a loincloth, looked strong. His muscles looked hard and well defined, not like a body builder, but more like someone who'd spent years in back-breaking manual labour. Kind of like my father who'd spent many years unloading cinder blocks by hand. There were also a lot of drawings on his skin, all in some red pigment I swear looked like blood. His long, grey hair was secured with a leather headband. And his black eyes — I am telling you the truth here — sparkled, and should have given me the willies, but instead made me feel calm.

He said something I didn't understand, and indicated for me to sit. As I sat, he threw something on the fire that made the flames turn white and scream up to the ceiling, while he chanted. The chant was low, slow, melodic and repetitive, and brought intriguing images to my mind; it felt almost as though the images floating through my tired mind were ... memories.

I was sitting with the shotgun resting on my knees, my finger on the trigger, ready to blast the man away if he tried something. But he didn't do anything for a long time besides chant while tossing some white powder into the fire. Yet, strangely enough, I didn't feel any fear. I was actually becoming relaxed and forgot all about what I was doing there.

After a time he looked at me, smiled — he had weird teeth: long, white and sharp — and he said in broken English: "The spirits, uneasy today. Strangers come. Yet, not strangers."

Okay, that sort of talk gave me the willies.

Then he took off the necklace he was wearing and handed it to me. It was a talisman. I knew what such things were because Cassandra had shown us a lot of them. Hanging on a leather string was a small smooth piece of finely polished limestone. Etched into the surface was a strange symbol I didn't at the time know, nor have I ever discovered what it means. If grandmother hadn't died when I was younger, maybe she could have told me.

"You are brother to wolf. No harm come to you in this place."

I tied the talisman around my neck and hid it inside my undershirt. I'm one-fourth Sioux Indian. My mother's grandmother, whose Sioux name translated as White Wolf Who Walks Alone, was one of the Lakota Sioux who survived the massacre at Wounded Knee and came to Indiana shortly thereafter. Her daughter, who was called Little Wolf Who Walks By Night by her tribe, married a young man of Irish descent who worked at the Mather Quarry near Bloomington. I reckoned the old guy sitting before me sensed my bloodline. Maybe that was what he'd meant by stranger, but not stranger.

"You must now go." He said, softly. "Take path to right. You find exit soon."

As I stood to do as he instructed (for some reason I trusted the guy), he added: "They who dwell in this place wish to remain unknown. Although they will not harm brother to wolf, you must keep secret."

I headed off down the tunnel indicated and soon found myself out in the semi-gloom of the hollow. A second later, Michael joined me.

We looked briefly into each other's eyes. Neither of us spoke, but I saw an unusual sparkle in my friend's eyes that told me he too had encountered something strange in the caverns. Then Michael trotted off towards a winding path that led straight to the top.

We drove home in silence. Jase and the girls kept asking us what had happened, but neither Michael nor I said anything. Annetta sat passively beside Michael holding his hand tightly the entire way.

A few days later, Jenna and I were fooling around and she asked me what the talisman was, holding it gently between finger and thumb. I told her to forget about it and she instantly, seeing the look in my eyes, said, "okay."

None of us ever discussed that outing again. I drove out there a few times trying to find Werewolf Hollow, but was never able to find the road leading down to it. It seemed as if the forest had literally closed up, sealing it from the outside world.

After our trip though, Michael started calling me Brother Wolf.

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Did Tolkien support the Canaries?

HENRY GEE

Hobbits “dressed in bright colours, being notably fond of yellow and green”. So Tolkien tells us in the Prologue of *The Lord of the Rings*. Nowhere does Tolkien give any reason for the hobbits’ preferences. Perhaps they were dictated by nothing more than sunshine and springtime. To this supporter of Norwich City FC, the reason is obvious — Tolkien supported the Canaries!

But hold — I know of no connection between Tolkien and Nelson’s Fine City. The published Letters do not mention it, although Scull and Hammond’s *Chronology* has him visiting Norwich in September 1913, although without comment — and, it seems, never again.

Last half of September 1913. Tolkien visits Warwick (from (?17 September), Birmingham, and Norwich
(*Chronology* p. 45).

Could his visit to Norwich — of unrecorded length or purpose — have coincided with a home match, and the sight of players or assembled supporters in yellow and green, perhaps enjoying a pint or two of ale before or after a game? It’s possible — Norwich City adopted a version of its current green-and-yellow livery as long ago as 1907. However, being the scholar that I am, I must own up that Tolkien would have had more cause to follow football teams in many other places before settling on Norwich. What of the colours of Oxford, where he spent almost all his adult life? Or Birmingham, where he grew up? And what of Warwick, scene of early romance and model for Elven Kortirion in the earliest of the Lost Tales?

So, let’s just check. Oxford United didn’t exist

until 1960. Before that it was Headington United, and it played in orange and blue. Warwick doesn’t have a football team. Birmingham City started life as Small Heath Alliance in 1875, becoming Birmingham FC in 1905 — their strip has almost invariably been blue. What of other West Midlands sides? Aston Villa, founded by Methodists from Handsworth, plays in claret and blue. Coventry City played in black and red, long ago, but its players now sport sky blue. West Bromwich Albion has played in navy blue and white stripes for most of its history, although their away strip has featured green and yellow stripes ... but only since the late 1960s. The odds shorten on a formative encounter between Tolkien and Norwich City.

But Tolkien was no soccer fanatic — he was more into rugby football, and played fiercely at school. The colours of Tolkien’s Alma Mater, King Edward’s, are currently two shades of blue, and the only slightly more varied palette on the school website (www.kes.org.uk/gallery//Sport) shows no signs of yellow or green. Perhaps another Old Edwardian, such as Tom Shippey, might enlighten me further — or an historian of the school, such as Maggie Burns. Oxford University RFC seems to play in black. What of Tolkien’s regiment, the Lancashire Fusiliers? No joy there, either — the badge is predominantly the rose of Lancaster, which is red.

The noble name of Norwich, by elimination, emerges from nebulosity and into the realm of the definite maybe. Let’s look again at the annal above. Although Scull and Hammond are as comprehensive as they can be, the note is exiguous in the extreme, giving almost no detail about a whole fortnight of Tolkien’s life. Perhaps Tolkien had an epiphany in Norwich that somehow composted in his subconscious, emerging much later in the garb of hobbits? Perhaps, one day, a letter will emerge from some dusty cellar or attic, describing (to Gilson, say, or Christopher Wiseman) the noble field of battle; the army of doughty yellow-and-green conquering some supposedly invincible foe, against all odds; an episode that coalesced into the Scouring of the Shire, or, perhaps, even, the whole of *The Lord of the Rings*. One can but hope. **Henry Gee** has his season ticket for the 2011–12 season all lined up.





